

LESSON EIGHT: RADIO INTERVIEW NOTES

Directions: Jayson Post is a leader of an organization called the World Union of Deists (WUD), which was established to teach people about Deism and to encourage them to become Deists. Jayson prepared the following notes so that he would do a good job representing Deism and the WUD when he talks about these things during radio interviews. With your child, read and discuss these notes.

- I. We should base our beliefs on reason.
 - A. Reason is one's ability to perceive reality as honestly and completely as one can, and then make logical conclusions based on what one perceives.
 - B. Unless one is relying on reason, one is relying on superstitious thinking.
 1. A superstition is a belief that is not based on reason.
 - C. Our reason is the best guide we have to understand reality as it truly is and to be virtuous.
 1. Superstitious thinking led to Mediaeval witch-hunts, Giordano Bruno being tortured and then burned to death, the trial of Galileo, the Spanish Inquisition, and the current Arab-Israeli conflict.
- II. Only three religions or philosophies are completely based on reason: Atheism, Agnosticism, and Deism.
 - A. Atheists base their beliefs on reason and conclude that God does not exist.
 - B. Agnostics base their beliefs on reason and conclude that they cannot decide whether God exists or not.
 - C. Deists base their beliefs on reason and conclude that God exists.
 1. Deism is the religion or philosophy that teaches that people should base their beliefs on reason and that God exists.
- III. The Argument from Design
 - A. The universe in general seems designed. Therefore, it probably has a designer.

1. The universe is complex, magnificent, and balanced. If it were an accident rather than a work of God, it would almost certainly be homogeneous, bland, and chaotic.
- B. The universe seems specifically designed for life, and life exists in the universe.
1. God is like a person who made a terrarium and put creatures in it.
 2. The terrarium is like the universe, and the creatures in the terrarium are like the creatures in the universe.

[* See Roman numeral VII for more information.]

IV. The First Cause Argument

- A. The universe is full of things that exist. How did those things get here?
1. One thing caused another, and that other thing caused something else, and so on and so forth.
- B. Consider a human—me—for example. What caused me to exist? Here is the probable chain of events as I understand them: I am a human who came from other humans, and the first humans came from apes, and the first apes came from some other kind of mammal, and the first mammal came from a reptile, and the first reptile came from an amphibian, and the first amphibian came from a fish, and the first fish came from some other kind of multi-celled aquatic creature, and the first multi-celled aquatic creature came from a single-celled aquatic creature, and the first single-celled aquatic creature came from the Earth, and the Earth came from a nebula, and the nebula came from the Milky Way Galaxy, and the Milky Way Galaxy came from the Big Bang, and the Big Bang came from . . . something. Was that something God or an accident?

V. Why should anyone choose Deism over Atheism and Agnosticism?

- A. Deism is the honest choice of many people.
- B. If the physical laws of our universe had been even slightly different, they would not allow for the existence of life as we know it.
1. The gravitational constant is a physical constant involved in the calculation of the gravitational attraction between objects with mass. If the gravitational constant were stronger, the universe would have collapsed on itself by now. If it were weaker, matter would have scattered much more. Thus, few or no stars would

have formed, and those stars which might have formed would have burned out by now.

- C. If God exists, there might be life after death and true justice.
- VI. Who are some famous Deists?
- A. Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Voltaire, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Charles Darwin, Mark Twain, Albert Einstein, and Stephen Hawking, and Antony Flew.
- VII. "Is There Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God? How the Recent Discoveries Support a Designed Universe" by Dr. Walter L. Bradley, PhD. in Materials Science from U.T. in Austin (<http://www.leaderu.com/real/ri9403/evidence.html>)
- A. The universe seems designed for life because it has . . .
 - 1. "*Order* to provide the stable environment that is conducive to the development of life, but with *just enough chaotic behavior* to provide a driving force for change."
 - 2. "*Sufficient chemical stability and elemental diversity* to build complex molecules necessary for essential life functions: processing energy, storing information, and replicating. A universe of just hydrogen and helium will not 'work.'"
...
 - 3. "A '*universal solvent*' in which the chemistry of life can unfold. since chemical reactions are too slow in the solid state, and complex life would not likely be sustained as a gas, there is a need for a liquid element or compound that readily dissolves both the reactants and the reaction products essential to living systems: namely, a liquid with the properties of water."
 - 4. "*A stable source of energy to sustain living systems.*" This source must be strong enough "to drive organic, chemical reactions, but not so energetic as to destroy organic molecules."
...
 - B. Earth seems designed for creatures who can do all the wonderful things humans can do [conscious life] because it has a . . .
 - 1. "solid rather than gaseous" structure;

2. "temperature range suitable to maintain the universal solvent as a liquid rather than a solid or gas;
 3. "just the right concentration of . . . radioactive . . . elements to heat the core of the planet and provide the necessary energy to drive plate tectonics, to build up land mass in what would otherwise be a smooth, round planet completely covered with solvent;
 4. "just the right amount of solvent (carefully coupled to the plate tectonics activity) to provide a planet with similar proportions of its surfaces as oceans and land mass;
 5. "just the right protection from the destructive forces in nature such as radiation and asteroids over a reasonable amount of time; and
 6. "just the right stabilized axis tilt and angular velocity to give moderate regular, and predictable seasons and moderate temperature fluctuations from day to night."
- * To this list, I add wondrous diversity.
1. Wondrous diversity teaches and tests us, inspires art and music, and gives us the building materials we need to make things like farms, buildings, medicines, cars, planes, computers, and spaceships.

VIII. A leading Atheist became a leading Deist.

- A. The former proponent of Atheism, Antony Flew, was drawn to Deism based on the incredible complexity of DNA. Mr. Flew wrote in his book *There Is A God*, "[A] gene is nothing but a set of coded instructions with a precise recipe for manufacturing proteins. Most important, these genetic instructions are not the kind of information you find in thermodynamics and statistical mechanics; rather, they constitute semantic information. In other words, they have a specific meaning. These instructions can be effective only in a molecular environment capable of interpreting the meaning in the genetic code. The origin question rises to the top at this point. The problem of how meaningful or semantic information can emerge spontaneously from a collection of mindless molecules subject to blind and purposeless forces presents a deep conceptual challenge."
(Flew 128 - 129)