

Chapter 7

History shows that there is nothing so easy to enslave and nothing so hard to emancipate as ignorance, hence it becomes the double enemy of civilization. By its servility it is the prey of tyranny, and by its credulity it is the foe of enlightenment.

-- Lemuel K. Washburn,
Is The Bible Worth Reading And Other Essays

Samuel went into another room. In a few minutes he returned carrying a box filled with books and lecture notes. I felt like a kid who had missed class and needed to meet with the teacher for extra tutoring. He took his seat and class began.

“We should start at the beginning with that most basic question: is there a God? Let’s begin with these assumptions: either there is no God, he is a fabrication of man’s imagination; or there is a God and we have simply lost sight of who God is. If there is no God then there is no truth in any religion. I fully understand that belief in a deity or deities is primarily an act of faith, but it seems logical that there would be evidence that proves this Being exists. Wouldn’t a God who created humans with the amazing ability to reason provide reasonable and logical proof of its existence?”

“Well, as I mentioned, the struggle to prove the existence of God has been undertaken by many people, both common and wise. I’m not sure there’s a way to prove that God exists. Shouldn’t we just assume that there is a God since we both agree that God is the foundation of religion and this discussion concerns religion, and, therefore, takes for granted that God exists?” I asked.

“You’re correct that religion, as we are defining it, involves belief in a god or a supernatural being. But, if we’re to stay consistent in our method of attempting to discover the truth about religion, based in part on reason and logic, then we must establish, at the start, that there is evidence for the existence of everything that constitutes religion and God is the basic

necessary ingredient. Besides, earlier you said that you did have doubts about God's existence."

"That's true," I was embarrassed to admit again. "Okay we can start there."

"I think for this part of our discussion we should take a little trip." He stood up and stretched. "I have a friend that lives close by. He has dedicated much of life to the study of science. While he doesn't consider himself a scientist, most people who know him respect his knowledge in that area. I think he can contribute a lot to our discussion."

I had no problem with taking a trip. I'll have to admit that I was getting a little weary from sitting. There's an old saying that the brain will only absorb what the butt can endure! My butt was just about maxed out.

"Sounds good to me. You don't think he'll mind if we drop by?" I asked.

"No. He always enjoys company."

We got our jackets and headed out. According to Samuel, Byron Donaldson had become interested in science late in life, around the age of fifty. It's sad that often times we don't realize our true passion until later in life. It could be because most of us focus on doing what we have to do to make a living so what we enjoy doing has to take a backseat. Or it might be because we set our goals based on financial considerations. Perhaps it is not until we have achieved some degree of success or realize that we are unhappy in our current endeavor that we recognize our true passion. For some, pursuing this craving becomes a hobby. Others actually change the direction of their career to that of their interest. Byron's passion was science.

Byron lived alone in a very small cabin in the hills. He came out to greet us when we arrived. When I first saw him, I thought I had stepped back into the nineteen-sixties. He wore a pair of old tattered blue jeans, a stained t-shirt and sandals. His hair was long, pulled back in a ponytail. But, I must say that he was one of the most jovial people I have met. His smile was sincere and he had an energetic bounce to his step. He invited us

into his modest dwelling and, after a few minutes of small talk, we took our seats and the discussion began. Samuel explained my situation and the purpose of our visit. Byron seemed delighted to join our discussion. Samuel introduced our topic.

“So, Byron, prove to us that there is a God!”

Byron laughed. “No problem,” he said with a smile.

“It should be obvious that there’s not a way to prove, definitively, that God exists or doesn’t exist,” he began. “Now keep in mind that when I talk about a supernatural Being I’m not talking about the gods who have been given all types of human characteristics portrayed throughout history by the various mythologies and religions. I’m referring to a supernatural entity that exists beyond the realm of human understanding. Many times when people discuss the existence of a deity they get bogged down in discussing the perceived nature of the deity or how religion has impacted civilization. If we are going to discuss the existence or non-existence of this entity, we must clear away all preconceived notions of what this deity is like and how society has used or abused their understanding of it. We must focus solely on whether or not it exists.”

“In other words, we shouldn’t get bogged down with the details,” I summarized.

“Right. Those things should be left for another discussion,” he replied. “Now, while I don’t believe there is a way to definitively prove its existence or non-existence, there may be a way that we can know whether it is more logical to believe that a god or supernatural entity exists or that it doesn’t.”

He walked over to a crowded dusty bookshelf. “I would like to begin by using nature as our primary source of evidence. Great men throughout history have championed the logic of an Intelligent Designer.”

“But didn’t they all fail to prove their point?” I argued.

“I don’t think they failed at all. Their message was drowned out by those who claimed to have had a more scientific solution to creation.”

“Go on,” I said. I was skeptical but interested. I had heard of these Intelligent Designer theories before.

“Most of those who have tried to disprove the existence of a Creator in creation have used evolution as proof that an intelligent power did not create the world. But evolution has little to do with the initial act of creation.”

“It sounds as though we are going to be making a lot of propositions in this discussion,” I said. “What makes your propositions different than anyone else’s?” I wanted to be sure I wasn’t getting just a lot of opinions.

Samuel joined the conversation. “Remember, as we look for truth, whether it is scientific or religious, we will use objective evidence to substantiate our propositions. Once we have substantiated our propositions, we will attempt to formulate a conclusion. If our conclusion meets the criterion that we have established for truth and it agrees with reality, we must presume that our conclusion is valid. The conclusion, then, becomes what we might call the accepted fact or truth about that issue until which time more information becomes available and our theory is modified to reflect the impact of that new information. This new information can then either further substantiate our theory or disprove the theory all together. The fact is, almost everything we believe is, in truth, a theory -- always subject to reevaluation based on new information and discoveries.”

“But what if the information we use to substantiate our premise is incorrect?” I asked.

“Then obviously,” Byron explained, “our premise or proposition, and consequently our conclusion, will also be incorrect. Almost all of our current theories were originally based on observation and common sense. We must always begin there. In ancient times, people observed that the sun rose and traveled from horizon to horizon. It made sense to assume that the sun was revolving around the earth. That assumption was considered the truth until new discoveries forced science to change its theory. Now we know that the earth rotates around the sun. This new information brought us closer to the truth. However, it began with common sense and observation. That’s

where we will begin and then we will build on that by considering the information that is available to us on the particular issue that we are discussing and employ logic and reason to formulate a theory.”

“Okay, so we’re back where we began. How does one go about proving there is or is not a god?”

“We will build our argument using certain ground rules. When discussing the existence or non-existence of a supernatural being we must remember that it is just that, supernatural. If a deity does exist, then it is otherworldly; it is beyond human understanding and is not bound by the limitations of this world. In other words, it is not human, not a physical being. If it is not a physical being and it is otherworldly then it is not restricted to the scientific boundaries and physical laws of this world. It is not limited by time and space. It is not made of matter and, therefore, does not have to follow the rules that apply to matter. In the beginning we must not attribute any characteristics to this entity if it exists. Once again, if it is not human, it does not necessarily possess any of the traits or attributes that humans do; such as compassion or jealousy or greed or any other such character traits. This entity must remain incomprehensible. Remember, the original question is not what is God, or who is God or what is God like. The original question is: is it more reasonable and logical and does it make more sense to assume that such a being exists than that it doesn’t.”

Samuel interrupted. “And, as a side note, one can never really disprove the existence of God. How can one disprove an idea or a concept that is indescribable and inconceivable? This is what the Supreme Being is if it exists at all, inconceivable because it is not of this world. It is of another dimension. The only way to disprove its existence is to walk into this unknown dimension and bang on the door. If no one answers, there is no God. However, since we don’t know of this dimension, locating it to see if God is there is just not possible. So, one either believes in it or they don’t.”

“So, it’s back to being a matter of faith!” I was getting lost in our discussion.

“Yes,” Byron said, “but our goal is to substantiate our faith with reason and logic.”

I repeated my question. “What evidence is there?”

“As I said, I would like to begin with observation and common sense,” Byron reminded us.

“Remember, common sense, critically examined, can be used as a source of reliable evidence when searching for truth,” Samuel interjected.

“But what about those who claim that God is no more than an invention of our imagination?”

“Byron, if I could?”

“Sure, Samuel, go ahead.”

“I will have to agree in part. Not that God is an invention of our imagination, but that God is in our imagination. What is the imagination? It is the part of our mind that allows us to see what is not visible. It enables us to visualize things that do not yet exist in the material world. It was through his imagination that Benjamin Franklin imagined harnessing electricity. It is the imagination that has prompted all invention. It is the source of all ideas and it is the conduit for revelation. Imagination is the engine that drives creativity and allows us to view things beyond the tangible. It allows us to enter the world of the supernatural, the mystical and imagine what’s possible, even when others try to convince us otherwise. It is the imagination that ignites the fire of discovery. It is a place where God can speak to us. So, God does exist in our imagination but God is not imaginary. This Being, if it does exist, is beyond our understanding. It is impossible to see the invisible, to conceive of the inconceivable. It is only through our imagination that we can catch a very sheer glimpse of this indescribable entity.”

“That makes sense. God exists in our imagination but God is not imaginary. I like that,” I said.

Byron walked to his chair as he talked. “We should begin this part of our discussion with the basic question: where did

everything come from? Where did our universe originate given what we know?"

"You mean the "Big Bang"? I asked.

"No, further back. While the Big Bang is the most popular theory concerning the beginning of the universe at this time, we need to go back before that event," he explained.

"How can we do that?"

"We'll begin with the assumption that nothing comes from nothing. Can we agree that common sense and observation provide us with evidence that this is a correct assumption?"

"At this point, I will agree," I said thoughtfully. "Nothing comes from nothing."

"So," he continued, "something had to cause the Big Bang. I mean, what is there to bang if nothing exists? If there was nothing before the "bang" then we have no reason for the bang."

That made sense. "I see what you mean."

"In fact, there could not even have been empty space because there would have had to have been a cause for space. Nothing comes from nothing."

"Okay, but that means that nothing would ever have existed. There had to be something at the start; something that started it all," I insisted.

"That's true. That "something" is what some people call the First Cause; something that has always existed."

"But nothing comes from nothing." I reminded him of our original assumption.

"But this entity didn't 'come'. It always was."

"And you are assuming that this always-existent entity was God?"

"Let's take it one step at a time," he answered.

"But if we agree that something has always existed then it could have been anything. It could have been the universe," I argued.

“Science tells us that our universe had a beginning. Even Stephen Hawkins was in an agreement with that,” he replied.

“Maybe it was space. Why couldn’t it have been space?” I insisted.

“If space has always existed, it was empty space. Because if there was something in space it, too, would have had to have always existed. And we know that empty space, being void of all elements or substances could never have led to the birth of the universe because empty space is just empty space.”

“So maybe atoms have always existed. Aren’t they present in all things?” I asked.

“Yes, except that atoms are made up of three elements: protons, neutrons and electrons. So these three elements would have had to have always existed as well. Now we are saying that there was not one single ‘always-existent’ entity, but three.”

I gave up. “So what is the solution?”

“There are two options,” he explained. “The first is that whatever it was that existed is an unknown; some particle or substance, some matter that has yet to be discovered, that was present in the beginning but is no longer identifiable; or, secondly, that there has always existed an entity that is not matter that is capable of creating something out of nothing. With our sophisticated laboratories and advanced scientific capabilities, it is not reasonable to assume that such a particle or substance exists or existed that we have not been able to identify. Therefore, the most logical and reasonable conclusion is that this ever-existent entity is non-matter and that it has the power to create something out of nothing, The First Cause.”

I had to admit that this assertion was the most logical compared to the alternatives. “But that would imply that there exists a supernatural entity. How can that ever be proven?”

“It does introduce a dimension or realm that is beyond what we are familiar with. But just because we are not familiar with it doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. Many people are stuck in believing that the things common to this world are the only things that are real; that there is no reality other than what we

know and experience on this planet. But that is not necessarily true.”

“But how can that be proven?” I repeated.

“Once again, we cannot offer definite proof but our objective is to see if it is more logical to believe that it exists than it is to believe that it doesn’t. Let’s go on. Since we’ve discussed the beginning of the universe, let’s talk now about where life originated. Where or how did it begin?”

“Where can we start to find such evidence? How can we know that?” I asked.

“Let’s examine the most popular arguments that exist today.”

It sounded like the conversation was about to get complicated. “Okay, I’ll try to keep up but I’ve never been very good at science,” I warned. Samuel smiled.

“Basically, these theories aren’t difficult to understand,” Byron began. “While there are many theories, I have found that there are only a few that are popular with a general and scientific audience. Creationism, Intelligent Design, and the Anthropic Principle are three; the fourth is the theory that claims that over time life evolved from nonliving matter. We’ll call that spontaneous generation. For the moment, I will combine Creationism and Intelligent Design because they both credit an intelligent entity with the creation of life and the world. Let’s take a look at these various theories briefly and logically.

“Like all theories concerning the existence of sapient life, the Anthropic Principle is very confusing even within the field of science. In a nutshell, the Anthropic Principle suggests that there are many planets, perhaps billions and billions in the universe and of these planets there are many that are probably friendly to life. That is, they would be life-friendly if life existed on them. And because of this favorable environment, somewhere at sometime, life simply appeared. It theorizes that life just popped up because the conditions were conducive for life to exist. From my point of view, that’s like saying if you build a road that is conducive to automobile travel, an automobile will eventually

come, without stating how or why it appeared other than because there was a suitable place for it. It is not a very popular theory among most scientists.

“Probably the most popular theory is the assumption that over time, nonliving matter somehow came together in a primordial soup that resulted in a living organism. But what evidence is there to support this theory? While much experimentation has been done and is still being done today, even with our sophisticated laboratories, scientists have not been able to produce life from nonliving substances. As far as we know from actual historical data, there are no examples that clearly offer proof that such a process has ever occurred.

“Simply put, the proponents of this theory, that life suddenly appeared spontaneously, believe that life was a result of chance. They propose that over time the necessary chemicals, having been produced as a result of the changing environment, mixed and mingled together and that this combining of chemicals resulted in the creation of the basic building blocks of life. And, eventually, over time, these building blocks became a living organism. In this scenario, chance was the creator of life. At this time, there is no evidence at all to support this theory. We have to remember that life is more than a chemical reaction. It involves complex systems and processes. In fact there are seven characteristics of a living substance: it takes in nourishment, it is capable of movement, it breathes, it excretes, it grows, it possesses sensitivity and it reproduces. One of the most accepted definitions of life is the ability of an organism to grow and reproduce itself. Even in a very primitive organism, these capabilities or processes could not have evolved over time. They must have existed in the first living organism, even though it might have been a very primitive system. These processes are essential for sustaining life.

“There are other problems with this theory. If life did originate through a slow chemical process, did it occur only in one place with one organism being produced, or in several places with many organisms produced of slightly varying kinds? If it occurred in several places, the odds of such a chance meeting of

just the right chemicals in just the right environment to create this new life are even more overwhelming. We just do not have any examples of life coming from non-living substances.

“On the other hand, we do have proof that non-living substances have come from living things.”

“You mean fossils?” I was happy to contribute to the conversation.

“Yes. Fossils were living organisms that died and became solid matter. Also there are petrified, stone-like objects that were the result of the demise of living organisms and substances. And we should add that it has been shown that many of our natural resources such as oil and gas and coal were also the result of decaying organisms. So, there is ample evidence of non-living matter coming from living things, but no evidence at all of living organisms being created by non-living matter or as a result of some chemical reaction. Furthermore, we have significant evidence of living organisms coming from living organisms.”

“You mean birth.”

“Of course, reproduction. Every living thing reproduces. Although I assume the creation of a new being or organism would be very different, we can easily see how life can come from life.”

I thought I’d better try to summarize where we were to make sure I was still keeping up.

“So, you are saying that non-life can come from the living, but not the reverse and that life gives birth to living things. I suppose you are suggesting that God has always existed and is the original life that created life and all non-living matter. So, you are assuming that life, in some form, has always existed. But where is your proof?”

“We are coming to that,” he promised. “Our first proposition built on logic and observation is that it is more reasonable to conclude that life came from life than from non-life because we have examples of the former, but no examples at all of the latter. Now we turn to evolution to substantiate our original premise.”

“I knew you would eventually end up here. But do you really want to go there?” I asked. “I mean, it’s controversial enough discussing religion as we are, but to take on evolution only adds chaos to the conversation.”

“That may be true, but it is an essential ingredient in building our case. The reason it is necessary will become clear as we continue. You’ll just have to go along with me for a moment.”

“Alright, I’ll follow along the best I can,” I said.

“Thank you. Many people see a conflict between creation by design and science. Obviously, Samuel and I are not among those. If God is the creator of all things, then God is the creator of science and all of the other disciplines. If this is true then the more information we have concerning life and our universe, the more evidence there should be to support the theory that there is a Supreme Existence that has carefully and intelligently orchestrated the creation of the universe. Science and math can help us in our quest for understanding.”

“So, let’s talk evolution. And, by evolution, I suppose you are referring to Darwin’s theory?” I assumed.

“That is the most popular theory, and the most misrepresented.”

“How can that be? It is studied constantly. It is the main theory taught in classrooms all across our nation.”

“Yes, it is taught, but perhaps not altogether accurately. Very few of those who teach it have actually read *The Origin of Species* for themselves. They depend on others who have studied it and provided a synopsis, of sorts, picking and choosing what is being taught and what is being left out.”

“Like sheep aimlessly following a shepherd, we are taking the word of those who profess to be experts rather than researching the information for ourselves.” Samuel reminded me of the things we had discussed earlier.

“But not all of us have time to do our own research,” I argued. “That’s why we have subject-matter experts. And how

do you know that those who teach have not studied it for themselves?"

"Because of the way it is being taught," he insisted. "Traditionally, it is taught that Darwin believed that evolution was the result of natural selection exclusively. But, according to his own words, Darwin is not arguing against the participation of a Supreme Creator in his book. What he is arguing against is the idea of the creation of each species being an independent act without the aid of evolutionary involvement. He says believing that theory,

'...makes the works of God a mere mockery and deception; I would almost as soon believe with the old and ignorant cosmogonists, that fossil shells had never lived, but had been created in stone so as to mock the shells now living on the sea-shore.'²²

Even Darwin believed in the hand of God in creation. In fact, on several occasions he refers to a Creator."

"You're right. I don't think that's what's commonly taught," I agreed.

"Of course it's not," he reiterated. "That would support the idea of a Creator and there seems to be a national, if not universal resistance to the idea of a creator in creation," exclaimed Byron. "The greatest failing of our formal education system is that it doesn't provide all of the legitimate theories that have been proposed; robbing students of what the various possibilities might actually be. In regard to creation, it is logical to believe that life began with an intelligent, ultimate design and has evolved just as it was planned."

"So you agree with Darwin's theory of evolution?"

Byron stopped to think about his response. "Not entirely. There are other theories that are still being argued. And, there are still many holes that must be filled. Even Darwin admitted that. He had trouble explaining the evolution of such organs as the eyes. In *The Origin of Species* he says,

²² Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, Gramercy Press. P. 202

‘To suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree.’²³

“He then continues to explain some of the ways that these complicated organs could have developed, realizing all the while that his suppositions were strictly speculation. But, let me point out the difficulties with the development of these organs strictly on the basis of natural selection. In his book, *Darwin’s Black Box*, Dr. Michael J. Behe, a professor of Biological Science at Lehigh University, calls such complex systems as sight and sound irreducibly complex. Here’s the way he explains it:

‘By irreducibly complex I mean a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly (that is, by continuously improving the initial function, which continues to work by the same mechanism) by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional . . . Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on.’²⁴

“Additionally, if an organism exists and has always existed in a world of darkness and silence, surviving and living successfully in that environment, even in the face of competition and changing conditions, then there is no logical reason for the

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

²⁴ Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box*, Free Press, NY, 2006, p. 39

development of such organs that produce sight and sound. Consider, in addition, with the appearance of that new organ, the eye for instance, the organism not only had to develop the physical eye with its complex retina, but also had to simultaneously develop an entirely new support system of nerves uniquely designed to collect the various intensities of light, convert the light to electrical impulses and communicate those impulses to a part of the brain that was capable of identifying that data and turning that information into images. The theory that this organ, with all of these unique nerves, and a brain that could translate this information into sight all occurring by chance, over time and yet congruently, is illogical. Especially given that the organism was already surviving without this capability. Certainly, adaptations like fins or other appendages that would help an organism to move more quickly would give them an advantage over the competition, but sight and hearing, having not been present in any previously existent organism, would not have been a “natural” progression necessary for survival. This same argument holds true for the development of all vital organs. As I mentioned, if evolution is mainly concerned with survival, then an organism with an already functioning system would not need to have that system modified, that is to say, not drastically modified.”

“I understand what you’re saying.” I actually did!

“And, along that same line of thought, if these modifications did occur slowly over time with the essential support systems being developed deliberately for their eventual use as part of some complex system, then something, somewhere had to know what the end result of this development would be. Something had to dictate how all of the parts would fit together in order to accomplish the final objective; that of hearing or seeing. Who knew that sight would be needed? Who knew that wings would be needed? Did evolution make these decisions? If we credit evolution with these intelligent designs we are simply saying that evolution is an intelligent creative supernatural entity. We are calling evolution God.”

“I really never thought of that. Why wings? Why legs and why arms? If these things developed slowly as environments changed in such a way as to require these capabilities, then who knew what the future conditions would be so that when they were needed they were available?” I was beginning to see the point.

“Finally,” Byron continued, “if evolution is mainly concerned with survival, then I will ask you, what creature has the best assurance of survival: one that is unisexual, possessing a male or female reproductive organ only, or one that is hermaphroditic, one that possesses both reproductive organs and can reproduce by itself without a mate?”

“Well, logically,” I answered, “the one that has the best chance for survival would be the one that is self-sufficient, that could reproduce on its own, guaranteeing the survival of the species.”

“Exactly. So why was there a gender split: male and female? And how did this occur? If this split occurred as a mutation, chances are it would not have been able to reproduce itself, or it would have reproduced a mix of hermaphroditic and gender-specific individuals. And, if it were a mutation, it probably would have become extinct given that there were no available mates. Now, even though it is illogical, let’s suppose that this is what happened, that there was this gender split as a part of some mutation. Seeing that virtually all organisms have male and female gender, it means that this mutation not only occurred in one species, but in almost all of the species that exist today. What are the chances of that happening? So, the gender that survived would actually be the mutation that should not have survived due to the complexity of finding a mate to reproduce. And, of course, most mutations cannot reproduce at all. Therefore, it is not logical that the development of genders occurred as a part of natural selection since natural selection is concerned with what works best for survival. The appearance of gender is one of the strongest arguments against a system of natural selection as the only means of evolution. I would like to

add one other problem with evolution strictly by natural selection. And one more argument.”

“Go ahead.” I was beginning to like this stuff!

“Once again, in *The Origin of Species*, Darwin observes that only those adaptations that benefited the survival of the organism became permanent in that organism.

‘Natural selection will never produce in a being anything injurious to itself, for natural selection acts solely by and for the good of each. No organ will be formed, as Paley has remarked, for the purpose of causing pain or for doing an injury to its possessor.’²⁵

Knowing this, we have to ask the question, how possible is it that adaptations and variations, not just in one organism, but a myriad of organisms, were beneficial one hundred percent of the time if we attribute those modifications to chance? Where in history or science do we have an example that illustrates how chance produces only positive results one hundred percent of the time? Conversely, it is simple to illustrate how chance cannot produce consistent results. Let’s use an example. Let’s suppose we have 5 dice and we throw those dice 10 times. What are the odds that all of the dice will result in the same number all ten times? Now, multiply the number of dice a thousand times, to represent each organism affected by natural selection and all of the aspects of nature that work together harmoniously and interdependently providing the perfect environment for life, and try to calculate the odds of that occurring by chance. Chance is not consistent or dependable. Chance is random. Chance is about odds and the odds that chance will always result in a positive outcome is illogical, unreasonable and does not conform to reality. Just ask anyone who has visited a casino and played a game of ‘chance’. And, finally...”

“I thought you already offered your last argument,” I reminded him.

“Just one more,” he begged.

²⁵ Darwin, p. 229.

“Okay.” Actually, I was eager to hear it.

“Humans.” He took a dramatic pause.

“Yeah, what about them?” I asked.

“Well, it might sound silly at first, but think about it: why are we humans the only creatures with a higher level of development; consciously, intellectually, psychologically and emotionally?”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean there were a lot of other creatures that evolved in the same areas that humans did; in the same environment, under the same conditions. Why didn’t they, too, evolve in similar ways to humans? Shouldn’t there be a species of tiger that can talk and think and use logic to make decisions? Shouldn’t a bear be sitting at the United Nations debating global warming? Why were humans the only ones to reach this pinnacle of development? Why were we the only ones whose brain grew and developed such capabilities as we have today?”

I had to admit that was perplexing. “That is an interesting observation,” I agreed. “All other creatures do seem to have reached a certain stage of development and then stopped. I’m not sure why that is. So what is your opinion?”

“The only logical conclusion is that evolution does occur to some extent, but the code or process for evolution, call it natural selection or whatever, was dictated by a well-defined design that was the result of the work of an Intelligent Designer; the Original Life, the First Cause. Once again, Darwin was not arguing the existence or non-existence of a Creator, which he acknowledges throughout his study on evolution. Scientists like Michael J. Behe in his book, *Darwin’s Black Box*, presents many scientific arguments to refute many of Darwin’s theories. However, we seldom hear of these arguments because acknowledging them would cause great distress throughout the educational and scientific communities.

“Recently, a group of scientists discovered what they are considering to be the most efficient shape in nature. As a result of more and more powerful microscopes, we are able to see

things like never before. It seems the most efficient shape is one that is part of even the smallest organism. It is a branch-like shape. One scientist remarked that natural selection has given us a shape that has brought organization to chaos. He spoke as if natural selection was an intelligent force that had made a conscious decision concerning the creation of the shape. Natural selection is a title given to a process, it is not an intelligent, creative being. However, it is a process that was designed by an intelligent creative being.

“Many experts are so focused on their particular discipline that they tend to develop tunnel vision, seeing their specialization as the only science that matters. If we take a step back and look at all of nature as one entity, we can recognize that each area of science is no more than a part of the whole. If we examine astronomy, we can easily see the tremendous order of the universe. Can chance ever lead to anything but chaos? Can chance result in consistent seasons, invariable tides, in planets that remain, century after century, confined to their specific orbits, each affecting the movement of the others? Can the earth, sun and moon be positioned by chance so that we have light and warmth part of the day and cool darkness the other? If we examine behavioral science and recognize the wonder of cause and effect, action and consequence and how these things bring order to life; and if we add to that the examination of evolution, we cannot help but acknowledge the tremendous order and design of all things. Coincidence? There are far too many occurrences to be coincidence or chance. The odds against it are far too great. All of these aspects of nature, logically and reasonably, cannot have been accidental, but the perfect design of an indescribable, incomprehensible, intelligent, creative Existence.”

“Wow! I have to agree, it does seem to be a logical conclusion.”

“And then we must ask ourselves, what exactly is life?”

“What is life? I thought we defined it earlier.”

“Yes, we’ve given a basic definition. But isn’t there more to it than that? We have to ask, is life no more than various

processes that enable an organism to grow and reproduce itself? What makes such an organism different from a non-living substance? Is it motion, or something greater? Is it intuition, instinct, consciousness, or the potential for consciousness? What makes it split itself or reproduce? What makes it seek nourishment? Is it something that has no actual place in evolution; a special quality that is not merely intended for survival but puts survival on a higher plane? Intuition, instinct, imagination, the ability to think, not just about eating and sleeping and finding shelter, but the capacity to contemplate life itself. Instinct, intuition, thought and consciousness are not elements of evolution. These are part of something bigger. These capabilities represent the quintessence of life. The real value of life is not in merely existing, it is being conscious of that existence.”

Samuel picked up where Byron left off. “Baruch Spinoza was a seventeenth century Jewish philosopher. In her book, *A History of God*, Karen Armstrong says this concerning Spinoza’s attitude concerning God:

‘As an aggregate of all the laws in existence, God was the highest perfection, which welded everything into unity and harmony. When human beings contemplated the workings of their minds in the way that Descartes had enjoined, they opened themselves to the eternal and infinite being of God at work within them. Like Plato, Spinoza believed that intuitive and spontaneous knowledge reveals the presence of God more than a laborious acquisition of facts. Our joy and happiness in knowledge is equivalent to the love of God, a deity which is not an eternal object of thought but the cause and principle of that thought, deeply one with every single human being. There is no need for revelation or divine law: this God is accessible to the whole of humanity, and the only Torah is the eternal law of nature.’”

“So we will agree with Newton and Darwin and Plato and Descartes and many other great scientists and philosophers that

there is a Creator and that this Creator is not in conflict with science,” I concurred. “Now what? Why was all of this important to our study of religion?”

Byron summed it up.

“We have shown that belief in a Supreme Being of some sort is logical and reasonable, much more, in fact, than the alternative. I will admit that it finally comes down to faith but so does accepting all theories, in science as well as in religion. However, it requires much more faith to believe in the theory of spontaneous generation and chance evolution. Creation, the universe as a whole, is irrefutable proof that there is an intelligent creator. There is an old story that has been told over the years that I enjoy retelling. It seems there was a man walking along the road when he happened across an old pocket watch lying on the ground on the side of the road. He bent down, picked it up and opened the case. He admired the ornate face and fragile hands. He watched as the second hand made its way, second after second with precision, around the circumference of the watch. Then he turned the watch over and opened the back. Looking inside, he marveled at its intricate workings. The tiny, scrupulously formed gears aligned perfectly so that the watch would keep time hour after hour, year after year. As he admired the meticulousness and workmanship of the watch he didn’t try to imagine how, over time, each fragile part of the watch had slowly been molded and shaped by the wind and other elements. Or how, by chance, they had all somehow mysteriously been brought together and had assembled themselves into such an arrangement as they now were. Or how the spring had quite inadvertently been wound so as to start the watch and begin the time-keeping process. He simply thought: somewhere there is a watchmaker. As we examine the universe with its complexity and yet its precision; as we analyze nature in our own world with its diversity and yet interdependence; as we marvel at the human body with its life-sustaining systems and its complex brain, which we still have not begun to understand, we must say to ourselves, somewhere there is a creator. Any other option is illogical.”

We thanked Byron for his time and we left. The drive back was quiet. Samuel knew that I needed some time to consider all of the things that we had discussed.