

The Faith That Persuades

by J. Edwin Orr

J. Edwin Orr's sermon emphasizes the importance of engaging youth in meaningful discussions about faith and science while equipping them to defend their beliefs logically and historically.

Duration: 1:04:25

Scripture: Psalm 139:23

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the idea of chance as an explanation for the complexity of the human brain. He mentions a professor's experiment with monkeys typing on typewriters, which ultimately leads to the realization that chance is not a sufficient explanation. The speaker then introduces the concept of Providence and how it led him to find God through Jesus Christ. He also mentions the role of scientists in finding faith and shares a personal anecdote about his son. The sermon concludes with a break and a hymn, followed by a conversation with Dr. Wallace about computer programming and human conception.

Transcript

I wonder sometimes if the older generation, my generation, understands what young people are up against these days. In Arizona I visited an old people's retirement home, some of them very successful in business, and found to my surprise the majority of them had not been through high school. Whereas today we find young people not only going up through high school but going through university, and they face a totally different set of problems.

So if my friends of my own generation would forgive me, I'm going to speak directly to the young people here, high school and university age, and young people out in business. If the older people want to listen in, that's all right, I don't mind, but I'm going to speak primarily to the young people. I flew into Irkutsk, capital of Siberia, first day of spring.

The temperature was 25 degrees below zero. I wanted to see Lake Baikal, the deepest freshwater lake in the world. They arranged for a university student to take me out there.

Lake Baikal is the size of Switzerland, but it's a mile deep. If there are any Canadians or Americans here, you may be surprised to know that Lake Baikal holds more water than all the North American lakes put together. I got engaged in conversation with Sasha Sergovich.

Now I assure you, to talk to a communist in Russia is quite different than speaking to people who have been brought up in a Christian tradition. You cannot begin by saying, do you know that God loves you and has a plan for your life? They'd simply turn you off by saying, I don't believe there is a God. But I determined to engage Sasha in conversation.

He said to me, have you learned any Russian, sir? I said, yes, 12 words. And I said in Russian, good morning, good evening, goodbye, tea with lemon, thank you, and slava bogu. Slava bogu? He said, where'd you learn that? I said, is that not good Russian? Oh, he said, yes, very idiomatic, but old fashioned.

Now, slava bogu is the Russian way of saying, praise the Lord. Actually, it means glory to God. They just say glory to God.

Slava bogu. He said, where'd you learn that? I said, I learned that from Mr. Khrushchev. Please, he said.

I said, now I have a friend living in Kansas City, right in the middle of the United States. His mother was born in Russia, but she was completely deaf. So he learned to lip read Russian to help his mother.

He told me he had the time of his life lip reading Khrushchev on television. If Khrushchev had said, who is that fat fool over there? Am I supposed to shake hands with him? He didn't realize that my friend could read him loud and clear 1,500 miles away. On one occasion, someone shouted, how's your health, Mr. Chairman? Khrushchev looked for the Russian speaker.

Then he beamed. He said, slava bogu, pretty good for a man of my years. On another occasion, someone shouted, what do you predict in Russian-American relations in the next 10 years? He said, God only knows.

On one occasion, he said with an engaging smile, my dear American friends. He waited for his interpreter. May I quote an old Russian proverb? Whatsoever a man sough, that shall he also reap.

Sasha said to me, that is an old Russian proverb. That's a verse from the Bible. Outside your university, I saw a sign that said, whoever does not work shall not eat.

Well, he said, Lenin said that, as the apostle said that first. As a matter of fact, I told Sasha, the Chinese communists who hated Khrushchev called him a Bible-quoting clown. He didn't mind being called a clown.

He was known to clown. But he didn't like being called a Bible-quoting clown. So he called a conference of foreign newsmen, and he said, gentlemen of the press, I want to assure you that I am an atheist.

An Englishman said rather dryly, you do talk a lot about the Almighty, sir, for an atheist. Khrushchev didn't like being contradicted. He said, do I have to tell you twice? I'm chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, and I am an atheist.

A Frenchman said provocatively, how do we know you're not a secret believer? Khrushchev lost his temper. He said, will you listen to me? He said, God knows I'm an atheist. Now, Sasha laughed too, but he said that was just conversation.

He said, I'm an atheist, and sometimes I say, God help us. I don't mean it. I said, granted, the man is an atheist.

And by the way, you sometimes hear silly rumors among Christians. They can be very gullible at some points. The rumor that Khrushchev had been converted, and that's why he lost his job.

I asked the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Moscow. He said, I wish it were true, but it's not. He had an atheist funeral.

He died an atheist. But I said to Sasha, I've met many atheists, but they nearly always seem to me to be believers in reverse. Please, he said, what does that mean? Well, I said, in Ireland we have a minority in the population that gives us some trouble.

They're called leprechauns. Please. Oh, I actually don't know that word.

You know, little fairy people living in the woods? Yes, yes. He said, we have that in Slavic folklore. Well, I said, I do not believe in leprechauns, but I don't go around lecturing on why I do not believe in leprechauns, or leprechauns are dead, or leprechauns are not relevant, or we can get along without leprechauns.

I just leave them alone. But most atheists of my acquaintance won't let God alone. Now, Sasha said to me, but does any man with a scientific education believe in God nowadays? I said, do you have a scientific education? No, sir.

He said, I'm a language major, but I've studied some science. I said, me too. I did my master's degree in geology, which is a very exact science.

I'm a fellow of the American Scientific Affiliation, and I gave him my card, which I printed up specially for the occasion. I said, Sasha, I wasn't aware of any scientific argument against God. He said, are you serious? I said, yes.

Sasha, I said, would you agree that the 70 past years, the 70 years past, scientists have discovered hundreds of thousands of facts? Yes. I said, name one that contradicts the idea of God. He didn't answer.

So then I said, would you agree this past 70 odd years, scientists have propounded thousands of theories to explain the facts? Yes. I said, could you name one that contradicts the idea of God? I said, some have been scrapped, some are in suspense, but others are accepted everywhere. Would you agree, Sasha, that the American space program and the Russian space program are based on the same scientific theories? He said, exactly.

I said, now name one commonly accepted theory that contradicts the idea of God. Again, he didn't answer. So to tease him, I said, how about the theory of gravitation? Does that contradict the idea of God? Because if it does, how do you account for the fact that Sir Isaac Newton, who propounded the theory, believes in God? Oh, sir, he said, that was 300 years ago.

Everybody believed in God then. I thought, take the 20th century. We think Albert Einstein was perhaps the greatest scientist of the 20th century.

He taught the theory of relativity. Does that contradict the idea of God? Because if you say it does, I'm going to ask you, how do you account for the fact that Albert Einstein, in his way, believed in God? I was disappointed with Sasha. You'd get a far better run for your money at the University of California or the University of Melbourne.

I remember an angry student getting up at UCLA. He said, what about the steady-state cosmology? I should stop and explain. That's the idea that the universe is eternal.

That somewhere or other it's manufacturing its own hydrogen and renewing itself never had a beginning, therefore you don't have to have a creator. I replied, the only answer I can give is the Encyclopedia Botanica says, this interesting speculation to date has produced no observable evidence. And that's a devastating thing to say about a scientific theory.

Nothing supports that idea. I was coming down from Forrest Home, in the conference grounds in San Bernardino Mountains in California, when a Baptist girl said to me, you made it far too easy. I said, what? She said, you said no commonly accepted theory contradicts the idea of God.

I said, what about the theory of evolution? Now she said, don't tell me it's not commonly accepted, because I'm having a bad time in biology. I said, it's taught in university, in college, in senior high, junior high school, grade school, kindergarten. But who says it contradicts the idea of God? Well, she said, doesn't it? I said, does it? What textbook do you use? Oh, she said, we have a book called Elements of Biology by Paul B. Weiss.

I said, I know the book. Published by McGraw-Hill, 1961. On page 434, it says, To the religious person, only the way God operates and not God as such is in question.

Christians love to argue on the wrong ground. Now, when I teach in Fuller Theological Seminary, theological students, I talk to them about the various theories of creation and evolution, and what a believer can, what a Christian can believe and what he cannot believe. But when I speak to an unbeliever, and he says that the theory of evolution discredits the idea of God, I have to contradict him flatly.

I was speaking at Purdue University in Indiana, when a priest who had lost his faith was now teaching, said to me, well, I gave up my faith in God because evolution provides a viable alternative. I said, you must be kidding. He said, why not? I said, sir, you couldn't mention one thing that I couldn't turn around and say, couldn't God have done it that way? And that would knock your argument on the head.

Without committing my point of view, I'm a progressive creationist, but without committing my point of view, I'd simply say, you don't have a leg to stand on. Why is it that Christians swallow fallacies and allow the ungodly to shove them down their throat? Well, I can tell you, there was a fellow in San Fernando writing his Ph.D. thesis on alcoholism. Now, you know, to get a Ph.D., you must make a contribution to knowledge.

In high school, if you're asked to write a paper on alcoholism, you go to the public library, get a few books, skim through them, get the main ideas, write it in your own words, that's important in high school, and hand it into your teacher. Your teacher may say, this student seems to have grasped the main idea. All right, here's an A. But not a Ph.D. You must add to the field of knowledge.

Now, this fellow thought, what new thing could I discover about alcoholism? I don't drink myself, and people have been getting drunk for thousands of years. Then the thought occurred to him, if I could discover the common denominator in drunkenness, perhaps I could discover the cause of alcoholism. His supervisor said, that's a good idea, work on it.

He didn't drink, but he found an old fellow on Skid Row who was willing to do all the research for him for nothing but the raw material. On Monday, he got drunk with whiskey and soda. On Tuesday, he got drunk

with brandy and soda.

On Wednesday, he got drunk with gin and soda. On Thursday, he got drunk with rum and soda. On Friday, he got drunk with vodka and soda.

My friend said, what makes you get drunk must be the soda. Now, that's an obvious fallacy. Yet, Christians, not only communists in Siberia, but Christians in California or Victoria, swallow fallacies like that.

I went to speak at a rally at California State University in Long Beach, arranged by Campus Crusade and Indivarsity. To my horror, I discovered they'd chosen a topic for me. Sometimes students pick a topic without consulting their visiting speaker.

I was to speak, and the topic was on the podium, on God versus science. I looked around for the chairman. There was a gray-haired man standing nearby, so I said, are you chairman of this meeting? He said, yes.

I said, what is your department? He said, I'm professor of physics. I said, I'm the speaker. He said, oh.

I said, sir, when you introduced me, would you change that topic? I'm not going to speak on God versus science. There's no contest. Yet, the average Christian has a sneaking idea that somehow or other, science is his enemy.

I never forget what Martin Lloyd-Jones said to me once. Never forget it when he said, all truth is on our side. All truth is on our side.

Now, even at this minute, some people may say, well, what's he giving us now? Is this the gospel? Let me quote a verse of script to you from the Apostle Peter. Always be ready to give a logical reply to the one who asks you for a reason of the hope you have within you. Should I do that? When I meet students in university, when I speak to students in high school, should I be ready to give them a logical reply? Some Christians, they know they're saved by faith, think it excuses them from thinking from then on.

I think we ought to be ready, and we should prepare our young people to meet these challenges. Now, on another occasion, I was in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, one of the republics in Central Asia. I was talking to a Madam Koja.

Her parents were Muslim, so when I engaged her in conversation, she said, well, I'm not so foolish to say that science contradicts the idea of God, but science explains everything. That makes the idea of God quite superfluous. I said, science explains everything? Well, she said, it's on its way to explaining everything.

I said, now granted, science does explain many things that uneducated people have attributed to God. When I was four years of age, I heard the thunder roll, I thought God was moving his furniture upstairs. I don't hold that view today.

But does science explain everything? You come into my kitchen, you say, why is the kettle boiling? I reply, the kettle is boiling because the combustion of the gas transfers heat to the bottom of the kettle, which being a good conductor, transfers to the water. The molecules of water become more and more agitated, they spin around, they make a singing noise, they give off water in the form of steam, and that is why the

kettle is boiling. Then my wife comes into the kitchen, you say, Mrs. Orr, why is the kettle boiling? And my wife replies, because I'm going to make you a cup of tea.

Now, the more you think about it, the more you realize, I didn't tell you why the kettle is boiling, I told you how the kettle is boiling. And science doesn't tell the why of anything. You go to your professor, you say, sir, when water freezes, it expands.

Yes, that's a great exception. Yes. And it forms ice and floats to the top.

Yes. Why? What do you think he'll say? He'll say, I'm not here to tell you why, that's the way it does. He only tells you how.

We have to turn to philosophy, or better still, to divine revelation to find out the why of a lot of things. But there's another fallacy that science has made our faith superfluous, when science doesn't answer one question. There was a girl in California, thrown through the windshield of a car.

She died on the road, but before she died, the doctors got to her and delivered her baby by caesarean operation. Now, the unborn baby is protected by what's called the amniotic sac, which contains a fluid that's called the amniotic fluid. What's the purpose of this? Well, it protects the baby.

That's why the baby survived and the mother was killed. Why does it do this? Do you think that millions of years ago, a lot of cells got together and said, fellas, if we cooperate, we can really lick this problem? Of course not. Now, the leading atheist in the United States is an Australian.

I'm not sure if he was born in Australia, but he lived here. Then he went to Oxford and did his doctorate of philosophy. His name is Dr. Michael Scriven, a brilliant man.

He's now a professor at Berkeley, California. He surprised a big audience once by saying, I'd like to agree with Dr. Orr that science does not disprove the existence of God. But, said he, science does not prove the existence of God either.

In fact, he said, science offers no evidence whatsoever. Therefore, he said, in this being the case, why should anyone believe such a proposition? Now, where was his fallacy? Well, he was assuming that the only evidence is scientific evidence, but that's not the case. In Long Beach, there was a man called Jack Kirschke, arrested for the murder of his wife and her lover.

He said the night of the murder, he was in Las Vegas at the tables. Sure enough, he was in Las Vegas, but I think he must have driven up there during the night to establish an alibi. He wasn't able to establish it, so he went to prison for life.

What did he need to go free? Just two witnesses. Did they need to be scientists? Not at all. They could have been school dropouts.

But if he had produced a taxi driver and a waitress, if the taxi driver had said, I met the guy at the airport at quarter to ten and drove him to the casino, and if the waitress said, I served him a cup of coffee at quarter past ten, he would have gone free. But how do we know the taxi driver and the waitress were telling the truth? There's a legal procedure for finding out truth, isn't there? Cross-examination. You ever heard of Wheaton College in Illinois? Some girls came in very late one night, three o'clock in the morning.

The matron was upset. Where have you girls been? Oh, matron, we had a flat tire. Well, how could the matron say, no, you didn't? The matron said, well, all right, girls, before you go to bed, Mary, would you sit here? Jean, would you sit there? Josephine, over here? Lily, here.

Now take a piece of paper and write on the paper which tire went flat. Our Christian faith is based on the evidence of eyewitnesses. You say, but that happened a long time ago.

There's such a thing as historical evidence. Now, let's see. This is the bicentennial year of the independence of the United States.

Let's see how much American history you know. George Washington once cut down a tree. What kind of tree? A cherry tree.

Now, how do we know that's true? Well, everybody knows that. But historians got busy on this, and they discovered that in the 18th century, in which George Washington lived and died, no one had ever heard that story. He didn't write it down.

It's not in his diary. It's not in the records of Congress. It's not in the records of the Continental Army.

He never told Martha. Where did it come from? Last year, I saw the story in the New York Times. It said, we need a president who can say, Sir, I cannot tell a lie.

That was a reference to the cherry tree. 1975. But here it is, 1943, 1921, 1887.

Right back, the first time that story appeared in print was in the writings of an enterprising Virginian called Parson Weems, who wrote fiction for children. It's a story, a legend. But did George Washington cross the River Delaware one very cold Christmas Eve? Is that a legend, too? Oh, no.

That's in his letters. That's in his diary. That's in the records of Congress.

That's in the records of the Continental Army. That's in the records of the British Army. George III's Hessian regiments were camped at Trenton.

They thought they were perfectly safe because of the terrible weather. Christmas Eve, they began to celebrate. They were getting drunk.

They expected Santa Claus, and who should show up but George Washington. That's established. And our Christian faith is established that way.

Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Some people in our universities haven't read a book on the subject for 40 years. I would advise you young people, if you're interested in the documents, get F.F. Bruce's book, *The Books and the Parchments*.

I was told when I was your age, I mean the age of the people I'm talking to, and I was your age, I was told the Gospel of John was written in the fourth century. The most optimistic of the liberal scholars taught it was written in the end of the second century, therefore written by somebody else other than John. But they wouldn't dare say that today.

If it was written in the fourth century, how was Saint Polycarp able to quote from it A.D. 105? Did the publishers send him an advance copy? Obviously not. And they found fragments of the Gospel of John

from the first century. And William Albright, the great archaeologist from Johns Hopkins University, told Carl Henry, a classmate of mine, that he was quite satisfied the Gospels were written in the lifetime of the apostles, therefore what we believe them to be.

I told my friends in Russia of what happened to me when I was a chaplain. A pilot came to me in New Guinea and he said very cheerfully, chaplain, I approve of the good work you're doing, but I don't believe in it. I said, what do you mean by that? Well, he said some G.I.s get scared during an air raid, they need a little bit of religion to help them through, but I'm an atheist, I don't believe there is a God, so I don't need any religion to help me.

I said, are you really an atheist or are you just talking? He said, I'm an atheist, I say there is no God. I said, could I ask you a couple of questions? He said, certainly. I said, first of all, do you happen to know everything? He said, are you kidding? I said, no, I am serious.

Well, he said, of course I don't know everything. He said, Albert Einstein said that scientists are on the fringe of knowledge. He said, I'll be modest, I'll admit that I'm on the fringe of the fringe.

I said, good, now the second question is this, if you don't happen to know everything, is it conceivable that God could exist outside what you know? He said, come again? I said, how much do you know? How much what? Knowledge. In relation to what? Total knowledge. Would you settle for 10%? He said, don't be ridiculous.

Less than 1%. I said, call it 1%. If you know only 1%, is it conceivable that God could exist outside your 1%? Well, he said, theoretically, yes.

You're a remarkable atheist. Five minutes ago, you said there is no God, now you say there could be one. Why don't you make up your mind? He came back to see me a week later, but before he did, another pilot dropped in.

Chaplain, were you talking to Lieutenant Peterson about how much do you know and all that? I said, yes. Well, he said, could I ask you, chaplain, how much do you know? Well, I should put me down for less than 1%. Then he said, is it conceivable that outside your 1%, Santa Claus could exist? And I saw he had laid a trap for me.

Mercifully, the phone rang. And I had an emergency call to the hospital. So I said, can you see me tomorrow? No, he said, I'm flying tomorrow.

I said, next day? Okay. When he came back, I said, and what is your definition of Santa Claus? Well, he said, you know. I said, what do you mean I don't know? Little thin man.

Oh, no, he said, a big fat man. I said, he wears a navy blue suit. No, he said, he wears a red suit with white fur trimmings.

I said, he's clean shaven. He said, what are you getting at? He said, he's got a white beard, white mustache, white hair. Then he said, he lives at the North Pole and he drives a ranger team over the housetops and he comes down the chimney and he fills kids' stockings with toys.

Okay. I said, okay. I said, now listen, I'll give you 101 scientific reasons for not believing in Santa Claus.

First of all, obviously, he's too fat to come down the chimney. Second, to drive a ranger team over the housetops would be like trying to ride a bicycle to the moon. It's rather difficult to work up the velocity.

He doesn't live at the North Pole. When I said to him, what's your definition of God? He didn't answer. He said, God is the only infinite, eternal, and unchangeable spirit, the perfect being in whom all things begin and continue and end.

There is no argument against that. None whatsoever. By the way, I was very surprised to find my friend Michael Scriven using the Santa Claus argument.

You can shoot it full of holes. Now, the other pilot came back. He said, Chaplain, I've been thinking.

I said, congratulations. Well, he said, I'll let that pass. He said, you know, no man really knows enough to be an atheist.

I said, that's right. He said, to be an atheist, you'd really need to know everything. I said, that's right.

He said, if you knew everything, you could claim to be God yourself. I said, that's right. And I could add, when Lord Bertrand Russell was number one atheist in the world, he had a debate at Oxford with Father Cobblestone on the BBC.

And Father Cobblestone said to him, do you defend the atheist position? And Lord Russell said, I prefer to defend the agnostic position. He knew that you can't defend the atheist position. It's indefensible.

Yet some of you kids allow people to walk all over you about this. They can't prove their position. All they do is to get you to try and prove God, and then they try to find arguments, holes in your arguments.

For example, you know that to go to New Zealand, you don't need a passport. If you went to New Zealand and came back again, the Australian immigration says to you, you're a citizen of what country? You'd say, Australia. What state are you from? You'd say, Victoria.

Got any proof of that? You'd say, they don't require a passport in New Zealand. Well, what have you got to show me? You'd say, I've got a driver's license here. Well, look at your driver's license.

But that's no proof that you're a citizen. You could technically say you've got to produce other evidence, but it doesn't mean you're not a citizen. And when some atheist finds a fault with your argument, it doesn't mean there's no God.

It just means you put a pretty poor case forward. That's all. Now, the other fellow said, I'm not really an atheist.

I'm an agnostic. I said, congratulations. Did you like that? I said, oh yes.

I said, last week you said there is no God. You couldn't prove it. You're in a weak position.

Now you say, I don't know whether there's a God or not. That's the meaning of the better position. I said, what kind of agnostic are you? Oh, you said there are different kinds? I said, there are two major denominations.

Ordinary agnostics and ornery agnostics. Do you know that American word ornery? It means objectionable or obnoxious. I don't know if there is an Australian word, but it's an American word, ornery.

What do you mean by that? Well, I said, the ordinary agnostic says, I don't know whether there's a God or not. But the ornery one says, I don't know, and you don't know, and nobody knows, and nobody ever will know, and nobody could know. Now, I said, if you insist that you know that I don't know, will you tell me how you know I don't know? He said, chaplain, I'll quit right there.

I'm just a plain, ordinary agnostic. So I said, congratulations. He seemed to resent my congratulations.

He said, what about the arguments for agnosticism? I said, there aren't any. Oh, come on, he said. Professor Julian Huxley is a very brilliant man, and he's an agnostic.

I said, Sir Julian Huxley may be a very brilliant man in his field of specialization, which is biology, but how could any man be brilliant in agnosticism, which means not knowingness? Let me illustrate. Supposing I asked these two young ladies in front of me, what is your favorite subject? In classroom, that would be. And this girl says, chemistry, and this one says, literature.

Let's say for the sake of argument, this young lady is a straight A in chemistry, and this young lady is a straight A in literature. Now, I'm going to say something in Zulu. Upiam, flobom, jango, jesu, kako, kaa, kako, kaa.

Do you know what I said? Do you know what I say? Which of the two, the straight A in chemistry, or the straight A in literature, is more brilliant than not knowing what I said? There are degrees of not knowingness. If you don't know, you're disqualified, and the next time someone tells you, I'm an agnostic, you tell them, that means you admit you're disqualified. You don't know, but let me tell you how I know.

Now, the big question comes up, can you prove there is a God? You go to our theological seminaries and colleges, they'll say, no, you better give up on that. It's by faith. But I'm going to make so bold to say, yes, you can prove.

You can prove there is a God. But before I conclude, I think because it's a cold night and go to hard benches, we'll take just one minute break. I'm going to ask Fred Leavitt if he will lead you in singing a verse of a hymn I wrote this day, 40 years ago, at Narrawahee in New Zealand.

Do any of you know it? Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Can you play it for us and lead us in that first verse? Or stand up, you can clamp your feet or do anything you like. Now listen carefully, and again I'm speaking especially to the young people who are bound to encounter these problems in a way that older Christians never will.

To prove there is a God, if that means logical entailment. In other words, I can go to the blackboard, and I can draw a right-angled triangle, and I can prove to you that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. You can't believe anything else.

That's what we call logical entailment. If that means proving God that way, you can't do it. But if it means you can prove for yourself there is a God, and be perfectly satisfied, and know it for the rest of your life, you certainly can prove the existence of God.

I was speaking at an international student banquet, when a Japanese girl raised her hand, and she said, Sir, isn't one man's idea of God just as good as another man's idea of God? I said, To answer your question, I'll have to ask one. As I was married in Africa more than 30 years ago, what do you think my

wife looks like? She was taken aback. She knew that in North Africa you have Arabs, in South Africa there are three million Europeans, in Central Africa there are pygmies, in West Africa there are negroes, in East Africa there are banteras.

So she said, I don't know. I said, have a guess. She said, I could never guess.

I said, come on now, I'm not going to give you a mark for it. Have a guess. Well, she said, is she brunette? She was playing it safe.

I said, what else? Dark eyes? I said, what else? Short? I said, why short? She's shorter than you? She was still playing it safe. I said, you're sure of this? No, she said, I'm just guessing, you told me to guess. I turned to another fellow, I said, what do you think my wife looks like? Well, he said, just to be different, I'll say she's blonde, blue-eyed, the same size as you.

I said, you're sure of this? No, he said, I'm guessing too. I asked another fellow, well, finally I said, can we get together? Do we all agree that her idea is no better than his idea? That what he said is no more valid than what he said? Well, we all agreed, we got a consensus. I turned back to the Japanese girl and I said, would you like to know what my wife looks like? She said, please.

As her parents were Norwegian, she's a natural blonde, she has gray-blue eyes, she spent 18 years in the African sun, so she has freckles, she's five foot five in her stocking feet, she weighs 125 pounds, which is the same weight that she weighed when we were married. In fact, that's what I weighed too, so we took turns to carry each other over the threshold. Now, I said to the Japanese girl, would you say that your idea is just as good as my idea, and that what I said is no more important than what he said? She said, that's not fair.

I said, what's not fair? She said, well, we were guessing. I said, what about me? She said, you're not guessing. I said, what am I doing? She said, you're informing us.

I said, what gives me that privilege? She said, because you know. I said, exactly. The prophets of old didn't say, there must be somebody upstairs that likes me.

No, Ezekiel said, the word of the Lord came onto me the second time. Moses said, God spoke these words. David said, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.

Oh, I said, you can believe it or not, but you have to admit they weren't guessing. They weren't speculating. They were not philosophizing.

They claimed to know. I said, by the way, why did you believe me when I told you my wife was five foot five and had freckles and so forth? Well, you have no reason to doubt yourself. Well, I said, that's another point.

The men that told us about Jesus Christ laid down their lives for him, and the highest revelation we have, the unsurpassed revelation of God is in Jesus Christ. He said, he that has seen me has seen the Father. This is not guessing.

This we know. But are you of the privilege of accepting it or rejecting it? But she said, how do you know, sir? Oh, I said, we read a little book called the New Testament. Yes, but she said, I'm a Buddhist, or at least my folks are.

She said, I don't know what I really believe, but she said, in the Buddhist religion we've got legends, you know. As for example, well, the Buddha's mother was an Indian princess. That I can believe.

But they say that his father was a white elephant. That I find difficult to believe. Well, I said, that is a legend that came into Buddhism 500 years after the Buddha died.

Besides, the white elephant is a symbol to the Buddhists. Symbolical. One of the titles of the king of Thailand is the keeper of the white elephants.

Well, she said, isn't the New Testament like that? I said, you haven't read it. Take the third chapter of Luke. It says, In the fifteenth year of the emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod prince of Galilee, Caiaphas and Annas being the high priests, actually there are seven checkpoints.

Now, if I said 100 years from now, well, I'll give you a right-off-the-date illustration. One of the best-known singers in the United States, not Bev Shea, but another one, sang on TV the other day, and I heard him. He said, dear friends, I'm going to sing for you a hymn written by Charles Wesley.

Queen Victoria asked him to sing at her coronation, and he said, your majesty, not only will I sing for you, but I'll write a song, a hymn for your coronation. He said, this is the song, and he sang over a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise. Now, the only catch to the story is that Charles Wesley wrote the song in 1739, and Queen Victoria was crowned, I think it was 1837, and Charles Wesley was dead.

You can check up on historical statements, and we have checked up on the New Testament. It's true. Not only does it have the ring of truth, I have spent most of my academic spare time, if you call it such, in historical research, and I would say that the New Testament is the best-attested document of ancient time.

It tells us of the most remarkable man that ever lived, of Jesus Christ. He was the only one who claimed to be God. In that debate, Michael Scriven said, every founder of a great religion claimed to be God.

I said, no sir. Confucius did not claim to be God. Buddha did not claim to be God.

Muhammad didn't claim to be God. Moses didn't claim to be God. But Jesus Christ did.

What's more, people believed him for the works that he did. So we have a divine revelation. Now, young people, if you can't write it down, mark it in your memory.

We begin with that point. That's the basis of the Christian faith. Our knowledge of God comes from a divine revelation.

Science can tell us nothing about God. If I said God was in this room, how could we find out scientifically? Would we use litmus paper, or a Geiger counter, or a spectrograph? There's no way of finding out. In fact, philosophy is only one man's guess against another man's guess.

But God has revealed himself to us through scripture, and supremely through Jesus Christ. Our knowledge of God comes from a divine revelation. Now, the second point is equally simple.

It is congenial to reason. It makes sense. You say, what do you mean by that? Well, I have a friend in Los Altos, in California, who has an IQ of 208.

Albert Einstein's IQ was 209. My friend, Dr. Gerhard Dirks, holds 240 patents for IBM computers. Let's say he's pretty smart.

I asked him how he found faith. He said, through computers. It was such a strange thing to say, I said, please explain.

Well, or, he said, what do you know about automation? I said, my wife has a dishwashing machine. She can tell whether it's from the noise it's making, whether it's sudsing or rinsing. I was more curious, so I opened it up to see what it made to do these things.

I found a steel wheel with a code cut on the wheel. First time around, it trips a lever, flushes in a lot of scalding hot water. The detergent's already there.

At the same time, a spinner starts and makes suds. They pick up the dirt and the grease. It goes on churning for a while.

Then, when the wheel goes round another time, another cycle, it trips another lever, out goes all the dirty water. My wife said, now don't interfere. It's still working.

After a little while, it clicks again, in comes scalding hot water, rinses the dishes, and so on. Now, he said, do you understand that had to be built into the machine? How many bits of information do you think it has? I said, bits of information? What does that mean? Well, he said, a light switch has two. It's either off or on, minus or plus, zero or one.

He said, all of computer science is based on binary mathematics, he said. Just two choices. Ordinary mathematics is one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and then zero, and then you repeat this series over again.

But in computer science, in fact, all electrical equipment, it's based on zero, one, zero, one, zero, one. Any number can be stated in figures like that. Now, he said, we can build a computer that can play chess, but it is not worth it.

It costs millions of dollars. A 17-year-old boy can play chess more economically. So he said, I made it my business, for instance, when they tell me we've got to make a computer that can do thus and so, I have to estimate the number of bits of information we need.

I tried to work out the number of bits of information for the human brain. He said, it's utterly staggering. In fact, he said, it's so fantastic.

I thought, well, chance won't explain this. What's the alternative? But I thought of providence, that it wasn't long before I found God through Jesus Christ. Dr. Gerhard Dirks is a member of the Christian Business Committee of San Francisco.

There are many scientists like that. Not all of them, but not all taxi drivers are Christians, either. Now, this intrigued me.

My son David, being a preacher's kid, was somewhat of a nonconformist. You know, it's awful hard on preacher's kids. Everybody expects so much of them and so forth.

During the turmoil of the years back, he joined one of the militant groups at UCLA, the one that's called the ROTC. That's the Officers Training Corps. And he became a pilot, a jet pilot.

To put away himself through school, he got a job. I told him, get a job that pays well by the hour. Otherwise, if you're paid only 50 cents an hour, you won't have time for your studies.

He got a job in computers, of all things. And they paid him \$5 an hour. And for a kid of 19, that was good pay.

20 hours a week he worked, 20 hours for study. Anytime he liked. But now my son spoke a language that I didn't understand.

I determined to rectify this. I was walking along the corridor in Moore Hall in UCLA when I saw that Professor Samuel Wanus was teaching a course called Curriculum for Computers. I don't know how they do it in Melbourne, but in California, 100 numbered courses are for undergraduates, 200 for upper division, 300 for postgraduates, 400 for professors and experts.

Like if a man who teaches calculus would like to teach computer science, he'll take a 400 course. It supposes a lot of prerequisites. I went to see the professor and give him my card.

Oh, you're delighted to have you, sir. He said, we have a Roman Catholic nun from one of their universities, very brilliant woman. We have a young professor from Tokyo.

His English is fractured, but he knows his stuff. We've got a professor working on his PhD from California Polytechnic, and you will be number six. He said, may I ask, what is your background? I said, in theology.

He said, did you say theology? Oh, he said, did you do your doctorate at Oxford in theology? I said, no, no, that was in history. He said, did you say history? He said, I mean, what's your background in computers? I said, I don't know anything about them. Well, he said, Mr. Orr, with your academic background, don't you think it would be better to take a freshman course and work your way up? I said, my age? I said, if you let me in, I'll do my best to catch up in your class.

He looked at me and then he grinned. He said, I've been trying to tell these teachers you don't need to be a genius in calculus to teach computers. It wouldn't be quite a talking point if I could say why.

I had a theologian took the course in spare time last winter, and he let me in. I never enjoyed a course more. It was mind-stretching, of course.

Modesty forbids me to tell you I was top of the class. In a graduate course, the last class of the course is always social. The examinations are over, and the professor takes you to his lodgings and serves you cocktails or soft drinks.

I said, Dr. Wanus, I want to ask a question. Yes, Orr? Would you agree that a 17-year-old girl could be taught to feed a program to a computer? Yes, of course, he said. If she can punch cards, she can feed a computer.

I said, could she write the program? No, he said, she'd have to know one of the computer languages, COBOL, FORTRAN, or PL1. He said, a programmer would have to do that. If the machine broke down, could you fix it? No, she'd have to call a technician.

Could she design a computer? No, he said, an engineer would do that. What's the point? I said, now would you agree that human conception is a kind of program? A young couple get married and decide to have a baby. Each of the pair contributes 23 chromosomes that carry the genes that decide whether or not the baby's fingernails will be long and so forth? Yes.

That's quite a complicated program? He said, yes, indeed. Takes 280 days? Yes. I said, where does the program come from? He said, get away with you, that's theology.

I would say, and I'll say strongly, that the climate for propagating Christianity today is better among exact scientists than ever before. The trouble we get today is not from the exact scientists or the mathematicians. It's from speculators in the speculative sciences, philosophy, and even theologians are giving us trouble, because they're allowed to use their imagination, and they're not tied to an exact discipline.

I wish I had time to deal with the arguments, but I studied at a Jesuit university on one occasion. I found my Jesuit friends back then believed they could prove the existence of God, and they used, of course, St. Thomas Aquinas. There isn't time to go into all that, but I'll give you one sort of illustration.

The argument from design, or the teleological argument, shows there's a God because of the design and nature. Now, St. Thomas Aquinas put it in a very simple way. He said, there's no other way to explain it, and I think Paley summed it up for us by saying, if you find a stone on a heath, you don't have to explain it, it's just there.

But if you find a watch, you can't say it just came there too. For instance, Michael Scriven, my Australian friend, said, if you go into a cave where the temperature is around about freezing point, you'll find a stalactite, an icicle hanging from the ceiling. He's always underneath it, you find a stalagmite.

If the temperature varies enough, it'll drip and freeze. He said, you don't have to explain this, this is according to the laws of nature. That's very easy to say about a stalactite and a stalagmite, but what about the human eye? Your eyeball is just an inch in diameter.

The retina that takes all the impressions is so fine, it's a fraction of the width of a molecule. And yet, at this moment, your eye is sending electrical impulse to your brain, where there's a computer that sorts out all the information of color, and tint, and hue, and shade, and texture, and mass, and you see things. You can't explain that and say, that's just according to the laws of nature.

In fact, Darwin himself said, you can't explain the beginning of the eye. And the more you think about chance to explain these things, you realize how feeble it is as an explanation. There's a professor at Oxford who had the idea that a team of monkeys typing on a set of typewriters over a number of years, sooner or later, would strike off all the great classics, including Shakespeare.

Now, a professor so brilliant wouldn't do the work himself, he got his students to do it for credit. In the 17th year of the experiment, a man from Merton College called the professor, and he began, are you there? And the professor indicated he was there. He said, sir, I'd like to make my morning report.

He said, one of the monkeys died last night. He said, another one is sick. He said, there's a third one who's antisocial.

He goes around turning up all the other ones are typing. But he said, the other nine are typing away. No, sir, he said, it doesn't make any sense.

He says, except for number seven. That's why I called urgently, sir. In number seven, he said, at 816 this morning, he typed the following, to be or not to be, that is the uns and quatch.

Now, I only mention this because I want to show you what we call the repugnance of chance. You can't show the impossibility of chance, but you can show that it's repugnant to sense. For instance, to get the first letter right on a typewriter, with 30 keys, is one out of 30.

To get the second letter right is one out of 900. To get the third letter right, of course, would be a greater figure still. To get, for instance, two words of 10 letters each right, is one in 30 to the 10th power.

If you'd like me to read it for you, it's one out of 1,771,470,000,000. Yet people talk about chance to explain our universe. Now, the thing that the Christian faith does is simply to tell us we have a simple answer.

We owe all this to the wisdom of God. It makes a much more sensible argument. But can they tear it down? Well, I notice in Michael Scriven's latest book, he says, could there have been a designer? Capital D, yes, indeed.

If by that we mean a being so great that he gave form to the whole universe, then why doesn't he accept it himself? He says, because it doesn't explain where that being comes from. The old question, who made the universe? God. Who made God? Well, you don't have to answer that.

You say God is eternal. Michael Scriven said, well, or if you say God is eternal, why can't I say that the universe is eternal? I say, because the second law of thermodynamics teaches otherwise. And in Russia, as well as in the United States, they believe in the beginning of the universe.

Most of them believe in the Big Bang Theory. Now, I'd like to come to the third point and final. Are you kids following me? Revelation, reason, and now experience.

You can verify the existence of God in your own experience. I was talking to a fellow on LSD, hard drugs. I said, what's it like? Man, he said, you're out of this world.

It makes blue, a deep blue. It makes red, a vivid scarlet. He said, you know when you fool around with the color in television? That's what it does.

He said, sometimes you feel as if you're going to way up into the sky. Other times you feel as if you're coming down on a roller coaster. Man, he said, it sharpens all your perceptions.

You're out of this world. I said, you mean you're out of your mind? Well, he said, it could be dangerous. I said, it's caused murder, suicide, rape, robbery, all sorts of bizarre behavior.

And as far as sharpening your perceptions, sharpening your perceptions is concerned, a fellow here at UCLA thought he was a bird. He was on an LSD trip, jumped out of the fifth story window. Instead of going up like a bird, he came down like a rock.

He landed on a thorn bush. That sharpened all his perceptions. Now listen, I have never taken LSD in my life, but I believe it causes hallucinations.

Do you? Why? Because there's enough evidence, enough people who've experienced it. Then who can really deny Christian experience? I knew a man that drank seven dollars worth of liquor a day. He had delirium tremens.

He said he met God in a hotel room in Pennsylvania, all alone. His name is Tim Spencer, the converted songwriter, chairman of the Hollywood Christian Group. Died just last year, chairman of RCA Victor Records.

I knew Jim Voss, the wiretapper, who worked with the gangsters. Today he's doing great Christian social work. That's Christian experience.

You can number them by the millions. My friend Michael Stratton said, I don't deny Christian experience, but I can jolly well explain it. He's some mixed up kid, goes to a Billy Graham rally, gets straightened out, jolly good thing, but I can explain it.

I said, how do you explain it? He said, psychologically. And what makes you think you have the explanation? Sirhan Sirhan was arrested for the murder of Robert Kennedy. The defense got a psychiatrist to say that the reason why Sirhan Sirhan murdered Robert Kennedy was because he was in love with his mother.

Sirhan Sirhan was in love with his mother. He hated his father. He transferred the hatred of his father to Robert Kennedy.

That's why he murdered Robert Kennedy, so the poor guy wasn't to blame. I've got a psychiatrist for the prosecution who contradicted this. You can speculate all you like, but ask the man who has been changed.

He'll tell you the same book that told him about Jesus Christ told him to repent and be converted, and he did. It worked. Now, I know that my wife loves me, but I don't know that I could prove it to you.

Now, there are at least, I think, three people here, friends of mine from Kerrang, who have stayed in our home, know my wife and me to be a very happy couple. But the rest of you, I don't expect you would have the same evidence. But, uh, do I need to prove it to you? For me to enjoy this happy relationship, do I have to prove it to you? No.

That's the thing about the Christian faith. God gives you, you, the chance of knowing for yourself. And you can't prove it to other people if they don't want to believe.

If by your way of living they get envious and say, you've got something I don't have, then they'll listen to you. So I say you can prove the existence of God by experience. And I want to talk to some of you about that tonight.

Now, I suppose you kids in college and university and high school have heard people say, oh, this evangelist is a lot of emotion. Have I been emotional tonight? I've spoken to your mind. But I'd like to speak to your will, too.

And I suggest to my friends on the platform that allow me to go over to the little prayer hall over here, CSSM hut. And I'd like to ask the university and high school students who have been interested tonight, if you'll come over and let me finish by telling you how you can be sure. I want to invite three kinds.

First of all, there may be some folks here say, I was brought up in a Christian home. I have, I do believe in Christ, but tonight this confirmed my faith. I'd like to invite you.

There may be others who'll say, well, I didn't believe. I mean, I just didn't believe, but now it makes a lot of sense to me. So I'd like to invite you, too.

And then there's some who say, well, I'm not convinced yet. There's some questions I want to ask. I'd like to ask you, too.

We're going to sing a concluding hymn, and I'm going to go across there. And I'd like you people, for instance, while we sing the hymn, you, preferably students, young people, would you come over there and let me talk to you for just a little while longer so that you can know for keeps. How about it?

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