

Personal Evidence of the Creator

By David Feddes

Physical evidence of the Creator is all around you, and within you is personal evidence of the Creator. Implanted in you are capacities of the human spirit: thought, conscience, choice, love, and longing, to name a few.

Denying the Creator means denying all these. If you are the accidental result of a purposeless process, human personhood is not real. Your mind, your conscience, your will, your love, and your longings are illusions. They are byproducts of biochemistry. In his book *The Astonishing Hypothesis*, Francis Crick writes, "The Astonishing Hypothesis is that 'You,' your joys and sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules."

Phillip Johnson points out that we might not take Crick seriously if he just came out and said, "I, Francis Crick, my opinions and my science, and even the thoughts expressed in this book consist of nothing more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules." Crick's hypothesis is self-refuting. If he has no personal identity, why listen to him? If his thoughts are nothing but nerves and molecules interacting, why pay any attention to them?

Humanity is not the result of a purposeless process. We are created by God. In fact, God's original purpose in creating humans was to picture something of what God himself is like. "God created humanity in his own image" (Genesis 1:27). As God's image bearers, we humans are more like God than anything else in our world, so our capacities as persons are even stronger evidence for God's reality than the design and splendor of the world around us.

Thought

Consider the reality of human thought. You have the ability to think, remember, make deductions, use language, and communicate with others. But how do you know that your thoughts have anything to do with reality? How do you know that anything exists outside your own mind? How do you know it's not all an illusion? How do you know other people exist? How do you know it's not all a dream? You can't prove it. And yet you can't help believing it. You just know it. Or how about memory? How do you know you didn't pop into existence five minutes ago with a brain full of signals that merely seem like memories? You can't prove your memories are real—you just know it. And why? It's part of the way God made you.

Only because of the Creator can we have any confidence in the human mind. Atheist scientists view the universe as undirected, random chaos flying through space, and they view the brain as a randomly evolved blob of meat. If you accept the notion that all human thoughts are nothing but impulses in a randomly evolved blob of meat, you have no basis for confidence that you have any capacity for knowing truth.

There's a great irony here. Atheistic evolutionists insist that their view is far more rational than believing in a Creator, but it turns out that if you see humanity as the result of a random process, you destroy human rationality. You have no ground for supposing that human thoughts—

including your own—have any link to reality. William Provine once said that in order to believe in God, you have to drop off your brain at the church-house door. But who is dropping off his brain? Provine's atheism says that his own brain is an accident and that all his beliefs are accidental. How can he be so sure he knows the history of the universe and the origin of man? How can he claim to know anything at all? Why should he suppose that the accidental ideas in his accidental brain are in touch with reality?

Does an atheist have any reason whatsoever to think there is any connection between electrical impulses in a randomly evolved blob of meat and the universe out there? There's no reason to suppose that the random blob of meat, the brain, is intelligent. There's no reason to suppose that the chaotic, random universe is intelligible. There is no order or pattern to be detected in the world because the world is chaos, and there is nothing in the brain that could recognize an order or a pattern because that brain is also chaos.

If you deny the Creator and claim that your mind is just a jumble of chemical reactions that are the accidental outcome of a mindless process, what basis do you have for supposing that your mind is in touch with reality or that your train of thought is valid? None at all. But if you believe that a supreme Intelligence made the world intelligible and made your mind intelligent (to some degree, at least), then you have a basis for thinking your mind really can know something about the world around you. You don't have the infinite mind and unlimited knowledge of God, but your Creator has given you mental capacities and language skills to connect you with truth.

The mind is created by a greater mind, and the universe is created by that same great mind. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The logic of the universe is coming from the Logos himself, Jesus Christ.

What is thought? Either it is a God-given capacity which can detect patterns in the world he created, or else thought is merely random firings of random brain cells, and you have no reason to put confidence in thought.

Charles Darwin feared that his theory of undirected evolution would destroy confidence in human thinking. He wrote, "With me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of a man's mind are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?"

Our capacity for thought, for grasping truth, for recognizing patterns in the world around us, is personal evidence of the Creator.

Conscience

Inside you is another pointer to God's reality: conscience. Conscience is a sense that some things are right and others are wrong, that there is goodness that we have a duty to pursue. That sense of duty and of goodness comes from the original goodness, the Creator of all things. He's the one who put conscience within us, giving us a sense of who he is and what he wants.

Your conscience senses a moral law outside you that you are either keeping or violating. But if there is no Creator of conscience and no Lawgiver, your sense of right and wrong has no basis in reality. If the conscience is really nothing but random chemistry in a random brain, why pay attention to it? If there's no Creator, why suppose there's any supreme standard of right and wrong? Without a Creator, you don't really have a conscience, and there is no moral standard for your conscience to recognize. Anything you do is just a byproduct of random evolution and chemical reactions. In that case, wrote Darwin, "Wickedness is no more a man's fault than bodily disease."

Atheist evolutionist Richard Rorty, a prominent philosopher, insisted that humans are not designed to know what is true or to seek what is right: "The idea that one species of organism is, unlike all the others, oriented not just toward its own increased prosperity but toward Truth, is as un-Darwinian as the idea that every human being has a built-in moral compass—a conscience." Therefore, insisted Rorty, we must give up on truth and morality.

But if atheistic Darwinism has no room for mind and conscience, no room for truth and morality, why give up on truth and morality? Why not give up on atheistic Darwinism instead? If it's a choice between thinking your mind is real and your conscience is real, or believing that everything is random, why would you pick the random option? You know you have a mind. You know you have a conscience. Why would you suppress, trample, and deny everything you know about yourself in favor of atheism?

The Creator is real. Because he designed us to resemble him, God's character is the original pattern for our character. We're created to image God's goodness and love. This is the basis of moral standards. We somehow know that not all behavior is equally right. Each of us has a conscience, a God-given internal sensor of whether we are matching the standard set by God.

Our conscience has been damaged by sin and influenced by social forces, so we don't always agree on the exact details of what's right or wrong, but we know there is a higher standard, even when we disagree about some details. The very fact that we argue with others about what is right means that we're appealing to a standard higher than ourselves.

Our awareness of a higher standard and the tug of our conscience point us to the reality of our Creator.

Choice

Another personal evidence of the Creator is our capacity of choice. We make decisions. We consider various options and choose.

Or do we? If choice is totally determined by physical processes and the forces of evolution, then there is no such thing as choice. In the words of atheist scientist William Provine, "Free will as it is traditionally conceived ... simply does not exist ... There is no way that the evolutionary process as currently conceived can produce a being that is truly free to make choices." You think you have a choice. It feels and seems like you have a choice. But choice is absolutely unreal because the evolutionary process, as currently understood, could not produce such a thing.

This denial of free choice is closely related to a denial of conscience and moral standards. Provine insists that "there are no inherent moral or ethical laws, no absolute guiding principles for human society."

What should you make of this? If you know you have a capacity for choice, why believe atheists who say, "According to our theory, you don't"? So much the worse for their theory! Theories are meant to explain, not to explain away. When there are capacities you know you have, such as mind, conscience, and choice, but the theory denies them, you say, "Bad theory. Atheism can't explain things I know about myself. It makes far more sense to believe in a Creator who instilled these capacities by making humanity in his likeness."

Love

Another pointer to the reality of God is our capacity for relationships. We flourish best when we love and are being loved. Without love, life is hardly worth living. That's because we were created by the one who is love and were designed to be like him. We were designed to flourish and to live on the fuel of love, receiving and giving love.

In our fallenness we aren't always loving, but we still know that love is why we exist. We just know it. When we see or experience instances of love, we rejoice in it and are amazed by it. That's who we are. That's who we're meant to be. And we know it.

Atheistic evolutionism reduces all relationships to mere biology and the drive to survive. In the words of Richard Dawkins, "We are survival machines—robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes." According to this view, love is an illusion. Reality is that we are "survival machines" that perpetuate "selfish molecules." (Here's yet another reference to machines and programming from someone who denies design. Have you ever seen a machine, a robot, or a program that had no designer?)

In this view, romance and long-term commitment and friendship are really nothing but molecular reactions. Family bonds are just evolutionary adaptations to insure the propagation of one's own genes. Even behavior that seems completely unselfish can be explained in evolutionary terms. A soldier who falls on a grenade to save his companions, a doctor who leaves a lucrative practice to work in a desperately poor neighborhood for little pay—there's got to be some evolutionary instinct that can explain it. These explanations are often so far-fetched they're comical, and yet they're presented with a straight face and the claim that now you know the real, rational explanations.

If you want to understand people and their relationships, you need to consider more than just biology or chemistry or physics. Romance and marriage involve a spiritual chemistry that's more than just body chemicals. Friendship and loyalty have a deeper basis than just the survival of DNA similar to one's own. Promises have a meaning rooted not just in survival instincts but in the faithfulness of God. Our experience of love in human relationships points us to the God of love who created us.

Longing

Here's more personal evidence of the Creator: longing. Within each of us is a longing for unlimited life and happiness. Nothing less can satisfy us. We crave joy without measure and life without end. We crave God. This craving is evidence of God's reality.

Some people argue the opposite. They grant that most people seem to have spiritual longings, but they use this fact to argue that God is not real, that he is just wishful thinking. Psychologist Sigmund Freud rejected belief in God and pictured religion as a crutch for emotionally needy people. According to Freud, people are afraid of the wild world around them and the wild urges within them. They yearn for a father-figure to protect them from dangers and to direct their urges in proper channels. This longing is so strong that it moves people to believe in God, without evidence or reasoning. They are moved by primitive longing, not rational thinking.

Freud was on to something when he pointed out the power of wishful thinking. People sometimes make themselves believe what they want to believe. But isn't this also true of those who don't believe in God?

Many people find it more convenient to be atheists than to believe in a God who might limit them or disapprove of their behavior or hold them accountable. Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World*, admitted that his unbelief was not just a rational result of scientific research or logical reasoning. He said that he and many of his fellow atheists wanted the world to have no God and no moral standard. "We objected to the morality," said Huxley, "because it interfered with our sexual freedom." Huxley's atheism was wishful thinking.

Atheist philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said, "If there were gods, how could I bear not to be a god? Hence there are no gods." Nietzsche didn't use evidence or reasoning to prove that there is no God or supernatural reality. He was so eager for his own will to be supreme that he found God's reality unbearable. Nietzsche's atheism was wishful thinking.

So if you dismiss belief in God as wishful thinking, keep in mind that not believing in God can also be wishful thinking. And if you agree with Freud that religion is really just a yearning for a father-figure, don't overlook the fact that many atheists (including Freud himself) had serious problems relating to their fathers. Their rejection of God may have been their way of rejecting any sort of father-figure.

The psychological argument against God says that belief in God comes not from rational thought but from a deep, non-rational urge. Even if that were true, the question remains: why do so many humans have this urge? Why, in almost every human culture, is there an urge to believe in Someone higher than ourselves? Atheism seldom comes naturally; you must talk yourself into it. Skeptics try to explain God away and claim that the deep urge to believe in God is an irrational instinct and a sign that God is a human invention, not a divine reality. But what would you expect if God is real and made humans for fellowship with him? Wouldn't you expect people to have powerful longings that often go deeper than rational analysis and explanation?

Almost all babies are born with a sucking instinct. They have this instinct without doing any logical reasoning about the existence of mothers. Does this prove mothers do not exist? Would anyone claim mothers are not real because babies have an urge to suck that isn't based on logic? Of course not. The sucking instinct is a strong indication that there is such a thing as a mother who is meant to satisfy that craving. Babies come from mothers and are designed to thrive on mother's milk. So why claim that God isn't real because people have an urge to believe in him that isn't based on logic but on a deep, basic longing? What if this longing is a sign that humans come from God and are designed to thrive on fellowship with him?

The Bible never pretends that believers in God follow logic alone without any deep cravings. Rather, biblical writers say, "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Psalm 84:2). "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Psalm 42:1-2). The Lord is a living reality, not just a philosophical proof or a mathematical formula, so a craving for God is a strong sign that he is there, not a proof that he isn't. Saint Augustine once wrote, "Lord, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you." Even agnostics and atheists wonder about God sometimes and feel an urge to believe in him, though they continue to suppress this urge. The craving for God arises at some point in almost everybody.

A skeptic might point out that a craving doesn't prove that what you crave is real. If you're stranded in the desert, you might have a burning thirst for water, but that doesn't mean water is there for you. You might see a mirage in the distance and think it's water, but that doesn't make the water real. Likewise, you might want God and imagine God is out there, yet be mistaken. Craving something doesn't prove you'll get it.

Fair enough. But the craving still might reveal something about reality. It would be strange to crave water if no such thing as water existed anywhere. Stephen Evans writes,

The fact that people in general have a need for water is strong evidence that there is such a thing as water, though this does not imply that an individual person will get water on a specific occasion. In a similar manner, the fact that we have a deep need to believe in and find God strongly suggests that God is real, though of course this does not mean that any one of us will actually discover God and establish a relationship with him. It would be very odd indeed if we had a fundamental need for something that did not exist.

Most people seem to have a built-in craving for a higher, supernatural reality. If this craving were our only indicator of God, we might dismiss it as wishful thinking. But there is so much other evidence of the Creator: evidence in the design and splendor we see around us, and evidence in the capacities we find within us.

The capacities of the human spirit are personal evidence of the Creator. "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts" (Proverbs 20:27). The Creator is real, and he has made us for himself. Each of us has a hole in the soul that only God can fill, a craving that only God can satisfy. "God has put eternity in the human heart" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). We have a yearning for everlasting life. We have a need to know the infinite God.

Atheistic materialism cannot explain this craving for God and eternity, and it certainly cannot satisfy it. Instead, it can only offer despair and death. Atheist Bertrand Russell declared,

Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are only the outcome of accidental clusters of atoms and molecules; no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system; the whole temple of man's achievements must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand.... Only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be built.

That last sentence says it all: atheistic evolution offers unyielding despair. Life has no meaning and no lasting hope. As Russell put it, "There is darkness without, and when I die there will be darkness within. There is no splendor, no vastness anywhere, only triviality for a moment, and then nothing." Other atheists have likewise emphasized that the universe is indifferent to us and that we have no eternal future.

Are You Really You?

Denying the Creator—whether as a materialist who believes only in matter and molecules, or as a Buddhist who accepts the doctrine of no self—leaves us without any basis for supposing that human thought, conscience, choice, relationships, and longing have any meaningful reality. Your thinking isn't really thought, your feelings aren't really feelings, and your will isn't really making any choices. In fact, you're not really you.

You may think you're a person with an individual consciousness, but you're not. According to atheistic materialism, you're just a complex machine that's arisen after a long series of chemical accidents. Everything about you is just a chemical accident. Language is a chemical accident. Memory is a chemical accident. Reasoning is a chemical accident. Conscience is a chemical accident. Choice is a chemical accident. Love is a chemical accident. Courage is a chemical accident. The longing for God and immortality is a chemical accident.

What sense does it make to believe this? It contradicts everything you know about yourself. You are you. You know that the human spirit, with its many capacities, is as real as the human body. Atheistic materialism denies the design of the body and the reality of spirit. A sound theory is supposed to explain known facts, and atheistic materialism can't explain things like thought, conscience, choice, love, longing, and other aspects of human personhood. It just tries to explain them away.

But come on! We know these things are real. They are essential to our humanity. We know we're not just machines (though our bodies are designed more marvelously than any machine ever built). When we recognize the marvels of our bodily design and pay attention to the personal capacities of the human spirit, we see strong evidence of a personal Creator.

Clearly seen

God created us in his image, and his image shines forth in the reality of thought and conscience and love and choice and craving and so many other things. The stamp of God's image is upon us even in our sinful and fallen condition. When you look at that, do you say, "There is no God whom we image. There is no such thing as personality, only atoms and unguided evolution. All the capacities of human personality are illusory"?

When you look at Mount Rushmore, should you say there never was a George Washington, there never was a Thomas Jefferson, there never was a Theodore Roosevelt, there never was an Abraham Lincoln? Should you say there never was a sculptor named Gutzon Borglum who shaped Mount Rushmore and put these images upon that mountain? Are the images on Mount Rushmore just the random result of the wind blowing and the water trickling down the face of that particular mountain? There never were such presidents, and there never was such a sculptor. It's all natural causes.

No, it's obvious that Mount Rushmore was designed and shaped with a purpose, and it's also obvious—even if we try to suppress the truth—that human life was designed and shaped with a purpose. "What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20).

There's good news and bad news. The good news is that God keeps shining forth and making himself known, even to people who never open a Bible, even to people who pay no attention to his Word or to preaching. The world keeps displaying physical evidence of the Creator, and their own capacities provide personal evidence of the Creator. The evidence cries out, "God!"

The bad news is, we've got no excuse. If God were completely hiding himself and revealing nothing of himself to anybody, we could just say, "How was I supposed to know God is real?" But created things constantly speak of God. "Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world" (Psalm 19:4; Romans 10:18).

So "men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools... They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator" (1:21-25). People didn't want to give God glory. They didn't want to give thanks, and they didn't want to owe anybody. They didn't want anybody greater than themselves. So they put created things ahead of God and plunged their minds into darkness.

We're all in that boat unless the Lord rescues us. God has paid for our sin and rebellion and ingratitude with the blood of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We can have our sin taken away and be made right with God by trusting in Jesus as our Savior. Then, when we're made right with God and can again see him for who he is and glorify him for who he is, we can recognize that his

glory is displayed in the physical creation around us, and his glory is displayed the way he made our human personality.

"God created man in his image... male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). "Man is the image and glory of God" (1 Corinthians 11:7). We fall short of God's glory when we don't praise him and don't recognize his image on our own personality. We honor God's glory when we exclaim, "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! ... You made humanity a little lower than the angels and crowned him with glory" (Psalm 8:5). "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful" (Psalm 139:14).

I'm not going to fall for the various lies that foolish men with darkened minds have put out there. If those lies tell me that I don't have a mind, and I don't have a conscience, and I don't have a choice, and there never was any such thing as love, and that my craving for God is just molecules or wishful thinking, why would I deny everything I know about myself? You know these aspects of your personality better than you know that the universe exists. You can't prove that physical things outside you exist, though you're right to think so. But you know yourself. You know your personal capacities by firsthand experience of yourself.

Some atheistic scientists say there is no self, no real personhood. An entire religion is built on the doctrine of no self, the religion of Buddhism, which says that you are just a candle for a moment and then you're out. There is no self, no personality; it's all an illusion. You can believe such lies if you want. You can deny that there is a God. You can deny that you have a personal self. You can build your soul "on the foundation of unyielding despair."

Or you can build your soul on the rock that is Christ.