

If I had One Opportunity...

What I Would Say to My Skeptical Neighbor

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Oh, so you are a Christian? Most of the Christians I know are good people, but I'm an atheist! I really enjoy challenging the faith of believers like you." What would you say to the skeptic who challenges your faith in God? What thoughts would flood your mind at such a moment?

Your first thought might be, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" (Ps. 14:1) Or you might react with a bit of fear and trepidation. You might even be tempted to think that the atheist would say something or ask a question to which you would not know how to respond.

Let's make it real interesting. Suppose this atheist has his Ph.D. in Philosophy and has taught this subject at a major university. The modern day philosopher turns to you and says, "*I would like to believe in God*, I really do wish that I could have faith." Do you become a little skeptical of the skeptic? On the other hand, maybe you see some sincerity in the statement and it causes you to realize the importance of the moment. You have one opportunity to share with him key reasons why you believe in God. What would you say to a neighbor like this? Oh, did I mention that you are still in your twenties?

The above scenario was not just a supposition for me. Who was my "skeptical neighbor"? He was a nicely dressed man sitting in the seat right next to me on an airplane flight. I was face to face with an atheistic philosophy professor challenging me to show him God. Since that discussion, I have had a number of occasions to discuss faith with skeptics, atheists and agnostics. Some of these discussions took place during the two years I lived in Bulgaria. At other times, I discussed faith in God with other skeptics while traveling throughout Eastern Europe just after the fall of communism. Other discussions have taken place with neighbors and acquaintances right in my own backyard, or by email, or letter. Yet no ongoing study, discussion, or challenge has ever equaled that unexpected challenge I faced on that flight that night. A challenge to one's faith, of such magnitude, does not come along very often. I have thanked the Lord many times that He allowed me the opportunity that night to take a stand for the faith.

My discussion with this atheistic professor will be an integral part my lecture. By using this approach, I hope to move this presentation from being merely a clinical discussion to being a real conversation. Perhaps you will find it useful when you have an opportunity to take a stand for the faith. Due to time constraints, I cannot possibly cover all of the arguments—neither the atheist's arguments nor the arguments for the existence

of God and Christ and the reliability of the Bible. My lecture is not a “classical approach” to the subject of evidences. (If you want some good reading on apologetics, I would suggest the 1999 Florida College lecture book. There are a myriad of other good evidences books out there.) In this lecture, you will not hear typical apologetics talk—the ontological, cosmological, teleological are thus ... However, you will see them used in my discussion with the atheist professor.

Defining Skepticism

Perhaps we should define skepticism before we proceed. We might think of the skeptic as one who looks at the world with a bit of bewilderment, scratching his head, not knowing what to believe. Such is hardly the case. What we will see is that all three, the atheist, agnostic and skeptic, are in the same boat together—they all deny the existence and significance of God.

Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary defines skepticism as, “A doubting of the truth of revelation, or a denial of the divine origin of the Christian religion, or of the being, perfections, or truth of God.”

Roget’s Interactive Thesaurus simply defines the skeptic as an “unbeliever,” and lists several synonyms: “agnostic, apostate, atheist, cynic, disbeliever, dissenter, doubter....”

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of the skeptic’s point of view, I spent several hours on skeptic websites. Contained within the endless pages of rambling are some of their own definitions of skepticism, and reasons why many consider themselves atheists, agnostics and skeptics. Michael Shermer is the publisher of *Skeptic Magazine*, and the director of the “Skeptics Society.”

Shermer, in *A Skeptical Manifesto*, defined skepticism:

But what does it mean to be skeptical? Skepticism has a long historical tradition dating back to ancient Greece when Socrates observed: “All I know is that I know nothing.” But this is not a practical position to take. Modern skepticism is embodied in the scientific method, that involves gathering data to formulate and test naturalistic explanations for natural phenomena.... Some claims, such as water dowsing, ESP, and *creationism*, have been tested (and failed the tests) often enough that we can provisionally conclude that they are false. (Shermer)

In his article, *The Benefits of Skepticism*, Shermer posted the answers of several skeptics and atheists to the question: “What are the benefits of being a skeptic (or nonbeliever, atheist, agnostic, free thinker, etc.) ...?” A “Christian friend” had posed the question to Shermer. Here are a few of the responses:

My behaviors are now my own. They are not the product of religious guilt or indoctrination, but of my own mind and my own appreciation of that which makes life

(all life) great! What if there were no afterlife? I would have wasted some of the short time I have on this world encumbered by my religion's code of conduct. Non-believers enjoy greater simplicity in their life without religion or God. Free of rules imposed by religion or God. (Shermer)

As you can see, we are not talking about people that are just filled with doubt about faith; they have turned against God and religion. They often claim that they are willing to examine all the evidence. Often this boast turns into a hollow claim. Take for example a review by skeptic Robert Shapiro of Michael Behe's book, *Darwin's Black Box*:

Michael Behe has done a top notch job of explaining and illuminating one of the most vexing problems in biology: the origin of the complexity that permeates all of life on this planet. Professor Behe selects an answer that falls outside of science: the original creation of life by an intelligent designer. *Many scientists, myself included, will prefer to continue to the search for an answer within science.* (Behe jacket cover)

What Shapiro and others like him admit is their refusal to believe in a Creator no matter how much evidence you show them. The atheist says there is no God. The agnostic lives as though there is no God. The skeptic will not believe in God, despite the evidence.

So what is the point? Why waste our time? Is contending with skeptics nothing but an academic exercise? No! We must try to persuade skeptics to see the illogic of their logic. While some are antagonistic and closed-minded, others have had the seeds of doubt sown in their heart. When we have opportunity, we must try to sow the seed of truth. Many times, they have not truly considered all of the evidence. We must put our trust in God and His word to work on the skeptical heart, and do the job that He has called us to do.

Are You Ready for the Challenge?

“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” “And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire.... Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a *defense* to everyone who asks you to *give an account for* the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” “I am appointed for the *defense* of the gospel” (Rom. 10:17; Jude 22–23; 1 Pet. 3:15; Phil. 1:16).

Who do you think may face such a challenge to their faith? College students? High school students? The truth is that every one of us needs to be ready to answer a skeptic's challenges to our faith. The challenge to your faith could come from a neighbor, a co-worker, a college professor or someone you meet on your next airplane flight. Maybe a former member of your congregation ... or even your son or daughter may be the skeptic you must answer. Eventually you are going to have someone ask you, “Why do you believe in God?” On the other hand, they may chide you by saying, “That religion of yours is just out of date.”

Skeptics come from every kind of background—some have walked away from faith, others have never known faith in God. Some are atheists because of a philosophical point of view, others from an evolutionary conviction. Some chose to be a skeptic because it is just easier not to believe. True belief in God requires change, sometimes big changes. Why someone is a skeptic will have a bearing on how the discussion will develop and where the conversation will go and will have an effect on how you answer and question your skeptical neighbor. However, at the root of any such discussion is the question: “Why do you believe in God?”

Christians are often concerned that they do not have the ability to defend the truth against atheists and skeptics. I like what brother Tom Moody wrote in an article entitled, “Who Needs to Answer Atheism?”

“I’m not an intellectual.” Few are, including many atheists and agnostics! Unbelievers frequently seem to make “gods” of science and philosophy, and will repeat and recite scientific or philosophical sounding statements. That does not mean that they are scientists or philosophers and beyond your level. Granted, you may be *forced* to do some *reading and thinking*, but it does not require a Ph.D. to intelligently discuss your reasons for believing in God and in His revelation. A high degree of formal education is not necessary, *but a great deal of work and study is necessary...* (18)

Prayer. Another way we should prepare ourselves for challenges to our faith is to take time to pray. Pray for an “open door” (Col. 4:3). Pray for boldness that you might say the things that you ought to say (Eph. 6:19). If you pray for opportunities to share your faith, the Lord just may send you that sincere skeptic.

Why Do You Believe?

“I would like to believe in God, I really do wish that I could have faith.” So began my three-hour non-stop discussion about God, the Bible and Christianity with an atheist professor. I responded, “I can not prove to you there is a God by showing Him to you. No one can run a scientific test and prove there is a God. However, I do not have a blind faith! I believe God has left His *fingerprints* all around us. The Bible says, ‘Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen’ ” (Heb. 11:1). I further defined faith as “The honest consideration of evidence in which reason finds that evidence sufficiently convincing.” I believe faith in God is both reasonable and rational. I have faith that God exists; “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that *He is* and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Heb 11:6). Our ultimate goal is in not only getting the skeptic to see the plausibility that God exists, but also the importance of diligently seeking Him. However, to climb a mountain, we must do so one step at a time.

About ten years before my study with the philosopher, I had another pivotal conversation in my life. I was in high school going through a “discovery period in my

life.” I had a classmate ask me this question: “You don’t believe all of that stuff your dad preaches do you?” (He knew my father was a preacher and had some knowledge of what he taught.) Truth is, I was not living as if I believed it, and the words came out of my mouth: “No, not really.” At the moment I said it, I knew that was the wrong thing to say. I had some serious soul-searching to do. What I concluded, after considering the evidence, was that I believed, but not because my father was a preacher, or my mother was a good example. I believed because I had looked at the evidence and it just made sense. I decided if I really believed it, then I had better start living it. I decided I needed to be baptized into Christ and start living a new life (Rom. 6:4). You inherit many things from your parents, but you cannot inherit faith. If we are true believers, then we should have the same attitude as Paul, *“I believed and therefore I spoke, we believe and therefore speak”* (2 Cor. 4:13).

Who is God?

“God is just a psychological crutch.” After I professed to the professor that I believed that faith in God was the thinking response to our existence, he responded; “It is not rational to believe in God, because God is nothing more than a psychological crutch that many people need to get through life.” (When speaking with a skeptic, look for their attempts to define God. They do not know God. Most have not read His Word, yet they attempt to affix their own [lack of] understanding of God to the discussion.)

Think about this *circular reasoning*. I think, I reason, but I do not conclude that there is a God; therefore, He does not exist. I observe people who need a psychological crutch to get through life. Many choose God. I do not need a crutch. I do not need God, and therefore, He does not exist. My response was, “God is not just a psychological crutch, God is real!” Many discussions about the existence of God end right there. You need a God to get through life. I do not need a God to get through life. I will live my life the way I see fit, and you can too. We would do well to listen to the wise words of Paul, “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ” (Col. 2:8). Paul warned Timothy that some “opposing arguments” are just “empty chatter” and falsely called “knowledge” (1 Tim. 6:20).

Do we need to lean on God? Without question! What would happen to the person that needs a physical crutch but instead leaned on a make-believe crutch? God is real. This is the reason we can depend on Him. The apostle Paul made a point about the reality of God as he spoke to the skeptics of Athens:

The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth.... He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist.... We ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. (Acts 17:24–29)

An atheist's faith. It seemed to me that the atheistic professor was proud of the fact that he did not have faith. Therefore, I pointed out to him that indeed, he did have faith. He incredulously responded; “How do I have faith?” I replied that his “faith” was believing there was no God. He could no more “show” me that there was no God, than I could “show” him God. I have used this approach on other committed atheists, with similar results, as though believing in something were some kind of plague.

Each system of faith is the result of a conclusion from the evidence examined. When one examines (or fails to examine) the evidence, he will come to a conclusion. I told the professor, “It takes just as much, or more, faith to believe in the non-existence of God, as it does to believe in God.” “Considering the magnificence of the world, it is more reasonable to believe it is the product of a Creator than believing everything accidentally came from nothing.”

God is the Creator. The atheist professor had defined God as a psychological crutch. It was my turn to define God. “I believe that God is all-powerful and that He created this earth with great design and purpose. ‘For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God’ ” (Heb. 3:4).

God has revealed Himself to humanity in two ways: (1) General revelation through nature, and (2) Specific revelation through His word. Psalm 19 shows both methods God uses to reveal Himself.

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world.... (Ps. 19:1–6)

Creation is a general revelation—a silent speech that reveals God to those that look and listen. Everyday and everywhere the creation is boldly proclaiming, there is a God! It proclaims Him not by voice or words; it does so by the rays of sun that shine upon the earth, by the stars that shine in the sky. Even though I cannot see God with my eyes, I can conclude that God exists when I look at the creation. This in turn should send me on a search for more information from God.

What does He want me to know? What does he want me to do? The significance of specific revelation can also be seen in Psalm 19:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.... Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. (Ps. 19:7–14)

Seeing the invisible God. “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible” (Heb.

11:3). "... that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His *invisible* attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been *clearly seen*, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:18–20).

As I continued talking to the philosophy professor, I made mention of several other thoughts from scripture. "... God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them ... [He] did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:15–17). We would not have a daily existence if it were not for His daily care. His ultimate care for His creation can be seen in Jesus Christ, through which He promises a resurrection from the dead (Acts 17:18–31).

Can you see design and purpose? The professor let me talk for a while about why I believed in God.... Then I stopped, took off my watch and handed it to him. As he was holding it, I told him that I had lived in Colorado a few years earlier, near a river where silver is found. "The locals told me that sometimes people get lucky and find a silver watch, because the silver collects in just such a way as to form a working watch." I told him I was just such a lucky fellow, and this was one of those lucky watches. He laughed and handed it back to me. Then I said, "Look around at this airplane. Do you think that someone planned and built this wonderful machine?" His answer was in the affirmative. I asked, "How do you know? Have you ever seen them?" I then asked the professor, "If something shows design, and it has a purpose, couldn't we conclude it had a designer?" We look at things man makes, see design and purpose, and must conclude they were created, even though we had never seen the creator. The earth is not self-made. It was designed and created by the great Architect and Creator. "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:16–17). God asked Job, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding" (Job 38:4).

God would not allow bad things to happen. The atheist's next attempt to deny the existence of God went like this: "If there is a God, He will not cause or allow anything bad to happen. However, bad things do happen, therefore there is no God. If God created the world in which we live, why do we have disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and other disasters that take innocent lives? If God is so good, why does He let bad things happen?"

I thought for a moment then I asked, "If my watch stops working, or this airplane develops a malfunction, would we conclude they did not have a designer or creator?" "No, of course not," he replied. "Then why should people conclude there is no Creator when something 'goes wrong' on the earth?"

A tragic illustration of this happened just a few days after this discussion. The year was 1986 and you probably recall that the space shuttle Challenger exploded one minute after lift-off. The space shuttle was the culmination of years and years of research and development, yet something went wrong. Then last year (2003), the Space Shuttle Columbia broke apart upon reentry into the earth's atmosphere. Scientists are saying that we may never know all of the reasons. These man-made disasters caused sadness throughout the world. Yet, I have never heard anyone reason that because something went wrong with these shuttles that no one actually built the shuttles, they must have come from nothing. It does not take a rocket scientist to recognize the folly of that kind of reasoning. The same is true of the earth. Because calamities, such as earthquakes and floods happen does not mean there is no God. The earth continues to show infinite design.

I continued with the atheist professor, "Christians understand there to be another force that exists in the world besides God. The devil is also real. Satan is the ultimate source of all bad, evil, sickness, pain, suffering, and death. God gives humanity free will, to choose between serving God or serving self and Satan." Many have fallen into the "snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (2 Tim. 2:26). Peter also warns us about the devil: "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith..." (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

It is interesting that when the apostle Paul tries to make sense of a personal suffering or evil, he refers to it as "*a messenger of Satan* to buffet me." He also knew that the Lord had the power to remove the thorn in the flesh, and asked Him to do so. Three times he asked. What was the Lord's response? "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness..." (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Lee Strobel in *The Case For Faith*, a book that deals with many of the skeptic's arguments, interviewed Peter Kreeft concerning the problem of suffering.

In fact, it's significant that most objections to the existence of God from the problem of suffering come from outside observers who are quite comfortable, whereas those who actually suffer are, often as not, made into stronger believers by their suffering. (49)

"I do not know all of the reasons why people have to suffer and die, God knows." (Sometimes I think we are afraid to say—"I really do not know the complete answer to that question.") Some questions have answers that we cannot fully understand at this point—suffering the loss of a child, etc. Job did not get all the answers to his questions, but God gave him some questions that were way beyond the thinking of man. The wisdom of God is so far beyond man (1 Cor. 1:18-25). What I do know, I continued, is that "we will all die (Heb. 9:27). We all will go the way of the world, some young, some old. For me, the more I think about death, the deeper my faith becomes (1 Cor. 15:50-58). Just because things are not perfect here, does not indicate that there is no God.

Heaven is the perfect place, and that is the place where Christians strive to go.”

Contradictory arguments. Another popular argument against the existence of God is the Biblical doctrine of hell. Though this did not come up in my discussion with the atheist professor, it often goes something like this: “How can you believe in a God that will condemn people to hell and punishment?” Do you see the contradiction with the “existence of evil” argument? On the one hand, “God cannot be real because He allows evil and suffering to exist.” On the other hand, when God promises one day He will send the devil and his evil followers to their own place (Rev. 12:9–10), the skeptics complain, “that is not fair.” If God took away all evil and all temptation to sin now, where would be the choice to serve Him?

Three Great Questions of Life

I then asked the professor, “With your worldview, would you mind answering what I believe to be the three great questions of life?”

“Where did we come from?” “I don’t know, nowhere I guess! It doesn’t really matter.” He seemed a bit uneasy as he answered with this non-answer. I guess some questions do not have an answer, so you are not supposed to ask the question. The Bible answers this question for me, and I am quite satisfied with its answer. “I believe the evidence is overwhelming that we came from God, the Creator.” “For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens. He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited, ‘I am the Lord, and there is none else’ ” (Isa. 45:18).

“What are we doing here?” “I don’t really know!” My response was that I believe we are here to “fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole of man” (Ecc. 12:13). “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” (2 Cor. 5:14–15).

“Where are we going?” “I don’t think we are going anywhere!” (Three for three on philosophical answers, don’t you think?) “I believe we are all going to meet our Maker and be judged for the things we do on this earth. If we are faithful, we are going to heaven, which is my hope.”

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. (2 Cor 5:10–11)

What If There Was No God?

The professor decided it was his turn to ask a question. “What if you woke up one

morning and said, ‘There is no God’? What would your worldview be?’ I thought for a moment and said, ‘It would be a dog-eat-dog world. Get as much as you can, as fast as you can, because that is all there is. It wouldn’t matter how many people you stepped on to get what you wanted.’ Sorry, no altruistic view here. Paul said it this way:

If the dead are not raised, *let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die*. Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for *some have no knowledge of God*. I speak this to your shame (1 Cor. 15:32–34).

If you are living as though the resurrection does not matter, it is tantamount to saying God does not exist (or it does not matter). Life is one big party if there is nothing after this life. Some people have no knowledge of God, often because of the immorality of those that claim to know Him. Yet we can raise our thoughts and actions to a higher plane. “... If there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

“If God does not exist, how is it that people can raise their thoughts to a higher level?” The professor thought for a few moments, then put his hand out to shake my hand and said; “You have just caused me to have faith.” I have to admit that I was a bit taken aback by his comment. Was this what it took? Could the existence of morality have been the argument that broke the atheistic faith of the professor?

Several years later, I used this same morality argument on a much more antagonistic skeptic. I asked him, “If there is no God, then why do people choose to do good?” He scoffed and asked, “Are you telling me that if you didn’t believe in God you would cheat on your wife, or kill people you didn’t like?” My reply was, “If God does not exist, it would not matter. The only thing that matters is what is to my advantage.” Maybe it would be to my advantage to be faithful to my wife, and not kill people, and maybe it would not. If God does not decide what is right and wrong, then I do.

Often the atheist’s response to the willing choice of man to do good is their commitment to humanity. In his book, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, John Stott points out that even atheists often describe themselves as dedicated to “the human case and the human cause.” Stott continues:

If we ask them why they are so committed to humankind, they are likely to reply with Julian Huxley that it is because of the human potential in the future eons of evolution. [Huxley] wrote “Thus the development of man’s vast potential of realizable possibility, provides the prime motive for collective action.” The inadequacy of this as a basis for service is obvious. If the unimpeded progress of evolution were our chief concern, why should we care for the senile, the imbecile, the hardened criminal, the psychopath, the chronically sick, or the starving? Would it not be more prudent to put them to sleep like a well-loved dog, lest they hinder the evolutionary process? Compulsory euthanasia, not compassionate service, would be the logical deduction from the humanists’ premise. The

fact that they draw back from this abyss indicates that their heart is better than their head and their philanthropy than their philosophy. (Stott 43–44)

Back to the professor—a moment after he told me I had caused him to have faith, he said; “No!” Almost as though he was upset with himself for making the previous statement. “The world is not perfect, thus, there cannot be a God. It is just not rational for me to believe in a God.”

Have You Ever Read the Bible?

I then asked the professor if he had ever really read the Bible. He looked down, shook his head, and said, “No, I really haven’t.” “If the Bible claims to be the only word from the Creator then should it not be honestly examined? If not, then how can any one claim that they are examining all the evidence?” He said, “You know you are right; I am going to read the Bible.”

God claims to be the Author of a book that will give us the answers that we need about life (2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:3). The men who wrote the Bible, claimed to be writing what God wanted them to write (2 Pet. 1:20–21). A quick summary of the Bible is that God created man without sin, but also created him with free will. When man sinned, there was a separation between God and man. Every one of us is separated from God because of our sins (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Through Jesus, we can become friends again with God (Rom. 5:8–10). We respond to God’s love with love: “ ‘And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30–31).

The greatest evidence of God and Christianity is the resurrection (Acts 17:31). Christianity stakes its claim on the credibility of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15).

Concluding Thoughts

The professor said to me, “I have really enjoyed our discussion; you have given me a lot of things to think about.”

I began this lecture with this question: What would you say to the skeptic that challenges your faith in God? I would like to leave you with the same question. *How would you answer this agnostic? As* I was preparing this manuscript, I decided to write to a highly intellectual friend of mine in Bulgaria and ask him several questions about his belief (or unbelief) in the existence of God. We have often studied together and often discussed faith in God. He says of himself, “At this point I am unsure about the existence

of God.” What follows are some of his statements and questions:

I do not see any way to rationally prove the existence of God. I see no positive or scientific evidence to support His existence. I have a general belief that God virtually exists for a large number of people, and I usually choose not to be cynical about it. Those who need Him, find Him. I can see many ways that the world seems bound together and logical, but the sciences explain how things work. Why leave those little midgets down below uncertain and confused? Why does He need us, with our love and faith for Him? Someone who never appeared to me in person gave me liberty to make a very stark choice without even telling me why He cares about it. The religion you teach is too simple and unexciting: Be good, study the Bible, be immersed, partake of communion on Sunday and don't use instruments. Most of the faith public here would find this unappetizing. Why does an Almighty Creature need me? Why is He not a bit more outspoken? Why has He never been in touch with me personally? Does He not care for someone as small and singular?

The “weapons” against such arguments are “mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10:4–5 NKJV).

How would you answer?

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