



# The God Who Is

*Had God designed the world, it would not be a world so frail  
and faulty as we see. – Lucretius (c. 96-55 BC)*

*The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” – Psalm 14:1/53:1*

## — PART 1 —

### Preface: Who Needs Philosophy?

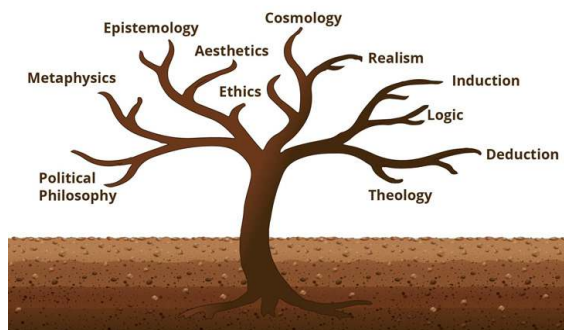
*“Philosophy is not the cultivation of cleverness, or the sophistications  
of scholarship, or the analysis of analysis, or the refutation of refutations,  
or the deconstruction of deconstructions. No, philosophy is a romance,  
a love affair: the love of wisdom.”*

— Peter Kreeft

### Stumbling Block or Stepping Stone?

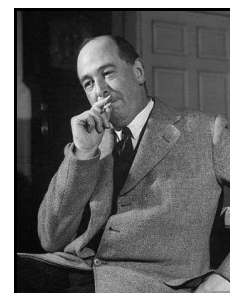
- Many Christians are skeptical philosophy.
- From the outset, philosophy has been an intellectual and a moral morass due to the noetic effects of sin on the human soul.
- What the Bible says about philosophy:
  - Colossians 2:8.
  - I Corinthians 1-2.
  - Tertullian (c. 160-220): “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?”

#### Branches of Philosophy



**[NOTE:** Classical philosophy developed outside of biblical revelation. Therefore, it depended exclusively upon general revelation (“natural theology”) and human reasoning. In fact, we need additional insight (and wisdom) via special revelation.]

- The Bible is not *anti*-philosophical.
  - The Bible sets forth a coherent, consistent, and comprehensive philosophy of life.
  - It address all the perennial issues of life:
    - Origins – Where did I come from?
    - Identity – Who (or what) am I?
    - Purpose – What am I doing here?
    - Destiny – Where am I going (after death)?
- Paul’s warnings pertain to purely human thinking, unenlightened by divine revelation.
  - Paul was well-versed in philosophy – ref. Acts 17.
  - Ref. I Cor. 15.
- Logic and reason are gifts of God.
  - The *Imago Dei*.
  - God insists that we use all our mental faculties to serve him.
    - Prov. 4:7.
    - Prov. 10:14.
    - Prov. 19:2.
    - II Tim. 2:15.
  - The Greatest Commandment: love God sincerely, passionately, and mindfully.
- Philosophy (lit. “the love of wisdom”) is the rational process of synthesizing facts, logic, moral precepts, and our own life experiences so as to guide our thinking and our actions.
  - Colin Brown: “Philosophy is an intellectual discipline that is concerned with the nature of reality and the investigation of the general principles of existence [ontology] and knowledge [epistemology].”
- Who needs philosophy?
  - Anyone who is serious about pursuing truth in this life.
  - C. S. Lewis: “Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered.”



## Introduction

### The “New Atheism”.

- *Time* magazine cover story (November 13, 2006): “God vs. Science.”
- Richard Dawkins: The atheist surge is the “atheist pride” movement.
- Aggressive atheism.
  - Sam Schulman: “Religious belief is not just misguided but contemptible.”
  - Dinesh D’Souza: “The atheists no longer want to be tolerated. They want to monopolize the public square and to expel Christians from it.”

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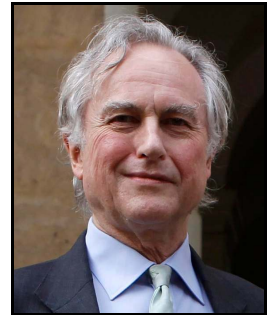
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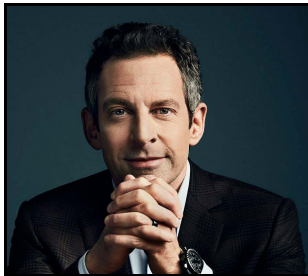
## Richard Dawkins.

- Author of *The Selfish Gene* (1976); *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (1986); *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life* (1995); and *The God Delusion* (2006).
- Dawkins: “Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.”
- Dawkins: Religious faith as “a kind of mental illness” and “one of the world’s great evils, comparable to the small pox virus but harder to eradicate.”
- Dawkins: “Life has no higher purpose than to perpetuate the survival of DNA.... The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference.”
- Dawkins: “The cause of religion might be hyperactivity in a particular node of the brain.
- Dawkins: “Religious education is “a form of child abuse.”
- Dawkins: Critics of naturalistic evolution are either “ignorant, stupid, or insane – or evil.”
- Introduction to *The God Delusion*: “If this book works as I intend, religious readers who open it will be atheists when they put it down.”
- Dawkins on the character of God:
  - “The great unmentionable evil at the center of our culture is monotheism. From a barbaric Bronze Age text known as the Old Testament, three anti-human religions have evolved: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam....

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all of fiction. Jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty, ethnic-cleanser; a misogynistic homophobic racist; infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal....”



## Sam Harris.



- Author of *The End of Faith* (2005) and *Letter to a Christian Nation* (2006).
- Harris’ stated intention: to “demolish the intellectual and moral pretensions of Christianity.”
- Harris: Religion is a harmful delusion, a menace to civilization, and the source of most of the world’s problems.
- Harris: Whereas atheism should be taught as an extension of science and logic, theology is “little more than a branch of human ignorance.”
- Harris: Religion is responsible for most of the genocides and holocausts in human history.
- Harris: Religion is a form of social lunacy – and unworthy of tolerance.
- Harris: “I no more believe in the Biblical God than I believe in Zeus, Isis, Thor and the thousands of other dead gods that lie buried in the mass grave we call ‘mythology’.”

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## Daniel Dennett.

- Author of *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (1995) and *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (2006).
- Dennett: Darwinian evolutionary theory is a kind of “universal acid” that “eats through just about every traditional concept, and leaves in its wake a revolutionized worldview” regarding the nature of man and the universe.
- Religion is an antiquated superstition and an impediment to progress.

## Michael Onfray.

- Author of *The Atheist Manifesto: The Case Against Christianity, Judaism, and Islam* (2007).
- Onfray: Historically, Christianity has persecuted unbelievers, suppressed women, stifled sexual and other pleasures, and inhibited the advancement of science. **Victor J. Stenger.**
- Author of *God – The Failed Hypothesis: How Science Shows That God Does Not Exist* (2007).
- Stenger: I have scoured the cosmos but cannot find any trace of the divine anywhere.
- Stenger: Modern science proves that there is a naturalistic explanation for all the cosmological phenomena that superstitious humans used to attribute to God.

## Christopher Hitchens.

- Author of *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (2007).
- A Bertrand Russell wannabe.
- An equal-opportunity hater of religions:
  - Hitchens touted the “moral superiority of atheism,” and charged that religion appeals to those with an “authoritarian, if not a totalitarian personality.”
  - Hitchens: “All religions and all churches are equally demented in their belief in divine intercession, or even the existence of the divine in the first place.”



Christopher Hitchens

## Atheistic Totalitarianism.

- Many atheist advocates are left-wing fascists who believe the state should control not only the science education but the religious upbringing of young people.
  - Richard Dawkins: “How much do we regard children as being the property of their parents? It’s one thing to say people should be free to believe whatever they like, but should they be free to impose their beliefs on their children? Is there something to be said for society stepping in?.... Isn’t it always a form of child abuse to label children as possessors of beliefs that they are too young to have thought out?”
  - Daniel Dennett: “Parents don’t own children the way slaveowners once owned slaves.”
  - Christopher Hitchens: Children are being “irreparably maimed” both physically and psychologically “by the compulsory inculcation of faith” by their parents.
  - Nicholas Humphrey: “Parents... have no god-given license to educate their children in whatever ways they personally choose: no right to limit the horizons of their children’s knowledge, to bring them up in an atmosphere of dogma and superstition, or to insist they follow the straight and narrow path of their own faith.”

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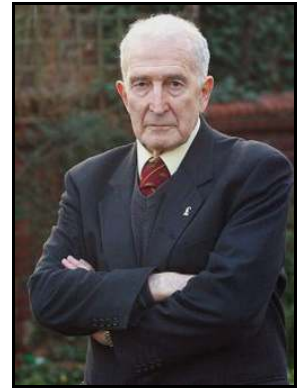
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- Richard Rorty: University professors should “arrange things so that students who enter as bigoted, homophobic religious fundamentalists will leave college with views more like our own.”
  - Parents who are religious traditionalists need to realize and accept that part of the role of a professor is to undermine their values.
  - “We are going to go right on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable.”
- Dinesh D’Souza: “Isn’t it brilliant that [left-wing professors] have persuaded Christian moms and dads to finance the destruction of their own beliefs and values?”

### Antony Flew’s Flight to God.

- *There Is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (2007).
- The mindset of naturalistic scientists:
  - “We should not ask for an explanation of how it is that the world exists; it is here and that’s all... Since we cannot accept a transcendent source of life, we choose to believe the impossible: that life arose spontaneously by chance from matter” or “The laws of physics are ‘lawless laws’ that arise from the void....”
- An Oxford University philosopher and influential atheist intellectual.
- In 2004 Flew announced that he now rejected atheism and had converted to belief in God.
- In *There Is a God* Flew explained that the scientific evidence and the philosophical arguments for the existence of God were too compelling to ignore.
  - “I now believe that the universe was brought into existence by an infinite Intelligence....”
- Three questions that scientific naturalism cannot adequately answer:
  - (1) How did the laws of nature come to be?
  - (2) How did the universe – including all space, time, and matter – come into existence?
  - (3) How did life originate from non-life?



## The Faith Factor

### The Seminal Issue.

- Faith is not (or should not be) an impediment to our search for truth and reality.
  - Unlike naturalistic materialists – we understand that we can access reality through both general revelation and special revelation.
- We demonstrate what we really believe by how we live our lives.
- What we truly believe about God defines our entire worldview – including our views on all the great social, moral, political, and economic issues of our time.

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## The Mind/Soul Connection.

- A clean heart facilitates a clear mind.
- Faith illuminates understanding.
  - Psalm 111:10.
  - Prov. 3:5-6.
  - Psalm 14:1.
  - Romans 1: Those who reject God's revelation in nature inevitably degenerate into intellectual and moral depravity.
- Blaise Pascal: God has revealed evidence of himself that is sufficiently clear to those with open hearts and minds, but which is sufficiently vague so as not to force those whose hearts and minds are closed to belief in him.

## Life Without God: The Human Predicament

### Imagine: Life Without God.

- Douglas Adams, *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979).
- John Lennon's "Imagine" (1971).
- If we live in a godless universe, Adams is mostly right and Lennon is mostly wrong.

### Terminal Avoidance.

- Blaise Pascal, *Pensees* (1670): Most people avoid divine knowledge and fill their lives with meaningless distractions and trivial pursuits
  - Such indifference is not only irrational, immature and irresponsible, but utterly insane.
  - Since knowledge of the divine is the most important thing in life, man should make it his number one priority.



Blaise Pascal

### The "Gospel" of Atheism.

- A godless universe is a meaningless and hopeless universe.
- G. K. Chesterton: "The danger is when people stop believing in God, it is not that they will believe in nothing, but that they will believe in anything."
- Richard Dawkins: "Life has no higher purpose than to perpetuate the survival of DNA... life has no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference."
- Quentin Smith: "The most reasonable belief is that we come from nothing, by nothing, and for nothing, and we should all acknowledge this foundation."
- Peter Singer: "We are all products of blind natural selection, morality and values are merely reflections of our subjective attitudes, and in that case everything is permitted and nothing matters."
- Michael Scriven replied: "We die and rot like fish."
- Loren Eiseley: Without the sustaining power and presence of a loving Heavenly Father, humanity exists as a "Cosmic Orphan."
- Human beings (unless miseducated otherwise!) want to know "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" and "Where am I going?"

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- Oswald Spengler: “Mankind has no aim, no idea, no plan, any more than a family of butterflies or orchids.”
- William Provine: Because there is “no life after death,” there is “no ultimate foundation for knowledge” and “no ultimate meaning for life.”
- Richard Dawkins: “In a materialistic universe, there is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil, no good – nothing but pointless existence.”
- Bertrand Russell: “We must build our lives on the firm foundation of despair.”
- Humanist Manifesto II: “There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body.”
- Ernest Nagel: “Human destiny is an episode between two oblivions.”
- John Updike: David’s “exact vision of death.”
- Living in an impersonal, purposeless, and purely materialistic universe leads only to hopelessness and nihilistic despair.
- Kansas, “Dust In the Wind.”
- Not only humanity, but the whole universe faces extinction.
- Friedrich Nietzsche on the consequences of the “death of God.”
  - Christianity will collapse, Biblical moral values will disintegrate, and an age of nihilism will envelope humanity.
  - Nietzsche: “Our whole European culture is moving for some time now with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade, as toward a catastrophe....”
- George Orwell on the consequences of atheism.
- Jean Paul Sartre: Why don’t we just commit suicide?
- Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*.
- Herman Hesse, *Steppenwolf*.
- Chicago, “When All the Laughter Dies In Sorrow.”
- Nothing matters in a godless universe.



Friedrich Nietzsche

### No Morality and No Justice.

- If there is no God, everything is relative.
  - Good and evil are mere abstractions.
- A source of liberation?
  - Harvard biologist E. O. Wilson: “We can be proud as a species because, having discovered that we are alone, we owe the gods very little.”
- The realities of the situation.
  - Rebecca Bynum: “Without a firm grasp on the transcendent, man is thrown back upon himself, a victim of directionless scientific dialectic, without purpose, without reason. And with nothing beyond himself to live for or to strive for, man becomes a pitiable creature vainly endeavoring to elevate his lusts to some level of profundity. We see this absurd drama everywhere. The message is, the meaning of life is found in the pleasures of the flesh (money and sex), which holds no meaning whatever and creates no life at all.”

### Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Parable of the Madman.”

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- ▶ J. Budziszewski: “If there is no God, then the universe is not a creation. One immediate consequence is that I owe nothing to anyone for the fact that I am in it.”
- ▶ Irving Kristol: “It is crucial to the lives of all of... all human beings that all times, that they encounter a world that possesses a transcendent meaning, a world in which the human experience makes sense. Nothing is more dehumanizing... than to experience one’s life as a meaningless event in a meaningless world.”
- ▶ George Will: “We know from the bitter experience of twentieth-century fanaticisms the political consequences of felt meaninglessness. Human nature abhors a vacuum, and a vacuum of meaninglessness has been filled by secular fighting faiths, such as fascism and communism.... [T]here is no precedent for bloodshed on the scale produced in the twentieth century by secular political faiths.”
- If there are no divinely-mandated moral laws, then everything is relative.
  - ▶ Everything is negotiable.
  - ▶ There is no objective basis for condemning war, social injustice, sexual abuse, racism, criminal behavior, or anything else.
  - ▶ If life ends when we die, then it makes no ultimate difference whether we lived a saintly or a demonic life.
  - ▶ Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov*: If there is no God, everything is permissible.
  - ▶ Likewise, if there is no God, all things are morally equivalent – in which case the Epicurean approach to life would be sensible.
  - ▶ If there is no Natural Law that serves as a basis for jurisprudence and justice, everything degenerates into power politics.
  - ▶ There basis to support women’s rights.
  - ▶ Only the Biblical theist can offer a convincing defense of environmental stewardship.
- Richard Wurmbrand in *Tortured for Christ*:
  - ▶ “The cruelty of atheism is hard to believe when man has no faith in the reward of good or the punishment of evil. There is no reason to be human. There is no restraint from the depths of evil.... [My] torturers often said, ‘There is no God, no hereafter, no punishment for evil. We can do what we wish.’ I have heard one torturer even say, ‘I thank God, in whom I don’t believe, that I have lived to this hour when I can express all the evil in my heart.’ He expressed it in unbelievable brutality and torture inflicted on prisoners.”
- Over the past 200 years – beginning with the French Revolution – more innocent people have been persecuted, tortured, and murdered by secular ideologies and institutionalized atheism – including Nazism, Communism, and various Fascist regimes – than by all religions in history.
- People acting in the name of religion have perpetrated heinous atrocities throughout history.
  - ▶ Unjust wars, religious persecutions, and other crimes committed in the name of Christianity are clearly antithetical to the moral teachings of Christ himself.
  - ▶ Such acts may be perpetrated in the *name* of Christ, but none are in the *spirit* of Christ.

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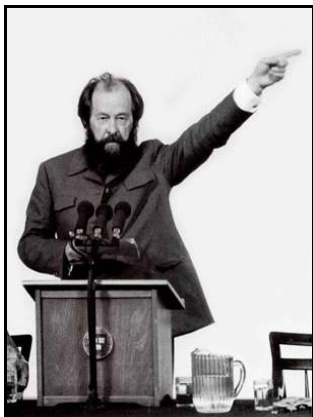
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- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn on the moral consequences of atheism:



- ▶ “Over half a century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of old people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: ‘Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.’ Since then I have spent well-nigh 50 years working on the history of our revolution; in the process I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by that upheaval. But if we were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: ‘Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.’”

### Living a “Noble Lie.”

- Cornell biologist William Provine:
  - If there is “no life after death,” there is “no ultimate foundation for knowledge” and “no ultimate meaning for life.”
- The existentialist option.
  - ▶ Even if life is ultimately meaningless, we must “live heroically” and create our own meaning.
- Dr. L. D. Rue, “The Noble Lie” (1991):
  - ▶ We deceive ourselves by means of a Noble Lie into thinking that we and the universe have value.
  - ▶ “But without such lies, we cannot live.”
- One cannot live happily on an atheistic worldview.
- Conversely, if God exists and we are made in God’s image, we have intrinsic value, dignity, and purpose.

## Atheism and Agnosticism: A Rational Assessment

### Is Atheism Logical?

- In order to argue that there is no God, a person would have to be omniscient with perfect knowledge of all that exists in the universe.
- The fallacy of the “absolute negation.”

### Is Agnosticism Logical?

- Thomas Huxley (1825-95) and agnosticism.
- David Hume (1711-76): All true knowledge is empirical.
  - ▶ We only know what we experience.
  - ▶ Propositional knowledge is merely theoretical and has no real validity.

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- Immanuel Kant (1724-1804): There is objective reality, but it is inaccessible to human beings.
  - We can only know what we experience subjectively in the physical world.
- A. J. Ayer (1910-89): Agnosticism and “logical positivism.”
  - Truth can only be verified empirically.
  - If God exists, he is mystical, inexpressible, and unknowable.
  - Therefore, all theologizing (or “God-talk”) is nonsense.



A. J. Ayer

### Self-Refuting Skepticism.

- Two kinds of agnosticism:
  - (1) Soft-core agnosticism: “I don’t know if there is a God.”
  - (2) Hard-core agnosticism: “No one can know if there is a God.”
- Hard-core agnosticism is a universal truth-claim and a subtle form of dogmatism.
  - This is illogical since it presumes to know something about the reality of God.
  - Only an omniscient mind could be totally agnostic – in which case it would not be agnostic due to the fact that it knows something.
- Those who declare that we can know nothing about reality have no basis for making a statement about reality.
  - Their opinion is nonsense because, logically, we cannot prove a negative.
  - Norman Geisler: “Every negative presupposes a positive; one cannot... affirm that something is *not*-that if he is totally devoid of a knowledge of the “that.”
  - J. Budziszewski: “To say that we cannot know anything about God is to say something about God; it is to say that if there is a God, he is unknowable. But in that case, he is not entirely unknowable, for the agnostic certainly thinks that we can know one thing about God: That nothing can be known [for certain] about him.”

**[NOTE:** Informed Christians do not think that we can know *everything* about God. In order to know everything about God, we would have to be omniscient – i.e., we would have to *be* God.

But although we can never have complete knowledge, we *can* have substantial knowledge because God, in his love us, has revealed all that we need to know about his nature and character, our human condition, and the path to redemption.

**Hebrews 11:6** – “Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”]

- Another problem with agnosticism: an irrational and blase indifference toward the most important questions in life:
  - Where did we come from?
  - Why are we here?
  - Where are we going?

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# APPENDIX

# **Life Without God: The Human Predicament**

## **Imagine**

(John Lennon, 1971, Maclen Music. Recorded by John Lennon)

Imagine there's no heaven... it's easy if you try  
No hell below us... above us, only sky.  
Imagine all the people living for today...  
Imagine there's no countries... it isn't hard to do  
Nothing to kill or die for... and no religion, too.  
Imagine all the people living life in peace...  
You may say I'm a dreamer... but I'm not the only one  
I hope someday you'll join us... and the world will be as one.  
Imagine no possessions... I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger... a brotherhood of man  
Imagine all the people sharing all the world...  
You may say I'm a dreamer... but I'm not the only one  
I hope someday you'll join us... and the world will live as one.

## **Dust In the Wind**

(Kerry Livgren, 1978. Recorded by Kansas)

I close my eyes... only for a moment and a moment's gone  
All my dreams... pass before my eyes a curiosity  
Dust in the wind... all they are is dust in the wind.  
Same old song... just a drop of water in an endless sea  
All we do... crumbles to the ground though we refuse to see  
Dust in the wind... all we are is dust in the wind.

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Don't hang on... nothing lasts forever but the earth and sky  
It slips away... and all your money won't another minute buy  
Dust in the wind... all we are is dust in the wind  
Dust in the wind... everything is dust in the wind.

## **When All the Laughter Dies In Sorrow**

(Kendrew Lascilles, 1970, Mediarts Music. Recorded by Chicago)

When all the laughter dies in sorrow, and the tears have risen to a flood  
When all the wars have found a cause in human wisdom and in blood  
Do you think they'll cry in sadness? Do you think the eye will blink?  
Do you think they'll curse the madness? Do you even think they'll think?  
When all the great galactic systems sigh to a frozen halt in space  
Do you think there will be some remnant of beauty of the human race?  
Do you think there will be a vestige, or a sniffle, or a cosmic tear?  
Do you think a greater thinking thing will give a damn that man was here?