

KNOW that HE IS the "I AM" GOD

Ps 46:10; Ps 10:4; Ps 14:; I Cor 2:6-16

I. **THE ULTIMATE ISSUE**—"More consequences for thought and action follow from the affirmation or denial of God than from answering any other basic questions" (*The Great Ideas Syntopicon*, v. I)

II. DENIALS

A. Know-Nothing Agnostics

1. Evade, dismiss, deny—skeptics allegedly awaiting impossible certitude
2. Slothful folks admittedly unwilling to investigate, acknowledge transcendent Reality

B. All-Knowing, Assertive Atheists

1. "Fools" in biblical perspective—not intellectually deficient but morally delinquent
 - a. Proud, arrogant, scornful, self-centered, self-satisfied, disdainful, "looking down nose"
 - b. Slothful, disinterested any Other, unwilling to expend effort, content to slide away
2. Psychological weaknesses:
 - a. Karl Stern: *Man's Flight from Women*; Paul Vitz: *The Faith of the Fatherless*; Armand Nicoli: *The Question of God: C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate . . .*; John Koster: *The Atheist Syndrome*
 - b. Illustrations: Thomas Hobbes; Ludwig Feuerbach; Thomas Huxley; Friedrich Nietzsche; Bertrand Russell; Sigmund Freud; Jean-Paul Sartre; Madeline Murray O'Hare
3. Moral deficiencies:
 - a. Theoreticians—Paul Johnson's *The Intellectuals* re Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, *et al.*
 - b. Practitioners—Lenin; Stalin; Hitler; Mao; Castro; Ho Chi Min; Pol Pot
4. Environmental factors:
 - a. "The Family Factor" explored by Mary Eberstadt in *Why the West Lost God*
 - b. Educational propaganda—political in USSR, scientific/sociological in USA
 - d. "Secularization" rationales—industrialism; urbanization; demythologizers (R. Bultmann)

III. AFFIRMATIONS

A. *A Priori*, pre-philosophical, pre-theological bases

1. Wonderful, illuminating insights gained from observing instincts (a remarkable kind of knowing)
 - a. Animals' amazing behaviors guided by innate instincts—bats; monarchs; hummingbirds; bears hibernating; termites' complex housing (J. Scott Turner's *Purpose & Desire & Tinkerer's Apprentice*)
 - b. Humans' abiding/guiding instincts—digestive & cardiovascular & nervous & immune systems; psychological fears re noises, snakes, etc.
2. Akin to animal/human traits, instinctive insights re Reality of God—"homing instinct;" "iron needle drawn to the magnetic pole of God;" "our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee"
3. Architects of *a priori* perspective
 - a. Plato: immediately recognize
 1. Truths re mathematics ($2+2=4$; Euclidian axioms) & Logic (law contradiction)
 2. Validity of Virtues (justice/injustice) immediately discerned—"cannot not know"
 3. Reality of God (Ultimate Good, Perfect Forms, Eternal Realm)
 - b. Augustine: "illumination" ("God is Light" and "in His Light we see light")
 1. Authority: know by accepting what's formerly unknown—e.g. Incarnation
 2. Reason: know by seeing clearly what is—"there is present in us . . . the light of eternal reason, in which light the immutable truths are seen." ". . . you yourself will find the answer from that greatest teacher of all, the truth within your own heart" (*On Free Choice*, II, 2, 4)
 - c. Anselm: "ontological" proof ("greatest possible being")
 - d. "Christian Platonism" of C.S. Lewis & J.R.R. Tolkien
4. Traditional Common Sense consensus: found in various cultures, agreed-upon conclusions
 - a. G.K.Chesterton in one of his Father Brown stories, "The Oracle of the Dog," said: "the first effect of not believing in God is that you lose your common sense."
 - b. Thomas Reid & "common sense" influence on Presbyterians (John Witherspoon; Princeton theologians, current "intelligent design" community, including William Dembski)
5. Faith (Heb 11:1-3; Ro 10:8-15)—supernatural gift
 - a. Mental Assent (*fides quae creditor*)—the faith that is believed (i.e. Christ's Person & Work)
 - b. Volitional Act (*fides qua creditor*)—the faith that believes (i.e. personal trust, fidelity)

AUGUSTINIAN KNOWING

"We judge therefore of those particular things according to that form of eternal truth, and discern that form by the intuition of the rational mind" (*De Trin.* IX, vi, 11).

"It is no small part of knowledge to join thyself to Him who is knowledge. He hath the eyes of knowledge; have thou the eyes of a believing mind. That which God sees, be thou ready to believe" (*In Ps.* XXXVI, *Serm.* ii, 2).

"Do not go outside thyself, but return to within thyself; for truth resides in the inmost part of man" (*De vera relig.* xxxix, 72).

"Return to thyself; but when again facing upwards, thou hast returned to thyself, stay not in thyself. First return to thyself from the things that are without, and then given thyself back to Him who made thee" (*Serm.* CCCXXX, 3).

"The mysteries and secrets of the Kingdom of God first seek out believing men, that they may make them understand. For faith is understanding's step, and understanding is faith's reward. . . . God hath given thee eyes in the body, reason in the heart. Arouse the reason of the heart, awaken to the interior inhabitant of thy interior eyes, let it take to its windows, let it examine God's Creation. . . . Believe on Him whom thou sees not because of those things which thou seest" *Serm. (de Script. Nov. Test.)* CSSVI, i, 1; ii, 3).

"If a man says to me, I would understand in order that I may believe, I answer, Believe, that you may understand. . . . 'I would understand in order that I may believe.' Certainly, what I am now saying, I say with the object that those may believe who do not yet believe.

.....
Understand, in order that thou mayest believe my words; believe, in order that thou mayest understand the word of God" (*Serm.* XLIII, iii, 4, 9).

"We are guided in a twofold way, but authority and by reason. In time, authority has the prior place; in matter, reason. . . . Thus it follows that to those desiring to learn the great and hidden good it is authority which opens the door. And whoever enters by it and, leaving doubt behind, follows the precepts for a truly good life, and has been made receptive to teaching by them, will at length learn how preeminently possessed of reason those things are which he pursued before he saw their reason, and what reason itself is, which, now that he is made steadfast and equal to his task in the cradle of authority, he now follows and comprehends, and he learns what that intelligence is in which are all things, or there what He is who is all things, and what behind and above all things is their prime cause. But to this knowledge few attain in this life; and beyond it even after this life no one can progress" (*De ord.* II, ix, 26).

"Understanding is the reward of faith. Therefore seek now to understand that thou mayest believe, but believe that thou mayest understand" (*In Joan. Evang.* XXIX, 6).