

The Question of God

A building is no stronger than its foundation. All the different parts of a building will be affected by the foundation upon which the building sits.

What a foundation is to a building, the question "Does God exist?" is to life. Our belief or disbelief in God forms a foundation for our thinking which colors or interprets all of our thoughts about life.

Therefore, the most profound question anyone can ask is the question "Does God exist?" The reason this question is so significant is that the answer given to it will affect all the answers to all our other questions about life.

For example, let us say that a man answers this question by saying, "No, God does not exist." Then, as this man answers the question "How shall I live in this world?" he will conclude, "I may live any way I choose. After all, I am not a created being, and I am not accountable to any higher power. The only obligation I have is to support the happiness and productivity of fellow human beings in a reasonable way.

Beyond this, what I do with my life is up to me. Since I will not live again beyond death, I must squeeze from life all the living I can."

Now, let us say that a man answers the question "Does God exist?" by saying, "Yes, He does exist." He will have an altogether different answer to the question "How shall I live in this world?" In response to this question, he may say, "I have been created by an Almighty Being. He clearly had a purpose for my existence, and I must discover that purpose. Only by finding His will and living by it can I find the peace and purpose that my Creator intended for my life. I know that someday He will call me into account for the way I have lived in His world."

Let us consider the question "Does God exist?" very carefully. Are there compelling reasons for believing that God exists? The Bible does not begin with an argument about the existence of God. It actually begins with an affirmation about God: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Scattered throughout the Bible, however, are rational evidences for the existence of God. Some are given directly, and some are given indirectly; some are expressly stated, and others are implied. Let us summarize several of them by considering two. If you will think deeply about these two reasons, they will lead you to believe confidently that God really does exist.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE WORLD

The first evidence that compels us to believe that God really does exist is that given by the world around us and above us. The earth and the universe eloquently proclaim the existence of God.

We live on a planet which we call Earth. It is part of a solar system which revolves around the sun. This solar system has unquestioned order and design. All the planets stay in their orbits and never run into each other. They encircle the sun at the right speed and at the right distance. The earth's relation to the sun creates day, night, and seasons. It is always at a proper distance from the sun. If we were any further away from the sun, we would freeze; if we were any closer, we would fry.

Scientists tell us that numerous other solar systems beyond ours exist in space. We do not even know for sure the dimensions of the universe. Our telescopes cannot take us to its edge; our minds cannot comprehend its width. Although there is much we do not know about the universe, one thing about it we know for certain—it is a universe characterized by order and design. It is not haphazard and chaotic; it is unified and organized.

The existence of the universe demands that we draw one of two conclusions about it: Either it was created or it just happened. If one argues that the universe just happened, he must either conclude that the universe just happened from nothing or that it resulted from some kind of cosmic explosion from already existing matter. Of the two major conclusions, the only reasonable one is that the universe was created. How could we believe with integrity that the universe came from nothing? How could we believe with rationality that the universe resulted from a cosmic explosion and that matter is the only thing that has always been?

Suppose a man came to me with a book in his hand. He gave the book to me and asked me to look

at it. I began to examine it. I noticed the book had on the front cover "Cruden's Complete Concordance." I also noticed that it had "Zondervan" printed in the place for the publisher. As I thumbed through the pages, I observed that it contained all the different names, places, and phrases of the King James Version of the Bible listed in alphabetical order, with the different references of their appearance in the Bible listed underneath them. On the cover of the book, it was stated that over 200,000 references were listed in the book. I might say to the man, "I believe I will contact the publishing company and see if I can acquire a copy of this book."

The man then said, "You cannot buy a copy of this book. This book was neither published by Zondervan nor compiled by Alexander Cruden. The book just happened. We found it in its completed state. It came into existence from nothing." I would say to him, "Are you telling me that all these listings of the names, places, and phrases of the King James Version of the Bible were not compiled by someone? Are you telling me that these over 200,000 references came into existence from nothing? Are you saying that this book was not composed, printed, and bound?"

If the man should reply, "Yes, that is what I am saying," I then would say, "I know that you are mistaken. I respect you as a human being, but my ability to reason will not allow me to accept your conclusion concerning the origin of this book. I can say without any fear of being disproven that this book did not just happen." I can be confident about my answer to this man because my ability to reason will not allow me to draw any other conclusion concerning the origin of the book.

Suppose another man came to me and handed me an electric razor. The man said to me, "I want you to look at this razor. An electrical cord may be plugged into the bottom of it, and through the use of electrical energy you can turn on this razor and shave your face. It will remove the whiskers from your face without cutting your skin. Inside the bottom part of the razor is a battery. While the razor is plugged into an electrical outlet, electric energy is stored in this battery for future use. Then, when you are away from an electrical outlet, you may turn on the razor, and it will run without being plugged into an electrical outlet. It can be used at home and also while you are traveling." I might say to the man, "This would be a most helpful appliance. I do travel often, and an appliance like this would be very useful to me. I believe I will see if I can purchase a razor similar to this one."

Imagine that the man said to me, "Oh, no. This razor cannot be bought. It was not created. It just happened. Not too far from here was a factory which contained all types of materials—plastics, metals, wood, etc. An explosion occurred in that building. These materials were thrown up into the air. While in the air, parts of these materials somehow came together, and after a while they developed into this appliance. Amidst the rubble and debris of the devastated building, we found this razor. It was not designed or manufactured; it resulted from this explosion." I would say to this man, "Are you asking me to believe that this razor was not designed, engineered, and carefully put together? Are you affirming that this razor resulted from chaotic chance, not intelligence?" If the man still insisted that the razor

resulted from an explosion, I would say to him, "You must be mistaken regarding the razor. I cannot conceive of a razor coming into existence in this way." I would be absolutely positive about my response to this man. My ability to reason will not permit me to draw any other conclusion.

The conclusion which we have drawn with confidence regarding the book and the electric razor is a conclusion which we must draw with even more confidence about the universe. No amount of scientific rhetoric and terminology can make us believe that the universe came from nothing or resulted from an explosion. The universe is far more highly engineered and designed than a book or an electric razor. If we cannot believe that a book just happened or that an electric razor resulted from an explosion, how can we believe that the universe came from nothing or resulted from an explosion of mindless matter? All who have studied the universe in any detail have come away from such a study with the realization that the universe is a marvel of complex design and precision.

What we have concluded by reason, the Bible affirms. Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." In other words, if we should sit down upon the ground on a clear night and look up into the starry sky, we will find ourselves in a wonderful worship service. The preacher will be the darkened sky with its myriad of stars. We will be the congregation. The auditorium will be the grass upon which we are sitting. The preacher will declare silently but eloquently that the stars did not just happen but were created. The starry sky will proclaim

the glory of God. As we leave this worship service, we will say, "The message I heard by this preacher has to be right. My reason will not allow me to accept any other message."

Paul, one of the writers of the New Testament, wrote, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). The visible, tangible things of the universe prove the existence of the unseen, invisible hand of God. They tell of His Almighty power and His supernatural character. We learn of the existence of God through general revelation—the world around us and the world above us. Paul also said, "And yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). The world of our planet and the world of the universe witness to the existence of God.

In a popular children's story, Robinson Crusoe was shipwrecked on a deserted island. When he washed ashore from the shipwreck, he immediately looked around for other survivors. None were to be found. He alone had survived the wreck. He searched throughout the island for other human beings but found none. He concluded that he was all alone on the island. He made for himself a type of house out of branches and logs. He lived on the wild fruit which grew on the island. He trapped and killed wild animals for meat and clothing. One day as he walked across the seashore, he saw in the soft sand the footprints of another human being. He immediately knew

that one of three conclusions would be true: Maybe someone had made those footprints and left. Perhaps the one who had made those footprints had died, and Crusoe would find him dead on the island. Maybe the one who had made those footprints was still alive on the island. The truth that someone other than himself had been on that island made his heart skip with joy. The footprints proved it. He could be absolutely certain about it. He searched throughout the island, and eventually, on one Friday, he found the native that had made the footprints. He named him Friday after the day on which he found him.

We are much like the storybook character Robinson Crusoe. We have before us the footprints of the earth, the stars, the sun, and the moon. These prints were made by an Almighty Being. Crusoe would have been foolish to have looked at those footprints and concluded that they had come from nothing. Even so, we would be unwise to ignore reason and to conclude that the earth and the universe have just happened, that they have come from nothing.

The world around us and the world above us point to only one conclusion: An Almighty God is behind this physical earth and the physical universe which is beyond it. We can be confident about this, just as confident as we are that a book cannot just happen from nothing and an electric razor cannot result from an explosion.

THE EVIDENCE OF MAN

Second, we can believe with confidence that God really does exist because of the evidence which comes to us through the existence of man. The existence of

man proclaims the existence of God.

Man is a far greater marvel than the physical universe. Think of his intellectual powers. He can reason, believe, love, dream, plan, and design. There are people who speak three and four languages fluently. Scientists tell us that one cell in a person's brain is more complex than the finest computer we can now build.

Think of man's spiritual nature. Man has always been a worshipping being. The most primitive of tribes of people look up in worship to some higher power. Man has within him a sense of "ought." He has a moral consciousness within him. Sometimes this consciousness is not very refined, but it is always present.

Think of man's physical body. You can spend a lifetime studying any part of the human body and never exhaust the research which could be done.

Think of life itself. We cannot create it, and we cannot revive it when it dies. We cannot fully explain it, and we cannot totally control it. The marvel of man declares the existence of his Maker.

Suppose we are in a classroom listening to a distinguished professor lecture about the origin of life. Skipping over the scientific terminology and explanations he uses, he says, in essence, "In the beginning a little cell of some kind existed, and it had some kind of life form in it. It multiplied, grew, and developed. A type of sea creature emerged. It multiplied, grew, and developed. A type of land creature emerged. It multiplied, grew, and developed. Finally, with the passing of millions of years, the creatures known as human beings evolved."

As we listen to the professor, we are confronted

with three problems which his theory does not solve. He skips over these problems as if they are insignificant and unworthy of mentioning, but his treatment of these problems makes it impossible and unreasonable to accept his theory. The first problem is explaining the origin of life. His theory assumes that life came from nothing. Any person would find it impossible to believe that a book came from nothing and that an electric razor resulted from an explosion, and life is far more complex than a book or a razor. Man can create a book and a razor, but he cannot create life. Yet the professor would ask us to believe that life came from nothing.

The second problem is explaining the existence of natural law. The professor's theory assumes that natural law came from nothing. Our world is governed by natural laws. If you do not eat or take food into your body in some way, you will die. You cannot ignore or evade this law. No one is excused from it. If you do not sleep, your body will collapse in exhaustion. You cannot break this natural law. Neither can you overcome the natural law of death. The death rate of human beings is 100 per cent. There are no exceptions. The professor implies by his theory that natural law just happened.

The third problem is the explanation for the existence of the family. The human race is made up of families. We cannot find a time in recorded human history when the family did not exist. The professor would have us believe that man evolved into maturity at the very time that woman evolved into maturity. They just happened to find companionship enjoyable and so man and woman have continued to build family relationships throughout recorded

history. Man is different from woman, and woman is different from man; yet they are alike in compatibility and companionship. The professor says they emerged into maturity at the same time and this resulted in the family. In other words, he argues that the family came from nothing—that it is only an accidental happening.

Our minds will not allow us to conceive that life came from nothing, that natural law came from nothing, and that the human family came from nothing. The only rational way that the existence of man can be explained is with the understanding that an Almighty Being created him and placed him upon this earth for a special reason.

What we have concluded by reason, the Bible clearly declares. In the first chapter of the Bible, we are told, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness . . .'" (Genesis 1:26). Human life came from divine life, according to the Bible. We are further told, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Genesis 1:27, 28). God gave human beings a spiritual nature, a likeness to Himself. He created the family, making humans male and female. God created the natural laws that would govern all earth life.

Reason demands that we admit that human life was created by an Almighty hand and for a divine reason. Without hesitation, we can say, "For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my moth-

er's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well" (Psalm 139:13, 14).

A missionary once said, "I have been in several countries of the world, and I have had a similar experience in every country. For example, when children are taught that two plus two equals four, they always respond in the same way. They think about it and then conclude that this is right. Something in their minds reaches out to that concept and accepts it as truth. Likewise, when people in all these different countries are taught that God created the earth, the universe, and man, they think about it and then conclude that this concept has to be right. Something in their minds reaches out to that teaching and accepts it as truth. I have received this response in every nation and country where I have gone."

If you will think about the existence of man—his life, his intelligence, his spiritual nature, his moral consciousness, and his physical body—you will surely conclude that he could not have just happened, but was created by an Almighty Being. You can be confident that God really does exist. The existence of man proves it.

CONCLUSION

Think deeply about these two evidences we have considered—the evidence of the world and the evidence of man. The conclusion which they demand is so certain and undeniable that the Bible says, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1).

It is also reasonable to believe that the God who

made us will call us one day into judgment and will require an accounting of how we have lived. This is the very reason God sent Jesus into the world and has given us the Bible. He wanted us to know why we are here and what is expected of us. Jesus said, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day" (John 12:48).

The most amazing truth which Jesus and the Bible reveal to us is that God wants to adopt us as His children. The One who made the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, and the entire universe seeks my fellowship in His eternal family! He has invited me into His family through the gospel of His Son. As I obey this gospel by faith in Jesus, repentance of sin, confession of Jesus, and baptism into Christ's body, I am adopted into His spiritual family (Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:6). According to the Scriptures, you can know not only that God really does exist but also that you are really His child!

STUDY QUESTIONS

(answers on page 259)

1. What is the most profound question anyone can ask?
2. Why is the question "Does God exist?" so profound?
3. What does the Bible begin with?
4. What is the first evidence that compels us to believe in God?
5. What three problems confront anyone who leaves God out of his explanation for the existence of man?

CREATOR OR CHANCE?

Dr. A. Cressy Morrison, former president of the New York State Academy of Science, said:

The evidence is strongly suggestive of this directive purpose back of everything. . . . We have found that the world is in the right place, that the crust is adjusted to within ten feet, and that if the ocean were a few feet deeper we would have no oxygen or vegetation. We have found that the earth rotates in twenty-four hours and that were this revolution delayed, life would be impossible. If the speed of the earth around the sun were increased or decreased materially, this history of life, if any, would be entirely different. We find that the sun is the one among thousands which could make our sort of life possible on earth, its size, density, temperature and the character of its rays all must be right, and are right. We find that the gases of the atmosphere are adjusted to each other and that a very slight change would be fatal. . . .

Considering the bulk of the earth, its place in space and the nicety of the adjustments, the chances of some of these adjustments occurring is in the order of one to a million, and the chances of all of them occurring cannot be calculated. . . . The existence of these facts cannot, therefore, be reconciled with any of the laws of chance. . . . A review of the wonders of nature demonstrates beyond question that there are design and purpose in it all. A program is being carried out in all its infinite detail by the Supreme Being we call God.

A. Cressy Morrison, *Man Does Not Stand Alone* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1944), 94, 95; quoted in Batsell Barrett Baxter, *I Believe Because . . .* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1971), 66.