if we expect to build a life, a family, a nation, or a world, that is to be
worthwhile.

Our civilization has tended in recent years to become secularized. It
has become quite prevalent to leave God altogether out of account in planning
our lives or our world. Even when religion is mentioned as a factor, we often
find on investigation that what is meant is merely a code of ethics or a general
desire for helpfulness. True religion is much more than that. It involves re-
cognition of the personal activity of God. "Except the Lord build the house,
they labor in vain that build it."

The factor of God cannot safely be ignored. It is said that during the
French Revolution, a man stood up in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris and,
looking up to heaven said, "If there is a God in the universe, I challenge Him
to strike me dead." All the assembly waited tensely. Though most of them
claimed to be atheists, few present would have dared to make such a challenge.
For two minutes they waited. No thunderbolt came. Then they laughed and went
on with their business. The very next day as the man was on his way to a meet-
ing, a little fly flew into his eye and blinded him. Soon afterwards he died.
God did not need to waste a thunderbolt on him. A little fly was enough to put
an end to the man's defiance. Many a small factor in life may mean the ruin of
our plans if it goes the wrong way, and God controls all of these factors.

Often we hear the term "God" used as a mere symbol for general wellbeing
or for the summation of the universe, or some sort of an abstract principle.
Even a hasty survey of the Bible shows that the God described there is not of
this type at all. He is a Person who thinks, feels, and takes an active part
in the affairs of this world. He is not like a statue that we can examine from
various sides, and depend on to stay quiet while we do so. He has thoughts and
plans and purposes. His influence and activities show themselves at many points
within our lives. Great upheavals and mighty changes come because He wills them.