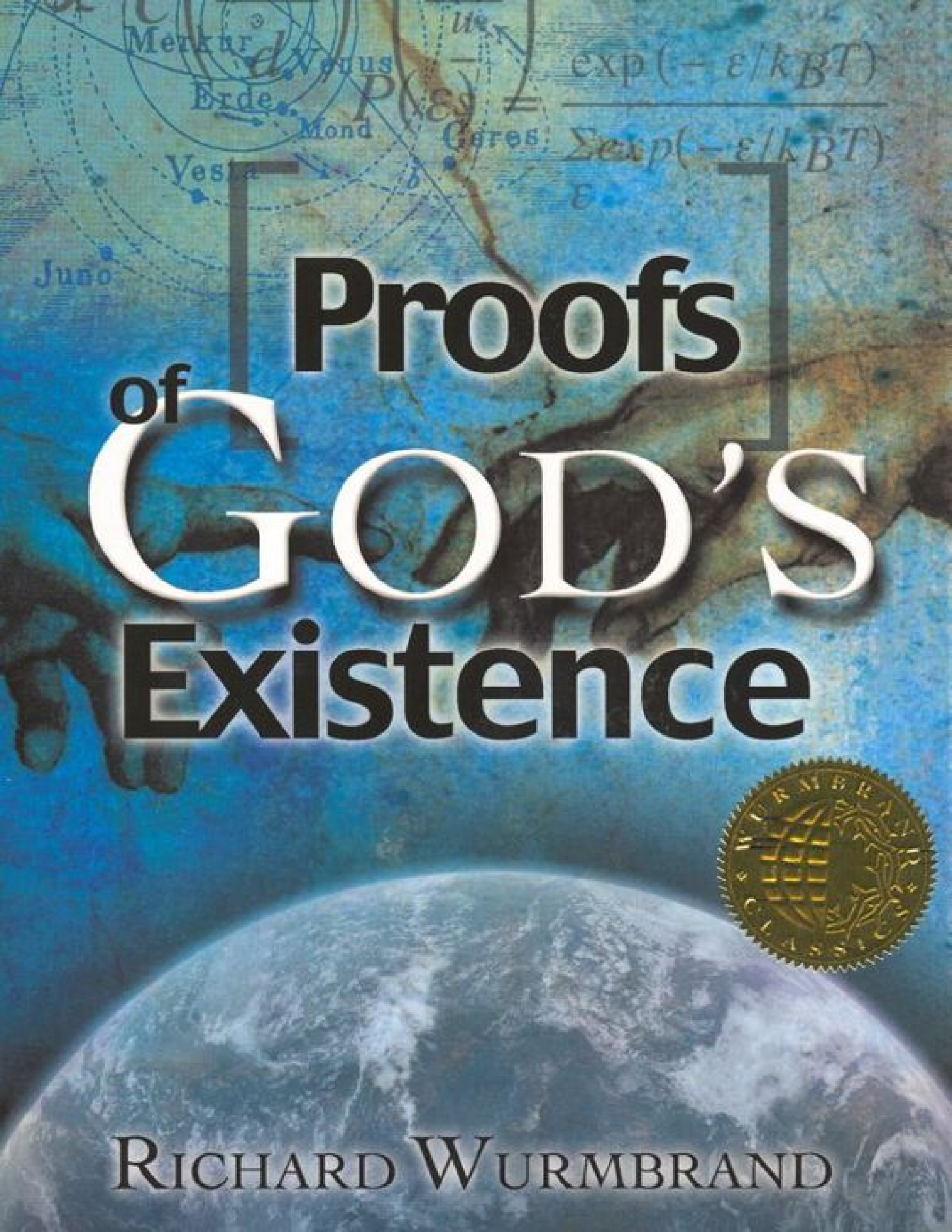
Proofs
of
GOD'S
Existence
RICHARD WURMBRAND

Contents

Proof of God's Existence

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The Voice of the Martyrs
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Proofs of God's Existence
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Foreword

"Does God exist?" is a question that has been asked throughout the ages. Arguments against His existence range from the philosophical, "If there were a God, then why is there so much evil?" to the scientific, "If there were a God, then why do so many scientists insist on evolution?" Were we created, or did we just happen to evolve into complex beings with an intellect and emotions? And if we were created, would that change the way we live our lives?

Proofs of God's Existence was first published in 1988 in India, just before the fall of the Berlin Wall, which began the toppling of a government system in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union that claimed "religion is the opium of the masses."[1] Communism took the position of being the people's god, striving to control and meet their every need, while going to great lengths to punish anyone who chose to worship their heavenly Creator outside the bounds of government-approved church buildings.

Richard Wurmbrand, the author of this book, was one such man who was punished at the hands of an atheist government for his work with the church in communist Romania. For a total of 14 years, he sat in a prison cell in between interrogations and beatings for following after the Founder of this "opium of the masses."

Today, in our post-Cold War, post-modern, post-9-11 society, many Westerners claim to be spiritual or believe in a higher being. According to The Barna Group, "71 percent (of Americans) believe that God is the all-powerful, all-knowing, perfect creator that rules the world today (2006)."[2] Although this statistic may be encouraging, the question of whether moral absolutes exist, while unchanging and relative to the circumstances, is distressing. Again, according to The Barna Group:

> "…people were asked if they believe that there are moral absolutes that are unchanging or that moral truth is relative to the circumstances. By a 3-to-1 margin (64% vs. 22%) adults said truth is always relative to the person and their situation. The perspective was even more lopsided among teenagers, 83% of whom said moral truth depends on

the circumstances, and only 6% of whom said moral truth is absolute."[3]

If we believe God exists, would there not also exist a set of moral codes that govern our lives in a way that leads us toward order and life versus chaos and death? Would His existence and the following of His moral code not be reflected in our relationships, work ethics, politics, communications, decisions, social lives and the innumerable other opportunities we interact with our world? And, therefore, would our lives not be a witness of our Creator, making our world a better place?

The question of the existence of God and absolute truth is not new to this generation. Throughout history, governments have attempted to remove God from society to enforce on its people a set of values based on many gods (polytheism) or no God (atheism). During the Roman Empire, Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). Anyone who refused to profess the emperor as god and make sacrifices to their multiple gods was oftentimes thrown into prison, only to face the lions before a blood-thirsty crowd. As Islam expanded in the Middle East, many were faced with the threat of death or paying a "jizya" (protection tax) if they refused to convert to Islam.[4]

Then in the 20th century, the world continued to witness more atrocities committed in the name of a "god" or no God. Adolf Hitler imposed his own moral code, attempting to wipe out God's chosen people—the Jews. In China, Mao bulldozed churches, imprisoning and killing Christians while Josef Stalin imposed his reign of terror in the Soviet Union, sending millions to death camps.

What has resulted in these governments' attempts at denying truth or imposing a polytheistic or atheistic belief system? Death.

The Choice is Yours

Richard Wurmbrand knew the words of this book were not unchallengeable, and one may find logical and factual flaws in his statements.

To these skeptics, Richard wrote of an anecdote he once heard. A doctor of linguistics fell into a well. A passerby heard him call for help and, bending over the wall of the well, asked what had happened. Sizing up the situation, he said, "I bringing quick a ladder and a ropes."

The professor protested: "'Bringing' is the participle. You need the future indicative 'I will bring,' not 'I bringing.' You also cannot say 'a ropes'; only 'a rope' is correct."

The man replied: "I see you having times for jokes. You having times for grammatics. You not being in danger."

He left, and the professor perished in the well.

If you are tempted to find fault with his writing, I urge you to consider accepting his message and coming to know the greatest joy—God—and living by His moral code, which will lead toward order and life versus chaos and death.

I am reminded of the words of Moses to the Israelites:

> "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land…. I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them" (Deuteronomy 30:15-20).

To the atheist: Will you consider the proofs of God's existence and embrace Him, or will you deny He exists and turn your back on Him? To the Christian: Will you love the atheist and set an example of living a life that reflects our Creator, or will you live by your own rules that lead to a spiritual, emotional, mental and possibly physical death?

The choice is yours.

—Dr. Tom White, Executive Director,
The Voice of the Martyrs, USA

Preface

There exist two kinds of experiences: intellectual and existential.

If I am told that a child died in a car accident, it is one of the millions of common tragedies, in which happen I might show interest in the details. If I am practical, I might help the bereaved family with finances or with a word of comfort.

But something entirely different happens if a person were to storm into my house and tell me that my child had just been killed. This would make a dramatic impact on my entire life. Such events are called existential experiences. Be they forerunners of joy or sadness, they affect the whole person.

For me, God was an existential experience in a dramatic situation.

I was in a communist jail for 14 years, many of which were spent in solitary confinement, never seeing any person with the exception of the torturers. I never had a book or paper, never heard a voice or a whisper. The only one I could cling to was God. That is, supposing He exists.

Does God exist? Is He my Father? Does He love me and care about me? Can He instill hope? Who or what is He? Is there any importance in having knowledge about Him? These were neither academic questions, nor matters of spiritual relaxation on Sunday in church or philosophic speculation.

If He exists and I can reach Him, I can absorb energy and hope from Him. I can remain steadfast, calm, yea, even joyous.

If He is not, my suffering for His name is foolishness. I would have to bang on the door and deny my faith in the hope I will be freed as a reward. If not, suicide would surely be preferred to slowly rotting in an underground jail.

You will find in this book what I—and in a certain measure other prisoners—thought concerning these matters in such circumstances. My source is a deep existential experience.

You, dear reader, have not passed through sufferings like mine; but you suffer, too. Suffering is a common human experience. It might be useful for you to know thoughts that preoccupied me during that time and the conclusions or certitudes, to which I arrived.

The main ideas of this book belong to that time and became a book with a multitude of references to religious, scientific and philosophic authors after I was released.

I hope this book will help someone think independently about the primary problems of the human soul, bringing him or her to the one eternal source of wisdom.

Proofs of God's Existence

A philosopher once confronted Rabbi Levi-Yitzhak of Berditchev with arguments disproving the existence of God. The rabbi listened for a long time in deepest meditation, then suddenly, without preamble, looked him straight in the eye and said gently, "And what if, after all, it were true that God exists? Tell me, and what if it were true?"

The philosopher was troubled more by these words than all the arguments for religion he had ever heard. He realized he was in danger and became a believer, sensing for the first time his vulnerability and accountability before a real God.

A Cistercian abbot was interviewed on Italian television. Cistercians are an order of Roman Catholic monks.

The interviewer asked the abbot: "And what if you were to realize at the end of your life that atheism is true, that there is no God? Tell me, what if it were true?"

The abbot replied: "Holiness, silence and sacrifice are beautiful in themselves, even without promise of reward. I still will have used my life well."

* * *

An ignorant man was given a watch, the first he had ever owned. To him it was a source of great pride, until one day the joy faded with the realization that it was not telling the right time. Hoping to get it fixed, he removed the hands from the watch and took them to the watchmaker for repair.

"But I need the whole watch!" exclaimed the watchmaker.

The man angrily replied, "You want the watch only so you can charge more money. There is nothing wrong with the watch. Only the hands need fixing."

Likewise in life, no independent problem can be resolved without involving the whole entity. In medicine this is called the holistic, or psychosomatic, approach—the recognition that body, mind and spirit are all involved in disease or disorder. The best physician treats not the ulcer but the cause of the ulcer. The resolution of social problems must also involve the whole person, or failure is virtually guaranteed.

No man is an island, separate from family, society or the cosmos. The sense of belonging is not simply essential to well-being; it is an irrefutable fact of being.

The question is: To whom do we belong?

Is there a Higher Being, someone above us? Is there perhaps a God, to whom we belong? Let us approach this question *sine ira et studio,* without hatred or bias for the religious or atheistic position.

* * *

Any unilateral examination of a problem is dangerous. Only the person who listens to both sides has an illuminated mind. The one-sided person remains in darkness.

Lenin once said: “To know an object really, we have to embrace and study all its aspects and all its connections. We will never arrive at this integrally, but the need to consider all its aspects guards us from errors and deceit.”

It is therefore wrong and anti-Leninist for communist countries to permit only atheistic books to be read. In other countries both religious and anti-religious books are readily available.

Mao wrote, “To see only one side of things means to think in the absolute, means to look upon problems metaphysically.” Since communists are adversaries of metaphysics, let them therefore allow the free expression of all ideas.

There is an old proverb that says, “From the man who reads but one book, Lord, deliver us.” I would be wary of the man of one book even if this book were the Bible.

A frog in a well said, “The sky is no bigger than the mouth of the well.” Obviously, the sky is infinitely greater than his narrow concept. It would have been correct to say, “The part of the sky I see is as large as the mouth of the well.”

The sky atheists see from their particular pit contains no God, just as the sky of many a narrow-minded believer contains no understanding of the atheist's position. But the sky, even in the natural world, is much greater than the small portion we see.

The blind man lives in a world without painting, and the deaf is insensible to music. The Eskimo cannot imagine the tropical sun or the rain forest, and the bushman is ignorant of the internal combustion engine. Their minds cannot comprehend such things.

Might it not be that atheists are blind to a part of reality we call God, just as believers are often incapable of grasping the circumstances that make it difficult for some men to acknowledge God? Christians should recognize that not only God but also atheism is a reality. There must be serious reasons for its existence.

Throughout the centuries our knowledge of the universe has extended from unsophisticated belief that the earth is its center to the fact that star NCG 62822 is at a distance of 4.5 quintillions of light-years and the diameter of our galaxy alone is 1,800,000,000, 000,000,000, light-years. Our spiritual universe, too, is far greater than we perceive.

So let us broaden our perspective and discuss belief in God versus atheism on a level different from the conventional wisdom of past centuries.

* * *

The Italian writer Dino Buzatti tells the following legend.

The angel of death appeared to the renowned scientist Einstein while he was working on his theory of relativity and said: "Your time is up. You must come with me to the other world."

Einstein begged for a month's time to finish his book. It was granted. After one month, he asked for another.

Finally Einstein finished his book and according to the agreement, went to the public park on a December night to meet the angel of death. He had no personal ambitions for success, fame, and money but was satisfied merely to have served science.

The angel of death asked him, "Have you finished your work?"

"Yes."

"Then you can stay on. I am no longer interested in you. I frightened you with the idea of the imminence of death to make you work more

quickly. I am the devil's envoy. I know you worked innocently. But on the basis of what you have discovered, missiles and killer satellites will be developed to destroy the earth and its inhabitants. We stimulate the development of a pseudoscience, geared not only to truth and love, but also to the artifices of the wicked.

"Only hurry! Hurry! This is our slogan."

The devil does not want us to spend much time thinking. He has a horror of depth. The demons begged Jesus not to send them into the abyss (Luke 8:31). In this they are unlike God, who spurns superficiality and is not afraid of the depths (Psalm 18:11; 139:8- 10).

"Quick! quick!" urges the devil. Build houses, towns, states, empires. Build cultural, scientific and political establishments, as well as churches and missions. Do big things, and do them fast. Don't waste time on the details. Thus you can help me build for the fire, for the cosmic holocaust, the *Goetterdaemerung*, in which nothing of God's creation will remain.

"Our demonic host will be the only survivors, and then God will have to receive us back and make peace with us on our terms."

This book is for those who are not in a hurry, who before building a house or fighting a battle sit down first, count the cost and consider the ultimate consequences of what they do. This is what Jesus taught (Luke 14:28,31).

For years I sat alone, almost immobilized by heavy chains, in a very small prison cell, without books or paper, without ever speaking to anyone. I could only think. I could only try to penetrate the depths.

Be quiet and listen.

* * *

Some men believe in God, some disbelieve. Some tell others to believe or disbelieve. Some go further: They try to compel others to believe or disbelieve. In Iran, Khomeini killed men for disbelieving in God; in Russia, communists killed them for believing.

So do not expect an easy solution to the problem of whether or not God exists. If there were a simple solution, the problem would long since have disappeared.

The main difficulty consists in the fact that the quarrel is only about a word.

How can that be? Proof is that before the flow of words starts, there is unanimous agreement about the notion “God.”

Before we say “I assert,” “I deny,” “I am indifferent and do not care,” “I believe,” “I disbelieve,” “I love Him,” or “I hate Him,” we have in mind a Being whose existence we assert or deny or ignore.

The agreement is perfect before we pronounce words, before we even say them inwardly to ourselves. Therefore, let there be no words, and the great cleavage between men will cease.

Real speech does not need words. In Hebrew, the word “word” does not exist. *Davar*, which means “the real thing” and also “the cause,” is used instead.

Our speech does not consist in conveying real things or in disclosing causes. Therefore, our words are flimsy vessels that often founder on the shoals of misunderstanding and dissension. Prudent words come from deep silence.

Reality transcends quarrels. Reality even transcends positions for and against truth. If one is God, He can plead for Himself.

Even those who speak *for* God often speak too much. They fail to observe when they shift from speaking about God to speaking about His attributes. Attributes are qualities we attribute to Him. The very word indicates that it does not speak about God as He is in Himself. If He exists, He is basically what He is (Exodus 3:14), not what we think and say He is.

The Bible says: “But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him” (Habakkuk 2:20). When the silent speak (though very rarely) about God, they do so in truth.

Truth can be apprehended, but it belongs only to those without dark glasses. Truth lives well only as long as it crosses unharmed the boundaries that separate languages and cultures.

There are primitive languages, in which the concepts “God is love” or “God is holy” cannot be expressed because there are no words for “love” and “holy.” For the aboriginals in Australia, “Holy Spirit” is uniquely translated in their primitive language as “the pretty witchdoctor in the sky.” So believers put their faith in the “Father, Son and nice witchdoctor.” The Eskimos, on the other hand, have no word for “quarrel.” They live in a very cold climate. Why should a man risk pneumonia for an argument? So it was impossible to say in their language that God has a quarrel with sinners.

Until a few years ago, Chinese writing employed the same ideogram for “he” and “she.” Is God a “He” or a “She”? In Western Christianity there are those who would remove from the Bible all male attributes of God. This is a Western luxury. This debate would have been impossible in China.

Only persons with clear, unobstructed vision can see the truth. But most men wear worse than dark glasses. They have blindfolds, like those worn by prisoners in communist jails. They cannot see a thing.

Therefore, it is necessary to remove the blindfolds and dark glasses. But one more thing remains: The eyes must be healed. Jesus says, “Anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see,” (Revelation 3:18). Only a healthy eye can perceive reality.

And this reality transcends quarrels. The Talmud, a holy book of the Jews, says that once when Rabbi Shamai and Rabbi Hillel quarreled about the correct interpretation of a Bible verse, a voice from heaven was heard: “Thus and such are the words of the eternal God.”

To arrive at truth, we must beware of the traps of opinion and the snares of evil thinking.

* * *

So many entities are called God.

Some believe in God only as “the great Architect of the universe,” a concept meant to include all religions. It is a neutral concept, which a Jew, Christian or Muslim believes. Some have no dogma at all. It is not that they do not have truth. They decidedly *refuse* to have it.

Gotthold Lessing, the renowned German dramatist, wrote: “If God held the whole truth in his right hand and in his left hand the mere and always active impulse towards truth, even though with the risk of always and eternally deceiving me, and if he said to me ‘Choose,’ I would humbly fall in his left hand and say: ‘Father, give it to me. The pure truth is fitting only for you’” (G. E. Lessing, Duplik, 1977, *Gesammelte Werke,* V, 100).

Every normal man wants to know exactly which food is good and which is poisonous, which medicine would cure his sickness and which would aggravate it. We desire to know the exact truth in mathematics and science. In matters of religion, some declare: “We don’t want it. No dogma. No clear truth in matters of religion.” They believe only in the great Architect of the universe, who apparently is not great enough to make Himself known.

Whoever says, “I deny the possibility or the desirability of reaching a definite truth,” declares by this: “I have an ultimate truth, and it is desirable that it be known. This is that there is no ultimate truth.” So we are back where we began: There is an ultimate truth.

But should we not look for a better ultimate truth than that there is no ultimate truth?

* * *

To the question, “Is there a God?” the atheist would reply, “A reasonable man believes only what he sees.”

Pressed for clarification, the atheist would no doubt qualify his assertion. Obviously, he too believes in the sun when it does not shine, in love when he does not feel it, in his brain that he cannot see. He believes the assertions of scientists regarding galaxies or micro-particles, as well as the assertions of historians about past events. He would correct himself: “A reasonable man believes only what can be seen by himself or other men. Few men, for example, have access to atomic installations or huge observatories, but some men have seen. Therefore, I can believe.”

The faithful could then say, “We are in the same situation. Few men can claim to be holy or have pure hearts, which are the prerequisites for seeing God. But some have. The prophets of old say they saw God. Jesus said He came from God. Many Christian saints have had visions of God, too. Therefore, we can believe.”

I know Tibet exists, though I have not seen it. I know some men have great goodness though only from what others say. I believe God exists even if I personally have never seen Him.

How many testimonies do we have that Hannibal or Genghis Khan existed? Very few, but still we have no doubts. There are far more testimonies for the existence of God.

At night we see many stars in the sky. But when the sun rises, they disappear. Can we claim, therefore, that during the day there are no stars in the sky? If we fail to see God, perhaps it is because we pass through the night of ignorance in this matter. It is premature to claim He does not exist.

Search yourself to see if there is some complex of antipathy that makes you deny God’s existence. Terrible things have been done in the name of God, and great stupidities have been preached or written as His revelation. “God” is truly a polluted human word. In His name statues of monsters

have been declared to be holy. In His name religious wars, often the most bitter and intense, have been fought. In His name inquisitions were carried out. Nazi soldiers had “God with us” inscribed on their belts.

For this reason believers are called to the reality signified by the word “God.” It is important to distinguish carefully between name and reality. Let me emphasize that unless a person distinguishes well, he cannot think well.

* * *

The true God is beyond the gods, in which one believes or disbelieves. He is not in competition with other gods for faith that He claims only for Himself. Like Him, they call themselves “god.” And like Him, they require a sentiment called faith. But only the names of the sentiment and of its object are the same.

We use so many misnomers in our speech. Faith in God might also be a misnomer. By God we must mean the real God, not a product of fancy.

In the sciences of physics or chemistry, the language used does not faithfully represent the properties of nature. In the natural world there is no iron, gold or uranium. There are only alloys, which can be refined in the manner dreamed of by scientists.

These scientists discover the microscopic properties of matter only by means of macroscopic implements, themselves constituted of microscopic atoms. Describing the microscopic world in microscopic terms spoils our observation, just as we misunderstand a child if we apply an adult yardstick to his behavior.

At its most sophisticated level, science no longer views nature as entirely separate from the observer. It is not independent of our experiments and measurements. To observe bacteria under the microscope, we first have to destroy and stain them, which means we do not really see them as they are when unobserved by us. We know elementary particles only as they behave in our reactors. How they behave in nature, when not bombarded by our photons, the reactors cannot tell us.

We do not analyze a house by dropping a bomb on it. Yet a photon has the dimensions and effects of a bomb on some elementary particles. Then, when we illuminate them, they are transformed, split, annihilated. We see them not in their pristine state but as “ruins.”

This is the sort of process that takes place in the realm of God. First, there is God. Then, there is God as He is when He knows He is being observed, prayed to, worshipped or hated. There is God as the great prophets have known Him, have written about Him, trying to describe in human words a reality, for which the dictionary has no words. And this reality about God they desired to communicate to those who could not share their experiences.

There exists the truth. There exists truth about truth, which, in order to be understood by men and to counter falsehood, is adapted, modified and qualified. Then there is the popularization of the truth about truth at different levels so that it can be understood by children, the ignorant, the stupid, ordinary men and geniuses—not to mention people of different backgrounds and languages. All this recycling becomes the truth about the truth about the truth, and as such all are misnomers. Only the truth is the truth, not its clothing in human language.

Who can comprehend it? Who knows enough about it to deny it? It transcends our attitudes and speculations.

Hinduism makes a difference between *Brahman Saguna* and *Brahman Nirguna*, between God with attributes and God as He is in Himself, without attributes.

The sun reflected in the surface of a lake is troubled by waves. Our relationship with the truth about the truth is likewise distorted. Seek God as He is in Himself, the One who reigns in perfect serenity.

He is not determined by anything His creatures say or do. Yajnavalkya in the ancient *Brhad-Aranyaka-Upanishad* calls Him *"Neti, Neti"* (neither this nor that). He describes Himself in the Bible as "I am what I am" (Exodus 3:14), not what people think I am or would like Me to be. The Kabbalah calls Him Ein, the Nonbeing, in the sense that He is never what we presume.

A disciple once asked the wise Bahva who God was. The teacher remained silent. The disciple repeated the question several times but elicited no response. In the end, the sage conceded this much: "I told you the whole time who He is, but you don't wish to understand me. God is silence."

He is the Creator, the Keeper, but also the Destroyer of all created forms in order to create new ones. He exists to fulfill His intentions, not our self-serving desires.

Christian medieval mystic Meister Eckhardt says: “If you seek something for yourself, you will never find God, because you make God a candle with which to seek something. When you find it, you throw the candle away. Some wish to love God as one loves a cow—for the milk and cheese and profit it provides.”

Seek nothing from Him, but stand before Him in quiet adoration. Do not seek even to be accepted. Everyone who feels forsaken by Him can be sure he is not forsaken. Those who are do not know it.

Serve God as if He had only you.

* * *

If you deny God truly exists, could you say, “I exist”?

Even to this question, the reply is not simple. It takes some thought.

What do you mean by “I”? Are you a self-contained, unchanging subject whose existence can be asserted or denied? Certainly not. Every day, even every second, you are changing. So are you the embryo, the babe, the schoolboy who bore your name, the soldier on the battlefield, the patient in the hospital, the husband and father, the old man nearing the grave? In a sense you are the same person, yet you are also the continually changing person.

The Bible says, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him…” (Genesis 1:27). The word “image” is used twice in this verse to show this our dual aspect.

In some respects your “I” that has existed in the past no longer exists. When you say “I exist,” you can mean only the abstraction of all the numerous events that have taken place in your life.

And what about the future? Will the assertion “I exist” remain true forever? Or is the “I exist” only a temporary thing that will someday disappear like a vanishing cloud?

And what does the word “exist” mean in this proposition? “To exist” is also an abstraction, like the word “I.” No one simply exists. He works, he sleeps, he eats, he laughs, he weeps and more: He passes continually from one state to another. For a person, “to exist” means “to become.”

We think we can easily dispense with the question of whether or not God exists when it takes considerable thought to decide if I exist and to what extent such an assertion holds true.

So we are forced to ask the question: Does any object named by men truly exist?

* * *

Philosopher Baruch Spinoza defined truth as correspondence between thought and its object. This definition is generally accepted. But what object of thought ever corresponded to thought? What is the similarity—not to say identity—between the reality *water* and its English name "water"? In German it is "Wasser," in French "eau," in Italian "acqua," in Hungarian "viz," in Romanian "apa," in Russian "voda." What is the similarity between real water and the chemical formula H20? What is the similarity between water and the thought it evokes—joy for the thirsty, excitement for the laboratory scientist, enchantment for the poet at the river's edge, fear for the homeowner threatened by flood, relief for the farmer praying for rain?

Similarly, there is a tremendous difference between what men think about God and what God is. Believers call men to the reality called "God."

Thousands of books have been written to explain who God is, but the reader can only come away with an explanation of the word "God," not God Himself.

One of my most beloved Christian hymns is a Norwegian one that, instead of defining God, says simply,

> God is God, though all the earth lay wasted.
> God is God, though all men death had tasted.
> God is God, and nothing else than God is God.

When one becomes a disciple of the Zen religion, he is asked to spend all his time in meditation about a few riddles called koan. The first is: "What is the noise produced when you clap with only one hand?"

Some think about this for months without finding the answer, though it is simple: "The noise produced when you clap with one hand is the noise produced when you clap with one hand."

Every other answer, even the obvious "Nothing," would be wrong. Everything can only be what it is. God is God.

* * *

You might be tempted to put this book aside at this point with the comment: “This is a religious book. Religion is a bore.”

To which, I would reply: “What about tennis or football? Is it not boresome to throw a ball from one side to another for hours?”

“All right,” you might say, “I concede that it is pointless, but it is beautiful, healthful and a demonstration of skill.”

Again, I would reply, “Religion might be useful too, and true, though it is not amusing.”

Let us continue quietly to reason together.

* * *

Plato wrote, “Seven years of silent inquiry are needed for a man to learn the truth, but 14 in order to learn how to make it known to his fellowmen.”

I do not know why Plato chose the figure 14. And why did Alexander Dumas decide that the hero of his novel *The Count of Monte Cristo* would also sit in prison for 14 years?

I thought often about this during my years in communist prisons. Then, after I had fulfilled 14 years of a 25-year sentence, I was released unexpectedly. Was it because I had learned my lesson and now knew how to teach the truth?

* * *

In jail, where we never saw a printed page, I had no idea about the discovery of such things as quarks, something of which the elementary particles are composed. Only after I was free, could I read about them.

Scientists have named the different kinds of quarks—“truth,” “beauty” and “charm.” Who would ever have believed that gross matter such as iron, lead or nitrogen is composed of entities, for which even cold, dispassionate science could find no other adequate names?

God is the truth. Jesus said, “I am the truth” (John 14:6). The Bible is also the truth and speaks of the beauty of holiness. The church is called by religionists the pillar of truth. And by some extraordinary coincidence, the quark—an immeasurably small building block of matter—is named beauty and truth.

An endless line contains an infinite number of points; a line an inch long also contains an infinite number of points. A point contains no center;

in the smallest imaginable point, there is also room for an infinitude of smaller points. So there is at once infiniteness in God and in the most minuscule finitude.

From the most exalted to the most obscure, there is only infiniteness. From the highest to the lowest, the essence is truth, beauty and charm.

After 14 years of prison, will I be able to impart this truth in a charming and convincing manner?

* * *

The world is more complex than it seems. Reality is more subtle than we are inclined to believe. Our knowledge is less certain than we think. A proposition generally accepted as true may be only relatively so because truth is many-sided.

A good illustration is the classic story of the blind men and the elephant. Asked to describe what they perceived an elephant to be, they each had a different answer. One felt the leg and said, “The elephant is like a tree.”

Another felt the trunk and said, “A snake.”

A third grasped the tail and said, “A rope.”

But not one of them had any idea what an elephant really was.

Only the perfected soul can see the truth whole and absolute and this only when he surveys the whole universe in a single act of timeless knowledge.

Is this what Jesus meant when He said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8)—God in whom all have their being and movement?

To *see* God? Does God exist?

* * *

God is what we understand by the word “God”—an almighty person or power who rules the universe and who is the object of our positive or negative thoughts and affection. I am the subject, He the object.

When I think thus about Him, great contradictions arise.

If He is almighty and loving, too, why does He not prevent earthquakes, tornadoes, wars, the shedding of blood, poverty, sin? If He has the power to avert disaster and does not, He has no excuse.

A sick lady wrote this letter of complaint to a missionary:

> “I was sick all last year. I am very unhappy and do not submit to ‘Your will be done.’ I am angry and in despair that so much suffering and awful things must happen to me. Please don’t send me words of comfort. I am fighting with Him unless He is asleep and does not know what is happening in this world, which He has so beautifully created.
>
> “Think about the last war, the concentration camps, and what is happening now. I don’t want to read the paper or listen to the wireless any more. You, however, I wish all the best, you idealist.”

Many Jews have said: “I believed, until millions of us were gassed and burned by Hitler. Let God now choose another people.”

God has no excuse. Perhaps He needs no excuse. Does a potter excuse himself before the clay for what he makes out of it, for putting what he has shaped into the burning oven to harden it?

Actually, God’s power is of a totally different order. There are many forms of power—nuclear, atomic, caloric, electric, mechanical, spiritual.

God is Spirit. So His power must be spiritual. What distinguishes this energy from other types is that it is not coercive. It is not a compulsory cause that *must* be followed by a certain effect.

Perhaps He is almighty in His power to convince, to teach, to persuade, to provide examples—a power utilized by educators, pastors and writers.

God does not force men to be good. But He shows His almightiness by becoming a babe in a manger, an itinerant teacher who inspires love or hate, a man crucified between robbers. He endures all things with love and by His supreme sacrifice has the power to attract many people in many circumstances to love and goodness.

God is not a sort of Superman who always appears as the *deus ex machina* to rescue men in trouble or resolve conflict. Rather, He is an almighty, serene, joyful, patient Being, who persuades men to receive from His bounteous hand these same qualities.

There was a moment in time when He spoke a word and the primary chaos became an ordered universe. He breathed into a figure of clay, and it became a living soul. He communicated with His creatures, and they became saints.

He has the power to break through to men, to speak to them, to persuade them, to transform them, to make them happy for all eternity.

Their happiness comes not from being rescued from all their troubles but from becoming like Him in character.

Once while in Santa Maria, St. Francis of Assisi called Brother Leon to him and said, “Write.”

He replied, “I listen.”

“Write down what true joy is.

“That all doctors of divinity of Paris have come to inscribe themselves in our monastic order is not true joy, neither that all bishops and archbishops or even the kings of France and England have joined it.

“Neither is it true joy that the brothers go to infidels and convert everybody, nor that someone receives the power to cure all sickness.”

“Then what is true joy?”

“I come from Perugia. It is winter. I am frozen. My garment is clothed with icicles. I am hungry. I knock at the gate of the monastery for a long time. Then someone asks, ‘Who is it?’ I reply, ‘Francis.’ The answer comes, ‘Away from here. We don’t need a simpleton like you.’ I insist: ‘Receive me for at least one night.’ But they drive me away.

“I tell you that if you remain calm and do not lose patience, this is true joy and true virtue and true good for the soul.”

* * *

God is not a power in the sense that He will keep a man from dying (though there have been such exceptional cases). As a matter of fact, life often rides like a harpy—a rod and a plague—on one’s back. But when at death she relinquishes her hold, we see her transformed into a beautiful maiden. All the suffering we have endured becomes reason for joy.

Jesus, God in human flesh, with all power in heaven and earth, chose not to change external circumstances, not to avoid a very painful death on the cross. Rather, by accepting His destiny with love and forgiveness, He demonstrated that we need not fear death. And once this fear is overcome, life itself becomes—as He promised to those who follow Him—more abundant (John 10:10).

* * *

It is a great mischief not to know God, but it is an even greater mischief to draw the wrong conclusions from our misapprehension.

In a sense, all of life is a venture, since we as humans cannot predict the future. I do not know if the marriage I am contemplating will make me happy; neither do I know if I would be happier to remain unmarried. I do not know what the career I have chosen will bring me. I do not know for certain if the food I have just eaten will do me good. But we all make decisions based on presumptions.

Let us do the same in this matter of the existence of God. Let us "gamble," as Blaise Pascal suggests. He says, in effect: If I put my faith in God and He does not exist, I lose nothing except the sinful amenities I must renounce, which are harmful in any case. But if He exists—ah, then I have won an eternity of joy.

* * *

As early as 1912, Lenin wrote the following in a letter to Russian author Maxim Gorki: "Millions of acts of violence, of illnesses and epidemics, are much less dangerous than the most purified, the slightest idea of a God…. God is the personal enemy of the Communist society."

He also wrote, "Religion is a kind of spiritual vodka, in which the slaves of capital drown their human features and their reverence for a somehow dignified human life."

There are those who choose to think like Lenin; but there are also multitudes who choose to believe in God.

To you it might be doubtful if God exists, but the following Jewish story surely exists:

A rabbi put the following question to a man in his congregation: "Two men enter a house through the chimney. The one is dirty, the other clean. Which of them washes himself?"

The Jew replies, "Surely, the dirty one."

"No," says the rabbi, "because the dirty man sees that the other is clean, so he presumes he is clean, too. The clean man, seeing the dirt on the other, believes he is dirty also and washes himself.

"Now I have a second question," continues the rabbi. "Two men enter a house through the chimney. One is dirty, the other clean. Which one washes

himself?”

The Jew answers, “Now I know: the clean one.”

“No,” says the rabbi. “The clean man looks at his hands and clothes and sees they are clean, so why should he wash? The other man sees that he is dirty all over, so he washes.”

The rabbi put a third question: “Two men enter a house through the chimney. One is clean, the other dirty. Which one washes himself?”

In despair, the Jew shouts, “Both!”

“Wrong,” says the rabbi. “If two men enter through a chimney, how can one remain clean? Did you not see that the question is foolish?”

So any human questioning of God is foolish. If there were no intelligent Creator, there would be no intelligent being to put questions or to deny the intelligent Creator. God simply exists. Even the assertion that He exists is a condescension to the unreasonableness of ordinary thinking.

* * *

Logisticians have long contested the notion that “exists” can be a predicate. The very fact that you pronounce a noun indicates that you accept the notion of its existence. If not, about whom do you speak and about whom do you assert that he does or does not exist?

Does a present king of France exist? About whose existence then do you ask? The notion “present king of France” surely exists. The only problem is whether or not this notion corresponds to reality.

With God, this problem does not occur. The notion “God” surely exists; otherwise, we could not debate about His existence or non-existence. The notion “God” is the notion of a perfect being— the ultimate, beyond which nothing can be conceived. To exist in reality is an essential part of perfection. Once the notion “God” exists, there must be a God in reality.

Anselm of Canterbury, an influential philosopher and theologian during the Middle Ages, pointed to the discrepancy between having the notion of a perfect being and denying its existence. Does existence not belong to perfection? How can one be perfect without being existent?

St. Bonaventura said, “If God is God, He exists.”

* * *

I propose to write about atheism and about God.

If there is a God and I am His creature, this is sheer audacity. He is supposed to be an eternal spirit, while I am carnal. He is supposed to be eternal, while I am mortal.

If there is no God, I am the result of the coming together by chance of molecules that also came together by chance. What chance has this result of chance to know the truth?

If atheism is true, if there is no eternal God and no eternal life, if we are aggregates of molecules that came into existence as a result of random movements of matter that just happens to exist, if death is the end for the unbeliever as well as the believer, if ultimately all mankind and the earth and the whole universe will wind down in a process called entropy, then everything is vanity. All history will end with not a single soul remaining even to be interested in what happened to mankind in the short span of time it happened to exist.

If God exists, He needs no defense. If He does not exist, whom do I attack? A mythological creature like the chimera? Then why do we not contest other fairy tales and myths?

In attacking belief in God, atheism might render itself a disservice.

A Russian farmer was asked, “Do you believe in God?”

He said, “I certainly do.”

“Why do you believe? Did you ever see Him?”

“No, but neither did I ever see a Japanese. I believe the Japanese exist because our army waged a war against them. And I believe in God’s existence because such a fierce battle is fought by our government against Him. Do you lead a war against a nonexistent being?”

I know it is presumptuous of me to write about this subject. But though I take up my pen timorously, I believe almost 50 years of study and meditation on this subject entitle me to hope I can make a significant, though small, contribution in this area.

* * *

This book is obviously not for everyone.

A musician standing before the Empire State Building in New York City said to a friend, “That child across the street whistles beautifully.”

His companion was astonished. “How can you hear him in all this noise?”

The musician threw a coin on the pavement. Immediately several men gathered. The proof had been given. Everyone hears what interests him.

Those interested in money hear the clink of a coin. Those interested in music hear even the rustling of leaves shaken by the wind. Those thirsty for truth will find something useful in the present book.

What I write is only for those who want answers, who desire knowledge, who prefer the light of truth to the darkness of ignorance.

* * *

Some believe the existence of God is an ethical issue: We have need of the notion of God because without it, morals collapse.

The Hungarian communists once made a movie called *The Spiral Ladder*. It is the story of a married man with two children. A good communist and a good worker, he was sent by the Party from a province town to Budapest to organize a cultural revolution. Because of a shortage of apartments in Budapest, he had to leave his family behind for a while. One can guess the plot. He fell in love with his secretary and abandoned his family.

In one scene while in bed with his mistress, he asks, “Don’t you have any remorse for splitting up my family?”

She answers: “When I was a child, I was taught to restrain my passions because there is a reward in the kingdom of heaven for those who do so and punishment in hell for those who do not. But I don’t believe in such things any more. Therefore, what reason do I have to restrain myself or worry about your family?”

Russian writer Fyodor Dostoievsky had said it before in *The Brothers Karamazov*: “If there is no God, everything is permissible.”

It would seem desirable, then, to invent God if He did not exist and to believe in Him and cause others to believe in Him so that society could function and survive.

Jesus says: “You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:1b,2).

But then what should we conclude? Should we argue that since there is no Master, no Judge, we should squeeze from life, as quickly as possible,

the few pleasures it affords? What about those to whom life allots no pleasures?

Another conclusion is possible.

* * *

In the 17th century, when atheism was almost unknown among the Jewish people, a Jew said to his rabbi, “I don’t believe in God.”

The rabbi embraced him and said: “How I envy you! Your state of soul is so much better than mine. When I see a man who is sick or poor or in distress, I comfort myself with the thought, ‘God will help him.’ Since you don’t believe in God, you must help him instead. It remains for you to do the things God would do if He existed. Therefore, live like this and you will be all right.”

When my son Mihai was perhaps 5, he said something similar. At a prayer meeting, he heard me interceding for a poor family. Suddenly he interrupted me: “Why talk to God about the problem? Put your hand in your pocket and give your money to the poor.”

From 1907 to 1912, there was a segment of the Bolshevik Party of Russia known as the Bogoiskatelstvo or Bogostroitelstvo (seekers for or constructors of God). It numbered among its adherents such renowned men as Maxim Gorki, the writer, and Anatoliy Vasilievich Lunacharsky, later minister of culture in the Soviet government. Their reasoning went like this: Since there is no God, let us act the way God would; let us construct a God. They thought like the rabbi.

Lenin fought bitterly against this faction. He feared that those who followed such reasoning would soon recognize their inability to be godlike. They might also conclude that there must be a godly force to imbue them with such a desire.

Well, it appears one need not be sure of God’s existence before attempting to walk in His ways. To admit only what one understands often leads to willed ignorance.

One might be well advised to proceed like the scientist.

The priest Gregor Mendel became the father of genetics some 100 years before the discovery of genes or even of chromosomes. But because his ideas were considered too revolutionary, he never succeeded in passing even a teacher’s examination. He was told: “One cannot expect exactness

when dealing with living things. It is not like physics, where one measures length or force or velocity. Life is too complex and mysterious for a ruler or a watch. You cannot measure the fragrance of a flower."

But he knew God loves numbers. In fact, one of the books of the Bible is called "Numbers." It is written in the Bible that He numbers the stars, the least of the birds, even the hairs of a man's head.

Mendel knew, without any proof, that there must be definite laws of heredity. It must be possible to predict the extent to which parental qualities will be transmitted to their offspring. Nature cannot be irrational and incomprehensible.

On the basis of presumptions of faith, he discovered the laws of genetics, without the knowledge of genes. Mendel's law of separation still stands. He called the unknown entities, with which he worked, "factors."

You, too, can work with the "factor," whom others call God. Though He is unknown to you at the moment, take Him as your model and follow the rabbi's advice.

Delve into the notion of "God" even if you don't know Him.

Francis Bacon wrote, "If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubt, but if he'll be content to begin with doubt, he shall end in certainties."

Therefore, start with your doubts!

* * *

We have the notion of a perfectly good and just Being. Some believe the notion corresponds to reality, others do not.

Why should we not dare to try to make Him exist?

At one time, technology did not exist, nor instant communication around the globe, nor modern medicine, nor democratic and socialistic institutions, nor capital and labor as giant forces. We could neither fly nor navigate under water. But we desired these things and brought them into being.

There exists an ideal notion of what a spiritual person should be. Let us endeavor to become like this ideal. We have turned dreams into reality in other matters. Let us do what the rabbi advised. If there is no God, let us do what a God would have to do if He existed. Very soon we will realize how

right Lenin was to protest against such endeavors. Before long they lead to the discovery of their inspiration: *the real God*.

What a paradox! We learn that religion at its best has much in common with atheism: The God the religionists worship is remarkably like the God the atheists deny.

Meister Eckhardt, a medieval mystic, once said: “A truly holy man has been made so at one with God that he does not think of God or look for God outside himself.” The apostle Paul wrote, “But we all…are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Einstein said, “Reality is *one* electromagnetic field.” There is only one reality. What seems to be plurality is often only multiple aspects of one reality. Gaurinsakar and Mt. Everest were found to be the same peak of the Himalayan Mountains seen from different valleys.

The following inscription can be found in Hindu temples, “Brahman is one, and there is no second.” These same words are sung in Jewish synagogues: “He is one, and there is no other.”

On this point, religion and atheism concur: “Reality is one.” We all adore “the one.” Atheists say, “Matter is this ‘one.’” There is nothing else. Spirit is an attribute of matter organized within the human brain,”

We say, “God is ‘the one,’ and nothing has existence without Him.” There surely was an apostle Paul and he is in glory because he could write, “I am nothing.” Only nothing has real existence alongside Him.

The priest Maximilian Kolbe, who died a martyr’s death in Auschwitz under the Nazis, once said, “I would like to be consumed unobserved without leaving a trace.”

Unlike stones and thorns that injure the feet of those who tread on them, God’s chosen people are like sand that passively yields to the tramp of the world and harms nobody. Even when the child of God walks, he leaves no trail of dust behind.

God has created all things, and all things exist through His selfexistent power. “In Him we live and move and have our being…” (Acts 17:28).

Only He truly exists. Language obliges me to refer to myself as “I,” but only God has the right to utter the word of ego-consciousness. I exist only “in Him.” Scientists, among them both religionists and atheists, agree: “There is only one.”

Who is this one?

Some say “I exist” and their “I” is so big it allows for the existence of no one else. Russian dictator Josef Stalin forbade not only God, but also his closest comrades to exist. Leon Trotsky, Grigory Zinoviev, Genrich Grigorjewitsch Jagoda—all had to die that his “I” might remain alone.

In like manner, 2,000 years ago in Palestine, Jesus was sacrificed to the selfish egotism of men whose minds could not accommodate to His mission and demeanor.

It is a sad fact that those who believe only in themselves destroy even within themselves all thoughts that do not correspond to their basic “I.”

Christian thought is at the antipode: Only God exists. Paul could write, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me…” (Galatians 2:20). The believing soul says about her heavenly Bridegroom, “My beloved is mine, and I am His” (Song of Solomon 2:16). The translation could read, “My Beloved is mine and I am not.” In writing, a difference is made, but the spoken language existed before writing. Spoken, it is the same word.

We Christians, then, have no need of being. What use has a person for his own existence once he has known God?

So we are agreed: There is only one. Who or what is this one? Is it matter which, when organized as a man’s brain, fancies a nonexistent God? Or is it God, who has created matter and life, upholding His whole creation with His presence?

It is little wonder that some civilized men identify themselves with matter. Our civilization is skin-deep. Primitive people, too, identify themselves with their totems, which at least are real. But what is matter? According to Einstein’s ultimate vision, it exists only as a curvature of the space-time continuum.

How meaningless to identify only with a space-time continuum! We believers, on the other hand, strive to know God intimately. He gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Which is better? Who is right?

* * *

A little bird once came upon a forest fire. Seized with compassion for all the wildlife and beauty that would be destroyed, she resolved to extinguish it. Flying to a far-off lake, she filled her beak with water and

returned to sprinkle it, drop by drop, on the growing blaze. But within a few short hours, she fell dead of exhaustion.

Neither the little flock of Christ nor I have the illusion that we will be able to extinguish the fire of atheism and false religion. This fire comes from too deep a source.

I write only because of the great pain in my heart. And yet— whence should a little mouth have the eloquence to speak about the great sea?

* * *

The Bible forbids men to defend God. A certain man who tried to steady the Jews' very holy Ark of the Covenant, which he thought was in danger of falling, was struck dead (2 Samuel 6:1-7). The apostle Peter, who drew his sword to defend his Master against the people who had come to arrest Him, was rebuked by Jesus: "Put up your sword to its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:52).

A man of Chu, called Pienho, found an uncut jade in the Chu Mountains. He took it home and presented it to the Emperor Wu. The emperor asked a jeweler to assess it. "It is just an ordinary stone," announced the jeweler. The emperor, believing Pienho to be a liar, ordered his left foot to be cut off.

When Emperor Wu died and Wen ascended the throne, Pienho again presented it to the emperor, who also asked a jeweler to give his opinion of it. Again he said, "Just a stone." The emperor, regarding Pienho as a liar, ordered his right foot to be cut off.

Emperor Wen died, and Chang became emperor. Pienho, carrying the jade in his arms, went to the foot of the So Mountains and wept there for three days and three nights until all his tears were cried away, and he wept blood.

On hearing this, the emperor sent officers to find out the reason, saying, "In this world such people are many. Why are you weeping so bitterly?"

Pienho said: "I am not grieving about the loss of my feet, but because the jade was called a stone, and because an upright man was called dishonest. That's why I am grieving."

The emperor told a jeweler to polish the jade, and it was found out to be so and was named "The Jade of Pienho."

We Christians are not angry because some people are atheists. Neither are we angry because many of our brethren suffer persecution in countries ruled by atheists. However, our hearts are broken because the precious jewel of faith is considered worthless. We desire to see the jewel vindicated. Therefore, I write these lines.

In the normal course of events, this book will be translated into the languages of communist countries and transported secretly across their borders. But while atheism is the acknowledged religion of the communists, there is widespread atheism and irreligiosity in the free world as well. And so this book has a potential broad-based audience.

Consider the following statistics that were gathered before the fall of communism in Eastern Europe: Of 100 English children, only 40 know the beginning of the Lord's Prayer; 17 do not know even that much. Some 40 percent do not know who Jesus was; 73 percent know nothing about Pentecost. Of 340 girls in a confessional school in Nurnberg, 85 knew their astrological sign, but only five knew the Ten Commandments. In Paris, only 5 percent of the population attends religious services; in London, 3 percent (H. Heinz, *Faith and Eternity*, Wegweiser Publishing House).

The terrible thing is not simply that men do not know God, but that they have no interest even in finding out whether or not He exists. The question is outside the realm of their preoccupations. The result is that mankind has become primitive. Today's great poison is indifference.

In some parts of the earth, there are savage tribes that have no notion of the immediate future. A swelling of waters does not interest them until it has swept away their houses. They are even less concerned with heaven or hell. It is in vain that one speaks to a mouse about a tiger. The mouse is concerned only with cats.

In spiritual matters modern man is very much like the mouse. Never was life more involved and more threatening than it is now, but he takes no time to sit down quietly, think about it and face up to the issues.

A European once invited two African tribal chiefs to travel with him by car for a while. At the end of the first day, they said to him: "With our bodies we have traveled far, but our souls could not keep pace. Now we have to wait a few days until our souls reach us."

In the last four or five decades, mankind has advanced tremendously in technical and scientific knowledge. There have also been profound political

and economic changes. Our souls have not adjusted to these new circumstances.

So I say to you: Sit down, be quiet and think. What values remain? How is my outlook? Are there things I need to change? Is the problem of the existence of God important to me?

For some the ideal life consists only of eating, drinking, sex and other pleasure-seeking. Some go beyond mere sensual gratification: They not only enjoy these things, but also philosophize about them. These are the materialistic thinkers. Others advance even further: They philosophize about materialist philosophy and live on the presumption that there is more to reality than matter.

The Bible says that once in Gergesenes, thousands of swine possessed by demons ran wildly toward the sea and drowned. Legend adds: “One single pig survived. It had stopped for a moment and asked itself, ‘What makes me run? What business do I have in the sea? Will I not drown?’”

I appeal to all atheists to stop for a moment and ask themselves: “Why all the denials? Am I possibly cheating myself? Would it not be better to investigate quietly the possibility of another reality beyond mere matter?”

At any rate, materialist—regardless of their beliefs about God— need to ask themselves what material things they really believe in.

For instance, color is neither in things nor in the eye of the beholder. Color appears when, for example, red-engendering oscillations react on the red-perceiving eye.

The same is true of other qualities of material objects. If one diligently inquires about matter it slips between the fingers. We must go higher than matter. We must go to our Creator.

If we can perceive the human spirit, surely we can apprehend also in the same measure what is above it. The human spirit is beyond mere touch or taste or smell or sight. It is perceived through its actions. Since the universe is full of actions of other than human origin, let us ascend.

* * *

Lenin once wrote, “All actual religions and churches, all religious organizations, are considered by Marxism as organs of the bourgeois reactionaries, serving the defense of exploitation and the doping of the working class.”

After 70 years of communist revolution, there are still religions and churches in Russia. Whom do they serve today?

Russia can no longer point a finger at reactionaries: They have all been shot. Anti-socialism and the exploitation of the working classes have presumably long since been eradicated by the Marxist “liberators” and “benefactors.” Whence the continuing interest in religion? Who besides “organs of the bourgeois reaction” support churches and religious organizations? Who is behind religion?

Might it be the reality of God?

* * *

Atheists ask: “Why all the dispute? If God exists, He certainly can reveal Himself. No one can question the existence of an American president, for instance, because everyone can see and hear him on television. If God were to show Himself as clearly as the president, who could deny His existence?”

The present author has spent many years in communist prisons. I find I cannot communicate my experience to men who have never been in jail, let alone under such atrocious circumstances. Even the Nazi holocaust is contested, in spite of all the proofs because men cannot bear the burden of knowing they belong to such a criminal race.

Lenin said correctly that if deep passions and pressing interests were involved, men would contest even that two and two are four.

Let’s be honest: If acknowledging the existence of God presupposed giving up a cherished way of life, many would find an excuse to deny His reality even if He appeared on television in the same manner as an American president or a Soviet premier.

In any case, the question of why God does or does not choose to reveal Himself is secondary. The great question is whether or not He exists. We humans and everything around us are composed of mesons, electrons and leptons. They constitute our very life and the lives of all our antecedents, though no one knew of their existence. Quite obviously, ignorance of this reality does not disprove their existence.

Is there a God or not?

* * *

There is much to be said for not debating truth at all.

When Sir Isaac Newton issued his new theory of light, all physicists argued with him. Newton became weary and wrote to Gottfried Leibnitz, “I was so persecuted with discussions arising out of the publication of the theory of light, that I blame my own imprudence for parting with so substantial a blessing as my quiet in order to run after a shadow.” From that time on, he refused to have anything to do with debate.

But on the other hand, if there is a God, certainly He would not object to a debate between His faithful and the atheists.

Atheists have abolished God, but so far God has been more tolerant. Not only has He allowed atheism to exist, but also like a loving, indulgent parent, He has allowed atheists to come up with good arguments for their convictions.

And so it was that 13th century theologian Thomas Aquinas, knowing the intellectual methods of atheism, first put forth in his *Summa Theologica* all the best arguments contradicting Christian postulates. Then, after having “fulfilled all righteousness” toward his philosophical adversaries, he brought forth all his most cogent arguments for the truth of religion. (Anselm of Canterbury proceeded in a similar fashion.)

Since his day, atheist philosophers have actually written books against religion by copying these anti-theistic arguments adduced by Thomas Aquinas as he set about to defend the faith.

Believers who deny that it is possible for atheists to have valid arguments should not expose their ignorance. The God who provided lions with strength and tigers with cunning, though He knew they might devour His own children, provided atheists with room for doubt, as well as pretty good proofs for their convictions. We let these proofs stand.

The Jain philosophers in India have some. In their holy book *Mahapurana*, it is written:

> “If God is perfect, He does not strive for the aims of men [righteousness, profit or pleasure]. So what advantage would He gain by creating the universe? If you say that He created to no purpose, because it was His nature to do so, then God is pointless. If He created in some kind of sport, it was a sport of a foolish child leading to trouble. If out of love for living things and need of them He made the world, why did He not make creation wholly blissful, free from

misfortune? God commits great sin in slaying the children whom He Himself created. If you say that He slays only to destroy evil beings, why did He create such beings in the first place?"

No one knows why the creation occurred and why the universe is composed of both matter and spirit. Atheists and believers alike are without an answer to many questions.

We do not have to go as far afield as Jainism to find such problems posed. The apostle Paul asked the shocking question, "Does God fail?" (Romans 3:3 and 9:6, NIV).

If an apostle of Christ could pose such a question, we will not point an accusatory finger at atheists.

Our brains are operative democracies, since no brain listens to one single voice. Why then should there be only the voice of faith in matters of religion?

I myself started out as an atheist. Later I became a Christian. What kind of believer would I be if I had no understanding for those who have remained faithful to their first love, atheism, while I abandoned it?

In addition, how can we condemn atheists when there exists unbelief in believers, too? All men are born with a sin nature.

But just as there exists unbelief in believers, so there exists faith in atheists.

Marxist atheists practice dialectic thinking.

The average mind can think only logically, in the best of cases: "A is A," which means "A is not B. A is either A or non-A. A third possibility is excluded." Dialectics says the contrary: "All things are interpenetrations of contradictions." To live means to die. To be an atheist means to be so concerned with God that you have to deny His very existence in order to have peace of mind. There is no such thing as a serene atheist.

I do not go around saying, "I don't have a million dollars in the bank," because no purpose would be served by such a denial. Why then should a person try hard to convince everyone there is no God unless he is plagued by doubts that God may indeed exist?

On the other hand, we confess that being a believer means to recognize within oneself such an inclination to disbelief that faith in God has to be constantly underscored and reinforced.

German political philosopher Friedrich Engels once wrote that even the most consistent Christian has in him the seed of what could lead in its development to atheism. This is true if we accept also the contrary: Every atheist is a potential believer.

We are reminded of the observation of St. Francis Xavier, a 16th century missionary: “A good many do not become Christians simply because there is no one to make them Christians.” Pope John Paul II adds: “It often comes to my mind to run and to shout here and there in the academies of Europe and to address those who have more scholarship than charity with the following word: Oh, how great is the number of souls excluded from heaven through your fault.”

Many men become atheists because of the multitude of unanswered questions.

Mankind has advanced from hunting with a bow and killing with a stone to annihilating with a nuclear bomb. Where is God in the picture? French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre seems right when he observed, “History progresses without knowing about itself,” otherwise it would not have gone this bloody route.

The Bible says God cannot behold iniquity. How then does He behold this evil world and allow it to progress in wickedness?

Further, the Bible says that no man can see God and live (Exodus 33:20). But it completes the thought a few verses later by saying we can see only His back part (verse 23). Then in the book of Genesis, Jacob wrestled with the Lord and saw Him face to face and lived (Genesis 32:30). While the future remains obscure, we can see Him in past events. Christians believe that at the end of history, there will be a light that will illuminate everything in the past. But the road ahead is difficult, and the answer is distant. Today’s darkness engenders atheism not only in communist countries, but also in many parts of the Western world.

If Scripture says that it was God who prepared a fish to swallow Jonah (1:17), might He possibly have also prepared this great tide of atheism that engulfs so many men?

Atheists observe that Christians pray, “Thy kingdom come.” The ordinary man cannot fathom how terrible it must be for a king to be without a kingdom. How many men gather around the deposed kings of Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Iran? Why should we wonder that God does not have more adherents? He is the only king who is without a physical, political

country yet has millions to praise and adore Him. It is rather a wonder that He has as many followers as He does.

Because He is a king without a kingdom—at least, a visible kingdom, or country, that is perceptible to everyone—some believe being with God seemingly means to be deprived of much joy.

In Jesus' parable of the Prodigal son, He speaks about a young man who went astray, then returned to his father's home. Overjoyed, the father ordered music and a feast for the occasion. Hearing the music as he came from work, the elder brother of the prodigal inquired as to its meaning, as music in the father's house was rare.

Music in our Father's house is rare, too. Those faithful to Him groan under heavy crosses. Can we reproach men for shunning the road of much suffering and preferring that of happiness and joy? Nightingales and larks prefer song.

Not every atheistic attitude is the fault of the atheist.

People do not join a faith. They join the faithful. If men do not wish to receive our faith, it might be because we fail to exercise it.

It is written that Jesus is "the express image of His [God's] person" (Hebrews 1:3), yet He "made Himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7). Christians pray His name be Hallowed (Matthew 6:9), though He does not strive for a reputation. Since He humbles Himself, atheists in a sense cannot be blamed for not recognizing the King in Him.

Some of these things are difficult to understand. But the whole of reality is difficult to understand. An atom is a riddle; so is a flower, a man, a talent. Many Christians sacrifice their intellect, their time, their money, their lives, for Christ. Their conversation can be without covetousness. They are content with the things they can understand (Hebrews 13:5). As for the rest, they are content to accept even the mystery.

Atheism has its justifications. But men evolve many ways of dealing with reality. Religion might have some justification, too. Will you not consider it?

If you do not, please know that we are ready to credit your courage, especially if you live in Christian surroundings.

Addressing a gathering of schoolboys, a bishop gave this example of moral courage.

"A boy in a dormitory who, in front of all the others, kneels down and says his prayers before hopping into bed." He then asked the boys if they

could think of another example.

"Sir," piped up one voice, "a bishop in a dormitory full of bishops, who hops into bed without saying his prayers."

Atheists on the other hand should be willing to acknowledge the courage of believers.

* * *

A missionary to Uganda told this story. His church had a Gift Day. But instead of sending their gifts ahead of time for decoration, they brought them on the Sabbath morning. When the service was over and the missionary stood looking at the pile of gifts, he thought he heard something. Looking down the aisle, he spotted a little African girl.

The missionary asked, "Did you want to speak to me?"

Very timidly the little girl came up to the front of the church and said, "Please, sir, I want to give something," and putting her hand into her scanty garment she took out a bag. She opened it and pulled out handful after handful of silver and gold until there was a pile of silver on the table worth more than all the other gifts put together.

The missionary said: "You should not have done this. Tell us where you took the money, and we will put it back."

The child burst into tears. "It's all mine."

The missionary exclaimed: "It cannot be your own. You are too poor."

The story came out. The child had sold herself as a slave in order to give money to the church.

To become self-sacrificing like God, to become as God would be if He existed, is an excellent way to find God. This was what the rabbi recommended. Have you tried it?

* * *

The atheist position leaves open a question, one posed in 625 A.D., by King Edward of Northumberland. He could not decide whether he should allow missionaries to come to the British Isles.

A nobleman proposed the following: "Life is like a banquet hall, in which you and your knights sit at a table. It is winter, and outside the storm winds blow. But inside it is warm. A sparrow enters through an opening, flies the length of the comfortable hall, and then departs through another

opening. Like the sparrow, we find life bearable within the banquet hall, but we do not know what precedes and what follows. If the new teaching can tell us this, it should be followed."

So it came about that Christianity was accepted.

The scientist John Haldane once suggested to a Christian prelate that in a universe containing millions of planets, it was inevitable that life should appear by chance on one of them.

"Sir," said the prelate, "if Scotland Yard found a body in your Saratoga truck, would you tell them, 'There are millions of trunks in the world—surely one of them must contain a body?' I think they still would want to know who put it there."

* * *

Adolf Hitler claimed to be religious. In Mein Kampf, he said he led the very fight of the Lord. He also said, "I go the way Providence dictates with the assurance of a sleepwalker."

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's aide, was also sure of himself. He wrote in his journal on July 21, 1926, the following, "The Jew is verily the anti-Christ of world history." He believed he was God's warrior when slaughtering the Jews.

Hitler was neither the first nor the last to kill in the name of God. There was also the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran.

During the Inquisition many died a martyr's death at the stake for God. But those who burned them were as convinced as the martyrs that they were serving God.

What a fanatical religious murderer understands by the word "God" and the sentiments it evokes in him are surely very different from the feelings of a true, loving, humble believer.

The notion of a God who is partial is false. No nation, class, party or religion is permitted to proclaim, "God is with us," if this means He is against all others. It is no wonder many have become atheists in rebellion against this false notion.

The Bible sometimes speaks in riddles, like the koans that the disciples of Zen Buddhism have to guess at. For instance, the apostle Paul asks, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

Usually the answer that is given is, “Nobody.” But the whole experience of the children of God contradicts this over-simplified reply. Many are bitterly opposed to those who unite with God.

Therefore, the reply, “Nobody can be against us,” is wrong. The question is wrong and thus cannot have any correct reply, just as there cannot be a correct answer to the question, “Which two even digits added to each other equal 19?” The question is wrong. As for God, He is not partial. He cannot be on “our” side. He cannot be a national, denominational or racial God.

If it were possible for a being to live on a negative particle within the atom, he would doubtless think of Him as a negative God. Perhaps, in a sense, atheists live in a negative spiritual sphere and therefore see God with a minus sign before His name.

God feeds lions as well as sheep. “He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). He is not a partisan God and does not want me to be partisan. In every conflict He teaches me to rejoice with the victorious and weep with the vanquished. The apostle James says, “The wisdom that is from above is… without partiality” (James 3:17).

God’s mercy is not confined to the boundaries of any social group. It is not confined to the boundaries of the church. An atheist is not excluded from it. He who seeks truth seeks God, whether or not he knows it.

A man’s atheism can be his way to God.

False thoughts are often a pathway to truth. Einstein said that 99 percent of his thoughts were false. The search for truth is like a sifting. Many thoughts have to pass through the sieve for the correct one to remain.

Neosalvarsan, the medicinal treatment for syphilis, was called drug 606 because it took 605 unsuccessful experiments to discover it. Errors were thus a pathway leading to truth. Atheism, too, can be for many a necessary stepping-stone toward the truth. Every calendar day comprehends not only light, but also darkness. “God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day” (Genesis 1:5). The morning without the preceding night is not a day.

Night has its place in nature and atheism its place in a sinful world. Much of its criticism of religion is true. Unfortunately, faith does not always lead to goodness. Faith in God depends on one’s concept of God.

The false notion then of an exclusive, partial and excluding God has been disavowed by many who react by choosing to reject such a God. They call themselves atheists.

* * *

Not all biblical concepts of God satisfy all modern men. Scripture contains notions of God acceptable only to a small segment of society. In fact, the deeper one delves into the Bible, the greater the difficulties become.

How should a lover of peace view His names, “Lord of Hosts,” or more simply, “God of the Armies”? The words spoken in Hebrew are literally “God—the armies.”

How should a lover of virtue view the Bible praising men like David and Jehu, who were far from being models of morality?

In the Old Testament, which was the whole Jewish Bible at the time of Christ, there are many things that are difficult to understand. Why were animal sacrifices necessary? In fact, after the Fall of Adam and Eve, why did God choose to clothe them in furs? Why did God accept Abel’s sacrifice of an innocent lamb and reject Cain’s offering of the fruit of the ground?

In Exodus when the Jewish slaves were about to leave Egypt, why was it necessary to sprinkle a lamb’s blood on the lintels and doorposts in order to be protected from the plague?

Furthermore, it is recorded that God sent droughts and famine on the land. On one occasion He sent an angel of death to destroy an Assyrian army of 185,000 men in one night. When the Israelites marched into the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, God’s chosen successor to Moses, they were ordered to annihilate not only men and women, but also children. When I read the stories of Joshua to my 6-year-old son, he observed, “God commanded these things before He became a Christian.”

We may smile at a child’s explanation, but there was a time when cruelty was attributed to God, in contrast to Christ, who revealed His love. Why the difference?

To complicate matters still further, the church has introduced into its arsenal of truth all sorts of physical and procedural devices as Cardinal Newman himself notes: “The use of temples, and these dedicated to particular saints, and ornamented on occasions with branches of trees;

incense, lamps, and candles; votive offerings on recovery from illness; holy water; asylums; holidays and seasons, use of calendars, processions, blessings on the fields; sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the East, images at a later date, perhaps the ecclesiastical chant, and the Kyrie Eleison. [These are] all of pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church."

And so we acknowledge that it is not easy for an atheist to come to God. We can understand the atheist well.

He is not alone in asking himself difficult questions about God. Believers, even saints, have questioned Him much more than atheists ever do. St. Theresa of Avila, one of the devoted teachers of the Christian church, observing the many afflictions that befall the faithful, said in prayer, "O my Lord, how true it is to say that as soon as somebody renders You a service, You reward him with some great tribulation." Job and David also complained to God of similar inequities.

Christians know better than to assert that they have all the answers and all the light. They concede the existence not only of light and darkness, but also of a twilight zone. When Jesus speaks about being "full of light," He means only "the bright shining of a candle" (Luke 11:33), not great searchlights or laser beams.

Christianity is under continual stress, produced by unsolved problems. Every Christian is a cross-bearer. If he has no other cross, he bears tormenting questions that burden him to his last breath. To the most difficult, he does not even seek a reply now, knowing the answers lie outside this world.

* * *

Caiaphas the high priest, Jesus' judge, when confronted with witnesses who contradicted each other, had the wisdom to question Jesus directly. This is the only solution to our problems, too. Jesus is alive today and can be questioned. Put your questions to Him directly.

I have done just that and have received an astonishing reply:

> "It is obvious that God does not exist. How could an all-loving and all-powerful God ordain or even permit the Auschwitz and Gulag extermination camps?

> “But men arrive at truth only by abandoning the obvious. It is obvious that the sun turns around the earth. The whole experience of mankind confirms the ‘fact.’ Yet we discovered the truth only by questioning what was obvious. It is also obvious that we live in a material world. The truth is, we live in an empty space, in which elementary particles whirl around at distances from each other as huge, relative to their size, as the distance from the earth to the sun.
>
> “It might be obvious, therefore, that God cannot exist, but seek the truth outside the obvious.”

* * *

By now it should be evident that I have mentioned many an argument that atheists never adduce. I have done so out of a superabundance of love for them. The truth is that most atheists have no argument at all.

Jonathan Swift wrote, “It is useless for us to attempt to reason a man out of a thing he has never been reasoned into.” Therefore, I will not reply to all the atheistic arguments previously enumerated.

It would seem some men happen to be atheists just as others happen to be believers. In fact, atheists are often not so much deniers of God as men who feel themselves denied by God. Many deny God because they cannot attain Him. They rationalize their tragic situation. They are like the fox in Jean De La Fontaine’s fable who, looking at grapes he could not reach, rationalized: “They are surely sour. I don’t desire them.”

And so I simply will say, “God exists.” We have to repeat this because of the poverty of human language, while realizing that to say, “God exists,” is to use a tautology, a repetition.

Simone Weil, the profound Hebrew-Christian writer, said: “If on some island completely separated from the rest of the world only blind men lived, light would be to them what the supernatural is to us. We can suppose that light would be nothing to them. In their physics there would be no place for the theory of light and this physics would explain the world to them fully. Seeing that light does not hit, does not burden, cannot be eaten, for them it simply would not exist.”

But whether or not the blind could realize it, only light accounts for the fact that plants and trees grow toward the sky in spite of the law of gravity. Without light we would not eat.

In a cinema one can observe all kinds of events on the screen for hours at a time. If the light suddenly goes out, there are no more events. Though light may have nothing to do with the actions on the film; without light, there are no actions.

The blind have four senses instead of five like other men. Might not an atheist lack one sense possessed by believers? To the blind, light would belong to a metaphysical realm. To an atheist, belief in the existence of God, which is as natural to the believer as the existence of everything else, might likewise be a metaphysical concept.

God is not a kind of insurance agent offering His followers guarantees against the mischief of life. Rather, He offers the challenge to imitate Him in love and self-sacrifice. He is not the immediate solution to all problems at our command. Being Love and Truth, He calls men to the great adventure of reaching the heights and lifting others. Religion calls one to battle and to sacrifice. Religion that does not embrace the tragic is not religion.

* * *

Some individuals are atheists because many Christians have not lived their religion in the proper manner. The second Vatican Council observed that believers must occasionally bear the blame for the appearance of atheism.

We do not despise the atheist, especially since he may only call himself one without the affirmation of conviction. Someone can consider himself an atheist while actually affirming God by the absoluteness with which he bows to the claim of morality, or by his love and dedication to the poor, for instance, in contrast to alleged believers who deny God by their manner of life.

* * *

Having said all this, we at the same time enjoin atheists to set aside their little egos if they wish to comprehend truth. The ego has no place in the search for truth.

If disease organism were able to think, would it ally itself with Louis Pasteur? Rather, it would look upon him as a Hitler. But if that same organism could understand that its usefulness in animal experimentation

and its potential destruction were necessary to produce a better world beyond its experience, it might willingly accept its lot.

What if our sufferings are a sacrifice essential to a superior cause? Even better, what if our temporal suffering in this poor world enables us to realize all the joys and benefits of the sacrifice in a supernal existence, of which we have thus become a part?

I can understand a God like this and can adore Him not only in His work of creation, but also in His ability to redeem destruction (Genesis 50:20 and Joel 2:25). We adore Him then as the One who has the power to kill and makes alive (1 Samuel 2:6), who destroys and builds in the process of raising up His eternal, glorious kingdom that we believers who suffer today will one day share.

It is amusing and acceptable for a child when urged to eat carrots and peas because they contain vitamins to ask, “Why didn’t God put the vitamins in candy and ice cream?” A child can be excused for not understanding the issues at stake. But adults should not confound the good with the merely pleasant.

Wrong concepts arise when one admits the existence of only this life. It is as if one of Bangladesh’s hapless millions were to maintain: “Only a life of starvation exists. There cannot be a better life.” Or as if an embryo in its mother’s womb were to conclude: “This dark place is the whole of existence. There is no life beyond this watery cocoon.”

We despair when we limit our existence to the narrow prison perceived by our senses and apprehended only by reason. In time we not only doubt the possibility of another life, but also cease to desire it, just as a man on a hunger strike loses the sensation of hunger after the first five or six days.

An Indian story tells about a very devout slave who received from an angel the gift of a ring that assures eternal life. But the life of a slave is so hard that the man did not wish to see it prolonged, so he offered the ring to the king. But the worries of governing an empire are so heavy that the king could not bear the thought of eternal life, so he gave the ring as a present to his wife. But her life was unhappy. She loved an officer whom she could not marry because she was bound to the emperor, so she gave him the ring. But the officer’s life was unfulfilled. He had to pretend to love the queen for immediate advantage, when in reality he loved another woman. So he gave the ring to a slave—the very slave whom the angel had first favored.

In this little tale of irony and frustration, each character had a distorted view of life. Because they were each caught in a web of unhappiness, they believed—as Buddha also believed—that life can only be unhappy. They also believed the ideal state is to cease to exist—in *Nirvana*, or the eradication of desire.

We have the assurance of another life because there exists a God who can give it, even though we may not see Him.

* * *

Christians know God remains hidden even after being revealed in the Bible. The word "revelation" has two meanings in Latin: to discover and to veil again. Christians sense the glory behind the veil.

Lackeys (manservants) are often better dressed than princes. To most men, the real and touchable are more attractive than an unseen God. This is how idolatry arose. But we do not want to be seduced by mere reality, no matter how palpable or beautiful. We seek the Unseen, who has clothed the seen with so much splendor.

We are happy with the little we can know about Him. St. Bonaventura said, "Quod de Deo scire possimus, *quid not fit, non quid fit*," meaning "We can know about God only what He is not, not what He is."

Other thinkers have been led to the same conclusion. Nicholas of Cusa said, "The intellect knows that it is ignorant of Thee because it knoweth Thou canst not be known, unless the unknowable could be known, and the invisible beheld, and the inaccessible attained." And again, "If anyone should set forth any concept by which Thou canst be conceived, I know that that concept is not a concept of Thee, for every concept is ended at the wall of Paradise…. So too, if any were to tell of the understanding of Thee, wishing to supply a means whereby Thou mightest be understood, this man is yet far from Thee forasmuch as Thou art absolute above all the concepts which any man can frame."

The German writer Johann Goethe said, "The highest cannot be spoken."

Teerstegan wrote: "A God who is understood is not God. You must not give such plausible explanations about Him as to chase away the mystery which surrounds you."

French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote:

> “If only atheists would at least learn the religion they fight against before fighting it. Our religion does not boast of having a clear view of God that sees Him without a veil. We assert on the contrary that men are in darkness and far from God, that He is hidden from our knowledge, that even the name which he has in Scripture hides God. We know only in part (1 Timothy 6:16). The obscurity in which atheists find themselves and which they complain of to the church confirms an assertion of the church.”

St. Augustine, while walking up and down the seashore meditating on his great work regarding the Trinity, became somewhat impatient because he could not obtain a clear conception of some line of thought hounding him. As he walked, he noticed a child weeping bitterly and, forgetting his own annoyance, stopped to ask why. The child answered, “Because I cannot empty all the ocean into this hole that I have dug in the sand.”

The saint had his answer, “How can a man hope to comprehend the nature of the infinite God with his finite mind?”

The almost atheist theologian Rudolf Bultmann wrote, “The man who wishes to believe in God as his God must realize that he has nothing in his hand on which to base his faith.”

Christianity says God is beyond our finite perceptions. Those who complain that they cannot hold Him in their hands confirm our dogma. Therefore, it is just as foolish to deny His existence as to deny one has a brain because it cannot be felt or held in one’s hand.

Though no man has seen God, all things are from, for and in Him. We realize He does not fit into all our rational categories, which may explain why atheism is so widespread. But the fact that a Being does not act according to our reason does not prove He is nonexistent. The apostle Paul writes boldly about the foolishness of God but knows that He is and loves Him as He is.

He is always present, even though many of His children die in pain. And Christians are loyal to Him even if He seemingly forsakes them. Job says, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15) and “For I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job 19:25). He knew it was better to deal with a loved than an unloved God. Even human beings respond better to love, but the difference is that God is love.

Therefore, Christians love God not because of what they can get out of Him—success or gifts or health. They love Him for who He is.

In the film *God Is a Monster*, Ingrid Bergman said: "I sought a God who loved me. Only when I recognized myself in the same situation as the one who said on the cross, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me,' did I know that God existed."

God has shown through Christ that He is love, that He is selfsacrificing and impartial. The way to recognize Him is not by trying— so often in vain —to get things from Him, but by renouncing everything else.

* * *

There are only four solutions to the problem of the origin of the universe:

1. The Buddhist solution that the universe is an illusion. This does not solve the question: Who created the illusion? How did it come into existence? How is it that there is a mind to entertain this illusion, and —greater wonder still—a mind great enough to discover that the universe is illusory?

2. The notion that the universe arose spontaneously out of nothing. But a nothing that generates a world is not a nothing.

3. The universe has always existed. But this would be contrary to the second law of thermodynamics. Such a universe would have run down because of increasing entropy, and everything would be at the same low temperature because the ratio of unavailable to available energy is always increasing.

4. The universe was created. There is a God.

We know today that the universe has not existed forever. It is acknowledged that it had a beginning and will have an end. How then did it come to be?

Can a harp exist without a creator? Nonetheless, can a chirping bird?

Scientists now accept the probability that they will soon succeed in synthesizing a virus. They believe they will thus create life out of non-

living particles only. But the assertion is not true. To synthesize life, they need material objects, a knowledge of chemistry and physics and the creativity of men. Without the last, nothing could be accomplished.

Bricks do not constitute a house. An architect and a master plan are needed first.

Ordinary matter contains a balanced mixture of protons and electrons, attraction and repulsion. These particles balance so perfectly that we do not sense the tremendous forces at work.

Professor R. Feynmann of the California Institute of Technology wrote, “If you were standing at arm’s length from someone and each of you had 1 percent more electrons than protons, the repelling force would be so tremendous, it would be enough to lift a weight equal to that of the earth.”

Who balanced these particles so perfectly?

And how could one explain what happens in life without at least postulating a God?

Darwinism cannot explain evolution. What evolutionary benefit arises from splendid music? Beings can live without it. How then did the canary, the lark and the nightingale happen to be? In nature as in the life of men, it is seen that energy is devoted to what is not necessary for biological survival.

According to Darwinism, human speech is the result of chance mutations. But in order for a man to speak, great changes had to take place simultaneously in the brain, the neck, the jaws, the mouth, the tongue. What is the probability of such a fortuitous coincidence?

George Gallup, dean of American pollsters, once wrote that he could prove God statistically. Take the human body alone, for instance, with its thousands of miles of blood vessels. Would anyone claim that the highway system of the United States arose spontaneously? Yet these blood vessels with their orderly functions are far more sophisticated. The claim that this bodily network—not to mention other human systems—just happened is a statistical monstrosity.

What richness there is in the whole creation! One elm produces 295,362 quintillions, 11,136 quadrillions, 1,584,000,000 seeds, which means 6 sextillions in the fourth generation, enough to fill the solar system with elms alone.

A cod produces 9,384,000 eggs. Thus God says in the Bible, “Let the waters abound within an *abundance* of living creatures…” (Genesis 1:20a).

God is no less beautifully revealed in nature and life than He is in the statements of the Bible.

Forces and matter and laws in the heavens are like those in our planet. Experiments conducted on Earth yield information about the stars. God has made a universe that we are able to understand.

Einstein said, “The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible.”

In his Nobel Prize speech of 1969, Max Delbruck said: “The truth, children, is that we all participate in a play of marionettes, of puppets. The most important thing in such a play is to keep in mind the idea of the author.”

Pascal correctly observed in his *Pensees*: “Nature has some perfections to show she is the image of God and some defects to show she is only His image…. Nature is such that it reveals everywhere a lost God.”

Then let us seek the great God we lost, who made a universe out of nothing. For it is significant that the universe speaks not only about the Creator, but also about the nothingness out of which it was made.

In a teaspoon of water, there are approximately as many molecules as there are teaspoons of water in the Atlantic. No man-made computer could calculate how many there are.

On the other hand, if we could melt together as many atoms of iron as there are inhabitants of the U.S., we would get a chain no larger than 2 centimeters in length. If this boggles the mind, consider the fact that the atom can be divided further and it consists mainly of empty space, just like the molecules that are made up of atoms.

But we have merely opened the door to complexity.

By the middle of our century, the atom was thought to be like a solar system: in the midst a nucleus consisting of protons and neutrons, with electrons spinning like planets around this nuclear “sun.”

Protons, neutrons and electrons in various combinations, depending on the element they constituted, explained all the mystery of matter. The atom, which in Greek means “the indivisible,” had been divided. Here it seemed we had exhausted our research. The three constituents of the atom were basic and indivisible.

Ten years after this, about 100 other elementary particles were discovered, a veritable zoo of particles.

At that time, two scientists, Gell-Mann and Zweig of the California Institute of Technology, observed they all had a few common patterns, which could be best explained by supposing the entities that still bear the incorrect name of elementary particles are not elementary at all. They owe their diversity to the different combinations of five even smaller things, called “quarks.” For the time being, these are considered the ultimate constituents of matter. Each has been given a name, but it is no more mesons or leptons as with the “elementary” particles. Such names seemed inadequate for these new discoveries.

The names given by dispassionate scientists to the different quarks are extraordinary, to say the least: charm, truth, beauty, color and flavor.

Like ice cream, quarks have three kinds of flavor. There are up, down and strange kinds of quarks. For instance, two up quarks and a down make the elementary particle baryon.

There are also anti-quarks, just as for every elementary particle there is an anti-particle. Where there is God, there is also the devil; there could not have been Christ without an anti-Christ. For one knowledgeable about physics, this should be self-explanatory.

Gell-Mann and Zweig now knew many things about the quark—except whether it really existed. To postulate its existence was very useful for mathematical operations, just as the hypothesis “God” explains many things in the universe. Why then should we not start with a hypothesis? These two scientists worked with quarks long before knowing whether they were only mathematical functions or real entities.

Today there is unambiguous proof of their existence.

You can have unambiguous certitude about the existence of God.

In outer space, quasars and pulsars have been discovered.

Now let us draw an analogy! There are many atheists in the world. The word comes from the Greek. “A” stands for “no.” “Theist” comes from “Theos”—“God.” Atheists are men who believe there is no God. But until 1960, everyone was a-quasarian and a-pulsarian. These entities certainly existed, though no one knew about them or believed in them. Then they were discovered, and there were no more non-believers.

You can discover God, too.

French astronomer Pierre-Simon Laplace, who was a believing Christian, said, “I do not need the hypothesis God” to explain the universe as then known.

But since his day, it has become much more complicated: The "indivisible" atoms are constituted of elementary particles, these "indivisible" particles are constituted of charm, beauty, truth. The next question for science—not for theology—is to tell what truth, beauty, and charm are. Investigators might look in the Bible and find these are ancient names for Christ.

Our age is no more like the age of Laplace. We need the hypothesis God.

* * *

It is a short step from the intricacy of nature to its seeming intelligence. The Belgian writer Maurice Maeterlinck wrote in his *Intelligence of Flowers*:

> "When shall we succeed in building a parachute as rigid, as subtle and as safe as that of the dandelion?… The different developments of flowers for impregnation, etc., follow exactly the line of inventions and improvements among us. A clumsy contrivance is succeeded by a simpler one…. It would really seem that ideas come to flowers in the same way as to us…. The flowers grope in the same darkness, encounter the same obstacles. They would appear to possess our patience, our perseverance, our self-love; the same varied and diversified intel- ligence, almost the same hopes and the same ideals. They struggle, like ourselves, against a great indifferent surrounding which ends by assisting them."

But lest we be carried away by Maeterlinck's enthusiasm, let us remind ourselves that man must garden the flowers.

God provided an unfinished world so that we might share in the joy of creation. He made rivers; we have to bridge them. He gave standing forests, raw materials, unfinished products, all sorts of possibilities for us to improve on what He gave. But man can only rearrange. He cannot create something from nothing.

There is only one real choice left to a thoughtful man. Either we live in a still-born, self-abortive, absurd universe, in which the efforts of all men are stifled and prove vain and pointless, in which even the efforts of atheists will be forgotten when the universe vanishes, or else the universe comes

from a thoughtful God and points toward a beautiful kingdom of peace, love and serenity.

Confronted with such a choice, only the fool can say, “There is no God.”

* * *

Alfonsus Liguori, in his *Dialogue Between a Christian Priest and a Believer*, wrote the following:

> “Men, the animals, the sea, the mountains, the plants, and other such things—are all certainly creatures made in time which have taken their existence from a First Principle; for, not having always existed, they could not have given themselves that being that they did not have before. A non-existing thing can do nothing. Therefore they must have gotten their existence from some other source. And this source must have its existence from itself throughout a beginning-less past. Otherwise, if it had been produced by something else, it would not account for things, as it would if it were the First Principle, or the Creator; but it would be a creature like all other things. So what we speak of is a First Principle. It would not be such a Principle if it lacked a beginning-less past. For if once It did not exist, It could not have given Itself that existence which It did not have.
>
> “Now this First Principle is what we call God; and He, as One who gets His existence from Himself, possesses all the perfections that can be had. Indeed, supposing Him to depend on no one, there will have been no one else who might share out to Him what perfections He might have (assigning Him His role; for His role is to give all things their respective roles and corresponding perfections). We ought to conclude, then, that He is a God of infinite wisdom, Who knows all things present, past and future, things that will be and things that are possible; also, that He is a God of infinite power, Who can do whatever He will; that He is One of infinite goodness, thus being infinitely holy and just….
>
> “If this world had emerged from matter (alone), and the world came into existence through the powers that belong to this matter, which is devoid of any mind, then we would have to say that everything has

been happening and continues to happen by chance. But we see in this world an order that could not emerge with such beauty and stability, nor be preserved this way, except by a Mind having infinite wisdom. We see the sun consistently making its course every year and every day. We see animals that always produce their own kind. We see trees that always bear the same fruit and always in the same seasons. Who could ever believe that chance, which has no mind, could have ever fashioned this world and maintained such a stable order in it? For the maintenance of this has required and continuously requires great intelligence.

"They who deny God could answer that all this order is the work of the very nature of the world.

"The reply is that either nature has no mind— and I repeat that a mindless nature could never have produced this world, whose fashioning demanded the fullest intelligence—; or else nature (of which they speak) has a pure, perfect mentality—and I answer that such a Nature is that very God who created the world and whom we adore."

Liguori says further:

"What have we in mind in using the name of God? We look for a supremely perfect Being. We cannot think of anything better. If God is to be supreme Lord of all, He must have boundless wisdom, boundless power, and all other perfections, and these must all be infinite.

"Now if we want to suppose that there are many Gods, either these Gods are not all equal, each independent or else one of them is supreme, most perfect, and the others depend on Him and are consequently less perfect. If we suppose that they are all equal and independent, we must say that none of them is true God; for none of them would be supremely perfect as God must be. For, first of all, as we said, to be God means to be the highest in perfection…. If God is this highest, He must be only One, and must have no equal. Otherwise, if we wanted to admit two Supreme Beings, neither one would be supreme, and therefore neither one would be God…. Therefore Tertullian said, 'If God is not one, God does not exist. For in order that He be truly God, there must be no one else supremely great; because if

there were, someone would equal Him, and if someone equaled Him, He would not be supreme' (*Contra Marcionem*. L. 1, c.3).

"Furthermore, if there were more than one (supreme) God, none of them would be supremely powerful, for if one of them wanted to do something in a free, unhampered way, then either the others could hinder him or they could not. If they could hinder him, he would not be supremely powerful.

"Furthermore, none of them would be all-wise and all-knowing, knowing all things; for if any of them could not hide a secret, he would not be supremely powerful. On the other hand, if he could hide it, the others would not be all-knowing.

"Moreover, this truth that a single God is who rules the world can be detected from seeing such a uniform and constant harmony…here below. This enables us to perceive that there is a single Ruler who orders it all."

* * *

Ludwig Feuerbach, one of Marx's teachers, stated it was Martin Luther who led him to his astonishing insight that man creates God as he would have Him rather than that God creates man in His image. Feuerbach often said of himself in good humor, "I am Luther number two."

His justification was Luther's statement: "Faith is the creator of divinity." But he neglected to quote the whole of Luther's observation: "Faith is the creator of divinity, not in person, but on earth."

The mirroring of the sun in a lake proves the existence of the sun. In like manner, the human heart reflects the image of God. Man through his system of thoughts and sentiments mirrors aspects of God's character or attributes, just as a certain arrangement of the surface molecules of the lake creates a perfectly visible sun in the water, though it be a little distorted with the ripples of the water (2 Corinthians 3:18 and Romans 1:20). But this does not prove—as Feuerbach surmised—the nonexistence of God.

It is God who inspired the greatest works of art and literature. What would Dante, Michaelangelo, Raphael and Bach be if there had been no God to inspire their highest achievements and bless the works dedicated to the glory of His name?

Lenin said, “You cannot be a Communist without appropriating all those riches that mankind has elaborated.” But he did not include religious riches.

An ideal is but the deepest sense of future reality. And the ideal of religion—intimacy with the unseen God—is an anticipated spiritual reality. Lodge argued: “Our highest thoughts are likely to be nearest to reality. They must be stages in the direction of truth, else they would not have come to us and been recognized as the highest.”

We may trust Nature’s economy. She does not waste her material. She has not furnished either the ox in the field or the fish in the sea with expectations beyond their limitations. Why then would she have lavished on man the boundless wealth of expectation, of spiritual aspiration, of faith? Why would a finite being dwelling in time and space have thought to invent an eternal Being?

Why would the mind of sinners have invented a religion that tells men not to sin?

Faith could not exist without a God who grants it. The existence of faith in a mysterious God is itself a mystery, a miracle, because there are so many facts that seem to contradict it.

For centuries Christians have sung, “From vict’ry unto vict’ry His army He [Jesus] will lead,” though the church has suffered and continues to suffer tremendous defeats. Christians, while divided into hundreds of denominations which all sing, “Elect from every nation, but one over all the earth,” thus affirm a faith that contradicts reality. They believe what appears absurd to reason, which means that faith itself is another reality, another means of knowledge than thought.

The Bible calls faith “the substance of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1, emphasis added). As such, it needs no evidence. Faith is an evidence of God’s existence. There is no other way to explain why men living in a bad world believe in a good God.

Faith has no more need of guaranteed knowledge than does love. A Romeo needs no proof that Juliet fulfills his need. Juliet herself embodies the proof.

Since the eye is limited, science sought new ways to see. Vision was extended by magnifying lenses, X rays, electron microscopes, computerized tomography. We now have an explosion of new imaging equipment understood only by technicians. Through them we view realities existing beyond the capacity of the eye. Faith is just another means to see further

than the human eye can reach. Through faith one views the world of God with the eyes of the heart (Ephesians 1:17-19).

Like love, faith needs no scientific formulation. Is science negated because the person who falls in love does not first weigh and measure the beloved or inquire about the blood type, basal metabolism, hormone balance and bacteria in the intestines of the beloved? Let medical science do this! Love simply serves and gives its life for the beloved.

Therefore, scientific theology in Christianity is cant.

Just believe in God without allowing logic and science to ask learned questions. You will never regret it.

When I was in a communist prison, an officer armed with a rubber truncheon once threatened me: “Don’t you dare ever again to speak about God in the prison cell, or you will get it. What proof do you have that God exists?”

I replied: “It is difficult to bring proof to a man with a stick in his hand. A stick can crack the head containing the proof. But let me ask you just one thing: I have known innumerable atheists who at the point of death regretted not having believed and who then repented. At the last moment, they shouted, ‘God!’ or ‘Jesus!’ or ‘Mary!’ or ‘Allah!’ Can you imagine a believer dying with regret that he had been a believer and imploring: ‘Darwin! Marx! Voltaire! Come and free me from faith’?

“Man is led by his own thoughts. But on which of these should he rely? Like everything else, thought has its ups and downs. Sometimes we are at the peak, other times in the depths or just plain stupid. Therefore, we have to trust thought when it is at its best. This happens in what the German philosopher Karl Jaspers calls ‘limit-situations,’ when the soul is in an ecstasy over seeing beauty or is urgently seeking answers in a moment of great danger, such as passing into an unknown world. There are no atheists at that moment.

“When a man sees death approaching, he is overcome by awe. He enters the great mystery. Believers do not forsake faith at that moment, but atheists often forsake their unbelief, because it is right to believe.”

On that day I remained without a beating.

* * *

I believe God is and He is highly reliable. I think of one argument for this that might evoke a quizzical response. The Bible declares itself to be a book inspired by God, yet this God is very strange. He has inspired biblical authors to include in their books whole chapters with murmurings against Himself, as if He invited men to ease themselves by venting all their complaints against Him. One has only to read Job 16:11-14, Psalm 88, Lamentations 3, and other such parts of Scripture. There is scarcely a word in defense of God in these portions.

Consider these words of the prophet Jeremiah:

> I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.
> He has led me and made me walk in darkness and not in light.
> Surely His hand He has turned against me time and time again throughout the day.
> He has aged my flesh and my skin and broken my bones.
> He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and woe.
> He has set me in dark places like the dead of long ago.
> He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out; He has made my chain heavy.
> Even when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer.
> He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; He has made my paths crooked.
> He has been to me a bear lying in wait, like a lion in ambush.
> He has turned aside my ways and torn me in pieces: He has made me desolate.
> He has bent His bow and set me up as a target for the arrow.
> He has caused the arrows of His quiver to pierce my loins.
> I have become the ridicule of all my people—their taunting song all the day.
> He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drink wormwood.
> He has also broken my teeth with gravel, and covered me with ashes.
>
> —Lamentations 3:1-16

This is how a prophet of God complains. He makes propaganda against his God, and God in turn publicizes it throughout the whole world.

A God who allows a prophet in His holy book to describe Him as one who “has been to me a bear lying in wait, and like a lion in ambush” is surely trustworthy. He will not hide the truth from me.

* * *

If you know little else about God, listen to the inner voice called conscience. It is a warning that Someone is looking at what you do. Who is this Someone? Contrition, repentance, is one of the proofs of God’s existence.

Atheists as well as believers know the pain of having commit- ted wrong. Before whom do they accuse themselves? To whom do they acknowledge guilt? They also have their moments of relief when they feel forgiven. Who forgives?

A knock on the door at night implies the presence of someone outside in the dark. Conscience proves the existence of God.

* * *

We believe in miracles. As the laws of nature reflect the ordinary attributes of God, miracles represent His exceptional attributes. Not everyone perceives miracles, but everyone has seen strange coincidences. Well, coincidences are simply small miracles in which God remains anonymous.

Einstein visited the father of the renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who was then a 7-year-old child, though already a concert artist. In a debate with the father, Einstein contested the existence of God.

The child intervened: “Mr. Einstein, I will prove His existence.”

Amused, the great scientist looked at the lad and said, “All right, I will listen to you.”

Yehudi took out his violin and played in his unique, masterly way. When he finished, Einstein said: “There is a God. If not, how could this child play in such a manner?”

As for those who do not acknowledge miracles, the simple facts of nature and the intricacies of their own mind and soul should be enough to make them bow before God.

But let them be careful to bow before the one true God.

Some religions have strange conceptions of God.

The *Rig Veda*, a collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns in the Hindu religion, contains this ambiguity, “Wherefrom this creation is issued, whether God has made it or whether He has not, He who is the highest superintendent of this world in the highest heaven He alone knows, or perhaps even He does not know.”

Egyptian texts inscribed in the interior of coffins dating around 2250-2280 B.C., have been found noting that God says about Himself, “I was the maker of myself in that I formed myself according to my desire and in agreement with my heart.”

The Buddhist book *Digha Nikaya* says that Brahma only imag- ines himself to be the Creator, when in fact the world came into being through the operation of natural law—just as a cock would believe the sun rises because he crows.

Gnostic texts of the third and fourth centuries A.D. contest that the Creator is good and He knows much.

What offends many other religions time and again is the fact that a good and all-powerful God permits suffering.

But we consider it normal not to be stone-like, wheat-like, birdlike, beast-like or angel-like. By the same token, there are heavenly beings that are not human, just as heaven is not earthly. It is normal for us to live our lives at the expense of plants, flowers and animals. We lead the type of life we like, even if it saddens angels and God Himself. Then we have a shameless boldness to claim that other beings should not touch us.

Every being in the world is prey as well as predator. Man is the greatest predator of all and feels no remorse for the fact. By what right does he claim he should not become the prey of an organism that will kill him or be mauled by a wild animal he goes out to shoot?

A wolf that eats my sheep is evil and deserves to be destroyed. But if the wolf does not eat the sheep, I will do so and will even say grace, thanking God for it.

We have to eradicate the idea of a God tailored after our needs and lusts. When asked by Moses, “What is your name?” He replies, “My name is I AM what I AM” (Exodus 3:13,14).

He is not what we want Him to be or what we imagine Him to be. He is what *He* is. He never chose what to be. He simply could not be something other than who He is. Unlike men, He is not in a constant quarrel with what He is. Joyfully, with wisdom and understanding, He is what He is.

However, the Almighty has His limitations. The Bible says He cannot lie. Thank God for this restriction on God! There are many other things He cannot do. He cannot commit suicide. He cannot stop revealing the attributes He has: love, might, justice, mercy. Without them He would be an unreliable God, one who would change His mind at every whim. He is under necessity, but He wills the necessity.

We may curse features of our character. God, unable to lie or to die, wills that He be as He is.

* * *

It is easier to love some people than to love God. For a person you can find an excuse if he does something evil. What excuse can I find for God if He allows an unpleasant circumstance in my life? He needs no excuse because He is what He is without having chosen to be so.

In the end the believer will find that who He is satisfies every human need, now and forever. It is only necessary to conform to His Being and His plans, instead of trying to make Him correspond to human expectations. He knows better than His creatures what they really need.

And He gives us the same liberty He has. “As He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). We can awake in His likeness (Psalm 17:15). We can say like Paul, “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 15:10). “He who is spiritual…is judged by no one” (1 Corinthians 2:15). With some of His prerogatives, we can each become a child of God.

* * *

It is alleged that science contradicts religion. Strangely, Albert Einstein, the 20th century’s greatest scientist, whose name the universe bears, does not know about this contradiction.

Though he was certainly not a specialist in the realm of religion, he was, however, on the side of religion. He says, “The individual feels the vanity of human desires and purposes as well as the majesty and wonderful order which reveal themselves in nature and in the world of thought.”

He demanded that science and art awaken and keep these feelings alive in man. He wrote:

> “Cosmic religion is the most powerful and most noble impulse for scientific research…. The most beautiful and deepest which man can experience is the sentiment of mystery. He who has not known it appears to me as if dead, or at least blind…. The knowledge of the existence of the—for us—impenetrable, of the manifestations of deepest reason and shining beauty, to which our reason can accede only in its most primitive form, this knowledge and feeling is true religiosity…. It is certain that a conviction about the reason and intelligibility of the world akin to religious sentiment is the basis of all finer scientific work…. My religiosity consists in a humble admiration for the infinitely superior spirit who reveals himself in the little which we can know of reality with our weak and transitory reason.”

The Russian scientist Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, considered by some to be the initiator of cosmic communications, wrote, “The highest reason that reigned, reigns, and will reign in the universe allows nothing imperfect.”

Science dare not contradict religion because, of all disciplines, it knows how little it knows.

Newton wrote, “I do not know how I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

To say science contradicts religion is like saying that a 3-yearold boy playing on the beach contradicts it.

Where are the anti-religious assertions of science? Our quarrel is not with science but with scientists. One does not have to look far to discover there are as many theories as there are academicians in the greatest scientific issues.

It was Lord Kelvin, president of the Royal Society in the late 19th century, who declared, “Heavier than air flying machines are impossible.” He also wrote with great assurance that “radio has no future” and “X rays will prove to be a hoax.”

Sir Richard Woolley, one-time Astronomer Royal of Britain, declared in 1956, that “space travel is utter bilge.”

To err is a human characteristic crowned with age. “I will ignore all ideas for new works and engines of war, the invention of which has reached its limits and for whose improvement I see no further hope,” wrote Sextus

Julius Frontinus, engineer to the Emperor Vespasian in the first century A.D.

Winston Churchill was no more prescient; in 1939, he declared, “Atomic energy might be as good as our present day explosives. But it is unlikely to produce anything very much more dangerous.”

Art critics have proved no better than the masters of war. In the early 19th century, John Hunt wrote, “Rembrandt is not to be compared in the painting of character with our extraordinarily gifted artist, Mr. Rippingdale.”

And in the area of finance, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund prognosticated in 1959, “In all likelihood, world inflation is over.”

Any reasonable person would certainly not conclude, therefore, that we should abandon science, art and finance.

Scientists are but minuscule beings on an infinitesimal speck of dust in the universe. By way of contrast, there are quasars that have a diameter of millions of miles, thousands of times larger than the earth. As for the religion revealed by the Creator of both scientists and quasars, it remains unscathed regardless of how many scientists of how many ages seek to contradict it.

Where then is pure, non-religious science? Einstein says in *The World as I See It*: “We have great difficulty in representing the world of experience to ourselves without the spectacles of the old established (which means mystico-religious conceptual) interpretation. There is the further difficulty that our language is compelled to work with words which are inseparably connected with these primitive (i.e., religious) concepts.”

Science itself is so interconnected with the whole religious outlook that to say science contradicts religion is tantamount to saying religion contradicts religion.

It is interesting that Newton and the Baron of Marchestown, founder of logarithms, both published commentaries on the Biblical book of Revelation.

Religion can be very restful in its rapport with science.

When Einstein once paid a visit to Cardinal Faulhaber, he asked him, “What would you do if mathematics should prove that your faith is false?”

The cardinal replied, “I would wait until the mathematicians discovered their error in calculation.”

* * *

But suppose that science should contradict religion: Would it then be inconsistent to accept both? But why must one be consistent? Science itself has ceased to be consistent; in fact, it teaches inconsistency.

German physicist and Nobel Laureate Werner Heisenberg says in *Steps Over the Frontier*:

> "Probably it can be said in general that in the history of human thought we have had the most fruitful developments where two different manners of thinking met. These different manners of thinking may have their roots in different domains of human culture or in different periods, in different cultural surroundings or different religious traditions. If only they meet really, if they enter in contact with each other at least so much that a reciprocal influence happens, we can hope that new and interesting developments follow."

Depending on necessity, the atom is considered both a particle and a wave. No one has ever seen one or could even locate a given atom. It can be compared to a point that is an entity without dimensions.

A scientist lives life on two levels. In his laboratory the world he studies is a whirlwind of atoms, protons, electrons, neutrons. His wife is also an aggregate of such things, which certainly do not inspire love. However, once home he forgets about science, and his wife becomes a dear partner.

Likewise, a scientist does not have to be scientific about his spiritual life. In the lab he can research the constitution of matter, and in church he can worship the Spirit of love that rules the universe.

Science has abandoned the demand for absolute consistency. Let us abandon it in other spheres. A heart can melt the humanlike God revered in practical religion with the lofty metaphysical concepts about the unfathomable God. We can also unite contradictory moral attitudes inspired by love.

Truth sits on a four-legged stool, of which science is only one leg. The others are reason, faith and intuition. Truth also draws on imagination and insight as sources.

For this reason, we are not much disturbed even if for a time some branch of science seemingly contradicts religion. It will grow in knowledge

and eventually come to know better.

In antiquity and in what is called the Dark Ages, men did not know what they know now about humanity and the cosmos. They did not know the lock but they possessed the key, which is God. Now many have excellent descriptions of the lock but they have lost the key. The proper solution is union between religion and science. We should be owners of the lock *and* the key.

The fact is that as science advances, it discovers what was said thousands of years ago in the Bible. To give just one example: It was predicted by the Evangelist John in Revelation 21 that a city, called the New Jerusalem, about 2,500 km high and wide and deep, would come to Earth out of heaven. For 2 millenniums science has denied such a possibility. Now we launch skylabs from our tiny planet and seriously talk about space—"cities."

The book written by an uncultured fisherman 2,000 years ago was science *because* it was religious.

* * *

Let us suppose that God does exist. All right, who is He? What is He? What do we mean when we say "God"?

To these questions, there is only one possible reply: God is God. Any description of God is simply a description of Him and not God. Any enumeration of the qualities of God is an enumeration of His qualities and not God. The name "God" is not God any more than I am simply my name or appellation. Only God is God.

Since God is beyond every other nature, any statements made about Him in words applicable to other natures acquire a different sense. What a prisoner and a millionaire call good food are two different things. A Beethoven symphony is not good music to a primitive.

What is God like? In the Bible it is written that "he…was like a jasper and a sardius stone…" (Revelation 4:3). If you wonder why He is described as being like a stone, the correct reply is that if any other likeness were used, you would have asked the same question. In the Bible God is also called a "man," a "warrior," a "husbandman." He is likened to "a lion when he roars" and so on, to show us that God can be understood in the likeness of anything.

In Exodus Rabbah we are told that someone asked Rabbi Joshua ben Perachiah why God chose to speak to Moses from a thornbush. He replied: “Everything God does can be questioned, but I will not leave you without answer. God chose the poor, small bush to teach you there is no place on earth where God cannot be present, not even a thornbush.”

According to the Bible, God passes through different stages. He can awaken, lift Himself up, return on high (from whence?), sing, shout, bless, curse. “Our God is in heaven,” says the Psalmist, “He does whatever He pleases” (Psalm 115:3).

We cannot put in words what He really is because about all we could say is that He is in the center, whereas our existence is peripheral. The center of a circle cannot be drawn because the real center is actually the center of the point one draws.

It is written in the Bible that man should not eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden of Paradise. Now, can you plant a tree in “the midst”? The midst will always be in the midst even of the smallest place where someone plants a tree. We all live outside the midst.

Thomas Aquinas, in his book *Sentences*, was the first to use the expression “attributes of God.” God has been called good, just, powerful and so on. All these names applied to God signify one and the same thing but under many distinctions so that our limited reason might apprehend Him in manifold ways.

Luther tried to reply to the question, “What does it mean to have a God?” or, “What is God?”

> “A God is the One from whom you expect and obtain everything good and in whom you seek refuge in all cases of need. Therefore, to have a God means nothing more than believing and trusting in Him heartily. Only the manner in which I trust and believe in my heart determines whether I have a God or an idol. If your faith and trust are genuine and right, you have your true God. By the same token, if your trust is false and unjust, the true God is not there, because the two belong together, faith and God. The One, to whom you attach your heart and in whom you trust is really your God.”

This is not much of a definition because we know God too little to define Him. The French say, Un dieu defini est un dieu fini, meaning “a

defined God is a finished God."

We have not seen God, but we do see beauty and wisdom in His creation, which He could not have imparted if they were not part of Himself.

We are satisfied with what little we know. Luther wrote: "He who believes that God is angry has an angry God; but he who believes that God is loving has a loving God. As a man believes so he has."

If man can behave in many different ways, even more can God. He can lead into light, or He can bring into darkness (Lamentations 3:2).

Without much reasoning about God, we perceive by simple faith these few things, and with this we are satisfied. Why should we think about God? What would a protozoan think about man? If it had at the least a little mind, it would know that its perceptions of man could only be false.

When my son was 5, he once asked me, "What should I do? I'm bored."

I replied, "Think about God."

He said, "Why should I think about God with my little head? Let Him, with His great head, think about me."

We are satisfied with what little is granted to us through faith.

The Bible says that for God one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day. This is because He lives in timelessness. Similarly, 1 gram is like 1,000 kilograms in a state of weightlessness. Someday time for us will be no more. We will be with Him. Then we will know.

Till then we do not importune Him with questions, especially all our *why's* and *wherefore's*. Since God's world is timeless, it does not readily divide itself into causes and effects. The question "why" belongs to another realm and is therefore unanswerable in the religious sphere.

Instead of engaging in all these speculations, we simply believe. God has revealed Himself as love. He has also revealed Himself as the judge of all. Therefore, it is right for sinners to fear. But one of the attributes of God revealed in the Bible (e.g., Jonah 4:2) is that He "relents from doing harm." Therefore, sinners who believe in Him can be confident, knowing that His threats of punishment are not absolute.

* * *

Instead of delving into depths we cannot fathom, we should try to be a credit to God. If one desires to know what God is like, he should be able to find out by looking at the believer. Seek the person who is most like God as He would be if He walked on Earth, and you will know something of who He is.

How can you seek someone whose name, features and dwelling place you do not know? We have neither His picture nor His fingerprints. His former temple in Jerusalem no longer exists; likewise, the original loving church where all believers were of one heart and soul (Acts 2).

There does not exist the slightest possibility of finding a God who is a literal, physical Being in the way we are constructed on Earth.

He finds us, and He challenges us to be born again and begin life anew as God would live if He were on Earth.

A child once made a drawing of God. He was admonished: “Give up this stupid endeavor. God is unknown.” He simply replied, “When I have completed the drawing, He will be known.”

The invisible God becomes visible in those who by faith are changed from glory to glory into His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Our likeness to God consists in the fact that we, too, are creators. Every man creates for himself his surroundings, the world in which he lives, just as the silkworm spins its own cocoon. A bad or good world—man is its creator. The one who has faith creates the best world, a heaven.

In this world with its beauties and delights, a person can be inebriated with joy. If God’s creation is delectable, how much more God, who embraces the pleasantness of all creation? And if created life is good, how much more its Creator, the One who granted man the power to create? And if salvation is good, how much more its Giver?

Therefore, we love the One Good that suffices, in whom all that is good is contained. Thus, He is called in Hebrew El-Shaddai, the sufficient God. What will He withhold from His beloved?

Living with Him, we rejoice in all the joys of God and of His creatures. Every joy that is not in God is not full because there is no abiding joy apart from Him.

* * *

It is only necessary to have the one true God, the God who is what He is, not what our capricious egos would like Him to be in our moments of foolishness.

In China there are tribes that not only put television sets in front of the statues of their gods to entertain them, but also throw their gods away if they fail to fulfill all their wants. The true God dwells in unattainable heights, and to recognize Him in all His splendor is what gives unspeakable joy.

Scientific truth, the truth about mankind, can be reached through experience. But one cannot prove in a laboratory that God is good and is a refuge in time of trouble. A godly life is needed to convince men that this is indeed true about Him.

In the Bible God is described as having wings. His flying is purposeful. He has a plan to fulfill. Therefore, aimless lives cannot represent Him. But he whose aim is to become godly will find that his life will speak to men about God's purposes.

We should have a goal, and only the highest will do. As Christians expecting the second coming of Christ, we have the promise that "when He is revealed, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2). With such a promise, it would be stupid to accept less. To be like a great saint, a genius, or an angel is not sufficient for us.

Many renowned teachers of Christianity, such as Origen, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and others, speak about the *Theopoiesis* (the being made god) of man through Christ. Now Christ, the eternal Son of God, received His fullness through His incarnation as man. This was not just a limited historical event; rather, He established a permanent connection with Him through repentance, faith, baptism and holy communion.

If this were only a slight possibility, it would be worth any cost. If I were invited to gamble in a lottery whose ticket cost an earthly life full of sorrows and burdens but which offered the chance to win eternal life in Paradise, it would be worth any investment. But we do not have to gamble; we walk in the sureness of faith.

Diamonds and other costly jewels are kept in safes and exhibited only on rare occasions and with great care. Are they any less real because they are kept secret? Faith has its mysteries, too. The lock that assures its security is found in the words of Jesus, who said, "Do not give what is holy

to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces" (Matthew 7:6).

Even in this book I might be committing the sin of going too far. But my love for atheists and desire for their salvation have made me do the impermissible, speak about the unspeakable, and explain the unexplainable. I have already told about a certain Uzzah, who died because he thought he must steady an untouchable sacred object with his own hands.

God needs no defense. My zeal and my impatience to see you on God's side impel me to write these lines.

* * *

When Luther was asked what God did before creation, he answered dryly, "Before that, God sat in a wood and cut rods with which to beat those who ask stupid questions."

Obviously, he was not being serious. The only thing we know about God before His creation is what He has revealed Himself: that He had a Son whom He loved and invested with glory (John 17:5) and that the Holy Spirit proceeded from them both. We call this the Trinity.

Other systems of thought prior to the Christian religion had known God as a trinity, though not has a Christian knows the Trinity. The Hindus knew Him as *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*—creator, preserver and destroyer. Aristotle wrote: "The threefold comprises a beginning, a middle, and an end and therefore is an appropriate means of expressing the idea of completion. It furnishes us also with a basic form for the relations in space." In Christianity, however, the concept of trinity is much more elaborate.

God is supreme goodness. The very name "God" evokes a being whose superior cannot be imagined. Since He is good, He must show love. No one exhibits love if he loves only himself. If God loves, there must always have been the lover, the beloved and love: Therefore, a trinity must have existed before creation.

A being can have supreme love only for an equal. A person cannot love a cat as he loves a fellow man. The beloved person in the Trinity must be equal with the Father. God would not be perfect if He did not share with another the whole of His glory.

But there is something greater and more exalted than just loving another person: It is to share that mutual love with a third person, so that each

person would share the love he gives and the love he receives. Again, the two would have to impart all their glory with the third. And the three must be co-equal. The sweetness of loving and being loved must be shared by the two with the third person, who in turn would share all his love. It takes three to embody and impart perfect love. This is the only acceptable concept of God.

God must be a Trinity.

A concept is an image of its object. When the Father thinks about His divine nature, He thinks perfectly. This idea of His—the Logos, as it is called in Greek—expresses God's nature completely. Father and Son love each other perfectly. St. Bernard de Clairvaux said the Holy Spirit is a kiss between the Two.

To say this is the maximum we can say about God. We do not know the structure of an atom. How can we know the details about the Trinity?

God is one, says the Hebrew Bible. One is God, says the Greek original of the New Testament literally. There are many suns, but there cannot be many gods.

However, oneness does not exclude trinity. It is not true that one cannot be equal to three.

For instance, there are mushroom spores and micro-organisms, which, moved by unseen powers, come together to form a plasmodium of many different cells that act like one organism.

* * *

To speak of oneness does not imply that there is no tension between the Persons of the Trinity. If there were no tension, why would love be needed? Love is the bridging of differences. If there were no differences, why would the question of unity among the Persons of the Trinity be important? Unity has to be established only when there is individuality.

Jesus, the Son of God, prayed to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemene that the bitter cup of being crucified might be taken away from Him. But the Father does not satisfy His Son's desire. The prophet Isaiah wrote, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him…" (Isaiah 53:10a). After His resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples that the Holy Spirit would not descend on them until Jesus departed from the earth, as if the Two could not be together on our planet.

The crucifixion of the Son of God on the Father's earth was the greatest dramatic event of history. Jesus cried out from the agony of the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). But in this extremity, love and unity between the Two were heightened, as evidence by Jesus' ensuing words, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit'" (Luke 23:46).

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-equal but not identical. There is a difference between a God-filled, a Christ-filled and a Spirit-filled person.

A God-filled person embraces the whole universe. In a Christfilled person, Christ is the middleman between two parties, bringing intimacy into our relationship with God. German religious poet Angelus Silesius wrote, "God without man is not one." The Christ-filled person has his historic limitations. He is bound to one episode in the existence of the earth: the life of Christ.

After His resurrection, Jesus walked with two of His disciples on their way to the village of Emmaus. Jesus asked about the things that had happened in Jerusalem in the last few days (Luke 24:13- 35). Now, many things had happened. Winds had blown, nature had been convulsed, there had been an earthquake, an unearthly darkness had enveloped the land. Children had been born, and people had died. Men had worked in their shops, and women had cooked their meals. Jerusalem had been filled with visitors, all involved in these events.

But these disciples were Christ-filled. Therefore, when asked what had taken place in Jerusalem, they told only of what had happened to Jesus.

Christ is one Being constituted of many individuals. The Bible says that every believer is a member of His body (1 Corinthians 12:12).

The Spirit-filled man is absorbed only with the things of the Holy Spirit. The Bible speaks of his walking in the light and showing forth the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. "Against such there is no law," writes the apostle Paul (Ephesians 5:8,9 and Galatians 5:22,23).

* * *

"God created man in His own image…male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). He is the source of what is highest and best in the

female as well as the male. The characteristics of each were endowed by God.

In the epistle of James (1:18), the Greek word apökueō—"to beget"—is used about God, though in that language it is a word strictly used to refer to a mother. Here we have a feminine expression for God.

He is a Father, but not only a Father. The prophet Isaiah (49:15) compares God to a mother in these unforgettable words: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely, they may forget, yet I will not forget you."

* * *

Faith in God completely changes a man's attitude toward both life and death.

For example, in ancient Greece, the pantheistic Spartans, who did not know God, strangled weak children. Prussian philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who became the pet philosopher of Hitler and Mussolini, railed against hospitals and orphanages. German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel said that men have the unquestioned right to put an end to all suffering by death. Today the subject of euthanasia is very much in the news.

If it could be proved that the universe is without God, Nietzsche and Hegel would be right.

In my youth I was very sure there was no God, but it saddened me. I wished there were a God and considered it a pity that He did not exist. A person who knows God exists feels sheltered, protected. In the Bible, the name of God's holy mountain, Zion, means "shelter."

To the degree that atheists, too, have this feeling of being protected, they have unconsciously turned toward God and desired Him. But they lack all the many great and supernatural helps that come only through believing on Him. Faith, without which it is impossible to please God and enjoy the fellowship of His other children, marks the beginning of man's salvation.

Faith in God brings one into the realm of forgiveness.

According to the law of God, an individual who dies as an adult without faith cannot be saved but consigns himself to the fires of hell. On the other hand, with faith in God he enjoys peace of mind and the answers to his many questions about the meaning of life and what lies beyond.

Once he experiences what it means to believe in a good God, his despair vanishes completely. In fact, for a believer despair is sin, because he learns to accept all of life as it engages him. For a believer, there is agreement with the sentiment of American poet James Russell Lowell: “Behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.”

Belief in this good God disposes one to praise Him continually, and dissatisfaction over life’s inequities melts away like morning dew. Troubles are allowed by a wise and benevolent Father, whom we may not understand for the time being. That is all.

Despised by other men, a man who believes in God and is of the lowest rank knows he is respected by the highest Being in the universe and, therefore, can maintain his self-esteem.

Believing in God, a man can know that his fellowman is God’s creature as much as himself. Therefore, he too is entitled to love and respect.

No one could persuade us, “All men are descended from apes; therefore let us love one another.” Stalin, an admirer of Darwin, drew the following logical conclusion from his book: Man is the result of a fierce battle for survival against other species. In this battle the most pitiless survived. So let me be pitiless.

It is only faith in a God of love who was our common Creator who can empower us to love one another.

Faith in this God makes one virtuous.

* * *

It is said that a sinful woman wanted to tempt St. Ephrem to whoredom. Sensing her evil device, he said to her, “Come with me.” When they reached a place with many people, he said, “Now you can do what you like.”

She replied, “It would be shameful to do it before so many people.”

“If we are ashamed of men,” came the rejoinder, “how much more should we be ashamed before God, who sees even those things hidden in darkness.” She repented and abandoned her wicked intentions.

It is often supposed that when people stop believing in God, they believe in nothing. Alas, it is worse than that: When they stop believing in God, they believe in anything. They believe in monsters like Stalin, Hitler and Mao.

The French Revolution replaced the idea of a holy God with a holy humanity. The Soviets dismissed the idea of God and deified the working class. Everyone who does not love the true God ends up destroying his own god. Men even killed Christ, who represented the good God. The French revolutionists killed men wholesale; the Russian communists killed workers by the hundreds of thousands.

* * *

God exists, and I am part of His life. Apart from God, man has no sense, just as a kidney outside a human body is good for no more than dog food.

In a sense God multiplies Himself in His children. The beauty of da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* would never have been enjoyed by mankind without its multiplied reproductions. Neither would the Bible have had any impact without the millions of transcripts, translations and printings.

By the same token, God reveals Himself through His children, scattered all over the world. We are the Father's name-bearers. We can put His name to shame or let it shine.

Thus, a believer has a high calling. But God knows we are weak and does not give us more than we can handle (2 Corinthians 9:8). We are meant to do only the little we can and pray for what we cannot. His glory can shine even through our feebleness (2 Corinthians 12:9,10).

The Christian life is one of obedience. Since we know so little, we give God the glory for all things created and for adverse circumstances alike. What produces displeasure in me might after all please Him. Crucifixion is among the worst things that can befall a human being, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Jesus (Isaiah 53:10). He knew what was beyond crucifixion —a glorious resurrection and the salvation of mankind.

And so we are quiet even in earthquakes or when thousands are slain around us. Believers could be quiet even in death camps like Auschwitz. God's ways are strange and mysterious, but we know that He can write straight on crooked lines.

Therefore, our main preoccupation is to seek His face. Let us imagine that the most perfect, loving and just Being is right in front of us and consider His tender expression of love as He listens to us (Psalm 27:4,8).

If sometimes His face is sad, do not be so rash as to suppose you have saddened Him. He might be grieved because of things that happen, not

because your relationship is stained or troubled.

Do not begin to play guessing games. It is important not to let ourselves be misled into believing the pressure of the world is the voice of God.

The pastor of an official church in Russia, a puppet of the communist government, maintained that while he was in jail for working in the underground church, God spoke to him telling him that he could do more by compromising with the communists.

And so instead of guessing or misinterpreting when you see the sadness of God, take it upon yourself to bring Him comfort. A good Christian is a person who makes God rejoice and sing (Zephaniah 3:17). He makes God sing, even when he is passing through a dark valley.

* * *

God is love. If He knew a certain solution to your problems, He will solve them. If He knew a word that could help you immediately, He will surely speak it. If you have no solution and cannot find the right word, know the time for a solution has not yet come. Even God cannot cause a 3-month-old embryo to become a healthy newborn overnight.

Therefore, until the fullness of time, in His good providence, let us be patient, wait in faith and be a joy for God.

To us, God often seems paradoxical. In fact, the person who is not aware of this ambiguity does not know Him at all. The believer trusts Him even when it seems He is leading in a false direction. By what criteria can He be judged? He is God and not man. Our disappointments are the times when faith is tested.

Today's generation praises modernist painters or rock-and-roll singers who depict man as he would have been if the devil had created him. It is far better to praise God. Praising God enables us to celebrate man (Romans 12:15). It is the oil that lubricates the best relationships between men.

When God makes His face shine upon you, it will comfort you to see how often He looks upon you with praise. The Hebrew word for "face" is always in the plural, paniym. Even the heathen had enough intuition to show the gods in their temples with many faces. If it seems God is looking at you with anger, do not despair. Know He also has a face of love. Praise Him and cause Him to turn to you and sing.

Jesus, the Son of God, in order to save us from our sins, gave His body to be broken for us. Throughout history, thousands of Christians have given their bodies to be broken, as they refuse to deny Jesus Christ in exchange for worshipping many gods or the "god-like" emperor (John 15:13,18,20). To them, He was worthy of being trusted, even to the point of death.

* * *

In our relationship with God, we hear from Him an echo to our prayers (ref. Matthew 6:9-13).

We say to Him, “Hallowed by Your name.” He in turn longs for us to be saints that He may sanctify our name. We tell Him, “Your kingdom come.” He replies that ours is the kingdom of heaven. We pray, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” He allows our desires to be fulfilled. We ask Him for our daily bread. He asks us for the bread of our sacrifices. We beg, “Do not lead us into temptation.” He requires that we not tempt Him. We say, “Deliver us from the evil one.” But angels cry, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne…” (Revelation 7:10).

He wants us to get rid of the things that entangle Him in this world. Therefore, let our relationship with Him be that of love.

God appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” To which Abram replied, “Lord God, what will You give me?” (Genesis 15:1,2). Let us not reduce our companionship only to such a commercial level.

God is worthy of love. St. Bernard of Clairvaux said, “The measure for loving God is to love Him without measure.”

We were created for His pleasure (Revelation 4:11, KJV). Then let us give Him pleasure.

* * *

Anyone who loves things forbidden by Him cannot truly love God.

The loving bride in Solomon’s song says to her heavenly Bridegroom, “Be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices” (Song of Solomon 8:14). She does not beg Him to stay continually with her, giving her caresses.

However, we must have some time for intimacy with Him and earnest talk.

God is omniscient, which means He knows everything that belongs to the realm of knowledge. He sees everything that belongs to the realm of seeing. He hears everything that belongs to hearing. But what about surprises? Would He be perfect if He did not have the joy of surprises and if there were no emergencies requiring Him to take new measures?

Things can be observed in some way, and their cause of events can be known. But not all things have a cause. Heisenberg has introduced into

physics the notion of indeterminism. Jesus says of His opponents, "'They hated Me without a cause'" (John 15:25).

Not every human action has a cause. There are then certain things we have to tell God.

Even if He knows all things, He is happy to know my opinion about the matter. He also desires human beings to sit with Him on His throne, from which He creates and leads universes (Revelation 3:21).

Life with God gives us the richest fellowship with the highest Being.

Even some theologians have the queer belief that there are scarcely any proofs in matters of faith. They are ignorant of the proofs; that is all.

* * *

The time has come now to reaffirm systematically the proofs of God's existence. Upon some of the proofs, I will elaborate; others I will only enumerate.

1. The cosmologic argument, or the argument from effect to cause.

Every building is proof of the existence of a master builder or an architect. Even if one does not know the master builder, the simple fact of the existence of the building is proof enough that he exists, too.

We all live in an enormous house—the house called "cosmos." The effect—"World"—is proof of the existence of an efficient cause—a wise Architect.

Today with atomic watches we can observe even minute irregularities in the turning of the earth. It has been determined that this movement is becoming slower. Proponents of the Big Bang theory (of the earth's origin) have noted that, looking back, the length of the day diminishes by 0.002 seconds every century, which means it decreases by 1 second every 50,000 years. By counting back to a day of zero length, they claim to have discovered the age of the earth: four-and-a-half billion years.

Long before this, there was the first Big Bang, which some think brought the universe into existence. It was not an explosion in the usual sense of the word: It was not the expansion of matter in an existent space. Space and time are attributes of matter. In the first Big Bang, time, space, matter, and all its laws and forces appeared simultaneously. The human mind cannot fathom it; human language cannot formulate it.

However, for those who believe in the Big Bang theory, wouldn't there have to be Someone to produce the Big Bang? St. Augustine's question, "What did God do before He created the universe?" is false and therefore has no answer. There was no "before." Time appeared together with matter. Before their supposed Big Bang, was there not God, the Eternal, without time, without space?

Let us look at the miracles of His creation. Let us have a look at one of its smallest parts—our minuscule sun.

If its total energy output were increased by a few percentage points, the temperature on Earth would rise, melting the icecaps, raising the sea level, and inundating the land. Human life would cease. On the other hand, if the sun decreased its output by a few degrees, continents would be filled with glaciers and mankind would freeze.

Who caused the sun to have just the right temperature? Did it just happen?

Did it just happen that bricks came together and formed your house? Did it just happen that wheels, levers and screws came together and formed a watch? "Absurd," you say. Surely there was intelligence behind the house and the watch.

The mind behind the sun is God.

If the money and intellectual energy expended on the spread of atheism were spent on furthering scientific discovery, sunlight and sunheat could be made to solve many of the pressing problems of the world.

The energy of sunlight, the most precious resource of all living things, is allowed to escape virtually unused. Photosynthesis in plants captures only one-tenth of 1 percent of the energy available; the rest is squandered. To put it in financial terms, it takes sunlight worth $175,000 to produce fish worth $1.50. Man's annual energy use equals just one hour's worth of the total sunshine bathing the earth. God has provided riches on Earth for us if we will use His gifts well.

Let us look at another of God's small miracles—water. It is one of the simplest of molecules, comprised of one atom of oxygen and two atoms of hydrogen. Its molecular weight is 18. By comparison, one molecule of insulin contains 777 atoms and has a molecular weight of 5.808 kDa.

The mind that made water so simple must be incredibly keen. This simplicity allows water to pass freely through membranes of living cells, a process impossible for larger molecules.

Water has tremendous solvent properties. Substances can pass in and out of living cells only as dissolved in water. This is how they obtain food to maintain life and eliminate waste products.

To be able to serve mankind best, water has no good taste to create water-addiction nor bad taste to create rejection. The two compounds most similar to water in molecular structure, hydrogen sulphide (H2S) and ammonia (NH2) are both pungent gases, forbidding in taste and smell and toxic to living cells (condensed from *Signs of the Times*, November 1980).

Then look at the truly great wonder—man. The 60 trillion cells of a human body collaborate to make him a unique personality. No two individuals are the same. Even fingerprints are unique. If a fingertip is injured, the whorls will be restored to their previous pattern.

Think about the lungs with their millions of elastic membranous sacs. Or consider the bone's ability to repair itself after injury.

The femur is like a hollow cylinder. Why? Engineers now know this configuration is the most efficient design to provide maximum strength with minimum material.

In females, toward the end of pregnancy, the joints of the pelvis loosen to make childbirth easier. What mind provided for this?

The bones of a large man weigh approximately 160 pounds, fulfilling the structural needs of the human body. Steel bars of comparable size would weigh 20 times as much.

How is it that the collection of living cells called the "eye" can see as well as the most expensive camera? Is a camera the random result of an evolutionary process, or is every camera the design of an intelligent being?

Who made memory, which can summon at command glimpses of the past from the billions of stored particles in one's personal computer bank? Who made fantasy, the power that can provide joy under the most adverse circumstances and can even fancy a world without God, if a man feels so inclined?

Two-thirds of the human body is composed of water. It contains more than 2,000,000 sweat glands, which exude waste products together with the water they release to cool the body.

Think about the miracle of being able to read. The eyes take in several letters at once and not all of them at that. They play hunches, cut corners, fill gaps. They can take in 20 letters at a time. An accomplished reader spends four one-hundredths of a second on each letter. Caltech research

scientist Dr. Raymond Briggs says, “On the basis of computer models we would predict that the eye can’t read.”

And what about the human anatomy in other particulars? One could marvel endlessly at the structure and functions of the human body. How would it be if the nose pointed upward instead of down? A person might then drown in a rainstorm. Swallowing entails an amazing coordination of the gullet and the windpipe, yet swallowing requires no concentrated effort or thought.

No one would believe that a watch existed without a watchmaker, but the body—not to say the universe—provides infinitely more indications of an intelligent maker than a watch.

Who determined that there would be micro-organisms that produce antibiotics, vitamins, vaccines and hormones? Such organisms routinely produce ethyl alcohol, citric acid and amino acids. They also produce insulin, interferon, growth hormones and leach metals from low-grade ores, notably uranium and copper.

Learning to put micro-organisms to work could free us from our life-and-death dependence on petroleum. Only a wise Creator could have provided such a big army of free laborers to work for us.

How is it that ants finding food on a foraging expedition should leave a scent trail for other ants?

There are 50,000 kinds of spiders, some big enough to eat a mouse, others scarcely large enough to be seen with the naked eye. Some spiders can spin a line of silk one-millionth of an inch in diameter. Who teaches them how to spin their webs, with their threads of great elasticity and tensile strength? In comparison, even steel is weak.

Scientific American reported that spiders hatched in small boxes were able to spin perfect webs when transferred to large cages. The fact that during the early stage of their life they had been fed by their keeper without any need for spinning had not affected their abilities. Spiders taken on satellites are able to weave their webs in zero gravity without the information gravity provides. Their ability to weave is pre-programmed. Who was the programmer?

In reality most spiders do not spin webs, meaning they do not have to. No struggle for existence during the millions of years of evolution can explain that only those spiders that could spin best survived. Furthermore,

how did spiders catch insects in webs requiring another million years of evolution?

Willis J. Gertsch, author of *American Spiders*, writes, “The orb web would seem to stand alone as a glorious creation, an incredible novelty designed by superior artisans” (*The Pentecostal Light*, September 1980).

If there is no mind behind creation, how is it that the atmosphere is exactly right for our breathing apparatus and exactly right for preventing the earth from being scorched by day and freezing by night? How is it that the temperature remains just right for supporting life? How is it that there is an ozone layer exactly right for filtering out deadly cosmic rays from space?

How is it that there is just the necessary quantity of oxygen around us and the proper mix of gases for us to breathe? John Meldau, in his book *Why We Believe in Creation, Not Evolution*, points to the tragedy of hundreds of babies going blind in their incubators before it was realized that too much oxygen was the cause. But man made this mistake, not God. He provided us with exactly the amount of oxygen we need for health and survival.

The earth’s tilt is 23.5 degrees, which is exactly right to prevent alternating ice and floods, torrid heat and freezing cold.

Human life would not be possible, for example, on Mercury, which sustains a temperature of 770 degrees Fahrenheit on one side, while the other approaches zero. One side is always toward the sun, and the other is dark and cold. The earth, by way of contrast, is just the right distance from the sun to receive proper light, heat and power to sustain life. All these facts point to the providence and genius of God.

A footprint or a fingerprint is sometimes sufficient to enable a policeman to find a suspect; but the whole universe, with all its wonders, is not enough for the atheist to discover the One who has stamped it with the fingerprint of His wisdom. He is both blind and deaf. And just as a deaf man has no business writing about music nor a blind man describing a painting, so it is not right for atheists to speak about things that are hidden from them.

Now hear what Darwin, the great favorite of atheists, says of atheism: “The impossibility of conceiving that this wondrous universe arose through chance seems to me the chief argument for the existence of God.”

An atheist once asserted that the universe came into being as the result of random forces. One who heard him responded impolitely, “That’s sheer

nonsense!”

The atheist was offended. “You should remember that you are talking to a Ph. D.”

“So what? A doctorate is just a random occurrence,” rejoined the other.

“But I worked for years on my dissertation!”

“If you think your mind was necessary for your dissertation, how much more then is intelligence necessary for the universe!”

The most marvelous proof of God’s existence is the universe itself.

2. The argument from the existence of the notion of God in our minds.

The English philosopher Roger Bacon once said, “There is nothing in our intellect which did not pass first through our senses.” We do not have in our minds any concept that is not either a true or a deformed reflection of reality.

A savage in the jungle cannot have the notion of a “television” because this reality does not exist in his world.

The great majority of mankind has at all times believed in God in some way. Even if individuals did not believe in Him for their whole life, they believed in Him at some moment in their life. Is His creation not a reality that reflects His attributes (Romans 1:20)?

If mankind had not had some experience of God, if he had never been perceived, the notion “God” could not have penetrated the human mind nor been anchored there with such power.

3. The teleological argument (from the Greek word telos, meaning “purpose”).

All things in this world tend toward a purpose.

The fertilized ovum in the uterus of the female takes from the mother the food it needs to become a human being. The female embryo in its mother’s womb develops mammary glands that will only be needed when she becomes a mother, perhaps 20 or 30 years later.

The seed of a plant appropriates to itself from the soil just the quantity of water, phosphates, nutrients, etc. that it needs to become a flower.

The sun and all its satellites run without interruption toward a certain apex in space as if they had an encounter there.

How can one explain the fact that in waterless regions where humans have had to rely on transport animals that can function for weeks without water there exists the camel? How is it that bees are essential to pollination? Did the fruit tree and the bee develop simultaneously as a result of random chance? Or does such symbiosis suggest intelligence behind the reality?

Only intelligent beings can decide on purpose. Neither the sun, nor the ovum, nor the seeds of flowers, nor the camel can choose its function. There must exist another Being who has predetermined their purpose. This Being is God.

4. The historic argument.

If most men of all ages—including the greatest minds—have believed in God, and if belief in a matter of such grave importance is mere deception, then the mind is completely untrustworthy and is not capable of endorsing atheism.

From earliest times, as archeological records have shown, there is proof of the existence of religious belief. It has existed in all civilizations that have disappeared. In history there is a natural selection of ideas. What is unfit is discarded. The persistence of the notion of God in spite of millenniums of social change proves its value. German writer Friedrich Von Schiller said it well: “The history of the world is the world’s court of justice.”

5. The moral argument.

There is sufficient explanation for the existence of wickedness and evil in the world. Life teaches men to be evil and leads men on wicked ways. One man has to be a wolf to another man in order to survive. It seems the only one who succeeds is the one who treads upon others.

But how is it that love, meekness and all the other virtues exist as well? They do not have their source in human experience. How is it that there is a conscience that restrains one from committing evil deeds or at least criticizes after the event? The illuminated conscience can only be the voice of another Being, the voice of the Being, whom we call God.

6. The argument from movement.

Movement is not possible without a motor or mover. Perpetual motion is impossible as many a would-be inventor has discovered. But the universe without God would be a perpetuum mobile. In our universe everything from the most elementary particle to the immense galaxies is in constant motion. There must be an agent who started the movement and who maintains it constantly. The One who superintends everything, who governs particles and planets, who causes everything to be in motion, is called God.

7. The argument from prophecies.

No one can tell with certainty what will happen 10 minutes from now. But there exists a book, the Bible, that contains prophecies about events that were to happen hundreds, even thousands of years after they were predicted.

The discoveries of many old biblical manuscripts in the Qumran region have proved again the antiquity of these prophecies, many of which have already been fulfilled, while many more are coming to fruition before our eyes.

Only by presupposing the existence of a master of the universe who foresaw the whole history of mankind can we explain the existence of prophecy in the Bible. While there are some predictions in other non-biblical writings, the Bible is unique in presenting long-term, detailed time prophecies, most of which have been fulfilled. Chief among these are prophecies relating to birth and ministry of Christ.

Prophecy that comes to pass is proof of the existence of an omniscient God.

8. The argument from thought at its highest level.

The mind that guides a man does not always function optimally, but there are only moments when it works with maximum efficiency. These are usually times of great emotion or great danger, when all the mental powers are concentrated. There are other moments when the mind rambles, deviates or is unfocused.

In times of great distress, man is usually a believer. This is best seen when he is facing mortal danger or is on his deathbed.

There have been cases without number where dying people who were unbelievers regretted in their last moments their unbelief; but there is

scarcely one man who, having been a believer all his life, regretted at his death that he had believed and then denied his faith. This is almost a psychological impossibility.

If someone builds a bridge and a cart passes over it, that is hardly sufficient proof that the bridge is good. A train must pass over it. Proof that a conviction is good will hold not only when life smiles on an individual, but also when he passes through a terrible crisis of the soul, when he is in danger or facing death. In such moments men are usually believers.

This is often true while one is enjoying great experiences of beauty as well. After traveling by sea, Engels, one of the foremost atheist thinkers, wrote, “We live in Godhead. You see it best when you are at sea.”

9. The argument from the existence of the function of faith.

Neither men nor animals would need ears if there were no sound. We would not need eyes if there were no light or color. We would have no use for lungs if there were no air to breathe. The organ presupposes the function. The existence of a sense organ is proof that there exists the reality to be perceived through this organ.

Man has the organ of faith in metaphysical realities. It could never have been developed and retained if there were not the reality perceived through it.

10. The argument from the bias of the human mind.

We need to be critical about our own thinking. We can see many things but not the eye, with which we see. We can test every thought except the thought, with which we test.

When a person stops for a moment to think about events, men and things and then starts thinking about thinking, he soon discovers that he is in a mental cul-de-sac and that the human mind has real defects.

The weather can affect our thinking processes, our ability to solve problems and do mental work, even our memory.

At the U.S. Air Force laboratory, subjects were given memory tests after being exposed for one hour to different temperatures— 72, 90 or 95 degrees Fahrenheit. It was found that as the temperature went up, the ability to remember went down. The sharpest decline occurred between 90 and 95 degrees.

A sudden rise in temperature stimulates aggressive thoughts and actions in people who would be incapable of them in favorable weather. It is widely recognized that the summer months are a time when the crime rate is the highest. Somehow, there are more criminal thoughts and, therefore, criminal deeds when the temperature shoots up. Between August and October, there are also more suicides and suicide attempts, both attributed to the hot weather and consequent loss of appetite, which in turn lowers the blood sugar.

At temperatures over 90 degrees Fahrenheit, people tend to make more errors. The National Science Foundation (U.S.) has proved that industrial workers are much more inefficient when it is hot.

Recent research indicates that even color affects our thinking. We think happier thoughts in beautiful meadows or in rooms painted with light blue, yellow or orange. Our attitudes are friendlier in such surroundings. In ugly rooms we think ugly thoughts. Dark, dull colors unrelieved by cheerful accents can be very depressing. One has only to think of the gray of a prison cell. A black bridge over the Thames was famous for the many suicide attempts made from it. When the bridge was repainted green, such attempts declined by more than a third.

Thoughts of suicide often depend upon the color a depressed man sees. While red is stimulating—an “advancing” color to the artist—a deep pink room can subdue a violent person, according to studies.

Marxists are masters in proving that social surroundings, especially economic conditions, determine people’s thoughts. When revolutionaries come into power, they change completely. Whereas they might previously have supported and organized strikes, after gaining power they shoot striking workers.

There is a psychological bias even among scientists. Their observations are often tailored to select experiences and data that confirm rather than contradict their presuppositions.

Our mode of thinking is often primitive. We think very much in analogies—not objectionable if we realize that, in the words of a French proverb, *Comparaison nest pas raison*, which means “Comparison is not a reason.”

Friedrich August Kekulé von Stradonitz discovered the ring shape of the benzene molecule, after dreaming of a whirling snake seizing its own tail.

Dmitri Mendeleev, a passionate chess player, created the periodic table of elements, which laid out the periodicity of the elements in the form of a chess table.

We can see the useful but also risky application of analogy in religion. This is why we tend to describe God anthropomorphically (in the form of man). God made man in His image, thus encouraging a certain amount of thinking about Him in this mode, but we need to be very careful. Anthropomorphism can lead one astray, too.

In order to conceive of and represent God, we need some kind of mental image. “The formless” is also a mental image. Many antireligious arguments of atheists would disappear if we ceased to attribute to God human sentiments and to define what He does and can do in human terms. He is infinite; we are finite. But “infinite” is also a human concept derived from our need to find the opposite of our finiteness.

There is nothing wrong with using analogies to understand something of God if we concede that He is beyond our images and is above every name we can give Him. Theologian and philosopher Dionysius the Areopagite of the fifth century said, “God is nothing,” in the sense that He is nothing like what we imagine Him to be. In the Bible, God simply says, “I am who I am” (Exodus 3:14).

Once one uses analogies and anthropomorphisms or anthropopathisms (attributing to God passions of men), the risk of misrepresentation becomes very real. Therefore, Meister Eckhardt said rightly, “Only a hand that erases can write something true.” Believers not only assert the fact of God’s existence, but also deny many things said about Him knowing that atheism is at times merely the rejection of a god who does not really exist. Christians can join with atheists in reacting against defective forms of theism in theory and life.

Still, because we are human, we cannot renounce all anthropomorphic descriptions of God.

The Jewish book Genesis Rabba relates the following incident: A heretic once asked Rabbi Meir how the God whom Jeremiah describes as filling heaven and earth (Jeremiah 23:24) could speak with Moses out of the little space between the two staves of the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:22).

The rabbi responded, “Bring me a convex mirror,” and then asked the heretic to look at himself in it.

When he did so, he saw himself magnified. Then the rabbi called for a concave mirror, and the heretic saw himself diminished.

The rabbi commented, “If you who are only mere flesh and blood can magnify or diminish yourself, how much more the One by whose hand the world was created. If He so desires, He can fill heaven and earth; if He chooses, He can fill a very small space.”

There is nothing wrong with a philosophical or anthropomorphic image of God as long as we remember that He is not what *we* think He is. He is what *He* is.

In much of our everyday thinking, we tend to use anthropomorphic images. We speak about the memory that crystallized metals have. Scientists have provided us with an image of the atom similar to the configuration of the solar system, knowing the atom cannot be pictured. Thus, objective truths are not divorced from human emotions, imagination or perspective.

There are many determinant factors apart from truth in our thinking, such as interest, usefulness, egotism, the desire for beauty and so forth. With this in mind, we can see how atheism might be the result of ugly circumstances in the life of atheist thinkers. The mind thus conditioned is not to be relied upon; it cannot rightly determine whether or not there is a God.

Therefore, 15th century Christian thinker Nicholas of Cusa posited the *docta ignorantia*, “the known ignorance,” as the beginning of wisdom. In other words, intelligence—the reason—alone is the lowest of man’s powers of knowledge and is not able to grasp reality. Knowledge of its own impotence is the highest awareness it can achieve: This is *docta ignorantia*.

Why this powerlessness? In the first place, such is the nature of truth and next, of knowledge. All knowledge can be but approximation and conjecture, particularly knowledge of ultimate reality.

We must find a more reliable mind.

In the life of Jesus, we can see clearly how unreliably the human mind functions.

Joseph, bridegroom of the virgin Mary, wrongly assumed she had sinned when he discovered she was pregnant. The chief priests of the Jews, men most steeped in religion, did not acknowledge Jesus for who He was but sentenced Him to death as a blasphemer. Pilate confirmed this sentence, allowing his thinking to be blurred by fear. Jesus’ own nation rejected Him

who was their glory. Judas preferred 30 pieces of silver to the friendship of the Son of God. Peter cherished his own safety instead of remaining loyal to His Master. At the moment of Jesus' arrest, all the apostles forsook Him and fled. And Thomas disbelieved in His resurrection until Jesus told him to put his hand in His side and to look at His nail-scarred hands.

The Christian religion teaches us first to distrust our own mind and, more importantly, to accept the thoughts of God, who is independent of external circumstances and is not subject to any earthly influence (Romans 12:2). He is the only One who can comprehend ultimate truth because He is its author. Thus, only in religion can truth be found; only in God can all be known. To the degree we depart from God, we exclude ourselves from truth.

As already stated, the notion "God" could not have penetrated our mind nor been anchored there with such power if mankind had not had the experience of God.

But many other factors might have blurred or falsified this notion. Neither in religion nor in atheism can we rely on our minds alone. We are doomed to error without a higher revelation. Atheism has no revelation from higher spheres, and therefore, it is not reliable. Religion has, and it tells us where God is.

11. The argument from the fact of contingency.

Everything in the world is changing and transitory. Nothing is stable or stationary. Men and matter alike are subject to such an everyday occurrence as weather—pressure, precipitation, humidity, temperature. The law of entropy states that everything tends toward disorganization and disintegration. "Change and decay in all around I see," observed the poet Henry Lyte. Furthermore, things that exist today are gone tomorrow. This holds true beginning with the subparticles in the atom and ending in the cosmos. It is also true in the spiritual realm.

Everything changeable and transitory is therefore contingent. Something here today and gone tomorrow might also have not been here today. The fact that it appears and disappears shows it does not exist in itself, of necessity. It is indifferent to existence. It can be and also not be.

Consequently, it must have a cause outside itself. If this cause is also contingent, it in turn must have a cause. This chain of cause and effect

cannot be without beginning and without end, because if everything is contingent, it could just as well not have existed. How and why did the chain get started?

The world of contingency presupposes the existence of a Being who exists necessarily, who could not not be, who has no cause outside Himself. He is intrinsically without dependency. He could not not be or be otherwise. We call “God” this Being who exists necessarily.

12. The argument from the laws of nature.

In nature, in society, in the soul, in the spirit, in our bodies, everything works according to laws—natural, sociological, physiological, psychological. It is inconceivable that laws should exist without a lawgiver and a law enforcer to see to it that everything acts according to the laws. God is the legislator whose laws we discover through science.

We speak about chemical, physical or biological laws. Let us be well aware that chemistry and physics are not simply chemical and physical. It takes the mind of man to discover them.

When Sir Alexander Fleming was thanked for penicillin, he said: “I wonder about this gratitude. I did not make penicillin; nature makes it. I only discovered it.”

Actually, the facts of nature are there, awaiting discovery by man in his eternal quest for knowledge. Since they are governed by laws, these facts are orderly and ultimately knowable. Chemistry and physics only change as scientists adjust their findings to suit the existing facts. The natural order remains the same.

But the sciences of chemistry and physics are more than a compilation of objective facts. There is a spirit in them. They are inspired by the Spirit, who established the laws in the first place.

13. The argument from the exceptions to the laws of nature.

Even if one could imagine that laws are intrinsic to nature and not established by a conscious being, how is it that there exist exceptions to these laws?

A mechanism cannot make exceptions; it works according to the stereotype. But in nature there are exceptions.

All bodies contract when cold. Only water is the exception. Water expands when it is cold. Ice is thus lighter than water in its liquid state and floats over it, forming a crust that shields ponds and lakes from the exterior cold. That is why fish can survive the rigors of winter. Who made this exception in the case of water?

All combinations of hydrogen are poisonous, again with one exception —water. Without this exception, life would not be possible. Who was responsible for this?

Who determined that women throughout the centuries could become pregnant only through sexual intercourse then saw to it that one virgin should conceive and bear a child—Mary the mother of Jesus?

The exceptions to the laws of nature are proof of the existence of God.

14. The argument from miracles.

There exists an argument closely related to the previous one— the existence of miracles.

The Bible records many miracles. One of the most conspicuous is the existence of Israel, God's chosen people.

The earliest reference to Israel outside the Bible is found in the famous Merneptah Stele. Merneptah was the successor to Pharaoh Rameses II. The Stele records his military achievements, among which is the boast that "Israel's seed is no more."

For 3,300 years the world has repeated this assertion, "Israel is destroyed; it has ceased to exist," or, "It has been assimilated." On the triumphal Arch of Titus in Rome, constructed after his destruction of the Jewish state, there is this inscription: "It is finished with Judea." Today, Rome's Jews take their pleasant walks near the arch. As for the Roman empire, well, it is finished.

The history of the church is also full of miracles, which could not have happened if there were no God. I will tell only one:

Archbishop Andrei Ukhtomski of Ufa had been sentenced to death and shot in Yaroslavl Prison. Before the shooting, the archbishop asked permission to pray. The executioners allowed the condemned several minutes. As he knelt, it was as if a cloud covered him and he disappeared out of sight. Those who carried out the sentence did not know what to do. He could not escape—yet he was not there!

It was only about an hour later that the hierarch reappeared on his knees in flaming prayer in the same spot, as if covered with a luminous cloud that quickly vanished. Relieved their victim was in front of them, the assassins, hurried to shoot him.

If people would take the time to reflect, they would recall miraculous happenings in their own lives that could not have happened without God.

Some such miracles we call “coincidence,” which is but a lesser miracle where God chooses to remain anonymous. French author Anatole France said, “Coincidence is the pseudonym used by men when they don’t wish to name God.”

It is strange that atheists find it difficult to believe in God’s miracles. How easy it must have been for God, who created the Red Sea, to part it so that His people might pass through on dry land.

Many atheists believe in far less acceptable things.

Merely on the authority of the Central Committee, Soviet communists once believed Stalin was the greatest politician, the greatest strategist, the greatest linguist, and the greatest scientist and philosopher. They believed this simple man who had been in prison for robbery was virtually infallible. After his death, Khrushchev’s speech denouncing Stalin led the people to believe that this same man was the greatest mass murderer in history.

In 1959, after another message by Khrushchev, they believed that in five years Soviet Russia would reach and surpass the material standard of the United States. In 1988, communist Russia could only live by importing wheat from the capitalist countries, chief among them being the United States.

Soviet atheists accepted passively and obediently all the fairy tales about how communism would create brotherhood among nations. They should read newspapers of relationships between other communist countries, and they will see how the comrades have hated each other.

They believe uncritically what the supreme ruler of the moment proclaims.

The Bible exhorts us to exercise our critical faculties. For instance: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God…” (1 John 4:1a). “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge” (1 Corinthians 14:29).

The Christian faith appeals very much to reason. For example, it is written, “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord…” (Isaiah

1:18a). One of the main tenets of Martin Luther was the right to private interpretation of Scripture. It was he who gave the impulse to freedom of thought in the world.

Communists refused this biblical liberty and arrived to believe in unreal political miracles. They believe in only one way of thinking. This results in brainwashing the mind, whereas believing in Christ results in transforming the mind.

It is said that the miracles in the Scriptures contradict the laws of nature, but men forget that they themselves, though they possess only very limited powers, constantly violate the laws of nature.

If you arise in the morning, you overcome the natural law of gravity. When you drive in your car, you oppose the law of inertia. When you split an atom, you break the law of cohesion.

If man can contravene these laws, how logical to believe that a higher order of beings—angels, not to mention God Himself—can do things that are impossible for us, just as the scientist can do things that confound an ignorant man.

English philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill once said, “A miracle is no contradiction to the law of cause and effect; it is a new effect supposed to be produced by the introduction of a new cause.” This cause is God.

15. The argument from the expansion of the universe.

The displacement toward the infrared of the spectroscopic image that we receive from distant galaxies proves that our universe is in continuous expansion. Astronomers sometimes compare the universe to a small balloon, a child’s toy, on which stars are painted. As the balloon is blown up, stars drift apart from each other.

[Editor’s Note: According to Dr. Don B. DeYoung, “…the universe was most likely created in an expanding mode for **stability**. Without expansion, gravity would cause the universe to begin to collapse back on itself. Many other motions, like the orbits of planets and the rotation of stars and galaxies, also serve the same function of providing a stable, dependable universe” (“The Hubble Law” by Dr. Don B. DeYoung. *TJ—in-depth Journal of Creation* (April 1995, Volume 9, Issue 1), pp. 7 – 11.).]

The expansion of the universe is a proof of the existence of a God who determined its beginnings and holds them all together (Colossians 1:17, NASB).

16. The argument from the second law of thermodynamics.

According to this law, in a closed system, things can progress only from order to randomness, chaos, anarchy. If our universe had been in existence from eternity past, it would be in chaos. System and order could no longer exist because of the irreversible fact of entropy.

The universe is orderly only because it proceeds from a God of order.

17. The proof from the existence of genes.

This proof is really only an extension or a specific application of the argument from the second law of thermodynamics, but it has a value apart.

Every living being has a genetic code, which decides how it will be constructed. The code is a combination of amino-acids, which—according to this law of thermodynamics—can develop spontaneously only from order to chaos, like all other matter. Whence then comes the order of the genetic code?

Each human spermatozoid and ovule contains information, which, written out, would fill 1,000 volumes, of 500 pages each. Everything is written out there: the color of eyes and hair, the features of the face, height, hereditary sickness, but also hereditary talents, all details of the body as well as the main psychological framework, etc. With all the modern technology available, no scientist could condense all this information on so microscopic a space with the intent of creating a man to live according to it.

When the cells are divided, all the information is copied in no time. In the end billions of copies are obtained. No multiplying machine could do it.

What happens with man, happens also with the cells of animals and flowers. Information in the genes tells lilies, tulips, roses, what color and fragrance and what elegance of the stems they must have and how they should transmit it to their successors.

Such an order cannot come from disorder. The lack of information and intelligence of acids cannot communicate to genes how to develop intelligence in humans. Molecules of acids have no instincts. How then do they tell genes how to produce instincts in animals?

Genes are an incontestable proof of an intelligent Creator.

18. The argument from the existence of radioactive elements.

By losing electrons, radioactive elements pass from stage to stage until they are degraded to the point where they become lead. This is called radioactive filiation.

Now, scientists know how much time it takes for one radioactive element to change to another and finally to become lead.

If the universe had existed from all eternity instead of being created, or if it had existed for billions upon billions of years, all radioactive elements would long since have become lead. How is it then that they still exist? Their very presence proves that the universe is not self-existent from eternity, that it has a beginning, that we live in a created universe, and that, therefore, there exists a Creator.

19. The argument from the existence of black holes.

In the 1960s, astronomers discovered the pulsars or neutronstars. They are called also “white dwarfs,” which consist of matter unimaginably condensed. Their own gravity acted on the mass, making it to collapse. The compression had resulted in an increase in gravity. We have a chain reaction. Gravity produces collapse, collapse produces greater gravity and so on. The star becomes denser and denser. The tendency of such stars is to arrive to infinite density and complete lack of dimension.

These stars don’t just deflect light as other stars do. They swallow it. In this phase they are called black holes. They become unseen forever as is everything in their horizon. We see objects because they emanate or reflect light. Swallowing every beam of light, the black holes constitute invisible matter. Good for the vulgar atheist who says he believes only what he can see.

There are three zones. At a certain distance from the black hole light is safe. It cannot be swallowed by this peculiar star, but only deflected as every object deflects it. At another distance it get swallowed. There exists a zone between these two: the socalled “horizon of events,” in which the light is not swallowed nor deflected but made prisoner. It will turn forever around it in an orbit. Time will have ceased for it.

In this horizon of events, the space-time continuum, which is our universe, is no more, the element of time having disappeared. We arrive to the border between our reality and another one.

The assertion of dialectic materialism that our reality, called in science "space-time continuum" is the only one is contradicted by the existence of black holes, which are the border between our reality and another one, which is outside of time, eternal.

Creationist professor A. Wilder-Smith in *The Resignation of Scientific Materialism* wrote: "Beyond the horizon of events all laws of matter known by us cease. The chemical laws which we know, cease, the same physical laws and matter, and our reality of matter- time. Material, temporary reality arrives only until this border. What is beyond this border belongs to 'the beyond.'"

The Bible is a unique breakthrough from another reality, that of God, into our space-time continuum. The basic dogma of materialism that the reality apprehended by our senses is the only one has collapsed when we discovered the collapsing stars.

20. The argument from the gradation to be found in all things.

Thomas Aquinas observed the following:

> "Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble, and the like. But 'more' or 'less' are predicates of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways something that is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest. There is then something which is truest, something best, something noblest, and consequently something which is most being."

This is called God.

21. The metaphysical argument of Anselm of Canterbury.

In Anselm's *Proslogion* he wrote: "When you say God does not exist, you mean the being than which a greater cannot be conceived." But He must have existence, otherwise a greater being could be conceived. He must also be a being which cannot be conceived not to exist. "No one who

understands what God is can conceive that God does not exist…. God is that than which a greater cannot be conceived. And he who thoroughly understands this, assuredly understands that this being so truly exists, that not even in concept can it be non-existent."

Chinese philosopher Confucius was asked how he would begin if he had to rule a country. He said, "I would improve the use of the language."

His audience was astonished, "This has nothing to do with our question!"

Confucius explained: "If the language is not right, what is said does not correspond with what is meant; if what is said does not correspond with what is meant, works are not done properly; if works are not done properly, morals and art do not prosper; if morals and art do not prosper, there is no justice. If there is no justice, the nation does not know where to set hand and foot. Therefore arbitrariness in words should not be tolerated. This is that upon which everything depends."

In the same spirit, Thomas Aquinas said, "There are self-evident things known as soon as the terms are known. So when the nature of the whole and the part are known, it is self-evident that every whole is greater than its part."

As soon as the meaning of the word "God" is understood, it is at once seen that God exists. For by this word is signified something beyond which nothing greater can be conceived. But what exists in actuality is greater than what exists only in the intellect. Therefore, since as soon as the word "God" is understood it exists in the intellect, it also follows that it exists actually. And so the proposition "God exists" is self-evident, as the existence of truth is self-evident. If you deny its existence, your assertion, "There is no truth," must be true. So there is truth.

God is truth. In the proposition "God exists," the predicate is the same as the subject. The existence of God is self-evident.

Spinoza wrote: "Only if the essence of God does not involve existence could you say that He does not exist. This is absurd. Therefore God necessarily exists, which had to be demonstrated."

You can surely say that though we have the words "square circle" there is not a square circle because it involves a contradiction. But this is not the case with God. What would hinder God from existing? No outer nor inner cause can make Him not to exist. Perfection enables something to exist;

imperfection hinders. Of no existence can we be surer than that of the Being absolutely infinite or perfect, that is to say, God.

We have this notion. “Existing” is included in it. We can no longer escape from the logical conclusion that God exists.

German philosopher Immanuel Kant said, “It is preposterous to ask whether there is a God,” because the notion “God,” which means the most perfect Being, includes the attribute “existing.”

I repeat myself: If God is conceivable, His nonexistence is inconceivable.

French bishop and writer Francois Fénelon wrote in connection with this argument:

> “Existence, truth and goodness are one and the same thing: evil has nothing real. It is certain that I can conceive an infinite being of infinite perfection and because I conceive it, it must be. This being is identical with my notion of it; it can be conceived only as existence because existence is comprehended in its essence. My idea about it comprehends clearly its actual existence. We must affirm the actual existence of this infinitely perfect being as I affirm the actual existence of my actual thought.”

French philosopher Nicolas Malbranche said, “It is enough to think about God in order to know that He exists.” Western philosopher René Descartes wrote, “The idea of ‘infinite’ could not exist in the spirit of a finite being if it had not been put there by an infinite being.”

22. The argument from the composition of all entities in nature.

In nature, everything is composed. What a complicated organization is found even in an atom, in one single living cell, in one complex of a soul! Everything composed services something other than itself. A bed and a chair serve men; a cell serves an organism; molecules serve a cell; elementary particles serve a molecule; and so on. Never does a purpose belong to the aggregate itself, which does not have intelligence and cannot thus have purpose. Every composed thing proves the existence of the composer: The composed things of the universe prove the existence of the Divine Composer.

God must be simple essence, uncomposed. Because if He were an aggregate, He would again serve the purposes of something else, and so on endlessly. Since all things serve God, He must differ essentially from them. Not being composed, He is not subject to change because change arises from the reactions between component parts. Thus, being unchanging and unchangeable, God is also obviously immortal.

23. The witness of the best examples of mankind.

As we consider the arguments for the existence of God, let us be like an impartial judge who hears all the witnesses and a righteous judge who evaluates their credibility. The witnesses to God's existence are those examples of mankind who have exhibited qualities of goodness, meekness, love and holiness.

The prophets, Jesus Christ, the apostles and the saints throughout history and the world were witnesses to His existence. Without exception, they speak about their personal experience with God. The prophets heard His voice. The apostles knew Him in the person of Jesus, about whom it is written that "He is in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18).

Throughout the ages, the Father has revealed Himself in many ways to the saints. Truth has been the guiding principle in the lives of all these witnesses, many of whom have gone to their death in its defense.

No judge would readily discard the testimonies of such witnesses, neither should we. Their multiplied testimony is compelling proof of the existence of God.

I will relate the story of just one. Bartolomé de las Casas, a Spanish priest later called Apostle of the Indies, settled in Hispaniola in 1502, wanting to find fortune in the New World. As was the custom, he had Indians who served him as slaves. But when he heard the gospel preached, he realized his men and the prosperity they brought him were ill-gotten goods. He immediately freed his Indian slaves and called upon his fellow colonists to follow his example and stop being tyrants.

He succeeded in convincing the Spanish authorities to establish self-supporting Indian farming communities, from which the Indians would receive most of the profits.

Later ordained a priest, he halted expeditions of conquest and slave hunting in Nicaragua and made soldiers disobey the orders of slaveholders.

In the end, he induced the emperor Charles V to abolish Indian slavery in 1542. Pope Paul III had already spoken out against it in his papal bull, or charter, Sublimis Deus.

Meanwhile, Bartolomé had become a bishop. He refused absolution to slaveholders and defended his position in the booklet "Confesionario," which stirred up an outcry against him in Spain. The government felt he had gone too far: "Traitor! He is a traitor! We have no claim to the Indies if, as he says everything we have done there is unjust."

Even humanists at that time argued that the Indians, an inferior race, were slaves by nature, thus justifying the Spanish conquest. Las Casas replied, "The entire human race is one," and said the Spaniards had no right to conquer or exploit. His influence resulted in the peaceful colonization of the Philippines.

He published book after book in defense of the oppressed. From him we have the pamphlet, "Very Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies," which contains the story about the Indian *cacique* (a native Indian chief) in Cuba who, when told that Spaniards went to heaven said he then "did not wish to go there but rather to hell, so as not to be where such cruel people were."

Where did Las Casas get his courage? He himself gives the answer: "In His goodness and mercy GOD considered it right to choose me as his minister, though unworthy, to plead for all these people of the Indies against wrongs and injuries never before heard or seen. And I have labored for about 50 years for God alone."

Would any reasonable judge reject such convincing testimony?

We can adduce in support of religion—particularly the Christian religion—the writings and records of countless saints of all ages. What authorities can the atheists muster in support of their opinions? They can lay claim to no benefactors of mankind. Their witnesses are the greatest criminals of the human race: Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Tito, Mao Tse-Tung, and Karl Marx, architect of horror and holocaust.

What impartial judge would have the least difficulty deciding for the existence of God when he has to choose between these two kinds of witnesses?

24. The witness of men of science.

Most of the truly great scientists—those who knew best the structure of the universe and the mystery of life—have been believers in a Creator.

Our universe has had two names: the Newtonian Universe and the Universe of Einstein. Both Newton and Einstein believed in God, though arriving in different ways. Neils Bohr, Piccard, Pasteur, Mendel, Filatov and innumerable other scientists and founders of scientific disciplines were believers. Theirs is a telling witness to the existence of God.

I do not think anyone is more authorized to speak in the name of science than Einstein, simply because the universe bears his name. He said that our experience to date justifies our feeling that "in nature is realized the idea of mathematical simplicity." Thus, according to Einstein, the universe is the realization of an idea. Now where there is an idea there must be the one who produced the idea. He refused to abandon his theory of relativity, saying that "neither logical nor experimental reasons could be cited, nor consideration of simplicity and beauty, against it."

Now, if the universe is beauty fulfilled, there must be an artist to conceive it. I have every respect for the scientific knowledge of atheist thinkers, but they must also admit that Einstein is a greater authority than themselves.

Carved above the fireplace in one of Princeton's fine halls are these words of Einstein: "God who created and is in nature is very difficult to understand, but he is not arbitrary or malicious." A God who thinks, a thinker; a God who seeks beauty, an artist; a God who is goodness. And in comparison to Him, we all—even members of the Academy of Science in Moscow—are dwarfs.

Perhaps you would like to know what the great German physicist Max Planck says in his scientific autobiography. He is the author of the theory of light. Here are his words: "Religion and natural science are fighting a joint battle in an incessant, neverrelaxing crusade against skepticism and against dogmatism, against disbelief and against superstition, and the rallying cry in this crusade has always been and always will be 'unto God.'"

Eventually atheists might admit that some scientists are religious, though simply by tradition, and that religion does not really play a significant role in their lives. This is not true. Einstein was an atheist in his youth. By birth he was a Jew, so his whole upbringing prejudiced him against Christianity. But his scientific achievements made of him a religious man and a great admirer of Jesus Christ.

And because we are dealing with Einstein, we quote from him again: “Most people say that it is the intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong, it is the character.” Now, character is created not by atheism but by religion. And one cannot be a true scientist without having a character of honesty and integrity, which is foreign to atheism.

25. The proof from great art.

Religion has inspired such great works of art as the paintings of Michelangelo, Raphael, Rembrandt, as well as the music of Palestrina, Bach, Mendelssohn, and the poetry of David, Dante and Milton. Can atheists name even one work of art inspired by the denial of God? Never has anyone been eloquent for atheism. Never could one paint, write a hymn or create a poem for it. This fact alone should give one pause. It is one of the most powerful arguments against atheism.

26. The witness of farmers.

Atheism is the child of city-dwellers who are enclosed within walls and perceive the universe through grimy windowpanes. They do not see the universe as it really is. Farmers who live in close communion with nature know it best. They are not atheists because they know it can only be understood as the creation of God.

27. The witness of animal experience.

Since man is not Earth’s only inhabitant, it is not right to draw general conclusions about the most important problems without taking into consideration the experience of other species.

All those familiar with animals, especially farmers, recognize the fact that domestic animals, especially dogs, as well as horses, have a sense for metaphysical realities that man lacks. A dog in a house seems to know beforehand about the death of his master, even if it occurs some distance away or happens suddenly. This knowledge is exhibited through melancholic states that can cause the animal to refuse food, even to the point of starving itself to death.

Usually this is attributed to instinct, but what do the animals perceive through instinct? They perceive a being whom we do not see—the angel of

death. The metaphysical reality whose ultimate expression is God is confirmed by the experience of the animal world.

There are many other things to be said in connection with animal life.

With materialists, thinking is a function of the brain. The complicated structure of the human brain allegedly explains our abilities. But how is it that bees can calculate? Do they have a high quality brain?

In 1983, Professor Dr. James Gould of Princeton University spoke at a conference in the U.S., about an astonishing experiment he made with bees.

He put a dish with sugar water at a distance from a honeycomb. After the bees discovered the syrup, he gradually moved the dish farther from the honeycomb. He continued to do this, moving the dish farther from the honeycomb using the same measurement each time. Finally, while Professor Gould was on his way to the sugar water's next place, he had a surprise: The bees were already waiting there for the sugar water.

The bees knew that the distance increased each time and had calculated where the dish will be next.

When Gould was asked if he had an explanation, he replied, "No, I would have liked they should not have done it." This because he stood before a riddle. Animal abilities are without explanation except for a God who thinks for them.

In many places on the East Coast of the U.S., gulls throw oysters on the concrete to break the shell so they can eat the flesh. Otherwise, they would have no other way of getting to it. Vultures in Africa, unable to open the hard shells of ostrich eggs, bombard them with pieces of rock. Do they think logically without an adequate brain and without knowing Aristotle's rules of thinking? Or is there a God who provides for all His creatures?

Whales communicate with each other with signals of such high frequency that the human ear cannot register them. They can distinguish sounds when they express well-being, the desire to ascertain that the family is near, the desire to play or to sleep. There is one sound for pain in sickness and another for birth pangs. They have their love songs, lullabies for little ones, information about available food, orders like "onward" or "stop," elegies in cases of a death.

Some African monkeys have what we could call "names" for different animals. They warn their friends on different pitches, depending upon the fact if the danger is from a leopard, a snake or a predatory bird. They hide

from snakes on treetops and from birds in thorny bushes, etc. (“Welt,” W. Germany, June 5, 1983).

Animal life tells us there is a God.

28. The proof from the satisfaction of our needs.

For all basic human needs, there exists a reality apart from men. We are born with lungs, and we find air to breathe. Thus, there is an outward reality corresponding to the need of our lungs. We are born with a dependence on milk, and we find a mother’s breast. As we grow and our needs change, the milk in a mother’s breast alters accordingly. We are born with the need for food, and we find vegetables, fruits and meat. We are born with a body that can fall sick, and we find in the earth—in its salts, its mushrooms, its herbs, the medicines for all our sicknesses. So the reality on Earth always corresponds to our fundamental needs.

But man is not only body, but also an organism that needs a protecting father to shield and comfort him, to assure him of moral order. It would be strange indeed if an exterior reality should correspond to everything else and not to this.

The desire for happiness and man’s capacity to imagine it so far surpass the happiest moments of a favored—let alone a miserable— existence that it is inconceivable that there is no external reality to correspond to it. If desire presupposes fulfillment, then paradise fancied must be paradise in fact. And paradise, that dreamed-of perfection that answers all man’s hidden longings, is the abode of God, who offers it to all who will.

And what about good and evil?

If there were no Supreme Judge to reward good and punish evil, it would make no sense to be moral. And if faith in this Judge disappears, the basic “glue” of society disappears. Human society needs a just God; to this need, an exterior reality also corresponds.

29. The proof from artificial satellites.

Today, man is a “builders of stars.” I speak about artificial satellites. These are actually more like tiny planets, but they have allowed us to prove experimentally that even behind the smallest specks in space, containing only a handful of people, there is always tremendous intelligence. Our man-made “stars,” while requiring intricate calculations and complex

instrumentation, nevertheless have a short life span. Yet they are achievements of a most extraordinary nature. Could they have simply happened?

Our earth is also a satellite, carrying its billions of inhabitants around the sun every year. During all of recorded history, it has never deviated off course or been drawn into the fiery orbit of the sun. Behind Earth and behind the millions of satellites and other suns, behind all the countless stars in the sky, there must also be a mind that has conceived these wonders, a person who constructed and now guides them. This person is God.

30. The proof from automated industry.

In an automated factory, one can walk a long time without seeing any engineer or worker. The motors and machines influence each other reciprocally, producing all necessary movements. But behind the automation stands the engineer who conceived and calculated it; and during the operation, there is the worker in command.

Similarly, the material universe appears to function automatically. But let us not be deceived. It could never have come into existence without a very real constructor and guide. Its builder and maker is God.

31. The proof from answered prayers.

For centuries and millenniums, countless believers have witnessed to the fact that prayers offered in impossible situations when all seemed lost, humanly speaking, have been answered, sometimes in remarkable ways.

If such experiences had not been attested, the practice of prayer would long since have disappeared, along with many superstitions that have vanished with time.

Therefore, answered prayer is proof of the existence of the One who hears and responds to them.

32. The argument from the need for an eternal mind.

This argument has been developed particularly by the Irish philosopher Bishop Berkley, who says that the universe can exist only in a mind. The mind is the “computer” that organizes the millions of impressions it receives daily through the senses and creates out of them a universe. After

due thought, the mind puts all the events it perceives through the senses into the categories of quantity, quality, causality, modality and finality.

The sense of touch tells the brain that it feels something soft; the tongue says it perceives something salty; the eye discerns something yellow. Out of this the mind construes the notion “cheese.”

Beyond objective analysis, the mind endows things with value. The rose becomes beautiful only to the eye of a lover of beauty. The universe is thus construed in a mind.

But when there was no human mind, where was the universe? Since the universe is demonstrably older than the human mind, there must always have been a mind to conceive it. This eternal mind is God.

33. The proof from the existence of evil.

Instead of adducing this proof, I will tell how it convinced a leading communist.

Communists often hate, arrest, torture and kill one another in orgies of violence.

During Stalin’s time in the country of Czechoslovakia, a leading communist named Loeb was imprisoned by his comrades and subjected to brainwashing. Alone in a cell, he had to listen day and night to a loudspeaker blaring at him maddening words: “Spy! Traitor! Counter-revolutionist! Oh, no, I beg your pardon. Dear and faithful comrade, no, spy! Traitor! No, comrade! You will be hanged! It is a confusion; you will be released soon. Your arrest has been a mistake. Rogue, rascal, beloved comrade, innocent victim of injustice!” This went on for weeks.

Then he had a moment of illumination. The thought occurred to him:

> “If communists torture Christians or other enemies, it makes sense. We cannot triumph without destroying them. But if communists torture communists, this is wickedness without any sense; it is evil for evil’s sake. I have now seen the final depth of evil.
>
> “But there is no electricity without two poles, no coin without two faces. If there exists an extreme depth of wickedness, there must also be an extreme height of love. This then is God.”

After this, when he was called to a new interrogation, he told the police officer: “You can switch off the loudspeaker now. I have found God.”

In the discipline of physics, a law states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. In this sense, excesses of wickedness like Auschwitz, the Gulag Archipelago, and the massacres in Cambodia prove God's existence.

All deep human suffering is not a valid atheist argument but a proof that there must be a Comforter to compensate for it.

Much suffering is, directly or indirectly, God's punishment for sin. To deduce from such suffering that there is no God is to deny instrumentality. One might as easily prove that a child has no father by the fact that his father spanked him.

From a human perspective, punishment for transgression might seem monstrously high. But God is concerned with shaping His creatures to be eternal embodiments of goodness and holiness (Hebrews 12:4-11). A great statue requires hammer and chisel as well as file and soft brush.

34. The argument from one's faith.

An individual should work at the formulation of his thinking until it becomes sure truth, just as Jesus was incarnate truth. As one advances in his thought processes, his inner doubts disappear. For such a man the fact that he believes in God is sufficient reason for having the certitude that God exists in reality.

Truth is the manner of thinking of a holy, Jesus-like man. Then as one becomes more and more like Jesus, he knows his faith to be real. His life confirms his thinking.

35. The argument from the impossibility of proving the contrary.

No one will ever be able to prove the rationality of atheism that begins by denying that a certain object of research (i.e., God) exists.

If a room is thoroughly searched for an object, failure to find it is not proof that it does not exist, but simply that the search has thus far been unsuccessful: The object may be well hidden, or the searcher may be blind.

If a room can fail a searcher, how much more the universe? Who will ever be able to plumb the far reaches of the infinite universe to establish that the object "God" does not exist?

Our senses, our intuitions, our rational considerations have limits. How can one confidently deny the existence of an entity that may lie just beyond

our perceptions, our “antennas”? Even if not one single person had ever experienced the existence of God, this fact still would not prove His nonexistence.

Every second, 1,000,000,000,000,000 neutrinos—elementary particles with no electric charge and little or no mass, radiated by the sun—pass through every human body. This startling bit of information was unknown until recently. Even so, not one in a thousand, or perhaps a million, is aware of it. Thus, entities can exist without our knowledge. Primroses grew on mountaintops long before humans discovered them.

Until a few years ago no one knew about neuropeptides—a short chain of amino acids active in the nervous system—which can influence drinking behavior and sexual urges. Yet they existed without either our knowledge or approval.

Now, a book proving the nonexistence of neutrinos and primroses would appear very stupid indeed. And an a-neuropeptide system of thinking would be no less irrational.

When all is said and done, no one has an invincible reason to believe God does not exist. In fact, there are numerous proofs for His existence (only a few we have touched upon), but none for His nonexistence. Whether or not they admit it, atheists are obliged to take it on faith that God does not exist.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen once astutely observed, “God is the most obvious fact of human experience. If we’re not aware of Him, it is because we’re too complicated or because our noses are lifted high in the air in pride, for lo! He is at our feet.”

Atheists need more faith than believers.

* * *

In an interview given to a Finnish journal, Stalin once explained the reasoning that led him to become godless: “If God exists, He must have ordained slavery, feudalism and capitalism; He must want humanity to suffer, as the monks were always telling me. Then there would be no hope for the toiling masses to free themselves from their oppressors.”

Where is the logic in this? Because Stalin disliked certain social orders that monks said were ordained of God, does this prove His nonexistence? It would have been more logical to react by saying, “I will oppose this unjust

God," or "I might find some causative agent other than God for the suffering of mankind." (Stalin later became the most infamous perpetrator of suffering in the history of the human race.)

To say, "God does not exist," simply because I do not like feudalism or capitalism is manifestly absurd.

French politician and historian Louis Blanc, one of the important leaders of socialism, is reported to have said: "When I was an infant, I rebelled against my nurse. When I was a child, I rebelled against my teachers and my parents. When I was a man, I rebelled against the government. When I die, if there is any heaven and I go there, I will rebel against God."

Atheism, then, is not so much the expression of a philosophy as of a rebellious character. What is its usefulness?

Many in the world are illiterate. There are whole tribes still living in the Stone Age in New Guinea, in the jungle of Ecuador and in the Philippines. Men who believe in God have gone to these tribes to raise the savages out of their ignorance and squalor and ennoble them. This is possible only by bringing them the message of God.

Is it imaginable that one might go to these savages and cannibals and tell them God does not exist and therefore they must reform their lives and live as noble, radiant humans?

It is said that in the New Hebrides, a communist agitator took it upon himself to explain to the native inhabitants that God did not exist. After listening to him attentively, they said: "Go back and thank god in whom you do not believe that you were not the first to arrive here. Before you there came a missionary who told us about God and made civilized men of cannibals. If he had not preceded you, we would have eaten you."

* * *

History proves there have never been regimes so cruel as those governed by atheists. There has been much barbarism in the world, but the greatest savagery has been inflicted by the Soviet rulers, Lenin and Stalin, followed by Khrushchev and Brezhnev—not to mention the refined cruelties of Mao Tse-Tung.

In the whole communist world, there cannot be found one philanthropic or charitable private institution. A heartless state may care for the sick, the

old and the orphans, but a hospital run by love is quite different from one run as a business paid by the state.

In an African state, the local populace was observed to pass by the state hospital in favor of the missionary hospital.

One day a nurse asked: “Why don’t you go to the state hospital? They have the same medicines as ours.”

The answer was, “The medicines are the same, but the hands are not the same.”

Atheism cannot abide meditation. If I meditate upon God and upon His Word, I become strong and full of joy, knowing I have a Redeemer, a Father, who thinks about me. But atheists must avoid meditation about ultimate truth.

Pascal observed: “‘There is no God.’ Is this a thing to be said with gaiety? Is it not rather a thing to be said with tears as the saddest thing in the world?”

* * *

Atheists have no comforter in moments of distress. An all-toobrief earthly life spent in fear that at the whim of a cruel dictator one will be arrested without reason will give that person little ease or comfort.

The author of this present book has spent years in solitary confinement. The worst torment of “solitary” is sheer, utter boredom. To the man without Christ, it is intolerable. But I can imagine nothing more boring than atheism, than telling oneself: “The world is an empty room. I have no one, here or hereafter, because there is no hereafter. I am alone. I have no friend here and none in heaven, because there is no heaven. There is no one who understands me, no one who loves me. Someday I will die and disappear forever, and no one will care. My birth was an accident. My death has no meaning. And I am alone.”

Atheism is boredom of a most corrosive type. Its child is despair; its grandchildren are drunkenness and suicide.

Whereas John saw in a vision the heavenly city of Jerusalem with a river containing the water of life, the renowned atheistic poet James Thomson describes the city of atheism in these somber words:

> The mighty river flowing dark and deep,

With ebb and flood from the remote sea-tides,
Vague sounding through the city’s sleepless sleep,
His name—the river of the suicides.

An honest atheist, Dr. E. Wengraf, once confessed in *Neues Wiener Journal*:

> “Every piece of anti-religious propagandas seems to me a crime. I surely do not wish it to be prosecuted as a crime, but I consider it immoral and loathsome. This not because of zeal for my convictions, but because of the simple knowledge, acquired in long experience of life, that, given the same circumstances, a religious man is happier than the irreligious. In my indifference and skeptical atti- tude toward all positive faith, I have often envied other men to whom deep religiosity has given a strong support in all the storms of life. To uproot the souls of such men is an abject deed. I abhor any proselytizing. But still, I can understand why one who believes firmly in a saving faith tries to convert others. But I cannot understand a propaganda of unbelief. We do not have the right to take away from a person his protecting shelter, be it even a shabby hut, if we are not sure we can offer him a better, more beautiful house. But to lure men from the inherited home of their souls, to make them err afterward in the wilderness of hypotheses and philosophical question marks, is either criminal fatalisms or criminal mindlessness.”

* * *

One or another argument for the existence of God can be contested in isolation, but the combined strength of the most cogent arguments is like the many-fibered cable that supports a bridge.

On the other hand, atheism, while it may have many questions, has no arguments at all and is positively harmful.

The arguments for the existence of God might not have convinced you fully, but know that arguments for atheism do not exist. On which side is it wisest to cast your lot? What if God does exist and you lose your life far away from Him?

The French philosopher Baron d’Holbach, who called himself “the personal enemy of God,” denied His existence by saying that only nature is

real. He describes nature as non-created but creating everything, eternal, infinite, containing wisdom, beauty, organization, spirit, plan, and order. Poor fool! He has simply given God another name—Nature—while believing in all His attributes.

Therefore, the proofs *for* the existence of God might be debatable but not those of His nonexistence. There simply are none.

Even more, the nonexistence of God is unthinkable. Without a God, how did mankind arrive at this notion so alien to its sense- perceptions? Even science fiction writers and movie makers, with all their imaginative license, seem unable to conceive of different orders of beings: Their extraterrestrials always have eyes, ears and mouths. Who could have dreamed up the God of the Hebrews and Christians if He had not revealed Himself?

Believe in the One your inner being so desires—if you are honest with yourself. His name is God.

* * *

We lack the answer to the most important question: What should I do with my life? Goethe said, “A useless life is an early death.”

To answer this question, we need God’s power to make life spiritually abundant, just as He made Francis of Assisi happy. This is not to deny the fact that others have joys.

A man once said to a Christian who lived abstemiously: “I couldn’t live the way you do. I enjoy my meals.”

The Christian replied, “I also enjoy myself between meals and when I have no meals.”

This is the difference God makes in the life.

* * *

Several times in this book, I have made a confession. I repeat it again. I acknowledge the guilt of Christians in the fact that many people are atheists.

Compare our experience with antibiotics. These miracle substances can heal many deadly diseases. But doctors have often abused their usefulness by prescribing them for every little sneeze and wheeze, cough and cold. The result is that resistant strains of bacteria have developed. A dose of

Penicillin-G sufficient for the treatment of gonorrhea 30 years ago must now be increased 25 times to be effective, and it is still doubtful if the offending organism will disappear.

In like manner, we Christians have abused our religion, which is truly effective "medicine" but needs to be administered wisely. Therefore, we children of God will have to resolve to be 25 times holier than before to overcome your atheism.

But we beg that you revise your attitude, too, and acknowledge your sin.

Chairman Mao once asked this question at a Communist Party meeting: "Who are smarter, men or swine?"

Without waiting for an answer, he replied: "Swine. If they come to a fence and cannot advance, they turn around and go back. But there are men who refuse to turn."

Mao himself was such a man, whereas Frederic Engels, Marx's closest collaborator and chief propagator of atheism, returned to God in his old age. In his treatise about the theologian David Strauss, he wrote, "Life must be brought back to the One who freely died on the cross for all men."

We recommend you be smarter than Mao's swine. Return to the God who certainly exists. Such highly complex structures as the liver, heart, thyroid gland and eye, not to mention chromosomes, could not arise of themselves. Neither could the brain that serves even atheism with such great skill.

All these organisms function according to the wise laws of mathematics, chemistry and physics. Return to God the lawgiver.

* * *

At this point, I do not deny that many questions remain unanswered, even if all the arguments of God's existence are accepted. If it were not so, the hearts of great believers could not be ravaged by tempests of doubt, as sometimes happens.

Let me give you the greatest argument against belief in a good and almighty God. It is the existence of human suffering. Some of it can be explained away as of human origin, but what about earthquakes and other catastrophes—"acts of God," we call them? What about children born with severe handicaps, who have only a few tragic days or weeks or years of life and nothing else? Can we cover up for God?

My reply: A man who has had a finger or foot amputated can suffer from “phantom pain,” which is often very severe. He feels pain in the limb that no longer belongs to his body. A man can die from an imaginary sickness, which means that even imagined sickness is very real.

What if the whole of suffering is illusory, phantasmagoric?

Many inner organs have no nerves to convey pain; thus the lungs, the liver and the aggregate of 13 billion cells called the brain. Exceptional men are sometimes untroubled by pain. There is a sort of spiritual anesthesia. Some saints seemingly felt no pain while burning at the stake. There have been times in my own experience when, after being caught preaching in a communist prison cell, I have been badly beaten and have felt absolutely nothing. While the wardens beat, I thought about how to finish my sermon. When they threw me back in the cell, I continued my speech quietly.

Pascal solved difficult mathematical problems when plagued by a toothache. Most women bear quite well their birth pangs.

I would say that pain is not a necessary and objective fact of life. It is now known the human brain itself produces endorphins, which act like an anesthetic.

Pain arises sometimes from a false attitude toward life on the part of the man who, having fallen away from God, sets himself up as a judge of reality, categorizing events as either good or bad. We are not judges but a part of reality, and the child of God accepts the whole of it—earthquakes as well as toothaches—with equanimity.

God is one, and reality is one. A sanctified spirit does not divide it into things pleasant and unpleasant. As we advance in faith, we become more accepting and less critical and complaining.

Think of it this way. As a child, did you ever sit on a little stool and look up at your mother’s embroidery? From your point of view it was a jumble of colored zigzags and a tangle of threads that made no sense. Then your mother, sensing your confusion, turned the embroidery over to show you the right side, and you understood.

So, in an ultimate sense, nothing untoward can happen in the life of the believer who knows that God controls the patterns of our lives. If we lift our hearts to heavenly places, we can look down from above and see that our transitory sufferings are but a gathering of pearls and jewels to embroider our lives for eternity.

Behavioral medicine tells us that many diseases of the body and their attendant pains are due to a state of mind, a negative attitude toward reality.

We become troubled, and belief is hindered because of the existence of so much suffering. However, it is possible that the problems might disappear if suffering were not perceived as such.

It is possible to rejoice about what was previously looked upon as pain, just as the apostle Paul did when he was beaten, stoned and shipwrecked. It should also be noted that much of the problem of suffering would disappear if those who philosophize about it would instead write out checks to help the sufferers, if those who complain about it would alleviate it.

* * *

Well, you object, these explanations are all well and good, but it would be better if there were no pain and no explanation.

I confess there is a grain of absurdity in our belief in God even after adducing all the arguments, revelations and explanations. But it is even more absurd not to believe in Him and to believe instead that the order evident in both the atom and the cosmos has appeared without the concurrence of a Creator. It is absurd to believe that there exists nothing to satisfy religious needs when food is provided to satisfy bodily hunger. It is more absurd to believe that all saints and the greatest scientists erred when they put their trust in God and, in some cases, even died for this faith.

Life means to bear strain. There is strain in faith, too. But between the two extremes—faith in God and faith in atheism— surely it is wiser to choose the former.

I repeat: The alternative to “believing in God” is not “believing in nothing,” but believing in monsters like Stalin and Mao, money, pornography, drugs or a life without content or meaning.

Now, we believers recognize that we “know in part,” we “see through a glass, darkly,” we operate in dim light (1 Corinthians 13:12). But it is better to see a glass as half full than half empty. The One who filled half the glass can fill it to the brim, yea, so that “my cup runs over” (Psalm 23:5).

Therefore, the arguments we adduce for the existence of God simply make the leap of faith more reasonable in matters we do not comprehend.

* * *

Neither the mind of the believer, nor that of the unbeliever can settle all issues; but we can bracket some of them.

The multitude of arguments that support the existence of God all affirm that He is. For some, the existence of God, though well argued, is a reality that does not harmonize with another reality: suffering. However, when we acknowledge the existence of a wise and loving Being, Creator of the universe, that reality surely has priority over a particular aspect of reality; for example, that on a small speck of the universe—our earth—there is suffering. But since the contradiction exists, I choose to bracket it in my mind.

Not everything must be settled before I become a believer.

To bracket a problem does not mean to run away from it. Time itself often clarifies things that one does not understand today.

No individual grasps the whole Christian creed at once. We know in part, but the part we know becomes greater and greater with time.

I had many difficulties with the problem of suffering, but I did not allow these to trouble my heart. To have a troubled heart is a sin. A believer is called such because he does not know all things and has to walk by faith. Max Planck, founder of the quantum theory, said: “Religion and natural science both need faith in God. For the one God comes at the beginning, for the other at the end of all thinking.”

Believing regardless of the problem of suffering, I one day received the following enlightenment:

There are two kinds of love: “love because of” the good and beautiful in a person, and “love in spite” of all that this person does to puzzle and hurt us. Obviously, “love in spite of” is superior. It is the most exquisite jewel to be found in the universe. God loves us in spite of our sins. Jesus loved His torturers in spite of what they did to Him.

We can love God not only because of the splendid things that enchant us in the universe, but also in spite of the sufferings we encounter. Without pain in this world, the highest form of love could not exist. This love is worth its price.

I have no motive to renounce God because of suffering.

It is said that the end does not justify the means. What else could justify means if not a beautiful purpose? The emergence of the highest form of love justifies the much suffering.

The *Zohar*, a book of Jewish mystics, says: “The right way of loving one’s master is expressed in the traditional teaching which says ‘even if he deprives you of your life.’ This is then perfect love…. Suffering emerged in order that there might be this perfect love.”

Sorrow apprehended like this is the choice food of sanctity and the medicine of sin. It is the brightener of dull views.

Without God, life is a big question mark; there is no answer to any question. Without God, life is like a bird driven by the wind, or like a deep sea, alternately tempestuous and calm, mysterious, unsearched. Without God, life is like a toy that gives a little bit of joy when first used but then is put in a corner, where it gathers dust, abandoned, unnoticed. Without God, life is but a cloud that floats from one destiny to another until it dissolves and disappears, leaving behind no record of its existence.

Only *with* God does life really become life.

Therefore, seek God. St. Bernard says, “God is never sought in vain, even when we do not find Him.”

There is one argument for faith that we cannot escape.

In December 1981, there was a trial in the U.S. to decide whether creationism, as well as Darwinism, should be taught in public schools as scientific doctrine.

Chandra Wickramasinghe, astrophysicist from Cardiff University in Wales, was a key witness against Darwinism. He declared that his friend, the renowned British astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle, and him now believe there exists a life-creating God. They claim His existence can be proved mathematically with the probability of 1-followed-by-40,000-zeroes to one.

They deny the play and interplay of natural laws alone can explain the appearance and development of the universe.

Give an untutored little child parts of a watch or a machine. In a hundred times the age of the earth, it will not be able to make a watch walk. Neither can blind chance form the long amino-acid chains, on which life depends.

There must be an intelligent design behind life. Natural selection can explain mutations within a species, but, says Hoyle, it cannot explain the appearance of a Mozart, a Shakespeare, a Gauss, or—I would add—the great religious geniuses.

Spill peas on the floor at random, and they will not form beautiful patterns. But look at macrophotographs of snowflakes and they are

exquisite beyond belief. The snow falls in millions upon millions of these hexagonally determined flakes. Someone intelligent arranged for us to have splendid embroideries such as no woman could make and no two snowflakes of the same design.

We call the intelligent Being behind the snowflake, behind all creation, *God*.

Actually, to know God must be easier than to know nature, because, as Pope John Paul II said: “Man though belonging to the visible world, to nature, is in some way differentiated from this nature itself…. He differs more from the world of nature than he resembles it…. Man resembles God more than nature…. The biblical narrative does not speak of his likeness to the rest of the creatures, but only to God.”

* * *

Many people refuse to believe in God because they would also have to believe in the Bible, the veracity of which they doubt or question. Worse, it would mean belief in the church and in a clergy for whom they have no respect.

Now, whatever might be the truth about the Bible, the church or the clergy, it still will be a lesser truth than what is primary: the existence or non-existence of God.

As often as a lesser truth is united with a greater one and thereby put on the same level, the greater truth dies in the miscellaneous. It is as wrong to identify belief in God with belief in a corrupt clergy as it would be to identify atheism with the crimes committed by communists in its service. There are also decent, peace-loving atheists.

Is it always best to call to the bar of judgment all the consequences of a truth one has deduced?

Let us remain with the original question regarding ultimate truth and not worry about what is considered to follow from its acceptance.

The environment in which one lives might not be conducive to belief in God, or it might be considered indecent in certain circles not to believe. Environment, then, should not count. The first great advance of ethics was the importance given to truthfulness. We progress morally not so much through increasing in goodness as through renouncing fraud, trickery and deceit.

In India, society is divided into castes. The highest religious instruction is reserved only to the Brahmins.

An *Upanishad*, a religious writing of Hinduism, tells the story of a young man who presented himself to a Brahmin asking to be admitted as a disciple. The master began by inquiring if he were from authentic Brahmin descent. The youngster confessed he was the son of a servant maid and his father was unknown. The master said, “Only a Brahmin can be so sincere,” and accepted him.

Seek the truth and only the truth in this one matter: Is there a God?

* * *

But don’t we have much more important matters to think about?

Some people consider Buddha one of the greatest teachers of mankind. (I personally do not think so. One statement of his, I believe, disqualifies him totally for his distinction. Just listen to it: “Wicked, Ananda, are women; jealous, Ananda, are women; envious, Ananda, are women; stupid, Ananda, are women.” However, this does not keep women from bowing before Buddha’s statue. Some even spend their whole lives in renunciation in a Buddhist convent.) He taught that the spirit should be engaged only in what has immediate practical utility for salvation. According to him, it is wrong to desire a knowledge of the world, nature or the teachings of masters.

When a disciple asked why Buddha kept silent about many things, he answered with a parable:

> “A man pierced by a poison dart does not wait, before tending his wound, to find out if the one who hit him was a *Brahmin*, a *vaisya* or a *Sudra*; he does not try to learn his name or the name of his family; he does not worry if the man was tall or short or of medium height, or what his bow looked like. If he did so, he would die of his wound. He can be saved only by entrusting himself to the physician called by his parents and friends.”

The fallacy of this thinking is obvious. There are many aspects of the parable that would not bear investigation.

First of all, a poison dart wound is rare. But beyond the details of the moment are other considerations. The would-be killer and the wounded

were both cared for as children. They had to eat, sleep, dress, grow up. They produced tools for work, as well as weapons like the bow. They had to decide either to kill or to be passive, with the possibility of being killed. The physician had to study and parents had to love in order to be helpful in the tragic occurrence. All these aspects are important in considering the story.

To understand life well, we cannot forego the philosophical questions: What is life? How does it come about? What is its purpose? Does it have an author? If so, what was his design in creating it? And so on and on.

This is how human reason can come to a knowledge of God. And once we know Him, everything apart from Him is pain. A dart wound pales in significance.

In the Bible, God is likened to a burning fire. Fire alters whatever it touches. Likewise, entering into a relationship with God changes a person markedly.

A peace that passes all understanding and all misunderstand- ing encompasses the heart. What can trouble us? Why would we be bothered about things that do not concern the great God who enflames our soul?

God is love. You and I are His love, His spouse. But we are His spouses in a foreign, polygamous marriage. He loves me and ardently loves many others; and I love these others because of the many joys they give to the One who is the center of my life.

* * *

The purpose of Christian preaching or writing is not to express objectively intellectual ideas and prove them. In this respect the sermons of Paul, Peter, Stephen, Moses and others, as well as the biblical writings, are of limited value.

The saints of old spoke not only to convince the mind, but also to stir the emotions and passions of the heart.

In the matter of salvation, we want people not only to know about the way, but also to enter into it. When we impart knowledge only, we should be aware that it puffs up.

All concepts about Deity formed by the human mind are imperfect. Who God is really cannot be put into words. His knowledge cannot be

communicated through human speech. Any feeble attempt can only be a challenge to men to taste God for themselves.

Through words a self can be made to grasp knowledge. But Jesus says that whoever desires to follow Him should deny or forsake his self.

True knowledge of God is possible only for those who already "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:4-7). Such persons do not see any truth because in that realm reality is no longer divided between the observer and the truth observed. Intimacy has taken place. The individual has become one with God through Jesus Christ. "I in them, and You in Me," as Jesus says (John 17:23a).

True preachers do not explain truth to a gathering of selves divided from each other and separated from God. Such men are ready only for the ABCs of faith, for spiritual milk. True preachers are men who have denied their own selves and who show by their example what it means to be united in harmony with God.

For the unregenerated soul, God will always remain incomprehensible and unthinkable. He cannot be reasoned about.

If one asks much about God and another answers him much, chances are neither knows much about God.

Truth cannot be had or seen or known. It can only be. It must be lived.

It is written in Hui-neng's Tan-ching:

> There is nothing true anywhere,
> The true is nowhere to be seen;
> If you say you see the true,
> This seeing is not the true one.

The truth is that there is one reality that becomes distorted as soon as it is divided into the seer and the seen. It can only be subsumed under the assertion of Jesus, "I AM the truth" (John 14:6). Truth must comprehend the whole. There cannot be the truth plus my mind. My mind is part of the whole that truth embraces.

Any arguing goes against the intent of truth because truth comprehends all the arguing parties.

Jesus said, "I am the truth." We have distorted this by saying, "*He* is the truth." But Jesus did not say "He." He said, "I am the truth." Jesus is the

truth only if He can live in me as my "I," instead of an exterior Being I only know *about* (Galatians 2:20).

This is the mystery hidden in the biblical expression Ani- Hu, which means "I am He." Isaiah 48:12 in Hebrew is written, *Ani hu Mishon of ani acharon* (A me, which is He—me is the first—and a me, which is only me, is the last). This is also found in Isaiah 44:6.

Religion must contest everything that is not God, that He may be all. So often doxologies are dozologies, lullabies. It should not be so. Our whole life should be a real doxology, a praise to God who is our all in all (Colossians 3:16,17).

The truth is eternally serene. There is no questioning it.

Seek the supreme fruit—living out the truth. Otherwise, your life will be a gathering of leaves and branches.

* * *

The one who knows God never wills anything except what God puts on his table. The righteous man has no will of his own, because he surrenders it to the One he loves.

If his adversary conquers, he wills this triumph of his enemy. Pascal wrote: "The same mover who determines our action determines that someone oppose us. Since it is not our spirit which fights the foreign powers, but that one and the same spirit does the good and permits the evil, the peace of our soul cannot be destroyed."

Truth is above and beyond the battlefield. My adversary is sent by God, too. Therefore, I need not let my temperature rise, not even for false doctrines invading the church. "For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you" wrote the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 11:19). This is also God's will. Heresies can serve a good purpose. In the long run, they make manifest who is approved by God.

Men usually pray God will be on their side. This is wrong. Our prayer to Him should always be, "Thy will be done."

During the American Civil War, one of President Lincoln's men said to him, "I hope God is on our side."

Lincoln said that was not his worry. "It is always my concern," he rejoined, "not that God should be on my side, but that I should always be on

God’s side.”

* * *

A person who is good to everyone except his parents is not moral. Neither is the person who is nice in society but naughty with God.

A girl once thanked her mother for the food.

Mother said: “I only prepared it. But I bought the meat from the butcher and the bread from the baker. Thank them, too.”

So the girl thanked the baker, who said: “I only baked the bread, but I had the flour from the miller. Thank him.”

The miller said: “I only ground the wheat I got from the farmer. Thank him.”

The farmer said, “It is true I worked, but I owe everything to the rain and sunshine.”

The girl asked finally, “Whom must I thank then?”

The farmer invited her into his house for a meal and, before eating, gave thanks to God. Then the girl understood.

Acknowledge God as your Father. If you find this difficult, call Him Father until He becomes one for you.

Many years ago, a pale, thin girl, hunchbacked and poorly dressed, entered my office. “Are you Pastor Wurmbrand?”

“Yes.”

“I come from a hospital. Christians who visited me there told me about you. I don’t have anywhere to go. Father has died. Mother is an alcoholic and brings home men who beat me. Henceforth you will be my father.”

There was no choice. I became her father.

Proceed in the same manner with God.

And when you have Him as a Father, be confident. The Zulus call God *Unkulukulu*, meaning “the Bigger than the Biggest.” You can rely on Him.

Today it is a simple fact of science that life exists in more than three dimensions. In God, you will have discovered a new dimension, unknown to you before now. He will fill you with joy.

* * *

The Talmud tells of a king who asked a rabbi to show him God so that he could believe in Him. The rabbi promised to fulfill the king’s desires.

“First, look at the sun,” he said.

Because of its brightness the king could not. He would have been blinded.

“Well,” said the rabbi, “if you cannot bear to look at the sun, one of His small creations, how can you possibly bear to see God?”

In Romania, an ignorant Christian farmer was arraigned in court for his faith. The judge said, “I will free you if you can tell me who came before God.”

The farmer responded, “Can you tell me what figure comes before one?”

“One is the first figure. Before one is nothing.”

“Just so, there is nothing before God.”

* * *

I know all I have written above is not unchallengeable. You can find logical and factual flaws in my assertions.

I am reminded of an anecdote. A doctor of linguistics fell onto a well. A passerby heard him call for help and, bending over the wall of the well, asked what had happened. Sizing up the situation, he said, “I bringing quick a ladder and a ropes.”

The professor protested: “‘Bringing’ is the participle. You need the future indicative ‘I will bring,’ not ‘I bringing.’ You also cannot say ‘a ropes’; only ‘a rope’ is correct.”

The man replied, “I see you having times for jokes. You having times for grammatics. You not being in danger.” He left, and the professor perished in the well.

Your business is not to find fault with my writing, but to accept my message and come to know the greatest joy: God.

Since God is the First Cause of everything, He must encompass all perfection. No effect can be greater than its cause. Therefore, God must have perfect knowledge, love, freedom, will, personality, omnipresence, omniscience, almightiness.

All these characteristics He puts at your service.

* * *

Do not be concerned to come to Him with all your insufficiency, all your weakness.

Once while Niccoló Paganini, the renowned violinist, was giving a concert, the A-string of his violin broke. Shortly after, the D-string snapped, then finally the G-string.

Genius that he was, he continued to play on the E-string alone, which was of silver and could not break. “Only one string remains,” he shouted, “one string plus a Paganini.” The concert entered history.

On your harp many strings may be broken. Play the song of faith on what remains. And if there is not even one string left, drum your love to Him on the wood of the harp.

* * *

The distance between God and us, the knower and the known, the seer and the seen, must be bridged in order to establish unity with Him. We should be conscious of the fact that we are not meant to be external to God, but rather that “He is not far from each one of us; for IN HIM we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:27b,28a, emphasis added).

God is the principle of love, from whom all beings have birth, in whom they live, and to whom they return when they die. We must know Him. The Hindu Upanishads correctly teach that we all have the same origin. We were created to be of one heart and one soul, and through Jesus this is possible (Ephesians 2:14-22). The soul of the creation is one. The first disciples of Jesus realized this: “They were all of one accord” (Acts 2:1).

The dissension that soon arose in the primitive church showed that oneness of soul is only half the truth. There is simultaneously unity and plurality, as there is one moon but many reflections of it in the water.

Many sparks come from a burning fire. Though they are of one essence, each is different, with a different trajectory.

A man kidnapped from his own country, blindfolded, and released in a foreign land would make it his first business to seek a way to return to his fatherland. So must be our search for God.

When we find Him, the glory belongs only to Him. It is all His doing.

Adam and Eve wished to become like God by an act of their will. For this they lost Paradise. Jesus chose men who were unlettered, poor, lower class and not influential to be His apostles. Among them were cowards,

social climbers, quarrelers, doubters, a crook, a Canaanite. Not one of them understood Him. He chose a thief as His treasurer. Such a gathering could not possibly succeed. But ultimately it did; and because they were "nobodies," the glory went to God, not to them.

Abandon yourself into His hands, and you will be His.

Free will in this domain is an illusion. But since we live in an illusory world, exercise it.

The Talmud tells of a prince who had gone astray in a very far land. The king called him back.

He replied: "I am too far away. I cannot reach my homeland."

The king sent him word: "You return as far as you can. I will come the rest of the way to meet you."

* * *

When I was in a communist jail, a very young Christian named Gafencu died near me after prolonged and severe suffering. He had been put in jail at the age of 18 before he had known anything of the joys of life.

Before dying, he asked to be washed and shaved, saying, "Only one step, and I'll be with many beautiful girls in heaven."

Is this not primitive thinking? The American Indians believed they went to the happy hunting ground after death; the ancient Teutons believed in Valhalla, a place of splendid battles. Was Gafencu any different from them in his naïve expectations?

Suppose there is eternal life: Is it similar to life here? What will we be like after resurrection?

Well, those who are resurrected will not be of a different order from those who go to the grave, and yet they are not the same. I am not the same as the embryo I once was, but I am not a different creature either. Each moment I live I am not another, but neither am I the same as I was a minute before.

The apostle Paul assures us, "Then I shall know just as I also am known"—though "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 13:12 and 15:53).

We can safely leave the matter in God's hands. Whatever He has planned will be so magnificent as to dwarf anything our feeble minds can imagine. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have en- tered into the heart

of man the things which God has prepared for those that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Best of all, God Himself will be there.

About Jesus

The Indian philosopher Ramakrishna long ago said: "Do you seek God? Then seek Him in man. God shows Himself in man more than in any other object. Truly, God is in all things, but shows His power in these sometimes more and sometimes less. God incarnate in men is God's most powerful expression in the flesh. Man is God's greatest revelation."

Man was created in God's image (Genesis 1:26); therefore, one can see God's image not only in saints, but also in hypocrites and criminals because today's criminal might hide tomorrow's saint. Thus, in a sense one can see God in every man.

But Jesus became the perfect man. In Him one can see God best.

Even doubters concede Jesus was a good man. We believe He is God. Consider the following argument of Italian priest Girolamo Savonarola:

> "Either the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Christians adore, is the true God and First Universal Cause, or He is not the true God. If we agree to the first hypothesis, all discussion is finished, because then the Christian doctrine and faith are true; if, on the contrary, we hold to the second hypothesis, it follows that Jesus of Nazareth was a man the most proud, the most criminal, since being a man and mortal He wished to pass for a God, and to be so adored by all; so consequently He was a liar, or else it would follow He must have been a fool to undertake such and so great a work. For what could be more mad, more contrary to reason, more ridiculous, than the attempt of a man, who pretends to raise himself to the Divine Majesty, with no other help than abjection and misery—no other weapon than an uncultivated speech—no other hope than an infamous death?
>
> "What an idea! To wish to deprive God of His adorers, and to establish a new form of belief amongst men, the powerful, the wise, as well as the simple and ignorant. To wish to reverse all other religions, to give a new career to the world, to change everything, and to cause Himself to be worshipped as a God by a subjugated humanity. To wish this not only during His lifetime, but to wish it to continue after His

death—after an ignominious death! To promise to Himself adoration and love, to exact from man, as a testimony, the most invincible attachment, a love even to death, and, if necessary, death in the most terrible torments! What an idea, we say, if such a one were no God!

"Whoever you may be, I put you this question. If a mortal promised to do everything—if he had conceived such an idea, and began with you first, what would you say? Would you not suspect such a person to be foolish? Would you not simply laugh at such follies? If, then, Jesus of Nazareth is not God, how is it that, without any help, this sacrilegious seducer has prevailed against the laws of his country, against princes, against wise men, against the whole universe in opposition to Him, against the powers of heaven and hell, in fine, against God Himself, even so far as to make Himself equal to God, to receive honors due only to the Divinity, and to fulfill with an infinite success, in spite of difficulties and contradictions generated by long centuries, all the prophecies."

Under conditions of poverty and oppression, He lived a life of perfect goodness and love. He went from place to place working great miracles.

Evil men disliked Him and crucified Him at the age of 33 on a hill just outside Jerusalem called Golgotha, which means "place of a skull" in Aramaic. One could conclude that the skull is not the right place for ultimate truth; the best place is a loving heart. Here God desires to make His throne. Thus, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21b).

Do not just analyze Jesus' life; analysis leads to paralysis. Rather, enthrone Him in your heart, and entrust yourself to Him. He who died, was resurrected on the third day and ascended bodily to heaven is spiritually present on Earth even now. You can become His habitation.

* * *

I have not attempted to record the details of His life because the best source of information is the Gospels, about which Albert Einstein once wrote: "No man can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word.

"I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene…. Jesus is too colossal for the pen of the phrasemongers,

however artful."

Read the Gospels, but do not assume that, having read them, you know His life.

One day my 6-year-old granddaughter came to me with the request, "Tell me everything about Jesus." After a moment's thoughtfulness, she added: "But you can't. You don't know everything. Not even God knows everything. The life of Jesus is not finished yet."

About His first 30 years of life, we know next to nothing; about what followed, just a few episodes. Let these suffice. The little we know is enough to make us acknowledge that He is indeed the Son of God, our Savior and Best Friend. Without knowing more, we embrace Him. Eternity may suffice to allow us to become better acquainted.

Do not expect to know Him fully before falling in love with Him. But let me tell you a few things about Jesus.

* * *

One day Edward Burne-Jones, one of Britain's best-known art- ists, went to his daughter's home for tea. His little granddaughter Angela was allowed to come to the tea table, but she was naughty and was told by her mother to stand in a corner with her face to the wall. She wept very much.

The next day the artist painted in that same corner a beautiful mural in the event the grandchild was punished again.

That is what God does with us. He cannot teach us without sometimes inflicting punishment, but He has given us a beautiful painting to look upon while we are chastened. We can contemplate the few episodes of Jesus' life, which are sufficient to compensate.

* * *

Jesus both taught and lived the truth. More than that, He was the truth, its incarnation. But He was not only truth.

He said about Himself, "I am the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6). Truth might be lord, but Jesus is Lord of lords. If we bow to truth alone, we might find ourselves plumbing the limits of atomic science, which can provide means for the destruction of mankind. Neither should we go to the extremes of truth in everyday life. A sense of balance is essential. But it is more important to focus on the Source of truth and embrace Him.

Jesus is the only teacher of truth who knows the exact measure of your need each day.

In the Bible, there is a very ugly story about Reuben lying with his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22). In the Hebrew text, the story is interrupted in the very middle. Much worse things might have happened, but the divinely inspired author felt no obligation to give all the details.

In the Hebrew scroll of the law, there is a big blank space in the midst of the story to show that it is not necessary to report all the evil a man has committed. Some things should be left untold.

Therefore, it is wise to say only the minimum of evil that is absolutely necessary, to refrain from sharing all the details. In this sense, Jesus is not only the truth, but also the life.

He does not merely represent abstract, impersonal principles. He is humane; sometimes love makes this to understate, at other times to the contrary, it states as accomplished fact what has not yet happened.

In the parable of the wicked vinedressers, He compares the chief priests to men who were so wicked as to say, "This is the heir [the Messiah]. Come, let us kill Him…" (Matthew 21:38).

This climax of wickedness was so hidden in the recesses of their hearts that even their own conscience had no access to it.

But Jesus penetrates beyond what people know about themselves to the inner core of their personality that contains the springs of action. Truth alone is insufficient and tends to be superficial. And so Jesus is both truth and life.

A father and his son were walking in a garden in springtime when the display of beauty was at its best.

"What is gravity, father?" the child asked.

The father answered, "It is a principle, by which everything is drawn to the earth."

The child insisted, "How is it, then, that the tulips go upward?"

The father said: "That is because in them there is another law at work: the law of life, which is stronger than the law of gravity. The law of life has freed tulips from gravity as long as they live. If you destroy their life, they will fall down immediately."

Jesus embodies the law of life that liberates us from the tendency to slide downward into the depths of sin and despair.

* * *

Legend says that Baruch, who had been the prophet Jeremiah's amanuensis in prison, showed himself to Jesus at the age of 12 and told Him: "All the prophets before you allowed themselves to be seduced. Be careful not to be corrupted."

Jesus did not need to be warned. Like us, He could be tempted, but He would not sin because He did not have the propensity to sin, the inclination to indulge His own selfish desires. He did not have the urge to live for Himself and enjoy pleasure at any price; for Him all temptations were merely external.

Therefore, He offers Himself as truth at its purest and life at its finest. Beyond Him there is nothing. Without Him we are nothing.

* * *

Because Jesus is Lord of all and Judge of all the earth, He knows the desires of the heart and can weigh intentions as well as actions. He knows "the pit from which we were dug" (Isaiah 51:1)—our heritage, our parentage, our upbringing, our genetic predispositions, our longings to be better than we really are. He can accept the weak as well as the strong, the cup of cold water as well as the mighty deed.

He came, as He Himself claimed, not to judge but to heal, not to condemn but to bring life.

His desire for us is that we treat others accordingly as He set forth in the Golden Rule: Do to others what you wish they should do to you. Also, put up with the irreparable.

Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr said it so well in what we call "The Serenity Prayer": "O God, grant us the serenity to accept what cannot be changed; the courage to change what can be changed; and wisdom to know one from the other."

* * *

Jesus fraternized with publicans, or tax collectors as we would call them.

They were called publicans because they gathered the publicum, which was the Roman name for state revenues. It was customary for them to abuse

the power entrusted to their hands. They were commonly stationed at frontiers, at city gates, on rivers or on havens for the purpose of collecting customs on the wares brought into the country. They were despised because of their rudeness, fraud, vexations and oppression.

The Jewish publicans were additionally hated by their countrymen because they were considered traitors to the cause of the nation and to God. They were accused of siding with the Romans—their oppressors and natural enemies—for the sake of filthy lucre. The fact that they collected tribute for a heathen treasury constantly served to remind the people of God of their subservience to a foreign yoke.

According to Jewish law, no alms could be received from the money chest of these publicans. It was not even lawful to change money there. Furthermore, their testimony was not admissible in a court of justice. Among the Jews, who classified them with sinners, publicans had only one friend—Jesus.

Whoever you may be and whatever you may have done, Jesus is ready to fraternize with you, too.

* * *

It is interesting to note that when people chose someone to intercede with Jesus, they picked His enemies, knowing that He would not refuse them. On one occasion the Jewish elders were sent by a Roman centurion to plead for the healing of a valued servant. Their argument was that he had built the Jews a synagogue, an institution from which Jesus was expelled (Luke 7:2,3). But the argument was decisive because Jesus granted the request. He almost seemed to have a preferential love for His avowed enemies.

If you have been an enemy of Jesus all your life, do not hesitate to come to Him. You will be received with open arms.

Jesus never coerces. Once He healed a man unable to speak, but He never required from the man to say only what He pleased. There were no conditions. The man was free afterwards to say whatever he liked, even against the One who restored to him his power of speech.

* * *

Shortly before His death, a woman anointed Jesus with costly perfume. If she had consulted Him beforehand, He might have reacted like the disciples and told her not to spend so much money. But she did not ask; she acted.

Thus, Jesus asks His disciples, “Why do you chide [present tense] the woman for something she has done [past tense]?” What is irretrievable should never be cause for pain or quarrel. Jesus does not trouble us over past sins and offenses if we come to Him. Rather, He longs to cover them with His love (1 Peter 4:8). His judgment centers on one’s character today, on what can be remedied.

* * *

Jesus understood that the power of religion does not lie in success but in defeat and weakness. The Russian author Alexander Zinoviev asks an insightful question: “Can we imagine Christ appearing on television and giving an interview to dozens of journalists?”

Rather, He preferred to die on a cross for the sins of men in order to erase them completely in His blood.

Luther wrote: “The sins of the whole world are not where they are perceived and felt, because for theology there is no sin and no death in the world. For philosophy and reason, sins are nowhere but in the world…. The true teaching is that there exists no sin in the world because Christ has defeated sin in His body.”

Jesus took all the sins of the world upon Himself, including yours. Dying on the cross, He bore the punishment we deserved that we who believe in Him might be forgiven all our iniquities.

* * *

A dove flew quickly to Moses and begged: “Save me! An eagle is pursuing me.”

So Moses hid the dove under his garment.

Then the eagle flew down and said to Moses: “I am a creature of God just like the dove, and I am hungry. I also need to feed my little ones. God planned that smaller birds would be my food. You are unrighteous in taking my prey away from me.”

Moses answered that he could in no case give him the dove, but that he could give him flesh from his thigh equal to the weight of a dove.

"Stop!" said the eagle. "I am the archangel Michael. The dove is the angel Gabriel. We only wished to test the goodness of your heart."

This is only a fable, but it tells the story of Adam's fall. By right of conquest, the devil was entitled to full control over our sinful souls. As a result of the Fall, we deserved to be his prey. But Jesus bore all the torment that is due us. He, the innocent, suffered for us, the guilty. Thus, we are free. God's will for us has been fulfilled.

We in turn are intended to be self-sacrificing in the service of men, even of evil men.

Here we see one of the many truths entrusted by Jesus to His church. For the edification of our childish minds, He often expressed them in parables like the one above.

* * *

When Jesus appeared before Pilate, His judge, He was silent because it was His purpose to die. He knew that by defending Himself He might escape, but He came to this earth not only to live, but also to die. It was His Father's will and His desire.

As He hung on the cross, His adversaries mocked Him, challenging Him to come down and save Himself. Though He had legions of angels at His command, the miracle was that He remained on the cross.

He had not hesitated to enjoy the happiness of a wedding, when it was His Father's pleasure. Neither did He shrink at suffering when it was His Father's will. He bore joy and sorrow with equanimity.

Those who shouted, "If you are the Son of God, descend from the cross!" did not know the sanctity of quiet endurance or the saving efficacy of Jesus' crucifixion. Even His friends were unaware of the significance of His suffering, or they would have pleaded with Him, "Because you are the Son of God, remain on the cross!"

Bloody, exposed, thorncrowned, haggard, thirsty, spiked to a rude symbol of shame, He willingly endured all the punishment for our sins. For my sins. And while some might have lost faith gazing at the cross, on which the Best, the Holiest, died, I came to faith through recognizing that God's own Son was so totally good as to die for my sins.

The Bible tells us about God's chosen people, the Jews, who for a long period of time were badly used as slaves in Egypt. But when God decided to deliver them, He announced that all the firstborn of the Egyptians would die in one night. To avoid a similar fate, the Jews were warned to smear the entrance of their houses with blood from a lamb. God said, by way of explanation, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13).

"When I see the blood." It was not the character of the inhabitants of each house that God looked at in making His decision. Rather, it was the blood of the lamb.

So it is in our relationship with Jesus. We are saved not because we are good, but because Jesus shed His blood for us and we claim that for our protection.

* * *

Jesus, having offered us salvation, then ministers to us by giving us perfect peace.

Charles Spurgeon, the renowned English preacher of the 19th century, said:

> "Yesterday while walking through a field I saw a thorn bush with an animal walking around it. As I drew near, I saw that a bird had made its nest in this bush. Sitting quietly among the thorns, it did not allow itself to be disturbed. Then I thought to tell you today, 'Make your nests among the thorns that crown the head of Jesus Christ, and you won't have to fear any enemy.'"

* * *

An old man with a heavy sack on his shoulders ascended a mountain with great difficulty. A car pulled up, and the driver invited him to get inside. The old man did so but kept his heavy sack on his shoulders. When the driver asked him why, he answered: "It was kind enough of you to take me in your car. Why should I burden you with the sack, too?"

We have this same foolish attitude when we enter Christ's church and hang onto the burden of our sins. Jesus paid the price for all our sins. Just

give them to Him. Then you need not worry about them any more.

* * *

It is said that a page at the Russian Imperial Court had many debts. Once, while on duty in the emperor's bedroom, he wrote out all his debts and below them the question, "Who will pay all this?" Then, although he was on duty, he fell asleep.

The emperor awoke during the night, came into the anteroom, and found the page asleep. Seeing the paper, he wrote below the question his own name—"The Czar Nicholas."

This is the answer Jesus also gives when we ask ourselves who will solve all our problems and pay all our debts. When we pray, "Forgive us our debts," He affixes His signature: "The Emperor Jesus Christ."

Our Emperor.

* * *

Jesus' grace cannot be measured. Spurgeon was once very sad wondering if there was enough grace for him to be saved from his many sins. Then all at once he began to laugh. When asked why, he said, "I saw a little herring swimming in the ocean asking himself if there were enough water in the ocean for him."

Who can exhaust the grace of God? Our sins are great, but the Savior is greater. The Bible contains a comforting little promise: "If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart" (1 John 3:20).

We can trust Him.

* * *

St. Bernard said, "Where have the infirm firm security and safe rest but in the wounds of the Savior? The world frowns, the body presses, the devil lays snares. I fall not, because I am founded on a firm rock. I have sinned a grievous sin. Conscience is troubled, but it shall not be overwhelmed, for I will remember the wounds of the Lord."

He concludes: "My merit therefore is the compassion of the Lord. Plainly I am not devoid of merit as long as He is not devoid of commiseration. But if the mercies of the Lord are many, equally many are

my merits. Shall I sing of my own righteousness? O Lord, I will make mention of Thy righteousness alone. That righteousness is mine also, being made by God."

"Man's whole merit," he adds, "is to place his whole hope in Him who makes the whole man safe."

* * *

A pastor once visited a poor woman in her kitchen. In the yard he could see the laundry she had washed. He complimented her: "How white your shirts are! You really washed them well."

Then while they were drinking tea, it began to snow. He looked out again, and the laundry seemed gray by comparison with the snow.

The woman was moved to comment, "What can compare to the whiteness of God?"

Jesus gives sinners this divine whiteness.

* * *

I know there are many who would gladly run errands for the Master, but we do not know Him or His errands very well. A true teacher will tell you that His first desire for us is that we not run but just sit quietly and accept His great gift free (Romans 6:23).

We are so used to the world of giving and getting, of paying for all merchandise, that the concept of a free gift is almost foreign to our minds. At the very least we expect gratitude in exchange for our gifts, a smile, perhaps a future friendship. But Jesus gives freely, knowing from bitter experience that He will not receive gratitude.

"For He is kind to the unthankful and evil" (Luke 6:35b). He knew those to whom He did good, for whom He performed miracles, would one day shout: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" He gives because He is pure love, and He is most appreciative when someone accepts His free gifts.

It is said that a rich man decided to impart his wealth to whoever wished to take it. So he took his possessions and exchanged them for gold coins, put them in a basket, then stood on a bridge over the river Thames and invited all who passed by to help themselves.

A great crowd gathered. Some said, "Surely he mocks us. They must be counterfeit coins."

Others said, “It must be a joke.”

Still others said, “It must be a promotion for a movie.”

Nobody came to receive the coins until a child made the breakthrough. He simply went and helped himself.

Jesus told us to become like little children. He desires to impart to us no less a gift than His own divinity, and with it all of life and truth.

You may say, “This is too much,” or, “This can only be taken symbolically,” or, “This must have a hidden meaning.” All these responses show that you have not yet become a child. If you are like a child, you will simply come and receive what He lovingly offers without asking for anything in return.

Jesus called a little child to Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:2,3). Church history tells us that the child was Ignatius, who later became Bishop of Antioch and was martyred.

Ignatius was martyred under the persecuting Roman Emperor Trajan. As Ignatius was led away from the Senate to the pit of the lions, he frequently mentioned the name of Jesus as he talked with the other believers. When he was asked why he mentioned His name, he answered, “My dear Jesus, my Savior, is so deeply written on my heart, that I feel confident, that if my heart were to be cut open and chopped to pieces, the name of Jesus would be found written on every piece” (Van Braght, T. J., *Martyrs Mirror*, 1660, pp. 106-107).

If history is accurate, this was a happy case. Many children whom Jesus might have hugged and embraced forgot about Him later. Others might even have turned against Him.

Because He is God, Jesus knew ahead of time how people would treat His gifts. But He continued to give to everyone, regardless.

Pope Alexander VI, the worst pope the church has ever had, and Mao Tse-Tung, the greatest mass murderer of all time, both received gifts from Him, along with the saints whom they persecuted. He has a gift for everyone, including you.

Many Christians torment their conscience because they do not serve Him well or do not know how to serve Him. It would be better for them first to enter into quietness and allow Him to serve them.

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Matthew 20:28).

* * *

Jesus tells in one of His parables about a lost sheep that was found. The shepherd does not punish it or even harshly drive it back to the fold but lays it upon his shoulders and carefully carries it. Jesus is this Good Shepherd.

The first Christians often painted on their sacred vessels the figure of the Lord as the Good Shepherd in the act of bringing home His stray sheep. He appears in this character in bas-reliefs on sarcophagi and in paintings in the catacombs of Rome.

In His parables Jesus speaks not only about saving a sheep that has gone astray and calls attention to itself by bleating, but also about finding a lost coin, a senseless metal unaware of its condition and unable to assist in its own recovery. Such are the lost who are totally unconscious of their state, the sick who count themselves whole and those who are indifferent about the matter of their spiritual health.

* * *

The blood of Jesus has power to cleanse from all unrighteousness, all sin.

In the book of Hebrews, the author wrote that it was impossible to renew to repentance those who had fallen away after new birth (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Until the third century, the church believed these words applied only to grave sins—whoredom, idolatry when there was no duress and murder.

The church did not consider these sins unforgivable at the last judgment but believed that for educative reasons, they should not be forgiven on Earth. Therefore, those guilty of such sins were permanently expelled from church. They were asked to repent but with no hope of being received back into the church in this world.

It was Pope St. Calixtus in the early third century who first declared, “I forgive the sins of adultery and whoredom to those who return.” At that time it was a revolutionary declaration. The attitude of the church until the third century was not based on Scripture.

The writer of Hebrews did not mean to exclude from forgiveness falling into sin, but falling from faith.

We are told in the New Testament about a man who was involved in whoredom to the point of living with the wife of his father; nevertheless, he was forgiven after due penitence. The church is not a society of perfect saints but of candidates to sainthood. Every fall into sin is reparable; falling from faith is not.

Falling into sin is like losing the adornments of grace that beautify character. In autumn, when assailed by frost and wind, a tree sheds its leaves and reveals its bare skeleton. So men ensnared in temptation find themselves stripped of self-respect and open to the gaze of their fellows. But after the winter of their shame comes the spring, and a man has the opportunity to regain what he has lost.

It is surely preferable to be like the pine tree, which does not lose its needles in winter but is ever green. So are those who keep their faith and keep it in temptation, too. But just as there are in nature more than pine trees, so God's church includes not only the steadfast, but also those weaker brethren who sometimes fall into sin.

The Lord says to the angel of the church at Ephesus, "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works…" (Revelation 2:5a). So a fallen man and even a fallen church can repent. The possibility of repentance exists so long as the goodness of God exists (Romans 2:4).

The writer of Hebrews adds that those fallen in sin "crucify again for themselves the Son of God" (Hebrews 6:6). The verb "to crucify" is in the present tense, implying a constant and deliberate attitude of sin, which is underscored by the word "again."

Obviously, no one can repent while crucifying the Lord. But he can repent after he has crucified Him. These words of condemna- tion do not apply to past but rather to present sins. The right translation would perhaps be that it is impossible to renew men to repentance *while* they crucify the Son of God again, or "afresh" as used in other translations.

It is possible to do so afterwards.

David, after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged to have her husband killed, was able to hope even though the law of God offered him no hope. Acknowledging his sin with deep repentance, he begged for restoration to the God he so loved. Today, we have Psalm 51, his

song of repentance, as a memorial to the relationship that was breached and then healed.

So we, too, can be saved in spite of any Bible verses that might discourage us.

Jesus' blood is all-powerful.

* * *

There is a faith that asks nothing but the privilege of adoration. It is a faith that shines through love and says to Jesus, as did Peter in a moment of illumination, "Depart from me" (Luke 5:8), or, with the believing Roman centurion, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself" (Luke 7:6).

A simple girl without education was loved by a man who had great prospects for success. She knew she would encumber his career and so did everything she possibly could to discourage her lover, though her heart went out to him. She pushed him to marry a girl more suitable to his future.

Jesus once said to His disciples, "It is to your advantage that I go away…" (John 16:7). He knows we might feel more at ease without His visible presence, and so He withdraws discreetly. He never forces Himself on anyone. And if we say to Him, "Don't trouble Yourself," He will communicate with us in some other way.

To those who belong to Him, He speaks during the night and then in the morning draws a veil over what He has spoken. They know He spoke, but they cannot say what.

Everyone has heard of psychoanalysis, which deals with the conscious, the unconscious and the subconscious; but no one has developed the technique of spirit analysis to deal with superconscious, the spiritual layers of thought. If these could be probed, one would discover many teachings of Jesus engraved in the heart, of which the individual is not aware.

After conversion, when a person commits his life to God, the old ego shows itself in many ways: self-assertiveness or selfcomplacency in service, self-pity in suffering, self-seeking in desiring the praise of men, self-judgment in hours of trial, selfdefensiveness when injured, self-consciousness in dealings with others.

But in time Jesus transforms the individual, so that he does not retain the character he once had. Self is replaced with the life of Jesus, as the

apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me…” (Galatians 2:20).

* * *

If you wish to seek Jesus, the whole power of the will must be mobilized.

John Bradford, a Protestant martyr during persecution in Britain, once said: “I have proposed to myself never to finish a spiritual exercise before having really had fellowship with Christ; when I pray until I truly pray to God. When I sing to Him, I sing until I really sing to Him. I always seek until I find.”

Kant said there is nothing really good except good will. To what extent our good wishes for our character can be fulfilled, however, does not depend upon us. We all have good qualities and defects. Jesus alone is “altogether lovely” (Song of Solomon 5:16). He has nothing to hide.

The good news is that, in spite of all our defects, Jesus accepts us when we choose to seek Him. Our good will He validates as goodness. And then when we find Him, we become extremely important. In a sense we become more important than Jesus Himself, as He indicated in these words: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will also do; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to My Father” (John 14:12).

Just as congregations are more attentive to sermons than to the reading of the Word, so people are more attentive to Christians they see than to the unseen Christ.

* * *

Where can one find Jesus?

A physician’s son was asked, “Is your father at home?”

“No,” he replied.

“Then where can I find him?”

“He is surely somewhere doing good.”

A good physician’s son can be sure that wherever his father is, he is ministering to those in need.

Christians may not be able to tell you the exact place where you can find Jesus because, as in the past, He goes from city to city and village to

village teaching, healing and comforting.

Look for Him in the houses where darkness, sadness and sickness dwell. You will not have to wander far seeking Him.

* * *

A king of the Scythian people had his son executed for committing a crime. Then he ordered the sword used to behead him be hung over his throne when he judged. Wherever he went, an officer walked before him with this sword in his hand that all might know, “If the king for the good of the law did not spare his own son, even less will he be inclined to spare others.”

God did not spare His own Son when He was charged with the sins of man. The cross is a symbol of the harsh judgment for sin.

Therefore, shun sin.

Michelangelo, when asked what method he used for sculpting his statue of Moses, replied: “It’s quite simple. You just take a chunk of marble and chip away everything that does not look like Moses.”

In our relationship with Christ, we start out as blocks of unshaped marble, but we have the potential for becoming splendid human beings through chipping away all that is not Christ-like.

But we have to be careful. To imitate Christ does not mean to copy Him. Rather, He lives in us, as the sap in the vine lives in its branches.

Every Christian thus has a new life to live, with all its implications, as truly as He lived His earthly life. This is harder than leading a life that is modeled on Christ’s. Actors who can play Romeo for three hours would not think of dying for their own beloved girlfriend.

With this in mind, learn from Jesus! Looking at Him, you will come to know God.

But look at Jesus, not at portraits of Him drawn by men.

Only Leonardo da Vinci’s contemporaries could see his famous mural *The Last Supper* as he painted it. Within 60 years it had so deteriorated that nothing was visible but a dazzling mass of blots. Since that time, it endured foreign and civil wars, a bombardment, good and bad restoration attempts, and the breath of hundreds of thousands of tourists.

Christianity has had many reformers. And da Vinci’s painting also had restorers. Both groups have not always been kind to their respective

masterpieces.

Therefore, transpose yourself in spirit to the time of Jesus, since events and recollections about events are two different things. Even the narratives of the Gospels do not tell the whole story of what really happened. Relive the events themselves.

Jesus is everywhere to be seen. To find Him, one need not attend a church or a monastery or an art gallery. And so instead of dwelling on the images of Him conceived by others, look on His wonderful face, concentrate on His loving features, meditate on His matchless character, walk with Him in the streets of service and blessing.

Looking to Jesus, the problem of pain will cease to be an obstacle to believing in God. Through the divinity of Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, suffering has gained wondrous dignity. Suffering is really suffering only if you hate it. Only our contrary desires make sorrow to be sorrow. If you have longed for it like Jesus, if you consider it a high privilege, it ceases to trouble you.

In so doing you will see God.

The existence of God will be obvious to you. You will wonder how you could doubt until now.

Feuerbach said, “Men created God in His likeness, not the inverse.” He was surely wrong. If man would have created God, it would have been a god who agrees with their lusts and passions, a god who would give an eternal heaven even to the wicked. The god invented by us would give us no commandments restraining us from what we like most and would not prepare a hell for transgressors.

God as proclaimed by the Bible and by Jesus is so totally otherwise than what men fancy that He could not be a product of our imagination. He is because He is, not because we invented Him.

Seeing God, you will love Him.

Loving Him, you will also love those who deny Him as He does. If only they would know how much they are beloved!

The renowned Jewish Austrian philosopher Martin Buber wrote:

> “There was once a man who loved God and left the world of creation and went to the great Void. There he wandered until he reached the door of the mystery. He knocked. From within came a voice. ‘What do you want here?’ ‘I have,’ he said, ‘proclaimed your

> praises to the ears of mortals, but they were deaf to me, so I have come to you so that you yourself can hear me and reply to me.' 'Turn back,' cried the voice from within, 'there is no ear for you here. I have drowned my hearing in the deafness of the mortals.'"

When listening to the atheists' denials of God after you have found Him, they will give you profound meaning.

Jesus brought the greatest sacrifice not through renouncing His life. He gave more than that. He renounced His innocence. He took the sins of all mankind upon Himself. The Bible says, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21). He became for us what He hated most. The only comparison that could be made is with French or Dutch patriots, members of the Resistance movements during the Nazi occupation, who became collaborators of the Nazi Police, whom they hated, in order to help those persecuted by them.

In the heart of the atheist, Jesus renounces to even more. He keeps silent about His presence, yea, about His existence. He identified with sinners of many kinds. He identifies also with those who commit the sin of God-denial and God-hating. In those who do not wish to listen to His call, he keeps silent and weeps. He gives up reproving those who cannot bear a reproof.

This will be your attitude toward atheists, too. We will just love them quietly, in silence. They have in us friends. They can do nothing to us that can ever quench our love for them. Thus, our love will be the best proof of God's existence.

Resources

The Voice of the Martyrs has many books, videos, brochures, and other products to help you learn more about the persecuted church. In the U.S., to request a resource catalog, order materials, or receive our free monthly newsletter, call (800) 747-0085 or write to:

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About the Author

Pastor Richard Wurmbrand (1909–2001) was an evangelical minister who endured fourteen years of Communist imprisonment and torture in his homeland of Romania. Few names are better known in Romania, where he is one of the most widely recognized Christian leaders, authors, and educators.

In 1945, when the Communists seized Romania and attempted to control the churches for their purposes, Richard Wurmbrand immediately began an effective, vigorous “underground” ministry to his enslaved people as well as the invading Russian soldiers. He was arrested in 1948, along with his wife, Sabina. His wife was a slave-laborer for three years on the Danube Canal. Richard Wurmbrand spent three years in solitary confinement, seeing no one but his Communist torturers. He was then transferred to a group cell, where the torture continued for five more years.

Due to his international stature as a Christian leader, diplomats of foreign embassies asked the Communist government about his safety and

were informed that he had fled Romania. Secret police, posing as released fellow-prisoners, told his wife of attending his burial in the prison cemetery. His family in Romania and his friends abroad were told to forget him because he was dead.

After eight-and-a-half years in prison, he was released and immediately resumed his work with the Underground Church. A couple of years later, in 1959, he was re-arrested and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison. Pastor Wurmbrand was released in a general amnesty in 1964, and again continued his underground ministry. Realizing the great danger of a third imprisonment, Christians in Norway negotiated with the Communist authorities for his release from Romania. The Communist government had begun "selling" their political prisoners. The "going price" for a prisoner was $1,900; the price for Wurmbrand was $10,000.

In May 1966, he testified before the U.S. Senate's Internal Security Subcommittee and stripped to the waist to show the scars of eighteen deep torture wounds covering his torso. His story was carried across the world in newspapers throughout the U.S., Europe, and Asia. Wurmbrand was warned in September 1966 that the Communist regime of Romania planned to assassinate him; yet he was not silent in the face of this death threat.

Founder of the Christian mission The Voice of the Martyrs, he and his wife traveled throughout the world establishing a network of over thirty offices that provide relief to the families of imprisoned Christians in Islamic nations, Communist Vietnam, China, and other countries where Christians are persecuted for their faith. His message has been, "Hate the evil systems, but love your persecutors. Love their souls, and try to win them for Christ."

Pastor Wurmbrand authored numerous books, which have been translated into over sixty languages. Geoffrey Hanks included a chapter on Richard Wurmbrand in his book 70 Great Christians Changing the World, counting him among the seventy greatest Christians our world has known. Christian leaders have called him the "Voice of the Underground Church" and "the Iron Curtain Paul."

THE BOOK THAT LAUNCHED THE MINISTRY

Tortured for Christ

Months of solitary confinement, years of periodic physical torture, constant suffering from hunger and cold, the anguish of brainwashing and mental cruelty — these are the experiences of a Romanian pastor during his fourteen years in Communist prisons.

Richard Wurmbrand's crime, like that of thousands of others, was his fervent belief in Jesus Christ and his public witness concerning that faith.

Meeting in homes, in basements, and in woods — sometime daring to preach in public on street corners — these faithful souls persisted in their Christian witness knowing full well the ultimate cost of their actions.

This is their story — a classic account of courage, tenacious faith, and unbelievable endurance. This history of the Underground Church reflects the continuing struggle in many parts of the world today.

Read the book that launched the ministry of The Voice of the Martyrs in the founder's own words.

UNFORGETTABLE TRUE STORIES

Extreme Devotion

Are you up for a challenge? Read 365 true accounts of men and women who totally sold out for Christ. See if it isn't unlike any other devotional you've ever read.

Serious followers of Jesus pay a price, and extreme followers often pay the ultimate price. The Voice of the Martyrs, coauthors of the bestseller Jesus Freaks, brings you a daily devotional filled with stories of courage, commitment, confession, and compassion — a price demanded; a price paid.

In an age of extremes, you can find faith, strength, encouragement, and hope through the stories of fellow believers from all over the world, from centuries past up to the present. These men and women, both young and old, went to the outer limits of human devotion.

Each story is true. Each story is unforgettable. Each story is extreme. Each story will change your life.

Take the challenge today and see for yourself.

Footnotes

1. “Karl Marx Quotes” from http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/k/karl_marx.html. Accessed on April 4, 2007. [return]

2. “Beliefs: Theological” from http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=Topic&TopicID=5. Accessed on April 4, 2007. [return]

3. “Americans Are Most Likely to Base Truth on Feelings” from http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=106. Accessed on April 4, 2007. [return]

4. “Rights of Non-Muslims in an Islamic State” by Samuel Shahid. http://answeringislam.org/NonMuslims/rights.htm. Accessed on April 4, 2007. [return]

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