



Atheism: A Philosophical Justification

Michael Martin

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In this book Michael Martin provides logical reasons for being an atheist. Carefully examining the current debate in Anglo-American analytic philosophy regarding God's existence, Martin presents a comprehensive critique of the arguments for the existence of God and a defense of arguments against the existence of God, showing in detail their relevance to atheism. Claiming that atheism is a rational position while theistic beliefs are not, he relies both on logic and evidence and confines his efforts to showing the irrationality of belief in a personal supreme being who is omniscient, omnipotent, perfect, and the creator of heaven and earth.

The author's approach is two-fold. By presenting and criticizing arguments that have been advanced in favor of belief, he makes a case for "negative atheism." By offering arguments against atheism and defending it from these attacks, he presents a case for "positive atheism." Along the way, he confronts the views of numerous philosophers—among them Anselm, Aquinas, Plantinga, Hick, and Swinburne—and refutes both classical and contemporary arguments that have been advanced through the history of this debate.

In his conclusion, Martin considers what would and would not follow if his main arguments were widely accepted, and he defines and distinguishes atheism from other "isms" and movements. Building on the work of religious skeptics and atheists of the past and present, he justifies his reconstruction of this philosophical dispute by citing some of the most interesting and important arguments for atheism and criticisms of arguments for the existence of God that have appeared in recent journal articles and have yet to be systematically addressed.

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