

Doctrine of the Existence of God

Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.”

1. It has been said that if a person can believe the first four words of the Bible, all the rest is easily embraced. *"In the beginning God."*
2. The words are simple but the concept is absolutely overwhelming.
3. The human mind reaches back across the centuries, past the building of the pyramids, past the first civilization in the Mesopotamia Valley, past the first village dwellers, past creation itself, and there was God.
4. But who is God? Where did HE come from? How did HE acquire all of His power? Can God be known?
5. Some people say no, God cannot be known, for God, as a superior, intelligent, all powerful entity, separate from the universe does not exist.
6. It is a bold assertion that must not go unchallenged. The Christian asserts that God can be known because the Bible declares He can be.
 - *John 17:3 This is life eternal, to know God.*
 - *Isaiah 11:9 The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters that cover the seas.*
7. Professor David S. Clark writes, “The manifestation of God in nature, His revelation in the Scriptures, and His incarnation in Jesus Christ assures us that God can be known. The atheists are not convinced.”
8. Sir William Hamilton once taught that God could not be known because He is the absolute and the absolute has no relation to anything else. Therefore God is unknowable. Sir William Hamilton was wrong.
9. While it is true that God has no necessary relation to His creation, He does have a voluntary relation whereby He has chosen to make a part of His creation, man, in such a way that there can be an intelligent interaction.
10. In the search of man to know God, man must begin humbly as a child and distinguish between apprehension and comprehension.
11. We can know that God is, without knowing all that He is, just as we can touch the earth without being able to embrace it in our arms.

12. Can we define God? No, not completely, but we can point out those revealed characteristics which mark His being. The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 offers a rather comprehensive definition of God.
13. There is Scripture to support each of these affirmations about the character of God. But what if a person does not accept the Bible as the Word of God? Are there other arguments that could be set forth to contend for God's existence? The answer is yes.
14. Traditionally there are five arguments of rational evidence.

The Ontological Argument

15. The first argument for God's existence is the Ontological Argument based upon the meaning of the term, God. Best stated by the theologian Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) the reasoning is this: Since man has an idea of an absolute Perfect Being, that Being must exist. A Perfect Being must exist because it is self evident that the material world cannot be eternal. We can conceive of the world as a non entity but we cannot conceive of God as never existing.
16. In the 18th century, Dr. Fiddes set forth the ontological argument in six propositions.
- Something does exist.
 - Something has existed eternally be it God or be it matter.
 - Something has been eternally self-existent, that is, not dependent upon anyone or anything.
 - What is self-existent must have all the perfections which exist anywhere or in any subject, which is that the body of man is perfect for the environment of planet earth. The body of a bird is perfect for flight and the fish is perfect for water.
 - What is self-existent must have all possible perfections and every perfection in an infinite measure.
 - What has all possible perfections in an infinite measure is God.
17. Those who do not like the concept of God will ascribe all of the eternity and perfection of the universe to matter.
18. Everything then is the product of time plus space plus chance. It takes great faith to embrace this anti-God concept which makes evolution an article of religion, not science.

The Ontological Argument

19. A natural outflow of the ontological argument is the cosmological argument which contends simply enough that everything designed demands a Designer.
20. Whatever has been created demands a Creator. Behind the building of any place is a rational planner.
21. Taking the universe as a whole it is an effect. There must be a Cause for the universe and that cause must be greater and more intelligent than the effect.
 - *Hebrew 3:4 Every house is builded by someone, but He who builds all things is God.*

The Moral Argument

22. The third argument for the existence of God is the Moral Argument.
23. We have a moral nature. It is logical to believe that the Author of that nature must be a moral Being. Conscience testifies to the fact of a moral law. That law implies a moral Lawgiver.
24. It is true that different cultures have different standards. However, there is a universal sense of justice and injustice in every culture no matter how punitive.
25. When you turn on the TV and see and hear the evidence of a swindle or a rape or a stabbing there is a sense of indignation and outrage that comes to the soul. Justice must be served.
26. Someone has said that man is incurably religious. It is true. A heathen woman hearing for the first time of a God of mercy, love and goodness exclaimed, "*There! I told you there must be a God such as that.*"
27. Helen Keller, when first told by Phillip Brooks of the great and good Being called God, smiled radiantly and replied, "*Why I have known Him all the time only I did not know His name.*" The universal heart says, "*There must be a God.*"
28. The cry of human nature can only find the answer to its cry in a Personal, Living, and Loving God. Plato was right when he said that atheism is a disease. Paul teaches in Romans 1:28 that atheism is the Divine judgment of God upon a people.
 - *Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind...*

The Historical (Ethnological Argument)

29. A fourth argument for the existence of God is the historical or ethnological argument. The history of the world gives evidence of an over ruling power.

30. Among all the peoples and tribes of the earth there is a voluntary submission to the Higher Being and rightly so for to the unprejudiced mind it cannot be doubted that God is, and that He works in human history.
31. The Bible declares that God is the judge; he putteth down one and setteth up another.
- *Psalms 75:7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*
 - *Deuteronomy 2:21 A people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; but the Lord destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead:*
32. In 1544 the people of England looked upon the defeat of the Spanish Armada as a Divine intervention. When destruction threatened the world by German aggression, men said, "Where is now thy God?"
33. God showed Himself to the world and defeated unholy aggression.

The Teleological Argument

34. The final main argument for the existence of God is the Teleological Argument.
35. Simply stated, this argument contends that the world everywhere reveals intelligence, order, harmony, and purpose, and therefore implies the existence of an intelligent and purposeful Being.
36. This argument is a little superior to the cosmological argument in that it contends for intelligence in the ordering of all things.
37. Here then are five rational arguments for God's existence. In summary,
- The Ontological Argument teaches that the idea of an Absolute Perfect Being exists therefor, God must exist.
 - The Cosmological Argument contends that everything designed demands a Designer, for every effect has a cause.
 - The Teleological Argument notes that there is a marvelous intelligence found in all that has been caused.
 - The Moral Argument sets forth the fact that man's sense of justice and injustice must reflect His Maker.
 - The Historical and Ethnological Argument believes that God's overruling of human will is self evident.

38. With the passing of time the wisdom of fallen man and the wisdom of Satan have produced a number of alternative beliefs as a substitute for the Divine revelation of God. They can be mentioned briefly.
- Atheism insists that there is no God. Atheism is mainly occupied with the denial of reality rather than in affirming what is.
 - Polytheism is the belief in many gods. Much of polytheism is tied up in nature worship of the earth, sun, moon, stars, and wind.
 - Materialism, which denies the reality of spirit, ignores the distinction between matter and mind and accounts for all mental and spiritual phenomena as the properties and functions of matter.
39. One author with this belief has written that, "The brain secretes thoughts as the liver secretes bile."
40. Christian parents should be concerned about the philosophy of materialism, in particular because it underlines all of public school education. There are predictable results.
41. A philosophy that reduces man to mere matter and puts him on a level with an animal or a clod, provides no moral restraints. The system that dispenses with God, dispenses with human responsibility, and gives man over to His passion and lusts.
42. Pantheism signifies that God is all, and all is God.
43. While many arguments are advanced for the existence of God, the Bible does not argue. The Bible merely affirms that in the beginning there was God.