

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

THE ARGUMENT IN POPULAR FORM

By Rev. R. P. Redmond, D. D.

WHY DO most people believe there is a God who made the world? The Book of Wisdom tells us that even the pagans should be able to know the Maker from His works. Let us put the argument in its simplest form. Imagine yourself on a desert island. Suddenly you come across a piece of old rusty machinery. At once you know that someone made this—some intelligence has been at work here.

Why are you so sure of this? Perhaps at first you can hardly say—it is too obvious to explain. If the question is pressed, you point out that the thing has clearly been designed. Look at those toothed wheels—look at the way this gadget fits into that. Each part is obviously constructed to do something; and each part fits into the next, so that all the parts work together as a single unit which has some special purpose. But that sort of arrangement is the mark of intelligent design, as clearly as if the maker had stamped a name on it. Someone made it for a purpose.

But now take a look at yourself looking at this piece of machinery. Isn't it clear that you are even more wonderfully constructed? Every little bit of you has a function, just as much as every gadget in the machine. And every part of your body fits in with the other parts, so that the whole thing works together as a unit to supply your needs. Can anyone deny that we ourselves—and the world around us too—show all the indications of intelligent construction? Someone made us: and the great Mind that designed the world we call God.

A certain young atheist (so the story runs) was friendly with a great astronomer. The astronomer had a beautiful model of the solar system. When you pressed a button the earth and the other planets swung round the central sun, and the moon round the earth. "That's marvellous," said the atheist when He saw the model, "who made that?" "No one," said the astronomer. "How do you mean, no one? It didn't just come by accident." "Why not?" was the reply. "You think the real thing just happened without anyone making it—why shouldn't the model just happen by accident?"

The point of the story is obvious: and that is the simple form of the argument for the existence of a Maker of the world. The ordinary man naturally accepts the reasoning, because it is straight commonsense. It is the sort of reasoning we accept in any other circumstances—there is no reason why it should not be valid in this one case.

Yet we are often told nowadays that the "scientific mind" does not accept the argument. So let us examine it in the light of cold reason, and see what is really behind it.

I. The Argument from Order in The World

The bare bones of the argument seem to be these: —Where there is design there must be a Designer—an intelligence which planned the design.

But in the world there are many examples of design.

Therefore the world had an intelligent Designer, whom we call God.

Let us examine these statements more closely.

Where there is design there must be a Designer. Here we must be careful. It could be argued that this begs the question. A design *means* something that has been designed: and if it has been designed, then of course it must have been designed *by someone*. But what you have to prove is that things in the world *are* really "intelligently designed "

This is in fact what we aim to prove: but we must avoid wording the argument so as to leave ourselves open to this charge of begging the question. Our opponents will say that if by "design" you imply a previously intended purpose, then physical things are not designed. Ordinary people use words like "purpose", "plan", "finality", when speaking about natural objects. All these words have an implication of intelligent purpose—but this is precisely what you have to prove. "The solar system is wonderfully planned", thinks the ordinary man. "No", says the scientist, "it is not *planned*—it simply is there and behaves in this way". "The bird has wings in order to fly," says the man in the street.

"No," says the scientist, "the bird flies because it happens to have wings."

In fact, a deep misunderstanding lies under this attitude. But we must take account of the scientific way of using words. We must not word our argument so that it seems open to such attacks, even if they are (as we believe) misdirected. So let us restate the argument, avoiding the use of such words as “design” or “plan” or “purpose” or “finality” in the preliminary stages. We will only introduce them when their use has been shown to be right.

Thus. *In the world there are many examples of order.*

But Order of this kind demands an Intelligence to produce it.

Therefore the world was made by an Intelligent Orderer.

We must now explain both these premises.

A. *In the world there are many examples of order.*

Everyone knows roughly what we mean by “Order”—some sort of recognizable symmetry or pattern, in contrast to confusion and chaos. Now, any number of examples of apparent order can be found in the physical world. We will not attempt to describe any of these in great detail—the main thing is to see the essentials clearly. We can draw our examples from three sources:

1. Life. Take something as humble as a common earthworm. It is composed of dozens of beautifully constructed segments, so that by “wriggling” the worm is able to move along. Under the microscope each segment is a miracle of orderly perfection, thousands of complex cells so adapted that each has its special function. And each function fits in with all the others, so that the total result is the worm’s ability to act as a single self-preserving unit.

What is true of the worm is true of all living things, great or small. The details can be found in any elementary Biology book. Two main impressions stand out from any study of life: the amazingly complicated arrangement of each small part: and the way each subordinate item fits in with all the other parts, so that the whole plant or animal is a single recognizable unity. Cells are grouped into tissues, tissues into organs, organs into systems: and the whole group of systems (skeletal, muscular, digestive, etc.) works, not haphazardly, but as a unit. The parts are subordinate to the functioning of the whole. This is the characteristic quality of life, that eye and ear, nerve, muscle and stomach are all coordinated with one another, and subordinated to the proper functioning of the whole. Those words “co-ordination” and “subordination” describe the living thing in terms of “Order” which is characteristic of life. In fact, for the biologist, the living thing is an *organism*, something “organized.”

2. The constitution of matter. At first sight rock or mud or lumps of mineral appear to be just haphazard lumps. But modern science has revealed the marvelously ordered pattern of what is sometimes called “dead matter”. Solids are built up of crystals, each one of its kind an identical pattern of atoms arranged, not higgledy-piggledy, but in an exact mathematical order. And the atom itself, which 19th century science looked on as the ultimate “lump” of matter, now turns out to be the first example of order. It is almost more an “arrangement” than a “thing”—a fixed pattern of forces, following fixed laws, which often can only be expressed mathematically. The orderly construction and behaviour of the atom, on which atomic science is built, is one of the great revelations of our day. And it is a revelation of ultimate “order” in Nature.

3. Finally we can consider the *Universe as a whole*. At the other end of the scale from the submicroscopic world of the atom, Astronomy has opened up a new Universe of a vastness that baffles human imagination. Now, although the heavenly bodies may seem to be moving to no apparent “purpose”, the point to notice is that they are all behaving in accordance with fixed laws. Everything in this vast universe (so far as observation can tell) is composed of the same sort of matter, constructed in the same sort of way, following the same laws. There is nothing haphazard about it—the movement of the heavenly bodies is in accordance with “laws”, that is to say, fixed patterns of behaviour which the mind is able to formulate in mathematical terms.

There, then, is the evidence for our first statement, that there are many examples of Order in the world. We have confined ourselves to stating facts, in a non-controversial manner. We must avoid “interpreting” the facts at this stage by the use of any ambiguous terms like “purpose” or “finality”, or even the controversial word “design”. Thus we cannot be accused of begging the question.

B. Our second statement is that *Order of this kind demands an Intelligence to produce it.*

Everyone instinctively feels that this statement is true as a general principle. Everyone acts upon it in practice. Uniformly regular pattern cannot be the result simply of Chance. Our two examples at the beginning (the piece of machinery and the model) show the normal working of our minds. We instinctively judge that real Order is not explained by Chance: it is the effect of rational purpose.

But *why* do we think so?

To answer this we must try and define "Order": and this is not easy. In our definition we must avoid any terms which already include the idea of "intelligent purpose", and so could be said to prejudice the issue. The kind of order we recognize in the physical world can be described as any "constant or regular pattern." We find a number of things arranged so that they form a single unity, which the mind can recognize as an "orderly pattern". The different things somehow form a sort of unity. Besides being their separate distinct selves, each has got its own place in a wider unit: each forms part of the general pattern. The simplest example of order shows this. Three lines forming a triangle are not just three lines: they are *a* triangle—and so on. There is an overall pattern in which everything has got its own place as part of a single whole. The existence of the pattern is not something which the mind creates: the mind recognizes it, because it is there to be recognized.

Now, the unity which constitutes order needs explanation just as much as the separate components. A crystal is not just a lot of molecules: it is a single regular pattern of molecules. A living organ is not just an agglomeration of cells: it is an "organism" which functions as a single unit.

This regular unity in complexity demands explanation. Chance explains what is merely haphazard: chance can even explain an occasional static pattern which seems to be orderly (like four stones accidentally lying in a square). But *chance does not explain uniformly regular behaviour, or uniformly exact pattern.*

What is behind this orderly arrangement if it is not just chance? Here we must notice that the sort of order we perceive in the world is in fact a "rational" order. By rational I mean it is something our mind recognizes as *intelligible*. The mind recognizes something akin to itself, something in accordance with reason. The constitution of matter, the movement of the heavenly bodies, the progress of life are all in accordance with fixed laws: and these laws are intelligible. Often enough they are mathematical formulae, which only a mind can express. The very possibility of science is based on the principle that the world is intelligible: that is to say, it is governed by laws which our minds can recognize as rational.

Now we ask: *where did this rational imprint come from?* It is no use just saying it's there, and leaving it at that. That is simply refusing to answer the question. Of course you will never get to God that way, any more than a detective would get to the person responsible if He observed the fingerprint but refused to ask how it got there. The rational order we see in the world is the imprint of MIND, just as clearly as fingerprints are the imprint of a human finger. We must repeat that the order of the world is an *intelligible* order: it is governed by laws which our minds recognize as rational. Now, the only source from which anything intelligible or rational can come is Intelligence or Reason, that is, MIND.

Therefore behind this intelligible order of the physical Universe there is somewhere an Intelligence which is the cause of it. This Intelligence we call "God". It is not our task here to investigate its Nature: that needs further enquiry. It is enough that the Order of the world comes from an Intelligent Orderer—which is where we started. Our original simple way of thinking was in fact correct. We were not just being misled by a false analogy from examples of *human* purpose—our minds were judging in accordance with right reason.

To sum up. **A.** In the world there are many examples of Order. We can draw our examples from living organisms, from the constitution of Matter, from the General Laws of the Universe. We simply state the facts, drawn from scientific textbooks: and carefully avoid using any language which could prejudice the answer.

B. *Order of this kind demands an Intelligent Orderer.*

Why? Because Order means unity in diversity—a number of different things forming a single regular pattern which can be recognized as a unit. Now, (1) Chance does not explain uniformly regular behaviour or uniformly regular pattern. And (2) the order we see in the world is one that our minds recognize as intelligible and in accordance with reason. But

(3) the only ultimate source from which anything intelligible can come is Intelligence.

Therefore the Order of the world demands an Intelligence to produce it.

But if this is so obvious, why do many intelligent people nowadays refuse to accept the reasoning? Let us briefly consider the objections.

1. It is alleged that the argument begs the question. It *presumes* that the order we observe in the world has been “designed “for a” purpose. But Science does not recognize this idea of conscious “finality” (that is, purpose) in Nature.

Reply. Scientists often find this a real difficulty. The reason is partly because Science is not in fact concerned with the possibility of purpose: and partly (let us admit) because of the way the argument is sometimes presented. The popular presentation of the argument from “Design” is not really incorrect, but it does leave itself open to this accusation. We forestall this by avoiding all words like “design”, “adapted for a purpose”, “finality”, etc., because they do already suggest the idea of rationally intended purpose. Instead, we simply state the facts, as given to us by Science: and then show that these facts do, in the last resort, demand Intelligence, because rationally intelligible Order is the imprint of Mind. Therefore we *conclude* that it is in fact designed. We do not *start* by calling it Design.

2. The scientist may press His objection further. The Order of the Universe (He says) is simply due to the Laws of Nature. Things act in the same regular sort of way because they are that sort of thing. No “planning” or “arrangement” is required for this.

Reply. Certainly the order of the Universe is immediately due to these Laws of Nature: and it is the scientist’s job to discover them. But a Law of Nature simply means a fixed manner of behaviour. It is not an explanation of its own existence. We must go beyond this and ask, “what is the ultimate reason why Nature works according to fixed, regular and *intelligible* Law?” And our answer is that the only source of orderly intelligible pattern is Intelligence.

3. It is then argued that what we call intelligible order is simply the result of chance. This seems very feeble and unlikely at first sight. But it is supported in some quarters by mathematical arguments from the statistics of probability. The best way to explain this is the example of the Monkeys and the Typewriters. It is alleged that if a number of monkeys were left to hammer on typewriters for a sufficiently long time, they would eventually (on the law of averages) produce the typescript of the whole works of Shakespeare. Shakespeare’s plays are, after all, only one particular combination of the 26 letters of the alphabet: and, given sufficient time, this particular combination could appear by chance. So it is with the apparent order of the Universe: it is simply this particular chance combination which has occurred.

Reply. The normal man’s first reaction to this is undoubtedly one of incredulity. As an explanation of anything whatever the statement seems ludicrous—no one would dream of accepting it in any ordinary affairs of life. Imagine a newspaper editor offering this as an explanation of how a libellous article got into print. It would in fact knock the bottom out of what we call Inductive Reasoning—that is, reasoning from concrete facts to a rational explanation. It would be the end of Science.

This immediate answer from commonsense would satisfy most people—because it is commonsense. But we must examine the point fairly. The statistical argument is difficult to refute theoretically. Out of millions of possible combinations surely this one is just as possible, theoretically, as any other. Therefore, given sufficient time, it will (or at least it could) turn up.

Yet our minds hesitate to accept the possibility. Why?

The answer lies in the *kind of order* we are investigating. We are not dealing with a single static pattern, which could possibly come by chance. For example, you toss four coins in the air—they could fall in a mathematically perfect square. But the order we perceive in the world is not like that. It is a *uniform* pattern of *consistently regular* behaviour, due not to chance but (as Science insists) to the working of fixed and intelligible Law. Notice that we are really arguing from the laws themselves rather than from their effects. These may sometimes appear to be chaotic—tempests, earthquakes, the prolific and apparently “purposeless” spawning of life, and so on. But behind all this there is “order “—the rational intelligible order of the laws of Nature.

In brief: the Monkeys on Typewriters story might explain the printing of Shakespeare’s works, if anyone really cares to

believe that. It does not explain our actual world of regular intelligible order, because it does not explain the orderly rule of law itself. It takes it for granted that the complicated machinery of the typewriter types when hit, and that monkeys are able to type. This is not just a smart retort it reminds us that behind what at times may seem to be chance results there is a fixed pattern of order. This is what needs explaining.

4. *Evolution* (it is said) has got rid of the idea that living organs are really arranged “for a purpose”. What happens is that random changes (called “mutations”) occur in the germ-plasm, giving rise to new forms. These forms are then weeded out by “Natural Selection”, so that the forms suitable to their environment survive, and others die out. Thus more perfect forms, “adapted” to their surroundings, appear simply by chance. There is no need for a Guiding Intelligence.

Reply. Science and Religion are dealing with two different questions, and the answer to one does not exclude the other. On the scientific level, adaption may explain *how* new species come into existence, just as power stations explain the existence of electric light. But you must first have your power station: and behind that there is Intelligence. Before Natural Selection can work at all on living things you must first have Life, with its complex organization and its mysterious laws. Biological evolution is only possible because the living organism has the power, the tendency within itself, to grow, to reproduce itself, to react from within to changing environment. But this is simply an example—and a most outstanding one—of what we call “Order”. What we are trying to explain is not the mechanics by which new species come into existence—that is the job of the scientist—but the orderly pattern which is characteristic of life, the fact that the living thing is an “organism”. Our argument (see p. 6) is drawn from the fact that life is an example of “order”.

There is no antagonism whatever between the principles of Evolution and the postulate of a guiding Intelligence behind them. The fact that London is lit by electricity produced by power stations does not disprove the truth that it is lit by man. Suppose a remarkable engineer could make a tricycle for His little boy, and could give it the power to adapt it to circumstances so that it could then develop into a bicycle, a motor-bicycle, a car and finally an airplane. That is Evolution: and if that is the way God has arranged things, it is more than ever an example of His marvellous power.

II. Argument from The Moral Order

Another fact of experience that points to God is our consciousness of right and wrong.

We are all aware of what is called “moral obligation”.

What does this really mean, and how does it point to the existence of God?

Certain actions, we feel, are “right”, others are “wrong”. What is right *ought* to be done, what is wrong *ought not* to be done. We may be physically free to do the things which we know are wrong—I am able to steal or cheat or lie—but because we see that they are wrong, or “bad”, we are conscious that we ought not to do them. This is what we mean by *Moral Obligation*—*something* which binds us (obligation), not physically but in the order of right and wrong (moral).

Now, this obligation is absolute. That is to say, it imposes itself on us without conditions: it is something which we *must* obey. Individuals at different times may vary as to the details of what is right and wrong: but the general principle, that what is right *should* be done and what is wrong *should* be avoided, is absolute. The obligation implied by the words “ought”, “must”, “should” is somehow final and unqualified.

Let us pursue this idea of an absolute obligation which imposes itself on our free will. The point about Moral Obligation is that this law of right and wrong is somehow superior to me personally. I am “bound” by it. But so is everyone else. If it binds me, it binds all mankind as well. Individuals or communities may at times reject it: but if they do they are “doing wrong”. They are doing something which they *ought not* to do, something which is “bad” in an absolute sense.

That is why we can speak of a “Law of Right and Wrong”—Law in the sense of an absolute standard of conduct which must be followed if we are to be “good” men. This Law is independent of the individual, who is bound by it whether He likes it or not. And it is independent of Society, since it binds mankind at large. We do not invent it. We are simply subject to it.

Furthermore, it is a Law of a higher order than the physical laws of Nature. It is what we call *ethical* or *moral*: that is

to say it is concerned with the value of our free acts, in terms of what is right or wrong for man considered as a responsible individual. The moral law leaves us physically free, but reminds us that we are responsible individuals, so that our behaviour is subject to this higher standard of right and wrong. This has introduced us to the moral order, the sphere of Justice and Righteousness. This is something which is outside the province of physical Science. It cannot be determined by microscopes or mathematics.

And Moral Rightness is of a higher order than the physical laws of nature. Even the Scientist recognizes this nowadays. The atom-bomb has brought it home. Science discovers the laws of the atom: scientific technology makes the bomb. But all over the world the men responsible for this immense scientific advance are realising that there are questions of another order, moral questions, attached. They see that they cannot make bombs without considering how they will be used, and this is a question which disturbs their “conscience.” In this way they recognize that there is an absolute standard of right conduct which imposes itself even on the employment of Science.

So there are the facts from which we start. There is a Law, that is, an absolute standard of right and wrong, which imposes itself on men. This Law is independent of any individual, and is of a different and higher character than physical laws, since it deals with the moral rightness of our free behaviour.

Now we must ask, *where does this absolute moral standard come from?*

It is not just a product of physical matter, since (as we have seen) it is of a different order of things altogether and cannot be investigated by physical instruments. It is not simply a creation of the human mind, since (as we have seen) it is something superior to the individual. It binds us from outside and we are subject to it. Nor is it merely the general agreement of Society imposing itself on the individual. This undoubtedly has an influence on our particular judgments of what is right or wrong. But the fact that what is right ought to be done and what is wrong ought not to be done imposes itself on the whole of mankind. It is something absolute which is superior to all men. It simply is so.

There is in fact no explanation of this absolute obligation to do right, unless there is some Absolute Being, outside the physical universe, which is the Source of Moral Righteousness. And this Being, the Source of the moral order and therefore something moral and spiritual, is what we call God.

It is important to see what follows if we deny this. It would mean, quite simply, that there is no such thing as absolute right and wrong. Right would simply be what I like and wrong what I don't like. But I could not impose my standard on anyone else. I may not like young thugs kicking an old man in the face. But if there is no absolute standard, which imposes itself from above on all men, then I cannot say it is absolutely wrong *in itself*. I can repeat that I don't like it, and if I happen to be stronger I will stop it. But I cannot take up a high moral attitude and say, “This must be stopped *because it is wrong*.” Once I say that, then I am admitting that there is some source of absolute rightness outside me. And that means that there is some *Being* which is the source, because otherwise the “source” is Nothing.

People who have had some experience of real moral wickedness usually appreciate this argument. They see that there is no such thing as “morality” unless there is an absolute standard to which all men are subject. Also this line of thought brings us straight to the nobler attributes of God—God as the source of moral goodness, the “Just God”, as the Old Testament calls Him, who is also therefore the upholder and vindicator of right moral order.

To make sure that the argument is sound, we must consider some *objections*.

1. Agnostics claim that moral conscience is simply the product of education and environment. We are taught from childhood that some things are right and others wrong. This early training sticks with us all our lives, and is confirmed (or modified) by the pressure of public opinion. No mysterious outside source is required to explain this.

Reply. Of course the child has to be trained into judging what is right and wrong, and naturally His judgments on particular points will be influenced by this training. But the time comes eventually to everyone when He sees the difference between saying that eating peas with a knife is “wrong” and that cruelty is “wrong”. Then our argument comes in. He must ask: is cruelty *absolutely wrong in itself*, whatever people around me may say? If it is, then there is an absolute standard outside me, and the argument stands.

2. It is argued that morality is simply the standard that right-thinking men impose on themselves. I make up my own

code, according to what seems to me best. I do not need to appeal to any outside source.

Reply. The immediate standard of right and wrong for the individual is, of course, His conscience, judging what is in accordance with man's proper nature. But eventually we must come to the question: Is there an absolute standard which imposes itself on all men, and to which I must conform? Can we say that cruelty or treachery are bad in themselves, and are not just something that *I* prefer not to do? In fact men do realise that there is an absolute standard which binds all men, in accordance with which even the individual conscience can be right or wrong. And that is the starting point of our argument.

3. The argument really comes to this: "Where there is a Law there must be a Lawgiver. Therefore God exists as "Giver of the Moral Law." But (it is argued) this is a misuse of the word "Law", which is ambiguous. If by Law you mean a command issued by someone, then of course Law implies a Lawgiver. But to say the Moral Law is a command issued by someone begs the question. That is what you have to prove. "Law" here simply means a standard of conduct.

Reply. It is true that the argument is sometimes expressed in this way for the sake of brevity. In the long run it is in fact correct. But, just as in our first argument, we should avoid stating it in a way which sounds as if it was begging the question. The objection does not apply to the way in which we have actually stated it. We argue from the fact that there is a standard of conduct which imposes itself on our free will to the *conclusion* that there must be some source for this absolute standard of righteousness—a source superior to us or to the material universe. This standard can only come from a Being who is the source of moral goodness. And so God is in fact the ultimate Lawgiver.

III. General Argument from Dependence

All our arguments start from some fact of experience, which is then seen to point to the existence of God. Our final argument is drawn from a number of different aspects of the world around us. These all fall under the general heading that *everything we perceive in the world is somehow dependent on other things.*

We observe that things depend on other things for coming into existence. I *received* my existence from my parents, and my parents from theirs, and so on back and back. The same is true of inanimate things, rocks and metals, the sun and moon and stars.—Once in existence, we still depend for continuing in existence on any number of things, on the air around us, the food we absorb, the sunshine, the force of gravity, and so on.—Everything in the world, living and non-living, is undergoing a continual process of change, passing from one state to another. For this it depends to some extent on the activity of other things acting upon it.

There is an even more fundamental side to all this, for those who can see it. Everything in the world is *limited*. That is to say, it is only one particular sort of thing, a tree, a cat, a flower, a man. You cannot say of anything that it is simply "being", "existence" pure and simple—it is something which *has* a particular limited form of existence.

So in all these ways the world of experience is characterized by *dependence* and *limitation*. Everything is dependent on something to some extent, for receiving existence, for keeping in existence, for the continuous process of change which it undergoes. Everything is limited, retaining a precarious hold in time and space on one small and temporary aspect of existence.

Now, the argument is simply this. If everything was dependent, if everything was simply a *receiver* of existence, and there was nothing behind it all that was absolutely *independent* and *gave* existence to everything else, then *nothing could ever have existed at all.*

Why is this? Because there is simply *no sufficient reason* for anything to exist unless there is something which simply exists of itself, and is not dependent on anything else. If a thing depends on other things in any way, that means that it is not self-sufficient. It cannot therefore be the reason why it exists. If dependent things exist at all, they must eventually depend on something which does not depend on anything else, something which is completely independent. There must be something which is fully self-sufficient, and which is not affected by those imperfections of dependence and limitation which characterize everything in the world of experience.

What characteristics will such a being have? It must simply *exist of itself* You can say of it that "it is because it is", not

because something else made it, or affects its existence in any way. It must be the ultimate source from which all other things receive existence, and on which they all eventually depend. And this Being which is absolutely independent and self-sufficient, which simply exists of itself and is the source of being for everything else, is what we call "God". This is the same God who is the source of order in the world and the source of Moral Goodness: for these two facts of experience are themselves examples of a dependent and limited sort of perfection which does not explain itself.

This argument needs careful thought. It could be developed in greater detail. Illustrations can be used to help. All these dependent things would, for example, be like a chain hanging from nothing: or like a reservoir being constantly filled with water that came from nowhere. But these are only ways of helping us to *see* the main central idea. If you do not see it immediately, go back over it again. *Think it over*: and not only should you gradually see that it is so, but the tremendous implications of our state of dependence and insufficiency will dawn upon your mind more and more.

Each of us must put to himself the strange problem of His own existence. I am not the sufficient reason of my own existence. I have only a precarious hold on a limited part of existence which comes to me from outside myself. In a word, I am a *creature*, dependent for everything I have on my *Creator*. I bow down and adore God who made me.

Objection. 1. I can see that *something* must exist simply of itself and independently. But why should this be anything outside of the physical universe? The fundamental matter and laws of the universe simply exist: and they are what everything depends on.

Reply. The last stage of the argument should be read again, carefully. What it shows is that something must exist *which does not possess these imperfections* of dependence and limitation which characterize *everything material*. As far as Science goes, physical matter and physical laws are simply "given": they are there and are the data of experience. But physical matter and its laws are simply the world itself in its most imperfect state. This elementary "raw material" of the universe does not account for its own existence, because it bears precisely those signs of material limitation, and interdependence of one part on another, which demand further explanation. Protons and neutrons or other even more elementary energy-forms are not the absolute fully self-sufficient Being which is the ultimate explanation of why there is existence at all.

Objection. 2. If God made everything, who made God?

Reply. This question, which is often asked, shows that the problem has not been understood. We are not saying "everything which exists must be made by someone." The whole point of the argument is that *there must be something which is not made*. That something is God, because everything in the world is limited and dependent, and therefore (we argue) it is "made". God is not made because He is the One who "is because He is."

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There is one principle common to all these arguments: that *whatever cannot account for its own existence must depend on something which can*. We can call this the *First Cause* of everything else, meaning by "Cause" whatever is the reason for something else existing. We have avoided using the word "Cause", or "Principle of Causality" in the actual arguments. This is because "Cause" and "Principle of Causality" have acquired a specialized meaning for scientists. We could quite reasonably say that whatever cannot account for its own existence *requires a cause*, and so the world itself must have a cause. This is a good clear way of saying it, and is quite correct. But unfortunately it is not accepted by people for whom "cause" simply means a physical antecedent. It is a matter of language and the different use of words—God is not a "cause" in the way scientists often use the word.

So we have avoided the word in the body of the arguments. We can get along without it. But there is no reason why we should not use it at the end, with the meaning it has borne for many hundred years. God is the "First Cause": that is, the ultimate Necessary Being on whom everything depends for its existence.

Can we properly *prove* that God exists? Many people nowadays say not, even among those who do believe in God. Again I think the answer depends on what you mean by "prove". In the sense that the arguments are so irresistible that it is impossible for anyone to hold the opposite—no. We cannot actually *see* God: and so men can always turn their minds

away, or concentrate on doubts and difficulties. But if by “prove” we mean: is there evidence sufficient to convince the mind that God must exist if there is to be any reasonable explanation of the world? then the answer is, yes. Let the reader judge.

God has left the imprint of His Mind and Will on the world He made, there for all to see. “From the foundations of the world men have caught sight of His invisible nature, His eternal power and His divineness, as they are known through His creatures. Thus, “there is no excuse for them”, says St Paul. The world is not really *intelligible* unless there is a God who is the reason of it all. If you prefer to think that there is no reason for it all, and that the world is simply not intelligible, then there is nothing more to be said. But this attitude is, in the literal sense, *not reasonable*. If we accept the existence of God we are on the side of reason. We must never feel we are on the defensive. *We hold the field.*