

THERE IS NO GOD

CONTENTS

Chapter 1 – The origin of monotheist religions	3
Chapter 2 – What is God under the monotheist theories?	7
Chapter 3 – Do we need a Creator?	12
Chapter 4 – Design	15
Chapter 5 – Revelation	25
Chapter 6 – God cannot fit into reality as we know it	29
Chapter 7 – The benefits of religion	33
Chapter 8 – What is there in place of religion?	36
Chapter 9 – What is there to put in place of religion?	39

Chapter 1 – **The origin of monotheist religions**

Monotheism is essentially a matter of having one god as distinct from a multiplicity of gods. The typical examples of the multiplicity of gods was early Egypt, the Greek system, the Roman system, the Northern European system, and in modern times, the Hindu religion. These multiple god systems usually had a hierarchy of gods, eg the Sun God in Ancient Egypt, Zeus, Jupiter, Wotan. He was more like a chairman of the board than an absolute ruler.

The move towards monotheism seems clearly to have started with the Egyptian Pharaoh, Akh-An-Aton, who endeavoured to turn the Sun God into a single god with the other gods forming more the position of archangels or chief assistants to the god rather than as separate individual gods. His endeavours seem to have lasted beyond his lifetime although overall in Egyptian theology there was a return to the multiplicity of gods of a hierarchy of status.

Chronology then points to Moses having picked up the one god theory from Akh-An-Aton. We know that Moses flourished approximately 60 years after the death of Akh-An-Aton.¹ By the time Moses became significant, the one god theory was present in Egyptian theology at least as an alternative position.

Moses then greatly simplified the one god theory by demoting the subsidiary gods so that they were merely the creatures of and creations of the one god.

The Jewish system then in turn led obviously and simply to the Christian position where the Messiah expected under the Jewish principles was accepted as Jesus Christ. The Christian system provided at least a basis for the Muslim system, Jesus being demoted to the position of an important prophet. In the Muslim system, the Messiah or the time of the Messiah is yet to come.

¹ References.

All of these monotheist religions share a pre-occupation with death and the afterlife. The Egyptian system focused on an afterlife to the extent that seems to have been a significant driving force in the Egyptian culture, although this may be perhaps over-emphasised because the archaeological remains were mainly focused on the appropriate steps to be taken to ensure the deceased of his afterlife. It remained, however, a permanent part of the Egyptian system that, if the proper steps were taken, an afterlife was assured.

This was then picked up in the Jewish system where a considerable part of the focus of religious activity and religious observances were the prospect of punishment or award in the life to come.²

It then became an almost total focus of the Christian religion. Punishment of extreme kinds was envisaged for those who did not conform to the requirements of the religion during their lifetimes. Hell, fire and damnation and tortures eternal were to be the lot of the sinner. Sitting beside God in an eternal heaven was the reward of the faithful who complied with the religious requirements. The organisation of Christianity greatly enforced this by claiming that the church held the keys to heaven and that even those who had sinned could still get into heaven by the intervention of the church. Christianity probably initially obtained its official status because Constantine saw it as a means by which, notwithstanding the awful things he had done in his lifetime, he could be forgiven and still get into heaven. At least that was one factor in his acceptance of Christianity. Constantine has been referred to as “Constantine the Great” but the list of his crimes against society and even his own immediate family, including his son, would strongly suggest he was not much better and perhaps worse than many of his predecessors or successors.³

Similarly and in turn, the Muslim religion has focused on the rewards to be achieved by those who have adhered to the teachings of the religion and eternal punishment to those have not. Some of the Muslim theories, however, seem to have presented an overall

² Frequently referred to as “Pie in the sky when you die.”

³ References.

more attractive idea of what heaven might be like than the somewhat drab picture painted for Christianity.⁴

When one looks at the three monotheist religions existing in the 21st Century widespread throughout the world, Jews, Christians and Muslims, to somebody who is not a member of any of the faiths, the differences between them seem to basically not that important even to the point of triviality.

They all have one god who seems basically to be the god described in the next chapter.

All three of them assure their believers of an afterlife at least a satisfactory kind and of dire punishments in the afterlife for those who transgress.⁵ All three of them also place emphasis on faith as the key ingredient of getting into the afterlife. This ensures the various religious authorities of a powerful role. The person who seeks to be assured that when they die their bodies are not going to disintegrate, rot or get burnt or eaten by scavengers, first of all has to show that he really believes there will be an afterlife and that he really believes in the powers of the one god and according the powers of the representatives of the one god on earth – the teachers and the priests. This essential requirement is part of the mainstay of the monotheist religions. Whether the evidence of the existence of God is there or not, whether the arguments for his existence are plausible or not, one's entry into a successful afterlife requires that one should believe and accept and have faith in the teachings of these three religions.

Accordingly, all three of the monotheist religions have the same essentials:

- There is a one and only god;
- There is an afterlife – good or bad;

⁴ References.

⁵ The basic improbability and absurdity of the idea of an afterlife is well illustrated by the large number of jokes of different kinds developed in all of those religious groups about the afterlife. **[insert some examples]**

- The way of getting to the afterlife is to believe that there is the one and only god and that there is an afterlife. If you don't believe and don't have faith in it, you don't get there, or if you get there you get to the bad part of the afterlife.

The differences between the three religions essentially turns upon the status of Jesus Christ: was he as the Jewish religion seems to suggest, an elaborate fraud; was he the son of God or indeed God incarnate; or was he merely one of various important and significant prophets as the Muslim teachings seem to require.

Considered carefully, that difference does not seem to be enough to justify the divisions of the world, mass murders and killings all round, and the fanaticism which all three of these religions seem to be capable of bringing about. All three of them seem to be capable of producing behaviour which, if it had any other origin but religion, might be thought to indicate severe mental disturbance, psychosis, or at least very neurotic behaviour. To provide its adherence with a "faith" which would justify murder and self-destruction seems anti-social when it has happened with relatively small groups in nations of religious persuasion. They are roundly and rightly condemned.⁶ However, when they take place under the aegis of one of the monotheist religions, the members of the other religions condemn them – though in the course of history each has done the same, and those who are fellow members of the murder suicide deranged fanatics, can praise them and feel assured of their place of a good spot in the afterlife.

⁶ eg Wako and the Jonestown suicides.

Chapter 2 – **What is God under the monotheist theories?**

All the monotheist religions adopt the same general position as to what God is. God, whether God is he, she or it, has the following characteristics. Despite the sexual bias, all of the religions tend to refer to God as if he were a male entity and accordingly this will be adopted in this work:

- There is only one God. He is one and indivisible. He is a single entity;
- God created everything. This is discussed in the next chapter;
- He has no normal physical material form;
- God is all powerful. God can do anything he wants. Everything that happens is part of his grand design. He is in charge of everything and can direct everything from butterflies to earthquakes; from deserts for forests; from ants to human beings; everything that happens is either the result of his direct intervention or part of a grand design which he has set in train;
- God knows everything that happens. He knows everyone's thoughts and ideas. Nothing is confidential from him. He knows about every desert, every lizard, what every human and other living creature is doing, what the weather is doing, what the fish in the sea is doing;
- God is not a purely local deity. He operates from one end of the known universe to the other. He is not like some spirit of a stream who is concerned only with the activities of the stream. He is not some god of a mountain concerned only with the immediate area of his mountain. His power and knowledge spreads everywhere;
- Prayer to the deity is supported by all of the monotheist religions as having some efficacy. The religions vary as to whether the prayers should be offered kneeling, standing, or lying prostrate. Sometimes within the one religion or denomination within that religion there are vary postures required for prayer ceremonies of different characteristics;

- Worship of the god is regarded as desirable and as part of the means of showing faith. This seems to be a direct carryover from the multiple god systems where one made offerings, worship or adoration to the particular god whose assistance one may require. In the Christian religion at least, the multi-god system is carried forward in a recognisable way in that prayers and worship are offered particularly to an individual saint who may have a reputation for special powers of intervention with God in particular areas. For example, seeking a husband; seeing a cure for particular diseases; seeking protection while travelling; or seeking benefits in a particular specific area associated with some saint or other. This is, however, not described as worship of a minor deity as seeking the assistance of a particular saint who is supposed to be somewhere around God and capable of asking God for special attention to the supplicant's problem.

The improbability of each of these characteristics does not trouble the faithful.

If God is all knowing, not just of local events, but of events of the whole extent of the universe, he cannot have a mind or personality or unity since he has to be observing and knowing events millions of light years apart. The distance between earth and the furthest part of the universe that we so far know about is [TO COME]. Knowledge essentially refers to a mind or a conscious process, becoming aware of some fact. A consciousness spread out over millions of light years seems a very strange concept. The receptive capacity must be incalculable. It is to be kept in mind that God's knowledge is not thought to be selective. God does not ignore a desert and its contents because it is of no interest to him. God does not ignore a planet with no life forms on it. Whirling quantities of gas are as much within his scope of knowledge as the detailed activities of his faithful. Reality is not some sort of book from which God reads chapters of interest. God is supposed to know everything going on everywhere.

If the faithful honestly believed that God knew what was going on in their minds at all times, seriously neurotic or psychotic behaviour might be expected. Could any human being really manage the concept that there was somebody or something eavesdropping on

their most personal thoughts at all times. There are things that human beings like to do in private. Sexual activity either alone or in pairs or even greater groups, is generally not something human beings like to have an audience for. But if God knows what is going on in human minds, why does God the omniscient stop there? Why not know what is going on in the minds which undoubtedly exist of largely and smaller animals? Why draw the line at animals? What about the minds of insects, reptiles and fish? The intelligence level of some animals is regarded by humans as worthy of study – why would God cross them off his list of things he knew about?

God the all powerful – the omnipotent – presents as many problems. There is firstly the traditional troubling argument as to why God, assuming he exists, would permit evil. This is usually answered by saying that God has given to man freewill which enables man to chose his course of action and enables God to ascertain whether this particular human is worthy of a good place in the afterlife or should be consigned to a bad place in the afterlife. Earthquakes, tsunamis and hurricanes are accepted as being somehow part of God's great design and the purpose he seeks to achieve by them is regarded as a mystery. It is not supposed to interfere with faith. This is of course a total logicity. If there is on the face of it a problem raised with a particular theory or belief, then that should throw the theory or belief into doubt. If there is some event totally inconsistent with the underlying theory, then that underlying theory is defeated or shown to be wrong unless the inconsistent events can be explained consistently with the theory. It is not an explanation of the apparent inconsistency merely to say that we must have faith that there is an explanation. That is itself to deny the possibility of testing the theory by seeing how consistent it is with the known facts. If any problem in the religious theory can always be answered by saying that it is not within our understanding to work out what on earth God is doing, then the truths of religion can never be tested at all. A fervent belief in an improbable fact does not increase the probability of the supposed fact.

Suppose an example. A crocodile seizes and eats a devote believer of one of the religions who has during his or her life complied with all the religious requirements and fervently believes in the truth of all of the religious doctrine. God has directly or indirectly, on the

religious theory, caused the crocodile to eat the true believer. The explanations usually offered just have to be considered to see how unlikely and fanciful they are. For example, it might be argued that the true believer was being saved from some terrible disaster that was going to strike him or her in later life. What sort of answer is that when God would have brought about the terrible disaster that would otherwise happen in the future. Why would being eaten by a crocodile be a kindness to prevent something even worse caused by God happening later? The hurricane which devastated the city of New Orleans in 2005, no doubt killed many true believers of perhaps each of the three monotheist religions. Was that also perhaps to save them from some future even worse disaster? What sense would that make if the future disaster was also to be caused by God? The individual eaten by the crocodile or the city wiped out present essentially the same problem.

The next explanation sometimes offered to return again to the true believer eaten by the crocodile, is that the true believer was so beloved of God, that God has taken that true believer up into his arms ahead of the ordinary time and the event should be looked upon as a recognition of the holiness and saintliness of the true believer who had the great benefit of being taken up to God by the intervention of a hungry crocodile. That becomes, however, totally implausible when we look at disasters such as the New Orleans hurricane. In those taken up to God there may have been some who were seen as true believers. There no doubt would have been some seen as thoroughly bad guys deserving of the worst of hell. There would be a lot of neutrals.

Even larger disasters such as the 2005 tsunami which took the lives of more than 200,000 people present an even bigger problem. It is no answer to say this must be part of God's great design. That is to assume at the beginning that God is there in charge of all these things instead of looking at the event as a test of the soundness of the theory that there is a God who is charge of everything. In the late 20th / early 21st Century of HIV and AIDS provides an even more graphic example since the disease is passed on from an infected mother to a newborn baby who at least in most of the monotheist religious theories are innocent. It would seem that God has selected every year thousands of children to be

starved to death or killed by disease before they have any opportunity to commit any sins whatever or for that matter, to exercise their freewill about anything whatever. If we use those terrible events as a test of the soundness of the theory rather than regarding the theory as unchallenged by those terrible events, all that is happening is a shutting of eyes to the reality.

Chapter 3 – Do we need a Creator?

The child's question: "Who created God?" is in fact a very sensible question. All religions, from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, seemed to have felt that they needed some explanation of how the earth and sun got there, or what they were. The tendency of the ignorant was of course to believe that the earth or part of it that they lived in was the centre of everything, since it was the centre of what they knew, is entirely understandable. It was only relatively recently⁷ that it was definitively established that the earth rotated around the sun, and that the sun did not rotate around the earth. Of course, that was rejected by at least the Christian religion at the time which obliged Galileo to recant. He was in danger of being burnt at the stake for heresy for not accepting that the earth was the centre of everything and the sun rotated around it put there by God to look after his particular interest, human beings. The reason why human beings were thought to be God's particular interest is because of the doctrine that God created man "in his own image". If man is in the image of God, then presumably God has some image relationship to man. Having a God which man is the image, or even a cheap carbon copy, does present even more difficulties as to God's omnipotence and omniscience discussed in the previous chapter. Otherwise, it is hard to see why human beings would be any more God's special concern than cows, sheep or crocodiles. If he created the lot, why does one of the species he created deserve more attention than others? But what is the answer to the child's question? Religious theories start us off with God.

If modern astronomical theory is correct that the universe began with a big bang,⁸ then God must have lit the fuse.

How does it advance our understanding of the universe and of astronomy to have God lighting the fuse or starting the big bang? If the big bang needs somebody to ignite its

⁷ REF

⁸ REF

fuse, why does not the fuse lighter need something to have brought into existence? If we say that God was always there biding his time until he felt like lighting the fuse, why is not possible that the bomb that went bang had also been there in one form or another for all time?

We now know from astronomy of course and geology and various other sciences that the world and everything that is in it was not created in 7 days, or any relatively short period. What we have now is the product of millions and millions and millions of years. Archaeology establishes that human beings or the species, homo sapiens, has been around for less time than most other life forms now living on the planet.⁹ Archaeology also establishes for us that millions and millions of years ago there were relatively limited numbers of land creatures and that other land creatures came in succession over extended periods with constant change. If there was a Garden of Eden, God turned Adam and Eve out of it less than 100,000 years ago when most of the living species that the planet now provides a home for, either existed or had obvious predecessors such as the mammoth, and the sabre tooth tiger.

Physics teaches the indestructibility of the total of matter and energy – all that can occur is to transfer matter into energy or energy into matter, or change the form of matter or the form of energy. If God could create everything, surely he must be able to destroy everything, but in fact he cannot. It is conceivable that some great force, including atomic warfare, could wipe out every single human being. Any life form can disappear as indeed many life forms have, but God is supposed to have created everything. Surely a creator can also uncreate. He did not create just man but the planets, the suns, and all the energy and matter involved.

When storms, hurricanes, tsunamis and earthquakes were not understood, it is intelligible that a primitive society would attribute them to the actions of some powerful god. Since the monotheist theory allowed only one god, that one god has to be blamed for all of these natural phenomena. However, we do know that they are natural. We can explain

⁹ REF

them. We may even be able to predict them. The fact that we cannot them, however, does not make them a matter of divine power.

Fears of natural disasters does not now justify prayers and sacrifices to the god to avoid them happening. They are going to continue to happen whatever we ask a god for, for whatever propitiation we may offer. Possibly the best we can pray for, assuming prayer to have any efficacy, is that the natural disaster should happen to somebody else and not ourselves.

Chapter 4 – Design

It is argued that so extraordinary and wonderful is the design of humans and other animals, even spiders, scorpions, and crocodiles, that there must be some great and powerful intelligence who has designed these extraordinary creatures. Even so, there are occasionally some criticisms of the design.¹⁰

The first thing to note is that the argument from design does not depend on human beings or even for that matter animals and insects and fish. It applies equally to plants and trees and fungi. It applies equally and fully to bacteria and viruses.

The same designer, the divine watchmaker, has not only produced the things we like, but the things we hate and detest. The crocodile eating the true believer, is equally the result of God's design. He has designed a creature capable of eating the supposedly most favoured creature.

It is suggested that the great designer has, however, left human beings with freewill. That is to say he has left their minds blank or partially blank so that they can decide for themselves for good or for evil. He leaves a part of his creation unfinished, namely its mental structure and attitude.

¹⁰ The argument from design is frequently the subject of jokes: three engineers were discussing god. The first engineer expressed the view that god must be an electrical engineer because the extraordinary nervous system, the tiny electrical impulses passing along the nervous system, and the capacity of the electrical patterns and impulses of the brain to control by this modest electrical current all of the movements and muscles of the body. The next engineer thought that god must be a chemical engineer because of the extraordinary capacity of the blood circulatory system to distribute around the body to places required a vast arrange of chemicals and fuel and to extract those chemicals and fuel from the digestive system, the lungs and other places. A most intricate chemical line indeed. The third engineer thought that god must be a mechanical engineer because of the great strength and flexibility and likeness of the joints and muscles and their capacity for movement and lifting and manipulating. An architect listening to the discussion interposed: "No, no. God is a civil engineer." The three engineers looked at the architect with astonishment: "Who else but a civil engineer would put a waste disposal channel through the middle of a recreational facility."

The doctrine of freewill itself seems insupportable when looked at with care. To any physical event we may attribute a cause. It may be difficult to ascertain the cause, but we can explain why the event came to occur. The crocodile that eats the true believer may be explained by consideration of the crocodile being hungry and being real concealed and consideration of the carelessness of the true believer in coming within reach of the crocodile without adequate protection. Why should mental events be any different. The whole study of psychiatry and psychology, even though they may be thought to be still in fairly early stages, has to proceed on the basis that a mental event has a cause. Otherwise there is nothing for the psychiatrist or psychologist to do. If the patient is depressed, the cause is explored: Is his brain short of certain chemicals? Has he had very bad things or unhappy things happen to him leading to a reactive depression? Why he is depressed is inquired into in order to try to find a solution. The psychiatrist and psychologist are proceeding on the basis of mental events being as much determined by causes as any other physical event. The doctrine of freewill proceeds on the basis that at least about some matters the mind is capable of making decisions without any causes whatever. For example, freewill may decide whether the man upstairs will go downstairs and rape the pretty girl in the flat on the ground floor, or alternatively, watch television. To say that that decision is the subject of freewill, unguided by any previous dispositions, trainings, habits or interests is a manifest absurdity.

The philosophical argument about freewill is confused. It is set against what is called "determinism". That is a strange and illogical idea. The concept of determinism is that our freewill will be exercised in particular ways and the way in which we will exercise our freewill has been determined by someone or something or perhaps God from the moment we are born. The logic of this view provides the logical basis of Calvinism. Since God is all powerful and all knowing and the creator and the designer of every human being, it is suggested that God has decided from the moment of birth (or perhaps conception) whether each human being will be saved or damned. God has determined the elect at the beginning. It therefore behoves a good Christian on this Calvinist doctrine to assume that he is one of the elect and to behave in accordance with God's requirements

on the assumption that he is one of the elect and that he does not wish to blot his copy book.

That strange and rigid doctrine, although it has about it a deal of strict logic and sense, if we start off with a god who is the creator of everything and who is all powerful and all knowing, has nonetheless been rejected by almost all religious people as being an idea which is totally inconsistent with God's goodness. On that doctrine, God must have determined from the moment of birth (or conception) who the bad guys are to be. He has determined in advance who will be the mass murderer, what Hitler's career was to be, how many countless thousands Wellington and Napoleon were to kill during the course of their professional careers. Such a proposition would be inconsistent with the required faith that God is good.

Having thrown out determinism in the Calvinist sense, the doctrine of freewill and the capacity of man, and for that matter any other living creature, to make a bad decision returns to the problem of how a mental event could be without causes. Social theory and criminology proceeds on the basis that if one turns to crime there are reasons and causes to be found in the background. If there are no reasons as to why a particular person behaves in a particular way then those sort or scientific inquiries are a total waste of time. An uncaused event is incapable of study or understanding.

We may wonder what causes our own decisions. Even why we find a member of the other sex attractive may be something we cannot fully understand ourselves. Why different people will find different members of the opposite sex attractive is something yet to be explored. However, we would assume that there is a reason even though we may not be in a position to describe it precisely.

Further, if man has freewill and that God has given him the opportunity to damn himself or save himself by making decisions, then why do we limit this capacity to human beings? A cockroach makes a decision whether to take the poison bate or not. We may say that his taking the poison bate has been caused by the careful placement of the bate,

or the pattern of exploration of the cockroach, or perhaps an especially attractive smell that has been given to the bait by its ingenious manufacturers – designers. The cockroach’s decision to take the bait may therefore be classified as having been caused. But why is the decision that a youth may make to seize a handbag from a passing old lady any less a caused event than the cockroach’s decision to take the bait. The more information one has about a particular course of action, the sounder the decision may be, but that is essentially a way of describing the fact that the greater information will provide a greater source of causation as to the course of action decided upon.

Darwin and his predecessors, however, have provided a much better and more complete answer to the argument that there must be a divine designer.

The principle of evolution has been well documented and explained in great detail in other places.¹¹ It may be summarised as follows:

The first point is that no two living creatures are ever exactly the same.¹² Change and difference is an essential characteristic of all life forms. No offspring is exactly like either of its parents. There will ordinarily be a substantial number of similarities. There will inevitably be a substantial number of differences. Some differences will be advantageous. The offspring may be more intelligent, more agile, of greater strength, of greater physical stamina, or greater beauty. Another offspring may have less of all of those characteristics than either of their parents. Even worse, offspring can and often are born with serious disabilities or diseases which neither of their parents had. They are born with disabilities which may shorten their lives substantially or make them incapable of living the sort of life which their family would regard as normal, or they may have basic weaknesses. Poor eyesight, an inferior heart, asthma, certain skin diseases are undesirable differences.

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¹² Dr Kinsie in his study of wasps of a particular variety provides one of the most detailed and careful examinations of this principle using a very common insect. His exhaustive and detailed study is an admirable illustration and example of this principle

The discovery and description of genes makes all these problems more intelligible. As to some genetic diseases it seems to be within the capacity of science ultimately to identify the gene which is causing the problem and fix it. However, until that happens, the superior offspring will tend to thrive and have successful offspring, again with differences from the parents. Those that have the problems likely to shorten life or make life in the manner of their parents impossible, tend not to survive or overall to have less offspring. Accordingly, changes which help the life form to survive and leave descendants are likely to be enduring changes whereas changes which reduce capacity, life expectancy or changes of offspring are likely to die out.

One of Darwin's examples was to consider a particular variety of bird which was found on a number of the Galapagos Islands. On an island with darker coloured vegetation, the birds were observed to be of darker plumage. On islands of much lighter coloured vegetation, the same variety of bird was found to have much lighter plumage. The obvious conclusion which the principles of evolution show is that on the island with darker forestation, the darker coloured bird was more likely to survive and have offspring and similarly for the lighter coloured birds on the lighter foliated island.

What has held to a lack of understanding of this fairly simple principle is a failure to appreciate the enormous periods of time involved.

God did not design the pelican in the form that we observe this distinct bird today. Every pelican is different from its parents. Every pelican is different from any other pelican. Changes which promote the survival of the bird have been retained in breeding. Changes which did not present an improvement to enabling the bird to live in its surroundings have not lasted. There are certainly strong indications of what the ancestors of pelicans looked like. If one thought of a bird designed to fish in particularly coastal waters and to be able to take into its mouth and digest quite large fish in proportion to the size of the bird, a pelican is a very cleverly designed animal. However, it was not designed. It evolved. The bigger beak, the flexible gullet, the wider wingspan, occurred not over a

few hundred years, not even over a few thousand years, but such evolution may involve millions of years.

The contention arising from the principles of evolution that man is descended from the ape has historically be the most controversial, although it seems in fact on the evidence that we have to be one of the most obvious. Listening and reading the critics of the doctrine that man is descended from the ape, the critics seem to be assuming that a couple of great apes, in a form recognisable to us today suddenly and unexpectedly one year had a bright pink or brown or black baby of the kind we would now put in nappies, and which would have to be looked after for at least the first 10 years of its life. A sort of one generation notion. Of course, that did not happen. The first recognisable homo sapiens would have been only marginally different from his parents. He would not have been capable of reading the newspaper or writing home to his parents. This was not a change that occurred over one or two generations, but again over millions of generations. Progressively one form of ape or another had offspring of greater mental capacity. They also had a body structure which made it comfortable and possible for them not only to walk upright when they wished to do so, which any of the great apes can, but to walk upright as a matter of preference. As they grew in intelligence, they were more likely to survive and to have offspring of their own because intelligence helped them to survive. In due course, the intelligence enabled them to co-operate by communication so that a group of them could take on the greatest animal of their time – the mammoth. The dinosaurs had all gone long before human beings or homo sapiens was found on the planet.

The best information we have¹³ is that human beings have been on the planet for no longer than 100,000 years, probably much less. At present research strongly suggests that homo sapiens first became an identifiable separate species somewhere in Africa and spread from there all around the world. Skin colours changed because of the climate and amount of sun to which descendants were exposed. The intelligence level does not seem to have changed much since the earliest time although subsequent research may tend to

¹³ REF

establish that there are higher percentages of intelligences of the level that we would call geniuses in present day human society than there was perhaps 50,000 years ago. But when one observes politics, wars, and even literature, it does not seem that human intelligence has changed greatly in at least the last 5,000 years. What has changed is technology and science which is largely the result of the capacity of human beings to write things down or tell subsequent generations as to what they have found out and learned. This expansion and improvement in mental capacity and knowledge will presumably continue to have an effect on the physical make up and the mental capacity of humans very slowly over the thousands of years to come. However, of course, like the dinosaur, homo sapiens may yet find a means of destroying itself, or suffer climatic changes which may make the continuation of this life form impossible.

Genetics also is of great assistance in tracing the ancestry of human beings. Our closest relative, the chimpanzee, has 98.5% of its genetic material the same as a human. The chimpanzee is very much stronger. It is far more agile. It has an ability to use tools. It appears to be able to communicate at least a rudimentary extent. It moves in social and family groups much like humans. It even suffers from some similar diseases – eg diabetes. The chimpanzee gets much the same diseases as humans – colds or pneumonia for example. It has similar teeth problems. There are large numbers of obvious physical similarities. The feet are different from the hands and the hands have fingers which can be used and manipulated for quite fine work in a way similar to human beings' hands and fingers. A chimpanzee finding lice in its mate or child and removing them and killing them involves a degree of manual dexterity of the fingers and hands and co-ordination by the eyes in a way all virtually identical to what a human being does.

It is not clear whether human beings are in fact descended from the chimpanzee or whether they come in two separate lines from an earlier common ancestor, but their near relationship genetically, physically and mentally is so obvious that it seems strange that many human beings are so presumptuous as to think that they are so wonderful that they could not possibly be the result of the evolution of a creature regarded as much less significant namely one of the great apes.

The evolution of course produced two types of human. The Neanderthal man seems to have had a larger brain capacity¹⁴ and seems to have been overall of the similar sort of physical capacity. As recently as the end of the 20th Century, there have been archaeological discoveries suggesting that it is at least possible that Neanderthal man and homo sapiens cross-bred on occasions. For whatever cause the Neanderthal died out presumably for some shortcoming in its mental or physical abilities or some susceptibility to disease which the other human variety, homo sapiens, did not have. Homo sapiens, however, have gone on to become the most successful animal species ever to have inhabited the planet. Every year the population of this unique animal species, the human ape, increases in number, increases in capacity to control its environment and essentially controls other animal or life forms at will. Sometimes humans act to preserve or in fact change life forms. The varieties of cattle now available to human beings have only a history of a few hundred years because they have been deliberately bred. Evolution has been used to produce beef cattle of various varieties and milk cattle of various varieties. Any stock breeder knows exactly how evolution works and applies it actively. He selects a bull which is as heavy in meat capacity as he can find. He uses that selected animal to impregnate a cow, also with the best characteristics as to meat that can be observed. Sometimes the bulls selected are so heavy that they cannot mate with the cow in the fashion that would have occurred before the evolutionary changes made him too heavy. The evolutionary changes which make him an excellent meat producing creature would have eliminated him if the evolution had not been controlled because he would have been incapable of mating. Instead, the veterinarian extracts the semen from the desired bull and artificially impregnates the chosen cow. Thus have been evolved the most successful meat bearing cattle. They have to be of course capable of surviving in the climate in which they are to be bred. Some cattle will do very successfully in very cold climates. Others will survive in climates so hot that other varieties of cattle could not survive. Even so, the cold climate cattle will be bred carefully to select the bull with the most desired features and the cow with the most desired features and the same will happen for hot climate cattle or cattle for temperate zones. Every cattle breeder actually applies the

¹⁴ REF

principles of evolution even though he may be unwilling to recognise that that is what he is doing.

The use of evolution has been with us for thousands of years in sheep breeding, dog breeding, the breeding of various types of grain crops, the breeding of flowers. It works the same way as the natural selection of unguided evolution, but with a guide from a breeder of sheep, cattle, dogs, flowers, trees, the evolutionary changes occur much more quickly and indeed can occur contrary to the principles of inbred evolution for example by allowing and encouraging and promoting the survival of a bull which is too heavy to mate.

Just as humans descended from apes, so we may expect that over the thousands of years to come, there will be some new species which will descend from humans. There is no reason why the principles of evolution should stop acting merely because human beings have been so far the most successful life form. However, what the future changes are likely to be is very difficult to predict, particularly modern human science and medical science in particular has devised means by which humans with severe disabilities not only survive but are able to breed even to the extent of passing on their genetic problems. That interference with natural selection makes the future harder to predict. That is merely the common experience that the more detailed factors are unknown and the consequences of actions cannot be sorted out with any confidence, prediction becomes impossible.

But the point is that just as human beings have evolved from one or more varieties of ape, not in one or two generations but over perhaps millions of years, so it may be reasonably anticipated that further evolution will occur. Maybe it will be some entirely different life form which will develop in a way which enables it to become the dominant life form on the planet.

Progressively each insect seems to be able to become immune to each new insecticide. This is not because they internally grow an immunity but because some of the insects

have a difference from their parents which enables survival and those surviving insects breed replacing those insects which did not have the capacity to resist the effects of the insecticides.

The opposition to the principle that man is descended from the ape is essentially the result of human conceit. If humans are convinced that they are so vastly better than earlier forms of life, it becomes difficult to accept that the chimpanzee is either a very very distant long ago ancestor or perhaps a very very distant long ago cousin. Minds untrained science for study have difficulty in following any sort of continuum of history. The monotheist religions are particularly prone to leap from their founders to the present without much attention of all of the evolution that the religious theory has undergone during the intervening period. Ideas evolve in much the same way as animals do.

We do not need to postulate a designer. Evolution over a period of thousands or even millions of years keeps some of the changes that make the animal more successful and kills off those changes which makes the animal less successful.¹⁵

¹⁵ Sir William Gilbert's character Pooh-Bah should not be alone in tracing his ancestry back to some primordial globule.

Chapter 5 – Revelation

The monotheist religions all depend primarily on what God has revealed to his chosen spokesman. It is not uncommon in psychiatric hospitals that there are patients being treated who believe that God has spoken to them and given them advice or instructions for good or ill. This claim is regarded as prima facie delusional. It is generally a safe assumption that if a person claims that God has spoken to them directly and imparted some instructions or advice or information, then that person is not mentally stable or totally sane. The monotheist religions, however, all depend upon what some one or more persons, usually called prophets, or in the case of Christianity, Jesus Christ, say that God has told them.

Those who deliver God's word have usually been able to persuade the audience of the time that they have some special powers or communication and are not merely lunatics. Frequently the spokes person for God is not believed or accepted by those in authority who come to the view that he or she is a lunatic or worse. Typical examples are John the Baptist who at the urging of those in authority and particularly the Jewish priests, was put to death. Jesus Christ himself is a good example. He was not believed by the Roman authorities who saw him overall as a disruptive force. Most of the Jewish community and indeed the Jews in charge of the community also did not believe him and saw him as a threat to the stability of the Jewish religion and he was put to death. In more recent times, Joan of Arc who certainly claimed to have heard voices directly from God was put to death as a heretic even if she was later rehabilitated and declared posthumously to have been a saint. Usually that requires the performances of some miracles and in times since Joan of Arc the investigation of the miracles has been thorough even if the attribution of miracle to events is sometimes open to question.

The function of miracles or other displays of divine favour is to demonstrate the reliability of the person who claims to be God's spokesman.

The miracles therefore fall into a secondary or supportive role. However, without that supportive role the revelations of God's spokesmen, would presumably never have gained any significant credence. If faith ultimately depends upon acceptance of these miraculous events or events showing divine favour, then the nature of the miracles should be examined in detail. It is not the purpose of this work to examine every alleged miraculous or divine indication in the monotheist religions generally but a few general observations may be appropriate.

The first thing to note is that most of these miraculous events are relatively trivial. Water changed into wine; loaves and fishes extraordinarily multiplied; a man believed to be dead brought back to life; a cripple suddenly cured; a longstanding disease suddenly and dramatically cured. Other alleged miracles such as a timely eclipse of the sun, or an unusual cloud formation or the wind suddenly turning to the right direction, are all so readily explicable by ordinary known phenomena that they may be at once discarded as evidence of any divine intervention.

The next feature to note about all of these miracles is that they depend upon reports in every case written many years after the occurred. For example, in the Christian religion the four gospels which tell of these miraculous events were written as to the earliest approximately 60 years after the death of Christ.¹⁶ They all therefore almost certainly depend upon third or fourth-hand accounts events of the past. They all lack what a lawyer would ordinarily refer to as the best evidence, namely a first-hand account of somebody who was actually there. The accounts therefore of these miraculous events or events tending to show divine favour, should be treated with at least considerable reservations as to their accuracy.

But even if it was accepted that the accounts of these miraculous events were broadly true, and that would be a very big assumption, that is not the end of the matter. What is to show that these events were the product of a god of the monotheist religious type as described in Chapter 2? It is a far less strain on credulity to attribute these miraculous

¹⁶ CHECK

events to the powers of a wizard who could do things of this kind even to the extent of putting life back into an apparently dead body, than to attribute them to an all powerful and all knowing God as described in Chapter 2. Surely a wizard with the power to turn water into wine or to produce extra stocks of loaves and fishes is easier to accept than a god.

Whatever the conclusion about the alleged proof of the authority of the spokesman of God, nonetheless we ultimately come back to the position that all of the monotheist religions depend upon what somebody has said God has told him. Moses, Jesus Christ, Paul, Mohamed, all tell us what God has revealed to each of them.

This immediately suggests that consideration might be given to the various possibilities as to what has happened:

- Psychotic delusion – a very common human phenomena frequently associated with delusions far more believable than that there is a god as described in Chapter 2 who has been in personal communication with the subject;
- The “revelation” may have been stimulated by a genuine belief that any community needs a religion, and that the religion offered through these revelations was superior than the religions that were otherwise around and available. There is strong evidence, historical and otherwise, to suggest that most communities at least in the past have wanted some form of religion or God who could be blamed for events or propitiated by appropriate sacrifices or prayer. There was also at one time a theory that society is only manageable because of God’s laws – that without the instructions of God, society would be a total anarchy. This involves the belief that it is police and the legal sanctions against criminals which prevent anarchy but the fear of eternal damnation to the wrongdoers. It seems more likely that human beings, like any other gregarious or social group of animals, have certain internal rules as to conduct. This has been progressively changing;¹⁷

¹⁷ “Not only is there no God, but have you tried to get a plumber on a Sunday?” – Woody Allen.
“A man must believe something and I believe I will have another bear.” – Peter de Vries.

- The “spokesman of God” may simply be wishing to attract fame to himself from some desire for self gratification even at the risk of life.

Surely the ultimate test must be whether the material “revealed” is believable, inherently probable or likely, or established by other observations or reasoning. It is the contention of this work that none of those things are established about any of the monotheist religions.

Chapter 6 – **God cannot fit into reality as we know it**

Humans have over many centuries made observations and calculations about the world we live in, the sun and planetary system of which we are part, and of the whole of the universe. These observations and calculations reached a high point with the Greek and Roman and Arab scholars and then, at least as to European scholars, went on hold until approximately the 16th or 17th Century when scientific observation began again in earnest. Each generation adds to our knowledge and understanding. What was mysterious and explicable to the uninformed as something to do with a power far outside the knowledge or understanding of human beings, is in the main now well understood. Knowledge will obviously continue to advance.

We have therefore a reasonable picture of what reality is like. Certainly we have reached a stage where we can be confident that there is no particular place either within the universe or within the core of the earth where there is anything that could be identified as a heaven or hell. Outer space is not now the total mystery that it was to previous generations. The core of the earth is also now the subject of geological and other observations which enables us to be reasonably confident as to what is in there.

If God exists, then God must be in some other reality than the one we know. If that is accepted as a principle, that God does not fit into the reality we know, then it can be shown by a reasonable course of thought that God cannot exist at all.

Whatever may be said about matter and energy in all its forms, there are two features of reality which are inescapable. They might be thought of as formal features of reality. They are space and time.

Time is necessarily infinite in both directions. The concept of someone having started time running as one might by ringing a bell at the opening of a stock exchange, is nonsense when applied to time in its simple pure form. If matter and energy began at

some point, which as set out above cannot be accepted, then before that beginning and going back infinitely, there was always time. Assuming a miraculous big bang, we can ask meaningfully and obviously what was happening before that? The answer must be that even there was no matter, no energy, no anything, there was still time passing. If the universe had a beginning, there was a time before the beginning.

If the universe as we know it was suddenly to disappear perhaps in another big bang and there was no matter, no energy, nothing left in space, time would go on. The concept of infinity is naturally hard to grasp, but is clear that time always has been and time always will be. Whether there is a means of measuring it, whether anything is happening in time or not, it goes on for every in both directions.

Space is the other formal feature. Again, that must be infinite in all directions. Suppose we go to the outer limit of the universe to a place where there is no matter or energy to be found and look out from there, what we are looking out to is more space. Space must also go on infinitely in all directions.

Advanced physical research during particularly the later 20th Century, particularly centred around the work of Albert Einstein, has established that in certain very extraordinary conditions the measurement of the rate at which time passes may change at least temporarily while the conditions exist. Further, those researches tend to show that in certain conditions the way light behaves and accordingly the space through which it is passing behaves may bend in certain circumstances. Those discoveries, or perhaps more correctly described as theories, do not detract from the circumstance that reality occurs in time, and space. It does not matter for this purpose that the time may vary as to its rate or measurable rate in certain circumstances. It is still time. It does not matter that space may produce something like a bend in certain circumstances but it is still space. Even if one imaged that space was somehow totally circular, if one goes to the perimeter of the circle and looks out, there must be then more space outside. The things we cannot control are space and time.

The reality in which God is therefore supposed to be able to operate has at least as its form or shape that is governed by space and time.

The one God described in Chapter 2 is apparently not limited by time. He has been there with all his powers forever and will remain wherever he is with all his powers forever in the future. The religious theory seems to require that before he did his creative bit he had been sitting around for an eternity doing nothing. Similarly, the god described in Chapter 2 must be completely over all space. He is not a local god. He is as much in charge as of earth and he is of the furthest star and planet in the universe, even though that millions of light years away.¹⁸

If it is accepted that he has no material form unless he should chose to adopt one, since it is believe that he has a capacity to act and cause things to happen, he must at least represent some form of energy. As a source of energy, however, he is undetectable.

The religious answer must inevitably be that God is not part of reality as we know it. This appears to be a way of saying that he does not exist. If he does not exist in our reality, he does not exist at all.

The religious argument, however, would be that there are different levels of reality. God is in a reality we cannot observe or get to.

The first question is whether there can be different levels of reality. It would seem obvious that if something is not in our reality, it is not real.

For the purpose of argument, let us imagine that there is the possibility of God being in some different reality. The problem then becomes once one has two realities, what is the bridge between them? If it is of our reality, it cannot get into God's reality. If it is made of God's reality, it cannot get into our reality. It would have to be some third sort of

¹⁸ Figures.

reality which would present a problem as to how either God's reality or our reality links with this third reality bridge.

Existence is being part of reality. Since God cannot be part of our reality, he cannot exist.

It is an interesting human characteristic that when reality is rejected, that is to say an acceptance of reality, realisation of reality or even belief that things are real or unreal – is lost, then an inertia sets in. It is seen in unsatisfactory marriages where the reality is that the relationship is bad for those in it and for the children that are in it. That realisation is rejected or concealed or suppressed. The inertia keeps the relationship going.

In politics, it will often be observable that the reality of a position may be quite clear, and it may call for some change of previous policies, but if that reality is not politically accepted or acceptable, inertia keeps the previous regime going.

So it is with religion. Reality having been rejected and God accepted, even though he cannot fit into our reality, the inertia of previous beliefs keeps going. Even the scientist who understand the extent of the universe and the infinity of time and space and the impossibility of any entity being informed about or day-to-day charge of areas as far distant from each other as the extremes of the universe, may still as a matter of inertia attend church every Sunday.

Chapter 7 – **The benefits of religion**

The simple contention of this work is that there are not any.

Religion was said to be the great patron of art. When religion was the great patron of art, it was firstly because the religions had control of the money and secondly art was used by the religions as propaganda or supportive material for the religions.¹⁹

It has even been alleged that the abolition of slavery was a contribution that religion made to the world. Any study of the subject of slavery establishes that whether it exists or does not exist, whether it is approved or disapproved is essentially a political decision. Religion has been used to justify slavery on the basis that the slave either has no soul at all or is already damned not being a member of the faith. That justifies treating him in a sub-human way. On the other hand, if the political forces provide for the abolition of slavery, then religions, in their usual way of siding with the politically successful, will declare that that is a right and proper thing approved by God. Religions, like politicians, like to be on the winning side.

Religion is said to benefit society by providing the whole basis of law and order. It is suggested that if we did not have the Commandments of God, particularly Moses' 10 Commandments, society would be ungovernable and society would degenerate into chaos. The existence of criminal activity, even of the most severe kind, however, still seems to continue through all societies, some crimes increasing or decreasing particularly with the variation of economic circumstances. In very poor countries, theft may become more common than it is in very wealthy and financially secure countries. But even the

¹⁹ The author's wife on a tour of Italy, including some of the most beautiful of churches, one day exclaimed, "*If I see another portrait of St Sebastian with the arrow sticking out him, I'm going to scream.*" St Sebastian was a popular subject for art for the church because it was one of the occasions on which a male torso or almost naked body could be painted even if it had arrows sticking out of it. The multiple portraits and paintings or representations of Mary with the infant Jesus are again obvious supportive and propaganda material for the Christian religion. Mohamed had the good sense to prohibit the making of images but the elegance of the architecture used by Muslims and the beauty of the interior decoration even though not representational, provides significant support for the practice of the religion.

most religious countries do not have empty gaols or totally law abiding communities. Neither are the communities of any one of the monotheist religions noticeably more law abiding than any other. The vast majority of the monotheist religions are law abiding, hard working, socially acceptable and integrated people. The criminal element is a small element in each of the religions. Historically this does not seem to have been changed or to have in fact changed by the work or beliefs of any one of the monotheist religions.

Religion is said to be a great consolation. When a loved one dies each of the monotheist religions, with their pre-occupation with death and the afterlife, tells us that the departed loved one has gone somewhere, where God is looking after him or her. No one seems to ask where they have gone physically and as a matter of where they are in space. Further, no one seems to concern themselves with any precision as to what they are doing in that place, wherever it is. The exception to this is the fire and brimstone theories of each of the monotheist religions that wrongdoers and those who do not have the faith are being punished in an afterlife forever. Like ?? [NAME], who the ancient Greeks believed had been tampering with the gods' rights by controlling fire, who is tied to a rock to have an eagle come each day and tear his liver out which was then allowed to re-grow overnight so that he could suffer the torture again the next day of having his liver torn out, wrongdoers are infinitely tortured.²⁰

²⁰ Popular jokes often refer to this problem of heaven and hell. A man who by any standards had led a very bad life after death found himself wandering for a long time through mists until he came to a clear door marked "Hell, please ring". Contemplating his bad life and the impossibility of finding anywhere else, eventually he plucked up courage and rang the bell. A very beautiful female receptionist came to the door and welcomed him in, "We've been expecting you. The Devil likes to greet new arrivals personally, but unfortunately he is tied up at the moment. The Devil noted that you like to play golf. He suggested you might meet him for a round of golf tomorrow morning. Shall we say 9 o'clock at the first tee?" The new arrival was astonished and immediately agreed. The receptionist continued, "We've arranged a very nice apartment for you with a very charming lady who will share your apartment and hopefully be part of your future for a long time. We do hope you will be happy. If there are any problems, just let us know and we will arrange another coupling." The new arrival expressed his thanks. "Just one further thing sir, as you are playing the round of golf, along the 9th fairway there is a wall off to the right. Whatever you do, don't look over that wall." The new arrival then went off to his apartment, met his female companion, and the following night would have been the best night of his life he wasn't already dead. The next morning he met the devil on the 1st tee. A charming gentleman, and they agreed to the terms of their game. The new arrival hit off and for the first 8 holes did very well, winning 6. He and the Devil got on splendidly. On the 9th fairway however, his ball rolled up quite close to the brick wall which the receptionist had told him about. He climbed up the tree and looked. It was terrible. There were people being whipped. There were people being tortured. There were people being burnt. There were pits of boiling substances in which people were being submerged. Screams filled the air. The new arrival got down from the tree and was

The consolation offered, however, is essentially a simple deceit. The faithful mourner is assured that at some time in the future they will meet their loved one again in heaven. The mourners never have it suggested to them that their loved one is going to be found only in hell or at least that is a practice that has now virtually died out. The trick here is of course that the mourner, having died, never knows that he or she did not get to heaven and that their previously deceased loved one was not there. The mourner is not around to come back and complain and say that they had been sold misinformation. It may be consoling, but is it honest?

badly shaken and his golf went to pieces. He lost all the rest of the holes. The Devil took him in for a drink at the end of the 18th hole and remarked, "Your game was doing very well for the first 8 holes but then suddenly your game went to pieces. What happened?" The new arrival replied, "Your receptionist had advised me not to look over that wall, but I did and it was terrible and it upset me so much to see all those people being whipped and tortured and screaming." The Devil, "I'm sorry you looked at that. That is the Catholic section, they like it that way."

Chapter 8 – **What is there in place of religion?**

The first question is why do we need a replacement for religion? In educated nations, the percentage of the population which does not have any real credence for any of the monotheist religions is progressively increasing. Throughout Europe, and many other countries with a monotheist background, and even in parts of the United States of America, the number of supposed believers who do not attend any services or Christian celebrations or Jewish celebrations or Muslim ceremonies, is progressively increasing. On the other hand, the expansion of the world population is leading to an overall increase in the apparent numbers of the faithful of each of the monotheist religions.

It is said that religion binds the community together. In a sense, this is in some cases correct. Where the only weekly community meeting point is a church, and all the members of that community attend or support that church, it becomes a community meeting ground which has a benefit of making each member of the community believe they have some association with every other member of the community and at least providing a place where the faithful may meet each other. However, for every community where religion has this binding and self-supporting community effect, there are other communities where the monotheist religions are divisive. Countries, towns or cities which have kept themselves with just the one of the monotheist religions have frequently done so by an enormous expense of blood death and horror in previous generations. The Spanish Inquisition provides an example of the horrors of trying to keep the religion of a community uniform. Those events were not limited to Spain. Each of the monotheist religions has gone through periods where their major activities were killing fellow members of their supposedly same religion. In 300 years of the Romans supposed persecution of the Christians, the total number killed for refusing to take any step to acknowledge the Roman religious system or to pay homage to any of the Roman gods, seems to have amounted to no more than 3,000. On the other hand, within 100

years of Christianity having become the official Roman religion, 20,000 Christians had been put to death by other Christians.²¹

In modern communities, the religions will frequently be very divisive. In the late 20th and early 21st Century, the constant and longstanding division between Jews and Christians has continued and the very worst period in the whole history of the world for a deliberate attempt to wipe out a religious group was the Nazi Pogrom against the Jews during the Second World War. However, Jewish Pogroms were not the invention of the 20th Century Nazi Party. They had occurred in almost every country in Europe and the east.

Historically, Christians of various denominations have brought about vast divisions in society. Looking at the late 20th and early 21st Centuries, the division between Catholics and Protestants still continues. In some countries it is perhaps not as bad as it was in the first half of the 20th Century but in some other areas it continues. A mutual suspicion between Catholics and Protestants, separate schools, separate social arrangements, different marriage and burial practices have tended to keep the division alive.

The late 20th and early 21st Centuries have shown a continuation of the opposition between Muslims and Christians and for that matter Jews, not only in the Palestine / Israel conflict but in the great tension between Muslims and Christians to be seen in parts of Indonesia, parts of Malaysia and in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq, Iran and Lebanon. The argument between different varieties of the one religious group are not limited to Christians. Sunni Muslims and Shi'ite Muslims seem to be as ready to kill one another even by suicide attacks, as Protestant and Catholics were until at least the 18th Century.

It may be in fact arguable, when one looks at the causes and consequences of wars, persecutions, social unrest, discrimination and source of conflict, that religions have been one of the great sources of evil of the whole world. Looking at the history of the

²¹ REF.

monotheist religions and each of their claims that God is good, make one wonder what God is good for.

Chapter 9 – **What is there to put in place of religion?**

The answer in short form is of course is that there is no need or reason to put anything in the place of religion. However, people who like to have some understanding of what they are doing here being alive, and what the purpose of being alive is, like to have at least some theory. The reality seems to be this.

We are one of many life forms on the planet. We have the good fortune that overall we are the most successful life form and we are, except in certain rare circumstances, the top of the food chain. The occasional human may be eaten by a shark, crocodile, lion or tiger. However, in the main with proper weapons or preparation or taking reasonable avoidance steps, we can avoid being eaten by any other life form and continue happily to eat whatever other life forms we wish. Lions and tigers are said to be not particularly edible, though some African and Asian tribes have in fact eaten them, particularly for ceremonial purposes. Crocodiles provide a light white meat, pleasant in many salads. It is not particularly flavoursome but is otherwise an acceptable light meat. Sharks fins a popular delicacy.

Being on top of the food chain and successful as a species, is a start to what we might call happiness. No species, including human beings, likes to be killed. It is a natural preference of all living organisms to stay alive. Humans are no exception.

Nextly, the great success of the humans as a species, enables the species to do what all other particularly mammal species like to do, namely to find a mate or companion and to have offspring. Humans have much longer and complex courtship processes than other mammals or birds, but essentially the process is the same. All animal creatures like to find a mate and to have offspring. Humans are able to do it generally speaking in comfort and without material sacrifice of life or limb. That is something else human beings may generally feel happy about.

Further, human society and the way humans band together to live in groups, enables the provision of accommodation, generally of high standard. We do not have dig ourselves a hole or to climb up a tree. We are able to employ specialised workers in our community to build comfortable homes where we will be protected from the weather and if they are built strongly and comfortably enough even to protect us from many natural disasters. The existence of our society and its complexity enables everyone to take on a different specialist role and everyone may work together successfully. There will of course be exceptions. Further, societies together and co-operating will usually be able to provide employment for the male or in some societies' protection in the event that he cannot find employment. He will then be able to earn money to support his mate and children. The female will be in a position where her needs can be basically provided for by the male's work and she will be able to devote herself to the care and upbringing of her children and the care and assistance and support of her mate. Society gives to human beings a very superior alternative to what other groups of animals can provide for themselves. We do vastly better than our nearest relative the chimpanzee.

Specialisation means that there are those who specialise in growing our food so that human beings in most well organised or well governed societies do not have natural disadvantages, are able to eat regularly. There are of course almost every year parts of the world where there is starvation and hunger and death from lack of food but surely we can look forward to a time when the world will as a whole, weather through the present international institutions or some other international institution, avoid the absurdity of some countries dumping unwanted food while other countries are starving to death.

Accordingly, without religion, and without more than usual bad luck, a human being may do what any other living creature wants to do but in much greater style and comfort. He may live as long as his body continues to function, subject to diseases, to which all animal species are liable. They will be able to select mates. They will be able in the main to be adequately housed and fed and protected from the elements and most natural disasters. They will be able to eat well and live in comfort and raise their children. The basic needs of living creatures will be met.

What need is there for more? The answer is that a characteristic of humans is to want more. Even in perfect happiness some will want to achieve other things.²²

Traditionally, humans have involved themselves in their spare time from working and rearing a family in a variety of other activities which they find rewarding. Many of the great scientific discoveries and advances of knowledge have been from the activities of such people who want to do more. Much great literature and poetry has been derived from people who want to do more. Some fortunate few are able to do more comfortably in the course of what would otherwise be an ordinary life by making a particular effort in some sporting field or in some social field. Many human beings want to find some satisfaction in life other than in fulfilling basic needs. The expansion of knowledge, the care of the sick, sporting activities of the highest standard, success in entertainment fields or in literature or poetry provide the opportunity for an additional satisfaction. Life is there, be in it. Do things that bring satisfaction. Efforts at doing other things are frequently their own reward. It is a small part of society, however, which applies itself trying to achieve something beyond meeting the basic necessities. A large part of any community will be content with their basic needs being met, and the opportunity to watch and enjoy others who perform in sporting roles or performing plays or movies. That is not something to be condemned, but it does probably give to those people overall a less satisfying and enjoyable life. It does, however, avoid the disappointment which may who strive nonetheless experience.

Helping others and helping one's own family gives a significant internal satisfaction. We are in this life only once and it makes common sense to think that during our time here we should do what we can for the benefit of our immediate family and our society and for the satisfaction of our own ambitions. Fortunately those who find satisfaction or have adopted as a chosen means of supporting himself as anti-social behaviour or criminal activity, always seem to be a small minority, but unfortunately they seem to be always there. Hopefully further study and experiment, by somebody who has the urge in this

²² "Men are not fooled by happiness." [WHERE DOES THIS COME FROM?]

direction, will find out how we may do something about that. So far, however, efforts to eliminate anti-social behaviour and crime do not seem to be encouraging.

We must accept that when finally our body wears out or disease or accident kills us, our life is over and there will be no further conscious activity. Our brain dies along with everything else. Our memory goes. Unless we have written something down our thoughts go. Our body will either rot or decay or be burnt depending upon social preferences of the immediate family of the deceased, or in some previously societies the body might be preserved so that at least part of it remains visible and identifiable for a very long time. There does not, however, logically seem to be any reason to try to preserve a body after death except some religious belief that at some time in the future life may return to the body. Experience so far suggests that no Egyptian mummy has ever been revitalised except in horror movies.

A human should be striving for the following:

- The meeting of his basic needs – food, shelter, a mate, children;
- He should be striving to stay alive as long as reasonably practical, without condemning him to suffer unnecessarily when there is no likelihood of a reasonable life being restored;
- He may legitimately strive to live his life and to have his mate and children live a life in comfort and security, free of worries as to the financial future;
- Hopefully there will always be a percentage of humans who want to do something more. The more may be achievement in the sports or the arts. It may be achievement in science, discovery, exploration, medicine, law or any other field of human endeavour. Excelling at anything and being good at anything is always of psychological benefit to a human being. Even having tried and failed, is better psychologically for the happiness and contentment of many humans than not having tried at all.

Accordingly, the basic beliefs of human beings should be that they have but one life after which there should be no thought of an afterlife. There is not one. Endeavours should be made to live that life in a way which meets firstly basic human needs and secondly provides satisfaction or a sense of achievement in or more areas of human endeavour.

To say that the aim is happiness is perhaps a shorthand way of talking about achieving security, comfort, contentment or satisfaction.

Such a life does not depend in any way on the existence of an afterlife, or the thought that there is some god watching every movement and understanding and knowing every thought who is going to either reward or punish in an afterlife.

Life or death is often a matter of chance. A beautiful young human with apparently a great future ahead is just as likely to be accidentally killed in a traffic accident as any old or worn out criminal. It is a matter of random accident. We have to live our life on the basis that we should be doing what we want to do or achieve each day allowing for the possibility that we may not be here tomorrow. We should enjoy our success as a species. We should try to use such talents as we have or abilities as we have in away likely to produce the satisfaction of having achieved something with our life.