

The Atheist and the Cabin

Once I dreamed that I walked through a beautiful forest with an atheist friend. As we followed a winding trail my friend explained his understanding of the universe. He said: "There is no reason for believing in God. Science has shown that everything can be explained by natural causes."

After a while we came to a clearing. In the middle of it stood a rustic log cabin with smoke curling up from its chimney. I turned to my friend and said: "How fascinating it would have been to stand here and watch the forces of nature that produced this cabin. There must have been a very strong wind to cause trees to fall in such a way that the loose branches would all be lopped off, while the trunks would land in such a way as to produce the four walls and roof of this little cabin. If one could look back through the centuries it would be fascinating to know whether the whole area here was covered with fallen trees and some process of erosion removed all except those that are now part of the cabin, or whether the wind was so selective that only those trees fell that would form its walls and roof.

We noticed the small windows, and I said, "How fascinating it would be to see the natural processes at work that produced these windows. I wonder what caused the logs to fall at exactly such an angle as to produce these rectangular holes, and what sort of chemical or volcanic process caused the various minerals to flow together in such a way as to produce panes of glass of exactly the right size to fit the apertures in the walls of the cabin."

Then I noticed the smoke rising and said in excitement: "There is evidently a fire in the cabin. We must run quickly and put it out before the cabin is destroyed." The friend replied, "There is no need to hurry. The fire is in a little stove, and the smoke is coming out through the stovepipe. It can't set the cabin on fire." I said, "What was the natural process that brought iron to this spot,