



***BATTLE AGAINST
HUMANISM!***

BY

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Ron G. Christian

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	2
INTRODUCTION.....	6
TWO-FOLD REVELATION OF ALMIGHTY GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE AND NATURE!.....	5
GOD IS THE ORIGINATOR OF BOTH THE MIND OF MAN, AND THE OBJECT IN THE SKY THAT MAN'S MIND IS IMAGINING!.....	7
FROM A LIFE OF SELF-CENTERED PRIDE TO A LIFE OF CHRIST- CENTERED LIVING!.....	10
EITHER YOU STAND TALL IN SELF-SUFFICIENCY OR YOU BOW LOW BEFORE CHRIST!	11
THE ROAD TO HEAVEN IS PAVED WITH THE 'COBBLESTONES' OF GREAT HUMILITY!.....	15
AS A HUMBLE JUNIOR PARTNER, YOU FOLLOW YOUR <u>DIVINE</u> SENIOR PARTNER!.....	18
GOD IS THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD AND PERFECT GIFTS!.....	20
GOD RESISTS THE PROUD BUT HE GIVES GRACE UNTO THE HUMBLE!.....	23
THE FERTILE MINDS OF HUMBLE, GOD-CENTERED SCIENTISTS AND RESEARCHERS!	25
THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEWPOINT!	29
THE 'WAY OF RELATIVISM' IS THE WAY OF DISHARMONY, DESTRUCTION, DEATH!.....	30
THE RESULT OF ALL OF THIS SUBJECTIVE SELF-CENTERED WAY OF LIFE!	31
HUMANISM- THE WAY OF DISILLUSIONMENT AND DESPAIR AND FINALLY DEATH!	33
THOSE WITH THE 'CLOSED VIEW' OF REALITY HAVE A RESTRICTED VIEW OF LIFE!.....	34
THE 'OPEN-ENDED' VIEW OF REALITY AND THE 'CLOSED-ENDED' VIEW OF REALITY.....	37

THE 'GOOD SHEPHERD' TENDERLY INVITES EVERYONE TO COME INTO HIS FOLD!.....	43
THE CRUMBLING FOUNDATION OF MATERIALISM WILL SURELY 'LET YOU DOWN'!.....	64
THE LOVE-DRIVEN WAY OF LIFE LEADS TO HAPPINESS AND TO SELFLESS CARING!.....	67
THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE SELF-CENTERED WAY OF LIFE!	69
THE GUIDING HAND OF THE UNSEEN CHRIST DURING THE STORMS OF LIFE!.....	70
THERE IS A 'WIDE GULF' BETWEEN HUMANISM AND CHRISTIANITY!.....	71
ARE YOU COMMITTED TO THE TEACHINGS AND THE LIFE OF BASIC CHRISTIANITY?.....	73
IS YOUR LIFE A 'CHANNEL' FOR THE FLOW OF GOD'S LOVE?	76
IS YOUR 'SPIRITUAL GIFT' A CHANNEL TO SHARE THE LOVE OF GOD?	79
VAST VARIETY IN GOD'S CREATION, WITH ONE COMMON SERIOUS DISEASE!.....	81
PREPARED 'PLACE' (HEAVEN) FOR A 'PREPARED' PEOPLE (REPENTANT, TRUSTING)!.....	82
AN HONEST ANSWER FOR AN HONEST QUESTION, FOR AN HONEST COMMITMENT!.....	86
I HONOR MY GIFTED WIFE WHO WALKS HUMBLY BEFORE HER BELOVED SAVIOR'!	90
SHE WHO WAS HIGHLY GIFTED WAS SHE WHO WAS GRACED WITH TRUE HUMILITY!.....	91
'LITTLE OR MUCH' - DOES GOD HAVE YOUR HEAD, HEART, AND HANDS?.....	93

INTRODUCTION

There are many 'humanists' in our world! 'Humanism' is often manifested by those persons who declare that 'science is the 'final solution' to the entire world's problems! These 'worshippers of science' declare that the 'scientific method' is the only 'right' way to find the solutions to the world's problems. They declare, with great confidence, and even with dogmatism, that no knowledge is discovered, other than through the methodology of science.

The humanists declare that science alone has access to 'true knowledge and facts'. According to the humanists, anyone outside of the 'regime of science' is to be 'pitied' (at best) and to be 'scorned' (at worst). If one is not 'up-to-date' with the amazing findings and products of science, then such a person is 'outdated' and 'irrelevant' and 'ignorant of this new age'. And such an 'outmoded' person is not even trustworthy! According to the humanists, technology (with its multitudes of innovations and inventions) should command the respect and the adoration by every person in this 'quick-paced world'.

Further, according to humanists, if you don't know 'technology', you essentially are a 'nobody', unable to cope in this modern world! Science, say the humanists, has proven, for a long time, that it can accomplish great 'feats'. Everyone is indebted to the 'advances' and 'progress' of science! Given enough time and given enough effort and given enough research, all the 'secrets' of Nature will be discovered through the 'scientific method'! So say the humanists!

TWO-FOLD REVELATION OF ALMIGHTY GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE AND NATURE!

What should be the 'response' of the Christian to these 'bold' and 'dogmatic' claims of those who think that Science is the only way to find the difficult 'answers' to mankind's many 'problems'?

Fundamentally, the Christian must not deny that science, as a methodology, has, indeed, achieved so very much, in the field of technology and in all the other 'branches' of scientific discovery. No Christian should deny that all human beings owe a 'great debt' to the many scientists (researchers) who have given society so many 'conveniences' and so many 'creature comforts'.

The breakthroughs in science have been many and these have been remarkable! What has been achieved in 'medical research' has been the 'talk of many', and many (suffering) persons have found relief because of the work of scientists. Polio, for instance,

has been virtually eliminated because of scientific (medical) research - and this is true of so many other maladies and diseases!

The Bible commands believers to give 'honor to whom honor is due.' Many scientists deserve to be 'honored' for their 'fine' research, the applications of which have brought help to many 'suffering patients'!

Some people (particularly narrow-minded scientists) forget, however, that the discipline of 'science' originated with Christians who took seriously the mandate to 'read the message of God within His creation'. The motivation and the methodology of Science are found within the compass of strong Christian beliefs.

The belief that this world belongs to God, that this world is full of 'God's secrets', ready to be discovered as man partners with the Creator, that this world is controlled by God's laws and that those laws are predictable and reliable - yes, the discipline of Science is indebted to the 'foundation stones' of Christianity!

Because of the latter convictions, scientists knew that the 'world', with its God-established laws, was capable of being explored and discovered and 'tested'. The 'establishment' and the 'development' of science were only possible because God created an orderly and a predictable world.

These 'assumptions' must be accepted by every scientist, if the 'investigation' of the world by any scientist is made possible. Even so-called atheistic scientists have to accept the theological tenets regarding the orderly and the predictable 'laws' of God, if 'scientific research' is 'carried on'.

These are assumptions (based on God's revelation) that are 'fundamental' in all 'scientific research'. If the 'rules' (laws) changed suddenly (i.e., if the laws were arbitrary and unfixed), there would be no such 'thing' as science or as 'scientific exploration'!

So, 'high-minded' (proud and complacent and self-reliant) scientists need to realize that what is 'revealed' as 'basic assumptions' (as recorded in the Bible) are the 'foundation blocks' to make possible the very 'discipline of science'.

Put in other words, Science as a discipline (i.e., as an intellectual pursuit of the knowledge of the world) is 'founded' on the 'basic revelations' of the Holy Scriptures! Science (as a discipline and practice) owes its 'origin' and its 'development' to the scriptural revelation which teaches that, even though there are some 'random' events, there is basically order and predictability in God's created world (and, of

course, within the created (vast) universe)! It is God (of course) who created all things, and who allows the mind of man to have a 'one-to-one correspondence' with the laws of the universe.

What man perceives (imagines), man (the scientist) discovers in the outer reaches of the universe. There is a 'correspondence' between the 'thoughts' of a searching scientist, and what is actually in the universe! This is an amazing phenomenon, and this 'correspondence' demonstrates that there is a 'common source' for man's inquiring mind (thoughts) and the actual 'presence' in the universe of what man conceives!

The One who makes this mysterious 'correspondence' possible is (of course) the Creator! The Creator made both the 'inquiring mind' and the object in the universe that the inquiring mind is imagining!

GOD IS THE ORIGINATOR OF BOTH THE MIND OF MAN, AND THE OBJECT IN THE SKY THAT MAN'S MIND IS IMAGINING!

It is not 'Science' as a 'methodology' that a Christian rejects, but it is 'scientism' as a god that a Christian strongly rejects. 'Science' as a 'methodology' is a 'gift' that the Creator has given to mankind, from which untold 'good' has come, but when a 'methodology' is turned into an 'object' of worship, such a 'foolish act' is nothing less than 'idolatry' - ascribing 'glory' to the 'gift' rather than ascribing 'glory' to the Giver of all good things!

The Christian will not deny that Science, as a methodology, has achieved so very much, in technology and so much more - during the last few centuries (particularly during this last century). When an astronaut, from the surface of the moon, read the passage from Genesis about God's creation, proper recognition was ascribed to the Creator who made possible the science that put man on the moon! Christians 'glance over their shoulder' to appreciate the work of a multitude of scientists from the past, many of whom were unapologetic followers of Jesus Christ! Many of these gifted scientists discovered and they invented many things in many different 'fields of study'! Many of these scientists often spoke of Christ as the Author and the Source of their knowledge.

Many of them were humble men of God who openly worshiped the Creator of all things, who openly professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

There were scientists who, not only wrote volumes of scientific discoveries, but who also wrote volumes of Christian theology. Based on their thorough knowledge of the Bible, they were better equipped to explore the knowledge of God, as revealed in the works of 'nature'!

They spoke of Jesus Christ as the 'dear Savior', the One who enabled them to research and to discover and to apply their knowledge to the needs of everyday citizens. They saw themselves as 'servants of Almighty God', who were 'called' to bless mankind with their God-imparted knowledge.

These scientists (God-loving men) were on a life-time 'mission' - to glorify the 'living God' whose world they were exploring, and to edify their fellow men through the compassionate application of the knowledge that they gained through their research and discovery.

As some men were 'ministers behind a pulpit', these gifted scientists were 'ministers' of God as they discovered the 'secrets' in the world that God had created. Many of these scientists had both a 'warm heart' of compassion, and a 'tough mind' of inquiry! They sought to live 'balanced lives' looking up in worship, and looking outward in diligent scientific exploration!

These scientists believed in the power of prayer. They believed that the God, who met with them while they prayed, was the same God who would guide them in their outer world of diligent research and discovery.

After months of research that seemed to 'get them nowhere', sometimes a sudden 'breakthrough' would come to them! They knew that the 'Author' of all knowledge (including scientific knowledge) was the One who was pleased to honor 'human effort and research' with 'breakthroughs of understanding'.

When the Creator partners with the creature (scientist), great 'breakthroughs' often happen during the diligent 'search' for knowledge of the 'secrets' of Nature! Countless times, the Creator of Nature has revealed the 'secrets' of Nature, to the humble (prayerful) 'researchers of nature'!

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life - and, obviously, Jesus is the 'way' to discover the truth about this world (and universe), and the discoveries which Christ (the Author of truth) allows scientists to make are meant to bring 'life' to the general population (not death, as seen in the 'discoveries' of atomic energy that are used to kill countless persons - a tragic application of scientific knowledge!).

Will scientific 'breakthroughs' be used to 'bless' humanity, or to 'curse' humanity - to honor God or to advance Satan's agenda?

George Washington Carver (the brilliant 'black' scientist/researcher) brought untold 'blessings' to everyone, particularly to his own 'people' in the South (United States). He was a dedicated Christian man, a humble man of 'faith' who believed that God went with him into his laboratory, daily.

He had unbelievable agricultural 'breakthroughs', time after time, throughout his long career as a scientist. God did not work FOR him, but God, indeed, did work WITH him. Is it any wonder that this divine-human partnership produced agricultural product after agricultural product? It is generally recognized that the American South was 'transformed' agriculturally because of the God - directed work of George Washington Carver!

The best scientist is the scientist who is in partnership with the Creator! The Creator, obviously, knows all about the 'works of His hands' (Nature), so it only makes 'sense' that the person (scientist) who is 'probing' Nature, 'gets in contact' with the 'Originator' of Nature. (If one, for instance, is desirous to find out how a 'Ford Car' works, would he not want to be 'open' to the 'information' that Henry Ford could give? Go to the 'Owner' of the 'property' - the world, and the universe- if you want to learn about its 'inner dynamics'!)

Why not ask the Creator to help you (a scientist) to find the way the 'secrets' are discovered in the 'place' that is 'owned' by the Creator? How foolish (proud and self-reliant) for a scientist to 'go it alone' when the 'Owner' (of nature) is willing and is glad to go with you (the scientist) into the laboratory or into the 'Owner's' mountain sides or prairie lands!

What the 'Baal' was to the ancient world of God's people Israel - I believe that 'Humanism' is to the modern world. Just as the worshipers of 'Baal' challenged the 'sole place' of honor to Jehovah, during the time that the Israelites lived in Canaan, so modern-day 'humanism' seeks to replace the worship of the true and the living God. 'Humanism' can be likened unto an 'Octopus'.

The 'head' of the Octopus is 'Humanism', but there are many different 'legs' to the 'octopus' - that is, there are many different manifestations ('legs') to this 'terrifying/destructive god'. There is no 'god', on the present-day scene, that is more of a threat to Christianity than the god of humanism!

Ultimately, God will destroy this anti-Christian 'god', but until that time comes, Christians must know, both the general nature of this 'god' and also must be aware of the characteristics of the several different 'manifestations' ('legs') of this dominant philosophy (god and world viewpoint)!

All 'humanists', regardless of the 'form' that humanism 'takes', are 'self-centered, self-reliant, proud, anti-God, anti-Christian, worldly-centered' with no belief in a hereafter, self-determining with no belief in an 'objective moral standard'.

Christianity does, indeed, have the 'right' answers (the only adequate responses) to these various 'evil' teachings of the anti-Christ! God loves all persons - including those whose minds are misinformed and whose hearts are heavy with guilt and whose spirits are dead because of the 'horrible grip' which sin has on them. God is not willing that anyone should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

***FROM A LIFE OF SELF-CENTERED PRIDE TO A LIFE OF
CHRIST-CENTERED LIVING!***

Nearly 30 years ago, I had the privilege of leading a couple to Christ, in their home. This intelligent couple (educators in the school district) began to grow 'by leaps and bounds'. The husband was, politically-speaking, a 'conservative', and the wife was just the 'opposite'.

They loved each other, but both were 'strong-willed' in their viewpoints, and the husband wondered why his wife was so 'liberal' in her viewpoints. She might be called a 'modern-day woman'. Both were 'sharp' mentally, and both were articulate in speech.

After they were converted, they became enthusiastic in their 'growth in the Lord'. I, of course, had no desire to impose my 'conservative views' on this dear lady. She treated me with the greatest respect, and she read her Bible and attended church regularly. A very lovely lady!

I knew that some of her liberal views probably would be changed some day. God works in His own time and in His **own** way. One day this delightful, quick-thinking, beautiful lady came into my church office, and there she blurted out to me: "I no longer believe in abortion."

That same lady started a Bible Study for her high school students. She was a counselor at the School, and she used her position to witness to her 'faith'. The class was held, after hours, so no one could complain, but it was conveniently held at a time (on the campus of the school) when students could attend.

This lady was 'popular' with her students. Also, I need to add, her husband (who had a PhD degree) was also a counselor at a 'middle school' and he also started a Bible Class at his school (which was successful).

This lady (a one-time 'modern lady' who advocated abortion), this educator influenced hundreds of students (both high school and college students). She battled breast cancer for about 14 years, and recently she had her 'home going' (heaven).

I have never attended a 'memorial service' that was more 'Christ-centered' in emphasis! All the 'tributes' (by family members- probably 7 tributes) focused on this lady's Christ-like nature and her amazing witness to students, during the last many years!

This 'bright woman' - once a 'liberal humanist' - was transformed by the living Christ, and she became a most effective witness for Christianity (for Christ). There are many persons (even atheists like C.S. Lewis) who are 'justified', 'regenerated', 'transformed', 'renewed in their mind', 'reconciled', 'filled with the Holy Spirit', and 'empowered for Christian service' (maybe empowered even to 'start a Bible Study' on the campus of a public school!)

***EITHER YOU STAND TALL IN SELF-SUFFICIENCY OR YOU
BOW LOW BEFORE CHRIST!***

Jesus said, "I have not come into the world to condemn the world (of sinners), but I have come into the world to save the world (of sinners - even 'humanist sinners')! So, following the example of Jesus, we must hate the sin (of humanism), but we must never hate the sinners (the humanists).

We must love the 'humanists' (while we hate their philosophy). We must love the 'humanists' (even when they hate us, and when they slander us, and when they try to discredit our beliefs, and when they try to undermine our 'Christian projects').

We must pray for those who spitefully use us, and who say all kinds of evil things about us. We know that there is power in prayer. We know that when we return good for evil that God will convict the abusers, and that some of them will feel terribly guilty for the way they have treated us.

Returning 'good for evil', is like 'pouring hot coals of fire' on their head (Romans 12). Even though (in the short run it does not seem to be the 'case'), we know that 'good will overcome evil', and 'love will overcome hate'.

It is hard for the humanists to 'kick their feet against the pricks' - it is hard to live against the will and the ways and the objective moral laws of God. To 'spit into the wind' is not a wise thing to do! To go against the God of the universe is the most 'foolish thing' a human being can do. To strike out against the love of God is the epitome of 'foolishness'!

Man is made for God (not for humanism), and only when we humans rest our hearts and our lives in the 'bosom of God' can we 'find true comfort' - can we find the purpose for which we are made!

Humanism (like any other 'god') will ultimately be destroyed. The time will arrive (in God's timetable) when the whole world will recognize that the God who created the world (with all of its fascination) is the one and only God - the God who must be recognized by all the inhabitants of the world as the only One worthy of worship!

In God's 'appointed time', willingly or unwillingly, every person who has ever existed (past and present) will 'bow their knee' to the living Christ and they will confess with their lips that 'Jesus Is Lord'.

Included in that vast number of persons will be all of the 'humanists of the world' - the very ones who proudly claimed that they could do everything 'on their own' with no need for a 'God'! At that time - a 'terrifying time for them' - they will realize how 'puny and weak' they are, and how 'great and powerful' the 'living Christ' is!

Jesus came the first time as a 'lowly lamb' (to Bethlehem), but Jesus will come the second time as the 'lion of Judah' to judge all persons and all nations! Those who ridiculed Him on earth (as the 'pale man from Galilee'- totally irrelevant in our world), will fall down on their faces to worship Him and to declare Him as the Lord of the earth! Lord of lords, and King of kings! The Judge of every man's heart!

"Do not fear him that can only kill the body, but fear Him who has the power to cast both body and soul in hell!" "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!" The 'fool of all fools' is the man/woman who defies the person and the authority of the 'Son from Heaven' - the Lord Jesus Christ!

One's eternal destiny is determined by the kind of response that is given to the Savior of the world! Acceptance of the Savior means eternal life; rejection of the Savior means eternal death! "All who trust him - God's Son - to save them have eternal life; those who don't believe and obey him shall never see heaven, but the wrath of God remains upon them." (John 3:36 Life Application Bible)

A helpful 'word picture' (analogy) to 'give light' to the kind of 'enemy' that we face, namely, 'humanism', is the 'analogy' of the 'Octopus'. The 'basic characteristic' of humanism is 'Self-centered pride'.

The various 'branches' ('legs') of humanism all have this in 'common' - proud declaration of independence from any 'higher power' (god)! Pride manifests itself in various ways, in the various 'branches' of humanism - whether it is materialism or sensualism or scientism, etc. The 'ugly head' of 'pride' shows itself in all of these 'man-centered', 'God-denying' philosophies.

'Human pride' is the 'integrating force' and the 'driving motivation' in all the 'legs of the Octopus'. Just as the octopus has many 'legs', so humanism has many 'legs' (forces or manifestations). Just as the octopus has formidable power to destroy other animals, so (tragically) the 'octopus of humanism' has power (in its 'legs') to 'wrap itself around its prey to destroy that prey' (unsuspecting and naive human beings who are not 'grounded' in Christian doctrines)!

Both Jesus and the apostle Paul warned everyone to 'guard against false prophets'. The apostle John (in the book of I John) said that there were many evil persons in the world who were 'anti-Christ' in their beliefs and in their behavior. In fact, there are still today many persons who are 'anti-Christ' in their beliefs.

It was 'pride' that changed Lucifer into the Devil. He was cast out of heaven because he became lifted up in his own eyes, because (apparently) he tried to usurp the authority of Almighty God. Pride was what motivated his behavior (plotting), and, because of his prideful behavior, God cast him out of heaven.

It was pride that caused the 'fall' of mankind. Adam and Eve (in presumption and pride) believed that they did not need to obey the command of a loving God.

Pride is the 'hub' of all human misbehavior (sin), and all the individual (particular and specific) sins that a person commits 'originate' in Pride! All 'false religions' that seek to either 'replace' or to 'deny' the 'true religion of Christianity' is motivated by 'self-centered pride'!

Pride keeps sinners from confessing their sins to God. Pride keeps sinners from trusting in Christ's blood alone to atone for their sins. Pride keeps a sinner from surrendering his own will to the perfect will of God alone.

Pride keeps the person who has 'hurt' one or more individuals, from making 'restitution' - i.e., from asking forgiveness for the harm he/she has done to another person or persons. Pride keeps believers from committing their needs to God, in prayer.

The spirit of 'self-sufficiency' is opposite of the 'spirit of humility'. The 'humble person' bows his knee in worship, and he raises his voice in intercessory/petitionary prayer. Such a person knows that, while his own efforts are required for most problems to be solved, he can do nothing worthwhile without the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Humility acknowledges that only as a 'mere human being' (a frail, finite creature of 'clay') is in partnership (communion) with the 'living God', can he live a meaningful and a fruitful and an eternally-significant life!

Jesus said, "Without me, you can do nothing!" (Jesus said what He meant, and He meant what he said)! In His own time and in His own way, our all-just God will 'exalt the humble one, and He will humiliate the proud one!'

'Humanism' (with all of its 'forms' and 'shapes') is likely the 'greatest battle ground' where Christians 'wage their battle for truth'. And, Christians must understand the 'nature of their chief enemy' (with all of its various 'battle fronts'). And that is the 'justification' for the amount of space and for the degree of analysis that I have given to the topic of 'Humanism'.

Christians must 'out-think' and 'out-live' and 'out-work' and 'out-love' those who are engaged in their 'battle for humanism'. I realize that it will not be mere arguments and strong defenses (against humanism) that will finally 'win the battle' against those who are engaged in the promotion of 'false religions'. "It is neither by human might nor by human power, but it is by the Power of the Living God!"

Regardless of how well armed we are with the 'right arguments' (against humanism) - and that is not to be minimized, as demonstrated by my considerable analysis of humanism, in this book - the battle goes beyond an 'intellectual battle'. Only the Holy Spirit can change human nature, only the Holy Spirit can turn a 'humanist' into a committed follower of Christ.

Only the Holy Spirit can renew a human mind, and cause a "modern-day liberal women" to embrace 'life' rather than to advocate 'abortion'. Only the Holy Spirit can produce a 'transforming miracle' - to turn a 'bad' man into a 'good' man! Only the Holy Spirit can convict and enlighten and "turn a soul away from the pit of destruction and final perdition"!

**THE ROAD TO HEAVEN IS PAVED WITH THE 'COBBLESTONES'
OF GREAT HUMILITY!**

God wants us (believers) to have a 'convincing' (logical) answer for everyone who asks us 'honest questions' regarding the nature of Christianity, and regarding the nature of 'humanism', but 'intellectual' preparation (as important as it is) must always be 'blended' with heartfelt 'compassion' for the lost one (for even the anti-god humanist).

As important as it is to be prepared in our mind (i.e., to be prepared to earnestly contend for the truth), the all-important 'partner' in our work of evangelism (seeking the lost ones, including the humanists), is the blessed Holy Spirit! Our Biblical arguments and our loving deeds (as our attempts to 'witness' to the lost ones) are important, but, unless the Spirit 'performs', our efforts are 'totally in vain'!

The attitude that best characterizes a true Christian is the attitude of 'genuine humility'. "I am what I am, by the grace of God." I am a 'wretch' who has been changed by the power of Christ's transforming power. Without Christ, I can do nothing. What I am, or what I ever expect to be, I owe it to the transforming power of Christ. Without Christ, I can do nothing. What I am, or what I ever expect to be, I owe it all to God's mercy.

Any gifts or achievements or abilities or talents that I have, they all originate with the 'God of all gifts and graces'. I am not worthy of the least of His favor. I am the recipient of all the good things that I have, only because I serve a God who is gracious.

I have often, unfortunately, failed my God, and I have often had to plead His forgiveness and receive His cleansing. My hope is built on nothing else except the blood of Christ and what He accomplished on Mount Calvary. I feel so unworthy of God's forgiveness and His love and mercy. I don't deserve the 'least of His favor'. I have 'besetting sins' in my life, and I have had often to ask God to give me the strength to resist certain temptations.

I am thankful for God's enabling grace in my life, and for my progress in the way of faith that I have so far made in my life. I have a wholesome 'self-love', but sometimes I have fallen into a terrible 'self-centered love' - the 'road to disaster'!

I consider 'others better than myself', without jealousy, for I know that I can learn something good from most persons around me. Other believers have been a great blessing to me, and I want to walk humbly before my God, so that others will better 'see Jesus in my life and words'.

Perhaps I will (by God's grace) enter the portals of heaven, as the 'last of the least of all the saints of heaven', but that will be 'fine' with me, for I will have all eternity to 'learn a lot' from all the inhabitants there who all know more than I do!

What a day that will be when my dear Lord I shall see! Then (hopefully) He will take me by the hand, and He will give me a 'brief view' of a little of heaven. And then (hopefully) He, or one of His attendants, will lead me to my 'heavenly home' (that I am sure will be 'just grand').

I am only a 'Christian-in-the-making, I am not yet fully made', so I must remain 'open' to newly-revealed truths from my Lord. Everything that I have, and everything that I am, I have received from the dear Lord, so I have no basis, whatever, to boast in my 'accomplishments'. Christ is the 'Head' of His Body, and I am only one small 'cell' in that Body, and my life is totally dependent upon the 'Head'.

These brief 'phrases' and 'statements' reflect the 'spirit of humility' that ought to be in the heart and on the lips of every true 'child of God'. Outside of our communion (life) with Christ, we have neither life nor righteousness, only sin and death!

The above-expressed 'sentiments' are the 'last sentiments and confessions' that would ever come from the lips of 'humanists'. 'Light' (Christian belief) has no fellowship with 'Darkness' (rejection of Christ). Jesus said that if a person is not for Him, that person is automatically against Him!

As someone said, "There is no razor edge of non-committal upon which a person may balance precariously!" We are either 'For' Christ, or we are 'Against' Christ! Joshua said to the ancient people of Israel: "Choose you this day, whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

It is true, of course, that God is very merciful and He is very patient with the person who is searching for the 'Truth', but who has not yet fully come into the 'Truth' (i.e., he has not yet made a knowledgeable and volitional commitment to Christ as Savior.)

There are many today (sincere souls) who are in the 'valley of decision' - souls who are searching for reality, who are carefully and humbly 'weighing the evidence' for the validity of Christianity. To those 'searching souls', Jesus says, "Come, let us reason together!"

The Holy Spirit gently (but firmly) deals with such souls, bringing enlightenment regarding the reality of sin, bringing conviction regarding the seriousness of sin, bring-

ing convincing evidence regarding the righteousness of Christ and of the adequacy of Christ's saving power. The Spirit strongly 'draws' - without 'forcing' - sinners to the foot of the Cross, offering to sinners the 'gift of repentance and saving faith'!

As just mentioned, Christ is loving and caring with every person (i.e., with every sinner), but Christ's love is not 'tolerant' of indecision by those who have received sufficient 'light' (knowledge of truth) to 'make an intelligent decision' to be 'saved' (converted, as a result of confession of sins and of surrender in faith to the claims of Christ).

For those who are 'gathering information' (sincerely gathering sufficient evidence that the claims of Christianity are 'true'), our kind God waits patiently, until a person (sinner) is ready to take 'the leap of faith'.

Concerning the 'unreached heathen' (i.e., those who have never 'heard' of Jesus Christ, that is, concerning those who have never had 'accurate information' regarding Jesus Christ), they ultimately will be 'accepted' or they will be 'rejected' entrance into heaven, depending upon the 'sincerity' of the kind of response that they made, and to the 'degree' of 'light' (of 'general revelation') that they received!

It is only the 'humble-minded' (those who have a 'broken and a contrite spirit') who will be given 'entrance' into the 'Eternal Kingdom'. The 'proud' and the 'haughty' and the 'self-sufficient' and the 'self-righteous', and the 'better-than-thou' persons, and the 'self-centered' persons - they will not enter the 'Eternal Kingdom'

In Jesus' parable of the scribe and the publican, it was the scribe that 'heaped praises on himself' (self-congratulations), and it was the publican who (with a deep conviction of his sinfulness) 'hung his head in shame' and pounded on his chest, and who said (in repentance), 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'

The Bible says that the self-righteous scribe was condemned by God, but that the humble (repentant) publican 'went away to his home, justified!' Pride keeps a person 'out of the kingdom of God', but humble entreaty to God for mercy, quickly brings God's positive response!

God cannot 'countenance' (tolerate) a 'snobbish attitude' - a 'better-than-thou' attitude. My dear wife has long been an example of a life of true humility. Venita was truly 'satisfied' with a 'job well down', but she, nevertheless, was not 'proud' of her accomplishments. She ascribed none of the 'glory' to herself, but, instead, she ascribed all the 'glory' to the only One who makes 'true' and 'lasting' success possible!

The works of man are temporary - they will all pass away - but the God-established works will abide forever! What are the 'works' that shall abide forever?

They are the 'works' of character-development. As an example of this important truth, think of school principals and school teachers who are greatly used of God in that important process of development of the lives and the characters of young people. But it is only God's eternal laws and principles and standards that, through God's grace, can actually transform a human life, and that can impart those beautiful 'fruits of the Spirit' which make an attractive and winsome personality!

There is great satisfaction when a believer is chosen by God to 'sow the seed of truth' in the life of another human being! But, it should be apparent to any sincere believer, that it is God, and God alone, who can 'germinate' the 'seed' and who can 'harvest' the crop.

God alone can give the 'increase' - He alone can use the sown 'truth' to change the heart and the mind and the spirit of a human being! As His 'partners' in 'reaching out in love', we are honored that God would choose to use us, but only a 'fool' would declare that he can 'germinate' the seed (i.e., give life to the seed), and only a 'fool' would declare that he can 'transform' the life of a sinner!

Only the 'resurrection' power (the same power that raised Christ from the dead) can turn a 'bad' man into a 'good' man! In all the works that Christ calls us to do, we are only the 'humble servants of the living God.' It is not our 'fragile power', but it is the 'mighty power' of the eternal God that can affect changes in the inner life of human beings. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit", saith the Lord.

***AS A HUMBLE JUNIOR PARTNER, YOU FOLLOW YOUR
DIVINE SENIOR PARTNER!***

To be a humble servant of God does not mean, of course, that he is uninvolved, that he is passive, that he is not engaged, and that he is indifferent to the world of needy persons. Even though it is obviously true that God alone can affect transformation and regeneration and reconciliation and justification and redemption and sanctification in the human heart, these facts do not mean that God does not have a very important 'place' and 'function' and 'role' for His children. God may be seen as the 'senior partner', and we (believers) may be seen as the 'junior partners'.

One analogy that may be helpful, in an attempt to understand the relationship between God and God's children, as it relates to the 'work of evangelism', is the comparison between a 'doctor' and a 'doctor's instruments.' The 'instruments' (believ-

ers) are important to the 'doctor' (God), but the 'credit' for the life-changing surgery goes, of course, to the 'doctor' (God)! 'To God be the glory, great things He hath done!'

God hates 'pride' in all of its forms and in all of its manifestations, for 'pride' ends up distorting the 'proper perspective' of life. Pride 'clouds' all of reality! Pride assigns a place for man that belongs alone to God! Pride attempts to place 'puny man' on the 'big throne' that belongs alone to the 'King of kings'!

The one who tries to take the place of God is the one whose harsh punishment is totally deserved. Such an arrogant person tries to do what only God has the power to do! Such a person, who thinks he has divine-type power, is a 'fool among fools'. He has a total distorted view of himself. He thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think.

Tragically, humanists (of many different 'brands') are pride-filled persons, persons who openly (or secretly) declare that they are 'self-made' (independent) persons! Such persons (with no 'clear' awareness) are on a path that ultimately leads to destruction! "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall!" (Book of Proverbs)

The proud humanist forgets that he is merely a finite, frail, fragile creature of clay (whose body is destined for the dust), that he is totally dependent upon his Creator who 'loans' him his every breath, that he is a helpless and hopeless human being who can do nothing without permission from the God who made him!

This so-called 'self-made' humanist needs 'to wake up' and to realize that he is constantly in need of the help which only his Creator can give to him! This humanist fails to know his 'place' in the 'larger scheme of things.' No man is created to do the work of Almighty God!

Instead of realizing that he is created to be a 'servant', this humanist is striving (foolishly) to be a 'master'. A 'master' of his own 'fate' (life), and a 'master' of the world of nature! Instead of 'turning his face towards God' in adoration and in worship, the humanist turns his back towards God, in an act of defiance and stubborn independence!

Every person is meant to do the 'works of God', not the works of his own vain imagining. He is not to pursue his own independent ideas! God has a treasury house of knowledge available and ready to be discovered, but God (the Creator) has designed the world for God and Man to work together (God the Senior Partner, and Man the

Junior Partner). Jesus said that without Him, humans could do nothing! Why then do conceited men (some scientists and others) leave God out of the 'formula'?

Foolish, foolish is the man who refuses to be in partnership with God! Suppose someone tells you that he has full knowledge of the location of a large treasure, and the availability of a certain treasure (a treasure that is more valuable than anyone's imagination). And suppose (for the sake of our analogy) that this knowledgeable person offered to take you to that rich treasure, and suppose he told you that you would be a recipient to a sizeable portion of that treasure - IF, IF, IF you were willing to travel with him - as a partner - to that treasure!

The application of this simple analogy is very obvious! The One who created Nature knows where all of the many different treasures are located. The world of nature (and otherwise) contains more treasures than we can imagine! The Creator knows where they are. He knows the 'keys' that will unlock the various treasures! He wants to work in cooperation with you (the same as God worked in cooperation with George Washington Carver), to unlock the vast amount of treasures in His world! But, you (the scientist) must 'pay the price'! Dependence upon God, listening to the Spirit, prayerful and humble and teachable attitude, diligent study and research, openness to the input from other humble scientists!

Some humanists are trying to 'play the part of God'. Instead of daily relying upon the God of all wisdom for guidance (like George Washington Carver did, in his amazing research), there are humanists (atheists) who foolishly believe that their own unaided minds can uncover all mysteries of Nature, independent upon any concourse with the Creator!

GOD IS THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD AND PERFECT GIFTS!

There is only one Master in this universe, and that 'Master' is certainly not you or me! God laughs in scorn at those who turn their back upon Him, in a spirit of indifference and in independence! The Bible says, "He (human being) is a 'fool' who says there is no God!" (Many dictators in the ancient world had to learn that they were only in the 'passing shadows' of the true King - the Sovereign of the Universe)! The proud king of Babylon was cast from his throne, because of his arrogant boasts, and he 'ate grass in the fields' for seven years!

Believers are to guard against becoming 'lifted up in their own eyes'. Any accomplishments which they receive, they are to pass the honor on to God, for God alone is the One who gives us (humans) all things to enjoy, God alone is the 'Source' of all 'good things'. In God alone, 'we live and move and have our very being'. "What doth

the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before thy God?"

Growth in holiness is always growth in humility. The closer you get to a magnificent (tall) mountain, the smaller you feel. The closer you draw nigh unto God, the smaller you feel, in comparison to Almighty God! A humble attitude (i.e., a humble feeling) is the result of seeing God for who He is (all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving). Read the many passages of Scriptures that describe the greatness of Almighty God (like Isaiah 40), and you will find yourself prostrate before that Almighty God!

Reflect for even a little while on the 'vastness' of God's Universe, and you will feel like singing praises to the God of 'vastness', and, at the same time, you will feel like singing other praises to the God who loves 'tininess' (who loves a 'frail, finite, dying creature of clay' - you and every other 'tiny' person!).

In our lives, there is no place for boasting or for self-sufficiency, but there is, nevertheless, an important 'place' for God-honoring persons to have 'confidence'! 'Confidence' that we (as believers) have an important 'place' in God's Kingdom Life!

We are not the 'doctor', but we are the 'doctor's instruments'. That is important! Even a doctor's 'instruments' are important and 'required' for certain surgeries - and, therefore, 'mere instruments' are endowed with 'confidence'!

God usually, not always, works bilaterally (in cooperation with humans), rather than unilaterally (independent of man's 'input' and 'instrumentality'). Someone said (what sounds to be irreverent) that 'without man, God is helpless to get His work done!' Almost everything (not absolutely) that is accomplished in our world, is accomplished through the cooperation of God and Man working together!

This commonly-acknowledged reality should invoke deep humility in the heart of the 'junior partner' (human beings), rather than pride and arrogance! Jesus said that without Him we (humans) could do nothing! But (because of God's choice to work through humans to fulfill a certain 'divine agenda'), it is apparently true (without sounding irreverent) that 'without man's cooperation', God (a certain way) is 'helpless' (to get His divine will accomplished)!

Should not the fact that Almighty God has chosen (in His 'divine order') to get (most) of His divine work done on earth - through the cooperation of human beings (working in conjunction with God's Himself - I say, should not this amazing reality cause every one of God's 'junior partners in ministry' to be profoundly humble?

Because God is all-powerful, we know that He could have chosen to do everything 'on His own' without any involvement from human beings, in carrying out His holy will. In other words, God could have been 'unilateral' in His fulfillment of His will (declaring His total independence of man and of man's contributions of talents and abilities and capacities and 'spiritual gifting').

Even though sometimes God does, indeed, do certain things 'on His own' with no con-course or communication or cooperation with human beings, it appears from a study of Scripture and from 'common observation of life', that God usually 'partners' with human beings to advance the cause of His 'kingdom work'.

For instance, if God wants some students to learn about His world, He finds a knowledgeable teacher to teach those young students. God works through the teacher (God's junior partner), and God uses the mind and the mouth and the movements (actions) of the teacher to impart important truths to the students!

A bilateral relationship (God and Man working together)! What a privilege for a human being (a teacher), to be in partnership with the God of the Universe - and a good reason for humility in the life (mind and attitude and actions) of the teacher! Genuine confidence, but no self-centered pride!

No greater 'honor' could God give to 'fallen' human beings than the 'honor' of 'assigning tasks' to His creatures. God gave 'special gifting' (and still gives that gifting in large measure) to His children, to enable them to 'do the work of the Master' - with significant results for time and for eternity! The amazement of a 'divine-human partnership'!

Paul wrote, "What do you have (like success or like the ability to 'solve problems') that you did not receive? If then you received these things, why do you boast as if you did not receive them? In other words, we are the recipients of all good things like intellect, talents, physical strength, and health. Because God is the 'Source' of all good things, why should we boast as if we are the source (or achievers) of all good things?"

When last did any human (farmer) produce a 'wheat crop'? A farmer must, of course, do 'his part' - plant, water, cultivate, fertilize - but a 'farmer' would be a 'silly fool' to believe that he has the power to 'germinate' the seed (i.e., to produce 'life' within the seed). The germination of the seed and the growth of the crop until 'harvest time' - those miracles belong alone to the Creator of all things! The farmer, of course, takes great 'satisfaction' for a "good harvest". It is legitimate for the farmer to take great satisfaction in the hard work that he did, but he knows that God alone can give

life to the seed, and growth to the crop (with human input, of course). God produces the harvest!

He knows that he (as 'junior partner') and the Creator (as 'senior partner') make a 'good pair', and that the harvest would not have taken place without the cooperation of both a human (himself, as the farmer) and the Lord of Life!

The farmer (the thoughtful farmer) is full of 'satisfaction', but he is not full of 'pride' - for He knows that only God can give life to the seed, that only God can produce a full-grown crop, ready for harvest!

Great satisfaction is expected (and is pleasing, certainly, to the Creator), but to take 'credit' for what only the Creator can do, would be 'blasphemy'! Everyone should know (unless he is a 'silly fool' - 'a humanist/atheist') that the 'final outcome' of any agricultural endeavor is in the hands of the Creator'!

GOD RESISTS THE PROUD BUT HE GIVES GRACE UNTO THE HUMBLE!

We often tell our children (when they accomplish a significant 'feat'), "I am so proud of you!" Perhaps we should say, "I am so satisfied with your worthy accomplishment. I know you worked hard to reach your goal. I thank our God that He has given you such wonderful 'talents' and such determination to pursue your goals. I am thankful that you plan to use your talents and your spiritual gifting to glorify your Creator, and to benefit the persons around you who need your positive influence and the results from your efforts. I know that God (the 'senior partner' in your life) is using you.

"Throughout the remainder of your long life, please ask God how He wants to use you as His 'junior partner', to bring His love to a hurting world. Right now, you know how very pleased I am with your compassionate ways, and I am committing you anew to our loving Heavenly Father. I trust that you will always 'do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly before your God'. You are God's child, before you became my child, but I want to remind you that I love you with all my heart." Love, your thankful Dad!

To the 'degree' that we 'walk humbly before our God', to that same 'degree' will we 'walk in love with our fellow men"! Humble before our God, we will be 'open' before our peers and associates and family members. To the extent that we are 'sensitive' to God's will, to that same extent will we be 'sensitive' to the needs of those around us!

We will be 'open-minded' rather than 'close-minded', we will be 'gentle' rather than 'harsh', we will be forgiving rather than resentful, we will listen more to others rather than talk so much about ourselves, we will be empathetic in our heart rather

than shallow in our heart, we will desire to understand others rather than desire to be understood by others, we will trust ourselves to divine intervention rather than to 'making things happen by our own wits'!

When we become 'high and mighty' in our own eyes, we are courting disaster! "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." A smug attitude of 'superiority', God looks upon with scorn! It is only a matter of time until the proud man, on the top of his tower, will be in the 'muddy ditch'! The 'ditch of shame'!

God cannot stand the 'proud look' and the self-sufficient attitude of the so-called self-made person (whether it is a business man, or a scientist, or an educator or a government official, etc.). Whether we are 'high' or 'low' on the economic scale, we must learn to 'bow the knee' and we must learn to confess with the lips that 'Jesus Is Lord'!

The Bible teaches that God looks favorably upon the humble person! God does not call us (believers) to 'humiliation' (groveling in the dust of shame). He calls us to 'humility'.

When we (believers) 'bow low at the feet of Jesus', then we have the 'confidence' to 'stand tall' before everyone and everything in our world. Humiliation destroys our ability to 'stand before the world' - to love people and to engage in creative projects.

Humiliation brings 'a sense of shame' and self-loathing, whereas humility brings a sense of gratitude to God and to others, and inspires confidence in God and in our own self! Humility is realizing who we personally are, in light of who God eternally is!

We see our self as unworthy of God's favor, but we, nevertheless, see our self as an object of God's special love! Therefore, we experience confidence in our self, and we enjoy a sense of wholesome self-worth and God-given self-importance! If God loves us wholeheartedly, then we must have a 'true worth'! We can 'humbly' feel 'good about our self' (with no sense of carnal pride)!

When 'self-consciousness' (a type of self-centeredness) possesses us, we, obviously, have no desire and no power to 'reach out to other persons' who need us. God has called us to 'serve', and the prerequisite for serving others (for thinking about others in true service to them), is a humility that honors God and that brings 'death' to self-centeredness and self-absorption.

The man who is 'looking up in worship' (a spirit of humility), is the same person who desires to 'look outward' to his fellow men. He who loves God truly (which is the

meaning of humility), is he who loves the ones whom God loves (the people of God's creation). Humility bows the knee to the Father, and humility (as a logical carry through) serves the 'children of God' (those who now are saved, and those whom God wants to be saved)!

Eventually (in God's way and in His timing), the humble man will be 'exalted' and 'honored' and 'rewarded' for his life of humble (self-forgetful) service to God and to his fellow men. The apostle Peter wrote: "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you in due time." That is one amazing promise!

THE FERTILE MINDS OF HUMBLE, GOD-CENTERED SCIENTISTS AND RESEARCHERS!

Among the many godly men, whom it was my privilege to pastor, was one man who prayed a special (simple) prayer. When he prayed, he used the 'same words' to make a request to his Heavenly Father. I heard him many times pray: "O Lord, keep us humble, prayerful, and obedient!" What this man prayed, he certainly lived! He was humble in his 'walk with God', and he was loving in his contact with his fellow men. He carried mail (in the mountains for probably 30 years), and those mountain residents really loved him.

He manifested humility in his words and in his demeanor! It was a joy for me to share words of tribute to this man, at his funeral service! He lived what he so often prayed - a life of humility!

I did not know him personally, but I have long thought of a certain wealthy business man - a man who was known for his brilliant mind and for his generous heart. He was a genius, and that God-given brilliant (engineering) mind produced many 'large earth moving machines'. He believed that God was certainly his 'senior partner' - the One who inspired remarkable 'ideas' in his mind. He became very wealthy, through his unique inventions. He had a keen interest in world missions, so he gave away large amounts of money.

He even founded a college (to train engineers, etc.), and that Christian College became well-known. This Christian engineer/inventor gave and gave and gave to the 'Lord's Work'. In fact, his acts of generosity became so overflowing that he ended up giving away 90% of his profits to charitable organizations, and he himself retained 10% of his profits for himself! Here is a 'prime example' of a 'scientific genius' (an engineer of the highest rank), who was also a man who (according to scriptural command) 'walked humbly before his God.'

Contrary to what some 'humanists' think, namely, that Christians are 'outdated and ignorant and irrelevant', humble 'Christians' can be 'smart', and 'innovative', and 'scientifically informed', and 'creative' (inventors), and 'confident' (without being 'vain' and 'proud')!

It is possible for one to be an effective problem-solver, and, at the same time, to be a very humble servant of the Living God. In fact, those who walk most closely with God, should, as a result of that creature/creator relationship, be able to better understand the 'dynamics' of this world that God has created! Therefore, he should be able to 'crack the hard nuts' to see what is 'inside those nuts'!

Some of the greatest 'problem-solvers' throughout history (especially scientists) have been devout followers of Christ, men and women who studied the Bible and who prayed regularly. Their study of God's Word made them better equipped to observe God's Nature around them!

The words written in God's Book helped them better to discern (understand) the words that were written on the 'pages of Nature'! A humble and a receptive mind - open to God's revealed truth - prepares men of science to uncover the 'mysteries of creation'.

The greatest scientists are the ones who are known for their humility - for their reverence for the Creator, for their sensitivity to the inner 'voice' of God's Spirit!

Another great problem-solver, a man who was known not only as a great scientist but also as a devout follower of Christ, was a man who worked most of his lifetime among the outcasts of society - namely lepers! He was a 'research doctor', an unusual surgeon who brought untold relief to many lepers. He created innovative methods to treat these leprosy patients (both in this country and in India).

This Christian doctor was ingenious in finding ways to perform delicate (complicated) surgeries which greatly eased the pain of many unfortunate leprosy patients. He solved multiple 'problems' (medically-speaking) during his lifetime of compassionate 'outreach to suffering persons' - persons who had been 'forgotten' by society!

What he said about his own 'place' in the 'Body of Christ' (Church), is most revealing - a revelation of his genuine humility! What this seasoned surgeon - this highly respected surgeon - said about himself is truly amazing: "I am only one 'cell' in the Body of Christ!" Not a highly-visible 'organ' in the Body of Christ, just 'one cell'! Those are words that manifest a profound 'humility'! Coming from the lips of a high-

ly-successful surgeon, from a well-known (brilliant) doctor who gave decades of his life to caring for many outcasts!

He could have made a 'fortune' (materially-speaking) if he had chosen to practice medicine in a comfortable medical clinic in America. "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these (given medical attention to needy persons), you have done it unto me!" That is what Jesus Himself said!

Great will be the reward for this 'man of God' - this man (surgeon) who 'walked humbly before his God' all the days of his life! Humility, as the 'trademark' of this man who used his hands to bring relief from pain, a compassionate man who gave release to many persons, from a crippling disease!

An engineer/inventor walked in humility - and, after a very fruitful life of service, God finally 'called him Home'. A skilled surgeon walked in humility, and, after a very fruitful life of service, God finally 'called him Home'. A scientist, who solved agricultural problems, also had a very fruitful life of service, and God finally 'called him Home'!

The latter person (scientist) was George Washington Carver - one of the most humble men of God that can be found anywhere, in any time. The story of his life is a story filled with 'God-inspired' agricultural discoveries. He was a 'scientist' among 'scientists' - the highest caliber that can be 'found' in the 'catalog of great scientists'!

George Washington Carver believed that, as he was researching various ways to use the little peanut, God was guiding him, step by step! Agriculturally-speaking, it is likely that Dr. Carver did more to revolutionize the economy of the South, than anyone else! He was a God-inspired man who saw possibilities in various crops, and those 'hidden secrets' became 'open realities' because Dr. Carver surrendered his brilliant mind to the Divine Mind!

George Washington Carver worked in close partnership with the Creator of life. He believed that the Creator 'whispered into his black ears' some of the 'secrets' of the mysteries of Nature! There was a 'one-to-one correspondence' between what was in his mind and what was actually present in Nature.

The same ideas that he imagined in his brilliant mind, were objectively 'found' in the aspects of Nature that he was examining! God was the 'Source' of the ideas of Carver's mind, and God also was the 'Source' of the actual 'realities' that Carver's mind discovered! A one-to-one correspondence between Carver's 'imagining mind' and what was actually 'found' in Nature!

The God who created the human being is the same God who created 'outer nature'! This makes the 'discipline' of Science possible. Of course, this is an 'assumption' that makes possible the practice of scientific exploration and discovery. The God of Creation is evidently and obviously behind all 'scientific endeavors'!

Because God created the orderly, predictable world (nature), and because God is the Source of the 'one-to-one-correspondence' between the ideas of man's mind and the objective realities in nature - because of these well-known 'assumptions' about the 'world of nature', it is possible for observers and 'inquirers' of nature, to make discoveries in the 'outer' physical world - that is, to uncover the 'secrets' of Nature.

Science is not isolated (or in direct opposition to) Christian Theology, but, rather, Science and the Christian Religion are 'partners in search of God's wonderful truths'! They are not 'contradictory' to each other, but, rather, they are 'complementary' to each other!

The 'discipline of science' was 'born' out of Christian premises (Biblical teachings). Science is indebted to Christian theology (to the Biblical teachings and principles).

The Bible, obviously, is not a 'science textbook'. It was written, not to explain in any detail the complexities of man's history, from the original creation until the ending of human existence. The Bible is concerned, rather, with 'salvation history' - the fall of man, and the restoration of man, and finally the state of man's perfection before the throne of God in Heaven.

A complex history, centered in the death and the resurrection of Christ, and in Christ's ascension to heaven to take His place at the right hand of the throne of His Heavenly Father (where he makes intercession for weak and fallible human beings). Through the multiple ministries of the Holy Spirit, it is God's wish to see all persons (sinners) repent and be 'saved' and to enter heaven someday!

As interesting and as important for humans to discover (as much as possible) the 'history of the world' and the 'history of the complexities of Nature', what is all-important is for humans (sinners) to understand the unfolding purposes of the 'history of man's salvation' (the meaning of God, Man, Sin, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, Future Destiny)!

Many of the greatest minds - the greatest educators, the greatest business men, the greatest engineers, the greatest musicians, the greatest artists, and the greatest writers - all of these have been followers of Christ.

The creative minds of these various persons (in many different 'fields' of endeavors) are open and are receptive to the 'movement' of the mighty Holy Spirit! They see themselves as 'junior partners', working closely and obediently with the 'senior partner' - the Spirit of Enlightenment!

THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEWPOINT!

Those persons who are most dependent upon God (i.e., those who are dependent upon God's wisdom and power), are the very ones whose own mental powers are most awakened!

When God, the all-knowing God, 'couples up' with the open-minded and the receptive person (the humble believer), there is no 'limit' to what can be accomplished, in terms of finding solutions to problems, solutions that will benefit mankind! God is the 'author of all truth', and God is ready to communicate His vast truth ('treasures of knowledge') to any open-minded and humble-spirited person!

The Bible says that it is 'in God that we live, and that we move, and it is through Him that we have our total being.' Every breath we breathe, every thought we think, every image we see, every heart beat we feel, every step we take, every aroma we smell, every sound we hear, every flavor we taste, every handshake we give, every emotion we experience - all of the properties of our human 'self are endowments (gifts) from the 'hand' of our loving Creator!

Why then should any human begin to feel that he is self-sufficient, that he is self-made, and that he is independent of the presence and the control of the Lord of Life? We, as humans, are totally dependent upon God for the air we breathe and for the heartbeat that keeps us alive!

If God withheld the air from us for only a few seconds, we would be dead! The one who thinks he can 'make it on his own', who thinks that there is an 'explanation' for the existence of humans, independent of a 'higher power', is the one whom God calls a 'fool'! "The fool hath said in his heart that there is no God."

The humanist (atheist), as well as the Christian, enjoys the benefits of physical existence, but the humanist tragically (foolishly) ascribes no praise to his Creator for his existence! He lives as if there was no God and the life that he lives is on a 'low plain'. The 'broad road' that he is traveling ultimately leads to 'destruction'!

When one 'boils down' all the 'ingredients' of society, one finds that there are only 'two types' of persons in our nation (even in the world). There are people who believe in a 'closed universe', and there are people who believe in an 'open universe'.

Those who believe in a 'closed universe' (as the name implies) believe that there is no force, no influence in the universe that 'plays' any part in the 'affairs of men'. This world is 'self-contained', 'on its own', independent from any one or from anything outside of the world. Many who hold this position (the position of humanism, with its various 'branches') outrightly deny the existence of a 'God' (and especially do they deny the "Christian God").

There are some humanists who do not want to identify themselves with so-called "blatant atheism" (i.e., with 'hard core' atheists), but they, nevertheless, do not identify themselves with "theism" (belief in a 'real God'). They can be called 'practical atheists', for they live their lives as if there were no God, and they do not call upon God for divine intervention.

Humanists never read the Bible, and the practice of prayer is 'foreign' to them (except when they hear national leaders talk about prayer during a national crisis). If there is a "God" somewhere, He is indifferent to what happens in this "war torn" world! If "God" is (like the Christians declare) 'all-powerful', then why does He not use His power to 'solve' the world's problems? If He is (as the Christians declare) 'all-loving', then why doesn't He 'wrap His arms around a crying world' and comfort the grief-stricken ones that are found everywhere? Such are some questions that humanists pose to Christians!

Some humanists continue to question: If 'God' is near to humans - not aloof (as the Christians declare), then why does He not 'talk' to us very lonely human beings? We humans are alone, 'whistling in the dark', lost and weary and disillusioned and in despair, so why doesn't the 'Christian God' come to us in our deep loneliness? Is the "Christian God" aloof and unconcerned in the human race, or is He 'closer than we think', actually available to us 'puny and fearful human beings'?

***THE 'WAY OF RELATIVISM' IS THE WAY OF DISHARMONY,
DESTRUCTION, DEATH!***

Those persons, who believe in the 'closed' view of reality, are the same persons who deny the existence of 'objective reality'. If they don't believe in the existence of God, obviously they do not believe that there is any 'solid source' in the universe from which 'objective standards' (laws) issue forth to the conscience of human beings!

They certainly do not believe in the 'Ten Commandments' (either the source or the authority of these Laws)! Logically, then, humanists formulate their own 'standards', and their own 'laws'. For the sake of preserving 'order' and 'continuity' in society, humanists devise those standards that seem 'right' to them!

Here is the motto of the 'humanists' - "Everyone does what is right in his own eyes!" No absolute, God-given, objective standards by which one can control and evaluate his own behavior and his own conduct! Man-centered totally, not God-centered at all! Ignoring God, and 'doing your own thing'!

Whatever seems 'right' for you is right for you, and no one can object (unless, of course, you are attempting to 'kill' someone)! Short of committing a 'violent act', you can do whatever 'you please', and no one dare 'judge you' for your own decisions! If it seems 'right' to you to kill the 'baby' in your womb, then that is alright, 'proper'. satisfaction!

THE RESULT OF ALL OF THIS SUBJECTIVE SELF-CENTERED WAY OF LIFE?

Eventual chaos and societal breakdown! Remember, it 'seemed right' to Hitler to kill millions of Jews (because such persons obstructed his national agenda and opposed his personal philosophy - 'survival of the fittest')! So, as a humanist (atheist) dictator, he carried out his subjectively-developed philosophy! In the 'name of relativism' he carried out a wholesale slaughter of millions of Jews and millions of other 'misfits', perhaps about 9 million persons!

That is the extreme example of the 'consequences' of a relativistic (humanistic) philosophy of life! If everyone does that which is 'right' in his own eyes (Biblical book of Judges), then blatant selfishness (self-interest) has the 'upper hand'!

You, of course, will unlikely kill anyone (if you are a relativist/humanist), but your selfish actions (plots) towards other persons will surely bring great 'harm' and 'hurt' and probable 'devastation' to those who are the object of your hate! You likely will hurt those who happen to 'stand in the way' of your accomplishing your selfish goals! When you (as a humanist) put your own interests ahead of the interests of others, you can be sure that other persons (around you) will be the 'brunt' of your cruel behavior!

Humanists (relativists) have their own 'set of rules', and, of course, their 'rules' are not 'grounded' in the nature of God, not grounded in the revelation of God (in the Bi-

ble). Their so-called 'rules' can (conveniently) change, according to their own changing opinions and perspectives and circumstances!

Suffice it to say that, because there are no 'objective' (God-established) standards, by which the behavior of mankind is to be 'regulated', our relativistic society does that which is right in its own eyes (according to its own 'privatized judgments'). This way of thinking (relativism) leads to chaos in the affairs of society!

Here is a clear application of this 'principle of relativism': Since it 'seems right' to many women (based on 'selfish convenience', and based on the so-called 'health' of the woman), 'relativists' promote the 'legalized abortion' (based upon the Supreme Court Ruling of 1973). This Supreme Court Ruling allows a 'consenting doctor' and a 'consenting woman' to abort her unborn baby!

Humanism (and relativism is integral to humanism) has been responsible for the murder (abortion) of countless babies, and aborting women and consenting abortionist doctors' get by with this mass murder of human life' (without them being indicted and without them going to prison), simply because abortion has been legalized by the highest court in our land! (At the date of this writing, there have been approximately 55 million babies aborted in the United States, since 1973)! Never mind that one of the Ten Commandments strictly forbids 'killing'!

Relativists (including the majority of the Supreme Court Justices) 'turn their back' on God and on His standards and requirements for the 'ordering of human life' and 'social justice'! The so-called 'personal rights of women' (totally based on selfish interests), and the so-called consideration of 'women's health' (based on 'subjective ideas' as to what constitutes 'women's health') - these two so-called ideas of 'women's rights' truncate (override and replace) the 'Laws of God' (Ten Commandments) which have guided mankind for the last 4000 years! "Forget what God commands, I will do only what is convenient for me, what fits into my agenda and my lifestyle, whatever I personally desire." Tragedy of tragedies, all because of humanist thinking!

The proud, liberal-minded woman has her own rationalizations, as her basis for destroying the precious life within her: "It is my body, and I have total 'control', jurisdiction, over my own body. No one can tell me what to do! Everyone has a right to do that which seems right to her. I am not about to listen to the 'voice' of some 'far distant' and 'totally irrelevant' God who doesn't understand the 'ways' of the 'modern' world.

"And who knows, there may be no 'real God' anyway, and, if there is a 'God', surely He would understand my own 'difficult set of circumstances'. If there is a 'God' who is displeased with my choice to abort, He certainly will forgive me, for I heard that 'it is His business always to forgive'.

"When all is said and done, I think that most doctors believe that what is 'inside' of me, is not really a baby, but simply 'unwanted tissue' that can be easily removed with no repercussions. So, that is all that needs to be 'discussed' about the 'procedure' that I am planning to have! Forget the 'so-called rules' of those judgmental 'Christians'! I am going to do what seems right to me, what 'feels' right to me!"

HUMANISM - THE WAY OF DISILLUSIONMENT AND DESPAIR AND FINALLY DEATH!

No one but God knows how many 'humanists' (of many different 'varieties') are on the 'very verge' of becoming Christians. Disillusionment has come to many materialists and sensualists and worshipers of science (scientism), and other branches of 'humanism'.

Many of these persons (humanists) have tasted the 'fruit of the world', and they have found out that the 'fruit of humanism' is either 'rotten' or it is very 'bitter'. To change the analogy, many of the one-time enthusiastic 'humanists' have traveled their 'worldly road', and they have found that the wayside scenes on their journey are no longer 'enticing with worldly beauty', but, instead, the scenes have turned to a 'desert-like barrenness'.

The Bible exhorts you to remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the time comes when you shall say that you no longer have any 'pleasure' in the 'ways of sin'. The 'pleasures of sin' turn to the 'miseries of sin'! "The way of the transgressor is, indeed, hard!"

Eventually, the humanist realizes that he has been 'deceived' by the allurements of sin. He wakes up to the reality that he is traveling on a 'dead-end road' - a road that ultimately leads to destruction!

Every 'road' except the 'road of Christ' is a 'dead-end road'. The 'road of Christ' is an 'open-ended road' that brings fulfillment to the traveler (believer) on this planet, and which leads the earthly traveler (believer) to the 'Gate' and through the 'Gate' of Heaven - where the traveler is no longer a traveler, but a citizen of the eternal City of God!

In contrast with those who believe in the 'closed view' of the universe, are those who believe in the 'open view' of the universe! These latter persons strongly hold the conviction that our world is the result of God's creative genius, and that God, from the moment He created humans, loved those humans deeply.

The 'open view' folks believe that, although humans are 'fallen creatures' (because of man's disobedience to the Creator), God (throughout history) actively loved His 'fallen race of creatures'!

The 'open view' folks believe that the coming to earth of God's perfect Son was the culminating 'redemptive move' on the part of God! 'Open view' folks believe that the series of divine initiatives throughout history was culminated in the greatest of all initiatives - namely, the Incarnation!

The 'open view' folks believe that, after the death and the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus, God continued to take the initiative when He sent His own blessed Holy Spirit to 'carry out the work of redemption' (salvation) among all persons!

The 'open view' people believe that they serve a God who was 'very active' from the very beginning of human history - showing His love to the 'lost race of humans', providing a plan for human restoration from the ravages of sin!

Those who believe in the 'open view' of reality, are those who believe that God is the 'God who Acts' in human history. God 'acted' in countless ways in the Old Testament, for instance, when He acted to deliver His people out of Egyptian bondage, and when he miraculously brought them through the Red Sea! This was the greatest recorded act of God's intervention, in the Old Testament.

As mentioned above, the greatest act that is recorded in the New Testament was the coming of God to this earth (Incarnation). Jesus' sinless life, His sacrificial (agonizing) death, His glorious resurrection, His amazing ascension - the greatest 'acts' of God's initiative - were all to rescue a lost race of humans!

"Greater love hath no man than this that a man (Jesus) lay down His life for His friends!" And who were Jesus' friends? Lost and undone and condemned and hell-bound and wretched sinners! The 'just One' gave His life for the 'unjust ones' (a race of rebels) - to rescue them from certain destruction!

***THOSE WITH THE 'CLOSED VIEW' OF REALITY HAVE A
RESTRICTED VIEW OF LIFE!***

The above (briefly-stated) affirmations are the 'affirmations' that the 'children of God' (Christians) 'ground their lives on'! Those who believe in a 'closed view' of the universe often do not even believe in the 'existence' of a 'God' (a 'higher power'). If a humanist does believe in the possibility of some kind of 'higher power', they do not believe that that 'higher power' has any interest or any involvement in 'human affairs' (problems)!

Humanists definitely do not accept a concept of a 'God', as 'Christians' describe and define Him! Humanists (skeptics and atheists) think it is incredible (unthinkable) that a 'higher power' (as believed by Christians) could possibly be 'concerned with the affairs' of this 'insignificant' planet. They find it impossible to believe the 'basic assertions' of Christians regarding their strong convictions (beliefs) - as stated in the words of the proceeding paragraphs!

There are those persons (including some scientists) who declare (in a condescending mood) that Christians are the ones who are living 'by faith' and not 'by scientific fact'. But (to counter the attacks of humanists) it must be stated that, while Christians embrace the 'scientific method', Christians, nevertheless, declare that God communicates through 'Revelation' (by means of God-called prophets, etc.), as well as through the 'works of Nature'.

It is not only through the mechanism of 'scientific exploration' that knowledge is gained, but it is also through the direct revelation of truth through the Holy Bible that knowledge is gained. As mentioned before, the God-oriented scientist (i.e., the scientist who believes in the 'open view' of reality, rather than in the 'closed view' of reality) is the scientist who 'reads' about God, both in Nature and in the Bible.

The two are not contradictory, but they are complementary. The 'God-directed' scientist (of the open-view) goes first to the primary source of knowledge (the Bible), and then he goes to the secondary source of knowledge which is the laboratory and the open fields of research (equipped with the knowledge of God's Word)!

The 'closed view' scientist thinks he has the 'final word' in terms of 'knowledge of Nature and knowledge of the universe'! Such an attitude is the 'epitome' of pride and self-sufficiency! In contrast to the proper attitude of 'humility, receptivity, teachable, and reverence', the proud scientist believes that he, and he alone (with his scientific partners,) has 'access' to the 'secrets' of Nature. Such arrogance, such self-deception, such defiance of the Creator of all things!

The reality is that much of so-called 'knowledge' which scientists have declared as the 'final word' on a particular subject, has turned out to be 'false', erroneous, com-

pletely 'misleading' and 'off target'! Scientists who believed they had the 'final word' (as a result of their scientific experimentation and observation and testing) have had to 'back down' and to 'confess' that their 'findings' were 'false findings'!

What is it 'going to take' for these self-sufficient (atheistically-oriented) humanists – scientists - to humble themselves before the Creator of the Universe (who is the Source of all scientific knowledge)? How will God 'bring them down to size', to make them aware that God 'holds the world in His hands', that God is the 'beginning and the end' of all knowledge, that in God alone are found all the 'treasures of knowledge and wisdom and understanding and discernment and truth'!

These proud (atheistic) scientists - these scientists who reject the 'open view' of the universe - must learn, sooner or later, that we humans 'live and move and have our being in God alone', and that, independent of this 'revealed God', we humans 'can do nothing' (that is, we cannot explore and discover the 'outer world of Nature').

Whatever a scientist 'finds' in Nature, he 'finds' because of the 'permission' of the Creator (and that 'goes' for atheistic scientists also)! All scientists must remember one simple fact: The hills and the forests and the mountains and the oceans, where scientists carry out their explorations and observations and testing - those places are 'God's Real Estate'!

Scientists are dealing with God's Property - for the whole world was created by the Lord God, and the whole world is 'still owned' by the same One who created it! The Creator has not 'sold' this property.

Satan thinks he owns the world, but Satan is the 'biggest thief' in the entire universe! God will renew (redeem) His world (this present world) someday, but until that time comes, the Creator cherishes this present world (in spite of the fact that this world suffered a 'type' of damage, as a consequence of man's historic 'Fall')

Because we humans, including all scientists, are 'present tenants' of God's Property, the outer world – Nature - we must 'take care' of our 'rental' (our so-called world). It is a prime piece of 'Property' (Nature), and, therefore, every scientist who traverses God's Property, who probes God's Property, who explores God's Property, who conducts tests in God's Property, I say, every scientist better recognize on whose Property his feet walk!

The scientist who truly has his 'eyes open' and who truly has his 'heart' conditioned (in love) for the 'Land Owner' (the Creator), will go into his science laboratory relaxed

but also with a spirit of profound reverence and worship! He will always remember that this 'world' belongs to His Heavenly Father.

He will always remember that he (a well-trained and intellectually-astute scientist) is a 'junior partner' with the 'Senior Partner', and that the 'Senior Partner' ('Land Owner' of the World) knows everything there is to be known about His 'Vast Property'.

As a God-oriented scientist (one who believes in the expansive 'open view' of reality), he will use all the 'powers of his being' - limited as they are - in his 'search for truth', but he will constantly remind himself that 'without the Creator/God he can do nothing.'

As he humbly works in 'conjunction' and in 'cooperation' with the 'Senior Partner' (the Land Owner of the World), he believes (if the Property Owner chooses) that he will 'uncover' many treasures in this beautiful world.

He may not have the kind of 'scientific success' that the great (godly) George Washington Carver had, but, nevertheless, (with no jealousy regarding the success of that great scientist), he believes that he, too, can find meaningful 'scientific favor' from the 'Land Owner' (the Creator of the World).

He - the godly scientist - knows that the Creator is very pleased to 'unlock the treasures of Nature', so such an (open-view) scientist may 'walk' with the Land Owner through His 'fields and meadows', and he may 'talk' with the Land Owner (and he may ask Him many questions regarding the 'mysteries' and the 'hidden treasures' that are 'buried' on His land).

Isn't that what Science is all about - working in cooperation with the Land Owner - to receive guidance from the Land Owner? All the "scientific explorations" in the world will not be profitable unless the Land Owner is willing to lead one (scientist) to the 'treasures in Nature'! (Wasn't that the 'genius' of the work of George Washington Carver - that is, the Creator (of the peanut) working in conjunction with an open-minded scientist)?

THE 'OPEN-ENDED' VIEW OF REALITY AND THE 'CLOSED-ENDED' VIEW OF REALITY

Those who 'pride' themselves in being the most 'open-minded' and the most 'scientifically - minded' persons (scientists) - all because they embrace the 'closed

view" of reality - these persons have actually limited themselves from the 'availability' of all the 'knowledge' that is 'out there in the universe'.

The 'closed view' folks (including atheistic scientists) are to be 'pitied', for they have closed themselves off from a 'rich treasury of knowledge'! Those persons of the 'closed view' have a 'view' of reality that is 'truncated', 'restricted', 'limited', 'narrow', 'static', 'exclusive', 'blinded'.

Those of the 'open view' of reality are 'open' to the entrance of divine truth (and that divinely-revealed truth encompasses a massive amount of data and revelation and heaven-filled realities).

Think about this: knowledge from God, centered in the Incarnation! Knowledge that is so wonderful that 'no one could invent these facts'. The 'open view' of reality is the 'view' that is 'expansive', 'inclusive', 'fluid', 'transforming', 'joy-giving', 'personable', 'broad', 'enlightening', 'eternal'!

The person with the 'open view' is the person who accepts the knowledge that is limited to this world (scientific knowledge), but he also gladly accepts the 'knowledge' that comes in ways that transcend scientific knowledge. Why? Simply (as stated before), God reveals knowledge, not in a confining way (i.e. not only through the 'scientific method' - as great as that God-given way is), but God also reveals His knowledge in a very expansive way, primarily through the 'non-scientific' Revelation of the Holy Scriptures.

Never should a 'scientifically-minded' person think that 'truth' is discovered only through the microscope or through the telescope (as wonderful as these scientific tools have proven to be), but the 'scientifically-minded person' should realize that 'all knowledge is God's knowledge', and that God chooses to communicate the all-important 'facts of life' (facts that affect 'eternal destinies') through the 'written Word'. "Heaven and earth (and all scientific findings) shall pass away (someday), but My Word shall never pass away!"

There are only two 'things' that are eternal - the soul of a human being, and the Word of God (Bible)! The conclusion of the matter is this: Scientific explorations are important (as the scientist and the Land Owner of the World work in conjunction to open up the 'mystery' of the 'tiny peanut' - or 'open up the secrets' of a thousand other 'things' like the peanut). Also, and most important, every person (including every scientist) must give priority to the understanding of the meaning of the Bible, and to the personal application of the 'Word of God'!

Humans (and especially Christians) are exhorted to 'hide God's Word in the heart', to 'study to show ourselves approved by God, rightly dividing the Word of truth'! Practically-speaking, everyone (including scientists) must never underestimate the importance and the power of the 'applied Word of God'! 'Scientific explorations' must never be viewed as an 'adversary', but as an 'ally' (complement) to the Bible.

The Bible does not profess to be a 'science book', but, nevertheless, scientists must understand that all findings in science are supportive of the Bible, not a means to 'undermine' the authority of the Holy Scriptures!

God is the Author of both Science and the Bible, so the Common Source is harmonious in His joint revelation of Himself (and of His creation)! God has 'deposited' His 'grand message' (of truth) primarily in the Bible, and secondarily in His creation.

The triune God is a God of perfect unity. This means that the God of unity (who has 'written' His message in both the Bible and in Nature) has a 'unified message'. There is no 'contradiction' between the message of the Bible and the message of creation. The 'double message' is not 'contradictory' (as some scientists declare), but, instead, the 'double message' (Bible and Nature) is 'complementary'.

The Bible must always be given the same place that God gives to it - first and primary - and God's outer creation must be given the place that God gives to it - secondary and derivative! Both, of course, are important 'messages' of truth from the 'Source of all truth', but God's Word must be respected for what it is - divinely-given revelation from heaven!

As wonderful as the earth is (and as needed as 'good' scientists are), the earth will someday pass away (and scientists with it), but God said about the Bible, 'Not one jot or tittle' - Greek markings - 'shall pass away from my Word, even after the earth shall pass away!'

The Bible is primary and eternal. Science (as wonderful as it is) is secondary and derivative. Science came from the Bible, and not the 'other way around' - so let us everyone (including scientists) 'keep our priorities straight'!

It is the 'open view' person (believer) who has the 'expansive' view of reality, that is, the 'Christian believer' not only rightly understands the purpose and the beauty of the divinely-created Nature, but he, very importantly, understands the nature of man, man's relationship to his Creator (revealed in the Bible).

In contrast to the evolutionist, who believes that man was an inferior creature (animal) in the beginning, but who has now evolved into a superior animal (through the evolving process of millions of years), the 'open view' person (Christian) believes in God's 'outside revelation'!

The 'open view' person affirms what the Bible teaches, namely, that humans started out in a 'perfect state', but that humans have 'gone downhill' in every way, all because of man's disobedience (sin) against the Creator.

Man's 'nature', originally created by God as 'perfect', has become 'corrupted' and 'tainted with sin'. Man (in the beginning of time) had perfect fellowship with his Maker (Creator), but man did not 'pass the test of obedience', and, therefore, man became a 'fallen creature', alienated from his 'Maker'.

Man was made for 'greatness', but Man lost his 'greatness', and man has been on a 'downward slide' ever since that fateful day when his beautiful fellowship with God was severed by man's rebellious 'act' of disobedience (Genesis 2).

Far from being 'inherently good' (as the various 'branches of humanism' declare), man, in reality, is a member of a rebellious, 'fallen' race. 'Humanists' and 'Christians' are on the 'opposite ends of the continuum' in their understanding of the nature of human beings.

The 'former view' declares that humans began on the lower (lowly) end of the 'evolutionary ladder', but that humans (as a result of millions of years of evolutionary development) has ascended that 'evolutionary ladder' until humans have 'come out on top' on that ladder - that is, humans are the 'fine specimens' of 'perfection'.

To suggest to 'evolutionists' that the opposite picture, regarding the 'history' of mankind, is the right picture would be to bring 'great offense' to an evolutionist, and it would bring 'ridicule' to the 'foolish claims' of so-called naive Christians.

To suggest that humans had a 'bright beginning', but that, because of sinful disobedience, mankind lost its 'greatness' (its original perfection) - would be to 'attack' the 'sacred doctrine' of evolutionary thinking (i.e., that humans have no 'sin' to be forgiven, only further progress in scientific explorations to be achieved)!

'Humanists' (and evolutionists who are a type of 'humanists') believe in the 'perfectibility' of human nature - that is, that humans are 'basically good', able to 'accomplish almost anything they set their minds to'!

'Humanists' contend that 'Christians', who declare that humans are far from 'perfect' (i.e. that humans are in need of a divinely-wrought transformation of the inner human nature which is 'basically corrupted'), are 'outdated' and 'archaic' and 'irrelevant' and 'ignorant' regarding their 'knowledge' of 'human nature'. But, reality (as conveyed in the Bible and as demonstrated in the 'affairs of men' throughout history) challenges the viewpoint (doctrines) of 'humanists' (including the 'naive' view of evolutionists).

All of the 'adjectives' that are assigned to 'Christians' as 'put downs' (as just previously noted), are, in reality, the 'adjectives' that need to be 'assigned' to evolutionists (because of their erroneous view - their unrealistic declarations - regarding the 'nature of humans').

Instead of being 'inherently good', reality (as taught in the Bible, and as demonstrated in our war-torn and vicious world), reveals that human nature is 'inherently evil' - and in desperate need of God-wrought transformation/conversion!

Those who believe in the 'open view' of reality are those who believe that God is the 'God Who Acts' in human history. God is not distant, or removed, or remote, or indifferent, or unmoved, or inaccessible, or passive, or unemotional, or ignorant of human affairs!

When the human race became a 'ruined race', because of disobedience to God's explicit commands, God could very easily have 'kicked the world into oblivion'! But, no, as grieved as was His love, God chose to activate His 'backup plan' - and that 'backup plan' took many years before it was fulfilled. "In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son into the world, born of a virgin", to bring that plan to fruition!

The plan was complicated (and misunderstood by many persons - primarily 'religious persons'), and the plan, when it was revealed, was so amazing that no one could ever have 'invented' that plan!

It was the 'plan of God', hidden for many generations throughout human history. Finally, at just the right time, God 'unfolded' that most amazing plan; He revealed that 'deeply hidden mystery'.

There are many dimensions to that 'plan', but, essentially, the plan is the 'plan of salvation' - namely, that through the 'finished work' of Jesus Christ (His death and resurrection) every person can be forgiven of all sins, and every person can enjoy 'fellowship' with God - the quality of 'fellowship' that man had in the beginning of history, and that was severed because of sin!

"For God so loved the world that He gave to the world of sinners His only Son", for the purpose of mankind's recovery from sin, through the redeeming 'blood' of Jesus Christ. All the 'works of salvation' are offered, because of the 'accomplished saving work' of Christ - the works of forgiveness, reconciliation, justification, regeneration, inner cleansing (sanctification)! Jesus, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is able and He is desirous to save each person 'to the uttermost'! Assurance of 'sins forgiven' and assurance of 'eternal life' in heaven (following physical death)!

The 'open view' folks believe that, in agreement with the record in the Holy Bible, the God they serve is the God who was (and who is) always 'taking the initiative'! This truth (of God's initiating love) is communicated over and over in the Holy Scriptures.

The story of the shepherd and his 'lost sheep' is one of the characteristic 'stories' which reveals that, instead of being passive and indifferent and hard-hearted, the shepherd, instead, 'searches for the lost sheep' that is 'near to destruction'!

The 'lost sheep' was helpless and hopeless, not able to save its self! In response, what did the shepherd do? Did the shepherd remain with the 'safe flock' of sheep that were 'obedient' to the shepherd? Was the shepherd a 'calculating shepherd', a shepherd who decided that 'one lost sheep' (who deliberately strayed from the flock) was 'useless' and deserved to die? After all, the 'lost sheep' had no one to 'blame' but itself for the 'mess' it was in!

It is 'true' that we humans (rebellious sinners that we are) have no one to blame but ourselves for the 'mess' that we have made of our lives (and of our entire world)! "The wages of sin is death!" We get what we deserve - spiritual death and widespread misery! All of us (without exception) deserve to die! We deliberately chose to break the Ten Commandments! But, the Shepherd is called the 'Good Shepherd'! God is a 'good' Shepherd!

It is 'clear' that God hates sin (in all of its forms and manifestations). God hates the fact that we humans (sinners) have gone our own way - our own selfish way! The Bible says that God hates the very 'sight' of evil, that He is repulsed by the 'fleshly' (in-human) ways that God-rejecters have taken during their 'earthly pilgrimage'! God has 'pure eyes', and He cannot even look upon sin and upon sinning persons!

God is righteous, and, therefore, He hates wickedness. God is a God of perfect 'integrity' (i.e., God cannot lie), and, therefore, God hates all lying. God is a God of perfect 'justice', and, therefore, God hates all deception and scheming and plotting and unfairness in social behavior. God is a God of 'holiness', and, therefore, God hates all hypocritical actions, driven by 'ulterior and impure motives'. God is a God of

unity and peace, and, therefore, God hates all divisive and disruptive actions that destroy that God-pleasing unity. God is a God of 'perfect love', and, therefore, God looks upon all bitter and resentful and vindictive actions as destructive of the very 'essence of life'!

The holy God, that 'open view' folks put their 'faith in', has 'eyes' that are so 'pure' that He cannot even 'look at evil'. It isn't that God doesn't have knowledge of all the evil in all the hearts of all mankind, but it means that God turns away from the 'stench' of evil! Sin is 'ugly', beyond description!

Sin is "foul" (degrading) beyond description! Evil (sin) is everything that 'good' (love) is not! There is a great contrast between the 'sweet aroma' of righteousness, and the 'unbearable stench' of sin. Literally! During World War II, how could anyone (in his right mind) walk near the pits of the Nazi 'death camps', where rotting bodies (or burnt bodies) were heaped, decimated body lying on decimated body of Jewish victims?

The horror of untamed evil and wickedness is the 'product of man's demon-possessed mind!' How true are the words of Holy Scripture: "The heart of man is desperately wicked. Who can know it?" (Do the 'humanists', who naively believe that man is 'inherently good', have any explanation for the mass murders of human beings - perhaps at least the murder of 100 million persons in the last century?)

The ancient scriptures have always been proven to be accurate about everything - including the realistic evaluation of the 'condition of man's nature'. Man's nature is 'corrupt', and it is no wonder that a 'corrupt heart' (nature) eventually produces 'corrupt deeds' (loveless deeds of human destruction to one's fellow men)!

***THE 'GOOD SHEPHERD' TENDERLY INVITES EVERYONE
TO COME INTO HIS FOLD!***

The 'Good Shepherd', while He intensely hates sin (and will not tolerate the presence and the manifestation of sin in any person's life), nevertheless, loves the 'lost sheep', and He deliberately (in great love and compassion) pursues the 'lost sheep'!

It is His intention to find the 'sick and dying sheep', and to carry the "crippled sheep" back to the safe fold, where he will comfort and he will heal and he will restore the sheep - and he will 'incorporate' the sheep into the 'fold' from which it strayed.

The Good Shepherd will 'transform' the sheep - that is, the Good Shepherd will change the attitude of the recovering sheep, appealing to the once lost sheep to 'stay close' to the Shepherd and stay close to the other sheep.

The 'lessons' of lostness will become very real to the once lost sheep. In a spirit of humility, teachableness, and attentiveness, the once lost sheep will learn important lessons (lessons that have had to be learned the 'hard way').

The once lost sheep nearly lost its life, and now that sheep has a great appreciation regarding the 'folly of straying away from the flock', regarding the serious (fatal) dangers that are 'out in the world' by itself, regarding the great risk that the Shepherd took to rescue the once lost sheep, regarding the love of the other sheep in the fold that enfolded it and helped heal it when the Good Shepherd brought it back to 'home'!

Everyone surely knows that the 'Good Shepherd' could not force the 'lost sheep' to return to the sheep fold! No straying sinner (one who has left the fellowship of God and the fellowship of his church), I say, no straying sinner can be 'forced' by God to 'come home' - to the 'faith' and to the fellowship of God's people! God calls, but we (sinners) must hear the call and we must respond positively to the call (of repentance and faith in Christ)!

This, in brief, is the Story of God's Initiating Love! The 'open view' of the universe strongly affirms the belief that God 'stepped out' of His heavenly home, to demonstrate His love for a lost race of people, and to 'do what was necessary' to rescue a lost race from certain destruction! "Out of the Ivory Palaces into a world of woe, only His great eternal love could make my Savior go!"

SHOULD THE BIBLE BE TAUGHT IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

'Humanist philosophy' is the philosophy that is taught (implicitly or explicitly) in all of our public schools throughout America. "You can do anything if you set your mind to do it!" This phrase and other simplistic phrases are heard in most of the classrooms in American schools.

Based on a naive optimism regarding human potential, the instructors in humanism are deceiving our young people into thinking that they can 'make it on their own' in life, without resort to any outside help (from a 'higher power'). Tragically, the young people in America today are taught a 'man-centered' philosophy, rather than a 'God-centered' philosophy of life.

It has been a decades-long goal of the humanists (including outright atheists) to remove all mention of God and all study of the Bible, from our public schools. They have successfully used the concept of the 'separation of church and state' as their rationale to accomplish this goal. Based on a false interpretation of this concept (separation of church and state), with the aggressive tactics of the humanists, most public schools have 'backed away' from any mention of God or the Bible or Prayer!

Never mind the fact that, for many decades, the United States Senate has respected the presence of a Senate Chaplain, who prays daily and who shares some devotional thought with the 100 senators! Never mind the fact that, when there is a national crisis of many kinds, there are prayer vigils in public places, as well as in local churches.

Various United States Presidents have often encouraged the practice of prayer when our nation faces some crisis! It is common for television personalities to openly advocate the activity of prayer, when some tragedy (like a mass shooting) takes place!

It is a strange phenomenon that, where prayer should be most practiced, and where the Bible should most be studied (as history and as literature), the practice of prayer and the study of the Bible are near to being 'outlawed'! In our public schools!

When the various branches of learning are pursued, absent the nurturing of the mind with Bible knowledge, and absent the nurturing of the human spirit with prayer - it is no wonder that students 'feel hollow inside of themselves' and feel 'lost and purposeless' in experiencing the meaning of life!

Absent from the nourishing 'food' of the Bible and of the comfort of Prayer, it is no wonder that most of our teenagers (in our public schools) are (to say the least) 'spiritually malnourished' (and, tragically, many teens today are 'spiritually dead')!

Without God and without the purposes of God (through Biblical knowledge and through personal communion with the Creator), there is no telling what the future of our teens will be! School shootings!

Should the Bible be taught in our public schools? A very relevant question, especially at a time in our nation's educational system when most teens are quite ignorant of the Bible's content and relevance and application!

A very relevant question, especially when it is common knowledge (by those who are 'in the know') that the Bible's influence in 'Western Civilization' has been greater than the influence of any other books!

Not to understand the Bible is not to understand the genius of our western civilization! An honest study of the history and of the literature of our western civilization is a study of the profound influence of the Bible's history and literature!

In fact, it is assumed, when one studies the great literary works, that the reader has some appreciation of the Biblical references that are 'intertwined' in the various 'readings' of the great classics of Western Literature!

Those without any knowledge of the Bible (common phrases and biblical stories), will be dumbfounded when they try to read some well-known literature! The Bible, briefly stated, has had a profound influence in the history of mankind, particularly the western branch of civilization!

There was a time, in the early decades of our country's history, when public school teachers regularly read the Bible to their students. Young children learned their alphabet (letters) by referring to Bible quotations or to Bible stories or to Bible references! Public school teachers quoted the 'Lord's Prayer', or had their students recite in unison this universal prayer!

The public school text books freely quoted Bible stories or Bible verses. The morality which teachers espoused was solidly based on an understanding of 'The Ten Commandments'! These were all 'common practices' in the everyday life of the public school teacher, in bygone years in America education.

Text books were Biblically-based, and the parents both approved of this and many parents outrightly expected this! Not all persons (teachers or students) were professed Christians, but, nevertheless, there was a widespread respect for biblical morality, even among non-Christian public school teachers!

It was assumed by nearly everyone (including non-Christian teachers) that all persons should respect the fact that there existed (from ancient times) the objective laws of God (the Ten Commandments) which guided humans in all matters of 'morality' among mankind!

Children, in public schools, were once (long ago, in America) taught the content and the application of those ten rules (given to Moses some 4000 years ago). Relevant for all time, and rules that must be respected and followed!

Of course, as important as knowledge of the Commandments was, the students (outside of the class room), needed to learn that they (within their own 'strength') could

not 'keep' the commandments, based on their own strength or based on their own effort! Teachers could not 'go that far' (because that is a religious and doctrinal and Biblical interpretation - outside of the 'realm' of 'legality' within the public classroom).

However, a sensitive public school teacher (a Christian teacher) could easily direct the 'religious' questions of students to ministers or to Christian parents, or (what is 'lawful') to a teacher who could meet with a 'searching' (spiritually-hungry) student 'after school time'!

If a parent of an inquiring student gives permission to a Christian teacher to meet with a student, after school hours, the teacher can further explain to the searching student the reality of the 'second birth' (indwelling Spirit) - which, of course, is the One who makes it possible for a student to 'live the life of the Commandments'. Not only the Ten Commandments, but all of God's Commandments, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament!

In one way or another, the inquiring student needs (compassionately and honestly) to be introduced to the 'fuller meaning of scripture' (beyond the good literary and historical content of the Bible which he can lawfully study in his public school)! (Supreme Court Ruling which permits the study of the historical of literary qualities of the greatest of all Books)!

Of course, we as Christians know that only through the personal conversion to Christ and through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, is anyone able to keep the commandments. We know that (according to Romans 5:5) the Spirit sheds abroad in our hearts the supernatural love of God. We know that, according to Romans 13, this empowering supernatural love is the 'fulfillment' of all of God's commandments!

Knowledge of the Law, of course, cannot save us, but the knowledge of our transgressions (realized when we study the Ten Commandments) 'drives' us helpless people to the 'foot of the cross' for conversion and for transformation!

When I was still a student at Greenville College (Illinois), my first year of marriage and my last year that I lived in Hillsboro, Illinois, I felt strongly that the Bible should be taught in our public schools.

At the time (1966), I did not know that I would be invited to be a pastor of a small (struggling) local church in Fort Collins, Colorado. When I first came to Fort Collins in 1967 (I was 22 years old), I came to this 'fair city' with a strong 'drive' - first, to preach the Gospel of Christ, and secondly, to encourage the public schools to allow all

teens (perhaps even children) to seriously study the Bible (as history and as literature).

Just previous to my coming to the city (that I grew to love), the United States Supreme Court had 'dealt' with the controversial issue of whether or not the Bible could properly be taught in the public schools in America.

The outcome? The opinion of the highest court in the Land? The court in its ruling 'Abington etc.,' not only said that the Bible could be taught in the public schools, but the Court (in its 'tone') actually encouraged the teaching of the Bible in the public schools! Here are a few words from that ruling: "It Certainly May Be Said That the Bible is Worthy of Study for Its Literary and Historic Qualities."

With the very positive 'ruling' of the U.S. Supreme Court (regarding the study of the Bible in the public schools in America), I should have immediately gone directly to the leaders of the School District, to present my request that the Bible be taught (very soon) in the entire appropriate curriculum. Instead, I waited and I decided to do a petition drive - to petition the leadership of the school to allow the Bible to be taught in the curriculum. I led a 'petition campaign', and I (with the help of others) collected about 900 names of persons who solidly supported the proposal (to the School) to add the Bible to the curriculum in our Schools.

At my appointment with the 'Curriculum Director' for the School District, I experienced a courteous (if not totally 'warm') reception. He was so impressed with my knowledge and my efforts (and the fact that the petition drive collected so many names). He told me that he would 'follow through' on this request (since it was, obviously, very worthy and definitely 'legal').

I never knew, for sure, what 'steps' he took to implement the request, but I understood that he, indeed, arranged for the Bible to be included, (in some fashion, in the curriculum at the high school level).

Since that time, I have often wondered if our school district has taken seriously the opportunity to teach the Bible which the U.S. Supreme Court has 'afforded'. Not only permission, but apparently encouragement to teach the Bible as History and also Literature. I am not thinking about 'passing references' to the Bible (in history and in literature classes), but I am thinking about serious study of the Bible!

Many years ago (when I was in my early 20's) I worked hard to 'get the ball rolling' - seeking to heighten the awareness in the mind of the school representative that the Bible could (and should) be taught, with full justification from a legal viewpoint. Prac-

tically-speaking, could the leadership be encouraged to incorporate the Bible into the regular curriculum?

I wonder if the 'ball' kept 'rolling', or if the 'ball' was stopped by the 'humanists', even before the 'ball' had a chance to 'roll' very far! I am aware that the humanists (atheists) 'hate' the Bible and they would fight any attempt to incorporate the Bible into the school curriculum! Such Bible-haters (God-haters) will give an 'account' before God someday (after their physical death) for their cruel action!

Those who block young persons from reading and from studying the Bible (simply as history and as literature, not religiously as the inspired Word of God), will hang their head 'in shame' before Almighty God someday, in eternity! Those teachers (in public schools) who are keeping their students from discovering and from studying the greatest Book in the World are guilty of closing the door to the greatest literature in the world!

No student is well educated until he/she has some basic knowledge of the contents of the ancient books of the Bible - ideas and concepts in that content that continue to profoundly influence the institutions and the values of our modern-day world!

Even though the Bible can only be studied (in public schools) from a historical and literary viewpoint, students of the Bible, nevertheless, will discover this all-time 'best seller' as a literal 'treasure house' (enriching their mind and their spirit immensely!)

Jesus pronounced a strong 'indictment' against those who 'offend these little ones' (children and young persons). He said, "It would be better for you to have a millstone hung around your neck, and you be drowned in the deepest sea, than for you to offend one of these little ones!" In other words, the fate of one who experiences a 'forced drowning' is better than what will be the 'fate' of a person who offends (hinders) one of these 'little ones'!

For a public school teacher to deliberately neglect the offering of the Bible (to be studied as history and as literature) to his/her students is a great offense, indeed! Most teachers (Christian teachers) are apparently 'afraid' to offer a Bible course in the high school curriculum - for they think such an action is 'illegal' or 'unlawful'!

Do these 'frightened and intimidated' (Christian) teachers not know that the Supreme Court (in the early 60's) gave explicit permission to teachers in public schools, to teach the Bible, not from a religious viewpoint, but from a historical and literary viewpoint?

The Court actually encouraged such a use of the Bible, and they said that it could be profitable (beneficial) for students to study the Bible! 'Separation of Church and State' bold declaration, by humanists, does not forbid the proper use of the Bible in the classroom! It is time that these 'bullies' (humanists) stop misrepresenting the 'truth' regarding the 'separation' doctrine!

Those teachers, who choose to teach the Bible (as history and as literature) in the public schools, have a constitutional 'right' to do so. Teachers who wish to do so must no longer allow the humanists to 'throw around their weight' (humanists, in spite of their 'tiger growls' of intimidation, are, in reality, 'pussy kitty', weak persons).

Teachers who wish to teach the Bible in the public classroom, have the 'full backing' of the United States Supreme Court - and no humanist (teacher or parent or student) can bring any legal charge against such teachers! For too long, Christian teachers have been fearful and intimidated - that is, these teachers have been defensive, rather than offensive in their desire to teach the Bible.

These teachers (who wish to legally teach the Bible) ought to be courteous, but, nevertheless, they need to be bold and assertive in their actions (of planning and of instigating the teaching of a Bible course, from a literary and historical viewpoint)! We hear the conversation regarding 'rights', far and wide throughout our society. Well, teachers in public schools have their 'right' also - the 'right' to teach the Bible in the public school!

Teachers (with the full backing of the U.S. Supreme Court) have their legal 'rights' (based on the Constitution of the United States)! Christian teachers (who wish to teach the Bible) ought to graciously, but forthrightly, step forward and make their request known to the curriculum director (or to the principal).

If the leadership wrongly responds in the negative, citing the 'separation' doctrine, then the teacher must respectfully quote the Court's decision (from the 1960's). The Court's ruling, though it is rather old, is still relevant (the ruling has not been changed)!

Those unfair humanists (secularists) who have, for decades, fought against having any religious content in the schools, these persons have conveniently ignored the Court's ruling regarding the teaching of the Bible in public schools! The humanists (on the false doctrine of 'separation of church and state') have (tragically) 'overridden' the Court ruling (regarding the Bible).

These scheming persons (atheists and secularists and humanists) have instilled 'fear' in the heart of principals and teachers - fear that there might be a 'law suit' against them if the Bible was introduced into the curriculum of the public schools!

We complain about 'teenage bullies', but these schemers (humanists, etc.) are far more hurtful and far more subtle 'bullies' than any teenage bullies! Humanists have instilled tremendous 'fear' in the bosom of any principal or of any teacher who would (according to the 'backing' of the Court) desire to introduce an interesting and important Bible course into the curriculum!

These humanists claim to be the 'knowledgeable' persons (experts) regarding the 'law' (regarding the Bible in the public school), and their pose as intellectuals brings 'fright' and 'intimidation' to school personnel! Their 'fear tactics', unfortunately, have worked 'wonders', to advance their secular (atheist) agendas!

It is the atheist and secularist and humanist who have 'blocked' the study of the Bible in the classroom. They have definitely exploited the phrase 'separation of church and state', and, based on their misinterpretation, they have fought for the barring of all religion from the public schools and, of course, the barring of the teaching of the Bible to students!

These atheistic advocates are militaristic in their approach to eliminate all mention of 'God', 'Jesus Christ', 'Bible', 'Ten Commandments', and objective morality which is an application of the 'Ten Commandments'! They, for many years, have been 'brutal' in their attacks against all Christians and against any attempt to teach our young people the 'basics of common morality'!

They advocate relativism ('there is nothing that is right or wrong, but everyone does that which is right in his own sight and according to his own private judgment, and therefore, no moral judgments can be imposed regarding the behavior of anyone else').

If there is any 'morality' that is recognized within the public schools, it is the morality of 'relativism'! If it is meaningful to have sex with a fellow teen in your school, so be it! No one should cast judgment upon two teens who have mutually decided to sleep together, and no one dare 'judge' a pregnant teen who chooses to get an abortion! A totally self-centered way to live! No fear of God and no regard for God's established (ancient) objective standards (laws)!

Our teens are not taught that God has established objective moral standards, that there are actions that definitely offend the Almighty Creator! Even though teens are

taught to refute the old-fashioned idea of 'sin', the reality is that sin clearly exists! Further, the reality is that sin has serious consequences - death to the spirit, devastation to the body, disturbance to the mind, weakening to the will! "The soul that sins, it shall die!" (Thus says Almighty God!). "The wages of sin is death!" Biblical truth.

We in authority (parents, teachers, ministers) do our youth a great disservice when we fail to teach them the truths about God, as outlined in the Bible, and as clearly taught in established 'holy tradition' through the church of Christ! What a travesty if we teach our young people that, whatever they think about cancer, it is perfectly alright! It is a greater tragedy if we teach our young people that they can make up their own (selfishly-oriented) set of relativistic standards by which they live!

Relativism in the area of morality and in the area of religion is prevalent among our young people! For a teen to adopt a relativistic idea regarding medicine, for instance, would be to adopt a very immature attitude towards the domain of medicine! Stated frankly, to adopt the attitude of relativism in the domain of medicine would be considered 'insane' ('crazy'), possibly leading to one's death!

Who in his right mind would think that whatever a person wanted to think regarding the science of medicine, would be 'proper' and 'sane' (reasonable)? Forget what medical science asserts, if I want to have my own opinion about cancer that is my business! Even though I am told by cancer specialists that I have a fast-moving cancer that needs immediate and delicate treatment, if I want to ignore what these scientists say, and come up with my own 'theory' regarding my cancer, then I will do so! The consequence from living by such an immature attitude could possibly (probably) lead to one's death! When one's subjectivism (regarding cancer) replaces the objective knowledge and the experience of scientific research, then danger looms on the horizon for such a foolish replacement!

In response to this ridiculous and self-centered and ignorant attitude regarding cancer, everyone would declare that no one could be so foolish (as to entertain a subjective opinion, rather than to submit to objective fact, regarding the presence of cancer and the treatment for cancer).

The vast majority of American citizens (out of respect for the 'facts' of objective medical science) would embrace the declarations of medicine and surgery. Even relativists (subjective as they are in their philosophy) accept the objective findings of scientists and of medical experts.

Why is it that relativists, who respect the fixed laws of medicine, reject the 'fixed' laws of morality and the objective declarations of Christianity? The dogmas (stand-

ards and beliefs) of Christianity are based on the solid historical and verifiable and objective teachings of Christ! What Christ spoke is recorded by historians who are objective in their investigations and in their accounts.

Why won't relativists embrace the teachings of the Bible (Ten Commandments, prophetic writings, Gospel accounts)? I think I know why! These objective truths (laws of morality) speak to the 'corrupt heart', to the 'rebellious will', to the 'darkened mind' of 'fallen mankind'! These 'fixed laws' of God bring tremendous conviction to the spirit of sinful man, and these writings (not subject to man's whimsical interpretations) call every person (every sinner) to get on his knees in a posture of true repentance!

These writings call for every person to 'confess with his tongue that Jesus is Lord', that Jesus is worthy of being served every day for the rest of one's life! Because the 'stakes' are so high (the call to surrender to Christ's lordship), there are many persons who choose to reject God, to deny God, to rebel against God, to repudiate the Ten Commandments!

With this negative reaction against God and against God's holy laws, it is easy to substitute belief in God's objective order with belief in a subjective (relativistic) order! When there is a rebellion against God's order of 'law' (objective morality), there will be many God-rejecters who will invent their own 'system of morality', namely the system of 'relativism'.

If one does not choose to submit to the laws of God (Ten Commandments), then he will choose to believe that there is no such thing as an objective set of moral standards (given by God as absolute standards). It is easy to understand how relativism is a form of rebellion against God and against God's revealed will (against God's objective laws).

Relativists deny that there is any such thing as, objective, absolute set of standards and laws, which have jurisdiction over every human life! Many relativists deny that there is a God, so it is convenient for them (easy for them) to make up their own set of standards for living – standards which, of course, they can change any time that they deem convenient! As relativists they, of course, do not believe they are 'obligated' (bound) to any law! The idea of 'law' is foreign to their way of thinking!

The relativist is, strangely enough, a 'law unto himself'. He is not obligated (pressured) to 'keep' any of the Ten Commandments! The fact that he feels free to break any of the Commandments, at any time, demonstrates the fact that he (the relativist) despises and he hates the so-called 'fixed' (objective) laws of God! He is fiercely inde-

pendent and proud and cynical and rebellious in his attitude towards God and towards those who claim to serve God!

The student who boldly declares that he does not believe that there is such a thing as absolute morality, is as 'stupid' as the student who decides boldly to make up his own conclusions regarding the presence and the nature and the possible consequences of his own fast-moving 'cancer'!

The relativistic student who makes 'crazy' (unfounded and unscientific) statements regarding the claims of Christianity - unless he has a 180 degree turn in his attitude toward God - is headed for eventual destruction of his spiritual life and of his physical life and of his mental life!

Relativism eventually leads to one's mental confusion, to one's spiritual disharmony, to one's social disintegration!

When the truth of God (embedded in the Holy Scriptures and in sacred traditions) is denied, the very purpose of a man is frustrated and all of life becomes disconnected and dissembled! Unless the relativistic person makes a 'moral U-turn' (repentance), such a person is headed for moral and spiritual disaster!

Along with the many other 'legs' that comprise the octopus of 'humanism', relativism is definitely one of those 'legs' - one of the manifestations of humanism. Relativism, without doubt, is one of the most serious enemies of Christianity.

To declare that everyone has a 'right' to decide (morally-speaking) what he/she wishes to do, without resort to a higher, absolute and objective moral standard (a standard that judges the actions of humans) - this attitude and philosophy (predominant in our society) is most dangerous and most destructive!

It is about like one saying that it is his own decision as to whether or not he thinks that a fast - moving cancer in his body is dangerous. Such a 'fool' throws aside all systems of 'authority'! Using the same arguments, as it relates to belief in the objective order of religion (Christianity), how foolish it is for a relativist to ignore (dismiss) the declarations of historic Christianity (that have been established for 2000 years)!

The system of Christianity is an established fact (objective reality), and no relativist (be he ever so opposed to this religious system) can destroy this reality! His subjective philosophy (and relativistic thinking) cannot demolish the objective presence of

Christianity in the world! Christianity is here to stay in this world, and nothing can remove this religion from this world!

Go ahead and ignore the teaching of the Ten Commandments (given to mankind more than 4000 years ago)! You throw away all 'authority', all absolute moral standards, at your own 'peril'!

Forget the declaration from a doctor that a fast-moving cancer is in your body! Pretend that you don't have a fast-moving and potentially deadly form of cancer. Ignore the declaration of the doctor whose findings (regarding your cancer) are based on solid and reliable and tested research.

Ignore the objective truth of the doctor, at your own 'peril'. As a relativist, think what you will regard the state of your health, and go ahead and deny objective facts, communicated to you by your doctor! But your wishful thinking and your denials and your own 'inventions' which deny the 'facts' - none of this will change the objective truth, declared by medical science!

The same is true, morally-speaking. You, as a relativist, can deny the existence of God, and you can repudiate the objective laws of God (Ten Commandments, etc.), but the facts regarding God and regarding objective morality remain the same - unchanged and unchangeable!

Denial will not destroy the facts! God is real and the commandments are real and the plan of salvation through Christ is real and the accountability for one's life before God is real. These are facts, and the relativist cannot destroy these realities.

Just as the law of gravity, while it can be denied, remains a scientific reality (in nature), so the spiritual laws of God remain constant and fixed and unchanging for all time! We can respect the law of gravity and we can, therefore, remain alive physically.

Likewise, we can respect the laws of God regarding objective morality and regarding the 'law of God's grace' - and find new spiritual life and maintain that new life through submission to Christ! Denial or acceptance - those are the options! But how we choose will make 'all the difference in the world'!

The maintenance of both physical life and spiritual life depends upon our obedience to the laws of nature and the spiritual laws of God! Denial of these two laws (physi-

cal laws and spiritual laws) leads to death (to one's body and to one's soul). God established the laws (in both instances)!

Those who accept the fact of objective laws (both physical and spiritual) will find for themselves life and liberty and true freedom! In contrast, those who declare that they will live by their own philosophy of relativism will eventually experience self-destruction (gradual dying during their life's pilgrimage that eventuates in ultimate death!).

But you declare that you feel well, and that (in your opinion) you have no cancer! How you 'feel' (good or bad) has nothing to do with the determination of the objective reality of whether or not you have cancer! There is an objective (fixed) standard by which a doctor determines the presence of cancer in the body of a human being. Facts are facts, whether or not you happen to feel a certain way!

There are some 'things' in this universe that are established (absolute and fixed)! There are God-established laws that are not subject to the whims and the opinions and the 'good feelings' of people (relativists) who proudly 'make up their own rules' - oblivious to the 'established authorities' in this universe!

What God 'determines' is 'determined' and no man can change that reality! For instance, God has established the 'law of gravity', and for one (a relativist) to decide in his own mind that he does not believe in such a 'law', and, therefore, he will jump off a tall building and not be hurt - well, he can 'do his own thing', but he has only himself to blame for deciding to disobey a 'fixed' law!

No 'relativist' would be 'foolish' enough to jump off a building, for, in spite of his relativistic mind set, he realizes that there is a law of gravity (fixed and unmovable and not subject to negotiation). He knows that he must 'obey' that absolute law, if he is to stay alive! But what the 'relativist' fails to realize is that there are spiritual laws that are just as absolute as the physical law of gravity, and to disobey those spiritual laws is to be spiritually destroyed!

Go ahead and defy God's objective moral laws and standards, ignore them, or outrightly and defiantly disobey them, scorn them and call them 'outdated' and 'outmoded', react negatively to them in many different fashions - but, just remember, God has been around longer than you have, millions of folks have sought to live by these commandments, and their lives have been harmonious and fruitful!

But you might declare (with self-confidence) that having 'sex' with a fellow teen 'feels good'! Relativism declares: "If it feels good, it must be good for you!" Remember: you

might 'feel good' while you break God's commandments - for a while - but the Bible says that there are 'pleasures in sin only for a season' (only for a short time)! The temporary pleasure which sin brings, will soon turn to regrets and shame and guilt and heartache and loneliness, and so much more misery!

Sin is like a chocolate-covered onion! The chocolate disguises the bitter onion (the onion of sin)! No one can ultimately 'get by' with breaking the commandments of God! Relativism is most deceptive, for relativism declares that 'everyone does that which is right in his own eyes' - and that there are no consequences for 'doing your own thing' (such as having sex any time you wish, and with whomever you desire).

'If having sex feels good, and if having sex with someone you think you like or with someone you say you love, then having sex is quite alright - and no one dare criticize or judge you!' Forget God's command - 'Thou shalt not commit adultery!' That commandment has no claim on you (a red-blooded teen boy), for those commandments are ancient and outdated and irrelevant for our modern times! Those commandments were given by Moses, for the Jews only, not for American teens!

The above stated words are the words of many relativists (parents and teachers) who are attempting to 'justify' the promiscuous behavior of teenagers on our modern-day high school campuses! It is both pathetic and dangerous to listen to such rationalizations from the lips of relativistic-minded adults, who are supposed to lead our young people into the paths of health and wholeness, rather than onto the paths of destruction and disease! These relativists (who deny the existence of a hereafter) will someday stand before the Judge of all humanity, to give an account of their evil influence on young persons!

These relativistic arguments are, unfortunately, widespread in our America society, and these arguments prevail among school staff and teens and parents of teens! Not all, of course, for there are outstanding Christian teachers and Christian parents and Christian teens still in our world, all of whom are holding the standards of God very high, persons who are determined (amidst the pressures of the relativists) to 'let their light of righteous living shine'.

Yes, these persons (just named) know what it is to be the target of ridicule! Thank God, there are some notable exceptions to the persons who are hard-core relativists! "Any old dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live fish to swim upstream!"

Against the current of worldly philosophy (humanism in its various manifestations, including relativism), there are Christian teachers and Christian parents and Christian students who are 'swimming upstream' (against the current of modern-day philoso-

phy) - letting their light shine for Christ, and refusing to compromise with worldly life-styles! It is these Christians (in the school and in the homes) who are the 'hope for the future' (hope for reform and revival and transformation in our public schools)!

Human beings (created in God's image) cannot forever defy the laws and the ways of Almighty God, and get by with it! The wages of sin is death - mental, social, spiritual death! Hopefully, when the relativistic student 'hits the wall' in his life (spiritual crisis and physical crisis), he will turn to Christ for salvation (religiously)!

If it is foolish (immature and shortsighted) to make up your own (subjective) mind regarding the established domain of science (which has much experience in treating cancer), it is equally foolish (immature and shortsighted) to make up your own (subjective) mind regarding the established domain of religion (Christianity).

The science of medicine has been around for centuries, and the objective teaching of Christianity has been around for centuries (two thousand years)! How 'silly', how 'stupid', how 'proud' for any person, including 'self-centered teens', to make up (subjectively) their own shallow pronouncements, regarding their own 'beliefs'.

A teen can say all day that he doesn't believe in the existence of 'cancer', but his bold declarations will never eliminate the 'facts' of medical science. He can say all day that he does not believe in the 'Ten Commandments', but his naive pronouncements will not change the fact that these commandments are established and are relevant and that they give guidance to millions of folks every day!

The sooner the relativistic teen 'wises up' (becomes serious about the established 'facts' of life), the sooner he/she will find his/her own 'sanity' and 'health'. From a Christian viewpoint (the realistic viewpoint), only the God/Creator (through the power of Christ) can (medically-speaking) heal a person physically (through the instrumentality of good doctors), and only the God/Creator can heal a person (spiritually-speaking)! When a person (a teen) finally acknowledges the presence of an objective moral order (not subject to the changing whims of humans) - that is, when he acknowledges that truth regarding God is eternal - he/she must personally surrender to that objective order. He must stop being a relativist, and he must embrace those 'facts' that are unchanging.

He must turn his/her life over to the One who is the Creator and the Redeemer. He/she must acknowledge with humility (surrendering his/her independent pride) that Jesus died on the cross to save them! Confess, Believe, Accept - this spells new life in Christ! Following Christ for one's entire life on earth!

The Ten Commandments cannot save a person, but they do give guidance on how to live a healthy, holy life! The Spirit is the One who empowers a person (teen) to live a life that is full of love - love for God, love for one's self, and love for others around him! This is what the abundant life is all about!

When someone deliberately 'blocks' (hinders) a young person from being exposed to the Bible (using a false 'legal' argument as an excuse for that 'blocking'), that person will face the 'wrath' and 'judgment' of Almighty God!

On the 'false basis' of the 'separation of church and state', these extremists (radical humanists and militaristic atheists) have nearly eradicated all references to Christianity and to the Bible and to any mention of God (even in graduation speeches given by religious students)!

There has probably never been a greater perversion (of a legitimate 'idea') than the twisted interpretation of the idea of 'separation of church and state'!

There is no desire, on the part of Christians, to use the public school as a platform for evangelism or for indoctrination. Of course, it is (legitimately) unlawful for anyone to promote any sect or any particular denomination or any personal doctrinal ideas in the public schools. It is true that it is illegal to use the Bible to campaign for a particular set of beliefs - that is, it is unlawful and improper to 'impose' one's religious beliefs on anyone else in the public schools.

No Christian teacher and no Christian student has a 'right' (according to the 'separation' clause) to promote a religious doctrine, or to impose (force) any personal religious conviction. This is the legitimate understanding of the concept of the 'separation' clause! Both Christians and non-Christians recognize that the public school is not a religious institution.

However, with the above principle clearly in mind (i.e., there is to be no imposition of religious beliefs on another), it is important to recognize that this principle (no imposition) is applicable to all educational endeavors (in all 'subjects' that are taught in public school).

Just as it is improper to 'impose' beliefs upon students when those students are studying any subject (civics or history or social studies or government), so it is (as clearly stated above) improper to impose religious beliefs upon any student. This principle - no imposition of a particular belief upon any student - applies in the teaching, not only of the Bible, but to all subjects where students are in a subordinate position to a teacher who is 'leader' of a particular class!

No student, in any class setting, should feel intimidated by a teacher who seeks to 'force' his/her views on a student, regardless of the content of the class (political or social or religious or scientific)!

Objective facts must be presented to the students, by the classroom teacher, but the interpretation of those facts (and the various ways that the facts can be applied to everyday life) must be 'left up to the individual, earnest-minded student'! And this principle applies to every subject that is taught in the public school (including the study of religion or the study of the literary and historical content of the Bible itself).

Study of the Bible should not be treated any differently from any other subject. There is room (generally-speaking) for various interpretations regarding any subject 'matter' (scientifically, politically, socially, etc.) among a class full of inquiring, truth-seeking students.

Just as the U.S. Constitution grants freedom of speech and freedom of expression of thought to the citizens of our Country (generally-speaking), so the same 'rights' are granted to public school students (specifically-speaking).

The right that is guaranteed to students (to think and to debate and to decide personal opinions in all the subjects), so the same 'rights' must be guaranteed to public school students who are studying the Bible (from a historical and literary viewpoint).

There should be no exception as to how all students are treated, including students who have a deep interest in studying the Bible's content!

The 'separation' clause has no jurisdiction over a public school which chooses (with Constitutional backing and Supreme Court backing) to offer a Bible course to public school students. The rights that are guaranteed to students in all the other 'fields of course work' is also guaranteed to the students who choose to seriously study (some of) the Bible's content!

What is 'good' for the student of political science is also 'good' for the student of Bible history and literature! Both of these students have the same 'rights', and both of these students should be treated equally (under the protection of the Constitution)!

There must be an objective approach to the content of any class curriculum, and each student must be 'free' to 'struggle' with the various (varied) concepts that are being compassionately presented by the teacher to the classroom of students.

Seeking objective truth, with no 'imposition' of personal ideas on fellow students (or by a zealous teacher on his/her students) - this should be the 'goal' (indeed, must be the educational standard) in every class room. And this goal (indeed, requirement) holds true for the classroom where the Bible (as history and literature) is being taught!

No student should ever be 'put down' for adopting views that are different from the views of the majority of his fellow students. Mutual respect should be the atmosphere of the classroom, and the teacher has the responsibility to 'set the mood' of respect in the classroom.

If a particular student tries to engage in unfair criticism of a fellow student, that student should be justly (but kindly) corrected (and 'put in his/her place'). Of course, wholesome debate between students can be an 'aid' to the learning process, but disrespect and intimidation and bullying must be 'totally off limits' in any well-run classroom (a classroom where mutual respect 'reigns supreme')!

Subjective viewpoints, obviously, will be expressed in the classroom, but the teacher should continuously challenge all his/her students to seek for the 'objective truth' regarding ideas (concerning any topic).

Of course, in a Bible course, no debates regarding doctrinal differences (between students or with the teacher) can be allowed or tolerated. Denominational and doctrinal dialogues cannot be discussed in the public school room.

Studying differences in religion and in any other subject matter, is, of course, permitted. However, there is to be no promoting of a particular viewpoint (in any course, not just in a Bible course). No teacher (or student) is permitted to be a 'propagandist' for any particular belief (religious belief or any other belief)!

Those legitimate concerns and interests (doctrinal matters) that could arise as a result of studying the Bible for its historical and literary interests, these 'doctrinal differences' must be stopped by the discerning teacher.

The interested students who wish to learn more about the Bible, beyond the historical and literary content of the Bible, must be directed by the classroom teacher, to the presence of a pastor or to the presence of the student's parent. As a third (legitimate) option, the interested student can be told that his/her important questions can be 'addressed' at a private meeting with a qualified teacher - 'after school hours'!

Just as the various viewpoints and diverse ideas are openly shared in many subjects (like social studies or civics, etc.), so the various religious viewpoints (biblical concepts and value systems and religious differences, and even doctrinal differences) - these various viewpoints should be carefully and clearly 'exposed' to students - never 'imposed' on students! 'Exposed' - legal and encouraged. 'Imposed' - illegal and disallowed! The former is 'proper' and 'encouraged' and 'beneficial'! The latter is 'improper' and 'disallowed' and 'illegal'! The Bible's content should be exposed to the students, not imposed on the students!

There can be no coercion or 'high pressure' (from a teacher or from fellow students) when it comes to the study of any subject on the public school campus - and this principle, obviously, applies to the teaching of the Bible as a legitimate subject on public school campuses.

If Biblical doctrine is recognized, in the process of studying the historical and the literary content of the Bible, at that point the teacher simply dismisses any study of doctrine (and the teacher shares with her students that the Bible is 'rich in doctrine', but that the public school is not the format for such interesting study of doctrinal options).

The conscientious teacher (of the Bible) will not exploit this situation, but she will focus on only two areas of Biblical studies (namely, history and literature - the areas of study which the Supreme Court ruled on as proper and beneficial).

No pressure should ever be put on students - during the time that any differentiations and options and various convictions are being discussed. This must be the standard for all teaching - including the teaching of the various viewpoints taught in the Bible.

The same standard that teachers adhere to in all their courses - namely, 'expose' various viewpoints, but never 'impose' personal convictions and opinions - this is the same standard that must be applied to the teaching of the Bible in the public classrooms.

Most students, when once exposed to the Bible, will find the Bible to be one of the most fascinating books that they have ever studied! Of course, reiterating the words of the Supreme Court Ruling, the Bible must be taught only as history and as literature - not as the doctrine of a particular church or religion!

Not to teach the Bible in our Schools is to 'rob' our students of the book of all books which has influenced our Country's history, more than any other book! Fear that a teacher might use the Bible for religious purposes (or for his/her own personal agen-

da, such as evangelism), should not be a deterrent for teaching the Bible in a proper and legal manner!

A teacher of any subject can illegally 'impose' his/her own viewpoints, rather than being objective and properly detached while he/she teaches his/ her students.

What is feared in the Biblical curriculum (imposition of personal viewpoints) can easily happen in a civics course or in a social studies class or in a psychology class or in a history class or even in a science class! In all of these classes (and many other classes), the teacher can decide (deviously) to advance his/her own agenda (his/her own convictions and biases and interpretations).

It is proper, of course, for a teacher to expose his/her own opinions and convictions, but he/she must never 'impose' his/her own positions on a variety of beliefs and convictions and personal interpretations and personal preferences!

Obviously, a teacher (in any subject) is not required to pose as a 'neutral' person when alternative views are being exposed and discussed in the classroom. But, after he/she exposes his/her own viewpoints (and shares his/her own reasons for his/her choice of a particular viewpoint), the teacher must not impose upon his/her students the viewpoints and the interpretations that he/she has personally adopted!

Students want to know what and why their teacher has adopted a certain viewpoint, but, students do not want (or deserve) a teacher who is coercive or high-pressured in his/her presentation of alternative viewpoints. The wise teacher allows the students to 'learn to think for themselves' (after the alternative viewpoints have been clearly and objectively presented by a kind teacher).

Without coercion, the teacher must allow students to see the various positions and convictions, and then allow students to think for themselves (and then encourage the students to give their own justification for their personal persuasions regarding alternative options).

The process of communication, when teaching the Bible (as history and as literature) is identical to the process that is used (or should be used) in any other course.

There should not be a bias against teaching the Bible, for the Bible is worthy of being taught, along with every other worthy subject! The Bible, after all, has had a very strong influence in the development of Western Civilization!

A student is not fully educated if he is ignorant of the Bible - the Bible that has been honored for generations. The Bible has outsold every other book, for centuries!

Two scholars (James Panoch and David Barr), who together wrote an entire book, in which they seriously look at the subject of the Bible in Public Schools, are very comprehensive in their treatment of this subject. They note, "The founding of our country is heavily steeped in Biblical connotations of every sort. Literature and the arts have been greatly influenced by the Bible. The Bible has influenced the basic philosophy of Western civilization. The high value of the individual soul, a Biblically inspired concept, serves as the real basis of Western culture. As long as man lives on earth, the Bible will be valid and illuminating. As a piece of literature that reflects inner emotions the Bible has no equal."

***THE CRUMBLING FOUNDATION OF MATERIALISM WILL
SURELY 'LET YOU DOWN'!***

It would be interesting to observe (from an invisible seat in the balcony of life), the future course that these 'humanistically-oriented young people' take during the future decades that they live, following their high school graduation. Some, alarmingly, will 'buckle' under the pressure of daily life, with all the demands of job and family, and they will become depressed, or worse, some will commit suicide.

Without the 'undergirding' of a 'meaningful faith', to replace their own 'self-centered lifestyle', many young people (by the time they are middle-age) will 'cop out of life' - many will divorce and many will become 'lonely wolves', searching for some kind of significance for their life!

Of course, some of these 'young humanists' will 'use' their selfishly-motivated 'energy' to drive them to the 'top rung of the ladder', financially-speaking. But, in spite of their success with money, many of these humanists will experience disillusionment in their minds and in their emotions. "Is this all that life has to offer me - wine, women, and song? I thought I would surely be happy, after I climbed the ladder of materialism!"

I personally have observed (at a distance) the rise and the fall of a businessman (a brilliant man), over a period of many years. Whether or not this man ascended the materialistic 'ladder' of success, without the exercise of some 'exploitation' of other persons (especially other business men), I cannot say for sure, but he at times had a reputation that was not 'crystal clean'. I am not his 'judge', of course. I knew him to be 'brilliant', 'clever', 'innovative', and 'financially wise'! There was much about him that I 'admired'.

For a time in his career, he was considered a wealthy business man. He did not mind taking risks in the real estate market and in his land development business, and (apparently) some of his 'risks' 'paid off financially'! For some time, it seemed that he was 'riding high' in the world of land development (building hundreds of homes, etc.).

Through these several decades, when he diligently pursued his financial 'dreams'(and when he reached many of them) - that is, when he obviously was 'raking in a lot of money' - his marital relationship was really 'hurting'! I think it was rather obvious to his wife and to his three sons, that he was living a 'secret life'.

If it had not been that he had an unusual wife (a wife committed to maintaining her marriage), I think that this businessman (due to his own unfaithful lifestyle) would have been divorced by his wife long before it actually happened! After about 4 decades, this loving wife (who said she did not believe in divorce), finally could 'take it no longer'. In spite of her great reticence in pursuing a divorce, this committed woman knew finally that divorce was the 'only right answer' for her!

This 'successful businessman' was guilty of being both a 'materialist' and a 'sensualist', and both of these lifestyles are common expressions (demonstrations) of self-centered 'humanism'! The 'self-centered man' (humanist) had no problem to pursue the 'almighty dollar' and the 'beautiful body of a woman' (or several such women)!

The Bible makes it clear that those persons who are 'guided' by their 'fleshly appetites' (materialism and sensualism) are headed for 'eternal destruction' (unless deep repentance is expressed by these persons who are 'worshiping at the shrine of their flesh')!

As just stated, the Bible makes it clear that the man who lives by his 'dollars' and by his 'sexual passions', is the man who is in the process of dying (physically and spiritually)!

Sadly, this business man (who 'sold his marriage down the river') gradually also 'lost his health'. Was the loss of his health a result of the indulgent and careless lifestyle that was characteristic of him, for so very long? Of course, I do not know the answer to this question, but I think that this (indulgent lifestyle) might have been a 'contributing factor' that caused his ill health.

This highly-talented, brilliantly-minded man is today a 'sad sight to behold'! The one-time, highly-successful business man finally had to declare 'bankruptcy'! "How art the mighty fallen!" Spiritually-speaking, I am hopeful that this man (presently nearly

90 years old), in a pathetic physical condition, will finally 'turn over his life to God'! I personally have had a limited contact with him (by way of letters), and I have sought also (through my gifts of some Christian books) to 'direct him to the living Savior'! Recently (since writing the above description of him), I have received some letters from hi which have indicated that he finally is 'turning to God'!

Do all 'humanists-materialists' come to the time in their lives when they lose their marriage, when they lose their health, when they lose their wealth (when they have to declare bankruptcy)? The obvious and the honest answer is No! Some materialists (who have long lived an indulgent lifestyle) never lose their wealth, right up to the time that they die! Their materialist cravings (passions) are in their 'blood stream', as they are in the 'process of dying', and even when they breathe their last breathe!

Sadly, they never repudiated the 'god of materialism', to embrace the 'true and the living God' - the God who desired deeply to take them to the City whose streets are 'paved with pure gold'. These materialists 'sold themselves short', and they lived only for 'one world' rather than for 'two worlds' (this earthly dwelling and the eternal city). Jesus called the 'rich man' (who wrongly accumulated wealth only for himself, with no regard for the suffering ones around him), I say, Jesus called this materialist who 'swam in money' - 'You Fool'!

"This night your soul is required of you! You chose to bow your knee at the 'altar of materialism', instead of at the 'altar of the true and living God' - so now you are a 'double loser'. You lost all your earthly wealth (at the time of your physical demise), and you now have lost your soul, with no chance to enjoy the 'wealth' of heaven which I prepared for you, but which you failed to prepare yourself for."

The 'open view' folks are 'double winners' - for they 'get the best' that earth has to offer (in spite of the trials that they must endure on this 'sin-cursed' earth), and they 'get the best' that heaven has to offer them (beauty and communion and divinely-given 'assignments' and worship of Christ forever).

The 'close view' folks (humanists) are 'double losers' - for they miss out on the 'abundant life' which Christ has to offer on this planet, and they miss out on the 'eternal life' in heaven which was 'prepared' for them, but which they, in their self-centered lifestyle, failed to 'see' and to 'receive' as the supreme gift from the 'hand' of a generous and loving God!

How tragic to miss out on God's very best for a human being! How could the 'humanist' be so 'blind', failing to enjoy the 'best that earth has to offer' (commun-

ion with Christ), and failing to enjoy the 'best that God makes available' after this physical life is over - eternal life in the most glorious place in the universe!

THE LOVE-DRIVEN WAY OF LIFE LEADS TO HAPPINESS AND TO SELFLESS CARING!

Life does not 'consist in the abundance of things which a man possesses (owns)!' Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and yet (in the end) lose his own soul?"

"What shall a man give in exchange for his own soul?" When self-sufficient 'humanists' finally realize that they are not sufficient 'within themselves - to adequately 'live in time' and to adequately 'face the unknown future' (including their death), then they are becoming 'ready' to look beyond themselves to receive 'outside help'!

When these 'proud' humanists realize that the things of this world do not have the ability to 'quench the thirst' and to 'satisfy the hunger' of their never-dying soul, then these 'humanists' (materialists, sensualists, etc.) are 'ready' to accept God's invitation to receive 'new life' in Christ. When 'humanists' humble themselves before the living God, then they are ready to experience a true spiritual conversion!

There are millions of persons (humanists) in our world today who have become disillusioned with the world's pleasures and involvements, and who have come to their 'senses', and who are ready to leave the 'far country' of sensual (fleshly and worldly) living, to come humbly to the 'house' of the Heavenly Father - to the God who is lavish with His tender love, and who is abundant in His gifts of mercy and forgiveness!

One such 'prodigal' (worldly-minded person) who tried the 'pleasures of the world' for a long time, but who finally discovered the meaning of life in Christ, is a man by the name of Herman Cohen, 1821-1871. The following is his remarkable testimony of his discovery of Christ, after he wandered for so long in the 'far country'! A 'prodigal' came home! A self-centered 'humanist' who finally realized that the many 'roads' of the 'world' were 'dead-end roads', and that the 'road of Christ' is the only 'open-ended' road in life!

"I searched for it in the poetic nights of glorious climate, in the clear waters of the Swiss lakes, in the most magnificent scenery. I have also sought it in fashionable drawing rooms, in splendid dinners, balls, and festivities. I have been looking for it in riches, in the excitement of gambling, in romance, in an adventurous life and in the satisfaction of an unmeasured ambition. I have sought happiness in artistic name and in all the pleasures of the senses and the mind. Indeed, where, O my God, did I not seek it, this happiness, and the dream of all human hearts?

"What is this happiness? God alone can satisfy the longing of the human heart. Moreover, God has descended into the world in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ; he has become the companion of our pilgrimage, the Bread of our souls. However, someone may say, I do not believe in Jesus Christ. I can only answer: nor did I, for this reason, I was unhappy. Let us love Jesus. There is only one happiness and that is to love Jesus and to be loved by him." (Taken From 'Glimpses of God through the Ages' by Esther Carls Dodgen, pgs. 209-210)

The three most important words in the English language are these: 'God Is Love'. 'Love' is the central message of Christianity! In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, the focus of all writers is God's Love.

God's love is the essence of God's character! All the attributes (traits) of God are expressions (demonstrations) of God's love. God cannot do anything or say anything that is a contradiction of His love. The 'source' of all God's attributes (knowledge, wisdom, power, justice, righteousness, etc.) is His Love!

To the extent that one is 'godlike', to that same extent is he 'loving'. To the extent that one loves God, to that same extent will he love his fellow men! One cannot profess to love God, and, at the same time, despise his fellow human beings. How can one claim to love the 'invisible' God, and, at the same time, not love and cherish his (visible) fellow 'human beings'? He who loves God must also love his 'brethren'. The best way to demonstrate that one loves God is to demonstrate that he loves his fellow human beings!

He who is truly 'converted' is he who is empowered by the Spirit to love those persons who are around him! Amazingly, the person, whose nature God has transformed, is the one who is empowered to love, not only his 'friends', but, strangely enough, also his 'enemies' (i.e., to love those persons who are unlikeable, to love those persons who are hateful towards the 'converted one').

The transformed person is able to do the 'supernatural thing' - namely, to return 'good' for 'evil', to pray for those who spitefully use him, to desire nothing but 'the best' for those who are 'wretched' in their behavior towards him! Of course, it is only by the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit that a believer is enabled to take the 'high road' of love, rather than to take the 'low road' of hate and vengeance.

Following the example of Jesus, who never sought to destroy His enemies, but rather sought to 'save' His enemies, so, in like manner, the follower of Jesus, while justly hating sinful behavior, will always (in love) forgive the wrongdoer and will seek the 'salvation' of the sinner!

The 'open view' person believes that God has invaded this world, and that this 'invasion' was done when the Son of God came to earth to 'seek and to save the lost ones'. The 'open view' person believes that, after the 'redemptive work' of the Son was completed (death and resurrection), God sent the Holy Spirit into the world, for the purpose of 'implementing' the 'redemptive work' of Christ, in the heart of every receptive believer in the world.

The Spirit (symbolically-speaking) now takes the 'spilled blood' of Christ (from the Cross), and the Spirit 'smears' that precious 'blood' of Christ on the 'heart' of every receptive (repentant and contrite) person!

What was 'objectively accomplished' when Christ died (namely, 'the purchased salvation of mankind') is now 'subjectively experienced' every time a 'sinner' personally receives that salvation into his own heart, and also every time a "believer" accepts the gift of 'inner cleansing' through his sincere surrender of himself to the Lordship of Christ!

The 'open view' folks believe that the 'invasion' of God to earth was the "invasion of divine love"! "Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down, Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown."

***THE TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE SELF-CENTERED
WAY OF LIFE!***

If the 'central message' of Christianity is 'Love' (which it is), then the 'central message' of Humanism is 'Self-Centered Adequacy'. This 'message' (theme) can be described with various phrases, and all these phrases apply to persons whose philosophy is simply a different 'branch' and 'manifestation' and 'leg' of Humanism.

The same 'central message' of 'Self-Centered Adequacy' (self-orientation) is found in 'materialism' and in 'scientism' and in 'sensualism' and in several other 'legs' of the 'octopus of humanism'!

Many different 'legs', but the identical characteristic is found in all the 'legs'. Different 'manifestations' of Humanism, but the 'same 'essence' is found in all the 'legs' of the 'octopus! The 'self of a person that is not 'crucified' (not surrendered to the living Christ) is an 'ugly self', a 'self' that is difficult to be 'around'.

Such a self-centered 'self', is a 'self' that is 'overly-sensitive' and, thus, is easily offended by others. A 'self' that is not surrendered to God, is a 'self' that is often 'out of sorts' with its 'self', and, thus, obviously, such a person is often 'out of sorts' with other persons around him/her.

Such a person is 'looking out for one's self' (and his own interests), and thus such a person is 'defensive' and 'easily offended'. Far from having a 'motivation to serve others' in a self-forgetful manner, this self-centered person expects others to serve him and his interests.

In his proud (self-centered) way, he is not able to think about the needs of others. Instead, he expects others to serve him. He is 'center stage', and he desires to be 'in the lime light', and he expects others to give him a lot of 'attention'. He has 'no problem' (i.e., he has no 'check' in his conscience) if he chooses to 'exploit others', if his 'cruel actions' help him in his 'advancement' of his own self-centered 'agenda'.

He can easily resort to lying and to deceit and to scheming and to plotting (total sacrifice of 'integrity') if such tactics promote his 'selfish purposes'! He 'uses' people, for as long as 'necessary', and then, after 'using' them, he 'throws them aside', and he proceeds to his next 'innocent victim'.

Of course, the above description of 'selfish actions' (wicked actions) is not a 'full description' of all persons who are humanists. All persons who are humanists (in one 'branch' or another) are, because they are 'living for self' rather than for the living God, is definitely living 'on a slippery slope'! Any person on that 'slippery slope' has the potential of 'sliding down' to the depths of 'human wickedness', to become a 'wretched' person (that meets the description as given in the above paragraph).

Without God at the 'helm of our life's ship', there is no 'telling' as to what the 'fate' of our 'ship of life' will experience. For many reasons, it is 'dangerous' indeed to 'face the storms of life', without Christ at the 'helm of the ship of our life'!

THE GUIDING HAND OF THE UNSEEN CHRIST DURING THE STORMS OF LIFE!

When I was a child, my mother gave me the well-known painting that portrays a young man who is steering a large boat, amidst a terrible storm in which the waves are almost coming into his boat. The young man is looking straight ahead, determined in action, and concentrating on the proper steering of his boat. The calm expression on his face shows that he is confident that he will make it through the storm.

Now, before I reveal the 'central message' of this painting, the brief description that I have just given, thus far, might be interpreted by a 'self-sufficient humanist' as an illustration of the 'determination' of a 'humanist' to make it through 'life's storms' by his own 'human strength' and by his own 'intellectual prowess'.

The 'central message' of this interesting painting is this: 'Christ's presence' (i.e., the faintly shown presence of Christ's beautiful and manly body) is seen, just behind the young man. The loving presence of the manly Christ is overseeing the troubled waters and the endangered youth! The 'Lord of the storm' is giving a spirit of calm to the young man, amidst a time when the young man is subject to the 'angry waves'! The left hand of the loving Christ is on the shoulder of the young man. While the young man is caught in a death-threatening storm, the right hand of Christ is extended toward the storm, and Christ is directing the youth through the dangerous and death-threatening storm!

I viewed this unusual painting ('Christ's guidance of the boy in the storm') - yes, I viewed that amazing painting almost daily when I was a child and a youth. This famous (heart-moving) painting was hung on my bedroom wall, and it was often the first image that I saw when I awakened from my sleep each morning!

The 'message' of that painting abides with me, to this very time in my life (and I will soon be 70 years old)! It is most comforting to me to know that Christ cares for me, personally, and that He has promised to be with me during the 'storms of my life', and that He bids me obey specific 'directions' during the 'storms' of my life. His presence is 'invisible' (unseen to the 'naked human eyes'), but, nevertheless, by faith I am able to sense His loving presence and to discern His unfailing 'guidance' (as is so movingly demonstrated in this special 'painting').

The effect (influence) of this painting has been very powerful, throughout my entire 'Christian life'. I wanted my oldest grandson to have a copy of that wonderful painting. He is presently going through the 'challenging teen years', but I am thankful that this painting (that he has had in his possession since his childhood) still remains on his desk! I hope that he, like me, will remember the important 'message' of that painting, namely, that the 'Lord of the Storm' will give God's children protection and guidance during all the 'storms' of life!

THERE IS A 'WIDE GULF' BETWEEN HUMANISM AND CHRISTIANITY!

Humanists believe that they can 'make it on their own' in life, through 'sunshine' and through 'rain', that they can do anything in life 'if they simply set their minds' on the goal they want to reach. Man is inherently 'good', and the so-called 'bad' in the world is due to the lack of education and lack of training. Humanists give 'primacy' to their own brains, to their own creative problem-solving abilities!

They bravely declare that they do not need any 'outside help' (which, to them, is a sign of total 'weakness' in humanity)! Humanists, self-confidently, believe that they can make it through all the 'storms of life', without the help of God! They 'pride them-

selves' in the use of all of their own independent 'resources'! They pride themselves in their own 'power' and 'competence' and 'courage', and they scorn Christians (as weaklings) for their 'dependence upon a higher power'!

Humanists believe that there is no such thing as 'original sin' (i.e., a corrupt human nature). Man is making tremendous 'progress' through the 'marvels of scientific discovery and inventions'. It is 'Christians' who are 'weak' and 'dependent' and 'ignorant' and 'ineffective' and 'cowardly' and 'archaic'. Christians are to be 'pitied' because they think they cannot 'make it through life' ('through the storms') unless they have 'outside help' ('a higher power').

Humanists declare that science alone has the answers to the questions of the world, the solutions to the problems of the world. Christians are 'outdated' and 'outmoded'. Humanists believe that if one cannot prove something through the 'five senses' of the human body, and through the 'rational instrument' of the human brain, then there is no 'objective reality'! We humanists 'rule the world', for we alone know how to 'find' reality - namely, through the 'scientific method'!

As noted (in detail) before, God 'writes His message' on the 'pages of Nature' (and scientists help humanity to 'read' that message, and to use that message in the service of mankind - like Dr. Carver who took the small peanut and used it amazingly for the benefit of mankind). But God also writes His message on the pages of the Holy Scriptures.

Sadly, the prideful and the God-rejecting 'humanists' are not able to discern and to properly interpret the 'message of God', as it appears both on the 'pages' of Nature, and on the 'pages' of the Holy Scriptures!

At the 'heart' of humanism is 'Pride' (self-sufficiency). The Bible declares that 'God Hates Pride'. It is worth reminding ourselves from time to time of what the Bible says about the dangers of pride (when we ourselves as believers tend to be lifted up in our own eyes, and when we come in contact with persons who are easily identified as 'humanists' - sensualists, materialists):

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit goes before a fall!" "God despises the proud, but God gives grace unto the humble!" "Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and He will lift you up in due time!" "Man is desperately wicked, who can know it?"

**ARE YOU COMMITTED TO THE TEACHINGS AND THE
LIFE OF BASIC CHRISTIANITY?**

Who can doubt that man is 'born in sin' (that is, that man is born with a propensity to be disobedient to the Creator, and a propensity to be self-centered)? The evidence is all around us, and we sense this propensity (to do evil) within our own corrupt heart!

The Biblical description of man's corrupt heart is both realistic and it is depressing! "No one is good - no one in the entire world is innocent. No one has ever really followed God's paths, or even truly wanted to. Everyone has turned away; all have gone wrong. No one anywhere has kept on doing what is right; not one. Their talk is foul and filthy like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are loaded with lies. Everything they say has in it the sting and poison of deadly snakes.

"Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. They are quick to kill, hating anyone who disagrees with them. Wherever they go they leave misery and trouble behind them, and they have never known what it is to feel secure or enjoy God's blessing. They care nothing about God nor what he thinks of them." (Romans 3:10-18 Life Application Bible)

Christianity, of all 'religions', has the 'realistic diagnosis' of man's corrupt nature (as described above), but Christianity, of all religions, also has the only 'cure' for man's degenerate condition. Christianity not only (realistically) describes man's corrupt and dying state (because of the ravishes of sin), but Christianity - and Christianity alone - offers to 'fallen man' a drastic and a definite 'cure' for man's 'deadly malady'.

Because of mankind's helpless and hopeless 'condition of lostness' (due to sin's devastation), the Son of God came to earth to provide a drastic and a thorough transformation for mankind. Forgiveness for sins committed and cleansing from self-centeredness. 'The blood, the blood, O wonder of wonders, it cleanses me!'

It is the 'blood of Jesus' that cleanses from all unrighteousness! Forgiveness for what we have done and cleansing from what we are! We are a sinner by nature and we are a sinner by choice! We have a double problem (sinful practices and selfish attitudes; outer transgressions and inner corruption of our nature).

We have, through Christ, a double solution (forgiveness for wrongdoing, and cleansing from a self-centered motivation). Our God, because of Christ's 'finished work', is able to save us 'to the uttermost' - to give us both forgiveness and inner cleansing! The Spirit of God (depending upon our faith and our surrender) is able to both save our soul from sinning, and to cleanse our inner heart from corruption.

The Spirit of God will 'witness with our human spirit' that our sins have been forgiven - that our sins are 'hidden in the depths of the sea of God's forgetfulness'. Also, following our conversion to Christ, the Spirit will 'cleanse our heart' of the pollution of selfish motives, and then (gloriously) the Spirit 'will shed abroad God's love in our heart!'

Justification and Sanctification are both the work of the Holy Spirit, and the former door that humans (sinners) must take is 'confession of all sins', and the latter door that humans (believers) must take is 'full surrender' to the will of God!

'Confession' and 'Surrender' are the two all-important 'passports' that humans must discover if they are to enjoy true fulfillment in life - strength for today and hope for tomorrow, and final entrance through that 'Golden Gate' into Eternal Glory!

Every 'step' towards 'abundance on earth' and final 'victory after death' is made possible because of the 'finished work' of Christ (His death and resurrection), and this is made possible, in addition, because of the powerful and the life-changing ministry of the loving Holy Spirit!

The gift of abundant life on earth and the gift of eternal life in heaven have both been purchased by Christ for every single human being (without exception), but only those who, from their heart and from their will, say YES to the offer of 'full salvation' will actually enjoy this divinely-offered Gift!

What God, through the 'work' of Christ, offers to 'lost mankind', must be personally accepted by a humble and receptive sinner, if the 'objective accomplishment' of Christ is to be experienced subjectively! "A bell is not a bell until you ring it", and 'salvation is not personally enjoyed until you accept it!'

The 'objective accomplishment' must become the 'subjectively enjoyed experience' - before the 'purpose of Christ' in coming to this sinful world is fulfilled! For those who reject the offer of 'new life' (personal fellowship with God), Christ for those persons 'died in vain'!

Tragedy of all tragedies for a person (sinner) to find himself in 'hell', where he will have to cry out 'Why was I so foolish to turn down the Gift of all gifts- the Lord Jesus Christ', the most beautiful and the most loving person in the Universe, who came to earth to rescue me from my sins and from my sin's ultimate consequence- HELL???'

Christianity, of all religions, is the most 'realistic' in its view of 'human nature'. On one hand, because of the 'fall of mankind' (Genesis 2), Christianity teaches that man's heart is 'desperately wicked' (Isaiah 64 and Romans 3), and, yet, on the other hand, Christianity teaches that, because of Christ's 'finished work', man's nature can be cleansed and can be restored and can be healed.

Christianity makes the 'daring claim' that the 'nature of Christ' (nature of holy love) can become a 'part and parcel' of the redeemed nature of a 'one-time' wicked person! The Holy Spirit can affect a total change in the heart of a one-time God-rejecter (such as an atheistic humanist), and the result is a transformed life, a life controlled by the Holy Spirit!

The 'miracle of transformation' is at the heart of Christianity. Christianity, while it has rituals and ceremonies and laws and standards and religious forms, is not these 'things' that 'define' Christianity. Christianity, it is true is a 'religion' and Christianity (in some ways) can be studied, along with other world religions, for instance, in a high school 'comparative religion' course. But Christianity, far more than a religion, is centered in a Person! That Person is Jesus Christ!

That person (Jesus of Nazareth) lived a sinless life, that person died a life of substitution for mankind's sins, and that person arose from the dead on the third day, and that person ascended to heaven where He now 'sits' at the right hand of authority beside the throne of His Heavenly Father. Also, as pointed out earlier, this all-powerful Christ sent the Holy Spirit into the world to carry out Christ's redemptive work (to make 'real' the work of justification and sanctification to the hearts and the lives of multitudes of all ages).

Christianity is 'Christ' personified through the work of the Spirit. The evidence that Christianity is more than a 'religion' is seen in the lives of millions of sinners who have been converted, and in the lives of millions of believers who have been sanctified (cleansed from their self-centered drives and their ulterior motives).

Only the Christ of Christianity can change a 'bad man' into a 'good man', can change a 'self-centered man' into a 'love-filled man', can change a 'greedy man' into a 'generous man', can change a 'lust-driven man' into a 'pure-minded man', and on and on and on!

Christianity is not a 'mere religion', but Christianity, instead, is a 'dynamic relationship' with the God of the Universe! Christianity does not know 'about' God, but Christianity actually 'knows' God in a personal (loving) relationship! Christianity is heart knowledge, not only head knowledge. Christianity is forgiving, not vindictive. Christi-

anity is reconciling, not alienating. Christianity is love, not indifference. Christianity is active, not passive. Christianity is concrete, not abstract. Christianity is positive, not negative. Christianity is hopeful, not despairing. Christianity is accepting, not rejecting. Christianity is humble, not proud. Christianity is gracious, not cruel.

Christianity is personable, not distant and aloof. Christianity is initiating, not withdrawing. Christianity is universal, not exclusive. Christianity is powerful, not impotent. Christianity is life-transforming, not life-deteriorating. Christianity is forward-moving, not backward-looking. Christianity is a joy-filled life, not a regret-filled life.

IS YOUR LIFE A 'CHANNEL' FOR THE FLOW OF GOD'S LOVE?

To love God supremely, and to love one's 'neighbor' as he loves himself - to love in that manner is, obviously, not humanly possible. Before one can love in this manner, he must receive a 'supernatural enablement from on high' - from the empowering Holy Spirit!

Someone (cleverly) said that "the Christian life is not hard, it is 'impossible' if you try to live it on your own!" Because this 'love' (for God and for one's fellow men) is a 'godlike love', it will be necessary for a person (believer) to 'receive' that supernatural love - from outside of one's self.

It is a love that is not capable of being practiced, unless there is a divinely-given empowerment to the believer! The 'good news' is this: What God commands (love), and what my own 'nature' demands (that I live by love), God Himself provides (supernatural love)!

This special love is a 'gift' from God, to be received by the humble and the receptive heart of man. "The love of God is shed abroad in our heart, by the Holy Spirit!" (Romans 5:5). Jesus said, "Ask (for this love), and you shall receive!" God is the 'source' of this divine-type love, we (as believers) are the 'channels' for God's love, and the world of hurting (needy) persons are the 'recipients' of this divine-like love!

What the world most needs (tender and forgiving and healing love), Christians are most ready (equipped) to give! What is the 'distinguishing mark' of all true Christians? "By this shall all men (in the world) know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another?" By the demonstration of love - by that unique love that is patterned after the love of Christ!

Love - concrete love, practical love, non-judgmental love, caring love, tender love, patient love, humble love, generous love, understanding love, suffering love, personal love, adaptable love, discerning love, impartial love, enduring love, hopeful love, joy-

ous love, forgiving love, affirming love, corrective love, honest love, redemptive love! These 'phrases' describe the concrete meaning of God's imparted (supernatural) love in my personal life!

It is the kind of 'love' that goes far beyond 'human love'. Human love is based (generally-speaking) on the 'emotions of the heart'! Divine-type love (called agape love) is based (generally-speaking) on the 'exercise of the will'! I 'will' to love someone who is not even 'loveable' (not naturally 'attractive' or 'likeable'), and (through the Spirit's empowering) I 'will' nothing but the 'best' for that rather 'repulsive' person (and this God-like nature within me is capable of loving even my 'enemy', whom I personally dislike)!

Like a 'many-sided diamond', God's indwelling love has many 'sides', many 'dimensions', and many 'expressions'! This special love is a beautiful, many-faceted revelation of the very 'heart of God'. Persons (believers) have the 'joy' of experiencing the 'divine nature', combined with their own 'human nature', and the result of this 'combination' between the 'two natures' is 'saintly living'!

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus!" There are no greater thoughts to dwell upon, than the thoughts of Jesus Christ (the Son of God)!

There are no greater emotions to have and to express, than the very emotions of Jesus Christ! There is no greater vision to have, than the vision of Jesus Christ! There is no more powerful mission to be involved in, than the powerful (transforming) mission that Jesus Christ is involved in! There is no 'calling' that is nobler, than the high and holy 'call' of Jesus Christ!

Why 'sell one's self short' in life, by taking the 'low road' of self-centeredness, when one can take the 'high road' of fellowship with God and service to one's fellow men? "Only one life to live. It will soon be passed. Only what is done for Christ will last!"

I want to make my life 'count' for something significant, to be involved in that which gives 'eternal dividends'! And what gives 'eternal dividends'? Work for the Master of Men - that is, influencing 'never dying souls' (human beings) to 'turn to the Cross of Christ' to be 'saved' for time and for eternity!

This divinely-imparted love (the direct 'gift' from God, given to humble and surrendered 'hearts') is 'multi-faceted', is 'many colored', is 'very adaptable' and is adequate for all of life's various situations and circumstances.

God's love is eternal, and it never fails, but, admittedly, sometimes the channels for that love are not always adequate (fallible Christians). Only as believers allow themselves to be 'filled with the Holy Spirit', are they empowered to love in a supernatural way.

When believers are 'walking in the Spirit', they are 'walking in love', for it is the Spirit who 'sheds abroad the love of God' in the human heart! When a believer (tragically) 'walks according to his own fleshly desires', he has no 'power', no 'incentive' to 'reach out in love' to needy persons. 'Self-preoccupation' always destroys the motivation to think of others and to care for others.

The Christian's 'channel' (heart and mind and spirit) must be kept 'clear' and 'open' in order for the Spirit's love to freely flow. Every day it would be 'wise' for a believer to ask the Spirit to 'cleanse' his 'channel', that he might be (for each day) an effective and love-filled servant for the Lord Jesus Christ!

Experiencing and practicing this type of supernatural love - love that is imparted by the Holy Spirit to the human heart - is an alien idea to the mind and to the understanding of the 'humanist' (secularist). Jesus said, "By this shall all people know that you are my disciples, if you have loved one for another."

While we 'hate' the relativistic philosophy of the humanistic person, we (as Christians) must always demonstrate a loving concern for the life and the welfare of the humanist! Hate the philosophy of humanism, but love the humanist himself! "Speaking the truth in love!" Defending the truth (hating the 'false philosophy'), but always showing love and kindness and 'warmth' to the person (humanist) who 'holds' the false ideas!

The Holy Spirit has come to 'uplift' Christ in our world! Christ is truly 'lifted up' when persons imitate Christ's kind of love, when persons 'reach out in love' to broken and to 'spiritually-destitute' persons! Believers best 'uplift the Christ' when they (sincerely, but imperfectly) imitate Christ's love!

The love that reaches out to the lost ones, the love that prays for saint and sinner alike, the love that forgives the transgressor, the love that gives to the poor, the love that listens to the hurting one, the love that endures hardship with hope, the love that lives simply and that gives generously!

Growth in Christlikeness is always growth in love! "Faith, hope, and love abide, but the greatest of these is love!" When the world passes away, love will remain, for 'God Is Love!'

Love is not merely 'feelings', not simply 'good intentions'. Instead, love is a 'commitment', an 'action', 'a way of life', 'getting your hands dirty' in practical projects! Love is 'giving to the poor', or 'helping someone solve a problem'. Love is 'hard work'.

Someone said that 'a bell is not a bell until you ring it', and it can be said that 'love is not love until you give it away!' Similarly, as the Bible says, "Faith without works is dead!" (Book of James)

Love as a 'sentiment', as an 'affection', as a 'warm feeling' - is authentic and these 'heart experiences' are to be 'cherished'. But, these 'heart experiences', while they are never to be despised or belittled, are only the 'beginning expressions' of love, the 'preparatory feelings' that must become motivations for 'launching out' into the 'fields of human needs'.

Affections for someone are good, but affections (by themselves) will not meet the practical needs of the suffering ones around us. I may (and should) have a 'warm and compassionate feeling' for the plight of the poor persons, but until 'action' is taken to actually give to the poor, my love has really not been properly demonstrated.

Remember: 'A bell is not a bell, until you ring it', and 'love is really not love (at least in a practical form) until you give it away!' Put very simply, until a need is met, until a problem is tacked and 'solved', love is not really manifested, love is not visible, love is not concrete, love is not practical, love is not fully following Christ's example (who went about 'doing good' of all kinds)!

IS YOUR 'SPIRITUAL GIFT' A CHANNEL TO SHARE THE LOVE OF GOD?

Sometimes the question is asked: 'What relationship is there between the 'love' that God has imparted to my heart, and the use of my spiritual gifts? All spiritual gifts are to be used to bless other lives, to edify the church, and to bring 'healing' to the outer world. And, most importantly, every gift is to be used in a manner that demonstrates God's love to the one who is benefitted by the spiritual gift.

All believers are to 'channel' their God-imparted love, through their particular 'spiritual gift'! Every 'spiritual gift' is to be 'guided' by God's love, and never should a spiritual gift be used to bring attention to the person who is exercising the spiritual gift. To 'bless others' and to 'bring glory' to the Giver of the 'spiritual gift'!

Sadly and hurtfully, the Corinthian Christians (in the early days of Christianity) were 'proud', rather than 'humble', in the use of their spiritual gifts. They were using the gifts to 'draw attention to themselves'. These carnal Christians, puffed up in their

*own self-estimation, did not bring glory to the Lord of the Church. Instead, their self-
ish use of the 'gifts' brought much distress and much division to all the members of
the Corinthian Christian Church.*

*When God's love is the motivation for the use and the expression of spiritual gifts,
there is no competition and there is no comparison among the members of the church.
God's love is the 'guiding force' in the local church, and there is a 'loving regard' be-
tween the members of the local church.*

*"Each for all and all for each!" "We are one in the Spirit, we are one in love." Love-
filled believers desire only to use their spiritual gifts 'to build up the church', never to
tear down the church through loveless actions of proud 'self-seeking' (the problem of
the 'carnal' believers at Corinth)!*

*The love of God 'shed abroad in the heart of believers' - that is the 'constant'! The
love of God is the same for every believer, although, obviously, each believer will en-
joy and will express that love in a different manner. But, regardless of the various
ways in which believers experience and enjoy that 'universal love' of God, it is true to
say that the 'eternal characteristics' of God's love, obviously, do not change, regard-
less of whose 'believing heart' that 'universal love' enters!*

*But even though there is the 'constant' in the characteristic of God's 'eternal love', it
is obviously true that there is an amazing difference in the expressions of God's love,
as that love is 'applied' to the needs of persons to whom believers minister. All be-
lievers must 'channel' their God-imparted (universal) love, through their particular
'spiritual gift'.*

*The manifestation of God's love, through their God-given gift, can bring great bless-
ing to their fellow men. Each believer must recognize that the manifestation of
his/her 'channeled love' will be different than the manifestation of love in most other
Christians. Each Christian is specifically endowed with a 'gift' or 'gifts', and the love-
controlled use of his/her gift will produce unique results!*

*For instance, the love that is 'channeled' through the Christian whose 'spiritual gift'
is Mercy will not likely be involved in 'Problem Solving' (that is, the manifestation of
love in a believer who has the 'gift of administration'). The practical manifestation
of the 'gift of mercy' will likely be 'acts of charity', 'acts of compassion', 'weeping
with those who weep', 'staying by the bedside of a cancer-ridden friend', 'making
phone calls to check on the elderly folks', and many other manifestations of 'mercy'!*

Each of us (believers) channel God's love through different 'spiritual gifts' and, therefore, the manifestation (concrete expression) of love will be different for each believer! The important thing is that we (believers who worship within the same congregation) do not 'judge' each other, regarding the various expressions of 'spiritual gifts'! None of us (believers) are equipped by the 'Lord of the Church' to express God's love in the same way, for God has equipped each believer with a different 'gift set' of abilities!

VAST VARIETY IN GOD'S CREATION, WITH ONE COMMON SERIOUS DISEASE!

When one views Nature and also when one observes various human personalities, it is obvious that the Creator loves 'variety'! We live in a world - a beautiful world - that is full of variety. Vast variety in 'Nature'! Variety is found in different races, nationalities, backgrounds, and personalities. And (as noted in our present context), God's love is manifested to the 'sons of men' in a great variety of ways.

The number of different talents, and the number of God-given 'spiritual gifts' - this alone demonstrates that God is not 'static' in His creation, but, instead God is totally 'dynamic' in His creation. No two persons look exactly alike, and no two persons possess the same intellectual abilities and talents and interests and aptitudes and personality and background and nationality and God-given 'calling'.

Of course, not every human being has the same 'potential' for achievements in life. Not all human beings have the same 'drive' in life, to work and to explore and to discover. Some individuals, for instance, are highly energetic and goal-oriented, and other individuals are more placid and laid back and non-energetic!

Each person, obviously, has a different DNA. Some students (in school) work hard and they still receive average grades, whereas other students verily 'open their textbooks' (real textbooks or digital textbooks) and they easily 'pull' superior grades! For His own mysterious purposes, God has made each of us differently.

However, regarding 'spiritual gifts', Jesus made it clear that 'unto whom much is given, much is required!' All believers are to use the kind and the number of 'gifts' that he has received, for the glory of God! The two talented people are honored by God just as much as the five talented people - if each has been productive in the use of the gifts that they were given! God favors all persons, and God wants to use all persons, and God will reward all persons (in the end) if all persons have been faithful to fulfill their unique 'call' from God!

As has been pointed out repeatedly (in this book), there is one thing that is in 'common' among the entire race. All persons (according to the declaration of the Bible) are 'sinners' in need of forgiveness and salvation and spiritual healing. And,

thanks be to the Heavenly Father, all persons have access to the 'universal offer' of divinely-wrought salvation (spiritual conversion). All persons (regardless of their 'wide differences') can be 'saved' from their sins, and they can have their names recorded in the 'Book of Life' in heaven.

Everyone can know that, regardless of what they have done or regardless of what they have said, they are forgiven by God and that they are going to go to heaven after they die! There are no exceptions that offer a 'new life' here on earth, and 'eternal life' in heaven is extended to every person who lives on this planet!

Amidst all the vast differences that exist (by God's design) among all human beings, there is a 'common denominator' among all persons. As previously noted, every person (without exception) is a 'sinner'. We have all sinned, and we have all come short of God's holy standards and His revealed expectations. We have all 'taken control' of our own lives.

We are all infected with the universal human 'disease' - the 'disease of self-centeredness'. We all think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think! Everyone has gone his own independent way, and our self-centered determinations have brought havoc and destruction to our own 'selves'. Each of us thinks that 'our way of doing things' is the 'only way', and we have had no inclination to 'listen to the advice of others'.

Many of us have bowed at the 'shrine' of materialism, but the accumulation of money has only given us an inner emptiness! We have bowed at the 'shrine' of sensualism (sex), but we have found that we have no 'satisfaction' for living, even amidst our 'drive' for sexual gratification! We thought that 'science' (and what science can give us) would 'satisfy our every desire' (lots of electronic gadgets), but there is a 'vacuum' within us that can never be filled with all the abundance of scientific gadgets.

**PREPARED 'PLACE' (HEAVEN) FOR A 'PREPARED' PEOPLE
(REPENTANT, TRUSTING)!**

Pleasure trips and scenic ventures leave us 'empty' and 'dissatisfied'. After we get our diplomas and after we receive our academic acclaims, we say to ourselves, "So what shall I now do, and where do I go from here. After I am dead (and my body is returned to the dust), what will my 'intellectual prowess' and my 'social standing' and my 'material wealth' mean to me then?"

Pleasure now and death soon! I will soon be forgotten even by my own family and by my close friends. The time will come (rather soon) when no one will even remember that I existed on earth! And no one will really care, for the future generation will be focused on how they themselves can live, amidst the 'rough and tumble' of their own cruel world! So, what is the purpose of my existence?

It is when persons (of all colors and clime and religious backgrounds) begin to 'get honest with themselves', and when they begin to realize the brevity of life and the uncertainty of life and the futility of life and the finality of life - it is when these kinds of 'considerations' prevail (even in the life of a humanist) that the 'Holy Spirit' has an 'opening' to the conscience and to the heart and to the mind and to the spirit of a human being (a lost person).

"It is not all of life to live, nor all of death to die, but after physical existence is over, every human being must 'face his Creator' - for examination and for judgment!" To live like the 'devil' on planet earth means that such a person probably will live with the devil forever! A most horrifying thought! One who lives like the devil on earth would certainly not feel comfortable to live with a company of 'saints' in heaven! The environment (in heaven) would be far too alien for such a wicked person.

However, if a wicked man (like the thief on the cross, near to Jesus) calls upon the Lord for mercy, at the last hour of his life, that 'death bed repentant' will certainly be welcomed into heaven. Doubtless, such a person (who knows nothing about the meaning of Christian discipleship) will undergo a lot of growing and learning (probably from other saints) in his new heavenly home!

The person who has lived for Christ all of his life, will doubtless also be a 'student' in heaven, for the Christian growth of a lifetime has only been the 'introduction' to the vast amount of learning that awaits the heavenly citizen!

It was C.S. Lewis who said (using an analogy) that our time as believers on this earth is like reading the 'introduction' of a book. When we enter heaven, it is like starting chapter one of the ventures of learning and growing! And in heaven, we will never come to the last chapter of the 'book' of learning. Learning will go on forever! Wonderful!

The process of 'becoming' brings the indescribable joy of living in heaven. The focus of learning in heaven will be on God - that is, on exploring the nature of God, on exploring the mystery of the 'holy trinity' (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)! We, as heavenly citizens, will never, never exhaust the glorious truths regarding the profound nature of the three-person God!

So, the death-bed repentant one, and the long-time Christian - both have something in common (in heaven) - both will spend all eternity glorifying the holy trinity, learning more and more about the beauty and the power and the nature and the purposes of that holy trinity!

We, in company with the multitudes of other redeemed saints, will probably spend a lot of time discussing the truths that we mutually learn, about the ways and the wonders of the holy trinity. The most amazing of all 'truths' to contemplate are the 'truths' that are revealed by our God, regarding Himself.

The truths we learn about God, while on earth, objectively from the Bible, and subjectively through communion with the blessed Holy Spirit - these truths, as wonderful and as glorious as they are, are only a 'foretaste' of the revelation of the fuller truths that we shall have unfolded to us in heaven, by the holy trinity!

There could never be 'boredom' of our spirit or 'confusion' to our mind when we are sitting at the 'feet' of heaven's teachers! The Spirit will be immediately present to each of the citizens of heaven, to communicate and to interpret and to apply the eternal truths, to our spirit and to our mind!

Likely, our teachers will be assigned to us by the Lord of Heaven. All of us know, as we observe our world, that there are special Spirit-inspired teachers (i.e., teachers who are very knowledgeable, very experienced, much trained, very mature, and very godly) - persons who have 'walked and talked' with Jesus for a long time.

Persons whose spiritual walk has been very close to the Master. Persons who have an unusual comprehension of the 'Word of God'. Persons who are 'deep in the faith' and persons whose heart and hands (spiritually-speaking) have long remained 'clean and pure'! Heaven will be 'full' of teachers who will be willing and glad to teach each of us about the deeper truths regarding the eternal God (the triune God)!

How exciting it will be in heaven to have the mysteries of God's personhood unfolded to us! We will each become more and more like God, without, of course, becoming 'little gods' ourselves! Of course, in heaven we will always be 'humans', even though we will enjoy a 'new and glorified body' (a body no more subject to the deterioration of material matter)!

It seems to me that, if we citizens of heaven are anticipating a lot of growth towards Christlikeness, God would 'see fit' to give teaching assignments to some of the 'choicest' (most mature) citizens in heaven - to impart 'heavenly truths' to many 'less enlightened' heavenly citizens!

This is only my (reasonable) conjecture (regarding the teaching activities of heaven). I have no solid biblical grounds for this 'imagination', but I think that, from someone in heaven and in some fashion in heaven, there will be the impartation of 'spiritual knowledge' to everyone!

I believe that heaven, far from being a static, placid, passive, boring place, heaven will be just the opposite of these negative descriptions! Heaven will be a place of dynamic growth (in every way) forever!

If anyone goes to 'hell' (to live), it will not be because God desired for that to happen! One verse that I have repeatedly printed in my books is the following: "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God's two options for human beings: 'Repent or Perish!'

There are only two ways to live: (1) Self-centered living, (2) God-centered living. Much attention has been given to a clear description of 'Humanism' verses 'Christianity'! The 'Closed View' of Reality verses the 'Open View' of Reality.

We have been 'justified' in focusing - at length - with these two ways of life, because the choice that a person makes between these two ways of life, will determine his/her 'eternal destiny'. The person who chooses to live independently of the 'higher power' (God Almighty) is the person who is on the 'low road' of life, and ultimately (unless he is converted to Christ) he will 'go over the cliff into eternal perdition'!

Such a destiny (of lostness) cannot be fully understood or explained. Suffice it to say, that to be 'separated from the God of love' is more than the 'mind can conceive'. Hell was not prepared for humans, but, instead, hell was prepared for the 'fallen enemy' - Satan - and for his demonic followers!

God, through the tender Holy Spirit, is doing everything that He can (short of coercion) to keep every person out of hell! But, before a person (sinner) can be 'saved' and avoid the 'pits of hell', he/she must say 'yes' to the voice of Love! Jesus has prepared a 'special place' - a 'customized place' - in heaven for every person.

All of us must 'prepare ourselves' for that God-prepared 'place'. Will we each accept our 'special place' in heaven, or will we 'reject' the God-prepared 'place' made ready for us in heaven?

Jesus Himself has gone (ahead) to prepare a 'place' for each of us human beings (God's special creation). God waits for each of us (during our earthly pilgrimage) to

'make preparation' for that glorious 'home' in heaven! Repent, trust, surrender, obey, and then follow Christ all the days of your life!

Then, when the time comes (at the time of your death), Jesus will gladly open the 'golden gates' of heaven for you! And you will hear the most beautiful words imaginable: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! You have been faithful in 'little things'; now I will make you a 'lord' over many things! Enter your eternal home, prepared for you from the 'foundations of the world.'"

The 'joy' of being welcomed into your 'eternal home' will be indescribable! "Joy unspeakable, and full of glory!" An old saint (my good friend) used to say: "Heaven will be 'cheap' at any price!" In other words, the 'price' we have to 'pay' to live the Christian life, is 'inexpensive', compared to the wealth of heaven that will be granted to those who follow Christ!

'Sacrifice', 'persecution', and all kinds of effort and discipline - these are a 'cheap' price, as compared to the heavenly riches (rewards) that will be given to the faithful children of God! The price we pay on earth cannot be compared to the benefits (rewards) that we will receive in heaven!

This invitation (to repent and to believe) is given to all persons, and that, of course, includes 'humanists' (and all persons in every branch ('leg') of humanism). If the 'closed view' folks will abandon their narrow view of life, and accept the 'broad view' of Christian beliefs, they can become children of God! They too can ascend someday to the very heaven that they have long denied even existed! "Whosoever will may come!" Christ's offer for 'new life' is open to everyone - even to materialists and to sensualists and to hedonists and to 'worshippers of science'!

AN HONEST ANSWER FOR AN HONEST QUESTION, FOR AN HONEST COMMITMENT!

As I mentioned previously, there are some persons - perhaps many persons throughout our world - who could be described as 'honest doubters'. They are 'searching for the truth'. They have 'honest questions' regarding the multi-dimensional features (dogmas and doctrines) of Christianity. If Christianity is what it 'claims' to be, then they intend to 'make the leap of faith'.

Their 'search' presently involves examination of the 'claims' of the Christian 'Faith', but, when they receive logical and honest answers to their sincere (intellectually-oriented) questions, they will make an honest commitment to the Christ of Christianity. They know that the 'heart' cannot accept (in faith) what the mind has to reject.

When they are convinced that all the 'arguments' for the resurrection of Jesus are 'sound' (historically and philosophically) - that is, that there is no other logical alternative for the resurrection except the Bible's record, and that there is evidence for the resurrection based upon the premise that supernaturalism is definitely feasible - then, based upon this 'solid logical and historical and philosophical foundation', these 'honest doubters' and 'sincere seekers' will 'surrender to the Lordship of the Resurrected Christ'. The 'leap of faith' is the 'leap' that is humbly and sincerely made!

During the time I spent in many homes of 'honest doubters' (during my 'Salvation by Appointment' Bible studies), some of these 'sincere seekers' who were in the 'valley of decision' struggled a 'great deal' (in their mind) before they finally made their 'faith commitment' to Christ's divine person!

One scientist (chemist) resisted for quite some time (in his apartment) while I tried to present the facts of Christianity to him. He was greatly struggling with the facts of Christianity, and with his own doubts and fears. Finally, after I repeatedly and patiently presented the 'way of Christ' to him, he made the surrender (in his mind and in his heart).

He is an intellectual-type person, and, before he could surrender to Christ, he had to have an honest answer to his honest doubts. He was not a 'dishonest doubter' - that is, a person who, after sufficient facts are presented to him, determines not to give his life to Christ!

His problem was 'honest doubts' that sought an honest answer for his 'sincere questions'. On the other hand, a 'dishonest doubter' is one who poses to be an 'honest seeker for truth'. Instead, his problem is 'rebellion against God' and 'rejection against the truth'! Such a 'dishonest doubter' knows that, if he accepted God's revealed truth, he would have to reject his own evil lifestyle!

A 'dishonest doubter', if he accepted Christ, would have to abandon his 'selfish pride', and he would have to humbly repent at the 'foot of Christ's cross'. Regardless of how much 'information' (truth claims of Christianity) is presented to a 'dishonest doubter', he is determined to reject the truth and to continue to live his own self-centered and rebellious lifestyle!

After much honest discussion during my Bible study in that small apartment (near CSU), this brilliant scientist friend (who initially was an 'honest doubter') made his 'leap of faith'. He became a solid lifetime follower of Christ!

During the last approximately 30 years (since his wonderful conversion), Don Walker has lived a dynamic, joy-filled Christian life, actively working in different states, in his various local churches (including singing in choirs). He has worked with young people as well. His lovely wife (who also accepted Christ during that historic night) is most supportive of her husband, and they together have let their 'light' of Christ shine brightly, wherever they find themselves! An example of God's transforming power - transformation of the life of a brilliant scientist (with his dear wife)!

Much of this book has been concerned with the giving of an accurate description of the world's 'chief religion', namely, 'Humanism'. I have tried, with considerable effort, to show, by way of contrast, the elements of the only true religion - namely, the religion of Christianity.

Repeatedly (to emphasize the great contrast between the religion of Humanism and the religion of Christianity), I have resorted to a few 'key words' and 'key phrases' to 'hang our thoughts on'!

'Closed View' reality verses 'Open View' reality! 'The way of the flesh' verses 'the way of the Spirit'! 'Independent Self-Centered Living' verses 'Dependent God-Centered Living'! 'Living for One World' verses 'Living for Two Worlds'! 'Self-Made Man' verses 'God-Made Man'; 'Prideful Self-Sufficiency' verses 'Humble Receptivity'!

Pride (i.e., taking things into one's own hands, independent of God) was the 'downfall' of Lucifer, and it was the downfall of our first parents (Adam Eve)! It is important to think a little more about the destructive 'force' of pride. Pride is the cause of humanity's 'fall' (in the beginning), and pride (self-centeredness) is the 'chief problem' in your life and in my life, and, indeed, in the life of every human being.

Pride, as personified in the philosophy of 'humanism', has the power to do destruction, spiritually, as great as any tornado or hurricane has power to destroy, in the physical realm!

What humanists so desperately want to do - namely, to solve problems - is not a 'wrong' thing. Christians, too, are desirous to solve problems, but Christians are committed to this worthy goal, with a 'right' understanding as to the 'method' and as to the 'motivation'. Christians know that God has created humans to approach the problems of the world, with God as the 'senior partner' and man as the 'junior partner'!

Man is not created to 'make it alone' in one's life (independent of the presence and the power of the Creator/God)! Man is made 'by' God, and 'for' God, to 'walk in step

with God' for an entire lifetime ('over the hills and down through the valleys' of life's experiences). Jesus said, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!" This is the 'sweetest message' that human beings have ever heard from the lips of Jesus!

Abundant life here and eternal life hereafter all because of the redemptive work of the 'Friend of Humanity' (the precious and ever-present Lord Jesus)!

We human beings are not intended to 'walk alone' during the changes and the chances of everyday life, nor are we intended to 'solve life's problems on our own'. God intends for all problems (big and small) to be solved, with man and God working together as 'partners'. That is the proper 'method' in approaching problems.

The humanists (sadly) approach problems with the 'ill-founded' confidence that they do not need any outside 'help', any divinely-given 'aid' or 'assistance'. 'Humanists' fail to realize that they were not created to live independently, or to attempt solutions to problems independently.

God wants to express His love to every person, through His amazing 'work' of salvation (transformation). But, if mercy is one side of God's love, then justice and wrath is on the other side of God's love. Remember: God 'resists the proud man'! Pride draws fire from the artillery of God's wrath!

There are countless scriptures (in both Testaments) that reveal that God 'despises pride'! What I repeated to my grandson on countless occasions - even when we were playing games - is still true: "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Think of the fall of the king of Babylon, who, because of his arrogance, was cast from his throne, and was made to eat grass for 7 years! Think of wicked king Herod (in the book of Acts) who, because of his proud defiance of God, was struck down and was killed suddenly - and then he was eaten by worms!

One time my grandson - mentioned above - made three of the four points in a soccer game. When he came off the field, I started congratulating him, and his silent response amazed me. He said nothing to me, but he held up his little pointer finger towards the sky - to give God the praise for his success in soccer! Think: The grandson, with whom I had often shared the popular verse on humility (and against the dangers of pride), was practicing that lesson after his amazing success on the soccer field! Christian teaching 'in action'!

I have enjoyed my partnership with a man (an African-American man) who is a professional musician. One of several instruments that he plays is the violin. He is an accomplished violinist, and we regularly go together to minister in nursing homes. Everyone who hears him play his violin is almost awestruck, including me, but when he receives numerous 'compliments and praise', he always passes the praise on to God. He simply says, "God be praised."!

***I HONOR MY GIFTED WIFE WHO
'WALKS HUMBLY BEFORE HER BELOVED SAVIOR'!***

One of many qualities that I have highly admired and I have respected in my wife is her genuine 'humility' in what she says, and in how she receives compliments that people give to her.

Compliments have been given to her, for many reasons, and for many years, (especially when they are amazed at her ability to solve a 'problem', or when she 'comes up with a resolution to some business challenge'). But she never proudly 'absorbs' the praises to herself; instead, she 'plays down' her accomplishments and she deflects the praise to others around her, and, most importantly, she gives all glory to God for anything 'good' that has happened!

She has, throughout my long marriage to her (nearly 50 years) truly demonstrated the meaning of humility! When she started and when she amazingly developed a Christian School, she was confronted (almost daily) with various problems that called for a solution (if the School was to continue to grow).

Challenges regarding student enrollment, or challenges regarding the need for adequate facility 'space' for all the classes, or challenges regarding communication with inquiring parents, or challenges regarding certain student disciplinary problems, or challenges with budgetary shortfalls, or challenges with various and sundry needs of her teachers, and so much more!

The fact that Venita was a 'good problem solver', as a result of her special 'gifting' of administration and wisdom - this 'reality' provided the 'foundation' for the building of a 'solid Christian Day School'!

But Venita's understandable 'satisfaction' because her School became successful (in the 'eyes' of so many) - this 'satisfaction' did not become her 'downfall'. Why? Because she resisted the temptation to take the credit for the success of the School to herself!

She did not succumb to the temptation to become proud and arrogant. She quickly sang her hymn of thanksgiving to God - the Author of all things that are good! "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." She worked hard to achieve success, but she was quick to point out that there were others with whom she 'worked' to build a 'strong School'.

Even though she was the 'leader', and (as such) did most of the up front and the 'behind the scenes' work (with recruitment of students and discovery of scholarship funds, etc. etc.), she, nevertheless, was willing (legitimately) to 'share the credit' with others (to 'give honor to whom honor was due').

Understandably, she was 'deeply satisfied' with the work that she did, but she never allowed the 'good' (satisfaction) to become the 'bad' (pride and glorying in her personal achievement). God loves for His people to enjoy satisfaction in work 'well done', but God hates the attitude of self-sufficiency and the attitude of selfish pride ('pointing one's finger to one's self' rather than 'pointing one's finger high into the sky in praise to God' - just like my young grandson did after his soccer game)!

During my life as a pastor (and certainly since my retirement), I have 'rubbed shoulders' with a considerable number of highly talented, wonderfully gifted, brilliantly-minded persons. I tend to be a 'little intimidated' by these persons, for (without despising my own endowments), I realize that they are 'very superior' to my gifting and to my intellectual capacities and to my talents!

They 'stand head and shoulders' above me! And, amazingly enough, I was the pastor for many years to many of the persons I am now describing! But God, mercifully, gave me the 'grace' to 'reach out in love' to many of these 'highly endowed' persons!

***SHE WHO WAS HIGHLY GIFTED WAS SHE WHO WAS GRACED
WITH TRUE HUMILITY!***

Many professions were represented in our church, and I have known a 'fair number' of these kinds of persons, since my retirement. Even though I do not currently have 'contact' with her, I once enjoyed the friendship of a most remarkable and highly intelligent lady.

I think Linda Saunders was the most educated person with whom I ever had contact. She had four degrees behind her name, and she was, obviously, a most diligent and a very hard working person. She had a business degree (CPA), she had a veterinarian degree (and she practiced for several years). She had a seminary degree (which, by itself, took 3 years to 'earn'). And, finally, she went to medical school and she became a doctor (and she presently practices medicine).

This woman, as brilliant as she is, does not 'glory in her amazing achievements"! She is humble, loving, approachable, others-oriented, and she is most enjoyable to be around. She has a deep faith in Christ, and she has a mission heart. She spent some time on an African mission station, doing a great work there (partly because of her versatility in training and her special veterinarian skill).

This lady, Linda Saunders, not only has a most brilliant mind, but she has a very 'warm heart' of love and compassion! She is one of the most remarkable persons whom I have ever known. When she was quite young, I had the privilege of being her pastor (and her friend). She is kind and considerate and sacrificial and approachable to people, and she is totally committed to the Lord whom she deeply loves!

She is one of the most remarkable persons whom I have ever known. She certainly is a lady who is amazingly educated, professionally advanced, and deeply spiritual. She has a warm heart and she has a tough mind! Her accomplishments in life are almost unprecedented, but, nevertheless, she walks humbly before her God! She is a joy-filled person, a person who is most approachable and loving and compassionate.

Linda Saunders only desires one thing - to glorify her Savior, in all that she thinks and in all that she does! Linda could intimidate those around her, because of her unusual 'drive' to achieve her high goals in her life, but, instead, she is very considerate of the needs of others, and she gladly affirms others in their own pursuits of life!

My friendship with Linda Saunders, for several years, and my relationship with her as her pastor, was most rewarding and very meaningful! She, indeed, is a special (radiant) 'servant of the Lord'!

There are far too many 'humanists' - proud in their attitude of self-sufficiency - who think that Christians compose a 'lower class' of humans, inferior in their intellectual capabilities, ignorant of the 'real issues' of life', foolish in their belief of some kind of 'invisible higher power'!

The truth of the matter is simple: Some of the most brilliant, most enlightened persons in the world today are Christian believers. Christian believers like the above-described incredible lady (Linda Saunders), and like a countless number of other brilliant persons in the world - including a large company of scientists (like Don Walker whom I previously shared) - these persons are both brilliant in their mind, and worshipful in their spirit!

They are not 'second class' to any humanist intellectual! Persons who walk humbly before their God are persons who are in 'league' with the Creator as they search for the truth about God's world. Scientists, who are involved in every imaginable 'field of research', are scientists who are not ashamed to declare that, without the enablement of their God, they could do nothing that would amount to anything worthwhile! Scientists who, like George Washington Carver, who enter their scientific laboratory with their mind fully engaged and with their worshipful spirit open to the direction of the Great Creator.

These scientists know that 'in God they live and move and have their being'. They affirm the truth of Jesus' declaration: "Without me, ye can do nothing!"

***'LITTLE OR MUCH' - DOES GOD HAVE YOUR
HEAD, HEART, AND HANDS?***

A good goal for all of us is (1) a 'tough' mind, (2) a 'tender' heart', (3) a 'surrendered' will! Numerous times in my teaching I have challenged listeners to give their Head and Heart and Hands to the Living God. To be a living sacrifice - with all on the 'altar of consecration' - to serve God with the 'endowments' that God has given to each of us. "Our talents may be few and these may be small, but unto Him is due our best, our all!"

Whether we are 'small' or 'big', whether we are 'smart' or 'average' in intelligence, whether we are 'rich' or 'poor' in material things - regardless, regardless, regardless of who we are or what we are or what we can do - the important thing is that we present our bodies as a living sacrifice, wholly committed to God and to His divinely-revealed purposes.

Remember: "Little is much if God is in it." "What is impossible to Man is not impossible to God."! God is glad to use a fisherman – Peter - even if he is 'common' and even if he is 'uneducated', and even if he has a 'fishy smell'!

You think that you are too 'common' to be used in any significant way? Just think of Peter, and think of the millions of other 'Peters' throughout history whom God has 'tapped on the shoulder' and to whom God has said 'Follow me!' God had to 'clean up' this crude fisherman, but God was able to take this 'diamond in the rough' fisherman, and God was able to do great things through the life of Simon Peter! Think: Christ was able to make this 'rugged fisherman' a 'leader of the twelve disciples'!

Christ took a 'self-righteous', legalistic Jew (a murderer of Christians) and turned him into the kind-hearted, love-filled apostle who spread the Gospel far and wide, during

the early period of the Church. Think: the man who wanted to kill Christians was so transformed that the day came when He wrote the greatest 'love chapter' known unto mankind - I Corinthians 13!

Considerable time and effort have been expended, to give a careful examination of the 'beliefs' of the 'chief' religion of the world, namely, 'Humanism', in contrast to the 'main beliefs' of the most important religion of the world, namely, 'Christianity'. Understanding these two opposite ways of belief is important for many reasons. What a man (sincerely) believes defines who he is. "As a man thinks, so is he!"

The rather detailed examination of contrasting beliefs (between humanism and Christianity) reveals the thoughts that have occupied my own mind, from the early period of my mental development, when I started having 'mature and noble thoughts'.

When I was a child, I thought like a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish thoughts. (I Corinthians 13) During my adult thinking process I have been preoccupied with the examination of the 'perils of humanism' (the chief 'enemy' of Christianity). There are, of course, several 'battle fronts', in our attempt to 'contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints' (book of Jude), but, without question, one of the most 'fierce battles against Christianity' is humanism (and all the various manifestations of humanism)!

I would be imperceptive and I would be 'blind' to my own (present) mental development, if I claimed that (now) I have only 'mature thoughts and understanding'. It is imperative that I keep my mind 'open' to the free-flowing 'stream' of God's truth and revelations. I need for the Spirit to continue to open my mind to God's truth (to Biblical truths), that I might more effectively identify 'false religions', that I might more effectively confront the brutal attacks of humanism (scientism, materialism, sensualism, relativism, etc.)!

I have long strived to live a 'balanced life', but I admit that sometimes I have 'gotten off kilter' in my own thinking. It is very difficult to maintain 'balance' in one's thinking process, and in one's daily living (i.e., it is difficult to maintain all the 'right priorities' in one's relationships and in one's work and in one's family responsibilities). Jesus alone kept the true 'balance' in His life, but, even though we 'come up short' in all of our life, we must try to imitate the 'Master of Life'!

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LET MY PRAISES BE HEARD!

LET MY TEARS FLOW!

LET MY LAUGHTER RESOUND!

DOES GOD LOVE ALL OR ONLY SOME?

BATTLE AGAINST HUMANISM!