

1. BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

1. Belief in the existence of God is the primary truth which lies at the foundation of all religions faith and knowledge.

Hebrews 11:6. "Who so ever, would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him." (R.S.V.)

Proverbs 1:7. The basis of wisdom.

John 17: 3. Jesus regarded a knowledge of God as vital.

2. The existence of God is an assumed truth, one that the human mind considers necessary as the only possible conclusion to account satisfactorily for the phenomena of the universe. The Bible writers make 110 attempt to prove that God exists. Jesus Christ advanced no arguments to convince men that there is a God. In the Bible the existence of God is recognized as a self-evident truth.

Genesis 1:1. Moses begins the story of the origin of our universe with the fact of God's existence.

Psalms 14: 1. The psalmist calls these who deny God's existence fools. (Psalm 53:1)

"We cannot prove that God is; but we can show that, in order to account the existence of any knowledge, thought, reason, conscience in man, man must assume that God is."

3. The following considerations contribute towards belief in the existence of God:

(a) The Existence of the Material Universe with its Living Inhabitants.

The existence of the universe necessitates an adequate cause. There must be some cause behind matter, movement, organization, and design, all of which are plainly discernible in the vast universe around us.

"The very uniformity of nature is conclusive evidence of intellect in the 'cause back of nature. The fact that nature obeys the laws of geometry, that there is an absolute scale in music, that all the so-called laws of nature are apparently universal in their application, all point to intelligence in the Cause which has produced them."-Floyd E. Hamilton, "The Basis of the Christian Faith," Revised Edition, pages 47, 48.

The manifestations of design in nature are evidences of a Mind and a Power capable of producing the effect. "The fact, for example, that all different kinds of liquids, when they crystallize form different but regular shapes of crystals, is a clear indication of plan and design. What shall we say, for example of the fact that water when it freezes, contracts almost up to the freezing point, and then begins to expand? Were it not so, the lakes would freeze to the bottom, all fish would perish, and a real glacial period would envelop the Arctic and Temperate zones. Is not that the evidence of plan and purpose?" - Ibid.

The world in which we live is teeming with living forms marvelously constructed and adapted to their environments. The existence of life points to the existence of a Life Giver and Designer.

Romans 1:20. Nature testifies of God.

Psalms 19:1-5. The heavens reveal God.

(b) The Universal Conviction in Men of the Existence of a Supreme Being.

This conviction is found in the hearts of even the most backward races.

Acts 17: 23. Heathen as well as civilized people have a sense of God.

(c) The Universal Desire to Worship.

Men everywhere look for something or someone to worship. Whenever they have departed from the true God and lost their knowledge of Him they still retained their instinct for worship. (Romans 1:21-25.) Where did man get his desire to worship if there is no God?

Bible Doctrines

(d) The Universal Sense of Right and Wrong.

Man, however bad retains a sense of moral obligation. Though his moral consciousness is often perverted, it nevertheless exists. This existence of a sense of right and wrong in man points to some Being who is responsible for it. Romans 2:14,15. Paul recognized the existence of conscience in the heathen.

(e) Jesus Christ's Faith in God.

The life and faith of Jesus Christ was centered in God. Disbelief in God is, with Him, unthinkable. His life would be unexplainable if there was no God. Perfection would be the result of a delusion if Christ was wrong in His belief that God existed.

(f) The Prophecies of the Scriptures.

2 Peter 1:21. Peter held that the prophecies of Scripture came from God.

Isaiah 41:21-24. The message that came through Isaiah professes to come from God. In it Prophecy is presented as evidence of this claim. The accurate fulfillment of Bible prophecy substantiates its claim to come from God, and is therefore a testimony to the existence of God. We can test the prophecies for ourselves by appealing to the facts of history.

4. The most important, and the really conclusive evidence, of the existence of God is to be found in one's personal experience. Multitudes of men and women have borne testimony to personal relationships with God. The Bible gives us a record of those who have known God, who have spoken to Him, and were conscious of hearing His voice and experiencing His presence and power. No arguments for the existence of God are necessary for the one who has experienced Him.

Jeremiah 29: 13, 14. God may be known if men will seek Him. (Exodus 6: 7; Joshua 3: 10.)

Some testimonies of those who knew God:

Jesus John 7:29; 10:15; 17:25.

Job Job 19:25; 42:5.

David Psalm 34:10; 42:2.

Jeremiah Jeremiah 10: 10.

Paul 2 Timothy 1: 12.

MEMORIZE: Proverbs 1:7.

Questions on the Lesson

1. Why is belief in the existence of God so important?
2. What is meant by saying that the existence of God is assumed in it?
3. State seven arguments to substantiate one's belief in God.
4. Why did Paul regard disbelief in God as inexcusable?
What manifestation of God's existence did David recognize?
5. What three characteristics are common among men and how do you account for their existence?
6. Explain: "Moral perfection would be the result of a delusion if God did not exist."
7. How did Peter account for the Prophecies of Scripture?
8. What evidence of His existence does God offer through Isaiah?
9. What is the strongest argument for God's existence?
10. What personal testimonies of faith in God have been given by Jesus? Job? David? Jeremiah? Paul?

For Further Study

1. What hope does man have of finding God through reason? Job 11: 7-91. Romans 11:33; Job 37:23.
2. The following words describe various attitudes and beliefs in regards to God. Give their meanings-theism, atheism, agnosticism, deism, pantheism, polytheism, monotheism, skepticism, rationalism, materialism, humanism.
3. What experience is necessary to furnish one with a knowledge of God?
4. Is there any difference between a knowledge of God and knowing God? Explain.
5. How is the God of the Bible contrasted with other gods? Psalm 4,21: 2 Jeremiah 10: 10; Acts 14: 15.

Bible Doctrines

6. What is theology? Consider the following statement from Revelation A. A. Hodge: "Religion is practical and experimental; theology is scientific. Every religious man is a theologian just as far as his knowledge is accurate and comprehensive; every true theologian must be a religious man as far as his knowledge is experimental."-"Outlines of Theology," 1886 edition, page 40.