

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649327010

The Existence of God by Canon Moyes & J. Moyes

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Cover @ 2017

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CANON MOYES & J. MOYES

**THE EXISTENCE
OF GOD**

WESTMINSTER LECTURES

EDITED BY REV. FRANCIS AVELING, D.D.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

BY THE

RIGHT REV. MGR. CANON MOYES, D.D.



LONDON AND EDINBURGH
SANDS & COMPANY

ST LOUIS, MO.
B. HERDER, 17 SOUTH BROADWAY
1906

BD555
M68

P R E F A C E

IN the list of lectures delivered at Westminster Cathedral Hall, the first had for its subject the "Proofs for the Existence of God."

To deal exhaustively with the proofs as a whole would have required not a lecture but a treatise. What the reader will find in the pages that follow is not an attempt to treat the subject fully or technically, but an effort to indicate in a broad and general way, the lines on which it is thought that the proofs of God's existence may be conveniently stated.

It is a need of our rational nature to interrogate the things which we see, and to ask the reason of their existence. And if this is true with regard to any single phenomenon, or group of phenomena, it must be emphatically more so when we are face to face with the Universe as a whole. Hence the great question as to the origin and destiny of the Universe—the *whence*, the *why*, and the *whither*—is inextinguishable

in the human mind. Man from the earliest times when he looked out with intelligent eyes upon the world, has never ceased to ask it. In the history of human thought, especially in its higher levels, as in the Greek civilisation, the best and ablest intellects of the race have been turned towards its solution. The acquired results of their labours have been happily handed down to us in the great schools of Scholastic philosophy, in which we have what has been aptly described as "the main line of European thought."¹ On the great question just alluded to, there is nothing in the "by-path" philosophies which is ever likely to invalidate their conclusions. The great work of St Thomas and the Schoolmen was not by any process of thought-spinning to originate a new philosophy, but rather to gather up into a formulated system all that was best and soundest in the Greek and Arabian schools which interpreted the thought of the ancient civilisations. Scholastic philosophy is thus much more a channel than a source. We esteem it, not merely because it is Thomistic or Scholastic, but because the great natural verities which it presents to us in terms of precision are the common property of

¹ Professor Caldecott of King's College, and H. R. M'Intosh, M.A., *Selections from the Literature of Theism*, p. 10.

mankind from the simple fact that they are the thought-out conclusions from the common sense of mankind, at work from the beginning upon the great problems of our origin and destiny. We prize it, because it comes as the heir of the ages, and represents the acquired results of the highest and clearest thinking in the life and history of the race. Metaphysical research has ever been its chief and absorbing aim, and its soundness therein remains untouched by the fact that in the physical domain, in which inductions upon ever-widening areas of facts must necessarily make their progressive report, many of its conclusions have been naturally long since evacuated. For this reason, most of the arguments set forth in the following pages have proceeded substantially on the traditional lines of the Scholastic philosophy, and to it, rather than to the somewhat free and feeble handling of those arguments by the writer, is due whatever worth or cogency they may be found to possess.

J. MOYES.

Note.—The few questions that were put to the lecturer on the occasion of the delivery of the lecture at London, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh have been dealt with in the text, and consequently are not included in an appendix.



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"I CANNOT see God. But I see that He must exist ; for if He did not, I could not see anything. There would not be anything for me to see, and I should not be here with eyes to see it." That would represent roughly the argument which arises in the mind of men as they gaze upon the world around them. It is built upon a conviction that the world and men have been made—that they did not make themselves—and that they have need of a God to have made them. But why should there be any such need? Why should the universe need to have been made at all? Might it not have existed always and from ever, with man (or his elements to be developed later on) as a part of it? Might it not exist of itself by its own forces and laws, without need of anything either to create or to sustain it?

The answer to this question is to be found in the proofs of the existence of God ; and a statement of these, in very rough outline, is attempted in the following pages.