

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

DR. NOEL B. CABRERA
Associate Professor in Business and Education
Eulogio “Amang” Rodriguez Institute of Science and Tech.,
Rizal State University, and
Trinity College of Quezon City

INTRODUCTION

It does not seem to have occurred to any of the writers of either the Old or the New Testaments to attempt to prove or to argue for the existence of God. Everywhere and at all times it is a fact taken for granted. “A God capable of proof would be no God at all” (Jacobi). He is the self-existent One (Exod. 3:14) and the Source of all life (John 5:26).

The sublime opening of the Scriptures announces the fact of God and His existence: “In the beginning God” (Gen 1:1). Nor is the rise or dawn of the idea of god in the mind of man depicted. Psa. 14:1: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,” indicates not a disbelief in the existence, but rather in the active interest of God in the affairs of men-He seemed to hid Himself from the affairs of men (see Job 22:12-14).

The Scriptures further recognize that men not only know of the existence of God, but have also a certain circle of ideas as to who and what He is (Rom. 1:18, 19).

No one but a “fool” will deny the fact of God. “What! No God? A watch, and no key for it? A watch with a main-spring broken, and no jeweler to fix it? A watch, and no repair shop? A timecard and a train, and nobody to run it? A lamp lit, and nobody to pour oil in to keep the wick burning? A garden, and no gardener? Flowers, and no florist? Conditions, and no conditioner?” He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh at such absurd atheism.

UNIVERSALITY OF BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The Fact Stated And Proven:

Man everywhere believes in the existence of a supreme Being or beings to whom he is morally responsible and to whom propitiation needs to be made.

Such belief may be crudely, even grotesquely stated and manifested, but the reality of the fact is no more invalidated by such crudeness than the existence of a father invalidated by the crude attempts of a child to draw a picture of its father.

It has been claimed by some that there are or were tribes in inland Africa that possessed no idea or conception of God. Moffat, Livingstone’s father-in-law, made such a claim, but Living-stone, after a thorough study of the customs and languages of such tribes, conclusively showed that Moffat was wrong.

Nor should the existence of such few tribes, even if granted, violate the

fact we are here considering, any more than the existence of some few men who are blind, lame, deaf, and dumb would make untrue the statement and fact that man is a seeing, hearing, speaking, and walking creature. The fact that some nations do not have the multiplication table does no violence to arithmetic.

Considering so-called atheists in Christian lands: it may be questioned if there are really any such beings. Hume, known as a famous skeptic, is reported to have said to Ferguson, as together they looked up into the starry sky: "Adam, there is a God." Voltaire, the atheist, prayed to God in a thunderstorm. Ingersoll, when charged with being an atheist, indignantly refuted the charge, saying: "I am not an atheist; I do not say that there is God; I am an agnostic; I do not know that there is a God." "I thank God that I am an atheist," were the opening words of an argument to disprove the existence of God. A new convert to atheism was once heard to say to a coterie unbelievers: "I have gotten rid of the idea of a supreme Being, and I thank God for it."

Whence Comes This Universal Belief In The Existence Of God?

Not from outside sources, such as reason, tradition, or even the Scriptures.

Not from reason or argument, for many who believe in God have not given any time to reasoning and arguing the question; some, indeed, intellectually, could not. Others who have great powers of intellect, and who have reasoned and argued on the subject are professed disbelievers in God. Belief in God is not the result of logical arguments, else the Bible would have given us proofs.

Nor did this universal belief come from tradition, for "Tradition," says Dr. Patton, "can perpetuate only what has been originated."

Nor can it be said that this belief came from the Scriptures even, for, as has been well said, unless a man had a knowledge of the God from whom the Scriptures came, the revelation itself could have no authority for him. The very idea of Scripture as a revelation presupposes belief in a God who can make it. – Newman Smith.

Revelation must assume the existence of God.

This universal belief comes from within man.

All the evidence points to the conclusive fact that this universal faith in the existence of God is innate in man, and comes from rational intuition.

The Weight And Force Of This Argument.

The fact that all men everywhere believe in the existence of a supreme.

Being or beings to whom they are morally responsible, is a strong argument in favor of its truth. So universal an effect must have a cause as universal, otherwise we have an effect without any assignable cause. Certain is it that this argument makes the burden of proof to rest upon those who deny the existence of God.

THE ARGUMENT FROM CAUSE: COSMOLOGICAL

When we see a thing we naturally ask for the cause of that thing. We see this world in which we live, and ask how it came to be. Is it self-originating, or is the cause of its being outside of itself? Is its cause finite or infinite?

That it could not come into being of itself seems obvious; no more than nails, brick, mortar, paints, colors, form into a house or building of themselves; no more than the type composing a book came into order of itself. When Leibig was asked if he believed that the grass and flowers which he saw around him grew by mere chemical forces, he replied: "No; no more than I could believe that the books on botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces." No theory of an "eternal series" can account for this created universe. No matter how long a chain you may have, you must have a

staple somewhere from which it depends. An endless perpendicular chain is an impossibility. "Every house is builded by some man," says the Bible; so this world in which we live was built by a designing mind of infinite power and wisdom.

So is it when we consider man. Man exists; but he owes his existence to some cause. Is this cause within or without himself, finite or infinite? Trace our origin back, if you will, to our first parent, Adam; then you must ask, How did he come into being? The doctrine of the eternity of man cannot be supported. Man is an effect; he has not always existed. Geology proves this. That the first Cause must have been an intelligent Being is proven by the fact that we are intelligent beings ourselves.

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN: TELEOLOGICAL

A watch proves not only a maker, an artificer, but also a designer; a watch is made for a purpose. This is evident in its structure. A thoughtful, designing mind was back of the watch. So is it with the world in which we live. These "ends" in nature are not to be attributed to "natural results," or "natural selection," results which are produced without intelligence, nor are they "The survival of the fittest," instances in which "accident and fortuity have done the work of mind." No, they are the results of a superintending and originating intelligence and will.

THE ARGUMENT FROM BEING: ONTOLOGICAL

Man has an idea of an infinite and perfect Being. From whence this idea? From finite and imperfect beings like ourselves? Certainly not. Therefore this idea argues for the existence of an infinite perfect Being: such a Being must exist, as a person, and not a mere thought.

THE MORAL ARGUMENT: ANTHROPOLOGICAL

Man has an intellectual and a moral nature, hence his Creator must be an intellectual and moral Being, a Judge, and Lawgiver. Man has an emotional nature; only a Being of goodness, power, love, wisdom and holiness could satisfy such a nature, and these things denote the existence of a personal God.

Conscience in many says: "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," "I ought," and "I ought not." These mandates are not self-imposed. They imply the existence of a Moral Governor to whom we are responsible. Conscience—there it is in the breast of man, an ideal Moses thundering from an invisible Sinai the Law of a holy Judge. Said Cardinal Newman: "Were it not for the voice speaking so clearly in my conscience and my heart, I should be an atheist, or an pantheist, when I looked into the world." Some things are wrong, others right: love is right, hatred is wrong? Morality is obligatory, not optional. Who made it obligatory? Who has a right to command my life? We must believe that there is a God, or believe that the very root of our nature is a lie.

THE ARGUMENT FROM CONGRUITY

If we have a key which fits all the wards of the lock, we know that it is the right key. If we have a theory which fits all the facts in the case, we know then that we have the right theory. "Belief in a self-existent, personal God is in harmony with all the facts of our mental and moral nature, as well as with all the phenomena of the natural world. If God exists, a universal belief in his existence is natural enough; the irresistible impulse to ask for a first cause is accounted for; our religious nature has an object; the uniformity of natural law finds an adequate explanation, and human history is vindicated from the charge of being a vast imposture. Atheism leaves all these matters

without explanation, and makes, not history alone, but our moral and intellectual nature itself, an imposture and a lie.” –Patton.

THE ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE

A great deal of our knowledge rests upon the testimony of others. Now the Bible is competent testimony. If the testimony of travelers is enough to satisfy us as to the habits, customs, and manners of the peoples of the countries they visit, and which we have never seen, why is not the Bible, if it is authentic history, enough to satisfy us with its evidence as to the existence of God?

Some facts need more evidence than others, we now. This is true of the facts of the existence of God. But the Bible history is sufficient to satisfy every reasonable demand. The history of Jews, prophecy, is not explainable minus God. If we cannot believe in the existence of God on the testimony of the Bible we might as well burn our books of history. A man cannot deny the truth of the testimony of the Bible unless he says plainly: “No amount of testimony will convince me of the supernatural.”

Scripture does not attempt to prove the existence of God; it asserts, assumes, and declares that the knowledge of God is universal, Rom. 1:19-21, 28, 32; 2:15. It asserts that God has wrought this great truth in the very warp and woof of every man’s being, so that nowhere is He without this witness. The preacher may, therefore, safely follow the example of the Scripture in assuming that there is a God. Indeed he must unhesitatingly and explicitly assert it as the Scripture does, believing that “His eternal power and divinity” are things that are clearly seen and perceived through the evidence of His handiwork which abound on every hand.

CONCLUSION

To believe in a personal, self-sufficient, and self-revealing God is in harmony without moral and mental nature; history and natural law have an explanation; and the universal belief in a supreme being with its accompanying religious experiences can be accounted for. Atheism, pantheism, and agnosticism do not provide an adequate answer to satisfy the human heart. We may conclude from these arguments that there is a personal, extra-mundane, self-existent, ethical, and self-revealing God. He is the incomprehensible (Job 11:7; Isa. 40:18; Rom. 11:33), yet knowable one (John 17:3; 1 John 5:20).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alford, Henry. *The Greek Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968. 4 vols.
Allis, Oswald T. *The Five Books of Moses*. Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1949.
Baker, Charles F. *Dispensational Theology*. Grand Rapids: Grace Bible College Publications, 1971.

- Cambron, Mark G. Bible Doctrines. Beliefs that Matter. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977.
- Deissmann, Gustav Adolf. Light from the Ancient East. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969.
- Evans, William. The Great Doctrines of the Bible Chicago: Moody Press, rev., 1949.
- Harrison, Everett F., ed. Baker's Dictionary of Theology. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978.
- Morris, Henry M. The Genesis Record. San Diego: Creation Life Publishers, 1976.
- Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. The Basis of the Premillennial Faith. New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1958.
- Tan, Paul Lee. The Interpretation of Prophecy. Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, Inc., 1974.