

The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word." (II Timothy 4:2)

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"Feed the Flock." (I Peter 5:2)

TO WORRY OR NOT TO WORRY

IF A MATTER is not serious enough to pray about, then it is not serious enough to worry about — and if it is serious enough to pray about, and we have prayed about it, then there is no need to worry about it.

—James E. Gibbons

THE SWORD AND STAFF

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INFORMATION:

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Proverbially SPEAKING...

DELAY in the achievement of our goals helps us achieve our goals in a mature, realistic way.

"Parents who are afraid to put their foot down usually have children who step on their toes."

"Faith changes the heart, repentance the life, and baptism the relationship" (Galatians 3:27).

"Happiness does not depend on what happens outside of you, but on what happens inside of you."

God gives grace to the humble (James 4:6)—when we are not humble, we cut ourselves off from grace.

"Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change; and when we are right, make us easy to live with."

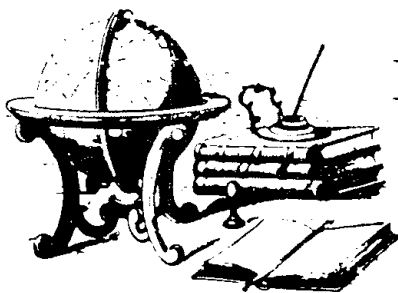
Many times the person who has the least to defend is the most defensive (the strong do not have to worry about being weak).

"God without man is still God; man without God is nothing."

If you are not AGAINST anything, obviously you do not STAND FOR anything much either.

"Here is a test to find whether your mission on earth is finished—If you are still alive, it isn't."

If couples would spend as much time planning their marriage as they do in planning their weddings, perhaps there would be more successful marriages.



EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

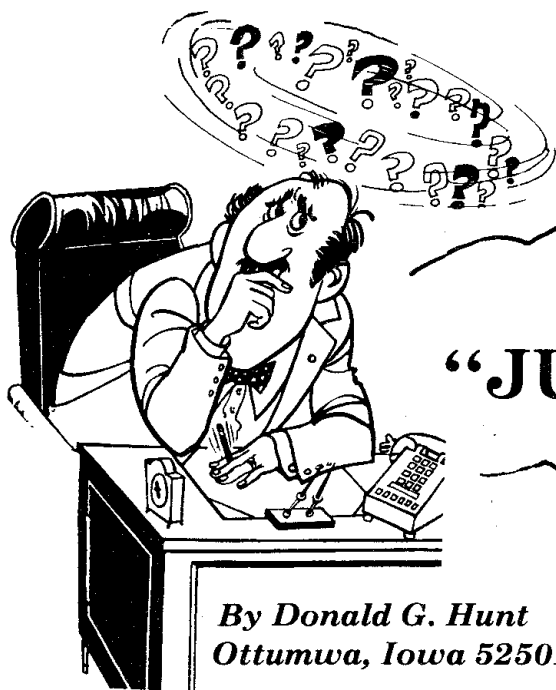
WE ARE ON THE WINNING TEAM

IT IS WONDERFUL to know as Christians we are on the winning team. There is no way, short of apostasy itself, that a Christian can lose. In every way Christ has already gotten the victory for us, and we are now to live out this victory in our lives as we trust him ("...this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," I John 5:4). Christ conquered sin, death, and the grave and consequently has delivered all "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:15). He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). We have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into his kingdom (Colossians 1:13). Jesus declared that the gates of hell would not prevail against his church (Matthew 16:18), and that is what we are. "Greater is he that is within you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

We are now reigning with Christ as he is the Lord of our lives. All things are subservient to us, or, at least they serve us (I Corinthians 3:21-23)—even death itself. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28)—even "bad" things. We should not look upon ourselves as victim of any circumstance. Everything is a challenge to be faced with the purpose of accomplishing the glory of God in it. "Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:36-39). "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:57,58).

Too many times we are whining whimps. We wring our hands, and say, "Look what the world is coming to!" How unlike the early church. They didn't say, "Look what the world has come to," but rather, "Look what has come to the world!" The good news of salvation, hope and victory in Jesus Christ!

We are on the winning team. □



Are Sex Sins “JUST Another SIN”?

By Donald G. Hunt
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ARE ALL SINS just alike? Is one sin just as bad as any other sin? Is any sin worse than other sins?

Are all sins equally serious? Are all sins equally damaging? Are all sins equally character-destroying? Are all sins equally complicating to those affected? Are all sins equally soul-condemning?

Those who have gotten themselves involved in sex sins want to think their sins are no worse than anybody else's sins. They say all sins can send people to Hell whether it be sex sins or some other sin. They say sex sins can be repented of just like any other sin. Are these assertions correct? Totally correct? That is the purpose of this message.

There is a sense in which sex sins are the same as other sins: (1) All sins break the law of God (I John 3:4). (2) All sin is to be repented of (II Corinthians 7:1). (3) God can forgive all repented-of sin (I John 1:7). (4) Christ died for all sins (Isaiah 53:6). (5) The wages of all sin is death (Romans 6:23). Besides the above, we note in a sin list like the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21 that envy is placed alongside sex sins, murder, drunkenness, etc. Truly “all unrighteousness is sin” (I John 5:17) whether it is “big” or “little” as men count sins.

But there are other senses in which, according to what we read in the Bible, sex sins, are not “Just another sin.” In some ways they are peculiarly serious and are, therefore, justifiably to be feared even more than sins in general. Let us see.

1. THE CASE OF DAVID AND BATHSHEBA.

We know that David was a human being and all human beings have various sins and shortcomings. If adultery is just like any other sin, why did God send the prophet Nathan to him about his sin with Bathsheba when He didn't about the usual sins of human beings (see II Samuel 12:1-12)?

I want you to know it is a serious thing to take the wife or husband of another. It is called adultery in the Bible. Those involved are adulterers and adulteresses.

You are taking that personal intimacy that rightfully belongs to somebody else.

It is also a serious thing to flirt with the possibility of bringing an unwanted life into the world, a life that will not have a normal father and mother for his or her parents, a life that society has had a tendency to look

down on, a life that may know unhappiness and feelings of inferiority.

Maybe these are some reasons why God sent Nathan to David about this sin when He didn't about other sins.

2. THE CASE OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

Of what sins were the people of Sodom and Gomorrah guilty? Of all the usual sins of humanity. Is this why God burned them up? No, Luke 7 says, “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” It was sex sins for which God destroyed them.

They were so wild about sex and so perverted about it (homosexuals) that they demanded Lot to bring his visitors out to them that they might carry on sexually with them and were about to break his door down to get to them when Lot refused to bring his visitors out to them (Genesis 19:5-9). How would you have liked to stop in Sodom overnight? Their homosexuality was so great that their case has given our language the word “sodomy” which Collier's *The New Century Dictionary* defines as “unnatural sexual intercourse, esp. of one man with another or of a human being with an animal.” Who can say in view of what God did to the sex deviates of Sodom and Gomorrah that sex sins are no different from any other sins?

3. THE STRONG LANGUAGE OF ROMANS 1:24-27.

Backing up a few verses we see that Paul speaks of a time when mankind knew God (v. 21), but departing from Him they fell into degrading idolatry (vs. 21-23), and as you know idolatry was often immoral. Now let's be honest, what did God say about their lowdown practices? When did He give them up? Listen: “God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. . . For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiv-

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Are Sex Sins “JUST Another SIN”?

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ing in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (vs. 24-27).

In all the Bible we never read such strong language as Inspiration uses here concerning sex sins. And what “recompense” is now running rampant throughout the homosexual world? That most feared disease—AIDS!

4. ITS LOCATION IN THE SIN-LISTS.

There are several sin lists in the New Testament. In nearly every one of these lists sex sins is the first thing named. Notice it: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, ADULTERY, FORNICATION, UNCLEANNES, LASCIOUSNESS, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revelling, and such like” (Galatians 5:19-21); “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither FORNICATORS, NOR IDOLATERS, NOR ADULTERERS, NOR EFFEMINATE, NOR ABUSERS OF THEMSELVES WITH MANKIND, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (I Corinthians 6:9,10); “The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in LASCIVIOUSNESS, LUSTS, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries (I Peter 5:4); “Being filled with all unrighteousness, FORNICATION, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful” (Romans 1:29-31); “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, ADULTERIES, FORNICATION, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness” (Mark 7:21,22); “Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit ADULTERY, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother” (Mark 10:19); “I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a FORNICATOR, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner” (I Corinthians 5:11).

Now how can anybody read these lists and miss the emphatic location of sex sins in them? We do not say that it heads every sin list in the New Testament, but it surely heads most of them! This is a point we should not miss when we say such sins are no worse nor more serious than any other sins.

5. EVIDENCE FROM MATTHEW 19:9.

Does the Bible allow a person to put away his or her mate for alcoholism and marry another? for failing to support the family? for beating up on him or her? for stealing? Is there any sin that is so bad that God will permit us to put a mate away who is guilty of it and then be married to another? Yes, listen to Matthew 19:9, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for FORNICATION, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.” This passage surely establishes what we are saying—sex sins are not “Just another sin.”

6. GOD SAID PEOPLE WILL NOT CONSIDER SEX SINS THE SAME AS OTHER SINS.

This is what sex deviates are hollering about. They don't like the way people treat them because of their sex sins. They don't like to be looked down on because of the way they have misbehaved sexually. They like to say, “Sin is sin,” but that's not the way people look at sex sins, and when God wrote the Bible He said of the man whose adultery is found out, “Wounds and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away” (Proverbs 6:33). “People will talk about such a person, and the guilty may deplore that fact, but it is right here in the Bible that those guilty of adultery get themselves a reproach, and that reproach will not cease. Even after a person is dead or has settled down to a proper behavior people will still remember him as ‘the man who stole so-and-so's wife’ ” (*Pondering the Proverbs*, p. 78).

Yes, people look at this as a terrible thing. Dinah's brothers reacted violently when young Shechem defiled her (Genesis 34:1-31). Absalom killed Amnon



for defiling his sister Tamar (II Samuel 13:1-29). Jacob did not forget that he denied Reuben had taken Bilhah on one occasion, and he denied him the birthright that would have been his (Genesis 35:22; 49:1-4).

Not only that, but the people themselves sometimes have a hard time forgiving themselves for what they have done even after they have repented of it and have sought the forgiveness of God. I wouldn't know how many people I have talked to, who have terrible feelings even yet because of former sexual misbehavior.

When people have brought themselves to temptation's breakover point (led away of their own lust and enticed—James 1:14), they want to reason with themselves about the matter: "I can't be perfect anyway. . . this sin is no worse than other sins. . . Jesus has died for this sin too. . . I can always repent and be forgiven." Thus saith the tempted. Thus saith the indulgent. Thus saith those lacking self-control. Thus saith those lacking will power. Thus saith those lacking self-discipline. But the Bible in no way softens the terribleness of committing fornication or adultery or homosexuality or any other sexual deviation.

The Bible says, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Ephesians 5:3)—not once! The Bible says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God; that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thessalonians 4:3-7). □

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HELPFUL HINTS for *Effective Bible Study*

1. **STUDY WITH AN OPEN MIND:** Try to find what the Bible actually teaches instead of trying to make it prove what you already believe. Remember, the Gospel is God's power to save and not our opinions (Romans 1:16).

2. **STUDY THE BIBLE SYSTEMATICALLY:** This is the purpose of Bible study. A student in school could not learn Chemistry, Math or Science if he skipped around haphazardly from one subject to another. The same principle holds true in Bible study.

3. **STUDY THE BIBLE DAILY:** In Acts 17:11 the Bible says of the people of Berea, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." If these disciples were encouraged to check the teachings of the apostles, how careful we should be today.

4. **REALIZE "TRUTH" EXISTS:** We sometimes hear the statement that "you can prove anything by the Bible." Such a remark borders on complete blasphemy of God's Word. If this is true then the Bible is full of contradictions and falsehoods teaching op-

posite doctrines on every page. Most people would become very angry if someone said their character was such that "you could prove anything by them," yet make the same accusation against God's own Word. Remember, the fruit of truth is harmony and unity. Truth never contradicts itself. If religious beliefs contradict one another it is because at least one, and perhaps both of them are not in harmony with truth.

5. **STUDY WIDELY:** If we could learn everything God wants us to know in one single verse, there would be no purpose for the rest of the scriptures. In studying a certain scripture we should always consider the context (verses surrounding the verse under consideration) as well as to whom, when and under what conditions the scripture was written.

6. **APPLY ITS TEACHINGS PERSONALLY:** One of the greatest Bible tragedies was the rich young ruler of Matthew 19 who inquired of the Lord what he must do to inherit eternal life. Upon receiving an answer the Bible says that "he went away sorrowful. . ." Bible knowledge is wonderful, but is of little value unless it is actively put to use.—*The Lamplighter* □

★★★★★★

How to Preserve a Husband

FIRST, use care in selection.
Get one that is not too young, but tender and healthy. If you choose one recklessly, it may not keep.
Don't put in hot water. This makes them turn sour.
Sweeten with smiles and spice with patience. All varieties will respond.
To insure a wonderful consistency, stir gently—never beat. And don't leave unattended for long periods of time.

To add a delicious flavor, sprinkle generously with praise and appreciation.

The poorest specimen may be improved if you follow these instructions and will keep for an unlimited number of years in any climate.

Frequent exposure to cold temperatures has been known to damage this dish permanently. Keep a small steady flame going at all times.—*Selected*. □

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HYPOCRISY

THE MAN WHO says he is kept away from religion by hypocrites is not influenced by them anywhere else. Business is full of them, but if he sees a chance at making money he does not stop for that.

Society is crowded with them, and yet he never thinks of becoming a hermit.

Married life is full of them, but that doesn't make him remain a bachelor.

Hell is full of them, and yet he doesn't do a thing to keep himself from going there.

He wants to have you think that he is trying to avoid the society of hypocrites, and yet he takes not a single step toward Heaven, the only place where no hypocrites can go!—*Selected* □

★★★★★★

A CLEAN HEART

HOW does a worm get inside an apple? Perhaps you think the worm burrows in from the outside. No, the worm comes from the inside. But how does he get in there? Simple! An insect lays an egg in the apple blossom. Sometime later, the worm hatches in the heart of the apple, then eats his way out.

Sin, like the worm, begins in the heart and works through the person's thoughts, words, and actions. For this reason, David once wrote, "Create in me a clean heart, O God."—*Selected* □

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FOUND: A Preacher to Suit All

AT LAST, the perfect preacher has been found. After hundreds of years, a model preacher has been found to suit everyone. He preaches exactly 20 minutes and then sits down. His lessons are deep and shallow. He condemns sin, but he never hurts anyone's feelings.

He works from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. in every type of work, from preaching to custodial service. He makes \$60.00 a week, wears good clothes, buys good books regularly, has a nice family, drives a good car and give \$30.00 a week to the church. He also stands ready to contribute to every good work that comes along.

He is 26 years old, has been preaching 30 years, and was 55 his last birthday. He is tall and short, thin and heavy-set, and handsome. He has one brown eye, and one blue one. He parts his hair in the middle. The left side is dark and straight; the right side is brown and wavy. He wears a mustache only on the right side of his upper lip, with the other side bare.

He works tirelessly with teenagers, and spends all his time with older folks. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that is keeping him seriously dedicated to his work.

He makes 15 calls a day on church members, visits all the sick in the hospitals and at home even when he doesn't know they are sick. He spends all his time evangelizing the "unchurched," and is never out of his office. He is not married but his wife is a wonderful helper in his work and is well loved by the whole church. He has no children, but his kids are the best ones in the church. He expects nothing from those in his Bible classes, but the members where he preaches are the best Bible students in the area.—*Torch* □

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HOW HUMANISM AFFECTS CHILDREN

HUMANISM has drastically affected the basic morality of the United States. It is a subtle philosophy and is often undetected.

Humanism is not new It is the struggle of man's will against God's will. A humanist believes in himself rather than God and is more concerned about his self-preservation than about the needs of others.

Children are affected by humanism in the following ways:

1. **Disrespect for Authority.** Children are taught that whatever you choose will be right for you because

you choose it. This, of course, leads to situational ethics which is contrary to God's Word.

2. **Decline in Discipline.** Since children are taught that they are their own authority they want to do their own thing. They ignore the leadership of parents, teachers, and others in authority over them.

3. **Decline in Academics.** When discipline deteriorates, learning also deteriorates.

Teachers are not able to teach if they do not have the attention of the children.

4. **Self-Centeredness.** The basis of humanism is the idea of man's being supreme over God. Children are taught to put themselves first, which is in direct opposition to Philippians 2:4.

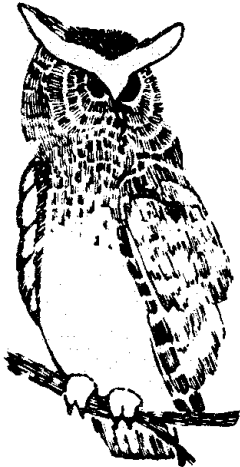
5. **Total Academic Freedom.** Humanists believe that children should have the right to read anything they want—except the Bible. They believe it is immoral to indoctrinate children with beliefs of the Bible.

6. **Total Sexual Freedom.** Humanists want to "liberate" our children from sexual inhibitions. Their sex education programs are nothing more than academic pornography.

To combat this humanistic philosophy, children need to be trained from the Bible in church, in school, and in the home.—*Pulpit Helps* □

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A wise old owl lived in an oak;
The more he heard the less he spoke;
The less he spoke the more he heard;
Why can't we be like that wise old bird?



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STRANGE, But Many Times Religiously True. . .

- Some religious people who talk the most about the Holy Spirit seem to know the least about the subject.
- Some religious people who talk the most about the book of Revelation probably know the least about its true meaning.
- Some religious people who call themselves Baptist go out of their way to deny what the Bible teaches about baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:27).
- Some religious people who say the most about the public worship of the church have yet to learn how to worship God in spirit and in truth.
- Some religious people who are the most outspoken against denominationalism (sectarianism) are among the most sectarian in the world. □

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HUMANIST MANIFESTO I AND II

(Editor's Note: Not everyone is aware of the subtle and undermining philosophy that is working havoc in our society. It is responsible for so many of our moral ills today. That philosophy is humanism. So many in high places—as in government, education, and the media—embrace and actively, if not evangelistically, prompt these concepts. We present this material for your files to better understand and combat our plightful situation.)

Humanist Manifesto I

The time has come for widespread recognition of the radical changes in religious beliefs throughout the modern world. The time is past for mere revision of traditional attitudes. Science and economic change have disrupted the old beliefs. Religions the world over are under the necessity of coming to terms with new conditions created by a vastly increased knowledge and experience. In every field of human activity, the vital movement is now in the direction of a candid and explicit humanism. In order that religious humanism may be better understood we, the undersigned, desire to make certain affirmations which we believe the facts of our contemporary life demonstrate.

There is great danger of a final, and we believe fatal, identification of the word religion with doctrines and methods which have lost their significance and which are powerless to solve the problem of human living in the Twentieth Century. Religions have always been means for realizing the highest values of life. Their end has been accomplished through the interpretation of the total environing situation (theology or world view) the sense of values resulting therefrom (goal or ideal), and the technique (cult) established for realizing the satisfactory life. A change in any of these factors results in alteration of the outward forms of religion. This fact explains the changefulness of religions through the centuries. But through all changes religion itself remains constant in its quest for abiding values, an inseparable feature of human life.

Today man's larger understanding of the universe, his scientific achievements, and his deeper appreciation of brotherhood, have created a situation which requires a new statement of the means and purposes of religion. Such a vital, fearless, and frank religion capable of furnishing adequate social goals and personal satisfactions may appear to many people as a complete break with the past. While this age does owe a vast debt to traditional religions, it is none the less obvious that any religion that can hope to be a synthesizing and dynamic force for today must be shaped for the needs of this age. To establish such a religion is a major necessity of the present. It is a responsibility which rests upon this generation. We therefore affirm the following:

First: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

Second: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process.

Third: Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.

Fourth: Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded to that culture.

Fifth: Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. Obviously humanism does not deny the possibility of realities as yet undiscovered, but it does insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relation to human needs. Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.

Sixth: We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought."

Seventh: Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. Nothing human is alien to the religious. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation — all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. The distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.

Eighth: Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion.

Ninth: In place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well being.

Tenth: It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.

Eleventh: Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.

Twelfth: Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life.

Thirteenth: Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view of the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.

Fourteenth: The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

Fifteenth and last: We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from it; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.

So stand the theses of religious humanism. Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement. He must set intelligence and will to the task.

Humanist Manifesto II

It is forty years since *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933) appeared. Events since then make that earlier statement seem far too optimistic. Nazism has shown the depths of brutality of which humanity is capable. Other totalitarian regimes have suppressed human rights without ending poverty. Science has sometimes brought evil as well as good. Recent decades have shown that inhuman wars can be made in the name of peace. The beginnings of police states, even in democratic societies, widespread government espionage, and other abuses of power by military, political, and industrial elites, and the continuance of unyielding racism, all present a different and difficult social out-

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look. In various societies, the demands of women and minority groups for equal rights effectively challenge our generation.

As we approach the twenty-first century, however, an affirmative and hopeful vision is needed. Faith, commensurate with advancing knowledge, is also necessary. In the choice between despair and hope, humanists respond in this *Humanist Manifest II* with a positive declaration for times of uncertainty.

As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival.

Those who signed *Humanist Manifesto II* disclaim that they are setting forth a binding credo; their individual views would be stated in widely varying ways. The statement is, however, reaching for vision in a time that needs direction. It is social analysis in an effort at consensus. New statements should be developed to supersede this, but for today it is our conviction that humanism offers an alternative that can serve present-day needs and guide humankind toward the future.

The next century can be and should be the humanistic century. Dramatic scientific, technological, and ever-accelerating social and political changes crowd our awareness. We have virtually conquered the planet, explored the moon, overcome the natural limits of travel and communication; we stand at the dawn of a new age, ready to move farther into space and perhaps inhabit other planets. Using technology wisely, we can control our environment, conquer poverty, markedly reduce disease, extend our life-span, significantly modify our behavior, alter the course of human evolution and cultural development, unlock vast new powers, and provide humankind with unparalleled opportunity for achieving an abundant and meaningful life.

The future is however, filled with dangers. In learning to apply the scientific method to nature and human life, we have opened the door to ecological damage, overpopulation, dehumanizing institutions, totalitarian repression, and nuclear and biochemical disaster. Faced with apocalyptic prophesies and doomsday scenarios, many flee in despair from reason and embrace irrational cults and theologies of withdrawal and retreat.

Traditional moral codes and newer irrational cults both fail to meet the pressing needs of today and tomorrow. False "theologies of hope" and messianic ideologies, substituting new dogmas for old, cannot cope with existing world realities. They separate rather than unite peoples.

Humanity, to survive, requires bold and daring measures. We need to extend the uses of scientific method, not renounce them, to fuse reason with compassion in order to build constructive social and moral values. Confronted by many possible futures, we must decide which to pursue. The ultimate goal should be the fulfillment of the potential for growth in each human personality—not for the favored few, but for all of humankind. Only a shared world and global measures will suffice.

A humanist outlook will tap the creativity of each human being and provide the vision and courage for us to work together. This outlook emphasizes the role human beings can play in their own spheres of action. The decades ahead call for dedicated, clear-minded men and women able to marshal the will, intelligence, and cooperative skills for shaping a desirable future. Humanism can provide the purpose and inspiration that so many seek; it can give personal meaning and significance to human life.

Many kinds of humanism exist in the contemporary world. The varieties and emphases of naturalistic humanism include "scientific," ethical," democratic," religious," and "Marxist" humanism. Free thought, theism, agnosticism, skepticism, deism, rationalism, ethical culture, and liberal religion all claim to be heir to the humanist

tradition. Humanism traces its roots from ancient China, classical Greece and Rome, through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, to the scientific revolution of the modern world. But views that merely reject theism are not equivalent to humanism. They lack commitment to the positive belief in the possibilities of human progress and to the values central to it. Many within religious groups, believing in the future of humanism, now claim humanist credentials. Humanism is an ethical process through which we all can move, above and beyond the divisive particulars, heroic personalities, dogmatic creeds, and ritual customs of past religions or their mere negation.

We affirm a set of common principles that can serve as a basis for united action—positive principles relevant to the present human condition. They are a design for a secular society on a planetary scale.

For these reasons, we submit this new *Humanist Manifesto* for the future of humankind; for us, it is a vision of hope, a direction for satisfying survival.

Religion

First: In the best sense, religion may inspire dedication to the highest ethical ideals. The cultivation of moral devotion and creative imagination is an expression of genuine "spiritual" experience and aspiration.

We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgement, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so. Even at this late date in human history, certain elementary facts based upon the critical use of scientific reason have to be restated. We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural.

Some humanists believe we should reinterpret traditional religions and reinvest them with meanings appropriate to the current situation. Such redefinitions, however, often perpetuate old dependencies and escapisms; they easily become obscurantist, impeding the free use of the intellect. We need instead, radically new human purposes and goals.

We appreciate the need to preserve the best ethical teachings in the religious traditions of humankind, many of which we share in common. But we reject those features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities. Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full potentialities. Such institutions, creeds, and rituals often impede the will to serve others. Too often traditional faiths encourage dependence rather than independence, obedience rather than affirmation, fear rather than courage. More recently they have generated concerned social action, with many signs of relevance appearing in the wake of the "God is Dead" theologies. But we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

Second: Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the "ghost in the machine" and the "separable soul." Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny and in the way that our lives have influenced others in our culture.

Traditional religions are surely not the only obstacles to human

progress. Other ideologies also impede human advance. Some forms of political doctrine, for instance, function religiously, reflecting the worst features of orthodoxy and authoritarianism, especially when they sacrifice individuals on the altar of Utopian promises. Purely economic and political viewpoints, whether capitalist or communist, often function as religious and ideological dogma. Although humans undoubtedly need economic and political goals, they also need creative values by which to live.

Ethics

Third: We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life. Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures. Happiness and the creative realization of human needs and desires, individually and in shared enjoyment, are continuous themes of humanism. We strive for the good life here and now. The goal is to pursue life's enrichment despite debasing forces of vulgarization, commercialization, bureaucratization, and dehumanization.

Fourth: Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses. There is no substitute: neither faith nor passion suffices in itself. The controlled use of scientific methods, which have transformed the natural and social sciences since the Renaissance, must be extended further in the solution of human problems. But reason must be tempered by humility, since no group has a monopoly of wisdom or virtue. Nor is there any guarantee that all problems can be solved or all questions answered. Yet critical intelligence, infused by a sense of human caring, is the best method that humanity has for resolving problems. Reason should be balanced with compassion and empathy and the whole person fulfilled. Thus, we are not advocating the use of emotion, for we believe in the cultivation of feeling love. As science pushes back the boundary of the known, one's sense of wonder is continually renewed, and art, poetry, and music find their places, along with religion and ethics.

The Individual

Fifth: The preciousness and dignity of the individual person is a central humanist value. Individuals should be encouraged to realize their own creative talents and desires. We reject all religious ideological, or moral codes that denigrate the individual, suppress freedom, dull intellect, dehumanize personality. We believe in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility. Although science can account for the causes of behavior, the possibilities of individual freedom of choice exist in human life and should be increased.

Sixth: In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered "evil". Without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity, a civilized society should be a tolerant one. Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire. We wish to cultivate the development of a responsible attitude toward sexuality, in which humans are not exploited as sexual objects, and in which intimacy, sensitivity, respect, and honesty in interpersonal relations are encouraged. Moral education for children and adults is an important way of developing awareness and sexual maturity.

Democratic Society

Seventh: To enhance freedom and dignity the individual must experience a full range of civil liberties in all societies. This includes freedom of speech and the press, political democracy, the legal right of opposition to governmental policies fair judicial process, religious

liberty, freedom of association, and artistic, scientific, and cultural freedom. It also includes a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide. We oppose the increasing invasion of privacy, by whatever means, in both totalitarian and democratic societies. We would safeguard, extend, and implement the principles of human freedom evolved from the Magna Carta to the Bill of Rights, the Rights of Man, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Eighth: We are committed to an open and democratic society. We must extend participatory democracy in its true sense to the economy, the school, the family, the workplace, and the voluntary associations. Decision-making must be decentralized to include widespread involvement of people at all levels—social, political, and economic. All persons should have a voice in developing the values and goals that determine their lives. Institutions should be responsive to express desires and needs. The conditions of work, education, devotion and play should be humanized. Alienating forces should be modified or eradicated and bureaucratic structures should be held to a minimum. People are more important than decalogues, rules, proscriptions, or regulations.

Ninth: The separation of church and state and the separation of ideology and state are imperatives. The state should encourage maximum freedom for different moral, political, religious, and social values in society. It should not favor any particular religious bodies through the use of public monies, nor espouse a single ideology and function thereby as an instrument of propaganda or oppression, particularly against dissenters.

Tenth: Humane societies should evaluate economic systems not by rhetoric or ideology, but by whether or not they increase economic well-being for all individuals and groups, minimize poverty and hardship, increase the sum of human satisfaction, and enhance the quality of life. Hence the door is open to alternative economic systems. We need to democratize the economy and judge it by its responsiveness to human needs testing results in terms of the common good.

Eleventh: The principle of moral equality must be furthered through elimination of all discrimination based upon race, religion, sex, age, or national origin. This means equality of opportunity and recognition of talent and merit. Individuals should be encouraged to contribute to their own betterment. If unable, then society should provide means to satisfy their basic economic, health, and cultural needs, including wherever resources make possible, a minimum guaranteed annual income. We are concerned for the welfare of the aged, the infirm, the disadvantaged, and also for the outcasts — the mentally retarded, abandoned or abused children, the handicapped, prisoners, and addicts—for all who are neglected or ignored by society. Practicing humanists should make it their vocation to humanize personal relations.

We believe in the right to universal education. Everyone has a right to the cultural opportunity to fulfill his or her unique capacities and talents. The school should foster satisfying productive living. They should be open at all levels to any and all; the achievement of excellence should be encouraged. Innovative and experimental forms of education are to be welcomed. The energy and idealism of the young deserve to be appreciated and channeled to constructive purposes.

We deplore racial, religious, ethnic, or class antagonisms. Although we believe in cultural diversity and encourage racial and ethnic pride, we reject separations which promote alienation and set people and groups against each other; we envision an integrated community where people have a maximum opportunity for free and voluntary association.

We are critical of sexism or sexual chauvinism—male or female. We believe in equal rights for both women and men to fulfill their unique careers and potentialities as they see fit, free of invidious discrimination.

World Community

Twelfth: We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic

grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community in which all sectors of the human family can participate. Thus we look to the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government. This would appreciate cultural pluralism and diversity. It would not exclude pride in national origins and accomplishments nor the handling of regional problems on a regional basis. Human progress, however, can no longer be achieved by focusing on one section of the world, Western or Eastern, developed or underdeveloped. For the first time in human history, no part of humankind can be isolated from any other. Each person's future is in some way linked to all. We thus affirm a commitment to the building of world community, at the same time recognizing that this commits us to some hard choices.

Thirteenth: This world community must renounce the resort to violence and force as a method of solving international disputes. We believe in the peaceful adjudication of differences of negotiation and compromise. War is obsolete. So is the use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. It is a planetary imperative to reduce the level of military expenditures and turn these savings to peaceful and people-oriented uses.

Fourteenth: The world community must engage in cooperative planning concerning the use of rapidly depleting resources. The planet earth must be considered a single ecosystem. Ecological damage, resource depletion, and excessive population growth must be checked by international concord. The cultivation and conservation of nature is a moral value; we should perceive ourselves as integral to the sources of our being in nature. We must free our world from needless pollution and waste, responsibly guarding and creating wealth, both natural and human. Exploitation of natural resources, uncurbed by social conscience, must end.

Fifteenth: The problems of economic growth and development can no longer be resolved by one nation alone; they are worldwide in scope. It is the moral obligation of the developed nations to provide—through an international authority that safeguards human rights—massive technical, agricultural, medical, and economic assistance, including birth control techniques, to the developing portions of the globe. World poverty must cease. Hence extreme disproportions in wealth, income, and economic growth should be reduced on a worldwide basis.

Sixteenth: Technology is a vital key to human progress and development. We deplore any neo-romantic efforts to condemn indiscriminately all technology and science or to counsel retreat from its further extension and use for the good of humankind. We would resist any moves to censor basic scientific research on moral, political, or social grounds. Technology must, however, be carefully judged by the consequences of its use; harmful and destructive changes should be avoided. We are particularly disturbed when technology and bureaucracy control, manipulate, or modify human beings without their consent. Technological feasibility does not imply social or cultural desirability.

Seventeenth: We must expand communication and transportation across frontiers. Travel restrictions must cease. The world must be open to diverse political, ideological, and moral viewpoints and evolve a worldwide system of television and radio for information and education. We thus call for full international cooperation in culture, science, the arts, and technology across ideological borders. We must learn to live openly together or we shall perish together.

Humanity As A Whole

In closing: The world cannot wait for a reconciliation of competing political or economic systems to solve its problems. These are the times for men and women of good will to further the building of a peaceful and prosperous world. We urge that parochial loyalties and inflexible moral and religious ideologies be transcended. We urge recognition of the common humanity of all people. We further urge

the use of reason and compassion to produce the kind of world we want—a world in which peace, prosperity, freedom, and happiness, are widely shared. Let us not abandon that vision in despair or cowardice. We are responsible for what we are or will be. Let us work together for a humane world by means commensurate with humane ends. Destructive ideological differences among communism, capitalism, socialism, conservatism, liberalism, and radicalism should be overcome. Let us call for an end to terror and hatred. We will survive and prosper only in a world of shared humane values. We can initiate new directions for humankind; ancient rivalries can be superseded by broad-based cooperative efforts. The commitment to tolerance, understanding, and peaceful negotiation does not necessitate acquiescence to the status quo nor the damming up of dynamic and revolutionary forces. The true revolution is occurring and can continue in countless non-violent adjustments. But this entails the willingness to step forward onto new and expanding plateaus. At the present juncture of history, commitment to all humankind is the highest commitment of which we are capable; it transcends the narrow allegiances of church, state, party, class or race in moving toward a wider vision of human potentiality. What more daring a goal for humankind than for each person to become, in ideal as well as practice, a citizen of a world community. It is a classical vision; we can now give it new vitality. Humanism thus interpreted is a moral force that has time on its side. We believe that humankind has the potential intelligence, good will, and cooperative skill to implement this commitment in the decades ahead.

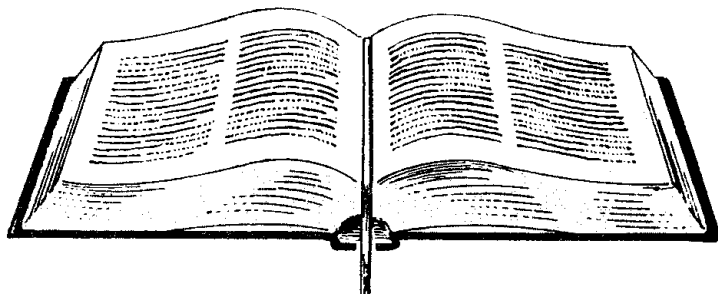
We, the undersigned, while not necessarily endorsing every detail of the above, pledge our general support to **Humanist Manifesto II** for the future of humankind. These affirmations are not a final credo or dogma but an expression of a living and growing faith. We invite others in all lands to join us in further developing and working for these goals.

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The All-Sufficiency OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

By Jim Hill
Vansant, Virginia 24656



THE CHURCH which Jesus built is a perfect institution. That church is all-sufficient to accomplish the purpose for which God built it. When men begin to doubt the all-sufficiency of the church, they then begin to build human institutions to do the work which God intended the church to do. In recent years, the church has been plagued with an ever increasing number of human institutions clamoring for church support. Each of these institutions first persuades the church that it is not sufficient to do its God-given work and then suggests that this human institution can accomplish the divinely commanded work more efficiently than the church can. Consequently, the churches are encouraged to make a contribution to this human institution to do the work which the church was commanded to accomplish.

None of these institutions would ever have been supported by church contributions had men had faith in the church which God designed and Jesus built. However, becoming disenchanted with the church these brethren turned to human institutions to do the work which God gave the church to accomplish. In order to prevent further and future apostasies of the same kind, we need to restore confidence in the all-sufficiency of the church.

We need to be reminded that the church is a perfect institution. We say this in spite of the fact that it is made up of men. The church might be considered from its divine side and from its human side. When we say that the church is a perfect institution, we are obviously speaking of it from its divine side. The human side of the church will never become perfect so long as it has imperfect men in it. The imperfect human institutions are also filled with imperfect men; they have nothing better to offer. Yet, the church is perfect from its divine side. Let us consider the ways in which it is perfect.

1. The church was conceived in the mind of our

perfect God. Paul wrote, "...to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:10,11). Notice that the church was "purposed" or planned by God Himself. The Divine Architect of the church was none other than God.

The church reflects the "wisdom" of the Divine Architect in the same way as some earthly building reflects the wisdom of the architect. As I view a bridge which spans a large river, I am impressed with the wisdom of its architect. Similarly, when I see the church functioning as the church is commanded to function, I am impressed with the wisdom of the Architect. For example, I am amazed that the gospel could be spread throughout all of the known world within forty years of its beginning with no organization other than the local church. Indeed, the church manifests the wisdom of its Architect. The church is perfect because it had a perfect Architect.

2. The church is perfect because it has a perfect blueprint. When we read of the construction of the tabernacle and later of the temple, we are told of God giving a pattern by which these were to be built. The men were commended because they built all things according to the pattern (Exodus 25:9,40). The Hebrew writer reminds us of God's instructions to Moses in erecting the tabernacle; he said, "...as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for, see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5).

The Hebrew writer shows that the tabernacle was the type of the church, which was the antitype. Even as the tabernacle was to be built by the pattern revealed to Moses, even so was the church to be built according to the divine pattern. . .

3. The church is perfect because it had a perfect builder. None other than God in the flesh built the church. The Prince of Peace, the Wonderful Counselor, the Everlasting Father, the Mighty God, built the church. To Peter Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church."

If an imperfect person planned a house, it would have flaws in its design. If a perfect person planned a house, it would be perfect. The church was planned by God and, therefore, has a perfect blueprint. Yet, if an imperfect builder works with a perfect blueprint, he will build an imperfect house. Yet, we have a perfect blueprint and a perfect builder for the church. Hence, the church is perfect, from the divine side. It is exactly what God planned to build.

4. Perfect preparations were made for the church. The church was conceived by God from eternity. Yet, preparations were made through the course of history to bring it into existence. Even as David made preparations for the building of the Temple by his son Solomon, so also God made preparations for the building of the church by His Son Jesus Christ. The prophets foretold the coming of the kingdom of God

(Continued on Next Page)

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Continued from Last Page)

(Isaiah 2:1-4; 9:6,7; Daniel 2:44; etc.). Divine preparations were made. Finally, when the time arrived for the divine kingdom to be built, the message was sent out, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:14). God sent forth His Son to build the church "in the fulness of time" (Galatians 4:4), when all of the preparation necessary for the coming of the church had been done. Yes, perfect preparations were made for the coming of the church.

5. Perfect provisions were made to bring the church into existence. Miraculous powers were needed to bring the church into existence. God did not leave the establishment of the church in the hands of unaided men. Rather, God spared nothing in bringing the church into being. We need only to read the second chapter of Acts to be impressed with the many different miracles which transpired to bring the church into existence. Without going into all of the miracles executed by Christ, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, the work of John the Baptist, or the work of the prophets, simply notice that God worked miracles in bringing the church into existence. He sent a sound from heaven like the rushing of a mighty wind, cloven tongues like as of fire which rested upon the heads of each of the apostles, and other tongues. Then, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter revealed the divine conditions for entry into the church. Yes, God gave perfect provisions for bringing the church into existence.

6. A perfect Head was given to the church. The Scriptures explicitly teach that Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. Paul wrote, "...and hath put all things under his (Jesus') feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22,23). The head of the church is not some imperfect pontiff. Nor, is the head of the church a group of imperfect men. The Head of the church is none other than the Son of God Himself.

7. A perfect law has been given to govern the church. The law which guides the church is perfect. Jesus imparted the Holy Spirit to the apostles to guide them in all truth in revealing His will to mankind (John 14:26; 16:13). The result was a "perfect law, the law of liberty" (James 1:25). The law of God which governs the church has been "once-for-all-times" delivered (Jude 3) and furnishes man completely unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16,17). Hence, the church is perfect because it has a perfect law.

The law of God furnishes the church completely with everything it needs to offer acceptable worship to God, to organize itself in order to accomplish its God-given work, to discharge its responsibilities in its given areas of work, etc. So long as the church walks within the confines of God's revealed perfect law, it will manifest to man the wisdom of God. When it departs from the law of God and walks in its own imperfect wisdom, it ceases to reflect divine wisdom and begins to reflect mere human wisdom.

8. It has a perfect mission. God has given the church a perfect mission. The work which God has given the church to accomplish is simple: the preaching of the gospel both to its own members (for edification) and to others (evangelism), and benevolence of its members. This is still the mission of the church. The humanly devised works—works not authorized in the pages of the perfect law of liberty which guides the church—distort the mission of the church.

9. It has within it the ability to perfectly carry out its mission. The perfect Architect who perfectly planned the church, created the church with the ability to carry out the works which He gave it. The work of God would be imperfect were it of such a nature that God has laid certain responsibilities upon the church and then not have given it the ability to perform those responsibilities. To illustrate the imperfection, consider what you would think of the designer and of the machine which was designed to harvest wheat but was unable to accomplish the purposes it was given to do. The church is perfect and is, therefore, able to accomplish its God-given works of evangelization, edification, and benevolence without the need of human institutions. The church is all-sufficient to do the work which God gave it to do (Ephesians 3:10).

When one begins with something that is perfect, he

(Continued on Page 16)

COME HOME

*Forbid the curse that darkens our way
That we can never go home again;
For our Father's love beckons us back,
If we repent and turn away from sin.*

*But the Devil delights in digging our ditch
Darker and deeper to our soul's despair.
He damns and denies God's mercy and grace
...And we doubt we have even a prayer.*

*Pray, dear soul, don't stay away,
Fearing you have strayed too far;
'Tis the blood of Jesus that calls you home—
Only He can heal sin's shameful scar.*

*Friend, if the way back for you is blocked,
Blame it not on God's doing nor design;
Only the Deceiver and your hardened heart
Could such a gracious invitation decline.*

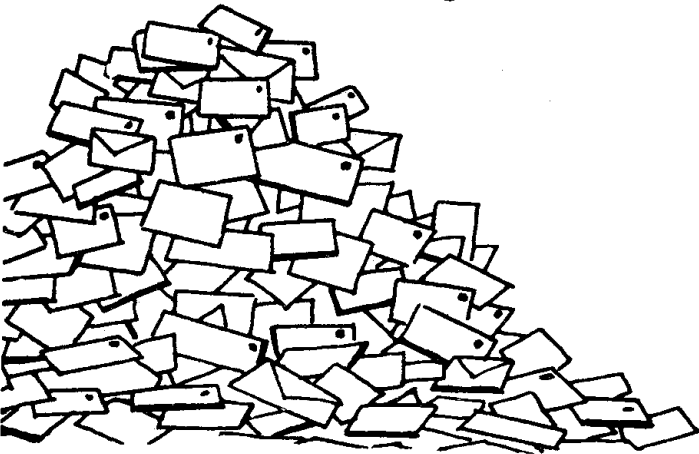
*What comfort to know He is always there,
Patiently awaiting our soul's return.
O, how He wants to welcome you home—
Such love! Too pure, too deep to discern.*

"...But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. . . 'For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found'."—Luke 15:20-24—

—By Bob Wickline

READERS'

... Response



NORTH CAROLINA:

—“Please remove my name from your mailing list.”

(Editor’s Note: A few responded this past issue wanting their names removed from our mailing list. They didn’t say why. We hope the reason is not like one man said, “I have read so much about the harmfulness of smoking that I have decided to give up reading.” And being like an ostrich will solve no problems).

TENNESSEE:

—“... I do get somewhat weary of attacks on Freemasonry. Snell or Paul either one know all the facts and I object to your comments.

“To begin with, there is no official Encyclopedia of Freemasonry. The ‘official’ is used as a word title to lend authority. Freemasonry is not a religion. It is religious in nature. I have been a mason since 1944 and have learned the lectures, studied its history and enjoyed its fellowship. I have been a minister for 35 years and have never found any disadvantage to being mason; in fact, it has been a tool for evangelism in many cases.

“I have preached many funerals and have never changed the direction of any one of the dead by my preaching. I also have conducted Masonic funerals and never put any Mason in the ‘big lodge in the sky.’ It is a meaningful ceremony worthy to be heard and seen. I know for a fact that one who does not, with his own mouth, say that he believes in God, is not accepted for membership. If he refuses, he is led by the cable tow and led back to the anteroom and leaves.

“Just because Mr. Snell or Mr. Paul refer to a so-called official commentary on Masonry, does not make it so. Would you accept the teaching on baptism from someone who got all his or her information from Barnes Notes on the New Testament?

“Masonry cannot be a false religion because it is not a religion! It is a fraternity with high principles. There are bad Masons, just as there are ‘bad’ Christians.’ I certainly know of some Christians who have gone to Lodge rather than a worship service. On the other hand, I have known multitudes of ‘Christians’ who have gone to ball games, parties, etc. rather than worship. One Mason told me, ‘I don’t need to go to church, I’m a Mason.’ He was dead wrong, and I told him so. He was woefully misinformed. If he had not used the Masonic Lodge as an excuse, he would have found something else to hide behind.

“In closing, I would like to say that I have seen many

Masons who acted more like Christians than many Christians who acted like Christians.

“Christ died for Masons and other sinners. He, and He alone, saves, keeps and loves His own—Not just any church; not the Lodge, not the moral non-believer but those who obey and follow the Christ are saved through His blood.

“Masonry does not make any man ready for heaven. It is a finger pointing to a philosophy of self improvement, that’s all. . .

“I do not consider myself any less Christian because I am a Mason. I’ve never seen anyone saved through Masonry but I have seen lives turned around, tongues stop cursing and brotherly love demonstrate. I have seen the Biblical injunction to Christians, not Masons, to care for the orphan and widows fulfilled. They didn’t learn this solely from Masonry but by Christians in the ranks of Masons carrying out some works not taken seriously by well-meaning Christians on the outside. Christ saves; the Gospel is still God’s power unto salvation. . .”

(Editor’s Reply: “It is very interesting that after all these years I finally hear from you, not in praise of the truth of God (as in the article, ‘The Purpose of God’) but in a fervent defense of the Masons. This tells me something.”)

(Editor’s Note: Following is part of an article submitted by an interested reader which appeared in *The Discerner*. It should likewise prove interesting.)

THE CULT WITHIN THE CHURCH

by
Roy E. Knuteson, Sr.

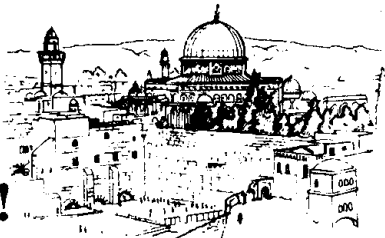
RECENTLY I was asked to officiate at the funeral of a man. . . His family told me that he was an active member of a church in a nearby city, and more importantly, that he was a Thirty-Second Degree Mason. They insisted that the Masonic Lodge have a part in the memorial service.

... Accordingly, I therefore requested of the mortician that the Masons go through their rites first, and then I would read

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TO: The Sword & Staff, Box 147, Mt. Airy, N.C. 27030

GENTLEMEN:

Understanding this does not obligate me, I would like my name and address put in your files as one who is interested in being a part of your final Bible lands tour now planned. I understand that you will keep me informed as to the developments and plans more in detail, especially as the time draws near.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Telephone:

(Clip and Mail)

READERS' RESPONSE...

(Continued from Last Page)

the obituary and close the service with a gospel message. I chose to have the last word.

A Bizarre Ritual

Here was a man who was a member of good standing in a recognized evangelical church, and yet at his funeral, these lodge members went through an eerie and bizarre ritual that was unChristian to the core. First, they lined up like little children behind the casket, dressed in their little white leather aprons. Then, each of them read sequentially from their lodge burial manuals, and one of them read this final prayer: "Most glorious God, author of all good and giver of all mercy, pour down thy blessings upon us, and strengthen our solemn engagements with ties of true affection." In the closing remarks, they spoke fondly of "our dear brother whom we shall miss very much," and then closed their burial statements with these written words: "So in the bright morning of resurrection, thou shalt spring agin into newness of life. Until then dear brother, farewell." I learned later upon questioning, that not one of these six lodge members had ever met the deceased! This is unusual.

At the graveside, these men read again from their little books and then, motioning up and down with their outstretched hands, they chanted: "The spirit goes up and the body goes down" over and over again. They spoke of the "Supreme architect of the Universe" and how their "friend" had gone to the "Grand Lodge in the Sky," all because he was a Thirty-Second Degree Mason!

The Hidden Cult

This is the Masonic Lodge—the cult within the church. Why do I call it that? Because the Masonic Lodge bears all the marks of a major cult and most of its members come from within the organized church. Many church buildings in America, of various denominations, have cornerstones displaying the Masonic Lodge symbols. On a recent visit to Mississippi, I saw a Baptist church building that was jointly used by the Masons, and each shared an equal portion of the outdoor sign!

Freemasonry, as it is called, is the oldest and largest secret order in the world, but it is also a religion that preaches another gospel—a gospel of good works—which is condemned in Galatians 1:6-8. It is a spiritual counterfeit that endorses and practices beliefs that have nothing to do with Christianity and are in direct violation of the teachings of Christ.

These lodge members are enslaved by their organization and, in my many years of ministry, I have yet to meet an active Mason who did not place his lodge above his church in his loyalties and devotion. Freemasonry is, in my opinion, one of the most subtle cults of all time because it works from within the professed church and receives little condemnation by the clergy, many of whom are members themselves. The vast majority of church members are totally unaware of how tragically unscriptural this movement really is because hardly any of the books on the cults even mention it.

The Masonic Lodge has more than a hundred fraternal organizations, including **The Order of The Eastern Star and Daughters of the Nile** (for women), **Job's Daughters** and **The Order of The Rainbow** (for girls), and **The Order of Demolay** (for boys). Other orders in Masonry are called **The Tall Cedars of Lebanon In The United States of America**, **The Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets Of The Enchanted Realm** and **The Knights Of the Red Cross Of Constantine**. In America, Freemasonry is represented by **The Blue Lodge** with its three basic degrees; Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. Additional

optional degrees are available up to the Thirty-Third Degree in the Scottish branch or up to the Tenth Degree in the American Rite, also called the York Rite. The Scottish Rite branch of this cult features **The Order Of The Mystic Shriners**, which is an organization of high ranking Masons who are well-known for their wild drinking parties and crazy antics at their national conventions.

Freemasonry erroneously claims that their lodge goes back thousands of years and that Solomon, John The Baptist, the Apostle John, and othe Bible characters were all Masons. *The Holy Bible-Masonic Edition* boasts of the antiquity of the Lodge, stating: "It is admitted that Masonry is descended from the ancient mysteries. This was first arranged when the constellation Leo was in the summer solstice. Thus the antiquity of Masonry is written in the starry heavens" (Revised Edition 1957, p. 51). Actually, this cult cannot be traced further back than 1717 A.D., according to *World Book Encyclopedia*. What began as a labor union of stone masons in Europe grew into an international lodge which included fifteen American presidents including: Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Harry Truman. It is estimated that one of twelve American males is a Mason today.

Cultic Beliefs and Practices

What really sets this group apart as a cult is their stated belief that "all men are brothers" (Universalism) and that "God" is the same, whatever the name (Unitarianism). God is often referred to in Freemasonry as G.A.O.T.U. (Great Architect Of The Universe) and "The All-Seeing Eye," or "The Nameless One Of A Hundred Names." In the secret rites of the Master Degree, the candidate is told that God's name is "Ma-Ha-Bone"—a name he is never to say aloud or ever reveal. In the York Rite, The Mason Of The Royal Arch Degree is told secretly that God's name is "Jah-Bul-On." "Jah" means Jehovah, "Bul" is the pagan idol "Baal," and "On" is the Egyptian Sun God. This is just another form of syncretism, creating a composite deity of pagan orgins.

Do not be deceived by their professed belief in God and their prominently displayed "Sacred Books" in their "temples." If the Lodge is composed largely of Christians, the Bible is displayed. In other settings the "Sacred Book" may be the Jewish Pentateuch or the Moslem Koran. In fact, any "sacred book" of any religion is accepted within Freemasonry. The Masonic Lodge wants to offend no one, but please everyone. Albert Pike, regarded as one of the outstanding Masons in the Western World, states in his book *Morals and Dogmas*:

"We utter no word that can be deemed irreverent by anyone of any faith. We do not tell the Moslem that it is only important for him to believe that there is but one God, and wholly unessential whether Mohamed was His prophet. We do not tell the Hebrew that the Messiah whom he expects was born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago; and that he is a heretic because he will not so believe. And as little do we tell the sincere Christian that Jesus of Nazareth was but a man like us, or his history but the unreal revival of an older legend."

Mackey in *The Encyclopedia Of Freemasonry* states:

"But its universality is its boast. In its language, citizens of every nation may converse; at its altars men of all religions may kneel; to its creed disciples of every faith may subscribe" (Volume 1, page 149).

What an unholy alliance and blasphemous organization in the sight of God!

Blood-Curdling Oaths

Most Americans do not realize the terrible oaths that Masons are required to take for each advancing degree in

this cult. Each Entering Apprentice is asked to solemnly swear *before* he knows what he is getting into, that he will never reveal the oath that he is about to take, in direct contradiction to the Word of God. Many of these blasphemous oaths are common-knowledge, and are available through a little research. Here, for example, is one such oath that a new member is required to repeat:

"Binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by its roots, and buried in the rough sand of the sea at low water mark where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, should I ever knowingly or willingly violate my solemn oath and obligation as an Entered Apprentice Mason. So help me, God."

A Third Degree Master Mason's oath has this penalty:
"Binding myself under no less penalty than that of having my body severed in two, my bowels taken out and burned to ashes and scattered to the four winds...should I ever violate this solemn obligation as a Master Mason. So help me, God."

Each succeeding degree has a similar horrible oath and penalty connected with it. Incidentally, it is a well-known fact that Joseph Smith was deeply involved with Freemasonry and that many of the "secret vows" taken in Mormon temples today, include almost identical wording (and gestures) which he borrowed from the Masonic Lodge. In this case, one cult gave birth to another cult in many of its rituals. This revelation alone ought to turn any conscientious Christian away from Freemasonry.

Jesus commanded His followers to "not swear at all" (Matthew 5:34). It is an open violation of God's plain Word to take such oaths as required by this or any other cult. James 5:12 states: "Above all, brothers, do not swear—neither by heaven or earth, or anything else. Let your "yes" be yes, and your "no" no, or you will be condemned" (NIV). Our Lord would never sanction these required oaths, for He said: "I have said nothing in secret" (John 18:20). Masonry claims to have found the truth, and yet demands that its members swear never to reveal and always conceal its teachings! How unlike true Christianity in which believers are commanded to "go into all the world and preach the gospel news to all creation" (Mark 16:15 NIV). Masonry's methods stand condemned by the Word of God.

Freemasonry is a religion without a Savior; a religion that denies the shed blood of Christ, and refuses to call Him Lord. In fact, they even prohibit prayers being said "in Jesus' Name" at any of their lodge meetings. It is a cult that knowingly misquotes the Bible and take verses out of context to support its teachings. It rests under the condemnation of God as a sacrilegious system that needs to be exposed and refuted. . ."

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—"I thoroughly enjoy reading your *SWORD AND STAFF*, and I praise God for your stand on the truth. We use your paper for our studies and it has been quite helpful. . ."

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—"We very much appreciate *THE SWORD AND STAFF*. . ."

As we grow (in Christ) we find very few places to turn for good Christian reading material (other than the Bible) and we look forward to the coming of a new SWORD AND STAFF.

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—"It's subscription renewal time again. It's money that has been well spent the last many years. May God bless 'you all' as you work for Him."

TEXAS:

(Editor's Note: A reader in the last issue of *The Sword and Staff*, responding to a short article we had run previously which pictured a snake dying from its own poison, said that this was not true—"No reptile is susceptible to his own or another's venom." We asked for authoritative comments on this. Such a letter follows:)

—"On page 17 (49) of my...copy is an item in which a writer says, 'No snake will bite itself and if it did no harm would result.' My answer to that is my own actual experience.

"I am 79 years old. About 1950 or so I was helping my folks hoe the weeds out of their corn patch. I came up on a rattlesnake or a copperhead—I don't remember which it was. But I know it was a poisonous one. I remembered having heard that if you make a snake bite itself it would die. So rather than chop at the snake I just set my hoe on it about half or two thirds back from its head. When my hoe touched it the snake swung around, struck hard at the hoe, sunk its fangs deeply into its body. In about five minutes it was stone dead. It was the only time I ever had a chance to try the story. That snake died within five minutes, and I never struck it. . ."

NEBRASKA:

—"It is a very attractive and well written paper your are putting out. Sure you are enjoying the new equipment. I especially appreciated the article on 'The Purpose of God.'"

OREGON:

—"I am enclosing a check to help you continue publishing your wonderful magazine. The last issue was a humdinger. The article 'The Purpose of God' should be read by every Christian. Also the one on the Masonic Lodge. . . I stand by the Bible and it alone. God bless you in your work."

—"I am sending a donation to you as I haven't been able to for many years—but you so willingly sent *THE SWORD AND STAFF* anyway, and I want to THANK YOU because it has really encouraged me to stay in the Word during tough times. . ."

★★★★★★

"LOVE ONE ANOTHER"

★★★★★★

THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST *(Continued from Page 12)*

destroys that perfection when he adds something to it and takes something from it. The church can have its perfection destroyed by men appending things to it which God, in His wisdom, chose not to attach to it or by removing from it things which God placed upon it. My brethren, the church is perfect as it came to man from God. It is all-sufficient to do the work which God designed for it to do. Let us be content with the church as it is revealed to us by God. □

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BELOW is a listing of booklets, tracts, and materials published by **The Sword and Staff** and currently available from us. □ *“Easter” Every Sunday*—3¢ each.

- *Getting Informed About Rock Music*—3¢
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