

# **EXISTENCE of**



# **GOD**

**Confirming The Foundation  
Of The Christian's Faith**

# **DICKSON**

# Existence Of God

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**Cover photo: Picture of a galactic phenomenon by the Hubble Telescope**

## INTRODUCTION

David correctly said, “The fool has said in his heart there is no God.” It is a foolish man who discards God from his thought and behavior. Our conduct of life depends on what we believe. If there is no belief that one will give account for his moral behavior in relation to his fellow man, then certainly one’s conduct will eventually lead to his or her maltreatment of his fellow man. The world view of every man must contain the thinking that one will give account of his behavior. Such thinking helps one keep his behavior with his fellow man in social cohabitation according to that which is good and right. Though all men have doubts concerning that which is beyond the physical world, it is necessary that Christians know why they believe in God. He is not the result of superstitious beliefs. Our belief in Him is the result of His manifestation to mankind throughout history. There is a God. He has revealed Himself to man. It is before this God that all men must eventually give account.

We live in a world of unbelief. There are many who do not believe in the God of the Bible. There are those who are skeptical, agnostic and completely atheistic in their belief. There are those who believe in a deity that is not characteristic of the God of the Bible. There are those who believe in gods of uncontrolled fear and wrath; gods that justify terror and terrorism. According to Bible definitions, those who have constructed such gods are atheists in that they do not believe in the God which is described in the Scriptures. Any god that has been created after the imaginations of man is not the God of the Bible.

It is the purpose of this first Book to remind ourselves of how objective reason will lead one to the God of the Bible. It is the purpose of this Book to present to you a systematic path of reason which results in a logical conclusion. That logical conclusion is the reasonableness of belief, belief in the God of the Bible. Once belief is established, then the reasonableness of that God’s revelation to man logically follows. And once we bring our reasoning to the Bible, a whole new world of religion opens up for those who have been misguided into

following after false gods. By careful study of God's revelation, the Bible, one is brought closer to the true nature of the God of the universe.

It is our final purpose in this Book to bring you closer to God's revelation of His personality. Through the creation of the world we now behold, God has revealed His existence and power (Rm 1:20). However, God has not left us in a physical world and ventured to the far corners of the universe. He has intervened in the physical world, and thus, given us evidence of His existence. God revealed His loving personality through word of revelation. Through the Bible, therefore, we have evidence of God who is beyond the physical world. However, revelation through creation and word does not fully explain what man needs to know concerning who God is. God knew that man needed more than words. There was the need for Him to incarnate, that is, reveal Himself by becoming flesh. And thus, "*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us ...*" (Jn 1:14). Through Jesus, therefore, man's knowledge of the God of the universe is enhanced to greater detail. When Christians transition to the very presence of God, then will they know all that God feels they should know concerning who He is.

## **Chapter 1**

### **A HISTORY OF DEFENSE**

Belief is based on evidence. If it is not based on evidence, then it is superstition. That which is believed is generally believed because one has been convinced of it by some type of evidence. We can also give some sort of defense for believing what we believe. All normal thinking people have beliefs and defenses for those beliefs.

Christianity is a system of belief. Christianity is not a defenseless religion which has no evidence to substantiate its facts. It is not a system of wishful thought or superstitious fables, myths and legends. It is grounded on facts that have been proved and proclaimed by reliable witnesses who experienced the unveiling of the supernatural environment of God. The truth of it has been confirmed in the annals of history by the blood of those witnesses who died in defense of it. Christianity

is a belief of man that can be defended because it is founded on facts.

The defense of the Bible and Christianity is not a recent development of modern times. The defenses began when men first experienced the manifestation of God. The defenses of the Bible originated with the Bible itself. Its inspiration is defended by its very nature.

The defense of the Bible and Christianity have continued throughout the centuries. When the apostle Paul stood on Mars Hill he confronted vain philosophies of Deity with the power of word and logic. There have been thousands of “Mars Hills” events since his day. There has always been those giants of logic who have sounded forth a defense of Jesus and His life and word.

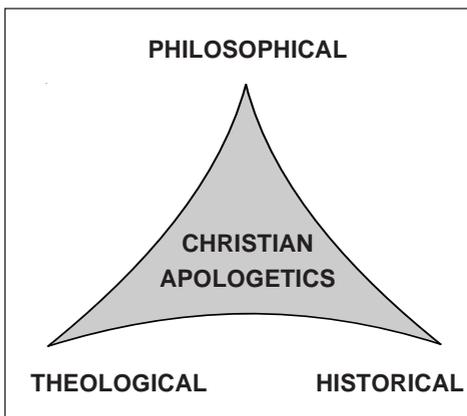
It is our opinion that every Christian should be able to defend that which he believes. A religion that cannot be defended is not worth believing. Those who crouch in fear and do not defend a defensible belief should realize that they are only hindering their cause by such non-action. It takes boldness to stand up and be counted. But such is what calls on every believer to do in this world of doubt. Christians must stand up and be counted for giving a testimony of what they believe and why they believe such. If Christians fail to take a stand for defending the truth, the environment in which they live will only become worse. Therefore, we must always be ready to defend our faith.

## A. Definitions:

We must clarify the use of the following two terms that are commonly used in the field of study of defending the Christian belief. First, the term **Christian apologetics** has reference to the verifying of Christianity in general.<sup>1:13</sup> The task of Christian apologetics is to show that Christianity is the true religion of God.<sup>1:13</sup> It is to show that there are no other true beliefs concerning that which is beyond this world other than what has been revealed from God. Secondly, **Christian evidences** can be considered a subdivision of the field of Christian apologetics. The study of Christian evidences deals more with the **factuality** of the Christian religion while apologetics covers the philosophical, theological and historical realms of evidence as a whole. Regardless of our defini-

tions, these two terms—Christian apologetics and Christian evidences—are used interchangeably in the study of defenses of the Bible and Christianity. Therefore, the definitions of Christian apologetics and Christian evidences vary from one author to another. Both terms can be used to refer to the broad field of defenses of Christianity. We will use the term Christian evidences in this book in order to refer to all evidences that give a supporting base to the Christian religion. Our main concern is to produce and recognize philosophical, theological and factual proofs of Christianity.

We are dealing with the following proposition: **Christianity is true because it is the result of the revelation of an eternal Being, God.** If this is true, then we should give our entire lives to this God who has revealed truth to us through the inspired word of God. If this is a false proposition, then we are left to existentialism, that is,



every man is left to determine what is right for himself. This means that we must become humanistic, that is, look only to man for answers. Man must become the center of the universe and the sole authority for law.

When we consider the history of man's efforts to devise his own systems of moral behavior, the urgency of determining the truth of Christianity is greatly emphasized. Man's inability to determine a moral standard upon which correct judgments can be made has been evidenced throughout history. Therefore, it is paramount that we come to the conclusion that man is not all there is. There is a Higher Being above him who must be allowed to determine that which is right and wrong. And it is necessary that man recognize this High Being, and thus, submit to His direction.

In the following defense material we will frequently use the word "skepticism" (sometimes spelled "scepticism"). This term is used as a

general term to refer to those who in any way doubt the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and thus, doubt the intervention of God into this material world so as to direct the affairs of man. It is used to define those who would question the existence of the God of the Bible, the transcendence of God through miracle and the life and resurrection of Jesus. In other words, any religionist that doubts the religion of the Bible is herein referred to as a skeptic. Those who profess religions that are contrary to the Christianity that is revealed in the Bible are religious skeptics.

The skeptic is not the one who has doubts at times in his Christian life and belief. The skeptic is the one who systematically launches an attack against the evidences and beliefs of Christianity. He is the one who has made it his policy of life to reject the will of God by rejecting that any Higher Power has a right to govern his life. In modern-day terms, this individual would commonly be referred to as the unbeliever. Unfortunately, the term “unbeliever” is often used today as a mild term to define the one who is actually a skeptic. All unbelievers are skeptics if they do not accept the authority of the verbally inspired word of God. All skeptics are unbelievers because they have given up a consciousness of God’s authority in their lives, and thus, refuse to accept the word of God. It is in this world that Christians live. Therefore, it is the purpose of the discussions of this material to confront the unbeliever.

## B. First century defenses:

The defense of Christianity had its origin in the inspired apostles of the first century. When Paul boldly marched over the plains of the ancient world he stood ready at any time to sound forth a defense of the truth of Christianity. His defense of the truth against the Athenian philosophers in Acts 17 is only one example (At 17:22-31). He proclaimed, “*Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you*” (At 17:23). And from this point, he made a defense of the God who has revealed Himself to man.



We must recognize that the first Christians were willing and able defenders of their faith (See Ph 1:7,16; At 24:10-25; 1 Pt 3:15; Jd 3). They shrank neither from the challenge nor from the responsibility of defending their belief. We have a record of their defense in the New Testament. When we consider our present-day defense of Christianity, therefore, we must consult their defenses. This is necessary because they walked by fact more than faith. They actually experienced the intervention of God in the lives of men. They saw the miracles. They experienced the resurrection of the dead. Therefore, their recorded testimony is our evidence for our faith.

According to 1 Peter 3:15 we understand that defending the faith was a God-given command. Peter wrote that we must be ready “*to give a defense to everyone who asks*” concerning our hope. Every Christian was in those days to be ready to give an answer concerning his faith. The early Christians were willing to defend the truth of the gospel. Nothing has changed concerning the Christian’s responsibility to defend his faith. 1 Peter 3:15 applies to us today as it applied to the early Christians. We must be ready always to give an answer to those who ask concerning our hope.

### **C. Second and third century defenses:**

The defenses of Christianity increased during the second and third centuries. Second century apologists met the attacks of pagans who launched false accusations against the church. Faithful Christians defended the truthfulness of Christianity against the widespread influences of paganism that infiltrated the church.

Christianity was greatly misrepresented by its enemies during the second and third centuries. Christians were called atheists because they did not believe in pagan gods. They were called cannibals because unbelievers misunderstood their partaking of the body and blood of Jesus in the Lord’s Supper. They were called insurrectionists because they would not bow to Caesar as lord. All these attacks stimulated a host of Christian apologists to arise to the occasion and defend the truth.

The main task of the second century defenders was to meet these false accusations against Christians and to show to the political and religious world that Christianity was theologically and morally superior to any other religion. It was so because it originated from God and not the legends, myths and fables of man. J. K. S. Reid wrote that the early apologists “undertook the double task of showing that Christianity was politically innocuous and of refuting the ignorant charges of immorality brought against it.”<sup>2:45</sup>

The following are just a few principal figures who led the way to defend Christianity during the second and third centuries.

**1. Justin Martyr (100 - 165):** Justin Martyr boldly addressed Antonius Pius and the Roman people as a whole in his *Apology*. Reid says that he “begins with a plea not that the punishment of Christians be terminated, but that the charges against them be examined.”<sup>2:46</sup> Justin was not begging for mercy from persecution. He was asking for an honest examination of Christianity. He knew that when men objectively examined the beliefs of the Christian, they would be found innocent of the false charges that were laid against them.

In his *Dialogue With Trypho*, Justin stated that his purpose was “to lay before the public a faithful memorial of our life and doctrine, that we may not thank ourselves for our sufferings, which for want of due information you may inflict upon us.”<sup>2:46</sup>

Justin’s major task was to prove the superiority of the life and morals of Christ over pagan practices. In the *Dialogue With Trypho* he set out to defend the messiahship of Christ by referring to Old Testament prophecies. In proving that Jesus was the God-sent Messiah, he proved that Jesus was from God and not man. The conclusion was that if Jesus was from God, then He must be heard and obeyed. Justin affirmed, therefore, that Christians are who they are because they have accepted Jesus to be more than a man. He is the Son of God, and thus, must be heard and obeyed.

**2. Tatian (125 - 200):** Tatian is best known for his authorship of the *Diatessaron*, a harmony of the gospel records. In his *Discourse to the Greeks* he argued that Christianity was superior to paganism. “He

delivers an attack of unusual force upon the contemporary world: he can find nothing but evil in its religions, its ethics, its philosophy and its culture” (2:47). Since religions of men are developed after the intentions of men, then developed religion conforms to the wishes of men. Man-made religion, therefore, is pagan because it conforms to the evils of men who seek to soothe their consciences by inventing a god who will justify their wickedness.

**3. Tertullian (160 - 220):** Tertullian’s purpose in his *Apologeticus* was also to defend the superiority of Christianity over paganism. He is well-known for the statement: **“The blood of the Christians is the seed of the church.”** This statement was made in reference to his defense of Christianity, pointing to the fact that persecution against Christianity was unwarranted and illegal. No matter how much Christianity was persecuted, it would continue to expand. In *Apologeticus* he dealt specifically with those injustices which were being leveled against Christians.

In his work, *Against Marcion*, Tertullian turned to a doctrinal refutation of Marcion. Marcion coined the gnostic belief that the God of the Old Testament was different from the God of love in the New Testament. Tertullian thus proved that the God of creation was also the “good” God of the New Testament. Marcion only manifested his ignorance of the God of the Old Testament by not seeing the disciplinary work of God so as to preserve a segment of society for the coming of the Messiah who was the manifestation of the love of God.

**4. Irenaeus (130 - 200):** Irenaeus is given credit for being the first to present and defend the principles or system of apologetical argumentation.<sup>2:45</sup> His greatest work was *Against Heresies*. This was an apologetical work against the widespread beliefs of the Gnostics who corrupted New Testament teaching concerning the nature of Jesus. Some Gnostics believed that Jesus was only a phantom of Deity who was manifested on earth and dwelt among the disciples. Others believed that the spirit “Christ” descended on the totally human Jesus, but left Jesus at the time of the cross. Therefore, the man Jesus went to the tomb and is still there today.



The Deity Christ returned to heaven. These were heretical doctrines that attacked the church in the second century, and thus, Iraneus set forth a defense against these heresies.

**5. Origen (185 - 254):** A man by the name of Celsus attacked Christianity around 177 to 180 in a work called *True Discourse*. In this work, Celsus denied the messiahship of Christ and stated that paganism was a valid alternative to Christianity. Since Christianity was supposedly an invention of men, then its right to be exalted above other religions was unjustified. Origen's work, *Against Celsus*,<sup>2:30</sup> is an answer to Celsus' argumentation. Origen essentially set forth a complete defense of Christianity. As a result of the powerful presentation of His reasoning in this and other writings, his writings affected the religious world for many centuries to come. Even today, the writings of Origen play an important role in the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church.

#### D. Fourth to eighteenth century defenses:

The second and third century defenders of the faith began to systemize the study and presentation of Christian evidences. But it was not until some centuries later that many of the philosophical arguments of Christianity were completely formalized. Great thinkers as Kant, Anselm and Paley put the unbelieving philosophical world to task with systematic presentations of apologetic arguments. Their systems of thought are carried on in many schools of philosophy to this present day.



By the twelfth century, science and religion were placed in positions which made them antagonist to one another. It was actually false science and some false religious thinking that conflicted. It was during this time that scientific thinking entered into the study of Christian evidences. Thomas Aquinas made it his task to establish a harmony between the fields of the study of science and revelation. Since Aquinas,

the study of defense always deals with the scientific field. Atheistic and agnostic scientists have made it their policy to exclude any religious beliefs from the study of science, and thus, have made the field of science antagonistic to religious belief. (More on this later.)

With the rise of the scientific field of study, the antagonism between science and the Scriptures began to arise in the field of Christian apologetics. The following are just a few principal figures that stand forth as defenders of Christianity during the fourth through the eighteenth centuries when the conflict between science and the Bible began to arise:

**1. Athanasius (296 - 373):** Athanasius' principal work was a waging of war against the Arian Heresy which denied the deity of Christ. This was actually a doctrinal debate which came into great focus during the early part of the fourth century.

**2. Augustine (354 - 430):** In his *de Civitate Dei*, Augustine defended Christianity against those who blamed it for the downfall of the Roman Empire. *De Civitate Dei* was written in two parts between 412 and 426. The first part was a defense of Christianity. In the second part Augustine shifted from a defense to an attack against those who opposed Christianity.

**3. Anselm (1033 - 1109):** The greatest contribution that Anselm of Canterbury made to the field of Christian evidences was the formalized presentation of the **ontological argument for the existence of God**. (This will be discussed later.) Anselm affirmed that the evidence of God's existence could be made on the basis of the existence of the idea of God. Since it is impossible for man to conceive of that which is above himself, Anselm affirmed that the concept of God argued for the existence of God. The very idea of God assumes the fact that God has revealed Himself to man. Anselm's argument seemed like a philosophical twist of words, but the nature of the argument has captured the discussions of philosophers and theologians for centuries.

**4. Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274):** As stated before, Aquinas' main purpose was to harmonize reason and revelation, science and religion. His first major work was *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1259 - 1264).

In his second work, *Summa Theologica*,<sup>2:112</sup> he dealt specifically with the existence of God by setting forth the following five major defenses:

1. There must have been a First Mover to start all motion.
2. Every effect must have an “efficient” cause. There must have been a first and efficient cause to start all present things.
3. If nothing had at one time existed in the past, then nothing would be existing today. Such necessitates the existence of something during all past time.
4. There must be a standard of moral good. Without a standard of moral good the concepts of good and evil could not exist. That standard must be infinite, and thus, come from that which is infinite. Such must of necessity come from God.
5. Aquinas affirmed that there is some intelligence by which things are directed toward an end. His fifth argument was his version of what is today called the teleological argument. (More on this later.)

**5. Other late century defenders and ages of contemporary thought:** Space will not allow us to discuss all those who have so valiantly stood forth to defend Christianity during the middle ages. However, we must mention a few here in passing who are the more well-known.

During the days of the reformation, John Calvin (1509 - 1564) published his *Instituto Christianae Religionis* (1536). In this work he contended that God presents Himself to man through nature. As with Anselm, Calvin believed that God ingrained in the minds of man the concept of Deity.

In 1627 Hugo Grotus wrote *Concerning the True Christian Religion* which was a defense against the teaching of Islam. At the time of writing, Islam was commonly referred to as Mohammedanism. His defense of Christianity argued against the divine origin of Islam. Islam, therefore, must, according to Grotus, join with all those man-made religions that have come upon the scene of human history.

A few years after Grotus, John Locke (1632 - 1704) contended for the reasonableness of the Christian religion in *The Reasonableness of*

*Christian Faith* (1695). Locke believed that some things could not be tested by reason, such as, the future resurrection from the dead and angelic wars. Since these things have not yet occurred, they can be believed on the basis of past miraculous events. The evidence of the past confirms the miraculous of the future.

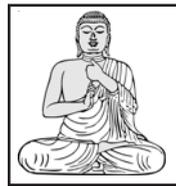
Some of the prevailing philosophies of the centuries have greatly affected society. Once these philosophies caught hold of societies, society changed in direction. It is for this reason that Christians must learn from the past in order to guard the saints for the future. The Christian leader must be perceptive to what is generally accepted in the present. In doing so, he can prepare the church to deal with the present, as well as, train the youth for the future. The following are some of the more prominent philosophies that set the trends of society for times in the past:

**a. The Age of Scholasticism:** “Scholasticism was an attempt to provide a philosophical basis for theology; an attempt to reduce Christian doctrine to scientific form, to harmonize revelation and reason, faith and science.”<sup>3:325</sup> What happened during this period is what usually happens when men try to bind religion to conform to the science of the day. Religion suffers and science reigns.



Systematic scholasticism actually **begun in the ninth century but it flourished during the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries**. Spirituality was not characteristic of this period since the minds of men were turned more toward the naturalistic inclinations of existence. Philosophers and scientists were more interested in cold logic rather than the development of godliness. The early scholastics dealt with bare logic in defending doctrines, whether they were Bible-based or not. Much of the philosophical thought of these years was centered in this manner of reasoning. Many religionists defended Christianity during this time by this same manner of cold reasoning. Emphasis of doctrine and reasoning, therefore, took precedence over the spiritual development of the individual. The holy life was sacrificed for doctrine.

**b. The Age of Pietism:** Pietism is an over emphasis upon the spiritual side of the individual. Reason is sacrificed for emotion. Because of the age of scholasticism, pietism was a natural reaction to the era of cold logic.



Pietism was centered more in the **seventeenth century**. “Historically, the movement originated by Philipp Jakob Spener in Germany, seeking a return to vital evangelical Christianity as over against the intellectualism and formalism of seventeenth century Protestant orthodoxy.”<sup>4:585</sup> Because this movement arose from the lack of concentration on the spiritual side of Christianity during the years of scholasticism, men developed the theology that emotion and feelings must reign over logic.

**c. The Age of Rationalism (Age of Enlightenment):** During this age, reason reigned king in the minds of philosophers, scientists and many religionists. Spirituality was again at a low and ignorance of the Scriptures high. This period has been explained as the epic when men accepted “reason as a substitute for spiritual depression.”<sup>5:81</sup> If it sounded right, then it must be right.



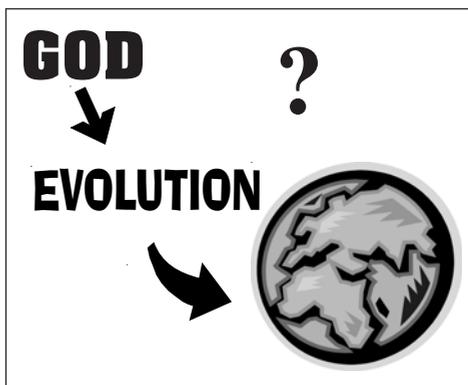
This period of thought sprang to life in the latter part of the seventeenth century. England was the nation of its birth. Its life-span was a little over one hundred years. “This Age of Reason or Enlightenment began in the reign of Louis XIV and continued without much, if any, abatement until it reached its height in the reign of Louis XV.”<sup>5:80</sup> Such philosophers as Rousseau, Voltaire, Descartes, Leibnitz and Spinoza greatly influenced the minds of men during these lively days of reason. They were antagonistic to the religion that they experienced in their day. Their reactionary reasoning concerning religion, therefore, was twisted because the religion of the day was twisted.

Throughout the age of rationalism, reason supposedly become the solution to all problems. Reason thus became a god in the minds of many men. Reid explained,

The overriding characteristic that dominated the thought of the day

and determined the way in which men talked about religion is a fundamental trust in the omniscience of reason. It is an age in which there are no insoluble problems and no locked doors through which reason cannot pass. The limitations upon our knowledge are brushed aside, if not in practice at least in principle, and nothing lies essentially beyond the grasp of reason.<sup>2:140,141</sup>

Culture and the philosophy of culture invariably affect man-made religions. And so it was during the age of rationalism. As a result of the naturalistic thinking in religion during these years, God was separated from His creation by the deist who believed that God did not deal with the material universe. The idea of a transcendent God was removed from religious thought. Deism became a common belief in this age of pure reason.



A deist is “one who believes in God, but who does not believe in the Christian Religion; he denies Divine Providence; believes that God is separate and distinct from the world.”<sup>6:iii</sup> He does not believe in the Christian religion in that he does not believe the Christianity that is revealed in the New Testament. During the age of rationalism, deists asserted a “belief in God, creator of the universe, but regarded him as detached from the world and making no revelation.”<sup>7:221</sup>

Deism took various forms during the enlightenment. Its chief proponents were Lord Herbert of Cherbury (commonly referred to as the “father of Deism”), John Toland (*Christianity not Mysterious*) and, Matthew Tindal (*Christianity as Old as Creation*). Tindal affirmed that natural religion was complete. It needed no transcendent God. Toland affirmed that the gospel was not above reason. In essence, deists as Toland did not believe in the possibility of miracles. Rather, they believed that God was separate from the world; He simply per-

forms no miracles at all. As a result of such beliefs, the possibility of revelation tended to be ruled out. As a result of this belief, men came to deny the inspiration of the Bible.

Deism also laid fertile soil for the doctrine of **theistic evolution**. God created the world, the theistic evolutionist affirmed, and then sat back to let natural laws take their course. When Charles Darwin came along with the *Origin of Species* in 1859, the stage had already been set in the minds of many religionists for a completely naturalistic concept of origins.

Joseph Butler (1692 - 1752) was one of the key figures who raised his pen in protest against deistic religion. In his *Analogy of Religion* (1736) he took for granted the existence of God and gave reasons that God created all things and now rules all things. "His key argument is the inability of human reason to be the judge of religious affairs."<sup>2:151</sup> Butler was right for his time. He was one who took a stand for belief, and thus, raised his voice against any attempts to place the Christian in a world whose God has supposedly left it alone. Christians would do well today to perceive the godless societies in which we live. Men proclaim that if there is a God, He is distant. He is thus not involved in the affairs of man. Deistic thought is still around.

**d. William Paley (1743 - 1805):** No study of Christian evidences would be complete without mentioning the works of William Paley. His works in this area of study were used for many years in schools throughout the western world. They have had a tremendous influence in the area of Christian evidences.

Rationalism inevitably leads to skepticism, the practice of doubting everything that cannot be perceived through the five senses. Skeptics flourished during the Enlightenment. In his book, *Treatise of Human Nature* (1727), men like David Hume flatly denied the possibility of miracles. Thomas Paine in his book *Age of Reason* (1794 - 1796) taught that the Bible was unreliable. As a result of these attacks, men like William Paley came to the defense of the Bible and revealed Christianity.

In *View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794), Paley answered the attacks of Hume and Paine. He produced sound philosophical ar-

gumentation in defense of the existence of God. Later he turned to prove the validity of miracles, prophecy and other facts of Christianity which are commonly denied by skeptics. Honest believers throughout the years that follow Paley used his argumentation in order to defend Christianity.

### **E. Nineteenth century defenses:**

During the last part of the 1700's in Europe, skepticism flourished under the influences of such men as Voltaire (1694 - 1778) and Rousseau (1712 - 1778). Divine authority was completely rejected. The Bible was considered to be just another book of literature. Christianity was mocked.<sup>8</sup> Nurtured by the works of Paine and Hume, rationalism quickly spread to the North American continent. From there it spread throughout the world through literature and cultural art.

As a result of this infiltration of skeptical thought into the minds of men, preachers and professors of religion in America began to raise their voices in defense of the Bible and Christianity. The books of Butler and Paley were widely used as textbooks in schools and universities. In the heated debate that developed, science was unfortunately made the enemy of religion in many cases. Men began to believe that there could be no harmony between the two fields of study.

From about 1820 to 1850 many institutions of learning in America taught a course in Christian evidences. These schools taught the literal interpretation of the Genesis flood account of Noah's day. Therefore, the evolutionistic and naturalistic works of George Buffon (1707 - 1788) and Charles Hutton (1737 - 1823) had little acceptance in the geology departments of early American schools. But this soon changed.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century many scientists accepted a mechanistic interpretation of nature. They ruled God out of any intervention in the physical world. The philosophy of evolution thus began to have its way with the thinking of many scientists. Byron C. Nelson explained this transition from supernaturalism to naturalism in relation to the naturalistic influences of the 1800s:

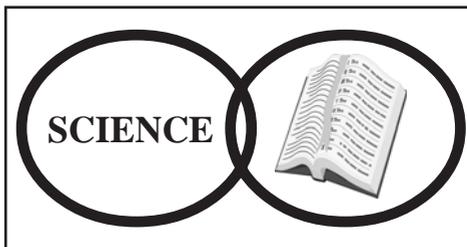
The reasons for this [rejection of the doctrine of uniformity –naturalistic geology in the early 1800s] was that the leading educators of the day were largely men of great religious faith, men who believed strongly in the Bible and did not hesitate to teach others to do likewise. A change came in the nineteenth century. As that century progressed, the control of education in Europe and America passed gradually out of the hands of such men into the hands of men more or less lacking in religious convictions, and even into the hands of men secretly or openly hostile to the Bible.<sup>9:83</sup>

As a result of this trend, a new enemy made its attack against the citadel of Christianity. This new enemy was **false science**. On the other hand, it may have been an old philosophy that was simply rejuvenated in the minds of modern men. Paul had warned Timothy centuries before, “*Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge*” (1 Tm 6:20).



Throughout the eighteenth century, men made science a god. Philosophical, not factual, science captivated the minds of men and reigned supreme. By the end of the 1800s the science god had fully awakened and was making his war against the unprepared ranks of the religious world. The religious world was unprepared for two reasons. First, the attack was made by scientists who did not always have their facts correct. At this time, the modern scientific movement was in its infancy, and thus, what sometimes appeared to be fact, was actually the philosophy of the scientists who proposed the fact. Second, the religious world had not prepared itself in the scientific field of study. When sciences proposed their philosophy of evolution, the religious world had no recourse but to resort to the text of the Scriptures. Since the Bible was rejected as a valid evidence in the field of science, the scientist challenged the believer to come forward with scientific evidence. And since the believer was unskilled in the field of science, he could not bring forth the evidence.

The above scenario often prevails in the Third World today. There are plenty of believers who promote the truth of the Bible. However, since these believers are often unskilled in the field of science, they cannot meet



the challenge of the modern-day scientific field of study. These believers are thus intimidated by the industrial world that presents an arrogance in the scientific field of study. This intimidation has led many in the world to believe that the industrial world has all the answers in the scientific field of study. They thus accept whatever scientific proclamations that may come forth from the industrial world. Such is unfortunate.

The nineteenth century was an exciting age for the study of Christian evidences. It was an age of controversy. In 1829 the historical public debate of that century was held in Cincinnati, Ohio (USA) between Robert Owen, a skeptic from Scotland, and Alexander Campbell, an early member of the church of Christ who led in the Restoration Movement of America. The subject of the debate was “The Existence of God and the Validity of Christianity.” It was from this debate that Campbell forcefully presented the argument of the Christian that Christianity stands upon the firm foundation of evidence. God never expected men to believe without evidence. It is the duty of the Christian, therefore, to know the evidence for his belief. In knowing the evidence he can make a valid stand against those who oppose belief (1 Pt 3:15).

Though the Christian evidences movement was strong in the middle nineteenth century, it seemed to weaken around the latter part of that century. As stated before, many in the religious world were scientifically unprepared to meet this new science god of false science. Bible believers, because they were scientifically unprepared, suffered at the hands of those who were more zealous about promoting theories than facts.

## F. Twentieth century defenses:

At the end of the nineteenth century, liberalism and modernism crept into the ranks of religion. Liberal theologians cast doubt upon the accuracy of the Bible. Theistic evolutionists considered the Bible account of creation a myth. Promoters of naturalism from the scientific world crept into religion to spread false propaganda concerning the miracles and prophecies of the Bible. Modernistic and existentialistic religionists began to look for authority in other sources than the Bible. As a result, when the doors of the twentieth century were opened, all sorts of distorted ideas, both in science and religion, entered in.

During the first part of twentieth century, science began to mould the minds of many against religion. Bible believers were unprepared to meet the philosophies of evolution and its consequences. After all—so thought the evolutionist—if evolution is true, we have no need for supernatural origins. Many Bible believers gullibly accepted the conclusions of this philosophical science. As a result, an incessant decay began which ate away at the very foundation principles of the Bible.

But this has all changed in the last half of the twentieth century. It has changed, not because the destructive decaying philosophies have been exterminated, but because the religious world is more scientifically prepared to meet the challenges of atheistic or humanistic scientists. Bible believers are facing the attack of philosophical science, not by saying that science is wrong but by pointing out the difference between false science and true science. True science does not contradict the Bible as many had earlier been led to believe. **True science harmonizes with true Christianity.**

Christianity has been brought under rigid investigation and found true. Those leading the offensive against the philosophical attacks of the false science today are not only preachers, but men from within the scientific field of study. This has been one of the greatest and most exciting aspects of modern-day Christian evidence studies. Geologists, anthropologists, biologists and countless other specialists in the scientific world are making their attack against false science and philosophies that are contrary to Bible teaching. Such is a strategic develop-

ment and one which must eventually lead to the downfall of erroneous scientific theories and philosophies.

As the twentieth century is being closed and the twenty-first opened, the influences of skeptical thought continue to be propagated from the industrial centers of the world. The attack of skepticism comes from non-Christian religions throughout the world which do not profess a Bible view of the world and life. As young minds from Third World environments receive their education at the feet of agnostic professors in secular universities, skepticism is imported into lands and nations that have always been religious in nature. The exportation of skeptic and humanistic thought continues to be made throughout the world by the medium of secular education in secular universities. Skeptical thought also continues to be spread throughout the world through cultures which militaristically press their beliefs upon others.

As we move into the twenty-first century, however, the Christian is better armed with scientific evidences than he was when he came into the twentieth century. Any objective person who is interested in belief is able to both philosophically and scientifically substantiate belief over unbelief. Christians are not at a loss for evidence today as they were when their forefathers had to defend themselves against the onslaught of skeptic philosophies a hundred years ago. For this reason, we are in exciting times for Christian evidence studies. We are in times where it is more reasonable to believe than to disbelieve. This is truly the dawn of belief to any who would be objective with the evidence.

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## Chapter 2

### THE CHRISTIAN AND REASON

The apostle Peter set forth the responsibility of Christians to defend their faith by commanding, “*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear*” (1 Pt 3:15). The Greek word *apologia*, which is here translated “a defense”, literally means “an answer back, a defense,”<sup>1:114</sup> or “a speech in defense.”<sup>2:52</sup> The phrase in this passage could also be translated, “ready to make a defense to anyone.”<sup>3:95</sup> This same word is also used in 2 Corinthians 7:11 where it has reference “to clearing oneself” from accusations and charges. In Philippians 1:7 Paul wrote, “... *I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the **defense** [apologia] and confirmation of the gospel ....*” In verse 17 Paul again stood his position by saying, “... *I am appointed for the defense of the gospel*” (See At 19:33; 22:1).

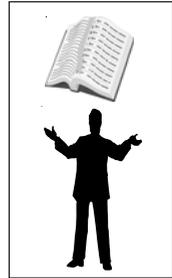
From the above uses of the word *apologia* we would conclude that the Christian has the great responsibility of defending his faith. In fact, everyone should be able to give reason for his or her beliefs. We must remember that belief without reason is only superstition. Archibald Sydney Smith stated, “It is always right that a man should be able to render a reason for the faith that is within him.”<sup>4:n.p.</sup> It was rightly said, “The unexamined life isn’t worth living and the unexamined faith isn’t worth believing.”<sup>5:1</sup>

**Belief without supporting evidence is only superstition.** Superstition thrives on the motivation of fear. It is not based on truth. It is based on the imaginations of men who have bound on their own minds that which has no evidence. If our beliefs are not based on evi-

dence, then they digress to superstition. Therefore, we must understand the nature of our beliefs and why we believe what we believe. It is the responsibility of every believer to give a reason why he has the hope of life after death. This is not simply wishful thinking. Our hope is founded upon evidence that leads us to believe in God.

### A. Evidence and belief:

All people establish truths by reasoning from evidence to belief in a conclusion. We consider the evidence. We form our conclusions. There are those evidences that we empirically experience, and thus call facts. There are those evidences that we have not experienced but believe because of the testimony of others. Reason operates on these evidences. We believe those things or facts we experience—“seeing is believing.” We do so



because we trust our senses. From this trust we reason that what we have seen or experienced or heard is true. However, if we were under the influence of an hallucinating drug, we might have reason to distrust our senses. However, all clear thinking people reason from evidence in order to make conclusions concerning what they will believe.

**We also have faith in, or believe many things we have not personally experienced.** We believe Socrates existed, though we have never seen or spoken to him. However, we believe that he existed at one time in history. We believe because we accept the testimony of those who experienced his existence. Why does the Christian believe that Jesus was raised from the dead? We believe because of testimony. Belief can be an interesting phenomenon. The question “Why do we believe what we believe?” is of great importance to our study of Christian evidences. It is important because Christians have a greater evidence for the existence of Jesus and the events and characters of the Bible than evidence to believe in nonbiblical characters and events that are written in the histories of mankind.

## B. The Christian and reason:

Contrary to what some religious believers have contended in the past, it is necessary for reasoning to be a process of Christian thinking. Christians do not have a “blind faith.” It is a faith that is based on reason and evidence (Hb 11:1). “Reason is the mental activity used in the search for truth. And no philosophical system avoids its use.”<sup>6:260</sup> Any faith that is not based on reason, is no faith at all. Those religions that are based on fables, superstitions, legends and myths are only the invention of men who have a great imagination and the ability to conjure up fears and faiths of misguided people who do not desire to search through the evidence of Christianity. Christians who do not research the evidence upon which their faith is founded are following after the manner by which superstitious faiths are maintained. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every Christian to examine why he believes in the Bible and the God of the Bible.

Many like Fred Denbeaux have claimed that “the New Testament places no great confidence in the power of human reason.”<sup>7:86</sup> Denbeaux was wrong. The Christian’s activity in the realm of reason is clearly evidenced by the example of the first Christians. Luke recorded, “*Paul ... for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures*” (At 17:2). Paul **reasoned** in the synagogue every Sabbath. As a result, Jews and Greeks were persuaded (At 18:4; see vs 19). Paul “*reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come*” with Felix (At 24:25; see Ph 1:17; 1 Th 5:21). It is a common thing for men to reason concerning that which is truth. It should be a common thing for them to reason about Christ and Christianity.

Christianity of necessity utilizes human reason. Christians must use their heads. When one becomes a Christian, he does not give his mind over to a blind faith and wishful thinking. Harvey Everest wrote,

We cannot believe unless belief is more rational than unbelief. We cannot believe at will, arbitrarily; or against reason. Reason, meaning thereby the whole mental power for the ascertainment of truth, must be our guide. No one insists upon this more earnestly than the defender of

Christianity. Reason and faith are not antagonistic, but rather coadjutors. No faith is of worth unless it is justified by the severest use of reason.<sup>8:13</sup>

George Santayana added, “Reason is man’s imitation of divinity.”<sup>9:n.p.</sup> There is no antagonism between God’s revelation to man, the Bible, and man’s power to reason. God is the author of both. He revealed His word to man, and thus, expects man to reason concerning what has been revealed. Those who contend that philosophical reasoning concerning existence has no place in Christian thought are certainly mistaken concerning the Christian’s responsibility to use his power to reason in order to come to conclusions concerning his faith. Galileo once wrote, “I do not feel obligated to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forego their use.”<sup>10:n.p.</sup>

We must understand, therefore, that “there is no antagonism between reason and revelation. The Bible reveals a system claiming to be divine in its origin and invites man to ‘come now, and let us reason together’ (Isaiah 1:18).”<sup>11:35</sup> “Reason and revelation are not opposed; nor reason and faith. We accept a professed revelation, if at all, because it is reasonable to do so; we put faith in another, and follow him because reason so directs. Reason or man’s intellectual faculties, stands behind everything else.”<sup>8:108</sup> J. D. Thomas was certainly right when he wrote, “A man cannot think without reason and those who say reason has no significant place in religious faith are surely naive at this point,”<sup>6:260</sup> The faith of the Christian is reasonable.

### C. Understanding truth:

In order to be clearly understood, I will be using the term “truth” to refer to the true knowledge derived from the evidences of Christianity. We understand that these evidences include facts, historical events and testimony. There is actually a difference, however, between truth and fact. Alexander Campbell wrote,

*Fact* means something done. Truth and fact ... are not the same. All facts

are truths, but all truths are not fact. That God exists is a truth, but not a fact; that he created the heavens and the earth is a fact and a truth .... The simple agreement of the terms of any proposition with the subject of that proposition, or the representation of any thing as it exists, is a truth. But something must be done or effected before we have a fact.<sup>12:90</sup>

There is a difference between the facts of Christianity and the truths of Christianity. We argue from the evidences, which include facts as archaeological discoveries and the existence of the Bible, to establish the truth of Christianity. But we also establish truths by using ideas as evidence. Such evidence comes into use when we argue the existence of God. To simplify our understanding of the place of reason in Christian evidences and to avoid confusion, we choose to use the word “truth” in a general sense. All facts, knowledge and events of Christianity are truths. And therefore, in the world of knowing (reason), these specific truths work together to establish the general truth of Christianity.

In Christian evidences our reasoning focuses on evidence and truths derived from our examination of empirical evidence. Evidence and truth have a direct relationship with one another. If a position of truth is valid, the evidence will prove that it is valid, even though we may not have considered all the evidence. If the particular conclusion we accept as truth is invalid, the evidence will not substantiate its validity, existence, or being. **Evidence consists of those pieces of information that give witness to and confirm the validity of truth.** Therefore, the evidence must have the ability to confirm.

#### **D. Inductive reasoning:**

Inductive reasoning is a different process than deductive reasoning. However, the two are related. Inductive reasoning would actually produce the major premise of the deductive process. In the scientific method, inductive reasoning usually comes before the deductive process. The inductive process forms the major premise, or known principle and deductive reasoning takes it from there.

“In the process of inductive reasoning the mind begins with the

particular and proceeds to the general.”<sup>13:19</sup> This is the method most used by the scientist and could be illustrated by the following diagram:

## INDUCTIVE REASONING

**Related Facts** ▶ **(Hypothesis)** ▶ **Tests** ▶ **Theory** ▶ **Law**

In this process of reasoning “the scientist *gathers many facts* that may have a bearing on the problem. He then forms a *hypothesis*.”<sup>14:5</sup> This is an “educated guess” (hypothesis) based on what the scientist knows about the already available information. Various tests or experiments are then conducted that are based on the assumption of the hypothesis. If many tests reveal no observed contradiction to the hypothesis, then the hypothesis will become a **theory**. After much time and testing, the theory may become classified technically as a **law**. A law is thus a thoroughly tested hypothesis.<sup>14:5,6</sup> However, if contradictory evidence is produced in reference to the hypothesis, then the hypothesis must be changed to agree with the new evidence or discarded as false.

The discovery of the atom and its function illustrates what we are discussing. Before the atomic laws were confirmed, scientists only hypothesized concerning the existence and function of the atom. It was only after diligent experimentation that the atom was discovered and its basic qualities determined. Scientists first assumed that the atom existed, and then, based their experiments on their assumptions. All tests thus far have proven the existence of the atom and its function. Atomic theory is based upon positive results of experiments that assume the existence and function of the atom. The hypothesis that the atom exists has moved from being a hypothesis to being a scientific fact or law.

If experimentation produces new light on the function of the atom, then scientists will have to revise their atomic laws. We must be ready to give up any “law” if it later proves wrong. Duane Gish pointed out an example of the effect of a new discovery in the area of atomic research itself. He wrote, “In recent times, a theory dealing with weak interactions of atomic particles became so widely accepted by physi-

cists that it won the status of a law, the Law of parity. During the 1950s, two brilliant Chinese-American scientists performed a series of experiments that disproved the theory and deposed the ‘Law’.”<sup>15:10</sup> When working with hypothesis and theory, the scientist must always be willing to discard those hypotheses and theories that contradict truth or fact that is revealed by further investigation.

It would be good here to read a warning placed in the biology textbook, *Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity*.

The history of science has included the replacement of generally accepted concepts with newer concepts. In the future, we do not know how our present concepts will be changed, but we can be certain that they will change. For this reason we must recognize that all scientific conclusions are tentative. They are not final answers and should not be regarded as such.<sup>14:13</sup>

## E. Deductive reasoning:

In Christian evidences we also work in the area of reasoning called deductive reasoning. “Given the revealed facts,” stated Thomas, “the truth is discerned by inductive and deductive reasoning, just like scientific, historical, or any other ordinary knowledge is learned.”<sup>16:20</sup> The Christian cannot expect the world to approach his beliefs on a different basis than it would approach any other discipline of learning. Therefore, the Christian uses his deductive process of reasoning in order to firmly establish his faith upon the evidence that God has provided for him to consider.

### DEDUCTIVE REASONING

**Evidence ◀ (A) ◀ Reason ▶ (B) ▶ Logical Conclusions**

Deductive reasoning is “reasoning from a known principle [major premise] to an unknown, from a general to a specific, or from a premise to a logical conclusion.”<sup>17:474</sup> This is the process of reasoning that usu-

ally takes place after inductive reasoning.

The most common form of deductive reasoning is the **sylllogism**. A major and minor premise are formed. From these premises a conclusion, a specific, is drawn. However, the truth is already evident in the major premise, the known principle, before the conclusion, or specific is made. If either of the premises is inaccurate, the conclusion will be false. An example of this type of reasoning would be such:

- A. Major Premise, “**All ruminants are quadrupeds.**”
- B. Minor Premise: “**All impala are ruminants.**”
- C. Conclusion: “**All impala are quadrupeds.**”

If an exception were to be found which contradicted the major premise, then the conclusion would be questioned. Or, the major premise may have to be rewritten to conform to any new evidence. The conclusion of the syllogism is qualified only by the validity of the major premise and the truth of the minor premise. The conclusion can be drawn only if both major and minor premises are true.

The syllogism is a simple way of illustrating the process of deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning draws a conclusion from particular bits of evidence that are known and are true. We reason with that evidence to form logical conclusions or truths. In Christian evidences as a whole, we consider all fields of evidence to verify the truthfulness of Christianity. We examine evidence which affirms that it is more reasonable to believe.

The difference between deductive and inductive reasoning can be clarified by two detective stories. In the first story a crime is committed and immediately investigators begin their search for clues (evidence) that will lead to the capture of the criminal. This is deductive reasoning.

In the second story, a crime is also committed. After the crime, a man turns himself in to the police and professes to be the one who committed the crime. Though they may believe his confession, the police do not immediately sentence this self-confessed man to prison. Evidence is first gathered to determine whether this is the actual man

who committed the crime. If all evidence points to him as the guilty party, then he is sentenced. This would be inductive reasoning.

## F. The nature of the evidence:

In Christian evidences all evidences can be classified into two general areas: **external** evidences and **internal** evidences. External evidences are those evidences outside the realm of biblical revelation that are provided by fields of study as anthropology, archaeology, cosmology, biology and the history of the Bible. Internal evidences have reference to those evidences within the pages of the Bible that substantiate both the Bible to be the word of God and the reasonableness of Christianity. These two sources of evidence, external and internal, provide the material upon which reason takes place in the study of Christian evidences.

The total process of reasoning in Christian evidences examines the evidence (A) in order to bring about the truth of Christianity (B). In this process of reasoning,



the reasonableness of the existence of God is set forth both inductively and deductively. Once the conclusion is drawn that it is more reasonable to believe in God than disbelieve, then from this conclusion the reasonableness of God revealing Himself to man is considered. In other words, if it is reasonable to believe that God exists, then it is reasonable to believe that He has revealed Himself to man. In considering the facts of Christianity, the deductive process of reasoning is used to develop the foundation upon which our faith stands. We deduct from many evidences that Christianity is reasonable and true. We deduct that it is the result of the revelation of God to man.

## G. The strength of the evidence:

To maintain any proposition, there must be the presentation of valid evidence. In fact, evidence can be evidence only if it is valid. All

honest and sincere people will seek for valid evidence. If one would seek to deceive himself, then he will allow false evidence to build the premises from which he will construct his faith. However, those who are searching for truth will always seek for valid evidence. Floyd E. Hamilton correctly stated,

The opinion of **no** man unsupported by evidence is worth the paper it is written on. No matter how great an expert a man may be in linguistic and archaeological fields, his opinion against the Scriptures is worth nothing unless he backs it with evidence. The Bible itself **is** evidence, and an opinion against it based on nothing but anti-theistic or evolutionary premises, with no direct evidence in its support, has no value.<sup>18:219</sup>

When “determining the truth or falsity of an idea there must be the presentation of real evidence, rather than a cursory, general survey of the situation.”<sup>14:36</sup> In determining a truth, all possible evidence must be presented and examined. If one is not willing to search for and investigate all possible evidences, then certainly we would question his integrity and honesty in reference to his beliefs.

**We must remember that the passing of time does not affect the power or strength of the evidence, as long as we have the evidence.** The same evidences that were used to prove the inspiration of the Bible in the first century can be used today. They are just as valid today as they were two thousand years ago. However, it must also be noted that the hypothesis of the inductive process of the scientific method may constantly be adjusted as more evidence is discovered. But this is a change in the conclusion and not in the evidence. New evidence can be produced. As long as evidence does not contradict the established verdict, the case still stands that was produced by earlier evidence. The honest scientist recognizes and accepts this as normal and necessary. However, if new evidence conflicts with any present conclusion, we must either revise or discard the previously accepted conclusion. Peter W. Stoner wrote,

A scientific theory is made up of known facts. The theory may or may

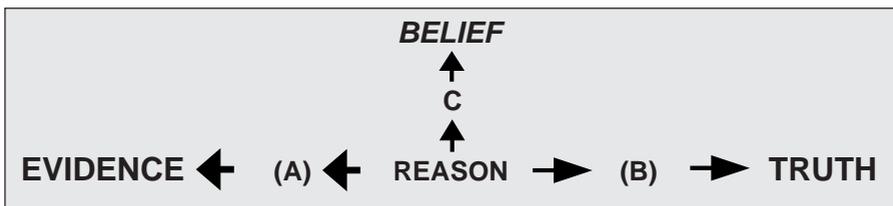
not be true; it may not even be thought to be true by its author. It helps the student to organize the facts in his mind and it often enables the scientist or the engineer to predict future behavior or happenings. When additional facts are secured, the theory is often revised to cover the new facts or it may be replaced by a new theory. This frequent change does not bother the scientist.<sup>20:26</sup>

In Christianity we are not dealing with changing truths or changing evidence. We are dealing with an eternal God, an eternal Holy Spirit, an eternal Son of God and an eternal word of truth. These do not change with time, neither does the evidence that supports their being. Each individual researcher may come into contact with new unchanging evidence; but the truth does not change. Only the researcher's understanding of the evidences changes. Therefore, we must never think that the evidences of Christianity wear out with the passing of time.

## H. The result of reasoning:

After one evaluates available evidence and is convinced that it proves a specific conclusion, the chart illustrates what would be the result.

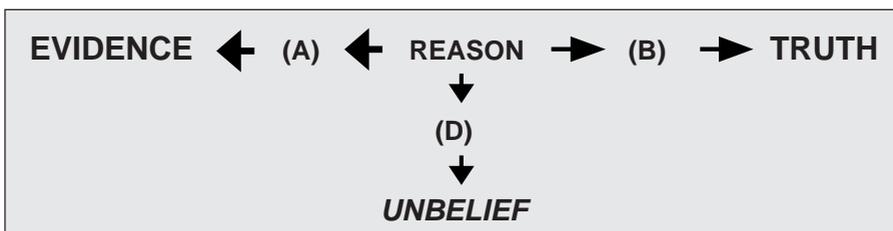
The above diagram represents a deductive examination of the evidence A and a belief in that evidence to support a particular truth B. **To produce belief (C) in the truth, there must first be sufficient evidence for the reasoner to consider in order to warrant such a conclusion.** There must be enough evidence to so motivate the researcher to respond with belief. The reasoner must objectively study the evidence in order to arrive at a specific belief. Insufficient evidence in support of the supposed truth would ultimately result in the conclusion that is illustrated in the chart below.



We do not believe in unicorns. Our unbelief is not the result of our unwillingness to believe, but because there is no evidence to support their existence. If reasoning process A of above diagram has not sufficient evidence with which to draw a conclusion, then B will not have sufficient evidence from which to establish belief. Or, there may be no evidence at all with which to reason. Therefore, the truth never really existed in the first place. Such is the case with the existence of unicorns. If by some reason people believed a “truth” that cannot be supported, we must ask for an objective reconsideration of it if we feel that there is not sufficient evidence or even no evidence at all on the matter.

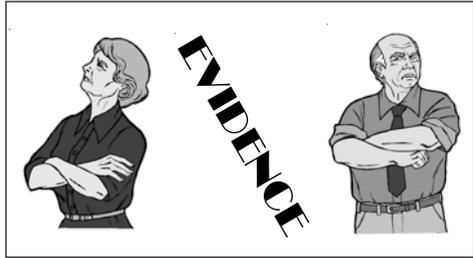
This all sounds simple until we consider the ever present influences which press upon the mind of the reasoner. Francis Bacon (1561-1626), who is considered to be the father of the inductive method of reasoning, pointed out four major problems which affect the objectiveness of the reasoner: (1) “wishful” thinking, (2) personal prejudices, (3) failure to define terms, and (4) the blind acceptance of tradition as authority.<sup>20:26</sup> Bacon posted just a few of the necessary warnings concerning his invention of formalized reasoning. There are many problems that we must recognize here and which will help explain why some people fail to see a specific truth even though there is sufficient evidence.

There are thus many problems that distort the normal processes of inductive and deductive reasoning. There is the problem of **ignoring the evidence**. Some people will not examine the evidence because they have their minds set on another conclusion. No matter how much evidence there may be presented that demands investigation, they will refuse to investigate. There is also the problem that one may be pre-



sented with **false evidence**.

Those who propagate a lie, will often be the source of false evidence. If one does not love and believe the truth, he will invariably be the source from which much false evidence originates



(See 2 Th 2:10-12). Others may be **prejudiced** or **unwilling to believe** no matter how strong the evidence may be in support of the truth. In reference to those of the scientific world who refuse to accept the evidence that has been presented to prove the erroneous conclusion of biological evolution, this is a major problem. Many scientists are prejudiced against Christianity, and thus, are unwilling to accept any evidence that is contrary to their beliefs in evolution.

The evidence may be strong enough to support the fact but because the reasoner has not examined all evidences or has examined false evidences (or unqualified authorities), he may arrive at unbelief. It is possible for him to arrive at this conclusion though the truth is valid. We contend that such is the case with those who disbelieve in the total harmony of the Bible. They do not believe the harmony and accuracy of the Bible text because they have somehow been convinced that it is full of contradictions. The problem may be that they have not examined the entirety of the subject under consideration or they may have examined unqualified authorities who were also ignorant of the evidence.

Unbelief may also be the result of prejudice, preconceived judgments or bias on the part of the reasoner. Thomas Paine stated in Part I of his work *Age of Reason*, “I had neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, **though I was writing against both** (emphasis mine, R.E.D.).”<sup>22:4</sup> Paine stated here that he had been criticizing the Bible, but he did not have a copy of it to examine first hand. This statement certainly manifested his prejudice toward the Bible. It manifests the prejudice of millions in the world today who do not accept the Bible, and yet, have never examined its text. Later in the preface to *Age of Reason*, Part II, Paine stated, “I have now furnished myself with the Bible and a Testa-

ment, and I can say also that I have found them both to be much worse books than I had conceived.”<sup>22:4</sup> Paine drew his conclusions before he examined the evidence. When the evidence presented itself through his acquisition of a copy of the Bible, his mind was made up, and thus, he concluded that the evidence was twisted. This is prejudiced reasoning.

We must confess that total objectivity in examining the evidence is almost impossible. Frank E. Wier said,

“Objectivity” is much debated in science. Critics assert - correctly, I think - that no human being can really be objective. Defenders of the principle maintain that unless objectivity is at least attempted, there is no hope that a picture of the world can be extricated from the wash of feeling and will.<sup>22:65</sup>

Whenever biases and prejudices distort the proof of valid evidences for Christianity, correct reason is abandoned. We must recognize that all have preconceived beliefs. But when these beliefs motivate us to intentionally overlook, distort or reject valid evidences, invalid conclusions will result. In John 12:42 the Pharisees believed in Jesus, but because of other factors, they turned away from Him. Many others refused to believe even though Jesus performed great wonders before their eyes. Their reasoning was clouded by prejudice. No other faith has evidence comparable to that of Christianity. In fact, there is no other belief that can be proved by the evidence that God furnished through the open manifestation of the supernatural world (See Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). Those who reject the evidence that God has provided, do so not because of the insufficiency of evidence, but because of other factors.

The agnostic contends that we can neither believe nor disbelieve. He affirms that we cannot “know.” This presents other problems to rightful reasoning. All the evidence can be presented—evidences which greatly support a truth—**but the reasoner may not make a decision.** This is his fault and does not say that the truth is unproved or unprovable. The problem of right attitude lies upon his shoulders, not the

believers. If he is unwilling to make a decision, then he should not condemn those who do.

The Christian also must be careful. McGarvey wrote, “The believer, on the other hand, is in danger of pursuing the inquiry with so fixed a determination that the Bible shall be found true, as to lead him to accept shallow sophisms for sound arguments, and to disregard the force of serious objections.”<sup>21:3</sup> The reasoner may be so eager to believe that he might accept or even compromise various aspects of his belief to maintain a total view. He may even twist the evidence to agree with his conclusions. As is the case with emotionally oriented religions, hypersensitive believers often generate in moments of ecstasy, those imaginations that in reality do not exist. The modern-day faith-healing movement would be an example. In their state of weak faith these religiously misguided individuals seek for that which God has never promised. They thus generate evidence that is only the illusion of their minds, and thus, do not seek after the truth (See 2 Th 2:10-12).

Belief in theistic evolution is a good example of the above scenario where a philosophy of the scientific world has come into the religious world of those who have been intimidated to accept the postulations of scientists who refuse to accept evidence that contradicts evolutionary thinking. The reasoner in this situation feels that scientific theories (technically, “hypotheses” with reference to evolution) must be harmonized with the Bible. Though scientific evidence does not support evolution, he feels that if he is to salvage his faith in the Bible, while remaining faithful to what he believes to be a scientific evidence in support of evolution, he must make compromises between the two. The result is that we have the doctrine theistic evolution. This is a result of the theistic evolutionist’s unawareness of the lack of evidence for evolution. It is also a manifestation of his ignorance of the uncompromising teachings that exist between the hypothesis of organic evolution and the Bible. This person has probably never investigated those scientific evidences that contradict the theory of evolution.

## I. The strength of faith:

We believe that Socrates and other historical figures existed. We believe the existence of personalities of history almost without a doubt. **In fact, most of what we believe we have never seen, heard, smelled, tasted or touched.** This illustrates the strength of faith. We believe the facts of history as if we had actually experienced them. The many signs, wonders and acts of Jesus that are recorded in the Bible were put there for the purpose of generating an unwavering faith in those who read their recorded accounts. *“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ...”* (Jn 20:31,32). Jesus said, *“Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed”* (Jn 20:29). It is true that “seeing is believing.” But the Christian has the edge over the skeptic in that to him “believing is seeing.” When we recognize God’s being, all the pieces of this universe make sense. God becomes an answer for that which we cannot empirically explain through scientific investigation. We do not have to actually touch or see God in order to believe in Him. It is not necessary to experience something before one believes in it.

We today believe that God is because we have the testimony of those who experienced His manifestation. God is spirit (Jn 4:24). Therefore, He could manifest Himself only through ways that could be perceived by those who are limited to the five senses. We cannot see spirit. However, we can see the manifestations of God who is spirit. The Bible, therefore, is a record of those who gave their lives because they witnessed the open manifestation of God who is spirit (See Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). It is for this reason that Christians believe that Jesus came from God, for no one could do the things that He did except God be with Him (Jn 3:2).

**The scientific method lies within the realm of experience.** It works with the present **empirically** discerned things, **not the past or the future.** We must keep this in mind when forming conclusions concerning the things of the past. Historians use the scientific method of

study in order to determine historical truths. But the historian is working in the past with documents of past history. In the same sense, this historical scientist is working in the present with “documents” (fossils and geological formations) of past history. The scientist is dealing with observation, but the historian is dealing with testimony. The historian uses only the scientific method of reasoning to determine the truth of the testimony of others.

In Christian evidences we are dealing with testimony and facts. Testimony and facts must come before belief because belief must be based on the true testimony of those who experienced what we believe. Facts must be true in reference to what is believed. Paul wrote, “*How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard*” (Rm 10:14). In reality, therefore, the purpose of the gospel records is to produce testimony of Jesus and evidence of His deity. Once this is established, then all other questions concerning salvation and reality take on a different perspective. If one believes that Jesus is the Son of God, then He becomes more than a man. What He said must change our lives because He would be speaking as God in the flesh.

## J. The limits of reason:

C. S. Lewis wrote, “All possible knowledge, then, depends on the validity of reasoning.”<sup>23:19</sup> It is imperative, therefore, that our reasoning be as true as possible. The problem with objective reasoning, however, is that we are all men. And being a man means that we are subject to all sorts of prejudices concerning right thinking.

It is thus essential to post some limits and warnings concerning our faculty of reason in relation to revelation. T. Alec Burkill stated



that “reason is a dangerous faculty inasmuch as it tends to press onward beyond its legitimate data derived from the understanding and to apply its ideas to the unconditioned, which lies beyond the limits of experience.”<sup>24:12</sup> Our reasoning, therefore, is limited to the world in which we live. We cannot escape the limitation of our five senses, and thus, we would do well to caution ourselves when reasoning concerning that which is beyond this physical world. Benjamin B. Warfield wrote,

Reason may assert things about God and about things beyond the experience of man but that it thus asserts cannot be said to be a part of knowledge by experience. By reason man cannot reach into the field of the divine. At least he cannot there speak with the same assurance that he is wont to imply with respect to the empirical realm.<sup>25:8</sup>

The Christian would do well to caution himself about postulations concerning the nature of God who is beyond this physical world. In our efforts to imagine one with whom we can have a greater physical identity, we often create God after our own image. Therefore, in dealing with those things that are beyond this world, we must realize that we are simply finite beings with limited minds that are struggling to understand the Infinite. In our struggle we must remember that we are dealing with fallible minds that cannot reach beyond this world. Davis stated,

Through human wisdom, the reason, it is not possible to understand the ways of God, for “we walk by faith, not by sight.” If we find the Bible teaching a certain truth, then we should not try to decide whether or not it is reasonable, and reject it if it is not reasonable (from the human standpoint). We can reason about the truth taught, but the truth or falsity of any Biblical doctrine is to be determined by the sole criterion of reason.<sup>11:36</sup>

“Reason can teach us many things concerning God and duty, but it cannot teach us everything which is necessary for us to know, unaided by revelation.”<sup>11:34</sup> Reason can go so far in our belief in God, and then,

revelation must carry on from there. Through the created world we reason that God exists (Rm 1:20). We reason, therefore, that He must reveal Himself to man. He has. We thus reason concerning His revelation. However, we must understand that neither creation or revelation fully explain the God who is beyond this world. We cannot reduce God to total reason, though everything about Him is reasonable.

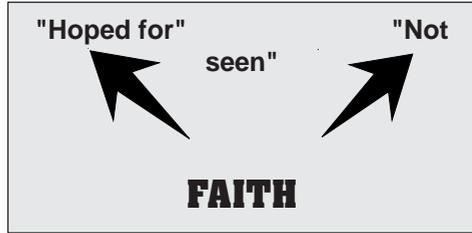
The great and impending danger of reason is that it many times advances to rationalism. The danger of rationalism is that it is almost always substituted for revelation in religion. W. A. Visser'T Hooft wrote, "The enthronement of reason means the enthronement of man who becomes his own lawgiver."<sup>26:818</sup> If we become our own lawgivers, then who needs God? "Nothing could be more fateful than the substitution of rationalism for reason in Christianity."<sup>27:97</sup> But this has been the direction of many religionists in our times. Such is portrayed in Leo Tolstoy when he said, "If there is no higher reason—and there is not—then my own reason must be the supreme judge of my life."<sup>28:n.p.</sup> This is secular humanism. This is the legacy that the twentieth century delivered to us as we take upon our shoulders another millennium. Through reason, men make themselves gods of their own destiny. God is thus extracted from all fields of study. All decision in life is thus left to the power of man's reasoning. We are doomed if all of society follow after this philosophy of life.

Man cannot be his own judge and lawgiver. This could be stated as an axiomatic truth, that is, a truth that is self-evident. It is axiomatic because everywhere in the world where man has been left to his own devices, he has led himself to social chaos. If we reject God's revelation in our reasoning concerning the things that be, our conclusions will certainly be false. The Bible warns against rationalistic thought time after time (See Rm 8:7; 2 Co 10:5; 1 Co 1:18-2:16). If we are left to reason out our own morals, we are left with no moral standard at all. Brantle said concerning right reasoning, "Reason will find God, but reason will find too, the need to transcend reason, the promise of more than reason can offer." Every person who has more faith in reason than in revelation (the Bible) should be reminded that man is still fallible. Man needs more than reason alone to guide his life. He needs God's revelation.

## K. The Christian and faith:

Christianity is a system of faith that motivates a behavior of life. It is not a blind faith but a **reasonable** faith. Christianity is not just facts and reason. If it was, then there would be no room for faith.

The evidential power of the Christian's faith is somewhat defined in Hebrews 11:1. "*Now faith is the **substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.***" Faith is both assurance and conviction. There is

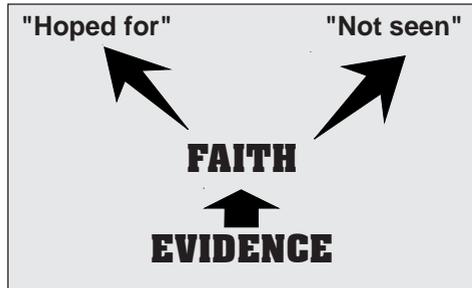


substance to it and it is supported by evidence. The word "evidence" (sometimes translated, "conviction") could also be translated "proof" or "proving."<sup>3:248</sup> Christian faith is proof or evidence of things not seen because it is based on evidence.

The Greek word which is translated "substance" is also rendered in the *American Standard Version* footnote "the giving substance to." In this scripture, faith "is declared to be the substructure of hope and the proof of its reality."<sup>6:261</sup> The Bible says that faith is evidence of the things that are not seen. However, it is an evidence **because it is based on evidence**. Thomas wrote, "When the Bible speaks of faith as evidence, we realize that the faith itself is based upon evidence, and that it can be a valid faith only if it is grounded upon valid evidence."<sup>6:261</sup>

Christian faith is based upon reasonable and valid evidence. If it was not, then it would be an unreasonable faith. We must clearly understand that faith is an evidence only if it is based upon evidence. Faith, or belief, without evidence is only superstition.

In Christian evidences we study facts and truths that infer faith in things we cannot experience. And "... necessary to faith is intellectual assent to a propositional statement or historical



fact, and that as preconditions to assent there must exist **facts**, evaluated by **reason** and culminating in **knowledge**, to which assent is finally given.”<sup>6:276</sup> “Both knowledge and reason must precede commitment for valid faith.”<sup>6:267</sup> This is essentially what Hebrews 11:1 is stating. Faith **is** the evidence of things hoped for. It becomes a substantiating evidence when it is based upon evidence.

Christian faith takes us beyond those things we empirically experience. Valid faith is able to take us beyond those things our senses are able to experience only if it is based upon reasonable evidences that conclude in the fact that there is something beyond this world. But the proof of religious knowledge, or the things which we are not able to empirically verify, is never absolute in the sense that they can be proved by the scientific method. “*We walk by faith not by sight.*”

The time comes in our reasoning concerning the evidence that faith is produced in that which is highly probable, but yet, not experienced. We cannot empirically prove that God exists. But the evidence is strong enough to warrant such a conclusion. Thomas adds that this faith “brings to **realization** (as far as the individual believer is concerned) the metaphysical concepts which cannot be discerned through the physical senses.”<sup>6:250</sup> In Christian inquiry, reason only goes so far. Where it stops, faith takes over. Thomas explained that Hebrews 11:1 “indicates that reason (supported by evidence and empirical facts) can take us only so far, and that then we must go on to our conclusion by faith. It is not Biblical therefore to think that faith conclusions are **totally** undergirded by reason.”<sup>16:18</sup> This is to say that solid reason is always the foundation of true Christian faith. However, this is not to say that Christian faith is total reason.

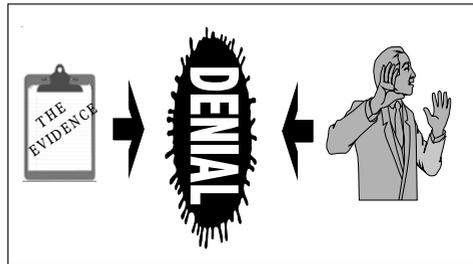
“***By faith*** we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hb. 11:3). This faith is not a superstitious faith that is unsupported by reason. “*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, ...*” (Rm 1:20). God “*did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and glad-*

ness” (At 14:17). God provided for man enough evidence to carry him beyond the material world to faith in the spiritual environment of Deity. He left us just enough evidence to let us know that this material world is not all there is. Those who are hungering and thirsting for that which is beyond this world have enough evidence to conclude that God is there.

## L. The faith of the atheist:

In the atheist’s fruitless struggle to disprove Christianity, accusations have been made that the Christian’s belief rests entirely upon faith and that the atheist’s position rests entirely upon reason. Such is not the case. The atheist not only has faith, but he has faith without sufficient evidence for his position. No man lives without faith in something, and thus, even the atheist cannot escape the reality that he must “walk by faith” in some areas of his life. He may walk by faith in historical events that have affected his life. He may walk by faith that things will turn out for the better. He may walk by a faith that he has evolved from the innate to a primate through a process of evolution. Regardless of what his faith is in, he must walk by faith.

The atheist believes that life originated from matter, or plasma or gases, and evolved into what is seen today in the organic world. This is his faith. He believes that consciousness arose from innate matter, that emotions arose from that which has no emotions, that personality came from the impersonal. The atheist believes in the eternity of matter. He “believes a creed which has no hope; which tells man that he came from slime rather than the sublime, and that man will end in the slime with all his hopes and aspirations crushed.”<sup>29:18</sup>



Once thing is certain in reference to the faith of an atheist. **It takes more faith to be an atheist than to be a Christian.** It is more difficult to believe what the atheist believes than what the Christian

believes. Atheism is a system that depends on faith more than Christianity. He must have faith that all the evidence that proves Christianity to be true must not be true evidence at all. The difficulty with the atheist's faith is that it is not based upon the type of evidence that the Christian faith is based upon. It is based on a faith in negation. The atheist denies the fact of the evidence that Christianity is true. (More on this later.)

The position of the atheist is a position of **great** faith. "The position of the atheist is one of consummate folly, because he affirms a negative proposition which is incapable of proof."<sup>30:181</sup> If incapable of proof, then it is a position which requires faith, an unreasonable faith that is not supported by evidence. The atheist cannot prove that life came from nonliving matter. He cannot prove that intelligence came from the unintelligent, that reasoning came from that which cannot reason. He believes these things but he cannot prove them. This is why his faith is an unreasonable faith.

The atheist denies God but he cannot prove his position. He sustains a position that can never be proved. His system rests upon **denial**, not proof.

The point is that the power of a position is to be found not merely in its power of attack but also in its power to sustain its own doctrine. In other words, one should not fall into the "fallacy of objections" and believe that because he can find certain objections to the position of faith in God that therefore faith in God is not reasonable. There is no position that any man can take that does not have some difficulties.<sup>29:15</sup>

As the atheist demands proof of the Christian position, so should the Christian demand proof of the atheist's position. Such is fair. No reasonable system of thinking would object to the presentation of its evidence. We would, therefore, challenge the atheist to bring forth his evidence. Baxter wrote,

For many years it has been my observation that the entire burden of proof is often forced upon those who believe the Christian religion by

those who question it. Often the atheist or agnostic does not shoulder his share of the burden of proof. He asks a barrage of questions, but does not prove his own position. It is easy to ask questions. It is much harder to demonstrate evidence. Let us begin our study by requiring the positions of faith and non-faith to accept equal responsibility to produce evidence.<sup>19:24</sup>

The words of the psalmist were true when he stated, “*The fool has said in his heart, There is no God*” (Ps 14:1). This statement will be made most clear as the evidences for Christianity are revealed throughout the remainder of this volume. However, we must continue to remember that the system of thought of the atheist is a system of faith. R. C. Foster appropriately concluded, “It is nowadays considered shocking discourtesy to call any one an atheist. He is only a ‘humanist’ – usually a ‘theistic humanist,’ if you please, for he has a ‘god,’ an idea, the image of his own distorted self. A theistic atheist!.”<sup>31:261</sup>

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### Chapter 3

## THE DOUBT DILEMMA

At various times in his life, almost every Christian has doubts concerning his belief. In the realm of religious matters we would not be honest with ourselves if we did not admit that at times we harbor some questions concerning different religious beliefs. Is the Bible really the word of God? Does it contradict itself? Does God even exist? Is Jesus the Son of God? Was Jesus raised from the dead? Is Christianity the

only true religion? Is Islam or one of the Far East religions also a revealed faith from God? Questions as these can be answered by diligent study of the evidences God offers for truth. One will always have some doubts in his life concerning things he has not empirically discerned. We often have doubts concerning those things we have not sensed. But such is normal when one walks by faith. Therefore, it is not abnormal to doubt.

Our search and acquisition of knowledge in areas of science and the physical world does not rule out faith. It is the purpose of Christian evidences to satisfy doubt, though there will always be those areas which must be covered by faith. But we must have some answers upon which to base a solid faith. James F. Coppedge once wrote: "It is important that one's philosophy of life provides a strong basis for assurance without lingering doubts on the main issues."<sup>1:25</sup> Atheism denies the main issues of Christianity. Skepticism systematically brings all issues under question. The modernist is headed the same way. It is the purpose of this and the following chapters to challenge the position of the doubters and to strengthen the theist's position of faith.

It is not that we set out on a course of investigation to prove the existence of God. God needs no proof. However, we do set out to discover His intervention into this physical world. If we discover just one moment of intervention, then we have satisfied our faith that He is there. And if He is there, then the rest of the questions have been answered. If He is there, then it is more reasonable to believe. It is reasonable to believe that the Bible, Christianity and all the miracles are real. And if they are all real, then there must be change in my life. This is exactly what my faith must do. It much change my life.

In studying the existence of God, therefore, our purpose is to show that an examination of the evidence necessitates His existence. We examine evidences derived from various fields of study which logically and reasonably affirm the necessity of God's existence. In other words, **we conclude that it is more reasonable to believe than to disbelieve.**

The inquirer cannot fill every vacuum of thought with empirical evidence in his study of the existence of God. Most of the things we

study about God are not derived from empirical evidences. Even God's revelation through His written word does not fill all the gaps. There are some things our finite minds just do not completely understand about God. God is eternal. Can the finite mind fully understand the infinite? Can the mortal understand that which is immortal? If we understood all, we would be gods ourselves. Therefore, there is much room for faith. But our faith is based on logical reasoning which affirms that God's existence is not simply wishful or superstitious thinking.

The Bible does not try to prove the existence of God. It simply states, "*In the beginning God created ...*" (Gn 1:1). It states that the heavens declare His glory (Ps 19:1-6); that the cosmos reveals His intelligence (Rm 1:18-22); that He is not flesh (Lk 24:39); but that He is spirit (Jn 4:24). The Bible assumes His existence, affirming that His existence is most evident by an examination of the things that He has created (Ps 8:1; 50:6; At 14:17; Rm 1:20).

There are, however, many philosophical schools of thought today whose metaphysics and philosophies deny God's being. Skepticism has twisted the minds of many thinkers into overlooking or just ignoring evidences that do manifest the reasonableness of Deity. Skepticism is defined as the "method of suspended judgment, systematic doubt ..."<sup>2:815</sup> All those who have doubts, however, are not skeptics. Skeptics are those who **systematically** bring into question those beliefs which are, and always will be, fundamental to Christian belief.<sup>2:815</sup> The real skeptic is the one who makes a habit out of doubting.

Christianity is a *positive institution* and has had a positive existence in the world for more than eighteen centuries. Infidelity, as opposed to Christianity, is not an institution, but a mere negation of an institution and of the facts and documents on which it is founded. It has no essential formal existence. It has no facts and documents, and, therefore, it has no proof. It merely assails Christianity, but offers no substitute for it, and it has none to offer.<sup>3:206</sup>

## A. The attack of naturalism:

Naturalism is a philosophy that **all things must be explained by physical processes**. Materialism, which is the companion philosophy of naturalism, “maintains that everything—past, present, and future—must be explained in terms of present-day natural process.”<sup>4:206</sup> Naturalism, which is often disguised today as modern-day environmentalism, assumes that all things are occurring in the world today through the processes of natural law. To the naturalist, there is no greater “being” higher than the processes of natural law. Enno Wolthuis explained it as follows,

It is a philosophy of life which is content to limit its interests to this world. It seeks to explain all we know, including man himself, in terms of physical processes which obey the natural laws discovered by the inductive, experimental sciences. What is real, it says, is that which we can describe scientifically; all else, if other there be, is forever unknown to us, so why bother about it.<sup>5:40</sup>

“The existence of God, immortality, disembodied souls or spirits, cosmic purpose or design, as these have customarily been interpreted by the great institutional religion, are denied by naturalists for the same generic reasons that they deny the existence of fairies, elves, leprechauns.”<sup>6:n.p.</sup> Naturalism is thus a basic enemy of religious faith and is most commonly the disease of the scientist whose mind has been absorbed by his study of the natural world. There is no room for supernaturalism in the philosophy of the true naturalists. This world view of life rules out anything such as miracles. To the naturalist, all so-called miracles of the Bible can be explained as the occurrence of some natural law.

## B. The attack of materialism:

Closely related to naturalism is the world view of materialism. Materialism is defined as a “theory that physical matter is the only real-

ity and that all being and processes and phenomena can be explained as manifestations or results of matter.”<sup>2:521</sup> Materialism maintains that matter in motion is the only thing that exists.<sup>7:37</sup> The former Chinese leader, Mao Tse-tung said, “There is nothing in the world apart from matter in motion.”<sup>8:20</sup> Such was the philosophy of the twentieth century communism. For this reason, religion was dispelled from the thinking of communists throughout the world. The twentieth century was ravaged by the onslaught of naturalistic and materialistic communists who sought to destroy God and religion from every society.

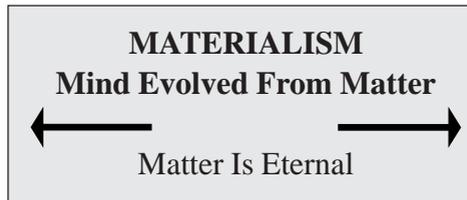
Concerning the thought processes of the human brain, Hamilton correctly stated the belief of the materialist. “Materialism holds that the chemical changes wrought in the brain cells throw off a sort of effluvium which we call consciousness, but as soon as the brain ceases to function, consciousness ceases to exist and vanishes forever.”<sup>9:18</sup> Julian Huxley, a materialistic evolutionist, expressed his materialistic philosophy when he stated the following concerning the activity of the brain, “The brain’s complexity of organization is almost infinitely greater than that of any other piece of *biological machinery* in ourselves or in any other animal ... [emphasis mine, R.E.D.]”<sup>10:73</sup> This is how most materialistic evolutionists look at the body. To the materialist we are all just machinery in motion. The thought processes of the brain are only the chemical reaction of material components that nature has arranged together for millions of years of evolution.

True materialists deny the existence of mind apart from matter. They affirm that matter is eternal. Matter is the only source from which the present world comes. The true materialist must deny God, miracles, the inspiration of the Bible and anything connected with supernaturalism. He believes that there is no supernatural above nature. Actually, “no man who is an exclusive materialist can have Christian faith. Nor could anyone who is a complete naturalist accept God or Christ, or the Bible as a divine book in any sense.”<sup>11:23</sup> “Strict materialism is necessarily atheistic. Materialism affirms that there is no God and that matter is the only eternal entity, or else matter created itself by evolving into existence from perfect nothingness. The latter case is to say that matter embodies the attributes of a creator.”<sup>12:18</sup> “In materialistic phi-

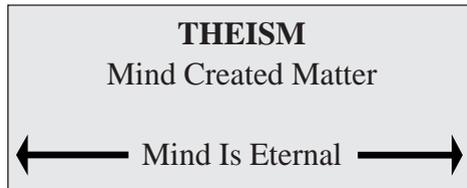
losophy there is no place for God. The materialist believes that matter, physical substance, is all there is in the universe and that all phenomena, including mind and personality, are due to physical agencies.”<sup>13:57</sup>

### C. The relationship between matter and mind:

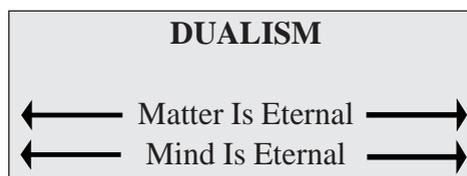
Materialists say that matter has existed throughout eternity in the past and will exist throughout eternity in the future. They affirm that mind is the result of a complex organization of matter itself.



Theists contend that mind has existed from all eternity and that matter is the result of the Mind who created it.

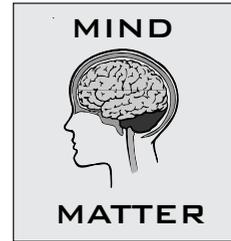


One is left with the choice that either matter created mind (consciousness, intellect, emotion, the idea of God, etc.), or Mind (God) created and sustains matter. **Dualism** contends that both Mind (God) and matter have existed from all eternity. That is, Mind is eternal and matter also is eternal. It is believed that both mind and matter have existed jointly throughout all eternity.



The following are at least two objections to the “eternity of matter” philosophy:

**1. Matter itself is not eternal.** Stoner wrote, “The argument, that matter was eternal and there could have been no creation, was found to be completely fallacious and has been replaced by the newer proven concept that energy can be changed into matter and matter into energy.”<sup>14:15</sup> The second law of thermodynamics is a scientific concept that “in any energy transfer or change, although the total amount of energy remains unchanged, the amount of usefulness and availability that the energy possesses is always decreased.”<sup>15:14</sup> In this process, therefore, energy may change from being available or useful to being unavailable or unuseful, however, the energy continues to exist. Many scientists, therefore, have come to the conclusion that it is energy that is the prime source of life and not matter. In fact, it is believed that the very essence of the material world is a composition of energy fibers that make up the atoms of all things. Many scientists have thus rejected the eternity of matter as we see it today. (More on this later.)



**2. Mind is master of matter.** Scientific discoveries which have disproved the naturalist, materialist and dualist’s claim that matter is eternal, have forced many scientists to find other answers for the origin of the material world. To the objective investigator, this shift has been toward theism. But to the one who refuses to have God in his world view, it has been toward agnosticism—he idea that we cannot know. Many just reject theistic explanations and resort to any explanation, as long as it does not involve the idea of God.

But mind is the master of matter. This is a logically, scientifically and philosophically accurate conclusion. The following points are factors that exemplify this conclusion:

**a. It is only assumed that matter is the eternal, ultimate reality.** The materialist “assumes that matter is all there is, and that consciousness, thought, intelligence, hate, love and feeling are all just

illusions.”<sup>2:37</sup> He often makes this assumption simply because he does not desire to search for anything that might lie beyond the material world. The problem is that the materialist cannot prove the eternity of matter. His belief is based entirely upon assumption, that is, that matter is all there is. Ramm correctly stated, “For a philosophy to be true it must not only be able to explain the universe in general, but itself in particular.”<sup>16:61</sup> Materialists cannot explain the origin of the material universe.

If the mind is only the activity and result of the interaction of matter, then why does it (the mind) determine that the ultimate reality is matter? Ramm stated, “... in natural processes there are no rights or wrongs. There are no erroneous *effects* that proceed from the correct *causes*.”<sup>16:65</sup> Matter is nonmoral and non-thinking. But we are moral and thinking beings. We transcend matter because we are moral, thinking beings. But from whence did this moral being come if all that is matter in motion?

**If materialism was true it could not prove to itself that it was true without transcending material processes.** In other words, matter would have to “think” in order to come up with the conclusion that it is all that there is. But even this observation completely destroys the concept of materialism. Matter would have self-realization, and thus, matter would not be all that there is. Matter would be above itself for it could think and come to conclusions. But materialism is a philosophy which cannot explain itself if all that exists is matter. If matter is all that there is, how can it explain how it functions? **The fact that we can explain at least to some degree, our being is evidence that we are more than just matter in motion.**

**b. Mind has the power of thought, memory, consciousness and comprehension.** From where did these abilities come? From that which can do none of these, that is, matter? Or, did they come from that which is Mind? Hamilton asked,

How could an impersonal force produce a personal being? How could that which neither thinks nor wills produce that which thinks and wills? The materialist declares that in a universe of chance anything is possible

if enough time is given to produce it, but no chance combination of atoms or molecules could produce something which does not consist of atoms or molecules: consciousness and soul!<sup>9:40</sup>

**c. Mind is moral; matter is not moral.** We ask, “How can a nonmoral force (matter) produce (create) a moral force?” On this subject the materialist is asking for a greater miracle than creation. He is asking for us to believe that matter produced the great emotions of love, hate, anger, and the actual process of thought. If matter is supposedly to have brought into existence these emotions, then is this not a greater act of creation than the creating act of an Eternal Mind which we call God?

Nonmoral matter cannot produce that which is moral. Thomas wrote, “... if mechanistic materialism be the true basic philosophy, then one is relieved of all personal and moral responsibility for his choices and decisions in life. He would have no moral inhibitions, except as he might voluntarily and arbitrarily choose.”<sup>11:25</sup> How did so much good get into the world if only matter exists? Since it is inconceivable that matter could produce that which is characteristic of human beings, we conclude that it is more reasonable to believe that an Eternal Being brought forth that which has the qualities and emotional abilities of man. We conclude, therefore, that all good is the result of a creative Mind that established moral laws.



**d. Mind can anticipate the future.** How can matter produce an anticipation of the future? This is another human quality that negates the concept that man originated from innate matter. Ramm stated,

Equally as phenomenal is the ability of the mind to anticipate the future. For a process to be conscious of process is absurd. Only that which transcends process can be conscious of process. The statement “meet me tomorrow at noon” can only be made by a mind that is aware of the process, yet is transcendent above it.<sup>16:65</sup>

If all that we are is matter in motion, then we would have no such

capability as future thinking. Ramm added, “The argument is that mind can transcend time and look forward or backward, a phenomenon that destroys with acidic burning the fabric of naturalism.”<sup>16:65</sup> “Matter” cannot conceive that it is in motion in the present and it cannot conceive itself as being in motion in the future. In other words, mind is above matter because it can anticipate the future by contemplating present processes. The very ability of man destroys the concept that matter is all that there is. It is more difficult to believe that energy at any microscopic level could through billions of years come to the conclusion that anticipation of the future would be possible. Is it now so difficult to believe that there would be an Eternal Being who could have simply called into existence that which is after His own image? The creationist is still justified in saying that it is easier to believe in God than in the “creative” power of matter.

#### **D. The fallacy of materialism:**

The materialist assumes that all that now exists has geologically and biologically evolved from the small particles of matter. However, he cannot explain anything that exists. The materialist can give no answers for being. He tries to replace Christian faith with another faith that is based upon assumption and improbability. It might be added that the materialist tries to replace Christian faith with a faith that is insupportable and unreasonable. Such a faith is certainly an insufficient faith in comparison to Christian faith. He is actually calling on us to believe in the “creative” power of matter in motion.

We must conclude that it is more reasonable to believe that Mind has existed from all eternity and that matter is its product. This is the more rational belief simply because it makes more sense. Dehoff wrote,

Matter is known by its qualities, mind by its activities; consciousness reveals the one, the senses the other; one is dead, the other alive; one is senseless, the other is full of thought and feeling; one is passive, the other active; one is amenable to physical law, the other to intellectual and moral law.<sup>17:18</sup>

It is encouraging to see in recent years a slight shift in the scientific field away from materialism, at least, in some areas.<sup>18:88ff</sup> Andrew Rule stated, “But developments in science have also been such as to render the adequacy of materialism highly dubious and the very concept of matter no longer appropriate. The processes of physics at the hands of the physicists themselves have been the basic cause of this change.”<sup>19:712</sup> The mechanistic and materialistic explanations of things that exist have and are continually being undermined by scientific investigation. Philosophy has already dug the grave; science is shoveling on the dirt. Matter has been replaced by energy in the realm of physics.<sup>19:712</sup> Rule added, “If these are sound interpretations of the contemporary situation, then the very concept of materialism would seem to be outmoded and currently meaningless.”<sup>19:712</sup>

We would not, however, affirm that the agnostic scientist is researching his way to God. The point is that some scientists in many fields of study have reached conclusions in their investigations that have moved them to question the hypothesis that the universe is the result of chance or spontaneous generation. There are those who have investigated the smallest detail of matter and have concluded that matter itself could not have sparked the beginning. There is no question that there was a beginning. But what initiated the beginning is what has moved some to conclude that matter alone could not have been the Prime Mover. If not matter, then what, or who? The believer has always had the answer to this question. The problem with the hard-core materialist, however, is that if he comes to the conclusion that God is the prime mover, then he has to accept the fact that this God is above man. And if God is above man, then man must give account of his actions. He must allow God to determine his behavior. This is too much for most people of the world. Therefore, God will not be allowed into the university science laboratory. As long as He is kept in chapels, the scientist feels unthreatened by any moral obligations that would incur from a belief in God.

## **E. Denials of the existence of God:**

Modernism is a term that is used to refer to the skeptic realm of thought wherein one denies the intervention of God into the physical world. It is thus a very subtle denial of God Himself and the supernatural realm of His existence. Though contrary to the very nature of the existence of God, it is often disguised in thinking of modern-day “theology.” In other words, there are those theologians in the religious world today who deny the intervention of God into the physical world. They deny miracles, the resurrection of Jesus and any other supernatural event that has been recorded in the Bible. Therefore, we must recognize modernism as a denial of all that substantiates Christianity above all other religions of the world. Bales was right when he stated,

When modernism does not give us a “dead God”, it gives us a “dumb God” who has not spoken to man, or a “stammering God” whose message in the Bible is so filled with uncertainty that we cannot know when it is God speaking or when it is a pious presentation of man’s ignorance.<sup>20:30</sup>

Consistent modernists must logically lead themselves to anti-supernaturalism. They must deny all that is miraculous. Modernism thus destroys faith in the Bible.

To the extent that modernism is consistent in its naturalism, and anti-supernaturalism, to that extent it pushes God away from man and silences His voice through undermining faith in the Bible. **When it is fully consistent, in its anti-supernaturalism, it denies the existence of God** [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].<sup>20:28</sup>

Modernism is always a threat to Christian faith, not because of its reasonableness but because of its aggressiveness. It is a threat from within as well as a threat from without. It attacks the Christian faith from



every corner. In one of the first bulletins of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, it was proclaimed, “The hour to overthrow the Church has come. Arise, ye prisoners of the priests! Strike down the God superstition! ... Stand up. Cast aside supernatural faith

and fear! Be men!.”<sup>21:n.p.</sup> Huxley stated, “We must now be prepared to abandon the god hypothesis and its corollaries like divine revelation of unchanging truths, and to change over from a supernaturalistic to a naturalistic view of human destiny.”<sup>22:101</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, an atheistic German philosopher and promoter of the “God is dead” theology once stated, “I regard Christianity as the most fatal and seductive lie that has ever existed—as the greatest and the most impious lie ....” David Hume wrote in reference to the existence of God, “Whatever we conceive as existent, we can also conceive as nonexistent.”<sup>23:n.p.</sup>

We live in a world today which is still bent on denying the God of the Bible. Such denials come from the scientific world, the philosophical world and the world of non-Christian religions. Unfortunately, it often comes from those who profess themselves to be “Christian” after a supposed belief in the Bible.

Many philosophers and scientists have accepted and propagated those theologies that deny the existence of the supernatural. Supposed “theologians” have also harbored and propagated theologies that deny the very existence of the supernatural. In doing so, they have led believers into a realm of religious thought that is based on human reasoning instead of Divine revelation. It goes without question that the man-made religions of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and a host of other world religions do not profess the God of the Bible. But when those from within the “Christian” camp deny the very foundation upon which Christianity is made distinctive from all other religious beliefs of the world, then Christianity is just another religion of the world.

Speaking for modernistic thought, J. J. C. Smart stated, “There can never be a *logical contradiction* in denying that God exists.”<sup>24:34</sup> Baier wrote, “It is no longer seriously in dispute that the notion of a logically necessary being is self-contradictory. Whatever can be conceived of as existing can equally be conceived of as not existing.”<sup>25:8</sup> From within the theological world, John A. T. Robinson, in his book *Honest to God*, expressed his modernistic thoughts thus, “But the signs are that we are reaching the point at which the whole conception of a God ‘out there’, which has served us so well since the collapse of the three decker universe, is itself becoming more of a hindrance than a

help.”<sup>26:15,16</sup> Thomas J. J. Altizer, wrote, “Indeed, the first axiom of an authentically contemporary theology is the acceptance of the death of God.”<sup>27:107</sup> A professor of a theological seminary stated the following contemporary theology of many supposed “Christian” religions in *Time Magazine*.

For contemporary theologians, God is a dimming concept. “Christian Atheists” stand ready to write this obituary .... Religion in the past has hindered rather than helped man’s self-development .... In the future, Christianity may not conceive God as being – which means, literally, that God does not exist since existence is a property of beings only .... And, in so far as the word “God” has become a symbol of an outdated supernatural idol, the church may well resign itself to silence as to the name of the being it serves and preaches.<sup>12:31</sup>

In the industrial world, the concept of God is under attack from both the philosophical and scientific world. This same attack has come from some in the religious world. The Christian’s position is thus under attack from both the non-Christian world and from those who propose to be of the Christian world view. It would be just to say, therefore, that any theologian who would attack the supernatural foundation upon which Christianity is built is no theologian at all. Such a one has forsaken any right to theological discussion. Since he denies the intervention of a God that is beyond this world, then certainly he has no right to even call himself a theologian who deals with religious matters. He has given up the supernatural, and thus, has to assume the position that we are only matter in motion.

The Bible states, “*The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’*” (Ps 14:1). It also says that there are those who **refuse** to have God in their knowledge (Rm 1:28). There has always been those who have cried out, “There is no God!” As long as there are those who refuse to subject their lives to God’s laws, these futile cries will continue. “Atheism is the leprosy of the heart, distilled wickedness, bringing utter gloom to hope, and resigning everyone to oblivion and nothingness.”<sup>28:81</sup> H. H. Farmer stated, “There can be no question that many people find

belief in God difficult because there is in their mind a bias which predisposes them against it.”<sup>29:129</sup> That bias is often the unwillingness of man to recognize that there is a Higher Power to which he must eventually give account. In man’s drive to “call his own shots” or to “do it his way,” there is the desire to free oneself from the accountability of paying for one’s own wrongdoing. We live in a world where men are prejudiced against the idea of God simply because they want to set their own moral standards.

There are those who simply deny the existence of the God of the Bible because they are ignorant of the Bible. There are those who have thus created a god after their own image. This god condones their sinful life and their diabolical philosophies of life. These “gods after Baal” allow man to establish his own moral laws and governments. In the name of religion, atrocities are committed against humanity. Under the name of government religion, military forces are mustered against any who would deny their god. Such concepts of god are only the desires of men to have their way in the world with a god who approves of their sin.

## **F. The futility of man in the absence of God:**

Without a consciousness of God, man’s soul is deprived of a most needed conscious-securing factor. Man is a physical being and he is also a spiritual being. If the physical needs of man are fulfilled in his life without fulfilling the spiritual needs, man’s being is totally unbalanced. Many years ago the philosopher Nietzsche manifested this situation of himself and others like him who reject a consciousness of God. He wrote, “Where is – my home? For it do I ask and seek, and have sought, but have not found it. O eternal ever where, O eternal nowhere, O eternal-in-vain.”<sup>30:274</sup> The one who gives up God also assumes the futility of having no answer for his origins or his destiny. He is left in life with the philosophy that this world is all there is. Hume stated,

Where am I or what? From what cause do I receive my existence, and to what condition shall I return ...? I am confounded with all these quota-

tions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of every member and faculty.<sup>31:4,7</sup>

Hume and others like him were philosophically lost; they were also theologically lost. Their naturalism denied any supernaturalism, and thus they had nowhere to go. The motion picture director Ferdrico Feline explained the situation of those like himself, who had no faith and no spiritual security,

Like many people, I have no religion and I am just sitting in a small boat drifting with the tide. I live in the doubts of my duties .... I think there is dignity in this, just to go on working .... This is the way things are, you say, now what are we to do? Today we stand naked, defenseless, and more alone than at any time in history. We are waiting for something, perhaps another miracle, perhaps the Martians. Who knows?<sup>32:85</sup>

Altizer confessed that to accept his philosophy – the “God is dead” theology—is to open “the way to madness, dehumanization, and even to the most totalitarian form of society yet realized in history. Who can doubt that a real passage to the death of God must issue in either an abolition of man or in the birth of a new and transfigured humanity?”<sup>33:22</sup> Altizer was right. When one forsakes a knowledge of God and a consciousness of accountability to God, there are no limits to which the human mind and behavior can go. The “transfigured humanity,” or better, “disfigured humanity,” of Altizer can only be the society described by Paul in Romans 1:28-32. This society—the society described by Paul—also “*refused to have God in their knowledge.*” Paul describes them as “... *being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers ....*” This is exactly the type of society the philosophy of Altizer and others like him would try to construct.

Men cannot survive without God in their societies. Those societies that have tried, go backward, not forward.

To live without God is nothing but torture .... Man cannot live without kneeling, he could not bear it, nobody would be capable of it; if he rejects God, he kneels before an idol of wood or of gold of an imaginary one ... they are all idolaters and not atheists. That's what they ought to be called.<sup>34:71</sup>

“Atheism doth utterly root out of men’s minds all the feat of doing evil.”<sup>35:n.p.</sup> “When men cease to believe in God they do not believe in nothing; they believe in anything.”<sup>36:133</sup> “The best proof of God’s existence,” Sullivan warned, “is what follows when we deny it.”<sup>37:n.p.</sup> Yes, Ralph Waldo Emerson was right when he said, “Skepticism is slow suicide.” Any society that denies the God of heaven has commenced sociological suicide. Death will eventually come in the society through its citizens who will morally reap the whirlwind of sin, for without a consciousness of accountability to God, man will create their own moral codes.

## **G. Sociological chaos without God-ordained morals:**

Stephen Charnock (1628-1680) in his arguments for the existence of God stated a major consequence of atheistic thinking. He stated that atheism “would introduce all evil into the world.”<sup>38:59</sup> He went on to say, “If you take away God, you take away conscience, and thereby all measures and rules of good and evil. And how could any laws be made when the measure and standard of them were removed?”<sup>38:59</sup>

Charnock was right. If we take away the eternal standard of moral law (God), we have no fixed standard left. If man was a god unto himself, his standard would become more base as time progressed. This is why there is a difference between the God of the Bible and the god of world religions. The God of the Bible has established eternal moral standards to which man must submit. The god of world religions is a god created after the moral desires of man himself. World religions are generated out of a desire to live after one’s own standards. Once the standards of behavior are established in the minds and behavior of the society, the next step is to create a god or spirit who would condone the behavior.

Men seek to please themselves. Man is a religious being with a conscience. What happens to a religious being who seeks to pacify his own conscience is that he creates both a religion and god who says everything is fine. He creates a religion after his own desires because he cannot live with his conscience. We are thus strapped in society with “Bibleless” religions that are controlled by man’s own moral wanderings. We create a god after our own image. What follows is a secular religion that is created to meet our own needs. We thus live in a world of secular religion, religion that has been constructed for the convenience of men.

**Without the God of the Bible, we are unable to determine right from wrong for there would be no right or wrong.** When Israel forgot God, and thus they created their own Baal gods, their society degenerated to a hideous cruelty of mankind (See Jr 3:21; Ez 22:12; Rm 1:24-32). Such has happened to societies throughout history and throughout the world. When Israel gave up a knowledge of God, God gave them over to follow after their own devices. The same has happened in societies throughout the world today. God has given over societies to reap the consequences of their own sin because they have given up a knowledge of God. Bales wrote,

Although there are atheists who are held back by their background or surroundings, from the repudiation of moral law, when the atheist is consistent, he denies the reality of moral law .... As long as men recognize that God and moral law exist, they can be urged to obey him, but once they deny their existence there is no adequate foundation on which to cultivate a law-abiding spirit.<sup>39:324</sup>

Moral law must always have an ultimate standard as a foundation. Moral law must have an eternal foundation upon which to be founded. Therefore, there must always be a “higher court” where the final decision is made. But atheists and those who create their own gods are trying to do away with that “higher court.” Thomas F. Heinze concluded,

There is often a real difference between the conduct of one who is convinced that God exists and that he is responsible to Him, as he tries to

obey God's command to love even his enemies and to treat them as he would like to be treated, and the conduct of one who does not believe in God, but thinks that it would be best for the race to eliminate whomever he happens to consider inferior.<sup>40:101</sup>

## H. The dilemma with doubt:

Here is the point. **One would have to be God in order to deny God.** Theodore Christlieb wrote, "The denial of the existence of God involves a perfectly monstrous hypothesis; it is, when looked at more closely, an unconscionable assumption. Before one can say that the world is without a God, he must first have become thoroughly conversant with the whole world."<sup>41:143</sup> In other words, "it would be necessary for you to know everything before you could dogmatically affirm that there is no God, because if you did not know everything, the very thing which may have escaped your notice is God."<sup>42:195</sup>

In order for the atheist to logically deny God, he would have to search every corner of the universe.<sup>43:40-43</sup> He would have to look behind every star at the same time, be everywhere at the same time, and know everything. "If there is one thing that he does not know, that thing might be that God exists."<sup>44:6</sup> The atheist must be acquainted with every source of truth, know all causes of existence, and explain all that has happened in the course of history before he can say that there is no God. One would have to be omnipresent and omniscient before he could affirm that there is not God. "In short," concluded Christlieb, "to be able to affirm authoritatively that no God exists, a man must be omniscient and omnipresent, that is, he himself must be God; and then after all there would be one."<sup>41:144</sup>

## I. The futility of denying the existence of God:

There are those who claim themselves to be atheists, not knowing the illogical reasoning of this philosophical system of thought. And then some people are as atheistic as the person who said, "Thank God I'm an atheist."

Atheism is not philosophy without grave social consequences. It is an unreasonable system of thought unsupported by evidence. It would be safe to say that most people who have claimed to be atheist have not fully examined the dilemma of atheistic reasoning. They have not explored the final consequences of this system of thought. An atheist is a man without any visible means of support since it is a system of denial. Atheism cannot be proved. And since it cannot be proved, it is only an assumption. The atheist can only assume that God does not exist simply because he cannot be God in order to deny the existence of God.

The atheist's only attack is denial. He can deny but he cannot prove. Oldam rightly said, "The atheist is but the incarnation of a negative idea. He is nothing but a mere negation."<sup>44:n.p.</sup> Patmore once said, "Atheism in art, as well as in life, has only to be pressed to its last consequences in order to become ridiculous."<sup>45:n.p.</sup> "Reality is such that when man sets out to deny God, man ends up accepting concepts which deny man's own rationality. His own logic demands that he deny that his own arguments are rational."<sup>43:44</sup> And if the atheist affirms that his arguments are rational, then he has proved that a rational being exists. Now he must explain from whence this rational being originated since he believes that we are only matter in motion. He has left himself with the necessity of believing that matter "created" intellect, feelings and emotions.

## **J. The desire for a Higher Power:**

It may be that the atheist cannot find God for the same reason a thief cannot find a policeman. Honest inquiry, apart from bias, does lead to a theistic explanation of the universe. Atheists do not give an explanation for the universe because they cannot. They have no answers. Without any consideration for any other possibilities, they simply affirm that evolutionary processes brought everything together. Ewing lamented that "the usual modern philosophical views opposed to theism do not try to give any rational explanation of the world at all, but just take it as a brute fact not to be explained."<sup>46:122</sup> Someone once

said, “An atheist’s most embarrassing moment is when he feels profoundly thankful for something, but can’t think of anybody to thank for it.”

Reason, however, points to theism. True thinking leads to theism. It is true that “in every land in which philosophy has flourished, there have been profound thinkers who have sought to discover some metaphysical basis for a rational belief in the existence of some supreme being or beings.”<sup>46:280</sup> Bacon was right when he said,

A little philosophy inclineth man’s mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men’s minds about to religion. For while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together; it must needs fly to providence and Deity.<sup>47:n.p.</sup>

There are problems in every system of belief. There are challenges in one’s affirmative argumentation for the existence of God because we live in a physical environment. These problems may never be resolved by our finite minds. At least, we will never have all the answers in this life. However, if we concentrate on the problems, we will swell a small, insignificant and accepted doubt into rank skepticism. Such will breed all forms of irrational reasoning and denial. Benjamin B. Warfield emphasized this point when he stated,

“When men give their undivided attention to these difficulties, they may become, and they have become, so perplexed in mind, that they have felt unable to believe that God is, or that they themselves exist, or that there is any external world without themselves.”<sup>48:128</sup>

Theism is an explanation for our existence. Atheism is a denial of theism’s explanation, pointing out some problems but offering no alternative explanation except a system of evolution from innate matter. Argumentation based upon the power of denial is as profitable as a man trying to catch a handful of air. No matter how much he tries, he still ends up with nothing. Nothing is exactly what the atheist has to

offer. He has neither positive hope or standards by which men can direct their lives. His philosophy of life, therefore, ends in a frustrating existence, for he has given up that which gives meaning to life.

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## Chapter 4 THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Most religious people believe in God because it is a heritage that was handed down to them from their fathers. They believe simply because belief is the right thing to do. There is nothing wrong with a simple faith that God exists and that He works in one's life. However, simple faith that is not based on one's knowledge of the evidence that God has provided to substantiate faith, will usually crumble when attacked by the first forces of skepticism. Truly, there are too many rusty swords in the Christian camp on this subject. Too few have seriously examined the evidence for the existence of God. Most people simply believe just because they have never been challenged as to why they believe.

The above is certainly not what Peter meant in 1 Peter 3:15 when he said that Christians must be ready to give a defense for their beliefs. In giving a reason for our hope means more than quoting a few scriptures to one who does not accept the Bible to be the word of God. God expects us to give a reason for our belief to those who neither accept Him or His word. For this reason, Christians must be able to reason outside scripture quotation in order to defend the God who is greater than the Bible.

The Christian is not only in a battle to defend the existence of God, he is often struggling to defend the God of the Bible. We live in a world of many religions. All these religions have some concept of deity. We live in a religious world where men ignorantly worship the same "unknown god" the Athenians worshipped about two thousand years ago (At 17:23). However, most of these worshipers do not have a concept of the Deity that is described in the pages of the Scriptures. As Christians, therefore, it is our responsibility not only to defend the existence of an eternal Intelligence, but we must also defend the God of the Bible. We must at least make an effort to refocus men's minds on the true God of the Bible.

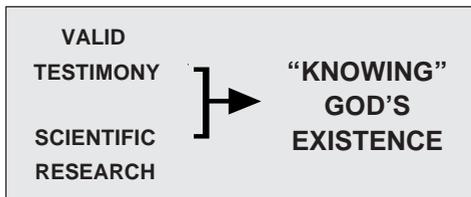
It would not be reasonable to believe that if God exists, that He

would conceal Himself from His creation. What would we consider God to be if He created man, and then, left Himself without evidence. We do not believe the God of the Bible is a God who has left Himself without evidence of existence.

Since the above would be a logical conclusion—that God would give evidence of His existence—then we would assume that it is the responsibility of the Christian to investigate such evidence. Since God would not expect us to believe without evidence that logically leads to His existence, then we must assume that He expects us to use our “thinking cap” in order to search after Him.

The Christian can know that God exists in the same manner that he can know any other non-experienced truth. It is a matter of deduction from the evidence. True, we cannot know God’s existence by use of the scientific method. God is not the result of a scientific experiment. The scientific method deals with empirical evidence and research. The scientific method is a way “to know.” However, it is not the only way to know. In reasoning concerning the existence of God we are not reasoning with such evidence as presented exclusively by the scientific method. We cannot smell, taste, touch, hear or see God. We only smell, taste, touch, hear and see the manifestations of His existence. We deduct from the things that exist that He is there. In the Bible we have a record of His manifestations throughout history. It is our task, therefore, to review the testimony of the Bible in order to determine the Bible’s validity in reference to being evidence for the existence of God. If the testimony in the Bible is valid, then we must accept the Bible as a true document that gives evidence for the existence of God. As evidence, it cannot be ignored in anyone’s investigation concerning the existence of God.

In the area of Christian evidences we also work with **testimony**. This is testimony of those who have heard God and have experienced His great works. For Christians today, the record of the testimony of those who actually experienced God is the founda-



tion upon which they build their faith. It is through a study of the Bible that Christians gain faith in the fact that God exists. In a similar way—through the examination of testimony—we know that historical figures as King Arthur of England existed by examining the recorded testimony of others. In this way we can know that God exists. We can know that God exists in the same way that we know and believe most of the knowledge we possess concerning historical events, most of which we have never experienced. This “knowing,” therefore, is not based upon an empirical encounter with a manifestation of God. It is based on a belief in the record of the testimony of others who did experience God.

Paul proclaimed that he experienced a vision of Jesus on the Damascus road (At 9:1-7). His recorded testimony of this event is evidence that something happened in his life to transform his personality and behavior from a persecutor of Christianity to a proclaimer of the sonship of Jesus. At the conclusion of His life he wrote, *“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day”* (2 Tm 1:12). We thus have the testimony of one who suffered greatly because of his actual empirical experience with Jesus on the Damascus road. His changed life. His persecution for what he believed. These things have been recorded for our study, and thus, belief that he actually experienced something on the Damascus road. This is evidence that God exists simply because we cannot explain the transformation in the life of Paul apart from his personal experience with Jesus on the Damascus road. The Bible is filled with the testimony of such men.

We must remember that it is not the burden of the believer to **prove** the existence of God. It is his task to examine the evidences which have always logically and reasonably resulted in belief. On the other hand, it is the burden of the atheist to prove that the evidences **do not** support God’s existence. When an atheist affirms that God does not exist, he must explain why the theistic evidences we use should not lead one to believe in a Divine existence and intervention in the lives of men. He must explain to us how and why Paul changed so radically in

his life. It is not only the life of Paul, it is the life of thousands of individuals who are recorded in a document (the Bible) that was written over a period of more than fourteen hundred years. The atheist must explain to us why so many people throughout history have changed and maintained their lives according to the law of the One they experienced. The burden of proof, therefore, is on the atheist's shoulders, not the theist's shoulders.

The following theistic arguments do affirm the existence of God. They are set forth not to "prove" the existence of God. They affirm that it is more reasonable to believe that there is a Higher Power than this material world. Therefore, they have been valid and proclaimed for centuries because of the power of their reasoning. Men of history have formed them into words. However, their origin and manifestation was purposed by their logical conclusion, God, from the very beginning of time.

One argument by itself does not necessarily lead to a total commitment to believe. But taken as a whole, their overwhelming conclusion is that God is. Therefore, the atheist must not only destroy one argument, he must break every link in this chain of argumentation that ties faith to the existence of God. The end of the arguments is that God is.

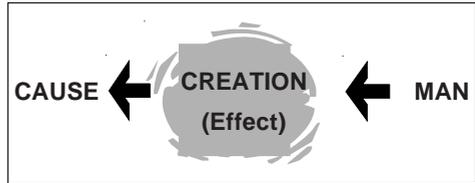
### A. **The argument from cause:**

The argument from cause, commonly called **the cosmological argument**, is the affirmation that there must be a cause for the cosmos. Something must have caused the existence of that which we empirically behold. It is "the argument that the cosmos is an effect produced by a Primal Cause, which, from the nature of the case, must be a Person."<sup>1:46</sup> It is that "Person" that believers affirm is God.

This argument is one of the oldest formalized arguments of the theistic arguments.<sup>2:n.p.</sup> The apostle Paul mentions the basic concept of this argument in Romans 1:20. "*For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity ...*" (ASV).

He mentioned the same argument to idolaters in Lystra. “*He [God] did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*” (At 14:17). Paul emphasizes the fact that the present existing things give witness to the existence of a Creator, a First Cause. Through the things made, therefore, the reasoner can “see” the invisible. We might say that man, through God’s creation, can “see” God. In other words, we perceive that there is a God by the creation we see around us.

This is actually an **indirect** argument for the existence of God. By examining the creation (an effect) we conclude that it was caused by a First Cause. By examining creation we can look



beyond creation to that which started it all. This is what Paul affirmed in Romans 1:20. We see the invisible (God) through observation of the visible.

This argument is only a first step in demonstrating a Divine cause of the world that we perceive through our senses. It manifests that there must be a Primal Cause. However, it does not seek to completely explain that Cause. Other arguments are needed to supplement this argument in order to bring one to the God of the Bible.<sup>3:104</sup>

The reasoning of the argument from cause expresses the need for a first and **adequate** cause for all existing things. Aquinas stated, “That which does not exist begins to exist only through something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence—which is absurd.”<sup>3:54</sup> Therefore, to have something we must start with something. That Something which first existed must have the power to bring about that which follows His existence.

Aquinas simply stated that **something cannot come from nothing**. Charnock stated it, “For as nothing can have a being from itself, so nothing can appear by itself and its own force.”<sup>4:35,36</sup> Since something now exists, we concluded that that which brought all that now

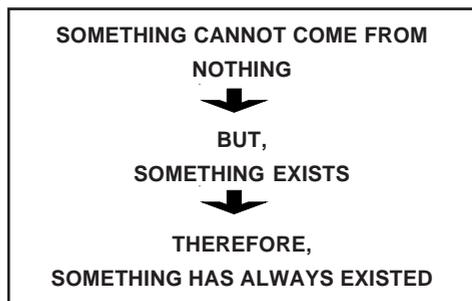
exists into existence was adequate to create.

The argument from cause deals with cause and effect—**every effect must have an adequate cause**. The truth that something cannot come from nothing is **axiomatic**. That is, it is a truth within itself. It does not need proof. A circle is round, not because it is proved to be round but because circles are round. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, not because it is so proved by logic but because it is a law of being. It is obvious. Such is an axiomatic truth. The statement, “Something cannot come from nothing” is axiomatic in that it needs no proof. Its truth is inherent within itself and its truth stands without contradiction.

**1. Something must come from something.** Perception through our senses affirms that **something is**. We exist. The universe exists. But from where did we come? Did we come from a primordial goo as the evolutionists say we do? We affirm that such thinking is ridiculous. Something had to cause that which now exists. All that exists did not just spontaneously come into being. Therefore, we must wonder what caused the things that now exist? From where did we come? What is our origin?

From the two premises, “Something cannot come from nothing” and “Something exists,” we can form the following syllogistic system of thought”

The above formulation of thought has been advocated by many and is the heart of the cosmological argument. Keyser explained, “There must be an ultimate and eternal something. If there ever was a time when there was nothing, nothing could have ever been.”<sup>5:14</sup> That which existed before that which we perceive today, must have been adequate to



bring into being the worlds that now exist. From this we conclude that an omnipotent Being has caused the existence of our world.

There is something existent now: therefore there must always have been something existent. If there ever was a time when there was nothing, nothing could ever have been—nothing could ever have come into existence. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. So there must be something that is eternal and uncreated. But that which has existed from eternity must be self-existent, infinite and absolute. That which has always existed must be sufficient in itself, and can be dependent on nothing else than itself.<sup>5:14</sup>

That something which has always been must be self-sufficient. To the Christian, this is God. And this God is a sufficient answer, that is, He does not need a further answer or explanation.<sup>6:15</sup> The totality of who God is—though we do not understand all that God is—is a sufficient cause for the present universe.

**2. Matter is not sufficient.** The materialist contends that the first cause was matter, some primordial slime. But that which has creative power must have the qualities of that which is caused, **and more**. We are talking about qualities of being (personality), not substance. God created dirt, but that does not mean that He Himself is composed of dirt. He created mind, personality, volition and thought. He Himself, therefore, must at least have these qualities that are above the material world. “Reason and science demand that the original Cause of all phenomena that appear in the cosmos must have in itself all the qualities and powers exhibited in the phenomena—in other words, an adequate cause.”<sup>5:4</sup> We conclude that because we as emotional and rational beings exist, the cause of our being must at least have these qualities and more in order to bring us into existence.

The First Cause must be infinite, independent and adequate. “We must come to something that is first in every kind,” wrote Charnock, “and this first must have a cause, not of the same kind, but infinite and independent; otherwise men run into inconceivable labyrinths and contradictions.”<sup>4:31</sup> “The first cause must have been adequate: but matter is not adequate as a first cause because for matter to have produced life and consciousness and mind, so distinct from matter, it would have been the same as getting something out of nothing; for these things are not found in matter.”<sup>7:141</sup>

The material world, therefore, does not explain itself. Matter can offer no explanation for the cosmos. If we are simply the product of an evolutionary formulation of matter in motion, then how could this higher evolved state of matter turn around so as to explain how “it” came to such a high state of development?

The universe needs more explanation than that which any materialist can possibly give. God, however, is a sufficient explanation for the existence of the universe and man and one that does not have to be explained.<sup>6:18</sup> If God is not an adequate explanation, then we will have to seek another that will explain itself.<sup>6:18</sup> If we followed this route of reasoning, we would still end up with God as being an adequate explanation for the universe, for no other explanation can be found. Our search for a sufficient cause for our being should always end in finding God.

**3. *The rational cannot come from the irrational. Something cannot come from nothing, but something exists; therefore something has always existed.*** This true logic is an argument which must be answered by the materialist. The problem is that he cannot find an adequate answer from the materialist for the existence of all things. Without changing the thrust of the above statement, we can change the words and make it apply to mind and consciousness. The following is a valid extension of this reasoning:

- A. A rational (thinking) being cannot come from an irrational thing. (If it could, this would be equivalent to something coming from nothing).
- B. But, a rational (thinking) being exists.
- C. Therefore, a rational (thinking) being has always existed.

The above is the basis of the argument from cause. In this argument we reason that intelligence is behind the universe. God, a rational, thinking being, has always existed. He is an adequate cause. “Something now is, and since something does not come from nothing, we know something has always existed. If at one time in the remote past there was not anything, there would not be anything now. Out of nothing comes nothing.”<sup>8:121</sup> Therefore, the fact that something now exists,

including mind, must conclude that something has always existed. Reid concluded,

“It cannot be that all things are only capable of existing: there must be something that is necessary. Further, this necessary something must have its necessity in its own right, per se, and so may be cause of necessity in other things. ‘And this all men call God’.”<sup>9:115</sup>

It is from the above reasoning that we conclude that that which has always existed must be indigenous of eternal existence. In other words, that from which all things have originated must be capable of existing beyond that which is created. Since nothing that is created is eternal, eternity must be indigenous with that which brought the temporal into existence. God, therefore, must be eternal because He has brought into existence that which is not eternal. Matter is temporary simply because its existence is contingent on the eternity of God who is eternal within Himself. We can exist throughout eternity, therefore, only if we remain in the presence of God who alone is the source of eternity.

## **B. The argument from design:**

The argument from design is many times referred to as the **teleological** argument. Teleology is “the study of evidences of design in nature.”<sup>10:906</sup> “The teleological argument is the argument for the divine existence which is based on the evidence of design, purpose, and adaptation in the creation.”<sup>1:30</sup> The argument is the argument that affirms that the “... order pervading the inorganic, organic, and human realm is indicative of an intended plan in an intelligent and good Purposer.”<sup>11:763</sup>

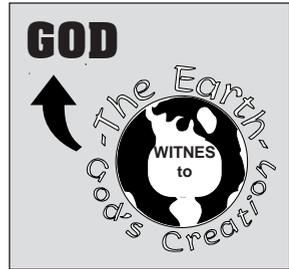
In the philosophical world, the argument from the design and order of the universe and nature was first suggested by Plato and Aristotle.<sup>9:16</sup> It was not formulated into philosophical thought until Thomas Aquinas. In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas stated, “Now we see that in the world things of different natures accord in one order, not seldom or fortuitously, but always or for the most part. Therefore it follows that there is someone by whose providence the world is gov-

erned. And this we call God.”<sup>12:11</sup>

This argument compliments the cosmological argument (the argument from cause) in that it calls “attention to the adaptive interrelation of the various parts or aspects of the universe to each other in a way conducive to the production and conservation of human values.”<sup>11:763</sup> The cosmological argument demands a cause of the now existing order of things. The teleological argument says that the “order of things” was so designed with purpose. Both arguments support one another in bringing our minds to the conclusion that there is something greater than this universe that brought all that exists into being.

The following points are the heart of this argument:

**1. *The creation manifests the glory of God.*** The Bible holds man responsible for belief in that it affirms that the creation is sufficient evidence to warrant theistic conclusions. As quoted before, Paul wrote, “*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*” (Rm 1:20). Paul states that the creation itself is evidence for belief. The creation was caused. It has design. It therefore points to a Designer.



The Psalmist wrote, “*You [God] who set Your glory above the heavens*” (Ps 8:1). “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork*” (Ps 19:1). “*Let the heavens declare His righteousness ...*” (Ps 50:6; see 139:14). Paul added, “*He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*” (At 14:17). The Bible affirms that man should be able to examine the things of the world and deduct by his examination of these things that a Creator exists. Job 12:7-9 reads, “*But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this ...*”

Honest inquiry of the creation leads men to the Creator. This leading of men to God shows that the argument from design is a strong argument for the existence of a Higher Being. Recognition of design demands recognition of a designer. This is a principle for all correct reasoning in this area of study.

One should not overstress this argument to the extent that it be used to discover the supreme characteristics of the God of the Bible. The argument only affirms that there is something other than matter in the universe and that this universe is not the result of chance. It is the result of an all-powerful being. The argument does not lead one to understand the character of this Being that is above the material world. Only through the direct revelation of God do we understand His loving nature.

Men of all centuries have wondered at the law, order and design of the universe. Elmer W. Maurer, a research chemist, said, "It is impossible for me to conceive the law and order of the universe as being the result of pure chance. The odds are simply too great. Law, order and intelligence go hand in hand."<sup>13:201,202</sup> Plato stated, "The earth, the sun and stars, and the universe itself; and the charming variety of the seasons, demonstrate the existence of a Divinity."<sup>14:n.p.</sup> Isaac Newton concluded, "The existence of a Being endowed with intelligence and wisdom is a necessary inference from a study of celestial mechanics."<sup>15:n.p.</sup>

Order prevails upon mankind to believe in an eternal Orderer. An examination of a few examples of design and order will manifest this obvious truth. Bales stated,

If there were no order in the universe, man could not exist, for he is not a disorganized arrangement of matter, and thus could not study the universe. Furthermore, if there were no order in the universe, man would not be able to discover order, and yet he discovers order everywhere he turns.<sup>8:122</sup>

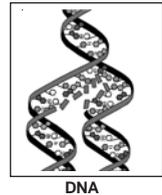
It is true that man discovers order everywhere he turns. This order evidences a great Intelligence which created this world.

**a. The cell world:** There are about 100 trillion cells in an average adult human body. Some cells are so small that it would take over **six thousand** arranged end to end to cover two and a half centimeters. It is estimated that nerve cells can live as long as 100 years. White blood cells live about thirteen days and red blood cells about 120 days.



A single red blood cell contains about 280 million molecules of hemoglobin. Each molecule has 64,500 times the weight of a hydrogen atom and is made up of about 10,000 atoms of hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur, plus four atoms of iron, which are more important than the rest.<sup>16:64,65</sup>

Each human cell contains forty-six chromosomes. In each chromosome there is what is called **Deoxyribonucleic acid**, or DNA. DNA is the programmed “computer,” the age long blueprint of all heredity traits.<sup>17:24,25</sup> DNA is contained in the nucleus of every cell and determines every trait of an individual, such as, color of eyes, height and skin color.<sup>18:58,59</sup> These traits are locked into the DNA structure of every cell and have been so since the creation of man. This represents fantastic order. Could this structure have evolved from matter by chance?



The **Mycoplasma homines** H39 is the smallest single-celled form of life known to man.<sup>19:198</sup> However, it is believed to have around six hundred kinds of proteins.<sup>20:72,135</sup> This is incredible order in the smallest form. This surely points the scientist to a Creator which is beyond matter.

The structure and operation of the brain is still a wonder to man. How do brain cells work? Scientists have discovered that small areas of the cortex contain a memory of all the past experiences of an individual. When these areas are stimulated, the individual can remember and relive past and consciously forgotten experiences.<sup>21:20,21</sup> A British neurophysiologist, W. Grey Walter, stated that it would take ten billion electronic cells, occupying a space of about one and a half million cu-

bic feet, to build a facsimile of the human brain.<sup>21:20,21</sup> Even in this day of micro computers this is not an exaggeration. These complexities of the world that are not seen with the naked eye greatly suggest order and a designer. How can one possibly assign the marvelous world of the cell to the chance development proposed by evolutionists? How is it conceivable that the DNA structure of every cell could have developed out of innate matter? Is this not calling for a greater miracle than the miracle of the existence of God?

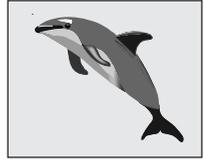
**b. The bird world:** Bird migration has always been a spectacular phenomenon to man. One example of this wonder is the migration of the Arctic Terns. The Arctic Terns nest in the Cape Cod area of the North American continent. When the urge comes to migrate, Arctic Terns set their course across the Atlantic Ocean to the coast of Spain, down the western coast of Africa, across the Atlantic again, and finally, to the vast Antarctica at the bottom of the world. When nature calls for these marvelous wonders of nature to return home from their southern tour of the southern hemisphere, they fly all the way back to the very same creek bank and same gravel bed they left at the beginning of their journey. In this journey they cover a fantastic distance of over thirty thousand kilometers.



Millions of birds migrate every year. They have no compass, no map and no calendar. How do they migrate over such fantastic distances without becoming lost? How can some birds migrate and arrive at their summer lodge the same day, year after year? A *National Geographic School Bulletin* stated, “How birds migrate over such distances is a mystery.”<sup>22:n.p.</sup> One authority said, “Even after years of research and experiment, scientists speak of the ‘mystery’ of bird migration, for they still do not completely understand it.”<sup>23:17</sup>

Evolutionists offer no explanation for the wonder of bird migration. They cannot. To say that birds evolved, and then learned migration, would be calling for a miracle greater than creation. Birds received intelligence, but not from unintelligent matter. They received it from an eternal Intelligence. The study of bird migration has confused materialistic evolutionists for years.

**c. The fish world:** One of the most amazing examples of invested intelligence in the fish world is the Archer fish. This fish is found in the waters which extend from India to the northwestern coasts of Australia. The Archer fish acquires its food in a somewhat unique manner. When an insect lands on a leaf or twig above the surface of the water, this marksman of a fish will shoot a spurt of water and knock the unfortunate insect off its perch and into the water. Without hesitation, the Archer fish will then eat from the result of his great marksmanship.



When this technique of the Archer fish was first reported in 1764 by a member of the Royal Society of London, England, few people believed it. Most people thought that there was something “fishy” about the truth of this fish story. It was not until forty years later, and after the capture and observation of many of these fish, that men finally believed the phenomenon of the Archer fish. He was a good shot after all.

The Archer fish shoots holes in the theory of evolution as an explanation for the order of the world. This fish story washes away any explanation for the order in the world other than creation by an eternal Intelligence. Here again is an example of design that is the design of a Designer who created all things.

**d. The worlds of the universe:** The orderliness and complexity of the world manifest marks of an intelligent Designer. We live in a universe that exists because of design and orderliness. A. Cressy Morrison, a former president of the New York Academy of Science and an evolutionist, wrote the following concerning the exactness of the earth,

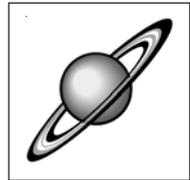
We have found that the world is in the right place, that the crust is adjusted to within ten feet, and that if the ocean were a few feet deeper we would have no oxygen or vegetation. We have found that the earth rotates in twenty-four hours and that were this revolution delayed, life would be impossible. If the speed of the earth around the sun were increased or decreased materially the history of life, if any, would be entirely different. We find that the sun is the one among thousands which could make

our sort of life possible on earth, its size, density temperature and the character of its rays all must be right, and are right. We find that the gases of the atmosphere are adjusted to each other and that very slight change would be fatal.<sup>24:94,95</sup>

Morrison and many other scientists have recognized and emphasized the orderliness of the earth.<sup>25:72</sup> They contend for the necessity of the earth's exact measurements by stating that without this precision life on earth would certainly be endangered.

Considering the bulk of the earth, its place in space and the nicety of the adjustments, the chances of some of these adjustments occurring is in the order of one to a million and the chances of all of them occurring cannot be calculated even in the billions. The existence of these facts cannot, therefore, be reconciled with any of the laws of chance. It is impossible, then, to escape the conclusion that the adjustments of nature to man are far more amazing than the adjustments of man to nature. **A review of the wonders of nature demonstrates beyond question that there is design and purpose in it all** [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].<sup>24:95</sup>

J. Arthur Thomson, an evolutionist, confessed, "When we study the powers in the world, we find, as in other studies, that, as science advances, **the world becomes more and more interpretable as the working out of a Divine Thought** [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].<sup>26:101</sup>



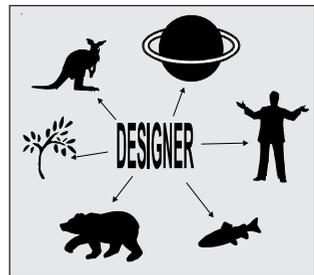
Thomson also stated, "We cannot comprehend how the Order of Nature could arise from chaos and chance."<sup>26:104</sup> Thomson seems to have been a little more objective in his investigations of the universe than most of his fellow evolutionists. He at least came to the conclusion that we cannot answer the order and design that are evident in the universe without the existence of a Divine Thought. Though Albert Einstein viewed God as an impersonal force or mind, he stated the following in recognition of the wonders he observed through his work,

My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior Spirit who reveals Himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.<sup>27:95</sup>

Can order arise from disorder? Atheists and evolutionistic religionists would have us believe that it can. All human experience, however, answers this question in the negative. Order cannot arise from disorder. John Calvin stated that God “daily presents himself to public view in such a manner that [men] cannot open their eyes without being constrained to behold him.”<sup>28:n.p.</sup> This is the force of the argument from design. Intelligence is seen everywhere in the things that exist. We could not exist in a world of disorder. We exist only because we live in an environment of order.

**2. Design presupposes a designer.** A design presupposes that there was someone who designed. This is a logical statement in reference to the design of the environment in which we live and one that cannot be refuted by the philosophy of materialism. The complex wiring of a radio forces the conclusion that someone designed the orderly arrangements of the components. Each component performs its specific task. The transistors and circuit boards all work together to perform the function and wonder of a radio. The radio just did not happen; it was designed by a designer, an intelligence.

In a world of design in the material world, the theist contends for belief in a God that can create an orderly world. It is not logical or scientifically provable that the universe was the result of mere chance development from innate matter. Matter which has no intelligence could not produce man who has intelligence. Therefore, we must conclude that the universe (design) presupposes a Designer (intelligence). What other adequate explanation do we have? The evolutionist does not have any adequate answers because his philosophy runs into too many



dead ends. He can give us no answers concerning origin and design.

The cosmological and teleological arguments are steps that lead to the conclusion of belief in the existence of God. They are related and should be studied jointly. With the great effect of the world in which we live to study and observe, we are led to the ultimate conclusion that the initial cause of the universe was Intelligence and not matter. Former president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, stated, “I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how a man could look up unto the heavens and say there is no God.” The Bible says that the heavens do declare the marvelous glory of God (See Ps 8). Sir James Jeans wrote,

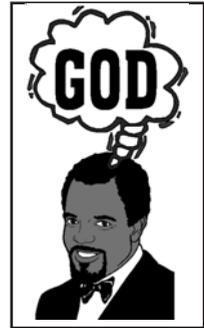
Today there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost the unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect it as the Creator and governor of the realm of matter – not of course our individual minds, but the mind in which the atoms out of which our individual minds have grown exists as thoughts .... We discover that the universe shows evidence of a designing or controlling power that has something in common with our own individual minds.<sup>29:186,187</sup>

So did order come from disorder? Did intelligence come from non-intelligence? Did mind come from matter? Did feeling come from that which has no feeling? Materialists and religionists who believe in evolution can give no adequate answer to these questions. Carl Wallace Miller concluded, “Stripped of confusing details, belief in God is acceptance of the basic principle that the universe makes sense, **that there is behind it an ultimate purpose** [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].”<sup>30:17</sup> In our examination of the universe, we must ask the atheist, “*Who has 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 the balance?*” (Is 40:12). Who? The only answer the atheistic evolutionist can give to

this question is that all things originated from matter. On the other hand, the Christian affirms that God created such. Who must have the greater faith? Again, the Christian affirms that the unbeliever must have greater faith in the theory of evolution than the Christian does in the existence of a God who can create.

### C. The argument from the idea of God:

The argument from the “idea of God’ is usually referred to as the **ontological** argument. Ontology is “the science of being, that is, as existing.”<sup>31:280</sup> Of all the theistic arguments for the existence of God, this argument appears to be the most difficult to comprehend. Some have even considered it strange. This argument has probably received the greatest criticism of all the theistic arguments. It has been labeled a verbal joke by some. It has simply been rejected by others. Nevertheless, to the believer it has merit. It has merit in that to propose an argument that must be dealt with by the skeptic.



Ontological

The central thought of this argument is that the idea of God could not be conceived by that which was simply matter in motion. If God did not exist, then there would be no concept of God within the minds of men. However, the idea of God does exist. Since it exists, then from whence did this idea come if there is no God?

The ontological argument purports to prove simply from the concept of God as the supreme being that God’s existence cannot rationally be doubted by anyone having such a concept of Him. It is thus a purely *a priori* argument, that is to say, one that does not appeal to any fact of experience but is concerned solely with the implications of concepts – in this case, the concept of God.<sup>32:vii</sup>

In reference to the ontological argument, Davis explained,

The argument attempts to prove the existence of God from an examination of what we **mean** by the word “God.” It attempts to show that the idea of God’s existence is necessarily involved in the very idea of God itself, so that one who clearly understands what he means by the word must recognize that God exists.<sup>32:7</sup>

“Thus, in order even to think about the Being than which no greater can be conceived one has to think about God **as really existing**, for if He is conceived as not existing, one hasn’t thought of the **greatest conceivable** Being.”<sup>32:8</sup>

We would say that God is conceived as existing simply by the mere idea of God as being a perfect, eternal and all-knowing being. Anselm stated, “No one who understands the reality that God is can think that God does not exist.”<sup>33:n.p.</sup> Albert Knudson explained, “The very idea of a supreme or perfect Being thus implies his existence.”<sup>11:301</sup>

It is curious indeed to consider how man could have formulated the idea of God if he was the result of matter only. Man does not have the capacity to think or imagine above that information which has been fed to him by the five senses. And yet, man has conceived of a Being that is not dependent on sense perception. God is above the senses. Campbell said, “Imagination ... has not the power of creating any new idea. It has the power of analyzing, combining, compounding, and new-modifying all the different ideas present to it; but imagination has not creative power.”<sup>34:123</sup> In his debate with Robert Owen, an atheist, Campbell argued persuasively that the imagination of man is unable to conceive of a being greater than the feedback of the senses.<sup>34:123-127,147-154</sup> To conceive beyond man’s empirical perception is beyond the ability of man.

An example of the above would be the inability of man to conceive of a **sixth sense**.<sup>34:n.p.</sup> What would it be? How would it function? If we say a sixth sense of man might be as that related to a bat’s radar system, our argument is still substantiated by the fact that our conception has been based on sense perceptive studies of bats. A good challenge to the mind is to try to think of

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|----------|
| 1. Touch |
| 2. Taste |
| 3. Smell |
| 4. Hear  |
| 5. Sight |
| 6. ?     |

something that man has invented or imagined that has not come from some previous observation or distortion of that which already exists. Where did man get the idea of a boat? An airplane? A fork? A wheel? All these inventions have come from objects already in existence that have given rise to man's ability to mould and reshape for various applications. These are inventions only because man just stumbled onto what was already in existence, or what was already a law. Invention, therefore, is not man conceiving of something of his own initiative or imagination. It is man stumbling on to that which has already existed or can exist. It is application of that which already exists to be useful for the development of man's dreams.

This brings us to an interesting thought. Where did man conceive of the idea of God if no God ever revealed Himself in the past? Would we not have to answer that he conceived this idea from a God that revealed Himself to the senses of man sometime in the past? Before we answer this question we would also have to ask why would man, if he is the sole result of matter in motion, want to even conceive of a Divine God in the first place.

If man cannot conceive of anything greater than what he understands by his own experience, it is certainly puzzling to see that he has formulated the concept of a Perfect Being. Campbell asked, "Now, if this be true [that man can imagine nothing greater than his experiences], and founded on a strict analysis of the human mind, and predicated of universal experience—how could man have imagined a God?"<sup>34:125</sup> **"It is a strange thing that, if all that exists is matter in motion, that matter should have universally worked out belief in God."**<sup>35:98</sup>

The ontological argument is saying that if the idea of God is conceivable, it is actual; it is real.<sup>36:n.p.</sup> If no logical contradiction exists in the argument, then the argument has validity. Spinoza added, **"If, then, no cause or reason can be given, which prevents the existence of God, or which destroys his existence, we must certainly conclude that he necessarily does exist [emphasis mine, R.E.D]."**<sup>37:n.p.</sup> There is no logical contradiction in the argument. We would conclude, therefore, that it must be considered a valid argument for the existence of God.

In conjunction with the thrust of this argument, however, we must caution ourselves concerning our concept of God. Since it is not possible for man to conceive of that which is beyond the experience of his world, then we would argue that God has revealed Himself to man in the past in ways whereby man can conceive of God. However, the limit of man's conception of God is the extent to which God has revealed Himself. Man's understanding of God is limited to the extent to which God can reveal Himself to a finite being who is limited to this present world. In other words, God can reveal Himself only in terms which man can understand. God can explain Himself through word of revelation by using only those words that are used by man in his environment. Therefore, we must conclude that the definition of man's words limit God's ability to explain Himself. In understanding this, we would not, therefore, limit who God is by the definition of our words.

We must never assume that God is limited to either our dictionary or our ability to comprehend His being. Any god that we can completely define or completely understand is a god who is limited to our imagination. And our imagination is limited to the environment in which we live. We would caution ourselves, therefore, that we not limit the existence or being of God to that which we can fully understand. Since God is above the physical environment of our world, then we must assume that He is above our ability to fully comprehend. And since He is above our ability to fully comprehend, then we should not frustrate ourselves with not understanding all that He is and does.

#### **D. The argument from man's religious nature:**

The argument from man's religious nature is very closely related to the argument from the idea of God (the ontological argument). Anthropology is the study and "teaching about the origin, nature, and destiny of man, especially from the perspective of his relation to God."<sup>10:38</sup>

We use the title "argument from man's religious nature" to refer specifically to the anthropological history of man as being a history of a religious individual since his existence upon the earth.



This argument has often been referred to as the “general argument.”<sup>1:24</sup> It is based on two conclusions we derive from the study of man’s ancient history: (A) Man has a religious instinct. (B) A belief in a Supreme Being has been universal and existent in all known cultures of man from the beginning of his existence upon the earth.

**1. *Man is religious:*** Those who have studied the history of civilizations unanimously contend that all civilization of men have had some sort of religion. Robert Flint once stated, “An impartial examination of the relevant facts, it appears to me, shows that religion is virtually universal.”<sup>38:26</sup> And “as far as our present knowledge goes, religion appears to be universal among men.”<sup>39:5</sup> “The statement that there are nations or tribes which possess no religion,” argued C. P. Tiele, “rests either on inaccurate observation or on a confusion of ideas.”<sup>40:6</sup> One of the world’s past leading anthropologists, S. H. Kellogg is yet to be found wrong concerning his following statement,

In every case alike, it must be confessed that everywhere and always, man has a religion. This is so manifest, that the denial of the fact, once not uncommon in our day, after more careful and extensive research, is much more rarely heard. **It is commonly admitted that religion is a universal phenomenon, and that exceptions, if any exist, must be regarded as abnormal** [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].<sup>41:54</sup>

Man is a religious being. He is incurably religious. He must worship something. One of the best known statements of the *Confessions* is: “Thou [God] hast made us for thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee.”<sup>42:n.p.</sup> One of the greatest historical philosophers of modern times, Will Durant, stated: “Here, after all, is a remarkable phenomenon—that men everywhere have had religions; how can we understand man if we do not understand religion.”<sup>43:n.p.</sup> How can we understand ancient man if we refuse to recognize his religious instinct?

The study of human nature gives abundant proof that man is normally religious, that religion is an experience which man inevitably possesses

as soon as his life begins to be organized and enters into relationship with his fellows and the nature which surrounds him on all sides. We are dealing, then, with what is a universal phenomenon.<sup>44:27</sup>

“It is a well-known fact that no nation or tribe has yet been found which has no belief in some kind of supernatural power or powers and does not adhere to some kind of religion.”<sup>5:1</sup> “Man is religious simply because he is so constituted that for him to be religious is natural, and to be irreligious or nonreligious is contranatural.”<sup>41:62</sup>

Man must worship something because he is a religious being. “Every man worships something or someone even if only himself. He worships something either concrete or abstract, whether it be wrought with his own hands or conceived in his own mind.”<sup>45:12</sup> The fact that man is a worshipful being leads us to conclude that man is not simply matter in motion. He is greater than matter, and thus, has come from a greater source than matter.

**2. *Universal belief in a supreme being:*** Since man is such a religious being, then it follows that what he seeks to worship is greater than man himself. Along with the universal religious nature of man, therefore, comes the universal belief of man in a Supreme Being.<sup>46:n.p.</sup> This belief may be readily seen in a given society, or it may be obscure in the histories of the society. There is no religion known to us that cannot have its objects (beings) of worship traced back to a supreme and ultimate being of worship.

All cultures have had religions and all religions have had a supreme being. William Schmidt wrote, “This Supreme Being is to be found among all the peoples of the primitive culture, not indeed everywhere in the same form or the same rigor, but still everywhere prominent enough to make his dominant position indubitable.”<sup>47:257</sup>

Some have contended that religion and the original one-God concept of man have been the result of an evolutionary process of man’s thinking.<sup>48:485</sup> That is, man only dreamed up the idea of God and religion. The facts, however, are in complete contradiction to this affirmation. If the evolution of man was true, it would be logical that man would first develop the idea of many gods and then combine these many

gods into only one god; polytheism would precede monotheism. But the facts do not show that this is true. William M. Petrie stated,

Were the conception of a god only an evolution from such spirit worship we should find worship of many gods preceding the worship of one god, polytheism would precede monotheism in each tribe and race. What we actually find is the contrary of this, monotheism is the first stage traceable in history. **Wherever we can trace polytheism to its earliest stages, we find that it results from combinations of monotheism** [emphasis mine, R.E.D.].<sup>49:34</sup>

Everywhere we turn in the religious histories of man we see that man was first monotheistic and not polytheistic. All evidence supports this fact.<sup>50:n.p.</sup> This truth is so evident that if anyone discovers a culture that supposedly does not have a religious belief in spirits or beings higher than this world, then we would question the investigation of the scientist who made such a discovery. Any anthropologist who studies the history of man, therefore, studies from an inadequate premise if he does not first accept the fact that all cultures he may study have had some kind of religious belief.

In seeing the obvious religious nature of man we would expect that the Bible would present a reason for this phenomenon. It does exactly that. The apostle Paul wrote, “... *in Him we live and move and have our being* ... (See At 17:26-28). The argument from man’s religious nature is valid because there is no other logical explanation for the religious instinct of man who lives and moves within an environment of God. Since all men have been created after the image of God, then we would assume that God placed within man the urge to seek Him (Gn 1:26,27). He has made us to seek after Him for direction in this world (At 17:27). The biblical argument is that if men seek God, then certainly God must exist. Our argument from the history of man’s religious nature, therefore, concludes that if man is religious and seeks for a Higher Power, then certainly the Higher Power exists.

## E. The argument from morality:

The argument from the morality of man can be divided into two areas: (A) Man is a spiritual being with spiritual needs. (B) Man has a moral conscience which urges him to do what he thinks is right.

**1. *Man is spiritual.*** The statement that Jesus made, “*Man shall not live by bread alone,*” is right not only because He said it, but also because it is a proven fact by the Divinely created nature of man. Man is more than a physical being. By nature he hungers and thirsts after that which is not physical.

Man is a dual being, physical and moral or spiritual. In the material world there is that which satisfies and gratifies every physical desire of man. There is not a physical appetite that cannot be gratified by the world of physical things. But there is that about man which all the physical and material things of earth cannot satisfy. There is a constant longing, a hungering for something beyond the merely physical. These are recognized as religious or spiritual needs.<sup>51:21</sup>

This thought closely relates to the argument from anthropology. Man is religious. He is a spiritual being with needs that can be satisfied only by spiritual food. If God created man, would it not be reasonable to conclude that He would implant within the mind of man such qualities? If such desires exist—and they certainly do—then to what or to whom shall we credit their origin? Shall we credit them to Intelligence? The logical answer to these questions is that we must give credit to whom credit is due. We must credit Intelligence as the originator of the moral values for which all men desire in order to cohabit with their fellow man.

Matter is not moral but Intelligence is. It is only reasonable to believe that man’s spiritual yearnings originated from that which is spiritual. The spiritual yearnings of man, therefore, find their origin in the mind of a God who does exist and is above this material world.

**2. *Man has a moral conscience.*** All men have the urge to choose

right over wrong. The right they choose may be wrong according to the standard of the Bible. However, man has the ability to choose. He has a sense of right or wrong in relation to his choices. **The existence of conscience is proof that man has this urge to choose right from wrong and to be motivated to choose what he thinks is right.**

Man is a being of volition, that is, he has the capacity and ability of choice. “All men believe that there is justice, and injustice, that there is a difference between evil and good. Furthermore, man believes that he is obligated to do the good and to oppose the evil.”<sup>8:128</sup> “So deeply embedded in the very nature of man is this moral sensitivity, this fact of conscience, that even those who reject the reality of moral law usually argue that their beliefs will lead men to be better.”<sup>8:129</sup> This desire to do good, therefore, must find its origin in something that is greater than this material world. The existence of conscience must be evidence of consciousness that is beyond this world. Hamilton explained,

What is meant by the statement that conscience is universal with all mankind is that there is a certain characteristic innate in the mind which enables a person who has reached the age of reasoning ability to make a judgment as to the rightness or wrongness of any course of action which may be presented to the mind. Faced with a particular course of action, the mind instinctively, involuntarily, and often unconsciously reacts with the corresponding judgment: “I ought to do the right.”<sup>52:47</sup>

Man has a conscience that compels him to do what he thinks is right. “It approves our actions when we do that which we judge we ought to do, and it condemns us when we do that which we judge we ought not to do.”<sup>53:41</sup>

If man is the result of materialistic evolution, how did he develop the innate capacity to always want to do that which he feels is right? When he obeys not his desire to do right, from whence did the capacity of feeling guilt come? The materialist can give no answer to these questions.

Materialists cannot explain conscience. They cannot tell us why

man is a moral being. If man is just another animal, how is it that men have developed consciences that move them to establish moral behavioral standards by which to relate to one another? Is it reasonable to believe that morality came from that which is not moral? This question forces us back to an Intelligence as an adequate explanation for the phenomenon of man's conscience.

The One who originated all, invested within man the ability of choice, the choice between right and wrong.<sup>54:13</sup> He invested within man the desire also to do right. When man does not yield to his desire to do right, his conscience is pricked. "The fact that men are creatures of choice and the further fact that their choices are made in terms of some awareness of moral and ethical principles are firm evidences that they originated from a source that also had the capacity of making moral and ethical judgments."<sup>55:52</sup> We conclude, therefore, that the origin of the conscience of man came from that which has conscience – though not limited to the conscience of man. It is only God who can originate conscience, and thus, God is the author of man's conscience.

## F. The argument from the appreciation of beauty:

The argument from the appreciation of beauty, or the **aesthetic** argument, deals with man's unique responsiveness to the wondrous beauties of life and nature. When we observe the beauty and grandeur of a rose, the majestic sounds of music, or the prevailing presence of life around us, we are struck with wonder and appreciation. When we experience the feeling of love and being loved, of giving and being given to, of joy and praise, our uniqueness as living beings is even further removed from all other living creatures. Man is not animal. He is human. There is a big difference between the two.

The argument from the appreciation of beauty affirms that man is an aesthetic being simply because he was so created that way by One who possessed the same qualities. Materialism is not a satisfactory answer for such aesthetic instincts. Mat-



Appreciation

ter is not aesthetic. When the materialist says that the things and virtues which now exist came from that which is solely matter, he is asking for a greater miracle than belief in God. Where did man acquire these aesthetic qualities? The only satisfactory answer would be that this nature was invested within man by the One who has the power to originate such. That One is God.

Continue this thought a little further. Man is unique. Animals do not appreciate art, music and beauty. Man appreciates snow and rain, but a cat or dog is not held in wonder at these phenomena of nature. To a dog or cat, snow or rain is only wetness and cold. Man enjoys the sound of a bird. But the bird's predator hears only the sound of a possible lunch.

The materialist has no answer for the aesthetic nature of man. If God does not exist, then we have no answer for the origin of emotion and aesthetic appreciation. If man evolved from animals, we would either have to prove that animals are aesthetic or that man is not aesthetic. If man is aesthetic—and he is—and animals are not—and they are not—then we have to explain the origin of man's aesthetic nature. The Christian's conclusion is that an aesthetic God created man after His own image, and thus, man is aesthetic because he was so created.

### **G. The argument from revelation:**

The argument from revelation is based on the truthfulness of the arguments concerning man's religious nature and morality. If man is a moral and spiritual being who is inherently religious—and he is—is it not reasonable to believe that the One who created man in this manner would reveal Himself to man? If man is an aesthetic being, is it not reasonable to believe that his Creator would reveal to him why he is that way?

Obviously, this argument assumes that the preceding arguments of this study have sufficiently defended God's existence. Therefore, we contend that it is reasonable to believe that God would reveal Himself to man. His existence demands revelation. We can divide this argument into two areas of concern: (A) There is the possibility, probab-

ity, necessity and reasonability of revelation. (B) There is the existence of the revelation itself.

**1. The possibility, probability, necessity and reasonability of revelation:** Would it be **possible** for an eternal Intelligence to reveal itself to man? Certainly! To answer in the negative would immediately place the burden of knowing all impossibilities upon the shoulders of the one who denied revelation. If an eternal Intelligence existed and He could not reveal Himself, then we would wonder if He really existed. In fact, if there is no direct revelation from anything that is above and beyond the material world, then we could assume that there is nothing out there. But if He is out there, it is possible that He could reveal Himself.

Is it **probable** that Intelligence would manifest itself to that which was created? Yes! To answer in the negative would say that the Creator would be cruel in that He would have created a being with religious and spiritual desires, and yet, leave those desires unfulfilled.

Therefore, it is **necessary** that God should reveal Himself to man. God created man to be filled with His spiritual food. The loving nature of God would not allow Him to let His children die from spiritual malnutrition. Man needs God. That is the way God made him. It is only reasonable to believe that the Creator would complete His creation with revelation. We have a record of that revelation in the Bible.

It is **reasonable**, therefore, that the Creator should reveal Himself to the created. The Christian affirms that God has so revealed Himself to man, both by manifestations of His presence and by revelation of His will. Both the manifestation of His presence and His will are recorded in the Bible.

Man is a moral being and needs a standard by which to judge his life. If atheism is true, there is no such thing as a standard of morality. Each man could do that which is right in his own eyes without logically saying that his behavior is either right or wrong.

There are atheists who claim to be able to live moral lives without the standard of Bible values. However, we question the origin of their morals. Where did they get their value system? Bales rightly stated, "It is true there are atheists who live good moral lives when judged by

the general standards of society. By their admirable lives they commend their atheism and make atheism seem morally safe and sound. However, we must ask whether their morality is rooted in and nurtured by their atheism.”<sup>56:5</sup>

Biblical morals have been entrenched in most societies. Societies that give up religious values are usually condemned to self-destruction. Though one might say that their moral values did not come from the Bible, they would at least affirm that such values came from religion. The atheist is saying that his moral principles did not originate from any religion. This we highly question.

**2. *The revelation itself:*** The Bible, the revelation from God, stands as a pillar in the defense for the existence of God. It does so because it contains the evidence of the manifestation of God who has revealed Himself to man. Since it is claimed that the Bible contains such revelation, then the Bible must be thoroughly examined as an evidence for the existence of God. Edward J. Young wrote,

The Bible itself evidences its divinity so clearly that he is without excuse who disbelieves. It bears within it marks of this divinity. Thus, its subject matter—its glorious doctrine of the living and true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, of man’s fall into sin and of the wondrous redemption which God has wrought for man—clearly and cogently testifies to its divine origin. The same is true of all its other “incomparable excellencies.” They are without parallel in any other writing, and show most convincingly that the Bible is in a unique sense the Word of God.<sup>57:27</sup>

How can we account for such a unique book? The unity, prophecy and application of its teachings are qualities which could not have had human origin. Man is just not that smart or dependable. The only satisfactory answer for the origin of the uniqueness of the Bible is an eternal Intelligence.

It is reasonable to believe that the author of the Bible is God. Anyone who has applied himself to know what the Bible actually teaches is convinced that it could not have been the work of man alone.



**Man would not have written it if he could and could not have written it if he would have so desired.**

The argument from revelation has its force in that if there was no God, we would not expect a revelation from Him. If there was a God, it would be reasonable and necessary that He reveal Himself.

When one links all the arguments for the existence of God together, there is a tremendous force leading one to belief. Materialism becomes irrational and illogical in comparison with the force of the conclusion of these arguments. Andrew Conway Ivy said, “Belief in the existence of God provides the only complete ultimate and rational meaning to existence.”<sup>58:225</sup> Bales wrote, “We do not need to hang our heads in shame in this scientific age because we believe in God. Instead, the atheist is the one who ought to hang his head in shame for his hypothesis denies the possibility of rationality; since he makes all but matter in motion responding to matter in motion.”<sup>8:138</sup>

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## Chapter 5

### THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND SUFFERING

To many people the problem of evil has been, and is, acclaimed to be the most difficult question the believer faces with reference to the existence of God. It has been referred to as the “evidence for the atheist.”<sup>1:231</sup> One unbeliever wrote, “There is too much evil in the world to warrant the inference that there is a Providence or an Architect who has human interests at heart.”<sup>2:4</sup> Thomas B. Warren wrote, “It is likely the case that no charge has been made with a greater frequency or with more telling force against theism of Judeo-Christian (Biblical) tradition than that such theism is unable to explain adequately the occurrence or the existence of evil.”<sup>3:vii</sup> It is this problem, therefore, that every Christian must face. It is not a problem that will go away.

This is one of the most pressing questions of our time. More pressing than the question of miracles or science and the Bible is the poignant problem of why innocent people suffer, why babies are born blind, or why a promising life is snuffed out as it is on the rise. Why are there wars in which thousands of innocent people are killed, children burned beyond recognition, and many maimed for life.<sup>4:72</sup>

#### A. Defining the problem:

In order to understand the importance of the supposed problem, believers must understand the nature of the attack. Around 300 B.C. Epicurus posed the problem of evil and suffering as follows,

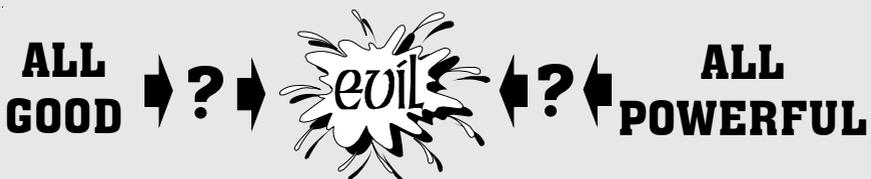
The gods can either take away evil from the world and will not, or being willing to do so cannot; or they neither can nor will, or lastly, they are both able and willing. If they have the will to remove evil and cannot, then they are not omnipotent. If they can, but will not, then they are not benevolent. If they are neither able nor willing, then they are neither omnipotent or benevolent. Lastly, if they are both able and willing to

annihilate evil, how does it exist?<sup>5:298</sup>

For the one who believes in an all-good and all-powerful God, the existence of evil does present a supposed problem as described by Epicurus. We must wonder how an all-good and all-powerful God could permit evil and suffering to exist. If God is all-good, would He not **desire** that evil cease to exist? If He is all-powerful, would He not be **able** to extinguish it if He desires that it should not exist? If God cannot eliminate evil, then how can He be all-powerful? If He can eliminate it, but does not, can He be an all-good God? These are questions which face Christians concerning their concept of God. These are not questions that must be ignored, neither are these questions that should distort our understanding of the Bible's answers to the questions.

The atheist denies God and assumes that evil is only a part of matter in motion. To him all is simply a struggle for survival. "To one who does not believe that the world is ruled by a Loving Mind," said Trueblood, "the existence of pain in nature, and the wanton cruelty of man to man, is not in the least surprising."<sup>1:231</sup>

The atheist also has a problem. **He has the problem of explaining how the theist came to attribute this evil in an all-material world (as they affirm) to be the product of a good, righteous and benevolent God.** This forces us back to the ontological argument concerning the very existence of the idea of God. It must be recognized that the theist has to explain the existence of a benevolent God in the face of the existence of evil in an all-material world.<sup>6:17-36</sup> On the other hand, the atheist has to explain the evolution of the idea of a benevolent God and existence of good values from an environment of a supposedly all-material universe. The materialistic atheist, therefore, is faced with the problem of explaining the existence of good while the theist is faced with the challenge of explaining evil in the sight of a good God.



## B. Biblical references to the problem of evil and suffering:

The prophets unceasingly asked for an explanation from God concerning suffering and pain. Elijah questioned, *“O Lord my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son”* (1 Kg 17:20). *“O my lord,”* pondered Gideon, *“if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?”* (Jg 6:13). Habakkuk complained, *“Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours one more righteous than he?”* (Hk 1:13). Job, in his confrontation with suffering, anguished, *“My soul loathes my life; I will give free course to my complaint, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say to God ‘Do not condemn me; show me why You contend with me. Does it seem good to You that You should oppress, that You should despise the work of Your hands, and shine on the council of the wicked?’”* (Jb 10:1-3). In all of Job’s suffering and questions, God never answered his questions. God simply responded that Job must trust in the all-powerful God who knows what He is doing.

In considering this subject there is usually a distinction made between three types of “evil.” These are: (1) **Physical evil or suffering** such as tornadoes, floods and deformed babies. (2) **Moral evil**, such as murder, greed, strife and lying. (3) **Eternal hell**, a place of punishment for those who rebel against God. As a whole, the atheist uses these concepts of “evil” or “suffering” as his argument against any all-powerful, all-good God who is conceived by the Christian.

## C. Preliminary considerations:

In order to understand the problem and deal with the argument, we must first define some terms and concepts. Once we clarify terms and concepts, we will understand the arguments. The following are some points that all must consider who claim that evil is evidence against the existence of God.

### 1. *The existence of good:* The atheist asks the theist, “If there is

an all-good and all-powerful God, how do you explain the presence of evil in the world today?” However, the theist can justly ask the atheist, **“If there is no God, how do you explain the presence of good in a world that is supposedly matter in motion?”** If all that exists is matter in motion, it is curious indeed that matter could have developed good love, good benevolence, good thoughts and good characters. From whence came good? What purpose is there in the good that is worked in the community by Joe Good? The atheist must answer these questions.<sup>7:161,162</sup> The theist must deal with the problem of evil, but on the other hand, the atheist must deal with the problem of good.



Origin of Good?

**2. The limitation of man's knowledge:** In this study we must realize that our knowledge is limited. It is often difficult to grasp eternal purposes. It is beyond our power to know the future. At the time of Joseph's mistreatment and sale to foreign traders by his brothers, he did not know that such was in the plan of God for a good purpose. However, Joseph later recognized this (Gn 45:7). The same is true with us today. At a particular time of calamity we might not understand the good that will come from a particular calamity. However, in time we may realize that God was working in our lives in or through the calamity.

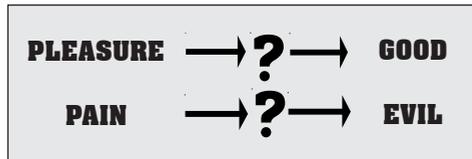
The Christian must recognize that there are some things that are hidden in the mind of God. Such things will be made known at their proper time (Dt 29:29). Herbert Farmer stated, “Christianity has never claimed to take the sting out of evil by explaining it, but rather by giving victory over it.”<sup>8:231</sup>

Christianity does not take suffering and pain out of one's life. It helps one to endure it. It should take out the suffering resulting from sin by removing, at least to some degree, the sin of one's life. We do reap what we sow. If we sow good, we will reap good (Gl 6:7). If we sow wickedness, we will reap suffering. If we remove as much sin from our lives as possible, then we will remove suffering which comes from that sin.

When Christians do not see the good in times of suffering, they are often limiting their thinking to that which is of this world. Paul said that all things work together for good (Rm 8:28). However, we often interpret this passage in the context of this present world. Certainly, this present world has something to do with the final answer. However, we must keep in mind that this world exists solely for the purpose of bringing disciplined characters into an environment of eternal dwelling. God is working through the structure of this environment in order to train souls who have the character skills to dwell in eternity. Therefore, in times of suffering, Christians can count it with all joy because they understand that this world is not all there is (Js 1:1,2). It is only a place of preparation for a greater environment that is yet to come.

**3. Determining what is actually good:** Man's idea of what is actually good is sometimes wrong. We often associate pleasure with good and pain with bad. "The pleasure-pain view of existence is shallow and incomplete. Yet, almost all mankind considers a thing good if it gives pleasure and a thing bad if it causes pain."<sup>9:274</sup> This misunderstanding causes many problems in correctly understanding pain and suffering.

Pain does not necessarily qualify something as evil, and pleasure does not necessarily qualify something as good. Pain that guards me from endangering my life is good.



Once we cover this field of study, we will come to the conclusion that sin, not pain or suffering, is the only real evil. Obedience to God, motivated by love, not fleshly pleasures, is the only real good (Mt. 22:36,37).

**4. The problem of wrong reactions:** Our reaction to suffering may be wrong. "At times it is our reaction to suffering," explained Paul Little, "rather than the suffering itself, that determines whether the experience is one of blessing or of blight. The same sun melts the butter and hardens the clay."<sup>4:80</sup> The atheist would certainly respond to suffering in a different manner than the one who understands the eternal purpose of God. It is for this reason that the sorrow that is ex-

pressed by the Christian at the grave is different than that of the unbeliever (1 Th 4:13). The believer and unbeliever view situations of suffering in this world from different perspectives. Therefore, we would challenge the unbeliever to view this world through the thinking of the word of God and the eternal purpose for which this environment was created. When he does this, then he will understand not only the thinking of the believer, but also the nature and purpose of suffering.

Both believers and unbelievers should caution themselves as to how they view the occasion of suffering and pain. Our evaluation of the situation of suffering and pain may not always be objective. A mother cow charging to protect her young may be evil to the one being attacked. Nevertheless, the survival of the young calf is good, for it provides food for mankind. A bee sting may be considered bad by some, but if bees had no way of protecting their honey, predators would certainly, and quickly, destroy their life's sustenance. If the honey was destroyed, the bees would die. If the bees die, pollination in the plant kingdom would be severely hindered. Without pollination, plants die. Without plants, man's food supply is suddenly and drastically diminished. Therefore, some things that may first appear evil are actually good in the long run. We need to be careful, therefore, when we evaluate our reactions to pain and suffering.

#### **D. Denial of the problem:**

Some have sought to explain away the presence of evil by stating that it is only an illusion of the mind. Mary Baker Eddy wrote, "Evil has no reality, it is neither person, place, nor being, but is simply a belief, and illusion of material sense."<sup>10:n.p.</sup> This belief certainly does not deal with reality and the problem of suffering. Davis rightly stated, "But even if evil is only an illusion, then illusions exist (in abundance!), and since these illusions themselves are evils, why does God permit the existence of illusion?"<sup>11:34</sup> If suffering is only an illusion, then why fight it when we could just simply forget it?

Pain is not an illusion of the mind. When a man has a broken leg, his mind is not playing tricks on him. If he tries to walk, he will cer-

tainly fall on his face and probably suffer another “illusion,” a broken nose. The excruciating pain from his “illusionary broken leg” will undoubtedly produce an agonizing yelp from his mouth, informing him that he really does have a broken leg. Claiming that pain is only an illusion is actually ignoring the problem.

On the other hand, there are believers who simply do not deal with the problem. They ignore this attack of unbelievers because they usually cannot answer the problem themselves. They can give no answer because their knowledge of the subject is usually so shallow that they simply ignore the attack by affirming that one must just believe in God to take care of things. God is certainly taking care of things, however, He has not left us in a vacuum of ignorance wherein we are left to the unmerciful attacks of atheistic philosophies. There are answers and it is the responsibility of Christians to rise up with these answers in order to defend their faith. The Christian who does not know the answers is simply neglecting his responsibility to defend his faith. As disciples of Jesus, therefore, we have the responsibility of knowing how to defend what we believe. We assume this responsibility for the sake of the unbeliever.

## E. Solutions to the problem:

In order to understand the problem of evil and suffering we must understand the nature of evil. This understanding will produce answers to the supposed contradiction between the existence of evil and the Christian concept of an all-good and all-powerful God.

**1. *The necessity of natural laws:*** Much suffering and pain is attributed to physical causes such as tornadoes, earthquakes and floods. When God created the universe He established natural laws to govern His creation. “God planned the universe so that it would be run by a system of natural laws, and by these laws everything functions. Without these laws life would be impossible. A



world of chance would be chaotic.”<sup>9:275</sup> Genesis 8:22 reads, “*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.*” God set things in order in the universe. Order is necessary. If more disorder existed than order, life could not exist.<sup>7:160</sup> There is no such thing as order without law. Therefore, natural laws are necessary in order to maintain order.

This brings us to an answer for many questions. F.R. Tennant introduced these answers by stating, “Nature’s regularity is the key to this problem. Once let it be admitted that, in order to be a theatre for moral life, the world must be largely characterized by uniformity or constancy, and most significant consequences will be seen to follow.”<sup>12:198,199</sup>

There is a spiritual and physical sense to the law Paul stated in Galatians 6:7, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*” Gravity is a law of nature. Violate it and severe consequences will follow. The sun is great for the body, but too much sun will cause some unpleasant pain. Fire has properties which make it essential for the existence of life. But the abuse of these properties will cause suffering. For water to have the qualities to satisfy and sustain life, it must also have the qualities to snuff out life by drowning. Tennant added, “We cannot have the advantages of a determinate order of things without its logically or its causally necessary disadvantages.”<sup>12:198,199</sup> “So, despite all the agony that nature’s law-abiding forces inflict on mankind, we would not dare substitute a lawless for a law-abiding world.”<sup>13:21</sup>

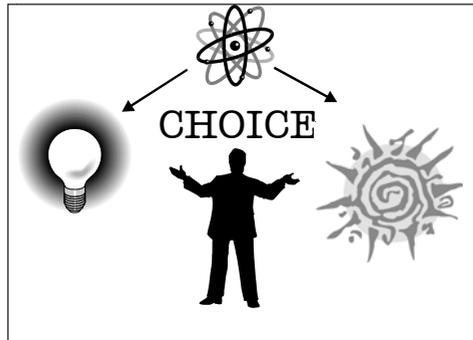
Much suffering that is in the world today comes as a result of violations of natural law. In the normal function of natural law there are those tragedies that inflict much suffering and pain. It is unfortunate that tornadoes and earthquakes exist. How we view their existence, however, depends on how we would consider their infliction of pain and suffering. We must keep in mind that God created an environment that must carry on with the normal process of natural law. As God did with Israel, natural catastrophes were used to awaken Israel to His presence and Israel’s need to submit to Him as their God. If such catastrophes never happened, Israel would never have been awakened to their

necessity to both recognize His presence and submit to His law. Through the calamities, therefore, the inner religious nature of man is awakened to the reality that this world is not all there is because there is a God above this world.

In the purposeful violation of natural law, man brings on himself unnecessary suffering. He reaps to the wind and sows the whirlwind. Most of the pain and suffering in the world today is the result of evil men who create wars in order to carry out their evil desires. Nevertheless, God allows such to happen for an eternal purpose. Through the heartache of men reaping the whirlwind we are constantly reminded that there must be a better place beyond this world. We would thus conclude that this environment is the best of all possible environments for the existence and dwelling of free-moral individuals. It is the best environment in which they can be prepared for eternal dwelling.

## 2. *The necessity of free choice:*

The necessity of the free will of man supports the necessity of the existence of evil. For man to be truly free, he must have the power to choose good and evil. Some ask, “Why didn’t God make us so we could not sin? To be sure, He could have, but let’s remember that if He had



done so we would no longer be human beings, we would be machines. How would you like to be married to a chatty doll?”<sup>4:72</sup> “A person who is not free to do wrong is a contradiction in terms.”<sup>8:244</sup> Therefore, we must understand that God “cannot give man the power of choice without granting him power to choose evil as well as good.”<sup>13:73</sup> “If man was to have freedom of will, it was inevitable that he might choose evil as well as good.”<sup>9:276</sup> Ramm rightly affirmed this in the following statement,

Freedom, to be real freedom, must be freedom to opposites. A restricted or hedged-in or confined freedom may well exist, as perhaps with an

animal, but this cannot be true of man in the image of God. Freedom must be freedom to radical opposites, that is, to sin or to holiness, to good or to evil, to the devil or to God. If one puts shackles on man's freedom, he has destroyed any real sense of man being in the image of God. Therefore evil must be a real possibility for man, for only in this radical possibility is he really free; and only as he is really free is he in the image of God.<sup>14:129</sup>

To be free, man must be able to make choices, even evil choices. He must be able to choose whether to make atomic reactors or atomic bombs. If he chooses atomic bombs, then he must live with the consequences whereby evil men might seek to carry out their evil intentions. Man must be allowed to build or to bungle the whole situation. A truly free-moral agent without the freedom to choose wrong is a contradiction. He would be a contradiction in the sense of being free, and yet, not having the power to make free choices. C.S. Lewis once wrote,

Some people think they can imagine a creature which was free but had no possibility of going wrong; I cannot. If a thing is free to be good it is also free to be bad. And free will is what has made evil possible. Why, then, did God give them free will? Because free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having.<sup>15:52</sup>

It is admittedly hard to understand the purpose of God from the view point of a finite mind. Farmer wrote, "It must be admitted that the mind staggers more than a little at the thought of a divine purpose which could make a race free enough to bring about the abominations of corruption and sensualism and cruelty of which history is full ...."<sup>8:247</sup> Then again, if finite minds were able to understand all that is in the mind of the Infinite, then we would not longer be finite. We would be as God who is infinite.

God purposed in the creation of man that man should be a free-moral agent. He could take evil from the world, but this would also take away man's freedom, and thus, make him a robot. And who wants

to be a robot? The fact is that no one wants to be a robot for all men enjoy the freedom to make choices.

We must also understand that much evil is attributed to the unwise, greedy and lustful choices of man. These are choices of free-moral men for which God cannot be held accountable. James wrote, “*Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’*” (Js 1:13). Solomon said, “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*” (Pv 14:12). Men often accuse God of evils which they themselves have brought upon themselves. In Homer’s *Odyssey*, the mythological god Zeus rebuked mankind by saying, “Lo you now, how vainly mortal men do blame the gods! For of us they say comes evil, whereas they even of themselves, through the blindness of their own hearts, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained.”<sup>16</sup>, n.p.

Men do not live unto themselves, nor by themselves. Our life affects others. Paul wrote, “*For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself*” (Rm 14:7). “In a world in which there is some freedom of will it is impossible ... for a man to abuse his freedom without hurting someone else in many instances.”<sup>7:162</sup> Men who are motivated by selfish incentives will invariably make choices that will cause suffering and pain on the part of others. We cannot accuse God for this suffering. It is man’s fault. He must be counted responsible.

We must take into consideration in this discussion that God created and intended for man to thrive in a garden-of-Eden situation. Such an environment—and we do not completely know its benefits and glories—was certainly a haven for a free-moral agent. This was God’s original plan. However, man fell by sin. Adam gave up this first home by **choosing sin**. As a result of the sin of Adam and Eve, God cursed the earth. As a result of the curse it would be from the sweat of man’s brow he should provide food for himself (Gn 3:16-19). Because we do not know how the world was before God cursed it, we do not know the extent to which God did curse the earth. There is more to what Paul said in Romans 8:19-21 than what we can understand. “*For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation*

*itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*” We would assume from this that before the fall of man the earth did not experience tornadoes, hurricanes and earthquakes. It was an environment in which free-moral agents could live without the infliction of natural catastrophes. However, it was still an environment in which free-moral men could make choices. And because one man made a bad choice, the environment was changed for the remainder of the existence of the world.

Paul wrote, “*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin ...*” (Rm 5:12). Man is to be blamed for sin, not God. For man to coexist on earth there must be law. When man breaks this law, he sins against God. His breaking of the law often leads to the suffering of one’s fellow man. For this we blame man. God started society in a good way. It was man who made the mistakes. Man’s wrong choices leads to great suffering in this present world, and thus, man must be held accountable for the wrong choices he makes.

**3. God can do only that which can be done.** Some charge that the presence of evil is evidence that God is not omnipotent. If God is all-good and desires that evil not exist—so it is stated—then He must not be all-powerful because evil does exist. Atheists wonder why an all-benevolent God would allow evil to exist if He is supposed to be all-powerful.

The argument should be considered from the viewpoint of the existence of a free-moral man. How could a free-moral man exist without the existence of his ability to sin? If man could not make free-moral choices, even though the choices may be wrong, then he could not exist as a free-moral being.

The charge that an all-good God who is omnipotent would not allow evil to exist is inaccurate as well as unjust. We must ask, **Can God do the impossible?** Can man be a free creature without having the right or ability to choose evil as well as good? Can good exist without evil? These questions must be answered in order to understand the nature of God’s relationship with creation and man.

**God can do all that which can be done.** God’s omnipotence does not mean that He can do things that are not possible to be done. Lewis

wrote that omnipotence “means power to do all that is intrinsically possible, not to do the intrinsically impossible. You may attribute miracles to Him, but not nonsense.”<sup>17:16</sup> Davis added, “But to say that God is all-powerful means only that God can do everything that **can be done**, not that He can do contradictory things like make square circles.”<sup>11:36</sup> “Nothing which implies contradiction,” replied Aquinas, “falls under the omnipotence of God.”<sup>18, n.p.</sup> God can do that which is possible.

“It is not the case that there are no limits to what an omnipotent thing can do.”<sup>3:17</sup> God cannot make square circles, round squares, four-sided triangles and three-sided rectangles. These things do not exist and cannot exist. God cannot make something exist and not exist at the same time. He cannot do that which cannot be done.

The point, then, is this, **God could not have created a true, free-moral agent as man and at the same time not allow him to be able to sin, to do evil and make bad choices.** Man could have been created a puppet of God and not allowed to make evil choices. Or, he could be a free-moral agent, as he is, with the ability to make evil choices. True freedom demands the latter. For man to be truly free he must have the capacity of choice. This capacity includes the ability to make wrong decisions. **A true, free-moral agent without the power to choose evil just cannot exist.**

It is not a question as to whether God could have created a being that would not be able to sin. He could have done such. However, to create a free-moral being and not allow him to choose, would be an impossibility. God can do what can be done, not what is impossible or contradictory.

Man must have the power of choice in order to be free. **The abuse of such power answers numerous questions concerning the existence of evil and suffering in the world today.** How much evil is the result of man’s evil choices? We live in a world where the majority of its citizens have gone wrong. They have given up a knowledge of the one true God, and thus, have created their own social laws. The result of this choice has plagued the world with AIDS and wars and a host of calamities that continually inflict society. The existence of a free-moral agent has led to human suffering that surely causes God to weep over

man's rejection of His guidance through His laws.

At this point in our discussion one might even question why God created man in the first place. We must be reminded, therefore, that God never intended that this world be the final dwelling place of those who submit to His guidance. Heaven is the final reality for the Christian. In order to prepare men for heaven, therefore, there had to be an environment in which true heavenly characters could be developed. This world is that environment. Therefore, in order to prepare an individual who had the capacity to love, God had to create an environment in which love could be developed by man's interactivity with one another. This environment allows such, and thus, this is the best of all possible environments that could be created in order to prepare men for heaven.

## **E. The benefits of evil and suffering:**

In understanding the presence of evil and suffering one must understand that evil and suffering inherently have benefits. Too often we question God's wisdom in allowing suffering and pain and sin to exist without realizing the benefits that do exist because God allows them to go on. Consider the following:

**1. *The presence of suffering produces better sons of God.*** For man to truly be a free-moral agent, he must live in an environment that would provide choices for him to make. For man to develop into a true son of God, he must live in an environment that would promote character-building. The world provides such an environment. The environment in which man lives "must be an environment which offers to man the **challenge** of choosing to become and to live as a son (of God) and a brother (to one's fellow man) at a possible very high price (a great deal of sacrifice."<sup>3:46</sup> **This environment (the world) offers the best possible environment to accomplish God's purpose to bring disciplined individuals into eternal dwelling.**

This world, in light of God's omniscience, is the best possible world for the preparation and character-making of man for now and eternity.

Could God eliminate all suffering and yet expect men to develop courageous characters? We think not. The unbeliever contends for a better world by the elimination of pain and suffering. However, for what would it be better? In such a world—a world free of suffering and pain—it would be impossible for man to be a free-moral agent. It would be impossible for man to develop spiritually by making right choices. Augustine wrote, “For Peter was in a healthier condition when he wept and was dissatisfied with himself, than when he boldly presumed and satisfied himself.”<sup>19</sup>, n.p.

Suffering does forge better characters. James wrote, “... *the testing of your faith produces patience*” (Js 1:3). Without trial, temptation and turmoil, there can be no truly courageously developed men in the spiritual realm. T. B. Maston wrote,

The main point, from our immediate perspective, is that God did not remove the thorn but said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength [“power,” RSV] is made perfect in weakness” (II Corinthians 12:9). How could Paul have known the power and sufficiency of the grace of God without his thorn in the flesh?<sup>20:46</sup>

“The crucial question is not whether ours is the **best** possible world, but whether it may be the **only** possible world.”<sup>1:253</sup> For soul development, it appears that **this is the only possible world**. God “cannot eliminate all hardship, risk, pain, and difficulty from life and still expect courageous character and venturesome minds to develop here.”<sup>13:73</sup> An environment must exist in which these true characters can be forged for eternal dwelling.

Peter wrote, “*But may the God of all grace, ... after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you*” (1 Pt 5:10). Peter had earlier explained the reason for suffering persecution. “*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (1 Pt 1:6,7).

Therefore, there are benefits of suffering. Suffering produces strong characters. It produces characters who are prepared for heaven. “If God thus intervened for his child, the child would become what someone has called ‘a cosmic pet,’ and a petted child is a spoiled child. Our Heavenly Father has no petted or spoiled children.”<sup>20:6</sup> Therefore, in order for God not to have spoiled children, He must allow them to exist in an environment in which they are disciplined and trained for the new heavens and earth wherein dwells righteousness (2 Pt 3:13).

## 2. *Evil exemplifies good.* Ramm wrote,

Man would never know good if he did not know evil. A man created in goodness, eternally protected from evil, would have no appreciation of goodness. Therefore evil is introduced into the universe so that man may experience evil and in so doing come to know good. He is therefore eternally better for having experienced evil, for he now knows the real character of the good.<sup>14:124</sup>

That which is good often results from evil. After Joseph had undergone numerous evils as the result of the evil doing of his brothers, he proclaimed to them, “*But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive*” (Gn 50:20). In the overall view, all things work together for good to them that love God (Rm 8:28).



Therefore, it is not evil that evil exists. Warren stated that “it is the case that evil really does exist, it is not evil that it does exist.”<sup>3:38</sup> **Sin is the only real evil for it is the willful transgression of God’s will** (1 Jn 3:4; Rm 3:18; 4:15). It is not evil that God gave man the power of freedom. It is evil when man abuses that power by choosing rebellion against God. God cannot be held accountable for the sinful choices of man.

3. *Evil points one toward heaven.* “It must be remembered that God did not create the world to be man’s permanent home but to be merely his temporary ‘vale of soul-making,’ the environment in which

man's one and only probationary period is to be spent."<sup>3:58</sup> If man was free from suffering and pain in this life, would he thirst after heaven in the next life? I think not. John Bennett wrote that "the very absence of evil would constitute a problem since there would then be nothing to jar us out of an attitude of self-sufficiency."<sup>21:164</sup>

Paul wrote, "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*" (Rm 8:18). There is a better land, a land of no more pain, tears or sorrows (Rv 21:4). It is this land, this rest to which we strive as Christians (Hb 11:24-26; Rv 2:10). Therefore, the believer does not consider this world his last hope. He views the present world as only a place of trial through which he must transition into the next. Once this view is understood, then one understands the purpose for which the world was created by God.

We must react to the presence of suffering in the light of what God has promised to those who endure through this world. Too often it is our reaction, not the suffering itself, that causes most of the trouble. Maston exhorted, "... suffering in general, can and will be used of God to deepen and enrich our lives if we will react rightly to it."<sup>22:n.p.</sup> Right reactions, however, are only found in the truly biblical understanding of what evil really is and the purpose for which this world was created. Right reactions will come only to those who realize and understand the great reward prepared for those who overcome this world, and thus, transition into the next. When one realizes the reward, then there is reason to live the right reaction.



Directed Toward Heaven

## G. The reality of final destruction:

We must continually remind ourselves that God has given man the power to choose his destiny. If he abuses his privileges here on earth he will have to suffer the consequences of his wrong choices (Gl 6:7). Man destines himself to destruction because he so chooses the course in life that leads to such. When man violates natural laws which of

necessity must exist, he must pay the price. It is the same in the spiritual realm. When man violates moral laws which of necessity must exist, he must pay the price. Men must know that they will pay the ultimate price for the ultimate sin.

This brings us to the accusation of the atheist concerning the Christian's concept of hell as the final punishment for those who are wicked in behavior or did not have a chance to obey the gospel. The atheist charges the Christian with a belief in a fiendish God who is unloving and unmerciful in His final punishment of the wicked. His argument is against those who affirm that God is supposed to be good, but this good God will supposedly punish with unending fire those who sin against Him. The atheist charges that the Christian believes in a God who checks up on the wicked throughout eternity in order to make sure they are burning in an unending fiery torment. Mother Teresa is eternally burning in hell because she did not obey the gospel by baptism for remission of her sins. She will burn in hell forever and ever while God checks in on her in order to make sure His punishment for her carries on without end. The atheist states that he would not believe in such a fiendish God because this God cannot be good and loving, while at the same time, inflict upon the wicked such unjust punishment.

The atheist may have a point. This argument is usually ignored by most Christians. It is ignored because most Christians do not have an answer for this contradiction in their belief concerning a loving and merciful God who would punish beyond the nature of the crime those who were good people, but never had a chance to hear and obey the gospel. There are two schools of thought among believers in their efforts to answer this argument.

First, there are those who simply dismiss the argument by saying that unending punishment is God's business. If He desires to hand down unending punishment for crimes that took place in a brief lifetime, then such is His business. If He desires to punish with eternal torment those who were of a good character, but never had a chance to obey the gospel, then it is His desire to do so. We do not have the option to question what He would do with the wicked.

This is usually the approach to answer the atheist's argument by those who affirm the unending torment of those who have not obeyed the gospel, whether they were morally good or wicked. However, this seems to be an effort to ignore the dilemma. It ignores the fact that the biblical definition of God is that He is a just God who renders just punishment for crimes committed. Throughout the Old Testament the extremity of the punishment that God commanded Israel to deliver to those who broke the law was measured by the crime that was committed. The principle of punishment was an "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." We would assume, therefore, that God would Himself justly work after this same principle. To simply say that God will unendingly punish because it is His business seems to dodge the principle by which He commanded man to live. Therefore, the approach to answer the argument by just saying that it is God's business does not satisfy the atheist. He thus maintains that his argument proves that the God in which the Christian believes does not exist simply because the Christian's theology contradicts itself on this point. It contradicts itself because a God that is just and merciful cannot be a God who will unendingly punish with a fiery hell the wicked or morally good person who never had a chance to hear and obey the gospel.

There is a second biblical answer that many believers have affirmed that answers the argument of the atheist concerning the punishment of the disobedient. It is based on passages as Matthew 10:28. *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* Since Jesus made this statement concerning the power of God, then certainly He can carry it out. After due punishment has been inflicted, God can terminate both soul and body in hell. Paul says that He can destroy those who do not know God nor obey the gospel (2 Th 1:7-9). In other words, once the punishment has met the crime, the body and soul of the wicked or the morally good person who did not have a chance to obey the gospel, is terminated. Once he has been rendered the "stripes" which match the crime, the individual ceases to exist. This school of thought, therefore, contends that God is a just and merciful God (Lk 12:42-48). He is not a fiendish God who holds in unending

confinement those He desires to unmercifully torment (For an extended discussion on this subject see *BRL*, volume II, pp. 115-148).

If this second answer is true, then the atheist cannot say that the Christian proclaims a concept of God that is contradictory. God can remain a just and merciful God, and at the same time, render punishment to those who rebel against His will. He is just in that He deals justly. He is not fiendish in the sense that He unendingly torments the morally good who have never obeyed the gospel.

In order for man to be truly free, he must have the power to choose between good and evil. If he chooses evil, there must be consequences for his behavior. If not, then men would choose only that which pleased themselves. Every man would do only that which was right in his own eyes. He would do only that which brings pleasure to self or power over our fellow man. Such would certainly lead to human annihilation. It has in the past in societies such as Rwanda and Nazi Germany and a host of other examples that continually flare up in cultures that have given themselves over to themselves. When men give up a knowledge of God, they seek their own pleasure and power.

If men were not severely warned for practicing sin, certainly numerous societies would have vanished long ago. Or at least various societies would have debased themselves to animality. Therefore, we must understand that man cannot do wrong against his fellow man without a final punishment. This is the way it must be for man to survive in an environment that allows choice. It brings no pleasure to God to see His creation suffer because of evil choices. God is not a sadistic old man. He is a loving Father guiding His children toward heaven. As a loving father chastises his son, so God chastises His sons to keep them on the right road (Hb 12:6,7). This is the way it should be. This is the way it is.

After we have covered all the material concerning the problem of evil and suffering, there are still unanswered questions. However, these unanswered questions do not cause us to forsake or even question God. After all, if we reject God, to what shall we flee. Illtyd Trethowan wrote, "If we reject God on this ground [that evil exists], we exchange

obscurity for chaos and for a more inspissated darkness—for in a supposedly purposeless world we should be faced with a still more intractable problem, the problem of good”<sup>23:300</sup> Therefore, we shall not turn out the light on what we have. We shall not dispose of faith for fiction and a world of chaos.

When Job questioned God on this issue, God answered Job by revealing to him that He was infinitely greater than what Job could possibly conceive. Therefore, God’s answer to Job was, “Trust Me, I know what I am doing.” And after considering all the problems of life, we must confess that it is still all worth the effort. Life is worth the struggle. When considering the hope that is before us, we cannot conceive of a better environment in which characters could be prepared for eternal dwelling. Therefore, we will trust in God that all things are working together for good. Habakkuk concluded,

Though the fig tree may not blossom,  
Nor fruit be on the vines;  
Though the labor of the olive may fail,  
And the fields yield no food;  
Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,  
And there be no herd in the stalls –  
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
***I will joy in the God of my salvation.***  
(Hk 3:17,18)

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**