

The God Who Is There Heb. 11:6

Calvin began the Institutes with the provocative remark, "Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves. But, while joined by many bonds, which one precedes and brings forth the other is not easy to discern." He went on to assert, "It is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating Him to scrutinize himself. For we always seem to ourselves righteous and upright and wise and holy- this pride is innate in all of us- unless by clear proofs we stand convinced of our own unrighteousness, foulness, folly, and impurity. Moreover, we are not thus convinced if we look merely to ourselves and not also to the Lord, who is the sole standard by which this judgment must be measured."

Thus we can easily see the trouble confronting modern men. In running from God, he runs from self- in denying His existence he loses the only way to know himself. **He is lost in space.**

There are various forms of denial of the existence of God. There are two types of Atheism: **(1) Practical** and **(2) theoretical.**

Practical Atheist: Is a person who may profess belief in a God but lives as if He doesn't exist. He need not be inordinately debased.

Theoretical Atheist: Are usually more intellectual. They use rational arguments to justify unbelief in God. **Three common forms:**

Dogmatic Denial: the flat denial of either: the existence of any God or of the God of the Bible.

Agnostic Pleas: That if He does exist, man cannot possibly know Him anyway.

Criticism of the evidence: There simply isn't adequate proof that he does exist.

Often the atheist's main aim is to distance himself from the God of the Bible; so he makes other gods, substituting them for the true God. **What are some of the modern substitute gods?**

Transcendent and unconcerned: The god of the deist that leaves the world unmolested.

Immanent but impersonal: The god of the pantheist is indistinguishable from the creation. It deifies the universe.

Personal but limited: The god of the openness theologians who is managing as best he can or the god who only has moral attributes.

The personification of human ideals: The god who is little more than the popular grand ideal of the day. **E.g., The goal of a tolerant and peaceful society.**

The Bible says, **"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight."** **Prov. 9:10.** Because this is true it shouldn't surprise us that the Bible also says, **"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" Ps. 14:1.** Whether *practical* or *theoretical* the Atheist is a fool.

Why, because as Charnock has said, "If he were not a fool he would not imagine a thing so contrary to the stream of the universal reason of the world, contrary to the rational dictates of his own soul, and contrary to the testimony of every creature, and link in the chain of creation: if he were not a fool, he would not strip himself of humanity, and degrade himself lower than the most despicable brute. It is a folly; for though God be so inaccessible that we cannot know Him perfectly, yet He is so much in the light, that we cannot be totally ignorant of Him; as He cannot be comprehended in His essence, He cannot be unknown in His existence; it is as easy by reason to understand that He is, as it is difficult to know what He is."¹

What ever possesses men to be so cruel to themselves? It is a deep seated desire to be uncontrolled in their lusts. God stands between them and giving full reign to the evil in their hearts. If they can deny His existence and bludgeon the voice of conscience into silence they are free to do as they please.

The Bible doesn't argue the existence of God; it simply declares it. **Cf. Gen. 1:1.** The nearest it comes to a declaration is in the word's of our text. **Cf. Heb. 11:6.** Yet, the church has always attached some significance to the so-called 'proofs' of the existence of God. **There are five popularly held proofs.**

¹ Charnock, *Existence and Attributes of God*, Vol. 1, pp. 25-26.

Ontological: Anselm held that man has an innate idea of an absolutely perfect being and since existence is an attribute of perfection that being must actually exist. But we cannot go from an abstract thought to actual existence.

Cosmological: Every effect has a cause. The universe must have an adequate cause behind it. Two things have countered this: **(1)** there is no justification for concluding a *single* cause behind the universe and **(2)** by the same rule God too must have a cause.

Teleological: The world everywhere reveals intelligence, harmony and purpose. Therefore, there must be a mind back of it commensurate to that intelligence, harmony and purpose. Some objected that it still doesn't take us to God.

Moral: The innate sense of right and wrong, so inseparable to the human race requires somewhere an absolute moral being, a law giver as the fount of that inner reality.

Historical: Since religion is present in some form among every people during every period of history it must be basic to human nature. If it is basic to human nature there must be some higher being that constituted man in this way.

They are all useful up to a point: but they can never create faith. No one can come to God w/out faith; without the inward work of the Holy Spirit. **Cf. Jn. 3:3.** Unbelief is a state; it is a heart commitment to the rejection of God and deification of sin and self. Believers do not need them, but they can be helpful in furnishing out the faith and stopping the mouths of unbelievers.

This is the most important thing in all of life. Without knowledge of God it is impossible to believe in Him. **“And without faith it is impossible to please Him.” Heb. 11:6a. Two things are stated:**

1. **We must believe in the existence of God.** It is not mere theism or even mono-theism called for but faith in the God of the Bible. This is an explanation for how it could be said that Enoch, **“was commended as having pleased God.”**

- a. From the perspective of the Bible there are none who do not believe in the existence of God. There are only truth suppressors. **Cf. Ro. 1:18ff.**
- b. Enoch was an anti-deluvian surrounded by the same iniquity that fell upon the world in the days of Noah. He believed in the God who was at work redemptively in the world. **Cf. Gen.3:15.**

2. **We must believe that knowing Him matters.** This may be the defining question of our day. Does God exist and if so does knowing Him matter. In a way the question itself reveals the sinfulness and shallowness of modern man. He somehow thinks he doesn't need to know God and when he admits he does, he feels free to fabricate one. Even the demons are not this foolish. **Cf. Jas. 2:19.**

- a. **We must “seek Him” in the way He has prescribed.** The word expresses the diligent seeking of God in His ordinances. **Cf. Ro. 3:11; Acts 15:17.** Seeking God on our own terms is but ‘Cain’ worship. It is ‘feeling after Him in the dark. **Illustr. This is what Enoch did.**
- b. **We must “seek Him” believing that He will reward us.** Not that we'll constrain Him, but that He is true to His promise to bless those who come to Him. **Cf. Matt. 11:25-30; Gen. 15:1.**

Tozer said, “What comes to our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshipper entertains high or low thoughts of God.”