

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

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Dearest grandchild,

Please consider these inspired words of Paul: **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1 KJV)** The Greek word translated as “reasonable” is “logikos” from which we get our English word “logical”. Presenting yourself to God as a living sacrifice is both reasonable and logical. “Atheism”, or “Naturalism” is not reasonable or logical!

So, today’s letter will deal with the self defeating nature of Naturalism. Even Charles Darwin was concerned about this and wrote: *“But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?”* Animals, as you know, are only interested in “survival” not “truth”. C. S. Lewis wrote about this same problem for atheists in his book on *Miracles* and Alvin Plantinga further developed the argument in his *Warrant and Proper Function* (1993). Briefly summarized, Plantinga argues that naturalism is incoherent, because we have no reason to suppose (from a naturalistic, evolutionary perspective) that our cognitive capacities would be truth-tracking.

Atheist Richard Dawkins described the amoral nature of the universe without God. He wrote: *“The universe we observe has ... no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. ... DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music”*. If there is no God, and if naturalism is true, then how can random unguided atoms arranged by accident determine truth? Please consider:

1. If Naturalism is true, then every finite thing or event must be (in principle) explicable in terms of the laws of nature.
2. If this is true, then the mind (along with its thoughts and conclusions) must, like every other thing or event, simply be the result of the non-rational, ineluctable forces of nature.
3. If this is true, then there would be no way of distinguishing between "true" thoughts or conclusions and "false" thoughts or conclusions.
4. But if we suppose #3, then we have no way of concluding that Naturalism is true, because the conclusion we must draw from Naturalism, is that there are no such things as "true" arguments or "false" arguments, "true" conclusions or "false" conclusions, "true" thoughts or "false" thoughts. To accept Naturalism as “true”, it must be possible to have a "true" conclusion. But this is precisely what Naturalism denies!
5. Thus, since Naturalism makes it impossible to accept anything as "true" or "false," it makes it impossible for us to accept Naturalism as "true" or "false." The attempt to convince us that Naturalism is true presupposes an ability that Naturalism denies we have.

C.S. Lewis said it like this: *"It follows that no account of the universe can be true unless that account leaves it possible for our thinking to be a real insight. A theory which explained everything else in the whole universe, but which made it impossible to believe that our thinking was valid, would be utterly out of court. For that theory would itself have been reached by thinking, and if thinking is not valid, that theory would, of course, be itself demolished. It would have destroyed its own*

credentials. It would be an argument which proved that no argument was sound -- a proof that there are no such things as proofs -- which is nonsense."

6. Since the arguments of the Naturalists are contradictory -- they presuppose what they deny -- they are fundamentally irrational and thus have no claim on our assent (because, in fact, they claim that our assent is impossible).

Scientist J.B.S. Haldane concurred and put it like this: "*If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true ... and hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms*" [or to believe that my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms.]

Again let us turn to Charles Darwin for his observations about the pragmatic aspects of Christianity. After circling the world compiling information to weave into his evolutionary preconceptions, he returned to England to find vigorous verbal assaults on missionaries. Accordingly, he rebuffed the critics with these words: "*They forget, or will not remember, that human sacrifices and the power of an idolatrous priesthood – a system of profligacy unparalleled in another part of the world – infanticide, a consequent of that system – bloody wars, where conquerors spared neither woman nor children – that all these have been abolished; and that dishonesty, intemperance, and licentiousness have greed greatly reduced by Christianity. In a voyager to forget these things is base ingratitude; for should he chance to be at the point of shipwreck on some unknown coast, he will most devoutly pray that the lesson of the missionary may have reached thus far . . . the lesson of the missionary is the enchanter's wand. The house has been built, the windows framed, the fields plowed, and even the trees grafted by the New Zealander . . . the march of improvement, consequent on the introduction of Christianity through the South Seas, probably stands by itself in the records of history*" (Journals of Research pages 414, 425, and 505).

So "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1 KJV)

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce