

AGNOSTICISM, SKEPTICS, AND ATHEISM

By Pastor Arnold

I. THE AGNOSTIC - WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, NOR SEEKING TO KNOW.

(The following material under "I", by A. McD. Redwood, is found in "Heresies Exposed", pages 9 and 10.)

- A. "'The natural attitude of a thinking mind toward the super-natural is that of skepticism'--skepticism, not agnosticism. The skeptic halts at the cross-roads, to take his bearings; but at the sight of a cross-road the agnostic gives up his journey altogether. True skepticism connotes intellectual caution, but agnosticism is intellectual suicide.
- B. "Professor Alexander Stewart says, 'the name by which those designate their position who do not deny the existence of God, the future world, and other doctrines of religion, but declare that we do not, and cannot, know anything about these subjects.
- C. "Such a half-way position, with atheism on the one side denying the very existence of God, and skepticism on the other side endeavoring to find the way is surely only possible to those who refuse to know and are willfully blind.
One can have much patience with the honest doubter, the man with sincere intellectual difficulties, who is willing to make use of even a rush-light if it will but lead him in the way of Truth. But no amount of argument will avail for the one who deliberately rejects; his agnosticism is with him a 'creed', a 'creed' of illogical ignorance."

II. THE ATHEIST.

- A. The atheist will usually try to put you on the defense by saying something like, "I don't believe in God. Prove to me that there is a God!"
Rather than get all uptight, turn the conversation around long enough to get him to think for himself. Say something like, "That's interesting, why don't you believe in God?"
- This puts him on the defense plus gives you an opportunity to find what his particular problem might be. He will have to admit, if he is honest, that he cannot prove there is no God.
 - By getting him to think, he may realize that he is just believing that God does not exist because someone he admires believes that way. You can ask him how he arrived at his conclusion. Did use "inductive" or "deductive" reasoning?
 - **Inductive** - gather data and information, weigh it, and then form a conclusion.
 - **Deductive** - start with a theory and try to find data to prove it. Usually, they have done neither one.
- B. You can explain your faith to be based upon evidences which show beyond any reasonable doubt that God exists.
- In a court of law, the jury does not have to see a crime committed, but only be shown beyond any reasonable doubt that it was committed by the accused in order to convict. (I don't have to see God, just the evidence!)
 - The evidences which God has given us are divided into four main categories:

1 **Cosmological Argument** (cause-effect) There is a cause or power behind everything; there must be a maker or creator.

- First mover - nothing could be in motion now unless there was first a self-moving one.
- An object in motion stays in motion unless an outside force stops it. Likewise, an object not in motion stays still unless an outside force puts it in motion.
- For every effect, there is a cause!

2 Teleological Argument (design)

The universe has an order and design to it that indicates the fact that there is a God, one Who designed it all.

- If the earth rotated any slower than 24 hours per cycle, approx. 1000 mph, one side would have its vegetation burning while the other side's would be freezing!
- If the earth was larger, there would be too much free hydrogen in the air; if smaller, we would not have a sufficient atmosphere for life.
- If the moon were closer, tides would increase causing floods, continued hurricanes, and erosion.
- Why is it that ice rises to the top and doesn't fall to the bottom, eventually freezing all water and killing all fish?
- See Romans 1:20 and Psalm 19:1.
If the atheist should happen to say that all of these things could have just happened by chance, show him your watch or car and ask if he would believe them to happen by chance. (If not, why not?)

3 Anthropological Argument (moral and intellectual qualities of man)

This argument is broken down into two groups:

- Moral awareness: -Where does man get his sense of right and wrong if there is no God? (Romans 2:15) -Everyone appeals to some kind of standard which they expect others to follow.
- God awareness: -All people throughout the world have an awareness of God; they must be taught atheism. Romans 1:21, 22)-If we came from animals, why don't animals worship God? -If there is no God, where did we get the idea?

4 Supernatural Revelation (God making Himself known)

- He first did it through the living Word, Jesus Christ. (John 1: 1, 14)
- We have supernatural revelation in that we have the written Word, the Bible. (II Timothy 3:16)
- He is revealed to us through personal experience, once we trust in Him. (Romans 8:15, 16)

Many people claim to be atheists because they say they cannot understand God. You cannot equate non-comprehension with non-existence. Illustration: That would be like saying that my wife does not exist because I cannot understand her at times. God is not afraid of man's questions. (See Isaiah 1:18) Man and God do not think on the same plane. God's thoughts are above man's. (Isaiah 55:8, 9) The things of God appear as foolishness to the natural or unsaved man. (I Corinthians 2:14) Some things will not be understood. (Deuteronomy 29:29)