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Chapter 2

The Search for God

Our holy mother, the Church, holds and teaches that God, the first principle and last end of all things, can be known with certainty from the created world by the natural light of human reason. — *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 36

“Chemistry is important; God is more important.” This is the inscription that a visitor slowly pondered as he read the words appearing on the Mohammedan University in Cairo. We can recall those words now and quote them with a certain amount of envy, indeed with a measure of fond hope that they may become a reality in our modern thinking.

Yes, chemistry is needed, and modern science, industry, health and pleasure all have their places and are necessary. But above all God is needed. It is with this subject, God, that we are going to begin.

A person who says that God does not exist is in the same category as a youngster who denies that he had a grandfather simply because he never saw him.

Why is it that an atheist shows such animosity toward religion and God? Animosity must be directed either against an illusion or against a reality. If it is directed against a figment of a person's imagination, the situation would lead us to question that person's mental balance. If there is no God, why does the atheist show such hostility? Does anyone still vehemently oppose Cicero or Hannibal or Napoleon? All were hated when they lived, but hatred for them died with them. Hate ceases when the thing hated ceases. Why then the animosity toward God and religion by atheists? If their opposition is directed toward something which does not exist, they are bereft of reason. The other conclusion is that the target of their hostility does exist.

We can clearly show by our own unaided reason that God does indeed exist. In our daily life we accept without question the fact that our human reason is trustworthy. To deny the reliability of our reason would be to deny the findings of modern science which are our pride and boast. Therefore, if a number of people looking for the answer to a problem all come to essentially the same conclusion, we would be inclined to agree with that answer.

The Evidence from History

It is a fact that people at all times and in all countries have believed in the existence of God. True, there have been individuals who doubted it, but these are rare exceptions which prove the rule. Every race and tribe, civilized and uncivilized, whether in connection with the rest of the world or isolated in a remote area, profess belief in some sort of god.

From ancient times to the present day all races have believed in a deity. At the very dawn of civilization along the Nile, primitive peoples worshiped a supreme being, leaving behind them evidence of their faith that is studied by the scholar in his library and examined by the visitor to modern museums. The Greeks called their supreme god Zeus; among the Romans Jupiter was the supreme deity; and so it goes down to our own day, all races believing in some sort of supreme deity. No race has yet been found that did not believe in some supreme being, some entity greater than themselves.

Perhaps one may object: "Travelers *have* reported tribes without any belief or religion." Yes, but *scientific investigation* has definitely proved the contrary. As recently as June 1971, for example, a primitive tribe was discovered in the Philippines that believed in a god called Diwata, whom their ancestors had told them would someday come to help the tribe.

In brief, a belief in God has existed among all races, in all times and places, and exists, too, universally among all peoples today. A belief so universal that it cannot be attributed to any one nation, that is present among tribes which have no contact with the rest of the world, cannot be due to chance. If we accept human reason as trustworthy, we must recognize the fact of the existence of God.

God the Uncaused Cause

We can verify the existence of God in another way, by using the principle that there must be a cause for everything that exists. The fact that we see an egg on the breakfast table is a sign that a chicken exists or did exist; when we see a computer, we know that a person with intelligence designed it. The philosophic principle is as simple as that. We can find in the world nothing that is the cause of itself. Everything we observe in the world was caused by something. If we see a book, we know it did not just happen; it was made out of paper and ink; but the paper was made of pulp from wood, which in turn came from trees; the trees grew through the light of the sun. And so we must go back.

In everything we can observe in the world there is a long line of causes, each dependent on a higher one before it. Search as we may, no evidence can be found to contradict this assertion. We cannot go back through a line of causes indefinitely. The only conclusion we can reach is that at the beginning of the line there is an Uncaused Cause.

If there were ever a moment at which nothing existed, nothing could ever exist. Nowhere in the world can we find a thing that was not caused. We believe that nothing can proceed from nothing in the natural world, but when it comes to God's creation, some proclaim, "This is an exception." Yet they do not prove the exception, they merely deny the fact. They do not believe because they do not want to believe.

Each one of us, for instance, was caused by his or her parents; they in turn by their parents. It does not solve the problem to become vague by going to the distant past. Some have summed up the problem vaguely with such an assertion as this: "The first living being came from lower beings." Then we must ask where these came from. A being cannot cause itself. Perhaps one may say that the sun is responsible for life. Where then does the sun get the power to give life? You cannot give money to a person in need if you simply have no money.

The idea, too, that life just sprang up in the beginning and developed in the course of ages is scientifically unsound, and we might add that Pasteur through his scientific findings proved the impossibility of spontaneous generation many years ago. We must look for another answer. Blind chance is ruled out by all reputable scientists. We are back to one solution: Life could have

been originally produced only by a Living Cause, which is merely another name for God.

It is not a question of time, nor does it help to add a few million years to the age of the world. Either the last thing in your series of causes was caused or it was not. If it were caused, then we must ask the same question of that thing. If it were not, it is an Uncaused Cause. Everything in the world is caused, but this cannot go *ad infinitum*; there must be an Uncaused Being at the beginning. This Being we call God.

Briefly: We observe in the world that everything that exists has a cause. A series of causes cannot go on indefinitely; it must have a beginning. Therefore, at the beginning there must be an Uncaused Cause. This Uncaused Cause we call God.

God the Intelligent Designer

There is a third way in which we can prove the existence of God.

Look at a clock. What a marvelous device it is! Does it not presuppose a clockmaker? Even if you had never seen a clock before, you would conclude immediately and definitely that someone made it. Observe the intricate mechanism with springs and wheels all working together—the minute hand traveling precisely sixty times faster than the hour hand; the second hand sixty times faster than the minute hand. You know that such a mechanism did not happen by chance, just several pieces of metal happening together to work in this way, any more than chance could explain the composition of a television, a computer, or a spaceship that can carry astronauts to the moon and back. Even a child would see the absurdity of such a statement. If you were to argue the point, people would think you insane.

If a person were to walk along the seashore and come across a word written in the sand, he would conclude that someone had been there. No one would say that such a thing happened by chance, that the wind and waves and sand just formed the word by accident. Obviously it was done by some person with intelligence. Upon seeing a beautiful picture, no one in his right mind would say that it came about by throwing several colors of paint on the wall. Anyone recognizes that a beautiful picture is the product of a person with intelligence, the result of a plan in someone's mind.

Every time we see an object with order or design, we immediately know there was an intelligent designer.

In the great Strasbourg Cathedral there was at one time a huge clock. It showed not only hours and minutes but seconds, days, months, and seasons of the year. In addition, its mechanism moved many small figures, so that the quarter-hours were heralded by a child striking a bell with a hammer; the half-hours by a youth; the three-quarter hours by a middle-aged man; the hours by an old man. Suppose a person were to say of this intricate mechanism: "There is nothing extraordinary about it; there is a pendulum which turns wheels, which in turn bring about movement of the dials."

No, a person viewing such a mechanical masterpiece instinctively exclaims, "What a clever engineer it took to produce this!"

The human body is a greater masterpiece than the clock in France. All parts of the body concur in a wonderful manner to bring about one complete effect. Look at the eye, for example. The act of seeing supposes each time the simultaneous presence of thirteen different conditions. Each of these presupposes many others. Did it all happen by chance? Scientists have calculated that, by the law of chance, without any designing cause, the odds are nearly a million to one that all the conditions would concur to make seeing possible. Why, in examining such things which give evidence of order and plan far beyond that found in any man-made mechanism, should we attribute it to chance? An Intelligent Planner is the only answer behind it all.

In the development of a child in the womb and the birth process, numerous conditions must be present, and major physiological changes must take place in order to bring forth a healthy baby. One of these involves the circulation of blood. In an adult heart, two completely separate circulatory systems keep pure and impure blood from mixing. This separation is not present in the heart of an unborn child, however. There is an opening in the wall of the fetal heart, protected by flaps of tissue, that allows blood to flow uninterrupted through the right auricle and left auricle. But at the time of birth—or shortly thereafter—the flaps close and seal the opening shut, thus preventing for a lifetime any mixing of pure and impure blood. This circulatory adjustment is absolutely essential if the baby is to survive. It must occur at the time of birth—and it almost always does. Any attempt to ascribe this remarkable adaptation to

chance raises more questions than it answers. Wise planning and intelligent design are the only sensible explanations.

God the Universe-Maker

In every aspect of our life, whenever we observe orderliness, we know that there was an intelligent planner. Consider the universe, arranged as it is in a marvelous order and design. The earth rotates on its axis once every twenty-four hours; it revolves around the sun once a year. The stars move in their orbits with a precision that far overshadows any chronometer made by human hands. The most accurate clock made by humans is not perfect, but falters and must be corrected by the clock of the stars.

As the clock implies an intelligent clockmaker, as the word written in the sand supposes a person with intelligence, as a picture supposes an artist, as the universe, so complex, vast and precise in its working, supposes a Being with greater power and intelligence; so also the intricate working of the human body cannot be attributed to chance, but supposes an Intelligent Being behind it. "Show me a watch without a watchmaker," said G. K. Chesterton, the famous English convert, "then I'll take a universe without a Universe-Maker."

In every part of the animate world we can observe things working out according to a finely detailed plan and order. We may consider just two examples. The bat, in order that its flimsy wings may not become too easily torn, has a gland near its nose containing an oil with which it can lubricate its wings. How does the bat know when it is necessary to oil its wings? Like the bird building its nest or the beaver its dam, the bat operates according to an intelligent plan.

As does the one spider, the *Argyroneta aquatica*, that builds its home underwater. This amazing insect spins an oval-shaped web just beneath the surface of the water, leaving an opening at the bottom for entrance and egress. Its specially designed hind legs enable it to carry an air bubble down into the water underneath the web. When the bubble is released it rises and displaces an equal amount of water. The spider continues this process until the web, which resembles a diving bell, is filled with air. Eggs are then laid in the upper part of this airtight and watertight bell and food is gathered and stored for the mother

and her soon-to-be-hatched progeny. Once this has been completed, the spider closes the opening and spends the winter in this safe and well-stocked home. Who taught the spider how to carry bubbles of air? What made the spider decide to live underwater in the first place? The only logical answer is that there is some Intelligent Designer behind it.

A visit to a planetarium will give a vivid picture of the universe with its innumerable stars and planets and their precise movements. There the technical skills of engineers and astronomers have depicted for us the order and precision of the heavenly bodies that we see at night. The images of the stars and planets are projected upon the ceiling. It is a wonderful work of skill and engineering genius.

Suppose a person, after seeing this, were to say, "This does not point to any designer; it just happened by chance—concrete, metal, wire, lights, all came together to form this." That statement is patently absurd. But is it any worse than saying that the universe, of which the planetarium is only a small picture, is the result of chance? If we are to be logical, we must say that not only is the planetarium the result of a designer, but that the world, which is a much greater masterpiece, is also the result of a Designer.

The Evidence from Astronauts

Strong testimony for the order and precision in the universe comes from America's space pioneers, those whose missions could never have been planned down to the minutest detail unless scientists and astronomers could be sure of the unchanging and exact conditions of the universe. For those who have rocketed through space, there is no doubt about the existence of an Intelligent Planner whom we call God. Astronaut Gordon Cooper, a veteran of two space flights, once commented:

In my opinion there is no rift between science and religion; the more one learns about scientific endeavors, the more one is convinced of the wonders of God's creation. The more one contemplates the complex workings of millions of planetary bodies, and the unknown immensity of space, the more one realizes what a fantastic miracle it all is. History bears this out. Today I see evidences that scientists are turning more and more to a belief in God; they have almost been forced to

recognize the Creator who made this magnificent, precise universe we live in.

At his general audience on July 17, 1985, Pope John Paul discussed the relationship between scientists and God. After noting that "there have been and still are today men of science who in the context of their human scientific experience have positively and beneficially believed in God," the Holy Father quoted from an address by Italian scientist Enrico Medi to the International Catechetical Congress of Rome in September 1971:

When I tell a young person: Look, there is a new star, a galaxy, a neutron star 100 million light-years away, yet the protons, electrons, neutrons, and mesons which are found there are identical with those which are found in this microphone. . . . Identity excludes probability. That which is identical is not probable. . . . Therefore there is a cause, outside of space, outside of time, the master of being, which made being to be in this way. And this is God. . . .

The being—I am speaking scientifically—which caused things to be identical at a distance of billions of light-years, exists. And the number of identical particles in the universe is ten raised to the 85th power. . . . Do we wish then to take in the song of the galaxies? If I were Francis of Assisi, I would say: O galaxies of the immense heavens, give praise to my Lord, for He is omnipotent and good. O atoms, O protons, O electrons, O bird-songs, O blowing of the leaves and of the air, in the hands of man as a prayer, sing out the hymn which returns to God!

The Theory of Evolution

But what of evolution—the theory regarding the growth and development of plants, animals, and human beings from earlier and more primitive organisms? Must one who accepts this theory reject the concept of God? Not at all. But it should be noted that while some scientists claim that there is sufficient evidence in support of evolution, others contend that much stronger and more credible proof is required to remove the issue from the realm of theory, especially as far as the evolution of humans from pre-existing and living matter is concerned. This skeptical view is shared by an increasing number of scientists.

One of the major problems faced by those who believe in evolution is the lack of hard scientific evidence to back up what is really a highly speculative theory. Oh, the authors of biology textbooks, artists, museum exhibitors, and producers of television specials can give the theory some apparent credibility, but still lacking is solid proof that natural selection and chance can produce new species and organisms.

There are huge gaps in the fossil record, that is, there are no transitional forms or "missing links" between species. The fossil record shows that species appear suddenly in a fully developed state and change little or not at all before becoming extinct. Despite a century of frenetic fossil-hunting, the fossil record is virtually the same as it was when Charles Darwin published *The Origin of the Species* in 1859.

If fossil studies cannot show changes from a fish to a reptile to a bird to a monkey, or find transitional links between these species, then Darwinism is an unproven theory. Paradoxes that cannot be adequately explained indicate that something is seriously wrong with the evolutionary hypothesis. Those who nevertheless rely on this highly questionable theory seem motivated by an attitude of "anything but God" to account for the present diversity and complexity of life.

They sound like the Red Queen in Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking Glass*:

Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said. "One can't believe impossible things." "I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age I did it for half an hour a day. Why sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

But even if all the questions about evolution are answered, and all the hypotheses are proved, no explanation will make sense unless room is left for the existence of a Creator who planned things this way and started everything in motion

At a general audience on April 16, 1986, Pope John Paul said that the theory of evolution is "only a probability, not a scientific certainty." He went on to say that "the doctrine of faith, however, invariably affirms that a human's spiritual soul is created directly by God. According to the hypothesis mentioned, it is possible that the human body, following the order

impressed by the Creator on the energies of life, could have been gradually prepared in the forms of antecedent living beings. But the human soul, on which man's humanity definitively depends, cannot emerge from matter because it is of a spiritual nature."

God, if he so chose, could have fashioned the universe through an evolutionary process. But whether he did it that way or by direct creation, he still must be acknowledged as its Maker. With this basic premise established, the Church positively encourages diligent investigation and study of the problem by scientists and scholars so that someday we may know with certainty the method that God used to bring human beings and the universe to their present state of development. The ultimate answer will involve no conflict between scientific and religious truth, for God is the Author of both.

It is said that a certain person expressed the opinion that there can be no God because, if God existed, he would write his name in the heavens for all to see. Apparently this person would have huge letters in the sky. In what language, so all could understand? Actually God has written his name in a universal language: the language of order, of law, of purpose, of design. We have but to open our eyes to see it.

In the words of the Irish poet Joseph Mary Plunkett:

I see His blood upon the rose
And in the stars the glory of His eyes,
His body gleams amid eternal snows,
His tears fall from the skies.

I see His face in every flower;
The thunder and the singing of the birds
Are but His voice—and carven by His Power,
Rocks are His written words.

All pathways by His feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.

No matter what way we turn, we are faced with the same conclusion—the world does have a Maker. No matter where we look in the world, we see perfect order and plan. The only conclusion is that there is a Planner.

To put it briefly: Wherever we see a thing in perfect order or acting according to plan, our common sense tells us that there is an intelligent planner behind it. All over the earth there are things working in perfect order. Therefore, these things demand some Intelligent Planner. This Intelligent Planner we call God.