

THE SKEPTICS' RELIGION

To hear them talk, you'd say skeptics consider religion nonsense, a waste of time and resources. "The opiate of the masses," to quote the renowned founder of Communism, Karl Marx.

Surprise! Skeptics are as religious as the rest of us. Religion doesn't have to be practiced in a church. It need not be defined by a name or written creed. What defines religion is devotion to a person or system of thought powerful enough to dictate the way one lives. Skeptics are devoted to their skepticism. They worship the great First Skeptic whom we'll name later. They have definite beliefs and live their religion. But the tenets of that religion are scary indeed.

Their cult does not acknowledge the all-knowing, all-powerful, everywhere present, righteous, holy God. Which is not to suggest that skeptics are true atheists. Theirs is a reactionary religion. With them, if God said it, it's open to question. For six thousand years now, they have echoed and reechoed the great First Skeptic, Satan, who challenged Eve in the Garden of Eden: "Yea, hath God said?" (Genesis 3:1) It's the theme that runs consistently through their talk, reasoning, and literature—rebellion.

Skepticism is dangerous. Only a sovereign, righteous God can restrain man's foolish, destructive impulses. Man is not capable of saving himself. Where skepticism runs rampant, and Christianity is at a low ebb, crime soars.

For all its intellectual veneer, skepticism thrives on ignorance. The neatly packaged philosophies of skepticism would unravel, and its foundational flaws be quickly exposed, should skeptics develop the graces of listening, teachability, and love of the truth.

The skeptics' religion is intolerant, cruel, and oppressive. God would have spared the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah had He found ten decent people there. But skeptics will rave long and loud against one Christian who dares to speak up for creation or eternal absolutes, or who calls into question their pet sin. Their legislative agenda is packed full of liberties for their unbridled lusts, and the suppression of God's truth and moral values.

Skepticism is bondage. Christ sets the captives free. While we cold-shoulder God, we quickly become the slaves of our own self-will, intemperance, and vanity. But when we confess Christ and our need of Him, and are born from above, we are given the keys of self-discipline,

and experience the blessings of living for God and others instead of ourselves.

No, you won't find The First Skeptics' Church listed in the yellow pages of the telephone directory or the religion page of your local newspaper. You won't find skeptics burning incense to Satan. Still skepticism is many folks' religion today. Note the ritual sneer when God is named in reverence. Many of the great First Skeptic's followers are also members of religious denominations. Might even you or I have worshipped at his altar? Have we questioned what we once knew to be God's truth? Are we already practicing skeptics, having adopted attitudes, lifestyles, and beliefs that are opposed to the truth of God's Word? Have we paraphrased the First Skeptic, Satan's words, like this: "Does the Bible say that? God couldn't have meant it!"

~ Dallas Witmer