

**JACKSON**

**BRATTENG**

**DEBATE**



**GOD AND THE BIBLE  
or  
HUMANISM AND ATHEISM**



**WHICH VIEW  
for  
SOCIETY'S GOOD?**



# JACKSON - BRATTENG DEBATE

Propositions: "The idea of a god, and the existence of a Bible representing the word of this god, are best explained as human creations."

-Steve Bratteng affirms

"The idea that things exist without creation by God, that man evolved from lower creatures, and the idea of humanism are not productive of society's good."

-Bill Jackson affirms

## INTRODUCTORY

Steve Bratteng is employed in the University of Texas science department, and has been active in promotion of atheistic and humanistic positions. Mr. Bratteng and I have engaged in lengthy exchanges in the local paper, and in a private exchange of letters, as well as appearances on a local radio talk-show on "Humanism." Mr. Bratteng and I engaged in two brief debate sessions on Southwest's own television program, "Christian Evidences." All of this earlier work has then led to this formal written discussion.

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## BRATTENG'S FIRST AFFIRMATIVE

The Bible: holy work or wholly human work?

Looking at the course of human history we can see an evolution of ideas about the nature of supernatural things. At first there was belief in a general pervasiveness of spirits; a later stage was one in which there was an array of individual gods that had specific associations with objects and activities observable by humans. In many cases there was one or just a few dominant gods.

The number of gods finally was reduced to just one in the Judaic system, which is still in effect in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Obviously this is an over-simplified account of religious development; however, it does make the point that over time religious views have changed in response to human perceptions of the world around them.

Furthermore, each stage of development, and each religious culture has yielded its own account of the origin of the world and the relationship of humans to the god or gods involved. Often such matters were recorded as a collection of sacred writings--a bible. Typically such bibles have dealt not only with creation stories but also with what behaviors were expected of people.

So, all bibles tell variations on a basic theme, but does any bible accurately reflect actual events of geological and human history? If we can clearly demonstrate that any biblical accounts did not or could not happen, then we can fairly assert that it is a human work and not divinely inspired--or at least not inspired by an infallible deity.

The rest of this essay will deal with some of the contradictions of the Bible--passages in which the Bible contradicts itself as well as some that contradict what we know about how the world works. In addition it will show that the common notion of a loving god also is contradicted.

People that claim the Bible is infallible have a tendency to be selective about what they cite and to be rather slippery in dealing with contradictions. The most common ploys are to claim discrepancies in translation or to invoke miracles by God to explain problematic passages. Another common out used to rationalize nonsense from the Old Testament is often to claim that its rules are no longer in effect, having been replaced by new ones laid out in the New Testament. However, Matthew 5:17-18 effectively rules this out. Readers should keep their eyes open for such rhetoric and demand better explanations.

Perhaps it is best to begin in the beginning, and in the beginning we find Genesis to have two accounts of creation. In addition to the mutually exclusive sequences of creation the Genesis story contains absurdities such as the fact that the sun was not created until the fourth day, leaving unanswered how days were defined before that.

The story of Noah and the Flood is simply packed full of absurdities and violations of natural law and logic. there are too many absurdities in the story of Noah to mention them all here, but one is especially puzzling: If the all-powerful God responsible for the Flood had some good reason to kill all the sinning people, why do it with a flood that killed millions of innocent animals? Simply willing all the sinners to be eliminated would have been much more efficient.

A naturalistic, humanistic explanation for this story is that floods are common disasters that many peoples have experienced. Therefore it is not surprising to have repeated mention of such events in various mythologies. Of course people that do not understand the factors involved in floods would be quite likely to invoke supernatural forces to explain such a dramatic occurrence. We no longer blame gods for floods.

Another interesting and absurd passage is Genesis 30 having a description of how Jacob tricked Laban. Jacob placed sticks with markings on them before sheep and cattle; when the animals mated in the presence of the sticks, they gave birth to marked offspring. When the sticks were absent, the offspring were unmarked. This runs directly counter to what we know about genetics in sheep, cattle, or any other animals. Why would a god need to resort to such trickery to accomplish a certain end? Yes, the Lord works in mysterious ways, but there is no evidence that the world works in this particular way.

Another scientific error in the Bible is at I Kings 7:23 in which a circular platter with a diameter of 10 has a circumference of 30, thus making pi equal to 3. For fundamentalists 3 may be close enough to 3.1416... to qualify as the same; however, if you made tires with the same ratio, they would have to be flat on one side. Given the primitive state of mathematics among the ancient Jews, this value was reasonably close. However, an omniscient god would know better.

Another physical impossibility was Joshua's trick of making the sun stand still for a day. This has two fundamental violations of what we know about how the universe works. It violates conservation of angular momentum, and it implies that the sun moves around the earth. And this latter point brings up the fact that the ancient Hebrews believed not only that

the earth was the center of the universe, with everything moving around it but also that the earth was flat. Although many creationists now are reluctant to admit it, the discipline known as Bible Science consists of three subdisciplines: creationism, geocentrism, and flat-earthism -- all deriving their authority solely from the Bible.

In Leviticus and Deuteronomy we find the various Mosaic Laws -- among which are the famous Ten Commandments. Most modern Christians totally ignore these laws except for the big ten. For example let us look at the dietary laws. Most of you know that eating pork was prohibited because of the unclean nature of swine. Possibly the swine contained devils as Matthew and Mark describe. Certainly it was good to avoid pork for health reasons. We now know about trichinosis caused by roundworms, not devils, that would have made pork unfit for consumption. Maybe eating pork was foolish, but sinful? The people living at the time these laws were "handed down" had no idea that any living thing could cause disease or be invisible to the unaided eye; in this light it is easy to understand the creation of demons. Modern Christians have no problems about eating pork now that we can avoid the health hazards associated with it. Apparently cooking removes devils. Another tidbit from the dietary laws as a list of birds that were not to be eaten. The last bird on the list was a "bat." Apparently God was not a zoologist.

Moving on to a few internal contradictions we find, again, too many to treat exhaustively. However, all we really need is one; here are a few. //Exodus 20:4, "Thou shalt not make any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath..." and Exodus 25:18, "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold...." //Matt. 1:16, "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary..." and Luke 3:23, "And

Jesus... the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli." //Acts 9:7 and Acts 22:9 in which Paul gives contradictory accounts of his conversion on the road to Damascus.

Judas is described as having hanged himself in Matthew while in Acts 1:18 we learn that "this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out."

In the crucifixion story there are differing accounts of what Jesus' last words were, of when various events occurred, of what happened at the tomb, of when, where, and to whom Jesus reappeared, and of when and where he ascended. The Bible is much less accurate than one would expect of a divinely guided chronicle of the most important event in history.

And now for some passages that shed light on the claim that "God is love" (or even a nice guy). //A group of children are killed by bears sent by God to punish them for teasing a bald man (II Kings 2:23-4). [Wouldn't a spanking be sufficient?] God threatens to kill Moses because his son is not circumcised (Ex. 4:24-6). A man is executed for picking up sticks on the Sabbath (Num. 15:35-6). God forces Jephthah to kill his only child (Judges 11:39). Uzzah saves the Ark of the Covenant from tipping over and is rewarded with instant death (II Sam. 6:6-7).

Remember Job? His wife and family were permitted to be killed by Satan as part of a wager with God. And God's words about the children of Babylon? "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (Psalms 137:9). God ordered Moses to kill 24,000 Israelites who co-habited with Moabite women (Num. 25:4-9). And there were almost countless massacres ordered by God against enemies of Israel --usually children were not excluded from these killings -- for example,



God orders Saul to "slay man and woman, infant and suckling" (I Sam. 15:3-7); King Ahab's children killed at God's command, and their heads put into baskets (II Kings 9,10). Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

The samples above are part of the compelling evidence that the Bible is not the infallible work of an omniscient, omnipotent, and all-loving divine being. These flaws are quite understandable as products of human beings who not only were fallible but also were rather ignorant of natural laws and processes. The personality of the god described in the Bible makes many of us think that man made God in man's image rather than the other way around.

I would like to point out in closing that while I find much wrong with the Christian bible, I find good in it, too. Much of the message of the New Testament is one of optimism for, cooperation with, and tolerance of our fellow human beings -- the same message as that of humanism. However, humanism lacks the supernatural trappings.

### JACKSON'S FIRST NEGATIVE

I'm happy to enter into discussion with Mr. Bratteng, with whom I've had discussions on radio and TV. Perhaps this present format will allow for more detailed discussion than we have earlier had. Mr. Bratteng did not give his first article the exact title that is in his proposition, which is: "The idea of a god, and the existence of a Bible representing the word of this god, are best explained as human creations." We must just here pick up on the point that Mr. Bratteng must show that the atheistic/humanistic view is the BEST explanation that can be given.

In keeping with our agreement, allowing 3 questions in each exchange, I submit these 3 for Mr. Bratteng's answer in his next article: (1) "Are you in agreement with the points made in Humanist Manifesto II, pp. 18,19, regarding approval of abortion, divorce, euthanasia, suicide, consenting-adult sexual behavior (including homosexual behavior)?" (2) "Is the view that 'something always was,' but that it was non-living and without power to act, but that order, system and design came from it, a SCIENTIFIC view?" (3) "By the atheistic view, was the conduct of Hitler wrong in his destruction of millions of Jews?" We look forward to his answering these.

Mr. Bratteng's initial points had to do with the fact that among some men the ideas of "gods" existed, and that religious views among those who believe in these "gods" have been variable and changeable. But, Mr. Bratteng can get that point from the Bible itself! Genesis 3 tells of man turning from God, and by Genesis 6:2 those belonging to God and those who had turned away (those belonging to men) are clearly distinguished. Again, the Old Testament is filled with references to the heathen and idolatrous systems that men had developed. In Romans 1:18-25 Paul pictured the degra-

dation of men who knew God, but who turned to invent and further the systems of their own manufacture. Granted that this was done, Mr. Bratteng, on a widespread basis, but this still does not argue that there was not a system, from the one true God, from which these had degenerated. Many false ideas about a topic in no way militates against there being a true idea that these have corrupted.

Mr. Bratteng can test this in his own scientific field. A dozen absurd ideas about the possibility of flight did not mean that there were no principles of flight. And, a dozen ridiculous ideas once held in medicine about blood and blood-letting did not mean that no truths regarding the importance of blood, and sufficient amounts of it being needed, were in existence. Your point failed, Mr. Bratteng! You simply say, "Men have had many ideas in religion," but that does not say that there is no truthful idea about God! The fact remains that no Bible truth is in conflict with any proven scientific truth.

It is purely amazing that Mr. Bratteng warns about the ploys that might be used by Bible defenders, and then will use one himself. He believes none of the Book, but will cite Matthew 5:17-18 as "proof" that no rule has ever come along to change a former rule. He urges that readers keep their "eyes open," and that is amazing from one who specializes in blindness! Mr. Bratteng does need to realize that the Bible speaks of God, and that God has indeed acted; the fact that Mr. Bratteng does not believe it, nor understand it, does not mean it did not take place. That blindness about which we spoke has Mr. Bratteng stating that "I don't believe in God, and I cannot allow that God has ever acted, even when the Bible says he has!" Bratteng's system won't allow it, but that doesn't change it nor assure that Mr. Bratteng's system is true.

Let me comment on these in his order: (1) Even Mr. Bratteng should be able to see that if Jesus is the Christ, God then spake through him (Heb. 1:1,2), and that necessitates change - the change mentioned in Galatians 3:23-25. Bratteng won't allow it, but God does!! (2) His two accounts of creation are imaginary, with Genesis 1 being a chronology, with day 1, day 2, etc. specified; Genesis 2, however, is not a creation chronology, and does not pretend to be. It is a record of what was created, and man's relationship to the rest of creation. Now, why would Bratteng tell you it is a chronology, when it is not? (3) As to the Flood record, Bratteng assures it is full of natural law and logic violations, but doesn't reveal them. He only mourns the loss of animals' lives! A true humanist, who, if he is typical, will sanction the aborting of humans, but moans over an animal! Once more, he mentions that floods are common disasters; however, this was not the overflowing of the banks of some river, Mr. Bratteng! This was universal in nature, and the hand of God was in it by its very nature. The fact that even idolatrous systems had some basis for believing the flood record, however their own ignorance might have perverted Deity being involved, proves that the event had basis in fact!

(4) Mr. Bratteng bases his objection, regarding Jacob, on "what we know about genetics," and I'm glad he acknowledges that we do not know everything about prenatal influences and coloration. Let it be remembered that Jacob was using skills regarding breeding in full compliance with Laban's agreement regarding wages. Mr. Bratteng wastes an objection, for we are not saying that "the world works in this way." (5) As to 1 Kings 7:23, Mr. Bratteng rejects the Bible based on 3 as opposed to 3.1416, and whether tires could be made by such calculations!! Ridiculous! Mr. Bratteng gets a slide-rule out, and on a fractional basis declares, "Be-

hold, there is no God!" (6) Mr. Bratteng has no evidence that God's Old Testament people believed that the earth was flat; he simply charges it! He knows that man can move the clock an hour ahead, or an hour back, but somehow God's power cannot give an extra hour of daylight! (7) In spite of the fact that the Old Testament laws were given merely to lead Israel to the Christ, and at this time the law of Christ would go into effect, Mr. Bratteng insists that Christians must now abide by Old Testament law. He gives us a dissertation on pork and roundworms, but that doesn't set aside God's earlier law forbidding pork. It was sinful, Mr. Bratteng, not due to health, but due to God's prohibition! Then, fault is found with the bat, and God placing it among the winged creatures. The bat has wings, Mr. Bratteng; examine one and see!

(8) He makes a ridiculous point regarding God's forbidding man to make idols for purposes of worship, and commanding cherubims as ornamentation. (9) Mr. Bratteng never heard of anyone having more than one name, as Jacob/Heli, and yet most people, among us and among Jews, have more than one name. (10) As to Judas' death, Mr. Bratteng cannot comprehend that one could fall from a height due to a limb or a rope breaking under the weight of a falling body! (11) In the case of Saul's conversion, strange that Mr. Bratteng also never heard of the possibility of one hearing voice or noise, but still not hearing with comprehension! (12) He charges but cites no resurrection record errors. (13) Then, he has a list of items simply charging that if God has love, then he could never punish, never require penalty to be paid, and never could have a law requiring capital punishment! In Bratteng's eyes, for God to possess love, he would have to love rape, love murder, love stealing, love adultery! He is in error to charge

God with "all loving" nature meaning he must then sanction and condone all sin and error. (14) He errs as to Job's wife, and misreads Psalm 137:9, which characterizes the delight of a heathen nation, not God!

Mr. Bratteng states what HE DOESN'T LIKE, what DISPLEASES HIM, what SEEMS UNREASONABLE TO HIM, and by that, God's ability to KNOW and to FUNCTION are impaired. We've noted his misunderstanding of God and love. Really, Mr. Bratteng, your displeasure with the Bible in no sense disproves God; for that point, as you argue, you will have to go back and deal with the beginnings, or with origins. You will have to show us, by the humanistic/atheistic method, just HOW first things appeared. Can you do it? We like the fact that he ends stating that he approves of some New Testament features, and we've tried to stress that this is the law we are under today (Matt. 17:5). He says the New Testament message is the same as humanism; really, Mr. Bratteng? Remember humanism on free-love, divorce, euthanasia and abortion? That's humanism's love for mankind!

#### BRATTENG'S SECOND AFFIRMATIVE

Bill Jackson chides me for giving my first essay a title instead of merely citing the proposition, but he then goes on to ask three questions that are not on the topic of the proposition, which is the relationship of

the Bible to the supposed existence a god. Despite Jackson's expressed desire to have a "more detailed discussion" the five page limit does not permit it. I would be delighted to discuss his questions in detail -- in the proper forum. For the time being I shall merely note the following for each of his questions: 1) tolerance of certain actions by others does not constitute approval or advocacy; 2) the question of our material existence is much to complex to deal with here; 3) no humanist could condone Hitler's actions (besides Hitler was a Christian, not a humanist).

My first essay gave examples of the humanness of the Bible -- that is, the idea that the errors of the Bible are not consistent with the idea of a perfect author, but that such errors are best explained if the Bible is thought of as a product of human beings who are not perfect.

Jackson boldly asserts that "no Bible truth is in conflict with any proven scientific truth." However, he fails to deal adequately with the conflicts I pointed out. Since we are limited in space, I shall treat only some I feel are important.

In Genesis 1 and 2 the first account is clearly a chronology by days; the second does not give a day-by-day description but does give a sequence of events. In Genesis 1 some beasts were created on the fifth day while some were created on the sixth day; then man was created later on the sixth day to have dominion over the beasts. In Genesis 2 man is created, but God did not think he should be alone so God created every beast of the field and fowl of the air. Adam was still alone so then God created Woman. Read it for yourself. The sequences of the two chapters are mutually exclusive.

The story of Jacob and Laban clearly violates what science tells us about heredity. Jackson claims that Jacob was "using skills regarding breeding." However, such skills do not exist in the world that science

reveals. You can draw on your own experience and common sense to help you understand this. Recall that the biblical story claims that what animals see as they mate determines what the offspring will look like. Imagine a room full of white lab rats (male and female). Imagine that the room has bright red polka dots covering every visible surface. Guess how many offspring of the rats will be born with red polka dots. If you guessed none, congratulations, you know more about genetics and heredity than Bill Jackson or the author of Genesis 30. If Bill Jackson wishes to invoke a god that can and does break the laws of nature, that is another matter than saying that the Bible does not contradict what science tells us. The contradictions are there.

The books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy are essentially lists of God's laws for his people. Jackson claims that the dietary prohibitions were based on the sinfulness of eating certain things. Certainly that is what the account says; however, this only matters if we assume the Bible is the word of God. The prohibitions do not make sense in human terms except as a way of requiring people to do what is in their own best interest. A modern example is seat belt laws; most people do not use them just because the belts are a good idea. It is necessary to have a law to get most people to buckle up. Likewise it was a good idea not to eat pork; however, a hungry person might not have been wise enough to avoid harmful foods unless there was a law requiring such behavior. For many "primitive" peoples, survival of the group depended on the survival of as many individuals as possible. therefore even self-destructive acts that we now see as affecting only the perpetrator could not be tolerated in a society that needed every able body it could muster. Religion is merely one tool for insuring certain behaviors within a society.



One other point about the dietary laws that Jackson dodges is the inclusion of bats with birds. Jackson tries to make rhetorical points by pretending the book refers to "winged creatures," but this is not so. In one case it says birds and in the other it says fowl. Bats are not any sort of bird or fowl. The Bible reveals a lack of understanding of zoological relationships. Such an error is understandable for ignorant human authors but not for a perfect one.

In the story of Joshua the fundamental impossibility of stopping the sun is dismissed by Jackson as being the equivalent of stopping the hands on a clock. Anyone who understands physics knows that this is not part of how science describes the real world. The forces required to stop (and re-start) the earth's rotation would be immense, and the agency to carry out such motion is not part of the world science knows.

Furthermore, anyone who understands the solar system knows that the sun does not move around the earth -- the earth rotates on its axis. When the Bible says that the sun stopped, we can see that the people who wrote the Bible did not understand this bit of simple astronomy. [It was not, as Jackson says, just an hour, but a whole day that the sun was said to be stopped.]

This last error of Jackson's shows that we all, as human beings, occasionally err. In my previous essay I erred when I included Job's wife as a casualty of God's wager with Satan. Actually, it was only his children who were slain to test Job's faith. But, Jackson focused only on my slip and did not deal with the cruelty of murdering children as a part of a bet.

Furthermore, Jackson distorts my statements when he refers to the passages that I cited to contradict the notion of God as a loving being. I did not say, as Jackson indicates, that a loving God would have to love rape or murder, or would not punish evil doers. The examples I gave were of death and punishment of innocent people. A just and loving God would not punish any innocent person because of someone else's transgression. In one case the victims were not entirely innocent: the 42 children that were killed for mocking a bald man. However, is capital punishment something a loving God would decree for rude children? If that were the case none of our own children would be permitted to live past the age of three.

Bill Jackson also avoids the true meaning of Matthew 5:17-18. Jesus' words are quite clear and unambiguous in this passage. I shall even quote it: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Now, unless you agree that heaven and earth have passed and that all has been fulfilled, the only interpretation for this passage is that Jesus is saying that the laws are still in effect. Every jot and tittle of the law still stand, including the dietary laws, the laws about relative worth of men, women, and children, the laws demanding animal sacrifices, the law that disobedient children must be killed, and the law that women who are not virgins must be stoned to death at their fathers' doors. The Old Testament does not to my knowledge have a passage saying that once the Messiah comes you can simply ignore all the old laws.

In the case of Saul's conversion Jackson dismisses the contradiction by claiming the distinction between hearing and hearing with comprehension. The passages themselves tell another story: Acts 9:7, "and the men which

journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." Acts 22:9, "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." To Bill Jackson, "hearing a voice" and "heard not the voice" mean the same thing. Now that is blind faith.

I was not born disbelieving the Bible (technically I did not believe nor disbelieve anything). Soon I was taught, as were you and Bill Jackson, to believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Unlike those of you that remained believers I realized that faith is not enough. In order for something to be accepted as true I felt it should accord with facts from the real world. The believer assumes the truth of that which he or she wishes to prove. God exists because the Bible says so; the Bible is true because it is the word of God. What is the independent evidence that demonstrates that the Bible is anything other than the words of many ignorant and superstitious people who desperately sought to answer questions that they could not answer? There simply is none. You must have faith that it is so, and there is no way to accept the quaint myths of the Bible without a mountain of faith.

One very important point about the discussion of God and the Bible is that the existence of a god is not proven nor disproven by the Bible (or by science). Errors in the Bible are not proof that there is no god; they are only proof that the Bible was written by fallible human beings. Furthermore the existence of a god is not, so far as we know, a subject for scientific studies.

Science does not deal with things beyond nature (i.e., supernatural things). Thus, there is no evidence for any supernatural being or occurrence. Many of us then choose to say that this total lack of evidence

might easily be interpreted to mean that there is no such thing; however, we do not say that the point is proven to any scientifically acceptable level of probability. Science is neutral on the existence of a god.

Here are my questions on this topic for Bill Jackson: 1) What evidence outside of the Bible tells us that the Bible is true? 2) Why do you attempt to argue based on evidence and logic when at the end you simply accept on faith things you cannot explain? 3) Why does a supposedly ethical Christian routinely and deliberately distort what an atheistic adversary says?

#### JACKSON'S SECOND NEGATIVE

It is already obvious that Mr. Bratteng will not be meeting the issues the propositions demand. He is a humanist, but will not forthrightly admit that his views are those set forth in the creed of humanism. Upon our every meeting, he has tried to disassociate himself from their printed decrees, but he upholds every one of them! He dodged my question No. 2, well knowing that he holds a completely unscientific view, and he chooses to say, "Too complex to deal with it here." His humanistic values could not consistently condemn Hitler's actions, but he simply states that a

humanist couldn't condone Hitler. He adds that Hitler was a Christian; if so, then Bratteng is a Christian, for he earlier told me he was brought up to believe in God and the Bible. The fact is that no one is a Christian simply because of exposure to Bible truth in an earlier time; what Hitler stood for, and what Bratteng stands for, shows that neither of them fits a Christian mold!

By the way, Hitler's statements were: "The best thing is to let Christianity die a natural death....when understanding of the universe becomes widespread...then the Christian doctrine will be convicted of absurdity....the only way of getting rid of Christianity is to allow it to die little by little." (Hitler's Secret Conversations, by H. R. Trevor-Roper, New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1953, pp. 49,50,51). Now, it is very, very clear that Hitler's expressed views are closely akin to Bratteng's own; indeed, he had far more in common with Bratteng than with any man claiming to follow the Christ!

Bratteng's claim to showing the humanness of the Bible is based on the fact that he feels God must have expressed himself, in every way and on every topic, just as a late-20th century botanist or zoologist would! God, states Bratteng, will not be allowed to express himself as pertained to time, place, nation and culture then prevailing. And, since Bratteng rejects the idea of God, he feels that any picture of God working is a product of man; but, Mr. Bratteng, that's because of your own preconception that God doesn't exist!

On Genesis 1 and 2, Bratteng will give us "double-talk," on the terms "chronology by days" and "sequence." Genesis 2 explains that man needed a suitable helper, and recaps that of the animals created, none thus suited

man's needs, and woman was made. Bratteng FORCES the reference to animals in 2:19 to be "sequence," so then he can cry, "Contradiction!" It is obvious when an argument is contrived!

As to Jacob and Laban, Mr. Bratteng should know that even today those who work in animal breeding do not know all that contributes to coloration. As to God breaking the laws of nature, God set up those laws, and has in the miraculous age worked on occasion above those laws. God, being God, can do this, and Bratteng cannot discount that it was so. Bratteng would have to disprove the existence of God to prove his case. Amazing that Bratteng cannot stand the idea of God over-riding natural law, but in the question he wants to evade, as to the origin of material things, he and all atheists hold positions in violation of ALL NATURAL LAW an ALL SCIENTIFIC LAW!

I'm glad Bratteng agrees that God declares the sinfulness of things. But, he acts as if God performed against man's "best interests." Let us remember that Bratteng, as a humanist, wants things to proceed for "man's best interests," but remember also the humanist stand favoring divorce, abortion, euthanasia, suicide and homosexuality! Ah yes, Bratteng feels humanism is in man's best interests, but that God's decrees were not! And did you get Bratteng's point on self-destruction? - it can be tolerated because we can spare them, having more people than we need! The humanist "standard" is being revealed!

On Leviticus 11:19-21, one can easily see the transition from birds to the inclusion of "other winged creatures," including insects that fly. Ridiculous to think that God's writers must use the classification system that men accept in 1988, or else "the Bible is not from God!" God couldn't stop the earth's rotation, says Bratteng, because the needed force would be

immense! Well, Bratteng, that's who we're talking about when we speak of God - AN IMMENSE FORCE! It is rejected because "it's not part of the world science knows!" See, folks, Bratteng falls down to worship at the feet of what he calls "science," and for all of its ignorance, contradictions, speculations and often ridiculousness, science is all of it, and therefore he states, "I cannot accept the idea of God!" How self-centered can a man be? "I cannot accept God, and presto, since I can't accept God, then God does not exist, and no work of God is allowed to be a work of God!"

I'm glad Bratteng is concerned with the "cruelty of murdering children" (his fault with the book of Job), what with his being a humanist and the humanist creed giving approval of abortions, self-murder and murder of the aged! Yes sir, Bratteng has strong sensibilities, when it comes to just how God should have acted. But such complaints do not remove God from existence!

Mr. Bratteng does not like my characterizing of his view of a "loving God," and yet he does hold the view that a "loving God would not bring capital punishment to bear upon one who violated the law of God - the man who gathered the sticks, and should Moses not have had his son circumcised. These are not "innocents," Mr. Bratteng, if God's law was broken. And you mentioned these as proof that God is not "loving"! Love demands rebuke and punishment on occasion!

Amazing now to see that an atheist, as to Matthew 5:17-18, is the one who has a "clear and unambiguous" understanding of the passage. He has proven that he is clear on hardly any passage, but now he proposes great theological understanding of Old and New Testament relationships. By the way, "virgin women stoned at their father's doors" related to the one instance, and Jephthah, and not to all virgin women under the law, as

Bratteng implied. We will be glad to show him the Old Testament passage, Jeremiah 31:31ff, where God made the Jews a promise that a new covenant would come, unlike the previous one. Colossians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:15 shows fulfillment, and Hebrews 8:8ff and 10:9 reconfirms: One covenant ended, and the second one began! At least in this discussion, we can help Bratteng find his way around the Bible!

Bratteng wants a contradiction so bad that he will not allow that one can "hear," and at the same time "not hear with understanding" - he won't allow it, but both of us, and all men, have experienced it!

I will stand with Bratteng in the view that reason is vital; in fact, one cannot understand Bible truth without reason. Bear in mind that which Bratteng will try (if ever) to explain the origin of the universe, and man, it will be the words of one accepting the speculations of mere mortals in areas where they cannot know, have not one bit of scientific evidence, and the holding of their views requires MOUNTAINS OF FAITH! I'm glad to see that Mr. Bratteng states that if errors were proven in the Bible, it still would not disprove God! He states that his field cannot disprove God, and yet states the wording of his proposition demands that he show that the idea of God is BEST explained as a human creation - and, what has he done along this line? And, he has but one other affirmative article!

He states that science does not deal with things beyond nature, we then would ask why scientists venture forth into realm of origins, beginnings? He states that science is neutral on the existence of God; then, Mr. Bratteng, why do you endeavor to speak, as a man of science, in these areas? If you are "neutral," then as a true neutral you would have to say "there is as much evidence FOR God as against!" Bratteng, then, appears to be agnostic, not atheistic!



I wonder if he wants the short shrift to his questions, such as he gave to mine? (1) Evidence from every scientific field, from 175 years of Biblical archaeology, from secular writers, from the statements of the best men who've ever lived, from the Bible's influence for good, and from the history of its own indestructibility. (2) Mr. Bratteng errs when he states that faith must be without evidence and without logic. His statement from a man who holds the "scientific" view that "in the beginning was nothing, and one day nothing got busy and gave itself life and order!" Faith embraces evidence! (Heb. 11:1). (3) Show the distortion, Mr. Bratteng, and call yourself, unless you want to be deceitful, an agnostic rather than an atheist! Remember, this from a fellow who insists that Genesis 2 is sequence, when it does not so claim, who insists Old Testament law still pertains against clear words to the contrary, who indicts God by man's view of justice, and who claims that his views stand with evidence and logic! Mr. Bratteng has failed thus far, and time is running out!

#### BRATTENG'S THIRD AFFIRMATIVE

Pure rhetoric, utter nonsense, outrageous lies and distortions. This is the only way to describe Bill Jackson's second negative. [I bet the third will be even more "negative."] I am not surprised that other non-believers decline to "debate" Jackson. They realize the futility of arguing with someone that refuses to listen, to think, or to deal honestly with the issues.

In my opinion, Jackson has deceitfully proposed a debate that is, in fact, purely designed to air his pre-packaged platitudes. It seems he had no intention of an actual debate on whether the Bible is explainable as a flawed work of imperfect human beings. He chose instead to make it a platform for his vendetta against people that do not believe as he does. How else can we account for his dragging Hitler into the debate? Hitler has nothing whatsoever to do with this matter. However, Jackson knows that by spuriously linking me with Hitler, he can win points with those lacking the insight to recognize such an illogical rhetorical device, and who want only to be reassured in their superstitious beliefs.

I have tried to deal with the proposition in a direct and honest way -- even to the point of admitting an error I made, and by admitting that science cannot prove the nonexistence of a god. Since Jackson understands so little about science, I need to point out that science never proves anything; it merely provides the best explanation of the facts available at the time. Science is not my religion; it is not a matter of faith but of evidence. Science may be incorrect about some things, and it may not have all the answers, but it is still our most reliable source of knowledge. And, as we apply science to what we do not know, we find out more and more. Furthermore, the devices you use in your daily lives cannot be attributed to knowledge acquired from the Bible or any other religious source; they are the products of science and technology derived from science. Religion is not science and therefore it can claim absolute truth. However, the burden then is to avoid appearing wrong -- no matter how illogical or deceitful one must be.

I showed several points where the Bible is wrong -- either it contradicts itself or it contradicts scientific knowledge, but, Bill Jackson cannot afford to admit even one little error. So, how does he deal with the errors? He fudges with the truth. He brings in irrelevant and misleading matters to shift the focus away from the errors. And, when really in a corner, he attacks the non-believer.

Read Genesis 1 and 2 and decide who is making a contrived argument. The Bible says one thing, but Bill Jackson says something else. Moving along we find that Jackson is wrong about Jacob and Laban and about what science knows of inheritance of coloration. We know that animal breeding does not work the way described. But then, Jackson says that it does not matter, anyway, since God is free to break natural laws. However, remember that Jackson also claimed that nothing in the Bible contradicts science (natural law). Jackson needs to decide which way he wants it; it can't be both ways.

A flagrant distortion (and irrelevancy): "the humanist stand favoring divorce, abortion, euthanasia and homosexuality." Humanists, myself included do not FAVOR these things. However, in some cases some people may find some of them better than the alternatives. Who among you is so cruel as to deny a terminally ill person who is in constant, excruciating pain the opportunity to have a swift, painless end to the suffering? Apparently Bill Jackson is. But, more importantly in this series of articles on God and the Bible, it is not at all relevant.

Discussions of humanism and the Humanist Manifesto would be appropriate for some other discussion; in this context they only confuse the issue and distract from the discussion of biblical errors as evidence for its human origin. But, for the record, I do not distance myself from humanist

writings. I agree with most of what is written in the Humanist Manifesto II. However, this manifesto is not a creed. It does not prescribe what one must believe in order to be a humanist as does the Bible for the Christian. Instead this manifesto is descriptive; it is what several humanists decided was a consensus of what humanists think. I have no objections to discussing and defending humanist thinking, but I feel such matters are not appropriate in this forum.

Now to continue with the matter at hand: we see a slippery sidestep when Jackson dismisses the odious actions of his God in Job by attacking me instead of dealing with the real issue. The capricious murder of children is lost in the shuffle as he claims that I as a humanist monster have no room to talk about atrocities. But, it would not matter if I were an ax-murderer (which, by the way, I am not) -- what about your loving God? How can such an action be justified by supposedly Christian criteria or even by humanistic criteria? Jackson realizes that it cannot, so he dodges the question.

Considering the matter of origins that seems quite important to Bill Jackson, we find him continually using one particular phrase that he attributes by inference to humanists, atheists, or scientists (depending on his target at the moment). What does the humanist explanation for origins have to do with the subject of the Bible and its relationship to a supposed God as the best explanation for the world? Nothing, but Jackson throws it in every chance he gets.

By the way, the catchy phrase (in slight variation) that keeps popping up is, "nothing got busy and gave itself life and order." It is not the scientific, atheistic, or humanistic view that something came from nothing -- that notion is the Judeo-Christian view. God made something out of

nothing. The scientific answer to the question, "Where did we all come from?" is, "We don't know, but we have some ideas that have some evidence to support them. Of course, we could be wrong." Admitting ignorance may not be as satisfying as proclaiming absolute certainty, but it is honest. And, more importantly, the claims that are made have evidence to support them. The religious view has no evidence -- only assertions.

When Bill Jackson answers the question about origins, he gives a very definite answer. But what he really does is give a name to his ignorance; he calls it "God." Ask him where God came from. If he answers, "I don't know," then you can see my point. However, if he answers that "God always was," then you should ask him why the physical universe could not be in the category of "always-was." I expect the answer will be, "the Bible tells me so."

Invoking the Bible as the source of knowledge is a classic example of circular reasoning. My point is, and has consistently been, to show that the Bible is just another book unless it has independent verification that is testable. So far neither Jackson nor any other believer has shown such evidence. The starting point is always that the Bible is true. Where is there even one shred of evidence for the existence of an all-knowing God as author of this book? The person or persons that wrote the "Holy Bible" on my desk certainly were not all-knowing. In fact, whoever was responsible did not even know very much about how the world really works.

Another ploy Jackson uses is to point out that my knowledge of the Bible is lacking. I will admit that I am not a biblical scholar; however, I feel as Mark Twain said, "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't

understand that bother me, it is the parts I do understand." Jackson has not dealt directly and honestly with any of my objections, continually dodging questions by various rhetoric devices.

Furthermore Jackson pretends great knowledge of the Bible that is not supported by his statements. For example, in reference to Deuteronomy 22:13-21 he is wrong that it applies to just one case; he also incorrectly cites it as virgins -- it is non-virgins. In a previous article he claimed Joshua stopped the sun for an hour; the Bible says it was a day. And in the matter of Saul's conversion the Bible says 'heard,' not 'heard with understanding.' Jackson claims literal truth for some parts of the Bible but not those where the literal statements are inconsistent with what he wants it to say.

But clearly, Jackson knows certain parts very well -- those that support what he wants. However, the Bible is so contradictory that one can "prove" just about anything, depending on which parts are used. Racism, sexism, genocide, and religious persecution all have been justified by people holding a Bible in one hand and a sword or a torch in the other.

Jackson's statement that Hitler "had far more in common with Bratteng than with any man claiming to follow the Christ" is given the lie when we consider the mute testimony of burned or hanged witches, the victims of the Holy Inquisition, and infidels slain by Crusaders marching behind the Cross. These victims of avowed followers of "the Christ" shared the same fate as the people in Hitler's Holocaust. [To update this exercise in guilt by association I need mention only two words: 'Bakker' and 'Swaggart.']

Bill Jackson tells me time is running out to make my case, but even at the outset I had virtually no chance of reaching true-believers who are secure in the comforting myths and fables of the Bible. At best I hope at least some of you will accept that non-believers have a right to exist, and that they are not the embodiment of evil as some claim.

"...know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Perhaps you remember those words attributed to someone called Jesus, but if you are Bill Jackson or one of his followers you won't heed them because you are enslaved by the impossible dream -- biblical inerrancy. Those that seek the truth must be willing to go wherever it leads, even if it leads to discomfoting ideas. But, since comfort apparently is more important to you than truth, you will continue to follow Bill Jackson. He will tell you what you want to hear.

#### JACKSON'S THIRD NEGATIVE

I am amazed that Mr. Bratteng is shocked that I have a negative, and that he anticipates more negative - that is my job in this portion of our discussion. He will have his negative opportunities in our second portion. I am all the more amazed that Bratteng charges me with uttering nonsense, lies and distortions, when he knows that he is upset that anyone challenges him. To question him is, in the Bratteng view, to be "dishonest with the issues." He accuses me of great wrong in trying to "line him up with Hitler"; Friends, Mr. Bratteng needs to be honest, also. Didn't he state that Hitler was a "Christian," and thus tried to line him up with me?

One more amazing thing is that Mr. Bratteng attempts to argue a point, and then will admit that science proves nothing, but only offers "the best explanation available at the time." Well, that's so "chancy" that Mr. Bratteng has no basis for arguing against God; since science cannot prove nor disprove God, Mr. Bratteng must then be agnostic and say, "I don't know." He, in loyalty to science, saying "it is still our most reliable source of knowledge," surely must admit that there is knowledge beyond just the realm of science. And, why is he using science as a source of "knowledge," after admitting science can't prove anything!!!!???

Mr. Bratteng said that he worked to show the Bible must be a flawed work of imperfect human beings. But has he forgotten that he was to show that the idea of a god is a human creation???? And surely he can see by now that his pointing out things from the Bible, claiming "contradiction," (and his refusal to allow that there may be true and reasonable explanation) goes not so much toward proving that the bible is a human product as it does to proving that Steve Bratteng is ignorant of the Book, and so prejudiced that he will not allow the Book a type of hearing that he would give to any other volume! Bratteng goes too far when he claims that the devices we use in daily life cannot be by Bible knowledge, but must come through science. I challenge that. One device I use daily is that of the sacredness of life, and science can tell us nothing here! Bratteng thinks if it can't be placed in a test-tube, it can't exist or be true!

One thing so puzzling about Mr. Bratteng, is the fact that he, an atheist/humanist, did not know that he would be called upon to defend his atheism and humanism. Why is it that he did not realize that he would have to argue from the atheist/humanistic perspective? Nice work he lays out



for himself: He states, in effect, "Let me attack God, but don't ask me to defend humanism. Let Jackson believe in God, but Jackson never can answer that a matter is the work or will of God."

Let us review the bends and twists of Bratteng: (1) He insists that Genesis 2 is chronology, whereas nothing states this or indicates this. You see, it has to be chronology, else he cannot claim, "Contradiction!" (2) He will not allow God to work in the case of Jacob and Laban, but insists that the record of thousands of years ago must be stated in terms of 1988 science - though all the while he tells us science never proves anything!!! (3) He is bothered by natural law, never stopping to realize that if God is, he is above natural law. (4) The real humanist Bratteng must agree with the statements in the Humanist Manifesto, all the while now stating such as divorce, abortion, euthanasia and homosexuality are not to be looked upon with FAVOR, but that, for example, the murder of a terminally ill person is better than having the person suffer! Now, when we can bring the real Bratteng out, he is something else! And, no wonder that, though his arguments against God and the Bible are based on his atheism and humanism, he thinks it inappropriate for me to bring them up!

(5) Bratteng has a "case" against God being a loving God, because God doesn't behave as Bratteng thinks he should. And, have you noticed (as is typical of all atheistic/humanistic rantings) that what usually upsets these are facts about punishment for sin!? Peculiar, isn't it? That's parallel to the man who rants and raves against the penal system, against law enforcement and the idea of incarceration - when he himself lives in violation of law! I'd say an atheist/humanist has good reason to disagree with the Bible's concept of punishment of the ungodly! Both he and Twain have reason to be bothered!

(6) In criticism of God, Bratteng now says things cannot be justified by a Christian criteria, when he has repeatedly argued not on the teaching of the Christ, but on the law of Moses. When one gives evidence that we are not now under that law, he simply rejects the point! (7) Bratteng argues against the Bible, and God, and thus against all that God says about origins, and then when I bring up origins, he wishes to exclude it from the discussion as insignificant! It has to all be one way, doesn't it, Mr. Bratteng? On origins, he again tells us that science fails here, that there is some evidence, but that it could be wrong! Then, he cannot state the Bible's points are definitely wrong, can he? He errs when he states the religious view has no evidence: Rather, the religious view has the evidence of science, in that there must be life to give life, and that matter is not eternal! We see him then, finally, admitting what he knows to be unscientific: He states that maybe the physical universe "always was." (8) He faults the Bible, and God, saying that God shows himself not to be all-knowing, for "he didn't know much about how the world really works." Why make that point, Mr. Bratteng, when you have admitted that science doesn't know, and can't prove anything, and that even when science speaks, it may be wrong!? (9) He chides me in regard to Deuteronomy 22, when he did not cite Deuteronomy 22 earlier, but only referred to the killing of a daughter; I took this to be the case of Jephthah, but as to Deuteronomy 22, it is the punishment due to one being in violation of God's law! (10) No, Mr. Bratteng, I know that God stopped the sun for a day, but was illustrating that man can arrange an extra hour of daylight, and Bratteng has no trouble with it, then God could do the same for an

hour...and if so, for a day. (11) In Saul's case, Bratteng will not allow "hearing" on the one hand, but "hearing not with comprehension" on the other, though two different Greek words are used to convey it.

Bratteng, in his continued ranting, then turns to claim that all manner of crime has been committed by people holding the Bible in their hands; but he was obligated to show why the Bible could not be of God, and why God could not exist, and speak of being off the subject: What men have done holding the Bible in hand is not the point at all!

Bratteng continues to err when he cites the misbehavior men, as they themselves violate the Bible's teaching, and hopes that this proves the Bible is of man, and not God! A pitiful exercise, Bratteng! A thousand misconducts by those who claim to believe the Bible does not disprove the Bible when rightfully used. Too bad Bratteng is ignorant enough to think that unworthy men somehow proves the Bible unworthy! We point out again that which Bratteng does not want to hear: Considering Bratteng is a humanist, and seeing what their Manifesto (I,II) advocates, as to human life and value, Bratteng and Hitler have much in common!

In his final sympathy ploy, Bratteng urges upon our readers that non-believers have a right to exist, and that they do not embody evil. Your right to exist is not in question, Mr. Bratteng. Believing the Bible, I think you have a right to exist, believe that you were created by God, believe in the sacredness of your life, would not have wanted to abort you while in your mother's womb, would not encourage you to commit suicide, and when old and infirm, would not want you exterminated! The Bible teaches me those values. However, Mr. Bratteng, your position, as a humanist, would not extend the same good-will to me. As an atheist, you think that all men are animals, having no sanctity to their lives, and feel that no moral

wrong would be done in exterminating us (except as it might break some man-made legal rule). Again, the Bible does tell me that what the humanist/atheist stands for is evil, and evil in its worst forms! We note, at the end, that Bratteng makes a plea that truth be followed, even to the accepting of a discomfoting idea. Truth, Mr. Bratteng? Where will you find it, since you say all must rest in science, but that science proves nothing, and in what it says, it may well be wrong! This man, readers, directs men to TRUTH - what truth?

We shall now end this first half of our discussion by noticing what Mr. Bratteng has not done. His proposition obligated him to show that the idea of a god or the Bible as the word of a god, are ideas best explained as human creations. Mr. Bratteng has (1) FAILED to do anything other than to show that men have, in history, fashioned gods. The Bible says that; (2) FAILED to see that Genesis 1 is chronology, and says so, while Genesis 2 makes no such claim; (3) FAILED to allow God to speak or act, because Bratteng decided there is no God; (4) FAILED to see that a record of thousands of years ago need not fit 1988 zoological classifications to still be an accurate picture of the animal; (5) FAILED to look at New Testament passages clearly showing that the Old Testament, a law given only to Israel, has been replaced by the Law of Christ; (6) FAILED to see that his faulting God's law is so often merely Bratteng's reaction to sin being punished; in his liberalism, he wants wrong to go unpunished; and (7) FAILED to see that one misbehaving, in failing to apply Bible teaching, does not prove the Bible to be unworthy. Bratteng has FAILED in being a humanist, in that while he agrees with most in the Humanist Manifesto, he denies that it is his creed (but only a consensus, but that's good enough to be a creed). Bratteng has FAILED to do any more than demonstrate that

he doesn't understand the Bible; his prejudice against it keeps him from doing any reconciling study. Bratteng proposed to show that the idea of God is a human creation, but put forth no effort to show that God could not exist. Never in human history has a man promised so much, and spent so much time in delivering so little!

#### JACKSON'S FIRST AFFIRMATIVE

It is with pleasure that I now begin the second half of the discussion with Mr. Bratteng. In our earlier exchange, he had said that the idea of God, and the Bible as the Word of that God, was best explained as being of human origin. He merely revealed that he did not believe in God, and that, in examining the Bible, he just didn't understand it. He never explained how rejection of God was the BEST course for mankind, nor did he choose to get into the atheists' view of origins, the first cause, etc. Now, in this present portion of our discussion, in meeting my statements, he will be expected to show how atheism and humanism hold positions in the best interest of society. It is hopeful that our exchanges will add something to the continual discussion ongoing between believers and the theistic community.

The proposition I am to affirm is this: "The idea that things exist without creation by God, that man evolved from lower creatures, and the idea of humanism are not productive of society's good." We, then, speak against the idea that there is no God, and thus against the idea that all things, including man, are here by the action of non-intellectual and

accidental forces. And we speak against the philosophy of humanism, and state that all of these factors work that which is detrimental, harmful and destructive to any society!

In keeping with our agreement, I have these three questions for my opponent's responses: (1) Since you reject the Biblical account of origins, please tell us that which was the first existing thing, and from which all else came. (2) Is it your view that the universe, or matter, or something, "always was," and if so, is this a sound scientific view? (3) Is the humanist approval of divorce, abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia and suicide that which betters society, enriches life, promotes human values and uplifts the character of mankind? These questions are directly related to the positions both Mr. Bratteng and I hold, and his forthright responses will expedite our discussion. I will now proceed by dividing my material into two sections.

#### ATHEISM AND SOCIETY'S GOOD

We wish to point out the following:

(1) Atheism is not even good science. All atheistic literature will embrace science, and declare loyalty to what science has revealed to us, but when pressed as to the origin of things, and how life came from non-life, and how dead matter became living matter, etc., without fail the atheist will take a completely unscientific view. That's why we want Mr. Bratteng's response to our questions No. 1 and 2. If "science" must fall back on "something always was," then that something may as well be God!

(2) Atheism promotes the irresponsibility of man. Since atheism begins its explanations without God, then man is here without God, and man becomes nothing more than an animal! In reality, man is an animal, and he has no concept of any higher power or authority - he lives in a completely "self-

world." The bottom line is that man is responsible for nothing, none have claims upon him or expectations concerning him, and even if he wills to submit to some rule, such as civil law, it is purely arbitrary, and if he breaks it, so what? This, in contrast with the Bible's picture of man being made in the image of, in the likeness of, God (Gen. 1:26). And more, from the Bible man is told that his every work is judged by God (Ecc. 12:14). Atheism promotes irresponsibility, relegating man to animal status. (3) Atheism has nothing to say about the worth of man. Again, man is just an animal, and unexplainable to the atheist, man just happens to have more intellectual power than other animals. But human worth cannot be established through atheism, and finally, it is the "jungle rule" of might makes right and rule by the strongest. That's why Communism and atheism can so readily embrace one another! And (4), atheism can give man no moral values. Moral value cannot be established by science. That's exactly why the most immoral of acts can be embraced and furthered, as we will see in noting what humanism stands for in our time. When Mr. Bratteng so quickly made a move to point out that "non-believers have a right to exist," he merely revealed, by atheistic thinking, that "rights to exist" enters the picture. To the believer in God, such is never a question: None of us have the right to declare that one in disagreement with us has no right to exist!

Just here we will challenge Mr. Bratteng, if he denies that his position is silent as to the worth of man, and as to moral value, to state that which is his moral code - Where is it found? Who created it? Is it unchangeable? Who can change it? Where did it first appear? His dealing with these will aid us greatly in being able to see, from his view, how atheism and humanism ARE PRODUCTIVE OF SOCIETY'S GOOD!

## HUMANISM AND SOCIETY'S GOOD

We do recall that Mr. Bratteng tries to distance himself from all the printed declarations of humanism, and yet in his negating my proposition, he is in the position of declaring that humanism IS PRODUCTIVE OF SOCIETY'S GOOD! We deny that such is so, based on these factors: (1) Humanism is detrimental to society because of its approval of divorce. Remember, with no established moral value, and no basis for human worth, no wonder humanism is bold to declare "right to divorce." Thus, homes are being wrecked in an alarming number today, and this is laid up against God's instructions of one man and one woman for life - his law on marriage from the beginning (Matt. 19:1-9). (2) Humanism is detrimental to society in its promotion of gross immorality, speaking favorably in the Humanist Manifesto of sexual behavior between consenting adults; thus, favoring fornication, adultery and homosexuality. The nation is wallowing in that filth this very hour, and the fact that atheists and humanists speak in behalf of such merely goes to prove our point on the absence of human value and moral worth when it comes to man and his behavior. Illicitness has brought upon the world the most infectious of diseases, and humanism is speaking in promotion of the illicitness. Lay that alongside the Bible's teaching of one man, one woman, exclusively together in marriage, and sexual activity only in their marriage! Which is promotive of the best interests of society? (3) Humanism is detrimental to society in the low view it has of human life and worth, believing that the taking of life can be at the whims and selfish desires of men. Thus the Manifesto speaks of the right to abortion, a crime taking place yearly in our land that causes Hitler's slaughter of the Jews to pale in comparison. Such once again points out the lack of consideration of human worth and value in humanism. The Manifesto speaks of the



right to suicide, and of the propriety of euthanasia, which would be the humanist's way of killing off an aged or infirm parent, but, of course, "with dignity." We have stressed before how humanism would free the world of problems, and at that, to also free the world of humanists and everyone else: Abort the unborn, kill off the aged, and encourage all others in between to commit suicide! Both the matter of suicide and euthanasia merely indicate that humanism is void of consideration of human and moral values, and all such are taken back to act merely as animals: It's not wrong to kill an animal, and if men think of themselves as merely beasts, then no wonder they act as beasts, reject any efforts to get them to act otherwise, and no wonder also that they can freely end the life of each other - being only beasts!

I am charging, Mr. Bratteng, that all of these forces, at work in any society on earth, will bring such a society down to an unparalleled low level, and will ultimately destroy that society. I am charging that what atheism and humanism stand for does nothing but lower man to the animal level, and that these philosophies have no moral value and cannot speak to human worth. I am charging that animalistic behavior in our own society today is furthered and promoted by such immoral values at work in our midst. And, I am calling on Mr. Bratteng not to cry as to how humanists are despised and hated, nor to moan that some are saying they have no right to exist or speak. I am calling on him to show that the views of atheism and humanism elevate, promote society's GOOD!

### BRATTENG'S FIRST NEGATIVE

I doubt you have noticed, but there is a glaring disparity staring you in the face. Bill Jackson goes to some length to explain that I and other humanists are fundamentally evil and that we could not possibly be otherwise so long as we lack faith in supernatural beings. And since you probably agree with whatever Jackson says, his statements sound plausible and somewhat scary.

Just imagine, here you are, a God-fearing, Christian person surrounded by wicked, godless secular humanists who would just as soon kill you as look at you. Because we don't believe in a God we have no basis for morality; no reason to love, to have compassion, or even to go on living. So, what's wrong with this picture? Just one it'sy-bitsy little thing: it just ain't so.

Some of the most moral, decent people ever to live have been non-believers while some of the most cruel and awful acts in history have been carried out by believers acting "in God's name." Of course, not all non-believers are exemplary individuals any more than all religious people are murdering monsters. But, there is clearly no strict correlation between belief and morality.

Jackson seems convinced that as an atheistic humanist I represent a threat to all of humanity ("society"). However, the very name and the definition of humanism show that humanists place the highest value on human life and human concerns. It is totally unacceptable for humanists to deny other human beings the right to live and think as they wish -- so long as they afford the same rights to others.

In his rhetoric Jackson claims that humanists support abortion, euthanasia, and suicide, thus effectively eliminating all age classes of human society. If Jackson is telling the truth, you should be surprised that any of us still remain to threaten you. But, Jackson is not telling the truth. However, he is right that humanism is a threat -- it is a threat to all those who do not wish to think for themselves, favoring instead a blind faith in someone else's notions that are comforting in their simple absolutism. Too bad life is not really so simple -- then none of us would ever need to think.

To humanists the "Jacksonian" notion of "jungle rule" by animalistic humanists is completely ludicrous. Human beings are obviously animals, but the notion of jungle rule shows a complete lack of understanding both of animals and of human behavior. Jackson seems to think that animals go around killing one another with no apparent reason and without any rules for controlling social behavior. Actually, contrary to Jackson's wrong-headed ideas about the world, animals do have rules that they follow; furthermore, ruthless, senseless killing is most commonly the preserve of human society, including, if not especially, the self-proclaimed moral religionists.

In response to Jackson's statement that atheism is not good science: "atheism" is not any kind of science, nor do atheists claim it is. Atheism is simply the lack of a belief in a god or gods. However, science is atheistic to the extent that there is no scientific evidence for gods and there is no formula, theory, or phenomenon that has a God-factor needed to make it work. Look at any physics or chemistry book. Interactions of

matter and energy are explainable in strictly mathematical terms without any supernatural fudge factor. If a god exists, it is not part of what science knows or needs in order to explain the world around us.

Jackson says that atheism promotes the irresponsibility of man. Au contraire, Bill. It is deity-driven religion that promotes irresponsibility when it claims "God's will." The atheist/humanist has to rely on his/her own abilities (or those of other people) and cannot simply fall back on wishful thinking (some call it prayer). This forces a responsibility in all areas, including the development of moral and ethical systems.

Jackson says atheism has nothing to say about the worth of man, nor does it give man moral values. In the most narrow sense of atheism this is true, since atheism deals only with the existence of a god and not with morals.

However, most atheists do have a keen appreciation of human worth and do have moral values. The difference between atheists/humanists and religionists is that atheistic ideas do not depend on a supposedly supernatural source; atheists and humanists value human intellect and emotional needs without intrusion from those human creations, the gods. The humanist ideal of behavior is the Golden Rule: treat others as you would have them treat you.

It seems impossible for a true believer to be truly moral. Morality implies making a choice. To the believer, being moral is choosing actions that will lead to wonderful rewards while at the same time avoiding choices that lead to eternal misery. This is not a real choice, given that the believer is convinced an all-powerful God will prevail. This makes it pretty easy to do the "right" thing. The person that chooses to do the

right thing for its own sake, and not to obtain heavenly bliss, has truly made a moral choice. It is the humanist, not the Bible-toting believer, who routinely makes such choices.

Jackson insists on equating tolerance of various acts with approval of them. This is typical Bill Jackson nonsense. I find it downright insulting to have self-righteous Christians continually imply that I am wallowing in filth simply because I do not try to regulate the private thoughts and behaviors of other people. Especially at a time when news reports almost daily reveal the foibles of such as Bakker and Swaggart.

Rather than waste more time and space quibbling over Jackson's hostile and inaccurate descriptions of atheism/humanism, I wish to make a few points about the good humanism holds for society as compared to the harmful effects of religious belief.

Humanism holds hope for humanity through application of reason and scientific knowledge. To the humanist, problems are not solved by merely accepting them as God's will nor by praying that the Lord will solve them for us. Humanists try to make the world better by learning more about how the world works, and then, once the underlying facts are known, to go about finding practical solutions.

The humanist accepts his/her role as a part of nature, and thus applies reason to all areas of human concern within the framework of human-based ethics. The humanist tries to decide what is best for all people and does not merely accept on faith some archaic nonsense handed down from people who had only a vague and inaccurate view of natural phenomena -- such as manifested by the Judeo-Christian bible.

I will cite a few examples of humanistic/naturalistic thinking, starting with one from the earliest days of our history -- as exemplified by the Greek philosopher, Democritus.

There was a man killed when a tortoise fell from the sky, striking him on his bald head. To the supernaturalistic thinkers this was a sign from the gods -- especially since an eagle, which was associated with Zeus, was seen overhead at the same time. Democritus, however, applied the naturalistic view of a humanist to arrive at a different explanation. Eagles like to eat tortoise meat but often have difficulty getting to it, thus they have learned to drop tortoises on rocks to break open the shells. The unfortunate man's bald head was simply mistaken for a nice shiny rock by the hungry eagle. No gods or other supernatural events are needed to explain this event.

In a similar manner religious people over the years have routinely ascribed various natural phenomena to their god or gods. For example many diseases have been blamed on evil spirits and demons or on divine retribution for various impure thoughts and deeds. The true story turns out to be much less mystical in light of modern knowledge of pathogenic viruses, bacteria, and other organisms. The failure of religious thinking to address the real problems has meant that vast numbers of people have suffered needlessly while praying and uttering meaningless incantations instead of attacking the natural causes of the problems. The humanistic view that whatever happens must have natural causes and remedies is vastly more productive of society's good than religious mumbo-jumbo ever was.

The same can be said of virtually every sphere of human activity. It has been the naturalistic, scientific view advancing our understanding that has led us to progress in relief of suffering. Religious views seldom have

helped more than they have hindered such progress. The period of history known as the Dark Ages was a result of religious domination of society. Thus, education was confined mainly to rehashing the myths of the Bible. Western civilization took a nosedive everywhere the church was dominant.

To the religionist, anything that God commands is good and moral --even if it is the cruel and brutal killing of another person, which, by the way, is rather commonplace in the Holy Bible. The brutality that is demanded by the God of the Old Testament is immoral and wrong in the view of humanists.

Very few, if any, of the terrible things that Bill Jackson says about humanists are true. Anyone that doubts that need only talk with humanists or read what they say about themselves in order to get the truth about what humanists think and do.

It is convenient for religionists like Bill Jackson, Jerry Falwell, etc. to create demons to blame everything on and to provide a rallying point. For some people everything must be black or white, good or evil. They cannot stand the ambiguity of shades of gray, nor the uncertainty of 'I don't know' as an answer for some questions. Such people are easy prey to those who bear false witness against others by claiming they are the embodiment of evil. Even if there were no godless humanists, Bill Jackson would have to create them just to have an adversary to mobilize his Christian soldiers.

**JACKSON'S SECOND AFFIRMATIVE**

I am shocked at Mr. Bratteng's defeatist attitude, assuming that all who read will probably agree with Jackson! Mr. Bratteng must feel that he had nothing worthwhile to present! Please note that, by our signed agreement, three questions were permitted. I asked my three, and what did I get from Bratteng on them? SILENCE! It makes one think that he entered into the discussion merely to have a platform to set forth his pre-packaged views, and he'll violate signed agreements to get to his canned material.

I had pointed out that atheism is not good science, meaning that what the atheist and humanist sets forth is not even in keeping with true science! He states that science can explain the world around us, and that God is not needed - but that conveniently overlooks the matter of origins, the first things. I pointed out also that humanism/atheism looks upon man as an animal, and cannot make more than that of man. Bratteng shows himself to be just what I said, in that he backs up the idea of man "having rules controlling social behavior" because the animal world abides by such rules! He even thinks no animals kill indiscriminately; Mr. Bratteng, I'd like to introduce you to Mr. Wolvervine! Well, enough - Bratteng has revealed much, in that he says "animals have rules" and so do we higher animals!

Mr. Bratteng seems to have forgotten that, as per our first exchanges, that I base faith and morals on the Bible, and not on Catholicism (which he cites in the Dark Ages) nor on Bakker-Swaggart-Falwell. I believe none of those are teaching and living in keeping with Bible truth, and their sins and excesses are in violation of Bible truth. Humanism should not condemn them, for since humanism has no moral code, "all these have merely done



what animals do!" I will stand with you, Mr. Bratteng, in condemning all such misconduct; the difference is, I have a Standard that condemns the error, and YOU DO NOT!

Bratteng claims that the name "humanism" shows it places high value on human life and concerns. IT DOES NO SUCH THING! THE NAME TELLS NOTHING! It will be the official documents and writings of humanism - THE HUMANIST MANIFESTO, I & II - that shows what they think of human worth. It is a picture of divorce, abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia and suicide! He claims humanists do not deny anyone the right to live, and yet his humanism is pro-abortion! Yes sir, humanists believe in the right to live, don't they? He says humanism is a threat to those who do not wish to think for themselves, and yet his MANIFESTOS are credal statements issued showing that the thinking has already been done by "headquarters!"

Bratteng says science explains the world around us, but does it explain origins, Mr. Bratteng? He states that humanists and atheists have moral value, but does science give moral value, Mr. Bratteng? He tries to elevate the humanist and atheist to really be something fine, in that, without God, they develop moral and ethical systems. Really, Mr. Bratteng? We've already seen, from abortion to homosexuality, just what morals and ethics humanism advocates!! And true to every previous time when he was pressed to give the basis for such morals and ethics, HE HAD TO BORROW IT FROM RELIGION!!! He cites, "The Golden Rule!" But his abortions, his euthanasia and the homosexuality he advocates violate that very rule!!! A glaring inconsistency there, Mr. Bratteng!

Bratteng then states that true belief robs one of choice, since God has spoken. But what proves too much proves nothing, Mr. Bratteng! By the same token, you, as a non-believer, in knowing that law exists, and that

law will punish you for stealing but that you will be left secure if you do not steal, by your own argument no moral choice is made. You simply follow a course that will assure that you will not be punished! Every humanist/atheist will trip himself up by his own arguments!

Now, Bratteng will try to distance himself from his Manifesto's declarations. He said that "toleration is not approval." Yet he will claim loyalty to humanism, and will contribute material to Mrs. O'Hair's journal! He tolerates - yes - and more, as a humanist HE DOES APPROVE! He could disassociate himself if he did not approve!

Bratteng reveals a lack of knowledge of Christianity when he implies that Christians sit back and wait on God to solve problems for them! He elevates the humanists' practical solutions (recall the abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, suicide and divorce?) - reminds me of Hitler's "final solution" to his problems!!! It is amazing that, in view of what humanism stands for, Bratteng will speak of "ethics." He ran out of soap, for sure, in that he spun a tale of eagle, tortoise and man, and all of it based on what some heathen idolater imagined! He talks about what all manner of religious people have done and said, and yet I have shown him that it is Christianity that I endorse and aid by. He then points out that some men in religion tried to blame all diseases on the "gods," or "demons." He clearly has not examined the New Testament, for in that age demon/unclean spirits existed for a time, but also there were physicians - Luke being one (Col. 4:14). It is not true that Christians blamed all disease on "demons." While Bratteng elevates science so highly, may we remind him that it wasn't too long ago that men in science bled other men to death (curing them) in efforts to heal them!

We need to correct Bratteng's history. Western civilization took a nosedive - dark ages - everywhere Catholicism ruled by might and main. Look still at the conditions wherever Catholicism is in power. But look also at real Christianity, and mankind is bettered wherever these truths have gone: The home is better, children are treated better, woman has been treated better - all of society is bettered!

Amazing that Bratteng tries to indict God for brutality; this, from a man whose position endorses abortion, euthanasia, suicide, etc! Bratteng argues that the world is not filled with items "black and white," but notice that true to humanism and atheism, when the choices are made he will decide FOR THE BLACK!

Now, I had charged that humanism/atheism, under the guise of science, uses that which is not science, especially when it comes to origins. I had charged that humanism/atheism promotes irresponsibility, in that man becomes merely an animal; Bratteng showed himself to have the same rules as he sees in the animal world. I had charged that humanism/atheism has nothing to say about the worth and value of man. That's exactly why we see no humanist/atheist orphan home, nursing homes, etc. What is their answer to human needs, in view of their seeing man's worth? Abortion, euthanasia and suicide!! I had charged that humanism/atheism has no basis for moral value, and in desperation, Bratteng had to borrow from religion to state his moral credo!! I MADE THE CHARGES, AND THEY STILL STAND!! Bratteng has not shown them to be wrong!

My affirmation is that both humanism and evolution (the humanist view of the beginning of things) are not productive of society's good. Mr. Bratteng is in the denial, and he should then be showing how humanistic "values" do promote good in society. He should be showing us how divorce

is good for society, how euthanasia is good for society, how homosexuality is good for society, how suicide is good for society and how abortion is good for society. Mr. Bratteng, you claim to be a humanist, and THESE ARE HUMANISTIC VALUES, stated in their own OFFICIAL MANIFESTO, I & II! And, while you are about it, elevating "science" as the panacea for all, please show us how atheistic humanism and the atheistic view of science explains the origin of all things. And, please explain how science gives moral value and worth; tell us how science goes about determining the matter of ethics.

And, Mr. Bratteng, will you please answer the questions I have submitted to you? They were a part of our agreement, and were to the essence of our discussion. One would think that you would have the desire to be as thorough as possible, and with all that you have obtained from science, the questions should be no problem to you. In the interim, should you meet a wolverine in the way, be sure and explain to him, from one animal to another, about the set of rules he has to abide by. Your next article should be a full one!

#### BRATTENG'S SECOND NEGATIVE

Bill Jackson makes a lot of harsh accusations against humanists, offering the explanation that non-believers cannot be good people. He never deals with the real issues. Instead he tosses around a lot of emotionally-charged rhetoric but fails to give a satisfactory explanation for

why I and many other humanists do not perform evil deeds. He refuses to admit (or fails to see) that humanistic ethics have a great deal in common with what he claims is the Christian ethic. The difference is not one of good versus evil; it is that his system requires an absolute truth determined by an all-knowing God, while humanism requires that we look at the human condition with reason and compassion without the presumption of absolutes or supernatural entities.

Jackson cannot afford to let you know that there are numerous ways to arrive at goodness. His system requires the claim of absoluteness -- that his way is the right way, the only possible way to goodness; all others are doomed to dwell in evil. As we have seen he condemns humanists; I am confident he would damn other views as well. The humanist view is that a person's actions should be consistent with goodness - regardless of a belief in gods, or whatever.

I venture that Jackson would say that no Buddhist, no Taoist, no Hindu can be moral. Of course this would be sheer arrogance unwarranted by the acts of the real world -- a world Jackson is not wont to visit. The truth is the world has produced several moral/ethical systems no more or less good than the Christian one. Among these are various systems that do not depend upon a god but do yield behavior that, in a Christian, would be given Jackson's imprimatur of goodness. I assert that humanism is one of these systems.

Aside from the important issue of the basis for morality, Bill Jackson continually attacks me for not answering various questions he poses. In some cases there is an element of truth in what he says. [However, I must

point out that he has demonstrated a masterful ability to dodge and ignore questions, himself.] So, what follows is a detour to explain the situation.

When this series was first negotiated, the stated objective was to provide a forum for a more detailed analysis of the differences between Bill Jackson and me than had been available in previous encounters on TV, radio, and in the newspaper. Jackson claimed he wanted to correct the problem of inadequate time and space for full debate. And I took his word for it that he intended such a debate.

However, he then proceeded with a tack that seemed calculated to prevent such open discussion. In his first article he presented questions that not only were completely off the topic to be discussed but also were not answerable in the space available. In my opinion Bill Jackson deliberately created a conflict so that he would be able to say either, 'Look, the humanist refuses to answer my question,' or, if I did address his questions, 'Look, the humanist has no arguments to support his philosophy.' I consider such a tactic to be deceitful and inconsistent with Jackson's claim to be an ethical person.

Jackson accuses me of merely attempting to present pre-packaged platitudes; certainly he is an expert at just such a ploy. But, that is exactly the point of this exchange -- to present our respective views of the world. I think the careful reader will see that if either of us is guilty of espousing a party line and thereby slighting the topic, it is Jackson. Furthermore, Jackson considers that if I give an answer that he cannot accept or understand, then I have not answered the question. But it is not

true. Read again the early articles and see who asks inappropriate questions, who dodges the crucial questions, who claims absolute correctness without need for evidence of it. Jackson does.

Because Jackson cannot understand how non-believers can be decent folks they are not permitted to be so. However, if we were limited by what Jackson can comprehend, we would live in a dark and dreary world, indeed. The truth is that a great many non-believers -- atheists, agnostics, humanists, etc. -- are good, decent people who love their families, show compassion for their fellow humans, experience awe of the beauty of the natural world, and behave in a moral manner. Jackson's inability to accept this truth shows that his world view is limited by severe tunnel vision, excluding some of the lustrous wonder that is basic to the human condition.

Because Jackson has a written formula (his Bible) that supposedly guides his life, he assumes that everyone else does the same. He thinks that the Humanist Manifesto has the same significance to humanists that his Holy Bible has to him. I disagree. The Bible is clearly a prescriptive document; it tells people what they should do and why. The Humanist Manifesto is merely descriptive; it tells what most humanists probably would agree on. One does not need to read or even know about the Manifesto in order to be a "good" humanist. I doubt that any humanists look at the Manifesto to find out how they should behave or think concerning any problem they face.

I doubt also that there is anything in the Manifesto that I would have much trouble accepting. However, I do not accept Jackson's description of what it contains. He claims it advocates abortion, suicide, euthanasia, divorce, and homosexuality. I again assert that if that were true, there would soon be no humanists around to threaten Bill Jackson. Of course it

is not true. Jackson seems fundamentally incapable of understanding the difference between advocacy and toleration. If I tell others that I will not condemn them as terrible because they find their marriage to be an unbearable union of incompatible persons, does that mean that I think everyone should get divorced ... that divorce is the ideal that everyone should seek? Not hardly.

Let us look at some of the the other "evils" Jackson mentions. The humanist position on euthanasia is that it should be applied only by the informed consent of the person involved. The idea of deciding for someone else that they have lived long enough, have suffered too much pain, or whatever, is simply not part of the humanist view. The humanist insists that people decide for themselves how, or if, they wish to live.

The matter of abortion is probably the most emotional and controversial issue of all those mentioned. The humanist position, again, is not to advocate abortion, but to admit that sometimes for some people it might be a better option than bearing an unwanted child. The main reason that abortion is even an issue is that, due to ignorance of human sexuality, abortion has become an alternative to contraception. In my view such use does diminish the value of human life; abortion is too grave an action to be used merely for convenience. The best way to end such use of abortion is to end unwanted pregnancies; this can be done only with a comprehensive program of education and parental guidance of young people.

Because of the current AIDS crisis, homosexuality has taken on new and serious significance for society. In some ways it is no longer just a matter of one's sexual preference, since there are serious public health



issues involved. [However, as an aside I would point out that it is not homosexuality per se that has caused the problem, inasmuch as in parts of Africa it is mainly a problem of heterosexuals.]

While I do not personally accept the homosexual orientation as a good one for me, I would have great difficulty condemning anyone whose "sin" is to love another person. The causes of homosexuality are very complex and unclear; however, it is clear that few, if any, homosexuals make a conscious choice to be as they are and violate the "normal" sexual patterns approved by society. Perhaps some combination of genetic and environmental factors are responsible. If one's "different" sexual preferences are a result of a pathological condition, it seems unreasonable to attack such people as sinners. It might even be possible for such persons to be "cured" of their orientation, if they found it to be too much of a problem.

Of course many homosexuals resent the implication that they have a problem; I am not sure if this attitude is justified, since it certainly seems to violate the natural order of things. However, since there is so much that we do not know about this matter, it is difficult to make definite, unqualified statements. It is the humanist position to accept people, odd or not, so long as they do not harm others, and so long as they permit others the choice NOT to participate. This is a far cry from promoting or advocating homosexuality.

Humanists tolerate a wide range of human activities, including some that they might find distasteful. They accept people as having complex needs that cannot always be met by the quaint, archaic notions dreamed up by a quarrelsome Semitic tribe more than two thousand years ago. Our modern culture has new and different needs and expectations that were not anticipated by our Judaic ancestors.

The philosophy of humanism requires not only a scientific view of the world, a view excluding supernatural factors, but it also expects people to tolerate those who do not think exactly the same: to respect the rights and intrinsic worth of other human beings. It is this latter aspect that often seems to be lacking in some religious views (actually, it is lacking most in the application of the views by religious believers).

The major advantage of humanism is not that it creates a moral and ethical system superior to those of religion. Religions throughout history and around the world have in common the creation of ethical systems that have been crucial in stabilizing the many cultures that have arisen. What humanism provides is an insistence on rational investigation of natural occurrences to learn more about how the world works, and in the process to find out how to improve human existence. Gods and other supernatural influences are rejected, not a priori, but only after repeated discovery that these supposed influences are better explained in purely natural cause-and-effect terms. Gods are simply unnecessary.

### JACKSON'S THIRD AFFIRMATIVE

This is, then, my final article in our discussion, and Mr. Bratteng has one negative to follow. I note that for all of Mr. Bratteng's early surprise that one in the negative should actually write negative things, he did pretty well as a negative in his last. He pounces on Jackson pretty good, but, in view of his denial of what I am affirming he should be tell-

ing you, with cited examples to back up his case, how evolution and humanism have products to the good of society.

He, in his last, refers to humanistic "ethics," and has the audacity to state they have much in common with Christian ethics. Yet, I showed from the Humanist Manifesto that their "ethics" include divorce, free-sex, mercy-killing, homosexuality, abortion and suicide. Humanist "ethics," INDEED! He revealed much in his last sentence in his first paragraph, denying any absolutes! Mr. Bratteng insists on "goodness" being around with various ways to attain such "goodness," but doesn't bother to tell us the points of that "goodness." He, as a humanist, must then see "goodness" in the list of "ethical" things we have cited from the Humanist Manifesto. May we be spared from his rule of "goodness"!

We must notice one of his "sugar-stick" expressions: "The real world." Now, that is just so much verbiage, inclined to make any reader think, "Real world? Why, this fellow knows something about a 'real world' that others of us can't see." But, from the above list, divorce to suicide, and all other matters listed, we have seen Bratteng's "real world"! It is, basically, a wholly selfish world, with men making themselves "gods," declaring their independence from the real God, (when they are daily dependent on Him) - an arrogance, a presumptuousness and an audacity laughable if it were not so pitiful!

I asked Mr. Bratteng three questions, getting to the heart of our differences, and especially appropriate in view of his boast of "the real world," and of his following the "reasonable, scientific" approach. I asked about (1) The first existing thing in the "reasonable, scientific" view he holds, (2) The matter of something "always being," and if such was "scientific," and (3) If what is allowable as "ethical" by the Humanist

Manifesto is good and productive in society. Friends, he has avoided answering, but takes the time and space to write a detour to explain it. In less space, he could have just answered the questions - and that was our agreement! - and avoided the detour!

So, then, to "explain" he faults our procedures, declares the questions "off the topic," charges deceit and lack-of-ethics, pre-packaged platitudes, etc. He then admits his dilemma: He didn't want to answer because, in either way, he would give Jackson a point he could use! Imagine! If you're in that kind of dilemma, Mr. Bratteng, then that's proof that something is wrong with your position! Mr. Bratteng admits that if he provided answers to my questions, it would look like HE HAD NOT A REAL SUPPORT OF HIS PHILOSOPHIES! Thank you, Mr. Bratteng! 'Nuff said, to show the real, revealed weakness of humanism!

Strange that Mr. Bratteng charges that if I can't understand some position he sets forth, then it is taken as Bratteng not answering. Remember that all that Mr. Bratteng said about the Bible revealed HIS LACK-OF-UNDERSTANDING of even the most basic of the Bible's concepts????? However, Mr. Bratteng really could understand my questions (1), (2) and (3). That's just the problem, as he readily admits: He could understand, but dared not attempt to answer them! Pitiful!

Now, in trying to dodge the fact that the Manifesto speaks for him, he faults the Bible for being prescriptive: telling people what to do and why. Let's look and see if the Manifesto tells the "why" as to the points advocated. We find it speaking of abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, divorce and suicide, the two Manifestos speak of values (I:p.3), heightened sense of personal life (I:p.9), promoting social well being (I:p.9), manly attitudes (I:p.9), mental hygiene (I:p.9), realizing the world of dreams and

power of achievement (I:p.10), survival (II:p.13), saving ourselves (II:p.16), etc., etc. Mr. Bratteng, do you still say the Manifestos is merely descriptive and doesn't offer a "why" as a motivation for the things described? Better read your own dogma!

Mr. Bratteng then admits that he has not trouble accepting the majority of the things his creed sets forth. Well, I said that all along; he is like most denominationalists, claiming their creed does not hold them in any authoritative way, but it speaks exactly to what they are and what they believe! He states he denies that the Manifesto states what I claim it states; so, I will again give the citation: Humanist Manifesto II, pp. 18-19 (Lines 23-27 on p. 18, and lines 10-11 on p. 19, if Bratteng wants it more exact). Contrary to the "tolerance, not advocacy" role Bratteng wishes to state for humanists, we have already seen, (previous paragraph) that what they recommend in their Manifestos is for social well-being, realizing dreams, achieving, and survival! Oh no, Mr. Bratteng! It is not just "tolerance"!

He reveals more and more, now stating that there is a humanist "position" on euthanasia - not just tolerance! He speaks of the humanist "position" again on abortion. Thanks, Mr. Bratteng! And on this latter, Mr. Bratteng in his advocacy (not just "tolerance") of abortions to end unwanted pregnancies does indeed reveal what he and all humanists see as value of human existence. Just animals, you know, and why not end an animal's existence at any time?

Again, we see real humanism in the view that "love for another person" surely should not be condemned. Aside from AIDS considerations (and it being among heterosexuals in Africa still does not set aside its originating in homosexual behavior), Bratteng wishes to bless the sinfulness,

charging that there may be genetic or environmental factors behind it - see? Not wanting to have the participants viewed as being at fault in any way! He says such persons should not be attacked as sinners. That's God's view, Mr. Bratteng (Rom. 1:23-27), and you're off your turf in speaking of sin (which is violation of God's law), since you do not believe in God. You have no right to speak as to something not being sin, Mr. Bratteng! You're out of your field, here. I am glad he is willing to venture that such conduct seems to violate the natural order; Romans 1:23-27 says the same. Again, notice that he speaks of the humanist "position."

I wish to speak to his point about humanism's "tolerance" of views it finds distasteful. Tolerance, indeed, when their Manifesto (their position paper, mind you) states that "religious institutions...ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods...MUST BE RECONSTITUTED AS RAPIDLY AS EXPERIENCE ALLOWS..." (H.M. I:pp. 9,10). Tolerance? These folks, non-religious, and abhorring churches, state their intent to RECONSTITUTE such! Completely outside their field, and in areas they wholly reject, they have the audacity to state they intend to reconstitute such. How? Infiltration? Attack? TOLERANCE, INDEED!

Mr. Bratteng states that humanism confines itself to a scientific view of the world, and that humanism excludes supernatural factors. Bratteng's thus narrowing is just short of being as goofy as the man who seeks all answers in, say, pharmacy, and he refuses to consider that some other factor might be involved. So, when he cannot answer, he says "pharmacy is learning all the time, and I will wait on it." In the meantime, cannot Bratteng see that he needs to show from science how (a) the first existing thing came to be? (b) what was the first existing thing? (c) how there was a beginning? (d) what caused the first thing to become? (e) how first

matter had to come from something outside time and space? (f) how design originated? and (g) how moral evidence exists that man cannot function successfully as a moral being without an external moral standard? Mr. Bratteng has shown adeptness in refusing to answer questions, though our agreement was that three could be asked in each exchange. On the matter of his moral code, all he could point to was something he and other humanists had to borrow FROM RELIGION!

Bratteng needs to study the New Testament, and see the worth, value placed on each human being on earth. He is in error, then, when he would charge that Christianity fails to see and respect the intrinsic worth of men. In fact, such value and worth is the very basis of the Christian system!

Bratteng has made an admission fatal to his humanism when he stated, at the end of his last, that humanism has not created a moral and ethical system superior to that found in Christianity. He then states that humanism again purposely insists on narrowing its concerns; he explains the narrowing as coming into being after repeated discovery that all is better explained in natural terms. If true, Mr. Bratteng, then please deal with the points (a) through (g) made just a few moments ago. He states repeated discovery has shown that God is not needed, but when we have submitted questions to him as to the "natural" explanation of things, their origin, etc., he states it is "off the subject" or "involves more that we can deal with by this forum." Very significant dodge, Mr. Bratteng! YOU CAN'T ANSWER, CAN YOU? It is obvious!

Please remember that my affirmation has been that belief of evolution, and acceptance of humanism, are detrimental to society's good. I have shown, by the Humanist Manifestos, what humanism stands for: Man as purely

an animal, and finally with the "ethics" of an animal (and sometimes lower). Just a smattering of knowledge of humanism, by their own published materials, shows where humanism stands as regards divorce, homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia and suicide. Each of these places "value" on a low plane - little value in human worth, and in the home as well. That's where humanism stands, and how could any man speak in defense of it? Mr. Bratteng has one more opportunity!

#### BRATTENG'S THIRD NEGATIVE

"Just a smattering of knowledge of humanism..." This phrase from Bill Jackson's final affirmative lingers in my mind; it was a revelation to read. Not only does this describe his understanding of humanism, it pretty well describes his understanding of things in general -- just a smattering.

Despite no apparent end to the things that Bill Jackson does not understand, there is one area in which Bill Jackson is truly a master. He is a master at the art of the deceit by omission and deliberate distortion. I will take up some of my precious space to detail just a couple of instances of his modus operandi, but I can scarcely overemphasize the fact that the cases I picked are just the tip of the iceberg of Jackson's rhetoric.

In the previous piece by Jackson, he makes a point about my refusal to answer some of his questions as I had outlined in my previous statement. However, he subtly alters the interpretation of what I said to create the



false impression that what I had written supported his pathetically weak argument.

Here is what I wrote:

"In his first article he presented questions that not only were completely off the topic to be discussed but also were not answerable in the space available. In my opinion Bill Jackson deliberately created a conflict so that he would be able to say either, 'Look, the humanist refuses to answer my question,' or, if I did address his questions, 'Look, the humanist has no arguments to support his philosophy.' I consider such a tactic to be deceitful and inconsistent with Jackson's claim to be an ethical person."

Now here is how Jackson describes this:

"He didn't want to answer because, in either way, he would give Jackson a point he could use! Imagine! If you're in that kind of dilemma, Mr. Bratteng, then that's proof that something is wrong with your position! Mr. Bratteng admits that if he provided answers to my questions, it would look like HE HAD NOT A REAL SUPPORT OF HIS PHILOSOPHIES! Thank you, Mr. Bratteng! 'Nuff said, to show the real, revealed weakness of humanism!"

Nowhere does he refute nor even mention my charge that it was his (Jackson's) actions that created the dilemma. It was not because I could not support my philosophy, and it was not a weakness of humanism. It was the limitations imposed by Jackson. He was the one asking questions that require entire books to answer; it was he who imposed the space limit here.

Using Jackson's logic he could ask Carl Lewis to run a race while holding four bowling balls and then denounce Lewis as not being a world class sprinter, when he refused. If you must resort to such tactics, Bill, then it appears your philosophy has weak support. Furthermore, your silence about my charge of deceit speaks volumes for my argument.

In another place Jackson dismisses the humanist ideal of the golden rule as being "something he and other humanists had to borrow FROM RELIGION!" He neglects to mention that the "golden rule" was first expressed by

Confucius, who not only lived 500 years before Jesus but also was not a theist. Confucianism is a religion, but it does not postulate a supreme being -- no lawgiver. Two reasons the golden rule is "golden": it has arisen independently in numerous cultures, whether theistic ones or not, and it serves as a useful guide for all humans, believers or not.

And farther down the page Jackson says, "Bratteng has made an admission fatal to his humanism when he stated...that humanism has not created a moral and ethical system superior to that found in Christianity." In this case Jackson fails to present what I said in context. I had said that the value of humanism over Christianity was not in creating a superior moral/ethical system [both systems being roughly equal in this regard] but in adhering better to what we know about how the world works.

This, then, brings us back to the real topic of this "debate," namely the merits of humanism. Simply stated humanism provides a moral and ethical system while at the same time accepting what science tells us about how the world works. Humanism tells us that we are capable of solving some of the problems of existence without reliance on magic and superstition. The achievements of science and scientists -- human beings -- are the legacy of humanism.

Science gives us a better view of the real world than other approaches because it works regardless of one's beliefs. I do not need faith in order for my television set to work; no prayers or incantations are required. It is simply a device that takes advantage of natural properties of the real world. The set of an "electronic non-believer" would work just as well as mine.

The real world is one that obviously gives Bill Jackson quite a bit of trouble. He thinks his world is the real one. Of course I think mine is the real one, too. What's the difference and how do these worlds differ in terms of their likelihood of being correct?

My version of the real world is one that can be, and in fact has been, measured by countless scientists over many years. Despite the religious views of these scientists (some of whom have been Christians, some of whom have been atheists, some of whom have been Hindus, etc.), they have arrived at a consistent and objective description of the "real world." This world must be modified from time to time as newer, more accurate methods of observation are developed, but it is an ever-changing, evolving view of the world and not the static, absolute (and wrong) view of the world that Bill Jackson lives in. In contrast to the world that science shows us, Jackson's world has been measured repeatedly, and it always comes up short. The Bible simply does not give an accurate account of the objectively-viewed world.

At this point I can show you another major distinction between Jackson and myself. Despite the fact that Jackson's world view does not withstand close scrutiny by objective observers I do not claim that his moral and ethical system is worthless. It clearly is not. However, Jackson does not afford others the same latitude and charity. If you do not live in Jackson's world, you cannot be a good person. Apparently the act that millions of non-believers have managed to live moral, meaningful lives is intolerable to Jackson, and so he denies that what has happened can happen. And Jackson accuses me of arrogance!

Humanism says that you, as a human being, have worth and that you are responsible for your actions. As a humanist you would have to grant others the same claim to human worth. Jackson says that you have little worth. That, because your supposed ancestors in the Garden of Eden once "sinned" by daring to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you are born a sinner yourself. You are evil and worthless unless you give in to Jackson's God and submit, in blind obedience, to Jackson's interpretation of God's law. You do not have to think for yourself, nor do you need to respect the rights and goodness of those who do. And Jackson accuses me of intolerance!

The Christian bible claims that a good tree will produce no evil fruit. But the legacy of Christianity has been one of enormous cruelty and evil. This does not provide the grounds to dismiss all of Christianity. It simply reflects the human frailty that afflicts everyone. However, when this frailty is coupled with the desire for absolute certainty that God is on your side, it can lead to Holy Inquisitions and Holy wars of all kinds.

The humanist will claim that you are entitled to your beliefs whether Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, atheist, or whatever. But, the humanist will also deny you the right to impose your beliefs on others. A humanist would say that if the Christian view is correct, and there is a God, and there is a time of reckoning, the judgment is that of God and not of the Christian inquisitor. If there is a supernatural realm, that is God's domain. The here-and-now natural realm is the domain of human beings.

The phony world of humanism created by Bill Jackson is the only place where "jungle rule" by human animals exists. In fact, the picture of dog-eat-dog that Jackson paints does not even exist in the world of the non-human beasts. Other animals do not kill wantonly as he suggests. But,

as has become increasingly obvious, facts and truth are irrelevant to Jackson. All he wants is to have confirmation of his absolutist view and to have a humanist "devil" to rail against, but the evil Jackson beholds is in his own mind.

In this series, undoubtedly, I have failed to convert any true believers into rational, objective seekers of truth. But then I never expected to. I wanted to express the value of humanism and of humanists so that some of the awful things said about us might not find blind acceptance. I wanted non-humanists to see the human side of non-believers. If some of you feel less threatened by "us," then I have succeeded in some small measure.

Finally, I would like to make a point, not as a humanist, but simply as a human being. Jackson would have you believe that I cannot love my family because I do not have faith in a god. Jackson's system cannot explain it nor tolerate it, but I do love them, and none of the lies Jackson tells you about me can take that away from me.



