

Always Be Ready to Give a Defence (3)

Background

Some people are unwilling to discuss the Christian faith because they think it is irrelevant. In such cases, before we can give a reason for the hope that is in us, we may need to discuss what life would be like without God.

Questions

The Bible begins and ends with God. His words and actions, or the consequences of those words and actions, are seen on every page. But what if there was no God? What implications would that have for your life?

- Would it matter what you did? Would it matter what other people did?
- Would you be able to change your ultimate destiny?

Bertrand Russell summarises this situation:

“That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins -- all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.”¹

If God does not exist, we must either deceive ourselves, by pretending that our lives have some temporary, subjective meaning, or we must try to live bravely in the face of despair. Alternatively, if God exists, there is real meaning and hope.

- What gives your life meaning? What is the foundation of your hope?

This contrast does not prove that God exists but it shows that the existence of God is worth investigating thoroughly.

¹ Bertrand Russell, A Free Man's Worship

Job

“As the cloud disappears and vanishes away,

So he who goes down to the grave does not come up.

He shall never return to his house,

Nor shall his place know him anymore.” (Job 7v9-10)

““Man who is born of woman

Is of few days and full of trouble.

He comes forth like a flower and fades away;

He flees like a shadow and does not continue.” (Job 14v1-2)

Psalms

“Nevertheless man, though in honour, does not remain;

He is like the beasts that perish.” (Psalm 49v12)

“As for man, his days are like grass

As a flower of the field, so he flourishes

For the wind passes over it, and it is gone

And its place remembers it no more.” (Psalm 103v15-16)

Ecclesiastes

“For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them; as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity.” (Eccl 3v19)

1 Corinthians

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Cor 15v19-20)