



THE PRESUMPTION OF FREEDOM

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Freedom is not a human concept or a political idea. Only philosophy can attempt to inquire as to its contents and its meaning. It is there, just as truth, justice and love are there, the constituents of God. If you are of a mind to trust in an ultimate source of all things, material and immaterial, you have some understanding of the existence of God.

Belief in God is elementary for most people, that's why more than three quarters of the world is God prone if not God certain. The mind finds within itself surety in the unmistakable premonitions of a transcendent order. This is what St. Anselm meant by his statement: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for." His belief in God superseded his lifelong rational inquiries into his presumptions which Anselm called "Faith seeking understanding, or simply", his theology.

Empiricists, generally of the scientific variety, attribute other causes as the reason for our existence. Unexplained change is the usual choice. Whatever force started it all was either totally free – or contingent on a previous start as part of a continuum of starts. Contingency is a stretch – and gets you thinking about eternity itself as a force, which, of course, it is not.

The initial force was the beginning of time and space. In eternity there is no such thing as time and space. What existed before what exists now, is said to have had its start in infinite-time; there is no infinite-time! Time has no reality in infinity. In fact, there is no (in) in infinity or out of infinity, no beginning – no end. To think in terms of one Big Bang after another, is to think in terms of time and space, which cannot be infinite

because space/time and the infinite have no relationship. Infinity has no place or sequence. Nothing can exist in nothing.

There is only the one uncreated power that is logically and mysteriously infinite, the force behind the beginning – and that is God, who exists, infinitely, outside of time and space and freely caused what (is). It is no wonder we owe that force thanksgiving; worship to be sure. Having a healthy fear of the Deity is reasonable, since it could freely end it all on its own or through our contingent negligence.

Creation was and is an act of Ultimate Freedom. At this point we can begin reasoning; offering understandings as to (why) things began, once we have presumed a beginning. Many may not accept a presumption of creation by God on faith, because presumptions can be false, depending on what is presumed and what proofs are offered advancing presumption to a point where it (becomes) an act of faith or the assurance of things hoped for.

I found a piece on <philosophypages.com> by Garth Kemerling which gives a tidy explanation of the Fallacies of Presumption.

Unwarranted Assumptions

The fallacies of presumption also fail to provide adequate reason for believing the truth of their conclusions. In these instances, however, the erroneous reasoning results from an implicit supposition of some further proposition whose truth is uncertain or implausible. Again, we'll consider each of them in turn, seeking always to identify the unwarranted assumption upon which it is based.

Accident

The fallacy of accident begins with the statement of some principle that is true as a general rule, but then errs by applying this principle to a specific case that is unusual or atypical in some way.

- *Women earn less than men earn for doing the same work.*
- *Oprah Winfrey is a woman.*
- *Therefore, Oprah Winfrey earns less than male talk-show hosts.*

As we'll soon see, a true universal premise would entail the truth of this conclusion; but then, a universal statement that Every woman earns less than any man. would obviously be false. The truth of a general rule, on the other hand, leaves plenty of room for exceptional cases, and applying it to any of them is fallacious.

Converse Accident

The fallacy of converse accident begins with a specific case that is unusual or atypical in some way, and then errs by deriving from this case the truth of a general rule.

- *Dennis Rodman wears earrings and is an excellent rebounder.*
- *Therefore, people who wear earrings are excellent rebounders.*

It should be obvious that a single instance is not enough to establish the truth of such a general principle. Since it's easy for this conclusion to be false even though the premise is true, the argument is unreliable.

False Cause

The fallacy of false cause infers the presence of a causal connection simply because events appear to occur in correlation or (in the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* variety) temporal succession.

- *The moon was full on Thursday evening.*
- *On Friday morning I overslept.*
- *Therefore, the full moon caused me to oversleep.*

Consider what sort of evidence adequately supports the conclusion that a causal relationship does exist, but these fallacies clearly are not enough.

Begging the Question (*petitio principii*)

Begging the question is the fallacy of using the conclusion of an argument as one of the premises offered in its own support. Although this often happens in an implicit or disguised fashion, an explicit version would look like this:

- *All dogs are mammals.*
- *All mammals have hair.*
- *Since animals with hair bear live young, dogs bear live young.*
- *But all animals that bear live young are mammals.*
- *Therefore, all dogs are mammals.*

Unlike the other fallacies we've considered, begging the question involves an argument (or chain of arguments) that is

formally valid: if its premises (including the first) are true, then the conclusion must be true. The problem is that this valid argument doesn't really provide support for the truth its conclusion; we can't use it unless we have already granted that.

Complex Question

The fallacy of complex question presupposes the truth of its own conclusion by including it implicitly in the statement of the issue to be considered:

- *Have you tried to stop watching too much television?*
- *If so, then you admit that you do watch too much television.*
- *If not, then you must still be watching too much television.*
- *Therefore, you watch too much television.*

In a somewhat more subtle fashion, this involves the same difficulty as the previous fallacy. We would not willingly agree to the first premise unless we already accepted the truth of the conclusion that the argument is supposed to prove.

Although it doesn't talk in theological terms, it is interesting enough to show how faulty reasoning can arise.

<phylosophypages.com> Garth Kemerling

From this basic little exercise we can easily see that presumptions are made in the pursuit of truth, and help us arrive at convincing conclusions by avoiding what is most obviously untrue. The average-minded individual never expects to find Ultimate Truth in the here and now, because Truth itself,

like Freedom itself, is beyond temporal existence. What occurs to us though, is that Pure Truth (is) Ultimate Freedom, and Ultimate Freedom (is) Pure Truth. That is not easily graspable because truth and freedom are not interchangeable in earthly terms. They are (One) only in the Infinite, beyond our terrestrial sphere, where there is Infinite Perfection. Without our transcendental thought processes we could never presume beyond our noses, much less place faith in our presumptions. Based on the angle of the mountain's sides, though its peak is in the clouds, it is reachable because the peak is there, even though it's hidden. Why do we care about these seemingly trivial thoughts? We care because it is our nature to know whatever we can. Every individual is surely free to know the truth of his or her own presumptions in order to secure vague understandings of the Ultimate Truth – by which he or she may be ultimately set free. We can rest, at least, on this temporal belief; on our faith.

We are able to do this because of inborn premonitions, as a result of creation, which help us draw current conclusions from our presumptions assuring us of what we hope for.

“If you make my word your home
you will indeed be my disciples;
and you will come to know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.”

The quote from Jn 8, 31-33 above is of great value when you put it in context. Jesus launches a discussion in which he testifies that he is from God, and has come to offer us hope; and a new life.

“I am the light of the world
anyone who follows me
will not be walking in the dark
but will have the light of life.”

Let us explore a bit, what we presume Jesus knows and what it means to be set free.

Offhand, many may see these statements as simply exaggerations, but Jesus uses a wonderful analogy: If you make my words your home... this certainly suggests we look more carefully into his meaning. When certain words become one's home one needs to live in them.

Moving into a new home, it quickly becomes apparent that in order to settle in, as they say, it is necessary to remember where the knives and forks are, in which closet the coats were put, or where the broom is to be found. Familiarization with the location of the objects you live with is a necessity, so you're not tearing your hair out trying to find something you know is there—somewhere.

In this context then, what did he mean when he called himself the light of the world? Understanding this description of himself with our temporal knowledge of the world, he would have to have been the sun, in a literal sense, since that's where our light comes from. To put it into one of Mr. Kemerling's exercises:

- Jesus is the light of the world.
- The world gets its light from the sun.

- Jesus is the sun.

There seems to be a fallacy in that presumption. Here's another presumption Jesus was attributing to his words— an inner light, an intellectual clarity reached only by transcending worldly concepts. By contrasting spiritual goodness as opposed to evil or darkness, he suggests that his friends are those who arrive at the truth by making his word habitual; and further, it is the goodness resulting from his friendship that emancipates the mind toward a life of Ultimate Freedom, which we presume to be extra-terrestrial. We draw that conclusion from Jesus' words themselves, which, hopefully, we're living in. The authority from whom Jesus speaks these words is beyond himself alone, they come from The Father, i.e. the Creator, from whence (he) came, or by whom (he) was sent. Not only that, but the Father is actually with him as he speaks. He says his statements are coming from two sources not one, fulfilling the Jewish law of testifying.

Judging by temporal, i.e., human standards, this makes absolutely no sense at all to his adversaries. He finally had to explain to them:

“You are from below;

I am from above.

You are of this world

I am not of this world.”

In our generation, this makes even less sense, and that's the very point! What Jesus is expounding is (not) sensory information, it is revelatory information of a spiritual nature.

How many individuals have we heard of, even in recent history, who have said they were from God, or had a direct contact with God? One, David Koresh of the Waco debacle, comes to mind. None of those who have ever claimed that distinction were ever able to show proof of their claims by raising the physically-dead to life, as Jesus is said to have done. Many who have read full accounts of Jesus' life and activities will not presume any of the miracle stories, especially the Resurrection and Ascension, to be true. For them, the whole New Testament falls like a house of cards and takes the Old Testament and all other subsequent spiritual texts with it. The concept of religion fails, and a small percentage of the world's population presumes the texts false. This reminds me of my grandfather's remark about the Irishman in the parade who said all the marchers were out of step but himself. People who think this way are well documented. Christopher Hitchens', god is not Great, and Richard Dawkins' Delusion, are just a few. I have read most of them, and what amazes me is the fact that they cannot break through or see spiritually. Their argument generally centers on what evil men and women have done in the (name) of religion, sadly true. Their spiritual needs are generally fulfilled with an approbation of the arts, and the tendency to approve of Buddhism, which we all know, is not a religion but a philosophy of life with ritualistic overtones. If their journey to get rid of self sets them free in this world, the Ultimate Freedom of another world, the one Jesus was demonstrating by the Resurrection and Ascension, probably never will be presumed to be true by them. Much like us, they will need an infusion of the grace of God. Faith is, as Anselm put it, "the assurance of things hoped for." I think, when and if they meditate, and are able to arrive at a so-called transcendental condition, they are not (transcending) the self, but are psychologically putting the self in a state of torpor or insensibility, similar to self-hypnosis. All well and good, if one

wants to call that freedom. I have an idea of it being, sort of, time/spaced out.

Freedom, in hope, is a wakeful whole-hearted trust in the promises of Christ. This is faith; living by the words of Christ which billions have made their home. There is no need to repeat the whole chapter eight of John's gospel, I'm sure you have read it for yourselves, but there is one section that stands repeating because of its bearing on the presumption of freedom. In his further discourse with the Pharisees, they asked him directly: Who are you claiming to be? Jesus answered:

“If I were to seek my own glory, my glory would be worth nothing; in fact my glory is conferred by the Father, by the one of whom you say, ‘He is our God,’ although you do not know him. But I know him, and if I were to say, ‘I do not know hm,’ I should be a liar, as you yourselves are. But I do know him, and I keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to think that he would see my Day; he saw it and was glad.”

“They then said, ‘You are not fifty yet, and you have seen Abraham!’ Jesus replied: ‘In all truth I tell you, before Abraham ever was, I am.’”

Here, there is no doubt, Jesus is claiming existence outside of earthly or cosmological time, suggesting that his Father and he are infinite. For Jesus to further declare that Abraham rejoiced to see his Day, puts Abraham in the same state of being with the Father and the Son, endorsing, as it were, the assertion whereby human beings can share in that existence. Jesus' I am, here, seems to resonate with Exodus 13, where the God of Abraham gives his name to Moses as: I am he who is, or I am who I am; A remarkable statement of absolute freedom. Let us move to the practicalities of temporal and spatial freedom.

When someone says, get out of my space, or I don't have time, they are surely saying that a certain amount of space and time belongs to them. To put it another way, when we're born, time and space is allotted to us. Whatever was there before made room for us. We certainly didn't create the space we occupy or the time we take, but we reserve the right to possess the area we fill and the consecutive moments of our being. What gives us the right to life – also gives us the personal independence that accompanies that right. As a person, we expect to be respected as one whose value is equal to any other, rich or poor, male or female, young or old, black, white, yellow, red or brown. The fundamental presumption is that we are all born-free human beings. I don't suppose it comes as any great shock that there are restrictions. No one is so totally independent that he or she does not (need) another. From parents and infant all the way to senility and care-givers, there is always someone else. That doesn't mean that we are never self reliant, but even in our self reliance, still, there needs to be others.

We live on this huge co-operative reservation called earth for a given period of time, and as it hurtles and grinds into the future, regardless of how many billions of years it takes, it, and our days are numbered; we are of this world. The fact that everything of this world has been freely given should be an easy presumption for us to make. When the child asks: Where did I come from? the answer, From Mommy's tummy is not exactly the full monty, not the whole suit, so to speak. The real answer, without too much presumption, is: from the Creator of all things, otherwise where did anything come from? If you have any other presumptive answer to that question, please let the world know immediately!

When Jesus said to his antagonists: "I am not of this world," there are only two ways of converting that statement into what

we could consider reasonable presumptions. The first would be that he is a very sick, delusional lunatic. The second presumption is that there (is) another world from whence he came (other than the ones Science Fiction claims), and that his message is true; however, a condition or basis for accepting his statements would need reasonable evidence to support his claims.

The works of Jesus have surely been reported to us, both in writing and by traditional understanding. There is no less reason to presume they are any more false than the words of Socrates (Plato take note). Now, if Jesus' works were insignificant during his time among us, surely we would not have heard of them through the Apostles, and the early Christians. The whole cult would have died out along with its founder. That, as we all know, did not happen. It was his apparent works that validated the truth! Jesus implores us in Jn 14: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God trust also in me . . . anyone who has seen me has seen the Father . . . You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; at least believe on the evidence of these works."

In one poignant account of his work, Jesus waited for three days, not only to signify his own entombment, but that we might rightly presume his raising of Lazarus from the dead was not magic. History has accounted for many healers across the span of years, even up to this present day. Many have been credited with bringing life back to the lifeless by timely resuscitation after an accident, drowning or shock. I personally do not know of any, off-hand, that enlivened a corpse after three days in the grave, except, of course, Frankenstein's monster from a novel by Mary Shelley, an English author,

written at the age of eighteen or numerous hoaxes you may find on the Internet or on television.

The Gospel has stuck with us over the centuries because of the Spirit of Truth with which it has been brought – substantiating its fidelity. In fact, as time goes on and human intellectual capacity improves, it even becomes more fully understood as the beacon of hope it is, inspiring the world with the Word of God.

On the afternoon of April 19, 2008, Benedict XVI met with thousands of young people and seminarians at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, New York. He delivered these remarks: "What purpose has a freedom which, in disregarding truth, pursues what is false or wrong? . . . truth is not an imposition. Nor is it simply a set of rules. It is the discovery of the One who never fails us; the One whom we can always trust. In seeking truth we come to live by belief because ultimately truth is a person: Jesus Christ."

We might add, it is only he who moved the world out of the darkness into the light of everlasting life, by the pure freedom of his unconditional love for us by way of the cross. It is Jesus who corroborates the ancient presumption of life after death. He clarifies and verifies it with the new covenant of our day. He showed himself to be the first, by the Resurrection, which we happily celebrate with Easter Bunnies and brightly colored eggs, signs of new life. I've often wondered how many kids have ever been told that the egg-hunt they enjoy represents, in reality, our search for everlasting life.

An addendum to the U.S. Constitution was the Bill of Rights. It was created in 1791, principally by James Madison and was influenced by the Virginia Declaration of Rights 1776, the English Bill of Rights 1689, and the Magna Carta 1215.

Ultimately it remains the fundamental symbol of the freedoms and culture of the nation. It was born out of a natural mistrust of centralized power. Having come through a Revolution, where a huge monarchy was thrown off and a nascent democracy was put in its place, the presumption that individual liberty or freedom may be infringed upon, caused the division at the 1787 Convention. All this played out against the background of a healthy slave trade. Hard to explain, even with an understanding that many of the founders were morally against slavery, but, that the economy inhibited any real action until the Civil War. To work an individual, from birth to death, for the profit of another is a great sin against freedom itself, which we are still paying for today. Taking away people's inalienable right to liberty and their striving to be happy without a master, is only surpassed by taking their right to life. What kind of people must there be in this world who would approve of these offenses against the Creator of natural rights, and believe there will be no redress? Are they convinced that power over others is their destiny, that their will only is meant to prevail? As with all crime, it simply comes down to inordinate selfishness of varying degrees; a complete lack of love, humility and compassion. The dictator, forcing his or her ideological will on a people because of some twisted philosophy is little different from a parent allowing a child to grow up without a sense of self respect and respect for others.

Right to life people, and Choice people have one marvelous thing in common. Before anything else, they presume that their freedom is a license to choose between the celebration of life as a gift, or having the power to destroy it. Ultimate Freedom remains transcendent. Restitution for the latter choice can only be presumed. We should ask ourselves, who among us can afford to be wrong in matters of life and death? Life has never been ours to give or to take regardless of the presumptions we

attribute to science! A husband and wife give birth– not life. The Giver of Life is not of this world. It takes (grace) to believe that as faith. The message, though, is far from obscure.

Slavery, the opposite of freedom in a physical sense, is a phenomenon the world knows well. The enslavement of just one life or millions of lives by the will of others has perverse political, economic, social and psychological effects. No human mind should be restricted except by injury or disease. One person or entire populations may be brain-washed by some evil force to a point of becoming irreparably lost to the natural proclivities of life, yet the human mind does not become totally oblivious to the virtue of hope because of its connection to – and ability for – transcendency. Hope springs eternal, is a literal fact! There were no worse examples of the manipulation of people, other than slavery itself, than the death camps of Hitler and the gulags of Stalin, still, hope triumphed over those unchecked murders of political and social differences, even though millions died. To have allowed those worldly abominations to go on, would have been a catastrophic sin of omission on the part of the free peoples of the earth. Yet, time and time again, the forces of selfishness and greed return in different guises, to commit the very same crimes against human freedom. The battle between good and evil is fought on the inner courts of one's humanity, as well as on the geo-political fault lines across the entire planet, all for the very same reason, selfishness.

Hope came to the world in human form as Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ that had been expected. He confirmed for all time the rightness of the virtues of faith and charity. Faith in the Father, the God of Abraham as seen in himself; and charity or love for us, also seen in himself by his crucifixion, leading us not into temptation but delivering us from the way the world thinks.

We have all been given the chance to look into the face of Love, and still retain our presumptive freedom with which to accept or reject it. “Which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, would give him a stone”? Matt 7, 9.

The lessons that Christ taught have been delivered to every corner of the world. Those oppressed as well as those more fortunate may conjure them with the gift of the freedom of thought, allowing those who hear the Word to become inspired and to rise above the world finding the Truth which constantly pursues us. “I am the way, the truth and life.” There is no power on earth that can kill the freedom to resist wrong, since no one can turn his or her back on Ultimate Truth without being eternally lost – willingly.

The immensity of freedom of thought as it is connected to the likeness of God is expressed by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) in the following:

“Extinguish my eyes:

I still can see you;

deprive my ears of sound:

I still can hear you;

and without feet

I still can come to you;

and without voice

I still can call you.

Sever my arms from me,
I still will hold you
with all my heart as with a single hand;
arrest my heart,
my brain will keep on beating;
and should your fire
at last my brain consume,
the flowing of my blood will carry you.”

I, personally, have never been a great fan of Franklin Delano Roosevelt aside from the leadership he provided during the war of The Greatest Generation. The political mistakes he made at Potsdam and Yalta, influenced by socialist ideologues, brought about an increase in the power structures that are enemies to the American principles of justice and freedom. The subsequent defense of that freedom brought on the costly conflicts in Korea, Vietnam and Cuba, as well as a forty-year standoff with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Empire. The present wars in the Middle East, although originating from other causes, generally, are again threatening freedom with aggressive regimes, soon to have a nuclear capability endangering, once again, world peace.

On January 6, 1941, President Roosevelt addressed the Congress eleven months and one day before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. Here is what Roosevelt said to Congress and the world:

“In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression — everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way — everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want — which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants - everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear — which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor — anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called new order of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

To that new order we oppose the greater conception — the moral order. A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear.

Since the beginning of our American history, we have been engaged in change — in a perpetual peaceful revolution — a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly adjusting itself to changing conditions — without the concentration camp or the

quick-lime in the ditch. The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.

This nation has placed its destiny in the hands and heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women; and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God. Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose.

To that high concept there can be no end save victory.” (From Congressional Record 1941, vol. 87, pt. 1)

After the often wanton slaughter of tens of millions of combatants and innocents, right from the very end of the Great Conflagration, unbelievably, the enemies of freedom renewed their attack.

Today, if a president stated that faith in freedom is under the guidance of God he would be criticized by the bogus separation of church and state argument. God does not guide temporal freedom, that he left for man to attain and retain. God (is) Freedom, in the ultimate sense; when people reject God they are rejecting their origin, the sole cause of all life, and freedom’s center.

Millions upon millions have placed themselves in the service of the anti-god, in the service of evil; they’ve become nothing more than vicious animals whose reason and will is given over only to self. What then, in future days, will be secure.

The world desperately needs to answer God’s call. Not the gods of wrath or a god of Jihad, but the true God of peace, love and compassion. God, the Son, Jesus Christ. Truth is a person! And

following him, our presumption of Ultimate Freedom will be fulfilled.

“Everything has been entrusted
to me by my Father; and no one knows
the Son except the Father, just as no one
knows the Father except the Son and
those to whom the Son chooses to
reveal him.”

Before I end this little paper, I would like to go back to Anselm, briefly. In his treatment on Free Will, Anselm makes a very strong case, to his hypothetical student, that there is no temptation stronger than the will, which he locates in the soul. No force known to man as temptation can possibly overpower the will. We are not able to say, as Flip Wilson's Geraldine used to say: “The devil made me do it”! The will itself does not succumb because of its own weakness but, indeed, wills to do what temptation suggests, leaving its freedom intact. There is no blame to be passed along to other forces for the will being poor, inefficient or even non-existent! The free-will of men and women is always stronger than any adversity. For this reason, crime or sin is punishable. The individual does not remain the animal he evolved from, but by the grace of God, in the Spirit, has become godlike in himself, remaining completely free. The only slavery he can put himself under is evil, strictly by willing to do so. What makes martyrs so important is that their

willingness is for God only; they will suffer death before willing to commit sin or error against the love of God. Blaming the Super-ego or the Id for the actions of the Ego is the gross myth of modern times. A too liberal state, under the control of relativism, must fall. So will the individual person. “I couldn’t help it,” is the epitome of self deception. Guilt is healthy and a friend, because it cries for forgiveness and forgiveness is the avenue to Love. The willingness to forgive and the hope of remaining in the assurances of faith, is the most powerful force for the existence of peace and justice on a grand scale, and for the attainment of Ultimate Freedom for every human being eternally.

“In my Father’s house there
are many places to live in;
Otherwise I would have told you.
I am going now to prepare a
place for you;
and after I have gone and
prepared you a place,
I shall return to take you to myself,
so that you may be with me
where I am.
You know the way to the place

where I am going.”

Thomas said, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’

Jesus said:

I am the Way; I am Truth and Life.

No one can come to the Father except through me.”

May I suggest we presume these words to be Freedom speaking, and find a home in them if you will!