the first part of the document is from module two and the bottom half put where module 6 starts

***module 2***

***Clifford’s Ship Owner***

In “The Ethics of Belief,” a nineteenth century philosopher, W.K. Clifford, tells a story about a ship owner who, instead of thoroughly inspecting his ship and readying it for voyage, convinces himself that the ship is in fine working order on the basis of wishful thinking rather than evidence. In order to save money on potential repairs, the ship-owner sincerely but conveniently believes that the ship will make the voyage without trouble. But when the ship goes down at sea, and the crew drowns, the ship owner will be culpable. He has no right to base his opinion on anything except thorough investigation.

***Evidentialist vs. Nonevidentialist Theism***

Theists (i.e., people that believe in God) obviously aren’t going to agree with the conclusion of the evidentialist argument against belief in God. Acceptance of the evidentialist argument against belief in God as sound implies atheism, or at least agnosticism with respect to belief in God.

Theists, however, come in all kinds of various stripes and so not all theists would reject the evidentialist argument against belief in God for the same reason.

One important distinction is the distinction between evidentialist theism on the one hand and nonevidentialist theism on the other. Click the buttons to learn more about each theism.

The **nonevidentialist theist** may or may not question the truth of the second premise of the evidentialist argument against belief in God, but he or she will clearly and emphatically reject the first premise of the argument. According to nonevidentialist theism, we don’t need evidence for belief in God. Rather, there are good nonevidential reasons to believe in God. We will investigate these reasons in Modules 5 and 6.

An **evidentialist theist** is one who accepts the epistemological theory of evidentialism as it is maintained by people like Hume and Clifford, but rejects the second premise of the argument, and argues that there actually is good solid evidence for belief in God. We will be considering some of this evidence in Module 3.

**MODULE 6**

***Meet Jane***

Suppose you go to a party and meet a person named Jane. Jane and you have a few drinks, share stories with one another, and have some laughs together. The next day Jane and you meet for coffee, and get to know one another even better. Years later, Jane is your best friend. You meet often for lunch. You watch movies together and babysit one another’s kids. When you’re having a bad day you can count on giving Jane a call and having her to cheer you up. Jane and you have a personal relationship of the deepest possible kind.

Now suppose that someone asks you to provide evidence for the existence of Jane. How absurd this question would sound! You met Jane ten years ago at a party. You went to her wedding. She was a bridesmaid in your wedding. Of course Jane really exists!

In the same spirit, the argument from mystical experience argues that one can know that God exists on the basis of a personal relationship with God. As the well-known evangelist Billy Graham once quipped, "I know that God exists because I spoke with him this morning."

Can such reasoning really be regarded as a serious philosophical argument? Most religious enthusiasts aren't much for rational syllogisms, but underlying their thought is a basic premise that the best and surest way to God is through direct mystical experience of God. Abstracting from this insight, we can offer the following argument

***The Argument from Mystical Experience: Premise by Premise***

**Premise 1:** If you have a very clear and direct experience of X, you are rationally justified in believing X.

For example, suppose you feel that you are in pain, then you surely have a good reason to believe that you really are in pain, even if no one else believes you.

**Premise 2:** I have a very clear and direct experience of God.

You might be lying, but you know whether you are lying or not. So don't deceive yourself. Have you really had a clear and direct experience of God? (E.g., maybe he spoke to you or appeared to you in some clear way.) Are you really as sure that God exists as you are that your friend Jane exists? If you are sure, then who am I to quarrel?

**Conclusion:** I am rationally justified in believing that God exists.

***Falsely Accused***

Suppose I am wrongly charged with a crime but all of the objective evidence points against me. Well, the fact that the overwhelming evidence points to my guilt, and the fact that any nonpartisan observer to examine the evidence would be rationally compelled to think I am guilty... none of this means that I myself don't have good reason to believe that I am innocent! In fact it is plausible to say that I know that I am innocent. I am being charged with the murder of my grandma, but she was killed in Pennsylvania last month and I distinctly remember being here in Florida last month. I haven't even been to Pennsylvania in the past year. And I loved my grandma; why in the world would I murder her. I know I am being framed even if I can't prove it by providing objective evidence.

***Better Than Proof***

Likewise, if I experience God, I can know that God exists even if I can't prove it. In fact, I know it more certainly than any "proof" could give because I have had clear and direct experiences of God