

There is a God

How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind

By: Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese

نبذة مختصرة عن الكتاب:

«أنطوني فلو» هو بروفييسور الفلسفة البريطاني الذي انتصر للإلحاد بمؤلفاته لمدة تزيد على نصف قرن تقريباً ثم غيّر اعتقاده وأعلن إيمانه بوجود إله، وهكذا ألف كتابه هذا المشهور جداً ليبيّن فيه أسباب إيمانه والأدلة التي أقنعتة!

مركز «براهين» أصدرت ترجمة عربية كاملة لنصّ الكتاب الإنجليزي الأصلي (لم يُنشر بعد لأسباب تقنية)، مع العلم أنّ الدكتور «عمرو شريف» هداه الله قام بما يُشبه الدراسة على الكتاب، في كتابه المشهور «رحلة عقل»، فقد قام بعرض مُختصر أو خلاصة للكتاب، ثمّ قام بدراسة المواضيع المطروحة في الكتاب بشكل أكثر استفاضة (هناك اختلاف بالتأكيد بين الترجمة التي قدمها الدكتور «عمرو شريف» وبين النصّ الإنجليزي الأصلي سواء كماً أو كيفاً).

من أشهر الأفكار الإلحادية التي نشرها «فلو» قبل إيمانه بوجود إله هو أنّ الإلحاد يجب أن يكون هو الموقف الافتراضي للإنسان، وليس الإيمان! وأنّ الذي يدّعي وجود إله عليه أن يأتي بالبيّنة! كذلك ادّعى أنّ هناك مفاهيم كثيرة مُتناقضة أصلاً في فكرة الإيمان بالله، فيما يخصّ صفاته الإلهية، وادّعى أنّه ينبغي أولاً أن تُزيل هذه التناقضات ثمّ نتكلّم عن إثبات وجود الإله، فيما يعني أنّ الفكرة في حدّ ذاتها مُتناقضة، فلا داعي للخوض في إثباتها!

ولا شكّ أنّ أفكار «فلو» الإلحادية كانت ثورية بالنسبة لكتابات الملحدّين قبله! لذا فإنّ تحوّله للإيمان بوجود إله كانت صدمة في غاية الشدّة بالنسبة للملحدّين، بل كان بمثابة الحدث التاريخي! وقد قام «فلو» بالردّ على أشهر شُبّهاته الإلحادية في هذا الكتاب، بالإضافة لتقديم كلّ ما ساعده للوصول إلى مرحلة الإيمان بوجود إله.

الكتاب لا غنى عن دراسته لكل من يُريد نقد ظاهرة «الإلحاد الجديد»، بما فيها التمهيد والملحق الأوّل، وأنصح جداً بقراءة دراسة الدكتور «عمرو شريف» بعنوان «رحلة عقل» (وهو متوفّر على الشبكة)، وباقتناء التّرجمة العربية للنّص الإنجليزي الأصلي فور نشره من قِبَل مركز «براهين».

المؤلّف ليس مُجرّد مُلحد تائب، ولكنّه كان من أكبر المُنظّرين للإلحاد في القرن العشرين! فقد أعلن إيمانه بوجود إله في عام ٢٠٠٤م، وكان عمره حينئذ ٨١ عاماً، ثمّ كتب كتابه هذا في عام ٢٠٠٧م، ولم يكتب عن الإيمان بوجود إله مرّة أخرى لأنّه مات بعدها في ٢٠١٠م، مع العلم أنّ كتاباته في التّأصيل للإلحاد بدأت منذ عام ١٩٥٠م!

يجب الإشارة إلى أنّ «فلو» ناظر الفيلسوف اللاهوتي المشهور جداً «ويليام كريج» William Craig في عام ٢٠٠٣م، وكذلك كان مُتأثراً جداً بالفيلسوف واللاهوتي المشهور جداً «سي أس لويس» C. S. Lewis الذي مات عام ١٩٦٣م، الذي يُعتبر أبرز المدافعين عن الإيمان المسيحي ونقد الإلحاد في القرن العشرين، وكذلك تأثر كثيراً بكتابات الفيلسوف الأمريكي المشهور جداً «ألفن بلنتنجا» Alvin Plantinga والذي كتب بالفعل ردوداً على بعض مؤلّفات «فلو» التّأصيلية للإلحاد، وكذلك أيضاً كتابات «ريتشارد سوينبرن» Richard Swinburne الذي قال عنه «فلو» أنّه أشهر مُدافع عن الإيمان في العالم النّاطق باللّغة الإنجليزية، كذلك صرّح أنّ الحُجج المنطقية التي جعلته يؤمن بوجود إله هي التي ذكرها «ديفيد كونويه» David Conway في كتابه «إعادة اكتشاف الحكمة» The Rediscovery of Wisdom، وكذلك نصح المؤلّف في النّهاية بالاطلاع على كتاب «روي أبراهام فارغيس» Roy Abraham Varghese بعنوان «عجيبية العالم» The Wonder of the World.

تمّ سبق نُدرِك مدى أهمية الاطلاع على كتاباتهم فيما يُخصّ مجال دراسة الإلحاد ونقده، مع الإشارة الغالبة العظمية من هذه الكتابات متوفرة على الشبكة من خلال موقع book4you.org، مع العلم أنّ مُعظم كتابات «سي أس لويس» مُترجمة إلى اللّغة العربية، وقد قُمت بعصر أهمّ مؤلّفات «كريج» وسأستمرّ بإذن الله، والذي يُعدّ أهمّ فيلسوف مسيحي مُعاصر انتقد الإلحاد، وناظر أهمّ المُنظّرين له، وأنوي بإذن الله عصر كُتب «بلنتنجا» و «سوينبرن»، كذلك كتاب «كونويه».

بشكل عام، الكتاب ينقسم إلى قسمين، القسم الأول يتناول فيه «فلو» ماضيه كملحد: كيف أصبح ملحدًا، وكيف قاداته الأدلة في النهاية للتشكيك في الإلحاد، وقد قدّم نقداً مُميّزاً للكلام «ديفيد هيوم» فيما يخص موضوع السببية، وفي القسم الثاني يتناول «فلو» الأدلة أو الحجج التي أقنعتة بالإيمان بوجود إله، وهي مبنية على هذه المواضيع الثلاثة: قوانين الطبيعة، الحياة، وبداية الكون، مع التّنبية على أنّ الفصلين الأخيرين من الكتاب يحتويان على مناقشات فلسفية عميقة عن الإله لا تؤدّي بالضرورة في النهاية إلى الاعتقاد الصحيح عن الله عز وجلّ.

من الجدير بالذكر أنّ «فلو» نشأ مسيحياً، ثم أصبح ملحدًا، ثم آمن بوجود إله، ولكنه لم يعتنق المسيحية مرّة أخرى، ولكنه صرّح أنّه يؤمن بإله «أرسطو»، وفي نهاية الكتاب ملحق للأسقف «أن تي رايت» يتحدث فيه عن الوحي، والعهد الجديد، وادّعاءات حول المسيح عليه السلام، وقد قال «فلو» في مقدّمة الكتاب أنّ الأسقف «رايت» قدّم له المسيحية بطريقة لم ير أفضل منها، ولكنه لم يقل أنّه اعتنق المسيحية مرّة أخرى!

في النهاية أقول مرّة أخرى: الكتاب من أفضل ما قرأت، يستحق تقدير مُمتاز، وأنصح بقراءته.

Preface (By Roy Varghese)

- According to the logical positivists, the only meaningful statements were those capable of being verified through sense experience or true simply by virtue of their form and the meaning of the words used. Thus a statement was meaningful if its truth or falsehood could be verified by empirical observation (e.g., scientific study). [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p x.]
- The result was that the only meaningful statements were those used in science, logic, or mathematics. Statements in metaphysics, religion, aesthetics, and ethics were literally meaningless, because they could not be verified by empirical methods. They were neither valid nor invalid. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p x.]
- The turn toward theism was highlighted in a Time magazine cover story in April 1980: “In a quiet revolution in thought and argument that hardly

anyone would have foreseen only two decades ago, God is making a comeback. Most intriguingly this is happening . . . in the crisp intellectual circles of academic philosophers.” [“Modernizing the Case for God,” *Time*, April 7, 1980.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xiii]

- What was significant about these books was not their level of argument—which was modest, to put it mildly—but the level of visibility they received both as best sellers and as a “new” story discovered by the media. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xiv]
- The year of the “new atheism” was 2006 (the phrase was first used by *Wired* magazine in November 2006). From Daniel Dennett’s *Breaking the Spell* and Richard Dawkins’s *The God Delusion* to Lewis Wolpert’s *Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast*, Victor Stenger’s *The Comprehensible Cosmos*, and Sam Harris’s *The End of Faith* (published in 2004, but the sequel to which, *Letter to a Christian Nation*, came out in 2006), the exponents of a look-back-in-anger, take-no-prisoners type of atheism were out in force. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xiv]
- Neither do any of these writers present a plausible worldview that accounts for the existence of a “law-abiding,” life-supporting, and rationally accessible universe. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xv.]
- The positivists were never so naive as to suggest that God could be a scientific hypothesis—they declared the concept of God to be meaningless precisely because it was not a scientific hypothesis. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xvi.]
- In Appendix A, I seek to show that our immediate experience of rationality, life, consciousness, thought, and the self militate against every form of atheism, including the newest. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His*

Mind), HarperCollins e-books, p xvi.]

- When asked by the Edge Foundation, “What do you believe is true even though you cannot prove it?” Dawkins replied: “I believe that all life, all intelligence, all creativity and all ‘design’ anywhere in the universe, is the direct or indirect product of Darwinian natural selection. It follows that design comes late in the universe, after a period of Darwinian evolution. Design cannot precede evolution and therefore cannot underlie the universe.” [Richard Dawkins, *What We Believe but Cannot Prove*, ed. John Brockman (London: Pocket Books, 2005), 9.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xvii.]
- In *My Father*, Bertrand Russell, his daughter, Katharine Tait, writes that Russell was not open to any serious discussion of God’s existence: “I could not even talk to him about religion.” Russell was apparently turned off by the kind of religious believers he had encountered. “I would have liked to convince my father that I had found what he had been looking for, the ineffable something he had longed for all his life. I would have liked to persuade him that the search for God does not have to be vain. But it was hopeless. He had known too many blind Christians, bleak moralists who sucked the joy from life and persecuted their opponents; he would never have been able to see the truth they were hiding.” [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xviii, xix.]
- In a poignant passage, Russell once said: “Nothing can penetrate the loneliness of the human heart except the highest intensity of the sort of love the religious teachers have preached.” [Bertrand Russell, *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967), 146.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xix]
- Dawkins’s “old age” argument (if it can be called that) is a strange variation of the ad hominem fallacy that has no place in civilized discourse. True thinkers evaluate arguments and weigh the evidence without regard to the proponent’s race, sex, or age. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His*

Mind), HarperCollins e-books, p xx.]

- More recently, when asked on a visit to Jerusalem if he believed in the existence of God, the famous theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking is reported to have replied that he did “believe in the existence of God, but that this Divine force established the laws of nature and physics and after that does not enter to control the world.” [The report of Hawking’s conversations with the driver of his special-needs vehicle, Saul Pasternak, an Orthodox Jew, are found in “The Driver of Mister Hawking,” an article in the Hebrew weekly newspaper Jerusalem, December 22, 2006, p. 28.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xxi.]
- About positivism, Einstein in fact said, “I am not a positivist. Positivism states that what cannot be observed does not exist. This conception is scientifically indefensible, for it is impossible to make valid affirmations of what people ‘can’ or ‘cannot’ observe. One would have to say ‘only what we observe exists,’ which is obviously false.” [Albert Einstein, *The Quotable Einstein*, ed. Alice Calaprice (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 238.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p xxii.]

Part 1: My Denial of The Divine

1. The Creation of an Atheist

- I am told that the Barna Group, a prominent Christian demographic polling organization, concluded from its surveys that in essence what you believe by the time you are thirteen is what you will die believing. Whether or not this finding is correct, I do know that the beliefs I formed in my early teenage years stayed with me for most of my adult life. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p11.]
- One of those early reasons for my conversion to atheism was the problem of evil. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p13.]

- I was regularly arguing with fellow sixth formers that the idea of a God who is both omnipotent and perfectly good is incompatible with the manifest evils and imperfections of the world. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p15.]
- Lewis was the most effective Christian apologist for certainly the latter part of the twentieth century. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p24.]

2. Where the Evidence Leads

- Idealists believe that all of physical reality is purely mental, and that only minds and the contents of minds exist. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p36.]
- The attempt to show that there is no philosophical knowledge by simply urging that there is always someone who can be relied on to remain unconvinced is a common fallacy made even by a distinguished philosopher like Bertrand Russell. I called it the But-there-is-always-someone-who-will-never-agree Diversion. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p41.]
- But the missing piece in this argument is the distinction between producing a proof and persuading a person. A person can be persuaded by an abominable argument and remain unconvinced by one that ought to be accepted. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p41.]
- what Kant famously distinguished as the three great questions of philosophy—God, freedom, and immortality. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p42.]
- They were built on what I later described as two “juvenile insitencies”: (1) the problem of evil was a decisive disproof of the existence of an all-good, all-powerful God; and (2) the “free-will defense” did not relieve the Creator

of responsibility for the manifest ills of creation. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p66.]

- If we say that God loves us, then we must ask what phenomena the claim excludes. Obviously, the existence of pain and suffering emerge as problems for such a claim. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p43.]
- Theists, it would seem, do not let any phenomena count against the claim that God loves us. This would mean that nothing counts for it either. It effectively becomes empty. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p44.]
- The presumption of atheism can be justified by the inescapable demand for grounds. To believe there is a God, we have to have good grounds for the belief. But if no such grounds are provided, there exists no sufficient reason for believing in God, and the only reasonable position is to be a negative atheist or an agnostic (by negative atheist, I meant “a-theist,” parallel to such words as atypical and amoral). [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p53.]
- I contended that in any properly systematic apologetic the propounder of a God hypothesis must begin, as would the propounder of any existential hypothesis, by first explaining the particular concept of God to be employed and then indicating how the corresponding object is to be identified. Only when and if these two essential preliminary tasks have been satisfactorily completed can it become sensible to begin deploying evidence intended to show that the concept does apply. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p54.]
- Writing as an agnostic, the English philosopher Anthony Kenny maintained that there may be a presumption for agnosticism, but not for positive or negative atheism. He suggested that it takes more effort to show that you know something than that you do not (this includes even the claim that the

concept of God is not coherent). [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p54.]

- I should point out here that, unlike my other antitheological arguments, the argument for the presumption of atheism can be consistently accepted by theists. Given adequate grounds for belief in a God, theists commit no philosophical sin in so believing! The presumption of atheism is, at best, a methodological starting point, not an ontological conclusion. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p56.]
- Hume denied causation in the first Inquiry and claimed that all the external world really contains is constant conjunctions; that is, events of this sort are regularly followed by events of that sort. We notice these constant conjunctions and form strong habits associating the ideas of this with the ideas of that. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p57, 58.]
- Hume's skepticism about cause and effect and his agnosticism about the external world are of course jettisoned the moment he leaves his study. Indeed, Hume jettisons all of his most radical skepticism even before he leaves his study. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p58.]
- I had drawn attention to the incongruity of evil in a universe created by an omnipotent, all-good Being. The theist response to this perceived incongruity was the claim that God gives humans free will, and that all or most of the obvious and scandalous evils are immediately or ultimately due to misuse of this dangerous gift, but that the end results will be the realization of a sum of greater goods than would otherwise be possible. I was, in fact, the first to label this the free-will defense. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p59.]
- The two senses of cause can be distinguished using Hume's terminology of moral and physical causes. When we are talking of some altogether

nonhuman event—an eclipse of the sun, say—then we employ the word cause in a sense implying both physical necessity and physical impossibility: what happened was physically necessary and anything else was, in the circumstances, physically impossible. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p60, 61.]

- Yet this is precisely not the case with the other sense of cause, the sense in which we speak of the causes (or reasons or motives) for human actions. (...) To adapt a famous phrase of the philosopher-mathematician Gottfried Leibniz, causes of this second, motivating sort incline, but do not necessitate. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p61.]
- Certainly if a piece of behavior (what behaviorists call behavior) is fully determined by physical causes, then the behavior did not choose to behave in that way. Nor could he or she, at the time when that behavior occurred, have prevented it from occurring. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p62.]
- Desires and wants are certainly not irresistible conclusions as such. Most of us are sufficiently disciplined sometimes to refrain from doing things we very much want to do. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p62.]
- A moving is a movement that can be initiated or quashed at will; a motion is a movement that cannot. The power of moving is an attribute peculiar to people, whereas entities incapable of consciousness or intention can only manifest motion. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p63.]

3. Atheism Calmly Considered

- Miethé presented a formidable version of the cosmological argument that rested on the following premises: Some limited, changing being(s) exist. The present existence of every limited, changing being is caused by another.

There cannot be an infinite regress of causes of being, because an infinite regress of finite beings would not cause the existence of anything. Therefore, there is a first Cause of the present existence of these beings. The first Cause must be infinite, necessary, eternal, and one. The first uncaused Cause is identical with the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p70, 71.]

- nevertheless “it is easy to persuade the public that the original big bang required some kind of First (initiating) Cause.” [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p71.]
- Swinburne had emerged as the best-known defender of theism in the English-speaking world. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p72.]
- In this symposium, when asked if recent work on the origin of life pointed to the activity of a creative Intelligence, I said: Yes, I now think it does . . . almost entirely because of the DNA investigations. What I think the DNA material has done is that it has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements to work together. It's the enormous complexity of the number of elements and the enormous subtlety of the ways they work together. The meeting of these two parts at the right time by chance is simply minute. It is all a matter of the enormous complexity by which the results were achieved, which looked to me like the work of intelligence. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p74, 75.]
- Schroeder first referred to an experiment conducted by the British National Council of Arts. A computer was placed in a cage with six monkeys. After one month of hammering away at it (as well as using it as a bathroom!), the monkeys produced fifty typed pages—but not a single word. Schroeder noted that this was the case even though the shortest word in the English language is one letter (a or I). A is a word only if there is a space on either side of it. If

we take it that the keyboard has thirty characters (the twenty-six letters and other symbols), then the likelihood of getting a one-letter word is 30 times 30 times 30, which is 27,000. The likelihood of a getting a one-letter word is one chance out of 27,000. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p75, 76.]

- Schroeder then applied the probabilities to the sonnet analogy. “What’s the chance of getting a Shakespearean sonnet?” he asked. He continued: All the sonnets are the same length. They’re by definition fourteen lines long. I picked the one I knew the opening line for, “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” I counted the number of letters; there are 488 letters in that sonnet. What’s the likelihood of hammering away and getting 488 letters in the exact sequence as in “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day?”? What you end up with is 26 multiplied by itself 488 times—or 26 to the 488th power. Or, in other words, in base 10, 10 to the 690th. [Now] the number of particles in the universe— not grains of sand, I’m talking about protons, electrons, and neutrons—is 10 to the 80th. Ten to the 80th is 1 with 80 zeros after it. Ten to the 690th is 1 with 690 zeros after it. There are not enough particles in the universe to write down the trials; you’d be off by a factor of 10 to the 600th. If you took the entire universe and converted it to computer chips—forget the monkeys—each one weighing a millionth of a gram and had each computer chip able to spin out 488 trials at, say, a million times a second; if you turn the entire universe into these microcomputer chips and these chips were spinning a million times a second [producing] random letters, the number of trials you would get since the beginning of time would be 10 to the 90th trials. It would be off again by a factor of 10 to the 600th. You will never get a sonnet by chance. The universe would have to be 10 to the 600th times larger. Yet the world just thinks the monkeys can do it every time. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p76, 77.]
- In my book Darwinian Evolution, I pointed out that natural selection does not positively produce anything. It only eliminates, or tends to eliminate, whatever is not competitive. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His*

Mind), HarperCollins e-books, p78.]

- A variation does not need to bestow any actual competitive advantage in order to avoid elimination; it is sufficient that it does not burden its owner with any competitive disadvantage. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p78.]
- To choose a rather silly illustration, suppose I have useless wings tucked away under my suit coat, wings that are too weak to lift my frame off the ground. Useless as they are, these wings do not enable me to escape predators or gather food. But as long as they don't make me more vulnerable to predators, I will probably survive to reproduce and pass on my wings to my descendants. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p78, 79.]
- Darwin's mistake in drawing too positive an inference with his suggestion that natural selection produces something was perhaps due to his employment of the expressions "natural selection" or "survival of the fittest" rather than his own ultimately preferred alternative, "natural preservation." [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p79.]
- Genes, of course, can be neither selfish nor unselfish any more than they or any other nonconscious entities can engage in competition or make selections. (Natural selection is, notoriously, not selection; and it is a somewhat less familiar logical fact that, below the human level, the struggle for existence is not "competitive" in the true sense of the word.) [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p80.]

Part 2: My Discovery of The Divine

4. A Pilgrimage of Reason

- In this parable we see how easy it is to let preconceived theories shape the way we view evidence instead of letting the evidence shape our theories. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the*

World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind), HarperCollins e-books, p86.]

- Now it often seems to people who are not atheists as if there is no conceivable piece of evidence that would be admitted by apparently scientific-minded dogmatic atheists to be a sufficient reason for conceding “There might be a God after all.” I therefore put to my former fellow-atheists the simple central question: “What would have to occur or to have occurred to constitute for you a reason to at least consider the existence of a superior Mind?” [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p88.]
- I now believe that the universe was brought into existence by an infinite Intelligence. I believe that this universe's intricate laws manifest what scientists have called the Mind of God. I believe that life and reproduction originate in a divine Source. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p88.]
- Science spotlights three dimensions of nature that point to God. The first is the fact that nature obeys laws. The second is the dimension of life, of intelligently organized and purpose-driven beings, which arose from matter. The third is the very existence of nature. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p88, 89.]
- When you study the interaction of two physical bodies, for instance, two subatomic particles, you are engaged in science. When you ask how it is that those subatomic particles—or anything physical—could exist and why, you are engaged in philosophy. When you draw philosophical conclusions from scientific data, then you are thinking as a philosopher. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p89.]
- Of course, scientists are just as free to think as philosophers as anyone else. And, of course, not all scientists will agree with my particular interpretation of the facts they generate. But their disagreements will have to stand on their own two philosophical feet. In other words, if they are engaged in philosophical analysis, neither their authority nor their expertise as scientists

is of any relevance. This should be easy to see. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p90, 91.]

- As Albert Einstein himself said, “The man of science is a poor philosopher.” [Albert Einstein, *Out of My Later Years* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 58.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p91.]
- Three domains of scientific inquiry have been especially important for me, and I will consider them as we proceed in the light of today's evidence. The first is the question that puzzled and continues to puzzle most reflective scientists: How did the laws of nature come to be? The second is evident to all: How did life as a phenomenon originate from nonlife? And the third is the problem that philosophers handed over to cosmologists: How did the universe, by which we mean all that is physical, come into existence? [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p91.]
- As for my new position on the classical philosophical debates about God, in this area I was persuaded above all by the philosopher David Conway's argument for God's existence in his book *The Recovery of Wisdom: From Here to Antiquity in Quest of Sophia*. Conway is a distinguished British philosopher at Middlesex University who is equally at home with classical and modern philosophy. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p]
- The God whose existence is defended by Conway and myself is the God of Aristotle. Conway writes: In sum, to the Being whom he considered to be the explanation of the world and its broad form, Aristotle ascribed the following attributes: immutability, immateriality, omnipotence, omniscience, oneness or indivisibility, perfect goodness and necessary existence. There is an impressive correspondence between this set of attributes and those traditionally ascribed to God within the Judaeo-Christian tradition. It is one that fully justifies us in viewing Aristotle as having had the same Divine

Being in mind as the cause of the world that is the object of worship of these two religions. [David Conway, *The Rediscovery of Wisdom* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 74.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p92.]

- God created the world so as to bring into being a race of rational creatures. Conway believes, and I concur, that it is possible to learn of the existence and nature of this Aristotelian God by the exercise of unaided human reason. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p93.]
- I must stress that my discovery of the Divine has proceeded on a purely natural level, without any reference to supernatural phenomena. It has been an exercise in what is traditionally called natural theology. It has had no connection with any of the revealed religions. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p93.]

5. Who Wrote the Laws of Nature?

- Perhaps the most popular and intuitively plausible argument for God's existence is the so-called argument from design. According to this argument, the design that is apparent in nature suggests the existence of a cosmic Designer. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p95.]
- I have often stressed that this is actually an argument to design from order, as such arguments proceed from the perceived order in nature to show evidence of design and, thus, a Designer. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p95.]
- What do I mean by the laws of nature? By law, I simply mean a regularity or symmetry in nature. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p96.]
- The important point is not merely that there are regularities in nature, but that

these regularities are mathematically precise, universal, and “tied together.” [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p96.]

- Hawking had more to say on this in later interviews: “The overwhelming impression is one of order. The more we discover about the universe, the more we find that it is governed by rational laws.” And, “You still have the question: why does the universe bother to exist? If you like, you can define God to be the answer to that question.” [Gregory Benford, “Leaping the Abyss: Stephen Hawking on Black Holes, Unified Field Theory and Marilyn Monroe,” *Reason* 4.02 (April 2002): 29.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p97.]
- Long before Hawking, Einstein had used similar language: “I want to know how God created this world. . . . I want to know His thoughts, the rest are details.” [Albert Einstein, quoted in Timothy Ferris, *Coming of Age in the Milky Way* (New York: Morrow, 1988), 177.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p98.]
- Albert Einstein: I have never found a better expression than “religious” for this trust in the rational nature of reality and of its peculiar accessibility to the human mind. Where this trust is lacking science degenerates into an uninspired procedure. Let the devil care if the priests make capital out of this. There is no remedy for that. [Albert Einstein, *Lettres a Maurice Solovine reproduits en facsimile et traduits en francais* (Paris: Gauthier-Vilars, 1956), 102–3.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p101, 102.]
- Albert Einstein: Whoever has undergone the intense experience of successful advances in this domain [science] is moved by profound reverence for the rationality made manifest in existence . . . the grandeur of reason incarnate in existence. [Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, trans. Sonja Bargmann (New York: Dell, 1973), 49.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His*

Mind), HarperCollins e-books, p102.]

- Albert Einstein: Certain it is that a conviction, akin to religious feeling, of the rationality or intelligibility of the world lies behind all scientific work of a higher order ... This firm belief, a belief bound up with deep feeling, in a superior mind that reveals itself in the world of experience, represents my conception of God. [Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, 255.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p102.]
- Albert Einstein: Everyone who is seriously engaged in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that the laws of nature manifest the existence of a spirit vastly superior to that of men, and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble. [Jammer, *Einstein and Religion*, 93.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p102.]
- Albert Einstein: My religiosity consists of a humble admiration of the infinitely superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God. [Albert Einstein, *The Quotable Einstein*, ed. Alice Calaprice (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 195–6.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p102, 103.]
- Werner Heisenberg, famous for Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and matrix mechanics, said, "In the course of my life I have repeatedly been compelled to ponder on the relationship of these two regions of thought [science and religion], for I have never been able to doubt the reality of that to which they point." [Werner Heisenberg, *Across the Frontiers*, trans. Peter Heath (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1974), 213.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p103.]
- On another occasion he [Werner Heisenberg] said: Wolfgang [Pauli] asked me quite unexpectedly: "Do you believe in a personal God?". . . "May I

rephrase your question?” I asked. “I myself should prefer the following formulation: Can you, or anyone else, reach the central order of things or events, whose existence seems beyond doubt, as directly as you can reach the soul of another human being. I am using the term ‘soul’ quite deliberately so as not to be misunderstood. If you put your question like that, I would say yes. . . . If the magnetic force that has guided this particular compass—and what else was its source but the central order?—should ever become extinguished, terrible things may happen to mankind, far more terrible even than concentration camps and atom bombs.” [Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Beyond* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1971), excerpted in Timothy Ferris, ed., *The World Treasury of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics* (New York: Little, Brown, 1991), 826.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p103, 104.]

- Another quantum pioneer, Erwin Schrödinger, who developed wave mechanics, stated: The scientific picture of the world around me is very deficient. It gives me a lot of factual information, puts all our experience in a magnifi cently consistent order, but is ghastly silent about all that is
- really near to our heart, that really matters to us. It cannot tell a word about the sensation of red and blue, bitter and sweet, feelings of delight and sorrow. It knows nothing of beauty and ugly, good or bad, God and eternity. Science sometimes pretends to answer questions in these domains, but the answers are very often so silly that we are not inclined to take them seriously. Science is reticent too when it is a question of the great Unity of which we somehow form a part, to which we belong. The most popular name for it in our time is God, with a capital “G.” Science is, very usually, branded as being atheistic. After what we have said this is not astonishing. If its world picture does not even contain beauty, delight, sorrow, if personality is cut out of it by agreement, how should it contain the most sublime idea that presents itself to the human mind. [Erwin Schrödinger, *My View of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 93.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p104, 105.]
- Max Planck, who first introduced the quantum hypothesis, unambiguously

held that science complements religion, contending, “There can never be any real opposition between religion and science; for the one is the complement of the other.” [Max Planck, *Where Is Science Going?* trans. James Murphy (New York: Norton, 1977), 168.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p105.]

- He [Max Planck] also said, “Religion and natural science are fighting a joint battle in an incessant, never relaxing crusade against skepticism and against dogmatism, against unbelief and superstition . . . [and therefore] ‘On to God!’” [Max Planck, quoted in Charles C. Gillespie, ed., *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1975), 15.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p105.]
- Paul A. M. Dirac, who complemented Heisenberg and Schrödinger with a third formulation of quantum theory, observed that “God is a mathematician of a very high order and He used advanced mathematics in constructing the universe.” [Paul A. M. Dirac, “The Evolution of the Physicist’s Picture of Nature,” *Scientific American* 208, no. 5 (May 1963): 53.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p105, 106.]
- Generations before any of these scientists, Charles Darwin had already expressed a similar view: [Reason tells me of the] extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe, including man with his capability of looking far backwards and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity. When thus reflecting I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man; and I deserve to be called a Theist. [Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin 1809-1882*, ed. Nora Barlow (London: Collins, 1958), 92–3.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p106. In his Templeton address, Paul Davies makes the point that “science can proceed only if the scientist adopts an essentially theological worldview.” Nobody asks where the laws of physics come from, but “even the most atheistic scientist accepts as an act of faith the existence

of a lawlike order in nature that is at least in part comprehensible to us.”] [Paul Davies, Templeton Prize Address, May 1995, See also Davies’s “Where Do the Laws of Physics Come From?” (2006).] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p107.]

- The burning question, he [Paul Davies] says, is threefold: Where do the laws of physics come from? Why is it that we have these laws instead of some other set? How is that we have a set of laws that drives featureless gases to life, consciousness and intelligence? [Paul Davies, Templeton Prize Address, May 1995, See also Davies’s “Where Do the Laws of Physics Come From?” (2006).] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p108.]
- These laws “seem almost contrived—fine-tuned, some commentators have claimed—so that life and consciousness may emerge.” He concludes that this “contrived nature of physical existence is just too fantastic for me to take on board as simply ‘given.’ It points to a deeper underlying meaning to existence.” Such words as purpose and design, he says, only capture imperfectly what the universe is about. “But, that it is about something, I have absolutely no doubt.” [Paul Davies, Templeton Prize Address, May 1995, See also Davies’s “Where Do the Laws of Physics Come From?” (2006).] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p108.]
- In his book *The Divine Lawmaker: Lectures on Induction, Laws of Nature and the Existence of God*, Oxford philosopher John Foster contends that regularities in nature, however you describe them, can be best explained by a divine Mind. If you accept the fact that there are laws, then something must impose that regularity on the universe. What agent (or agents) brings this about? He contends that the theistic option is the only serious option as the source, so that “we shall be rationally warranted in concluding that it is God—the God of the theistic account—who creates the laws by imposing the regularities on the world as regularities.” [John Foster, *The Divine Lawmaker: Lectures on Induction, Laws of Nature and the Existence of God*

(Oxford: Clarendon, 2004), 160.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p109, 110.]

- Swinburne makes a related point in a response to Dawkins's critique of his argument to design: What is a law of nature? (This is not an issue faced by any of my critics.) To say that it is a law of nature that all bodies behave in a certain way (e.g., attract each other in accord with a certain formula) is, I suggest, just to say that each body of physical necessity behaves in that way (e.g., attracts each body in that way). And it is simpler to suppose that this uniformity arises from the action of one substance which causes them all to behave in the same way, rather than to suppose that all bodies behaving in the same uniform way is an ultimate brute fact. [Richard Swinburne, "Design Defended," *Think* (Spring 2004): 14.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p110.]
- What is complex about the idea of an omnipotent and omniscient Spirit, an idea so simple that it is understood by all the adherents of the three great monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam? [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p111.]
- "Science is based on the assumption that the universe is thoroughly rational and logical at all levels," writes Paul Davies, arguably the most influential contemporary expositor of modern science. "Atheists claim that the laws [of nature] exist reasonlessly and that the universe is ultimately absurd. As a scientist, I find this hard to accept. There must be an unchanging rational ground in which the logical, orderly nature of the universe is rooted." [Paul Davies, "What Happened Before the Big Bang?" in *God for the 21st Century*, ed. Russell Stannard (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2000), 12.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p111.]

6. Did the Universe Know We Were Coming?

- Imagine entering a hotel room on your next vacation. The CD player on the bedside table is softly playing a track from your favorite recording. The

framed print over the bed is identical to the image that hangs over the fireplace at home. The room is scented with your favorite fragrance. You shake your head in amazement and drop your bags on the floor. You're suddenly very alert. You step over to the minibar, open the door, and stare in wonder at the contents. Your favorite beverages. Your favorite cookies and candy. Even the brand of bottled water you prefer. You turn from the minibar, then, and gaze around the room. You notice the book on the desk: it's the latest volume by your favorite author. You glance into the bathroom, where personal care and grooming products are lined up on the counter, each one as if it was chosen specifically for you. You switch on the television; it is tuned to your favorite channel. Chances are, with each new discovery about your hospitable new environment, you would be less inclined to think it was all a mere coincidence, right? You might wonder how the hotel managers acquired such detailed information about you. You might marvel at their meticulous preparation. You might even double-check what all this is going to cost you. But you would certainly be inclined to believe that someone knew you were coming. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p113, 114.]

- “The more I examine the universe and study the details of its architecture,” writes physicist Freeman Dyson, “the more evidence I find that the universe in some sense knew we were coming.” [Freeman J. Dyson, *Disturbing the Universe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 250. Also cited in John Barrow and Frank Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 318.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p114.]
- Let's take the most basic laws of physics. It has been calculated that if the value of even one of the fundamental constants—the speed of light or the mass of an electron, for instance—had been to the slightest degree different, then no planet capable of permitting the evolution of human life could have formed. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p115.]

- In his book *Infinite Minds*, John Leslie, a leading anthropic theorist, argues that fine tuning is best explained by divine design. He says that he is impressed not by particular arguments for instances of fine tuning, but by the fact that these arguments exist in such profusion. “If, then, there were aspects of nature’s workings that appeared very fortunate and also entirely fundamental,” he writes, “then these might well be seen as evidence specially favoring belief in God.” [John Leslie, *Infinite Minds* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), 213.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p115.]
- Rees observes: Any universe hospitable to life—what we might call a biophilic universe—has to be “adjusted” in a particular way. The prerequisites for any life of the kind we know about—long-lived stable stars, stable atoms such as carbon, oxygen and silicon, able to combine into complex molecules, etc.—are sensitive to the physical laws and to the size, expansion rate and contents of the universe. [Martin J. Rees, “Numerical Coincidences and ‘Tuning’ in Cosmology,” *Astrophysics and Space Science* 285 (2003): 376.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p117.]
- He [Martin Rees] notes that only one of them can be right. And, in fact, he adds, “Quite possibly none is: there are alternative theories that would lead just to one universe.” [Rees, “Numerical Coincidences and ‘Tuning’ in Cosmology,” 385.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p118.]
- Davies, a physicist and cosmologist, writes that “it is trivially true that, in an infinite universe, anything that can happen will happen.” But this is not an explanation at all. If we are trying to understand why the universe is bio-friendly, we are not helped by being told that all possible universes exist. [Paul Davies, “Universes Galore: Where Will It All End?”] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p118.]
- The idea of a multiverse replaces the rationally ordered real world with an

infinitely complex charade and makes the whole idea of “explanation” meaningless. [Paul Davies, “Universes Galore: Where Will It All End?”] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p119.]

- Swinburne is just as strong in his disdain for the multiverse explanation: “It is crazy to postulate a trillion (causally unconnected) universes to explain the features of one universe, when postulating one entity (God) will do the job.” [Richard Swinburne, “Design Defended,” *Think* (Spring 2004): 17.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p119.]
- Three things might be said concerning the arguments about fine tuning. First, it is a hard fact that we live in a universe with certain laws and constants, and life would not have been possible if some of these laws and constants had been different. Second, the fact that the existing laws and constants allow the survival of life does not answer the question of the origin of life. This is a very different question, as I will try to show; these conditions are necessary for life to arise, but not sufficient. Third, the fact that it is logically possible that there are multiple universes with their own laws of nature does not show that such universes do exist. There is currently no evidence in support of a multiverse. It remains a speculative idea. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p119.]
- What is especially important here is the fact that the existence of a multiverse does not explain the origin of the laws of nature. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p119, 120.]
- Martin Rees suggests that the existence of different universes with their own laws raises the question of the laws governing the entire multiverse, the overarching theory governing the ensemble. “The underlying laws governing the entire multiverse may allow variety among the universes,” he writes. “Some of what we call ‘laws of nature’ may in this grander perspective be local bylaws, consistent with some overarching theory governing the ensemble, but not uniquely fixed by that theory.” [Rees, “Numerical

Coincidences and ‘Tuning’ in Cosmology,” 386.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p120.]

- To ask how the laws governing the multiverse originated is the same as asking for the origin of the laws of nature in general. Paul Davies notes: Multiverse proponents are often vague about how the parameter values are chosen across the defined ensemble. If there is a “law of laws” describing how parameter values are assigned as one slips from one universe to the next, then we have only shifted the problem of cosmic biophilicity up one level. Why? First, because we need to explain where the law of laws comes from. [Davies, “Universes Galore: Where Will It All End?”] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p120.]
- But, as Rees has pointed out, even such accidents can be regarded as secondary manifestations of deeper laws governing the ensemble of universes. Again, even the evolution of the laws of nature and changes to the constants follow certain laws. “We’re still left with the question of how these ‘deeper’ laws originated. No matter how far you push back the properties of the universe as somehow ‘emergent,’ their very emergence has to follow certain prior laws.” [Martin Rees, “Exploring Our Universe and Others,” in *The Frontiers of Space* (New York: Scientific American, 2000), 87.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p120, 121.]
- So multiverse or not, we still have to come to terms with the origin of the laws of nature. And the only viable explanation here is the divine Mind. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p121.]

7. How Did Life Go Live?

- The philosophical question that has not been answered in origin-of-life studies is this: How can a universe of mindless matter produce beings with intrinsic ends, self-replication capabilities, and “coded chemistry”? Here we are not dealing with biology, but an entirely different category of problem. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p124.]

- The origin of self-reproduction is a second key problem. Distinguished philosopher John Haldane notes that origin-of-life theories “do not provide a sufficient explanation, since they presuppose the existence at an early stage of self-reproduction, and it has not been shown that this can arise by natural means from a material base.” [John Haldane, “Preface to the Second Edition,” in *Atheism and Theism (Great Debates in Philosophy)*, J. J. C. Smart and John Haldane (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 224.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p125.]
- Conway concludes that these biological phenomena “provide us with reason for doubting that it is possible to account for existent life-forms in purely materialistic terms and without recourse to design.” [David Conway, *The Rediscovery of Wisdom* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 125.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p126.]
- A third philosophical dimension to the origin of life relates to the origin of the coding and information processing that is central to all life-forms. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p126.]
- The remarkable nature of this phenomenon becomes apparent when we highlight the word code. Berlinski writes: By itself, a code is familiar enough, an arbitrary mapping or a system of linkages between two discrete combinatorial objects. The Morse code, to take a familiar example, coordinates dashes and dots with letters of the alphabet. To note that codes are arbitrary is to note the distinction between a code and a purely physical connection between two objects. To note that codes embody mappings is to embed the concept of a code in mathematical language. To note that codes reflect a linkage of some sort is to return the concept of a code to its human uses. [David Berlinski, “On the Origins of Life,” *Commentary* (February 2006): 25, 30–31.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p127.]
- This in turn leads to the big question: “Can the origins of a system of coded chemistry be explained in a way that makes no appeal whatever to the kinds

of facts that we otherwise invoke to explain codes and languages, systems of communication, the impress of ordinary words on the world of matter?” [David Berlinski, “On the Origins of Life,” Commentary (February 2006): 25, 30–31.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p127.]

- Carl Woese, a leader in origin-of-life studies, draws attention to the philosophically puzzling nature of this phenomenon. Writing in the journal RNA, he says: “The coding, mechanistic, and evolutionary facets of the problem now became separate issues. The idea that gene expression, like gene replication, was underlain by some fundamental physical principle was gone.” Not only is there no underlying physical principle, but the very existence of a code is a mystery. “The coding rules (the dictionary of codon assignments) are known. Yet they provide no clue as to why the code exists and why the mechanism of translation is what it is.” He frankly admits that we do not know anything about the origin of such a system. “The origins of translation, that is before it became a true decoding mechanism, are for now lost in the dimness of the past, and I don’t wish to engage here in hand-waving speculations as to what polymerization processes might have preceded and given rise to it, or to speculate on the origins of tRNA, tRNA charging systems or the genetic code.” [Carl Woese, “Translation: In Retrospect and Prospect,” RNA (2001): 1061, 1056, 1064.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p127, 128.]
- Paul Davies highlights the same problem. He observes that most theories of biogenesis have concentrated on the chemistry of life, but “life is more than just complex chemical reactions. The cell is also an information storing, processing and replicating system. We need to explain the origin of this information, and the way in which the information processing machinery came to exist.” [Paul Davies, “The Origin of Life II: How Did It Begin?”] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p128.]
- The origin question rises to the top at this point. “The problem of how

meaningful or semantic information can emerge spontaneously from a collection of mindless molecules subject to blind and purposeless forces presents a deep conceptual challenge.” [Paul Davies, “The Origin of Life II: How Did It Begin?”] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p129.]

- Andy Knoll, a professor of biology at Harvard and author of *Life on a Young Planet: The First Three Billion Years of Life*, notes: If we try to summarize by just saying what, at the end of the day, we do know about the deep history of life on Earth, about its origin, about its formative stages that gave rise to the biology we see around us today, I think we have to admit that we’re looking through a glass darkly here. We don’t know how life started on this planet. We don’t know exactly when it started, we don’t know under what circumstances. [Andy Knoll, PBS Nova interview, May 3, 2004.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p130.]
- Antonio Lazcano, the president of the International Society for the Study of the Origin of Life, reports: “One feature of life, though, remains certain: Life could not have evolved without a genetic mechanism—one able to store, replicate, and transmit to its progeny information that can change with time. . . . Precisely how the first genetic machinery evolved also persists as an unresolved issue.” In fact, he says, “The exact pathway for life’s origin may never be known.” [Antonio Lazcano, “The Origins of Life,” *Natural History* (February 2006).] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p130.]
- As for the origin of reproduction, John Maddox, the editor emeritus of *Nature*, writes, “The overriding question is when (and then how) sexual reproduction itself evolved. Despite decades of speculation, we do not know.” [John Maddox, *What Remains to Be Discovered* (New York: Touchstone, 1998), 252.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p]
- The Nobel Prize–winning physiologist George Wald once famously argued

that “we choose to believe the impossible: that life arose spontaneously by chance.” [George Wald, “Life and Mind in the Universe,” in *Cosmos, Bios, Theos*, ed. Henry Margenau and Roy Abraham Varghese (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1992), 218.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p131.]

- George Wald: How is it that, with so many other apparent options, we are in a universe that possesses just that peculiar nexus of properties that breeds life? It has occurred to me lately—I must confess with some shock at first to my scientific sensibilities—that both questions might be brought into some degree of congruence. This is with the assumption that mind, rather than emerging as a late outgrowth in the evolution of life, has existed always as the matrix, the source and condition of physical reality—that the stuff of which physical reality is constructed is mind-stuff. It is mind that has composed a physical universe that breeds life, and so eventually evolves creatures that know and create: science-, art-, and technology- making creatures. [George Wald, “Life and Mind in the Universe,” in *Cosmos, Bios, Theos*, ed. Henry Margenau and Roy Abraham Varghese (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1992), 218.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p131, 132.]

8. Did Something Come from Nothing?

- Nothing comes from nothing, Nothing ever could. [“Something Good,” music and lyrics by Richard Rodgers, 1965.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p133.]
- I confessed at that point that atheists have to be embarrassed by the contemporary cosmological consensus, for it seemed that the cosmologists were providing a scientific proof of what St. Thomas Aquinas contended could not be proved philosophically; namely, that the universe had a beginning. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p135.]
- When I first met the big-bang theory as an atheist, it seemed to me the theory

made a big difference because it suggested that the universe had a beginning and that the first sentence in Genesis (“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”) was related to an event in the universe. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p136.]

- As long as the universe could be comfortably thought to be not only without end but also without beginning, it remained easy to see its existence (and its most fundamental features) as brute facts. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p136.]
- If the existence of one universe requires an explanation, multiple universes require a much bigger explanation: the problem is increased by the factor of whatever the total number of universes is. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p137.]

9. Finding Space for God

- No antidualist argument shows that a body is a necessary condition for being an agent, since the condition for being an agent is simply to be capable of intentional action. God is an agent, he notes, whose every activity is intentional action. To speak of God as a personal being is to talk of him as an agent of intentional actions. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p150.]

10. Open to Omnipotence

- Certainly, the existence of evil and suffering must be faced. However, philosophically speaking, that is a separate issue from the question of God’s existence. From the existence of nature, we arrive at the ground of its existence. Nature may have its imperfections, but this says nothing as to whether it had an ultimate Source. Thus, the existence of God does not depend on the existence of warranted or unwarranted evil. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p156.]
- With regard to explaining the presence of evil, there are two alternate

explanations for those who accept the existence of the Divine. The first is that of the Aristotelian God who does not intervene in the world. The second is the free-will defense, the idea that evil is always a possibility if human beings are truly free. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p156.]

Appendix A

The “New Atheism”: A Critical Appraisal of Dawkins, Dennett, Wolpert, Harris, and Stenger, By: Roy Abraham Varghese

- At the foundation of the “new atheism” is the belief that there is no God, no eternal and infinite Source of all that exists. This is the key belief that needs to be established in order for most of the other arguments to work. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p161.]
- As I see it, five phenomena are evident in our immediate experience that can only be explained in terms of the existence of God. These are, first, the rationality implicit in all our experience of the physical world; second, life, the capacity to act autonomously; third, consciousness, the ability to be aware; fourth, conceptual thought, the power of articulating and understanding meaningful symbols such as are embedded in language; and, fifth, the human self, the “center” of consciousness, thought, and action. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p162.]
- The approach taken here is that we have all the evidence we need in our immediate experience and that only a deliberate refusal to “look” is responsible for atheism of any variety. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p163.]
- Dawkins and the others ask, “Who created God?” Now, clearly, theists and atheists can agree on one thing: if anything at all exists, there must be something preceding it that always existed. How did this eternally existing reality come to be? The answer is that it never came to be. It always existed.

Take your pick: God or universe. Something always existed. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p165.]

- The reality of rationality cannot be evaded with any appeal to natural selection. Natural selection presupposes the existence of physical entities that interact according to specific laws and of a code that manages the processes of life. And to talk of natural selection is to assume that there is some logic to what is happening in nature (adaptation) and that we are capable of understanding this logic. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p167.]
- “The world is rational,” noted the great mathematician Kurt Gödel. [Hao Wang, *A Logical Journey: From Gödel to Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 316.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p167.]
- The relevance of this rationality is that “the order of the world reflects the order of the supreme mind governing it.” [Palle Yourgrau, *A World Without Time: The Forgotten Legacy of Gödel and Einstein* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 104–5.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p167.]
- Amazingly, *Fearful Symmetry*, a book by Anthony Zee, a leading authority on symmetries, uses the very same facts adduced by Stenger to reach a very different conclusion: Symmetries have played an increasingly central role in our understanding of the physical world. . . . Fundamental physicists are sustained by the faith that the ultimate design is suffused with symmetries. Contemporary physics would not have been possible without symmetries to guide us. . . . As physics moves further away from everyday experience and closer to the mind of the Ultimate Designer, our minds are trained away from their familiar moorings. . . . I like to think of an Ultimate Designer defined by Symmetry, a Deus Congruentiae. [Anthony Zee, *Fearful Symmetry* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 280–81.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World's Most Notorious Atheist*

Changed His Mind), HarperCollins e-books, p169.]

- Over the centuries, thinkers who have considered the concept of “nothing” have been careful to emphasize the point that “nothing” is not a kind of something. Absolute nothingness means no laws, no vacuums, no fields, no energy, no structures, no physical or mental entities of any kind—and no “symmetries.” It has no properties or potentialities. Absolute nothingness cannot produce something given endless time—in fact, there can be no time in absolute nothingness. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p170.]
- It is apparent from this analysis that Stenger leaves two fundamental questions unanswered: Why is there something and not absolute nothingness? And why does the something that exists conform to symmetries or form complex structures? [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p171.]
- Wolpert is quite candid on the state of the field: “This is not to say that all the scientific questions relating to evolution have been solved. On the contrary, the origin of life itself, the evolution of the miraculous cell from which all living things evolved, is still poorly understood.” [Lewis Wolpert, *Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 212–13.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p172.]
- Richard Dawkins: “The origin of life was the chemical event, or series of events, whereby the vital conditions for natural selection first came about. . . . Once the vital ingredient—some kind of genetic molecule—is in place, true Darwinian natural selection can follow.” [Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam, 2006), 137.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p173.]
- Richard Dawkins: “Scientists invoke the magic of large numbers. . . . The beauty of the anthropic principle is that it tells us, against all intuition, that a chemical model need only predict that life will arise on one planet in a billion

billion to give us a good and entirely satisfying explanation for the presence of life here.” [Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 137–38.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p173.]

- Wolpert deliberately avoids the entire issue of consciousness—“I have purposely avoided any discussion of consciousness.” [Wolpert, *Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast*, 78.] [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p176.]
- The point here is that, strictly speaking, your brain does not understand. You understand. Your brain enables you to understand, but not because your thoughts take place in the brain or because “you” cause certain neurons to fire. Rather, your act of understanding that eliminating poverty is a good thing, to take an instance, is a holistic process that is supraphysical in essence (meaning) and physical in execution (words and neurons). [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p178.]
- The history of the world shows the sudden emergence of these phenomena—life appearing soon after the cooling of planet earth, consciousness mysteriously manifesting itself in the Cambrian explosion, language emerging in the “symbolic species” without any evolutionary forerunner. [Antony Flew with Roy Abraham Varghese: *There is a God (How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind)*, HarperCollins e-books, p182.]

الحمد لله الذي بنعمته تتم الصالحات