Ontological Arguments

Analysis of Anselm's Argument:

1. Definition: God is the greatest of all conceivable things.

2. Premise: The concept of the greatest conceivable thing is the greatest concept.

3. Therefore: The concept of God is the greatest of all concepts.

4. Premise: The Fool understands the meaning of the description "God is that than which no greater can be conceived".

5. Premise: If you understand the meaning of a description, then you have a concept of the thing described.

6. Therefore: The concept of God exists in the mind of the Fool (that is, God exists in the understanding of the Fool). Note that God is not a concept. Your concept of your car is not your car. Concepts are not things.

7. Premise: A concept either exists only in the mind or in both the mind and in reality. A concept that exists in reality is one that is realized by some thing. My concept of my coffee cup exists in reality, since my coffee cup exists.

8. Premise: Any concept that exists both in the mind and in reality is greater than any concept that exists in the mind alone.

9. Premise: It is obviously true that some concepts do exist both in the mind and in reality. For example, the concept of my coffee cup.

10. Hypothesis to be Tested: God exists only in the understanding of the Fool and does not exist in reality. That is, there is a concept of God, but no thing which realizes that concept.

    10A. Therefore: The concept of my coffee cup is greater than the concept of God.

    10B. But if any concept is greater than the concept of God, then the concept of God is not the greatest concept.

    10C. So, the concept of God is not the greatest concept.

    10D. There is a contradiction between 10C and 3.

11. Rejection of Hypothesis: The hypothesis that God exists only in the understanding of the Fool and not in reality leads to a contradiction; so it must be rejected.

12. Conclusion: God exists in both the understanding of the Fool and in reality. There is a concept of God (the greatest concept) and there is a thing which realizes that concept (the greatest thing). This greatest thing is God.

An ontological argument proving the existence of a ring:

(1) There are some wizards.
(2) These wizards are ordered by strength.
(3) Wizards are either adorned by rings or they are not adorned.
(4) Some wizards are adorned by rings.
(5) Any wizard with a ring is stronger than any without a ring.
(6) There exists exactly one strongest wizard, namely, Gandalf.
(7a) Assume that Gandalf has no ring.
(7b) If Gandalf has no ring, then some other wizards are stronger than Gandalf.
(7c) But then Gandalf is not the strongest wizard.
(7d) So the assumption that Gandalf is ringless leads to a contradiction.
(8) Therefore, Gandalf is adorned by some ring.
(9) The ring which Gandalf has is Narya.
(10) Therefore: Narya exists.

An ontological argument proving the existence of Paradise:

(1) There are some maps.
(2) These maps are ordered by beauty.
(3) Maps are either completed by territories or they are not.
(4) Some maps are completed by territories.
(5) Any map with a territory is more beautiful than any without a territory.
(6) There exists exactly one most beautiful map, namely, the Aleph.
(7a) Assume that the Aleph is not completed by any territory.
(7b) If the Aleph has no territory, then some maps are more beautiful than the Aleph.
(7c) But then the Aleph is not the most beautiful map.
(7d) So the assumption that the Aleph has no territory leads to a contradiction.
(8) Therefore, the Aleph is completed by a territory.
(9) The territory which completes the Aleph is Paradise.
(10) Therefore: Paradise exists.

An ontological argument for God:

(1) There are some forms.
(2) These forms are ordered by greatness.
(3) Forms are either instantiated by things or they are not instantiated.
(4) Some forms are instantiated by things.
(5) Any instantiated form is greater than any uninstantiated form.
(6) The greatest form is F.
(7a) Assume that F is not instantiated by anything in reality.
(7b) If F is not instantiated by anything, then some forms are greater than F.
(7c) But then F is not the greatest form.
(7d) So the assumption that F is not instantiated by anything leads to a contradiction.
(8) Therefore, F is instantiated by some thing.
(9) The thing which instantiates F is called God.
(10) Therefore: God exists.