

The One True



GOD

God

Is there a God? is a question which is often posed.

How FAR-REACHING are the issues involved in considering this fundamental question!

If the answer is no, the origin and purpose of the Universe and of life itself must remain impenetrable mysteries. If everything `evolved' if blind chance set going a process resulting in the existence of objects great and small, animate inanimate there cannot possibly be any answers to the questions as to how or why. In that case, man's moral obligations extend no further than his duties to fellow man. As for the future, this must remain as unknowable as the past, and the possibility of life after death must be ruled out by all natural laws. Dismal and hopeless must be the prospect for the individual, and all the nobler aspirations of the human mind must be crushed with vexation and frustration.

How different, however, is the outlook if the question, "Is there a God?" can be clearly answered in the affirmative. Life becomes interesting and meaningful, there is scope for the expression of the highest faculties of the mind: worship, praise, thanksgiving, and hope. Moreover, there are reasonable grounds for believing in purpose in Creation, and even that such purpose could be the subject of divine revelation.

The atheist cries vehemently, "There is no God". That cry is a self-evident absurdity. It stems from an abandonment of all reasonable evidence. The agnostic who says `we cannot know' is

little better, because he too shuts his eyes to unassailable evidence that there is an all-powerful, all-wise Creator. The evidence is two-fold. Nature provides silent proof that God exists, and the Bible contains evidence that God has spoken; and if God has spoken, He must exist.

THE EVIDENCE OF NATURE

Nature's argument is irresistible. All the great exponents of Christianity have appealed to it. The apostle Paul urged the inhabitants of the city of Lystra to 'turn from idols unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness' (Acts 14:15-17). Again, Paul wrote to the Roman believers, 'The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen (a powerful paradox), being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead'. (Romans 1:20). In what way do 'the things that are made' testify to God's existence?

All nature is seen to be governed by law. As far as man can investigate, the whole universe is known to be constructed on absolutely perfect principles. The regularity, order, precision, exactness of the movements of the heavenly bodies and the earth have enabled the scientists to gauge with mathematical certainty the course of man's flight to the moon, and his safe return after orbit and landing. Consider the marvel of the sun. It is a colossal sphere of white-hot gas. Its energy releases light and heat, yet it never burns itself out. It is the centre of the solar system, holding all the planets in their orbits by its magnetic power of attraction. It is ninety-three million miles away and is one million, three hundred thousand times larger than the earth. Light travels from it at a speed of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second. Around this orb the earth, itself revolving upon its own axis

once every twenty four hours, describes a complete circle once every year at a speed of 18.5 miles per second. It never diverts from its course a hairsbreadth.

THE MOON AND STARS

Consider the moon. This is an entirely different object. It provides the lesser light of night, which is soft and restful. It controls the tides. It appears to be a lifeless mass of mountains and craters, yet, its surface acts as a reflector of light. If it had a fraction of the energy generated by the sun, it would render life on the earth impossible:

Next consider the stars and the planets, some smaller, some vastly greater in size than the earth. They are innumerable. As larger and more powerful telescopes are invented, more and more stars appear. So exact are their movements that their precise position in the heavens can be forecast centuries ahead. All have their prescribed orbits and remarkable peculiarities. How reasonable is the conclusion of the Psalmist, who was moved to exclaim, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard" (Psalm 19:1-3). It is reasonable to ask, 'Can there be such vast effects without an adequate First Cause?' It is more difficult to believe that all things created and ordered themselves, than it is to accept the testimony of Scripture, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). What profound truth underlies the simple declaration, "He made the stars also". (Genesis 1:16). Consider Arcturus, that golden star of first magnitude, at a distance from the earth some two and three quarter million times more than that of the sun. Its diameter is computed to be seventeen million miles. Then there is the Belt of Orion, a constellation containing the enormous star Betelgeuse which has a diameter of three hundred million miles. There are countless constellations and galaxies - the Milky Way is reckoned

to have thirty thousand million stars - yet there is law and order in perfection. 'He telleth the number of the stars.' Their existence and glory demand a belief in a Creator, a lawgiver, a designer possessing infinite intelligence, wisdom and power.

AN INTERLOCKING PATTERN

Consider the wonderful interlocking in all the departments and workings of nature. The existence and continuity of the sun is essential to the earth and man. Without light and heat, life would be impossible. But water is essential to life, and it needs to be distributed. Thus it is that the sun causes evaporation, the clouds are formed, the rain is distilled to fall gently on the earth, vegetation is watered, man and beast live by the products of the earth. The cycle continues without the aid, and in spite of the interference, of man.

Design is apparent in nature wherever we look. How wonderful is the marvellous adaptation of all forms of life to the conditions of their environment! The fish are constructed with all the functions and facilities needed to live in the water; the birds fly in the air; the animals run, walk, crawl, lurk, climb or leap according to the particular needs and environment of their species. How remarkable is the propagation of plant life in the various forms of seed dispersal! Some trees, like the sycamore, have winged appendages; some plants have hooked appendages by which their seed is carried far and wide on the coats of animals, as they brush by; some seeds are in hollow shells so that they can be borne on the water to the place where they settle for germination. The bees are particularly known as pollen carriers, fertilising as they move from plant to plant.

Lastly, consider man, with his wonderful frame and unique endowments. The five senses - how intricate are the organs by which they function: the eye with its protective lashes and brows

and tear-ducts, its ability to focus, its power to see objects near and far; the ear, the nose, the tongue, the nerves, all perfectly constructed for hearing, smelling, tasting, touching. How smoothly does the system of digestion and assimilation work to feed and nourish the body. How unique in mammalia is the biped with such easy balance and control. Whence came the power of speech, the ability to reason, the sensitivity of conscience, the gift of invention?

Is all this wisdom and contrivance accidental and self-generated? or is it not as the Psalmist proclaims, “O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches” (Psalm 104:24). A notable exponent of what is called Natural Theology has summed up the argument in these words:

“There cannot be design without a designer, contrivance without a contriver, order without choice, arrangement without anything capable of arranging, subservience and relation to a purpose without that which could intend purpose, means suitable to an end, and executing their office in accomplishing that end, without the end having been contemplated, or the means accommodated to it. Arrangement, disposition of parts, subservience of means to an end, relation of instruments to a use imply the presence of intelligence and mind.”

The Psalmist expressed the fact in declaring: “He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth. man knowledge, shall not he know?” (Psalm 94:9, 10).

The witness of nature to the existence of God must be accepted by all thoughtful people. It is a commonplace question in examining or admiring any object to enquire, “Who made it?” If the question were side-tracked by the rejoinder, “it did not have a maker”, the enquirer would either feel slighted or conclude that

the answer was a joke. Who then could be so illogical as to assert that the Universe, or even the minutest insect, had no Maker. Not only is His existence attested by “the things that are made”, but many divine attributes are manifest as well. Creation testifies to His beneficence. Consider the exquisite beauty of forest and field, of mountain and meadow, of sea and stream, of lake and lagoon. How glorious and grand is nature. Consider the fauna and flora which cover the earth with exquisite designs and colour. We do not eat flowers; they are there to impart joy and gladness, and to uplift and ennoble man's mental make-up. How kind and good is the Provider of our food - not in the form of a tasteless concentrated pill but of endless variety for us to enjoy and appreciate. “The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works” (Psalm 145:9). In nature, then, is abundant evidence of the wisdom, power and beneficence of an Almighty Creator. There is also evidence of purpose. Now it would seem extremely unlikely that a Creator having such attributes and having endowed mankind with faculties to reason, praise, worship, and revere, would not make Himself known, nor reveal His purposes and intentions in His creative work. In point of fact, such a revelation has been made. The Bible is the word of God. If this can be proved, the second line of evidence for God's existence is established, because if God has spoken, He is a reality.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE BIBLE

It does not come within the scope of this booklet to develop all the arguments which sustain the Bible's claim to be the inspired and infallible word of God. Suffice it to indicate briefly what the main lines of evidence are. The evidence of prophecy is advanced by God Himself to prove His existence and foreknowledge and the certain truth of His word: “Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me” (Isaiah 45:11).

This is the divine challenge. The Bible contains prophecies concerning countries, nations and individuals, prophecies relating to an immediate future and to a remote future of thousands of years. They speak of events that would come to pass, and of happenings that would never take place. The prophecies are scattered throughout its pages. Particularly, the predictions concerning the nation of Israel, its overthrow, its dispersion, its vicissitudes, and its restoration are clear and unambiguous and confirm God's declaration respecting Israel, "Ye are my witnesses". Isaiah 43:10

The foundation doctrine upon which Christianity is built is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This event can be historically proved. There is no explanation for the progress of Christianity in the first century, its triumph over Roman paganism, Greek philosophy, and Hebrew prejudice and tradition, other than the fact that the first promulgators of the new doctrine were honest, reliable and credible eyewitnesses of the risen Lord. If Christ rose, a wonderful miracle is conceded to have taken place, and the Bible record is both authentic and accurate.

THE BIBLE NOT OF HUMAN ORIGIN

The contents of the Bible are clearly superhuman. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8, 9). It has been well said that the surest way to obtain a conviction that the Bible is the word of God is to read it constantly. Its doctrines and precepts are altogether above human wisdom. Its system of ideas are foreign to man's conception of values and assessments. It describes the heart of man basically as "desperately wicked"; it speaks of man's alienation from God because of sin, and of his mortal corruptible nature. Man is abased, God is exalted; its moral principles are opposed to human standards, and the virtues it inculcates are in direct opposition to

human propensities.

The uniform teaching of the Bible is a marvel. Notwithstanding its sixty-six divisions, the diverse human instruments employed in its compilation, its extended period of production of some 1600 years, it bears uniformity of teaching concerning a divine purpose summed up in the inspired declaration, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with my glory". Numbers 14:21 This purpose is revealed in plain language in figure, in type, in allegory, in prose and poetry. It is so written that a child can understand its elements, yet a student of full age could never claim to have exhausted the study.

Many other lines of evidence proving the truth of the Bible can be considered almost inexhaustibly. The evidence of archaeology, the "undesigned coincidences" as they are called, in the presentation of fact in minutest detail, the internal harmonies, the remarkable preservation of the book—all these points provide an accumulation of evidence which is irresistible to the thoughtful mind. Hence the apostle Paul commended the Thessalonian believers because "when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe". (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

Now it is an inevitable conclusion that if God caused the Bible to be written, then He must exist. The sublime statement of the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews is palpably true: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son". (Hebrews 1. 1, 2). Similarly in the second letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul affirms, without any qualifications: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy

3:16); and the apostle Peter describes the method employed, in the words found in his second epistle: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

The aspect of the subject now to be considered, with reverence, concerns the information God has given in the Scriptures concerning Himself. Without that gracious revelation we could know nothing about Him except the silent testimony of nature to His existence, wisdom, power and goodness. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" was the challenge of Zophar, the Namaathite, as recorded in the book of Job 4,000 years ago. Humanly speaking, the answer is a compelling "No". The Psalmist confessed that in his own strength "such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain to it". Yet it is one of the most reassuring facts revealed in the Bible that God delights to accept the worship of the man or woman who humbly tries to understand Him insofar as He has made Himself known:

"Thus saith the Lord. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight. saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 9:23, 24).

WRONG VIEWS

Throughout the ages, men have developed widely different conceptions of the Godhead. Polytheism, pantheism, idolatry of all kinds, represent the beliefs and practices of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans. The monuments and tablets contained in the museums of the world illustrate these conceptions. In preaching on Mars' Hill, Paul told his audience, "We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17:29). In reviewing all

these human attempts to depict God, the apostle concluded, 'The world by wisdom knew not God' (1 Corinthians 1:21).

If he denounced the beliefs of the ancients in these terms, he would equally denounce the beliefs and opinions of the moderns. Nearly all sections of Christendom worship the Trinity, representing God as 'three in one, and one in three', being without 'body, parts, or passions'. The Roman Catholics deify the Virgin Mary, and worship saints and dead men's bones. The most modern conception of God is that found in the 'advanced thinking' of men like John Robinson, the former Bishop of Woolwich, who virtually denies the personal reality of the God of heaven, and instead propounds the theory that God is 'the ground of our being', whatever that enigmatical phrase may mean. All this, in the light of divine revelation, is error and superstition, or atheism in a disguised form.

BIBLE TEACHING

From these considerations, it is a tremendous relief to reflect upon Bible teaching concerning the sublime subject of the Godhead. The opening verse of the sacred book declares in the simplest terms, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". The reader is confronted with the stupendous fact that God is eternal, self-existent, the Source and Sustainer of all creation. Many passages of Scripture corroborate this teaching. It is written in the Psalms:

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalm 90:1, 2).

In contrasting the heathen conceptions of God with the true understanding of the matter, Paul declared:

“Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him” (1 Corinthians 8:5, 6).

Not out of nothing was the world created, but out of the spirit of God, that limitless power and energy which ceaselessly flows from Him. His spirit is the basis of every existing thing. The Psalmist further explains the fact when he says of God: “With thee is the fountain of life” (Psalm 36:9). The theory of spontaneous generation is contrary to all known facts. Far from there being the promise of life in inanimate objects, there is only the prospect of decay, dissolution and a resolving to mother earth. Life can be derived only from that which is already living, and its source can be found only in the Ever Living First Cause.

THE ONE TRUE GOD

The nature of God is defined by the Lord Jesus Christ in the words: “God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). He is inherently immortal, “The King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God” (1 Timothy 1:17). He dwells personally in heaven, as it is written, ‘The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool’ (Isaiah 66. 1). The same truth is expressed in the opening words of the Lord's prayer, “Our Father which art in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). Not only do these words show that God has a located existence somewhere in the Universe, but they show the relationship between Him and man. In the full sense, man is incapable of understanding what God is, but the relationship of father and son can be grasped by all. It is a sublime, intelligible, and comforting conception of God that He is a loving eternal heavenly Father in whom man can put his trust.

The reality and personal existence of God can be demonstrated by reference to many Scriptural allusions. The glorified Christ is said to be “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (Hebrews 1:3). The opening chapter of the Bible describes the creation of man in these words, “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26), and James reiterates the truth in his epistle, man is ‘made after the similitude of God’ (James 3:9). Though personally located in heaven, God is everywhere present by His spirit: “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there” (Psalm 139:7, 8). He knows and probes the innermost recesses of every human heart. His ears are ever open to hear the needy’s humble prayer, and He is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy” (Psalm 103:8). His incomparable greatness is described by the prophet in a series of questions: “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? . . . Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance” (Isaiah 40:12, 15).

These are the attributes of the great eternal God, under whose wings mankind is invited to trust: ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else’ (Isaiah 45. 22). This gracious invitation is the product of the Father’s overarching attribute of love. “God is love” - a statement as simple as it is sublime. The underlying principle of all God’s creative work is love. His purpose with the earth will not be consummated until love is perfected therein with the removal of every curse.

SUFFERING AND THE LOVE OF GOD

To many people, the love of God is incompatible with present suffering, but the Scriptures answer fully this baffling problem. The existing evils of mankind are the result of sin, which is defined as the “transgression of the (divine) law” (1 John 3:4). Sin commenced in Eden, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's law. Disease and death were the inevitable consequences. The perpetuation of immortal sinners is a situation that would be too disastrous to contemplate. In love to man, God limited the duration of his mortal existence. But it is the purpose of God that the earth shall be filled with His glory, and the contrite in heart of mankind shall be reconciled to Him. The love of God moved Him to arrange a wonderful plan of human redemption. That plan is crystallised in those very well known words, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). This passage focuses our attention on Jesus Christ as the very centre of the plan to give men and women everlasting life.

THE SON OF GOD

Who was Jesus Christ? Not God the Son, but the Son of God. He was born miraculously by the overshadowing of Mary his mother with “the power of the Highest” (Luke 1:35). Joseph, the husband of Mary, was not the father of Jesus. God was his father. The fact that Jesus was born of Mary involved his participation in the physical nature of all of Adam's descendants (Hebrews 2:14). He shared the mortal, sin-stricken nature of those he came to save, but his divine origin gave him a mental capacity to resist actual temptation and sin (1 Peter 2:22). Hence he combined in himself sin-stricken nature with personal sinlessness. In the cruel death to which he voluntarily submitted, he upheld the righteousness of the divine law which imposed upon the human race death as the penalty for sin. Yet because of his spotless righteousness, Jesus

could be granted resurrection and eternal life without the violation of the divine principles governing the corruptibility of the human race. Jesus by his resurrection became “the firstfruits of them that slept”. (1 Corinthians 15:20). He was “raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father” (Romans 6:4). The mission of Christ was fulfilled in his death and resurrection. He was firstly “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), and secondly “the beginning of the creation of God” (Revelation 3:14). This creation will involve the “making of all things new” (Revelation 21:5). Now God has decreed that those who receive Jesus Christ, in believing the principles exhibited by his death and resurrection, shall receive remission of sin and reconciliation to divine favour. Such men and women become incorporated in a divine family of which God is the Father, and Jesus is the eldest son: “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”. (John 1:12).

This divine family is the subject of many glowing promises. The apostle Peter referred to these promises as “great and precious”, involving a participation in divine nature (2 Peter 1:). This change of condition from mortal to immortal nature will be effected by resurrection from the dead, and subsequent transformation from human nature to spirit nature. ‘As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly’ (1 Corinthians 15.49).

THE NAME OF GOD

There is still one aspect of the Godhead which is the subject of divine revelation, of which few professed Christians have any knowledge. It concerns the name of God, in which is embodied the foregoing truths outlined in this booklet, with especial reference to the promises to the righteous.

When Moses received the commission from God to secure Israel's release from Egypt, he said to the angel who visited him, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM . . . this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Exodus 3:13-15). It is agreed by Hebrew scholars that the rendering of the original should be in the future tense: "I will be who I will be". This enigmatical expression has a wonderful doctrinal significance. The Hebrew, transliterated into English is Ehyeh - "I will be". The reverent enquirer will ask, What is it that God will be? This is revealed in the full memorial name of God. The Almighty employs the third person, singular, future tense of "Ehyeh", which is "Yahweh", "He who will be", and in the full memorial name the word Yahweh is joined with the word "Elohim", which literally means "Mighty Ones". This memorial name occurs many hundreds of times in the Old Testament as Yahweh Elohim: "He who will be mighty ones".

The tremendous doctrinal significance of this memorial name is quite hidden from the readers of the Authorised Version, because the translators have simply translated Yahweh by the word "LORD" printed in capital letters, and Elohim by the word "God". In the very numerous places referred to above where we read in our Bibles "LORD GOD" the original is Yahweh Elohim, "He who will be mighty ones". The name is an expression of the purpose of the Creator to manifest Himself by His spirit for ever in a multitude of earth-borns. Of these Jesus is first and chief, but an innumerable number are to follow: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23).

GOD'S PURPOSE FULFILLED

The eternal fellowship thus created between God, Jesus Christ, and the accepted servants of God, will be based upon undying reciprocal love: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:1, 2).

In view of such a wonderful prospect, certain of realisation to all who love and fear God, who could be so foolish as to refuse His condescending and gracious invitation, “Look unto me, and be ye saved” Isaiah 45: 22.