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SALUTE TO ATHEISM ON NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

BY DAVE BERG

I DON'T USUALLY SING THE PRAISES OF FANATICAL ATHEISTS.

(DAVE: ANYONE WHO CALLS ATHEISTS "FANATICS" HAS NO INTENTION OF SINGING THEIR PRAISES. SO DROP THE DISHONEST INTRODUCTION AND GET ON WITH IT).

THEY SEEM LIKE SUCH A DOUR LOT

(DAVE: DOUR WOULD DESCRIBE PEOPLE WHO ARE TERRIFIED OF AN INVISIBLE GHOST WHO THEY BELIEVE HAS THE POWER TO SEND THEM TO HELL IF THEY DON'T OBEY. YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND THE FEELING THAT ATHEISTS HAVE BY BEING FREE FROM THAT FEAR - BUT I CAN GUARANTEE YOU THAT "DOUR" DOES NOT DESCRIBE IT).

BESIDES, I'M A LITTLE SUSPECT OF ANYONE WHO GETS AS EXCITED AND CHARISMATIC ABOUT CLAIMING THERE'S NOTHING TO BELIEVE IN.

(DAVE: SINCE WE CAN PROVE EVERYTHING WE BELIEVE IN, FROM PHYSICS TO CHEMISTRY TO GEOLOGY TO BIOLOGY; AND SINCE YOU CANNOT PROVE ANYTHING THAT YOU BELIEVE IN, LIKE INVISIBLE GHOSTS - IT SEEMS LIKE YOU ARE THE ONE WHO HAS NOTHING TO BELIEVE IN).

BUT I HAVE TO GIVE CREDIT WHERE IT IS DUE. THE FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUNDATION (FFRF) RECENTLY WON A FEDERAL LAWSUIT THAT RULED THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER IS A VIOLATION OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT.

PRETTY IMPRESSIVE, CONSIDERING THAT ONLY TWO ATHEISTS RUN THE FFRF AS CO-PRESIDENTS: ANNIE LAURIE GAYLOR AND HUSBAND DAN BARKER, A FORMER EVANGELICAL MINISTER.

(DAVE: WE HAVE FORGIVEN DAN FOR HIS EARLIER DELUSIONS AND HE IS NOW ONE OF OUR MOST PROMINENT SPOKESPEOPLE).

THESE TWO NONBELIEVING, TRUE BELIEVERS FROM MADISON, WIS.,

(DAVE, REALLY. NOW YOU ARE SOUNDING LIKE A TEENAGER DEFENDING HIS GOD ON A WEBSITE COMMENT BLOG. TRYING TO BRING NONBELIEVERS DOWN TO THE LEVEL OF TRUE BELIEVERS IS A VERY JUVENILE TACTIC. THE TERM "TRUE BELIEVER" APPLIES TO PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE WITHOUT THE NECESSITY OF EVIDENCE - PEOPLE LIKE YOU DAVE).

SEEM TO HAVE MORE SPIRIT THAN ME AND MOST OTHER BELIEVERS I KNOW.

(DAVE: THEY PROBABLY DO HAVE MORE SPIRIT THAN YOU - THEY JUST DON'T REQUIRE INVISIBLE FRIENDS FROM FANTASYLAND TO PROVIDE THAT SPIRITUALITY).

LAST CHRISTMAS - I MEAN SOLSTICE - THEY PUT UP A MESSAGE IN THE WISCONSIN CAPITOL ROTUNDA THAT SAID, "RELIGION IS BUT A MYTH AND SUPERSTITION THAT HARDENS HEARTS AND ENSLAVES MINDS."

(DAVE: TRUTH HURTS - DON'T IT?)

THEY DON'T JUST DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO THEIR NONRELIGION ONE HOUR OF ONE DAY A WEEK AS MANY CHRISTIANS DO. THEY AND THEIR EIGHT STAFF MEMBERS PUT IN COUNTLESS HOURS CARRYING OUT THANKLESS TASKS SUCH AS SENDING OUT LETTERS TO MAYORS OF MORE THAN 1,000 CITIES AND GOVERNORS URGING THEM NOT TO TAKE PART IN PRAYER DAY.

THE WORK HAS BORNE FRUIT.

(AND THAT'S WHAT REALLY HAS YOUR PANTIES ALL KNOTTED UP IN A BUNCH ISN'T IT DAVE? NOW THAT ATHEISTS ARE FIGHTING BACK INSTEAD OF KEEPING THEIR MOUTHS SHUT, THINGS ARE GETTING A LITTLE ROUGH. YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN THROWING STONES SO LONG, YOU FORGOT WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE ACTUALLY HAS THE GUTS TO THROW THEM BACK.

AND THE REASON WHY THAT IS SUCH A BIG PROBLEM IS BECAUSE, EVEN THOUGH THEIR NUMBERS ARE SMALL, THEY ARE THROWING ROCKS FROM INSIDE THE CASTLE OF SCIENCE - YOU ARE THROWING ROCKS FROM INSIDE A GLASS HOUSE).

FOUR RECENT POLLS SHOW THAT 82 TO 88 PERCENT OF AMERICANS CLAIM TO BE CHRISTIAN. YET THE NUMERICALLY INSIGNIFICANT FFRF (14,000 MEMBERS) HAS EFFECTIVELY PUT CHRISTIANITY AND ALL OTHER RELIGIONS IN AMERICA ON THE DEFENSIVE.

(DAVE: VERY MISLEADING AND DISHONEST. THE FFRF DID NOT PUT CHRISTIANITY AND ALL OTHER RELIGIONS ON THE DEFENSIVE - THE CONSTITUTION TOOK CHRISTIANITY OFF THE OFFENSIVE. YOU ARE TRYING TO PLAY THE VICTIM. YOU ARE NOT. YOU ARE THE ATTACKERS AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT HAS JUST DONE WHAT IT WAS DESIGNED TO DO: PROTECT MINORITIES FROM THE FASCIST MAJORITY).

ANYONE PARTICIPATING IN PRAYER DAY WILL NOW HAVE TO JUSTIFY IT, AND IN SO DOING, ACKNOWLEDGE THE ATHEISTS' LEGAL CHALLENGE.

(DAVE: YOU SEEM TO BE UNWILLING TO LET GO OF YOUR FANTASY: THE DAY OF PRAYER HAS JUST BEEN DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL. THERE WILL BE NO PARTICIPATION IN SUCH A DAY ANY LONGER.

BELIEVER'S DO NOT HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE ATHEIST'S LEGAL CHALLENGE - THE FEDERAL COURT ALREADY DID THAT).

FFRF FILED SUIT AGAINST THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TWO YEARS AGO, CLAIMING PRAYER DAY VIOLATES THE ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE OF THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH STATES THAT "CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF."

PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN SIGNED THE LAW IN 1952, REQUIRING THE PRESIDENT TO ISSUE AN ANNUAL PROCLAMATION ASKING AMERICANS TO PRAY.

(DAVE: WAS HARRY TRUMAN A FOUNDING FATHER? YOU MUST BE USING THOSE TEXAS SCHOOLBOOKS).

MANY STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS DO THE SAME.

(DAVE: YOU STATE THAT AS IF THAT MAKES IT OKAY. AS THE FEDERAL COURT JUST SAID - IT'S NOT OKAY. JUST BECAUSE MANY STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS DO IT - DOESN'T MAKE IT LEGAL).

TURNS OUT THE NEW RULING CANNOT TAKE EFFECT UNTIL ALL APPEALS ARE EXHAUSTED, AND THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION HAS SAID IT WILL APPEAL THE CASE, WHICH WILL LIKELY KILL THE CHALLENGE.

(DAVE: ALWAYS THE WISHFUL THINKER. I WONDER WHERE THAT KIND OF THINKING CAME FROM? HINT: BIG BOOK - MANY AUTHORS).

BUT THAT WON'T STOP OUR ATHEIST FRIENDS. THEY NOW HAVE A TOEHOLD IN THE PROMISED LAND, AND THEY DON'T INTEND TO GO BACK.

(DAVE: YOU GHOST-WORSHIPPERS ALWAYS HAVE IT BACKWARDS. IT WAS YOU GUYS WHO INSERTED A TOEHOLD INTO THE PROMISED LAND WHEN YOU GOT TRUMAN TO PASS AN UNCONSTITUTIONAL DAY OF PRAYER. IT TOOK ALMOST 60 YEARS BUT THE COURT HAS FINALLY STRUCK IT DOWN).

FFRP FEELS EMPOWERED BY ITS HIGHER PROFILE BROUGHT ON BY THE INCREASED PRESS COVERAGE RESULTING FROM THEIR TEMPORARY LEGAL VICTORY.

(DAVE: HOW DO YOU KNOW IF THEY FEEL EMPOWERED OR NOT? DID YOU ASK THEM? HOW DO YOU KNOW IT IS A TEMPORARY LEGAL VICTORY - ARE YOU NOSTRADAMUS?).

AND THEY WILL CONTINUE TO SAY THAT PRAYER DAY AMOUNTS TO SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE EVEN AFTER A LEGAL DEFEAT.

(DAVE, THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT YOU HAVE JUST DONE: YOU ARE CONTINUING TO SAY THAT PRAYER DAY DOES NOT VIOLATE THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE ... EVEN AFTER A LEGAL DEFEAT.

HOW CAN ANYONE CONTRADICT HIMSELF THAT BADLY AND NOT BE AWARE OF IT? EASY - AS YOU HAVE JUST DEMONSTRATED).

THE ATHEISTS KNOW THAT THEIR REAL BATTLE IS IN THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION,

(DAVE: THAT IS ALWAYS WHAT PEOPLE SAY ... WHO LOSE IN COURT).

AND THAT IF ONE SAYS SOMETHING OFTEN ENOUGH - TRUE OR NOT - PERCEPTION WILL OFTEN PREVAIL.

(DAVE: THAT IS EXACTLY WHY YOUR RELIGION STILL FLOURISHES. HOW YOU CAN SAY THESE THINGS AND NOT EVEN BE AWARE YOU ARE DESCRIBING YOURSELF IS BEYOND EXPLANATION.

PEOPLE WHO DID NOT ARRIVE AT THEIR BELIEFS THROUGH REASON - CANNOT BE PERSUADED BY REASON, AS YOU HAVE JUST PROVEN).

SO MS. GAYNOR MAKES THE POINT THAT THE LAW THAT ESTABLISHED NATIONAL PRAYER DAY "IS BASED ON LIES AND BAD HISTORY."

(DAVE: SO TYPICALLY MISLEADING. IT WASN'T GAYNOR THAT MADE THAT POINT - IT WAS THE FEDERAL COURT).

SHE CONTENDS THAT OUR FOUNDING FATHERS DID NOT ESTABLISH OUR CONSTITUTION BASED ON JUDEO-CHRISTIAN BELIEFS, AND THAT A PRAYER DAY WAS NEVER PART OF OUR TRADITIONS.

(DAVE: YOUR STATEMENT MAKES IT CLEAR THAT YOU DISAGREE. YOUR IGNORANCE OF HISTORY WOULD BE EMBARRASSING - IF IT WERE IGNORANCE. BUT IT IS NOT. IT IS PART OF A DISHONEST CAMPAIGN OF LIES BY CHRISTIAN PROPAGANDISTS TO DISTORT THE INTENT OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS.

AND AS YOU YOURSELF ADMITTED EARLIER, PRAYER DAY WASN'T PART OF OUR TRADITIONS, BUT WAS ADDED ALMOST 200 YEARS AFTER THE FOUNDING OF OUR NATION).

IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT IN 1775 THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS CALLED ON COLONISTS TO PRAY AS TENSIONS WITH ENGLAND INCREASED.

(DAVE: YOU ARE RIGHT FOR ONCE - IT DOESN'T MATTER).

NOR DOES IT MATTER THAT GEORGE WASHINGTON CALLED FOR PRAYER WHILE HE WAS PRESIDENT, AND THAT ABRAHAM LINCOLN ESTABLISHED A "DAY OF NATIONAL HUMILIATION, FASTING AND PRAYER" DURING THE CIVIL WAR.

(DAVE, RIGHT AGAIN: IT DOESN'T MATTER. WHAT MATTERS IS WHAT IS IN THE CONSTITUTION).

NOR WILL FFRF EVER ACKNOWLEDGE THAT PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LED THE NATION IN A RADIO PRAYER ON D-DAY, THE INVASION OF NORMANDY DURING WORLD WAR II.

(DAVE. YOUR ARGUMENTS REMIND ME OF A BASEBALL PLAYER SITTING BEHIND THE PLATE - WITHOUT A CATCHER'S MITT).

THE ATHEIST GROUP IS ON A "HOLY" MISSION, WHICH I RESPECT.

(DAVE, YOU ARE A LIER. YOUR ARTICLE IS PROOF THAT YOU RESPECT NEITHER THEM NOR THEIR MISSION.

WHAT IS IT WITH HONESTY AND YOU GHOST-WORSHIPPERS ANYWAY? YOU ACT LIKE TRUTH IS KRYPTONITE OR SOMELTHING).

I UNDERSTAND WHAT FAITH THE SIZE OF A MUSTARD SEED CAN DO.

(DAVE: WHAT FAITH, OF ANY SIZE, CAN DO, AND HAS DONE TO OUR CIVILIZATION THROUGHOUT HISTORY IS EASY TO SEE IN THE GRAVESTONES OF ANY MILITARY CEMETARY).

THIS ISN'T ABOUT TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK. JESUS NEVER SAID LIE DOWN AND PLAY DEAD WHEN THE OTHER SIDE GETS OUT OF HAND. ASK THE MONEY CHANGERS.

(DAVE: SO TYPICAL. WHEN JESUS' TEACHINGS DON'T GO THE WAY YOU WANT THEM TO YOU SIMPLY MAKE UP EXCUSES, LIKE YOU JUST DID, AND THEN IGNORE THEM.

JESUS DID SAY TO TURN THE OTHER CHEEK. BUT AS YOU JUST STATED, YOU HAVE NO INTENTION OF OBEYING HIM. GOD DID SAY THOU SHALT NOT KILL, BUT AS YOUR LONG, BLOODY HISTORY PROVES, YOU PEOPLE HAVE NO INTENTION OF OBEYING HIM.

YOU ARE THE BIGGEST BUNCH OF HYPOCRITES THAT HAVE EVER WALKED THE EARTH. YOU SIMPLY FIND THE VERSES YOU NEED TO SUPPORT KILLING, SLAVERY, DISCRIMINATION, OR ANY OTHER BRUTALITY YOU NEED TO USE, AND IGNORE THE VERSES THAT WOULD PROHIBIT YOU FROM DOING THOSE THINGS.

STAY ON YOUR KNEES, PRAY TO YOUR INVISIBLE FRIENDS, THEN DIE AND GO TO HEAVEN. BUT PLEASE STAY AWAY FROM THE UNINFECTED ONES. WE HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS WITHOUT ADDING YOUR DELUSIONS TO AN ALREADY BRUTAL WORLD).

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

HERSCHEL TELESCOPE FINDS 'IMPOSSIBLE' STAR SO MASSIVE IT WOULD DWARF OUR SUN

ASTRONOMERS AT THE HERSCHEL TELESCOPE IN EUROPE HAVE SPOTTED AN 'IMPOSSIBLE' STAR THAT WILL TURN INTO ONE OF THE BIGGEST AND BRIGHTEST STARS IN OUR GALAXY.

ASTRONOMERS USING THE HERSCHEL TELESCOPE HAVE SPOTTED A STAR IN THE MILKY WAY THAT CHALLENGES OLD IDEAS OF STAR BIRTH, AND OPEN NEW ROADS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.

NEW COSMIC OBSERVATIONS FROM THE EUROPEAN-BUILT HERSCHEL INFRARED SPACE OBSERVATORY HAVE REVEALED PREVIOUSLY HIDDEN DETAILS OF STAR FORM TUCKED AWAY IN DISTANT GALAXIES. ONE SNAPSHOT REVEALS WHAT RESEARCHERS CALLED AN 'IMPOSSIBLE' STAR CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF FORMING.

'IMPOSSIBLE' STAR

IN A STATEMENT, EUROPEAN SCIENTISTS SAID HERSCHEL HAS DISCOVERED AN "IMPOSSIBLE" STAR SO MASSIVE IT WOULD DWARF OUR OWN SUN, BUT THEY ARE PERPLEXED AS TO HOW IT CAME TO BE. HERSCHEL FOUND THE EMBRYONIC STAR IN THE STAR-FORMING CLOUD RCW 120.

THE NEWBORN STAR LOOKS SET TO TURN INTO ONE OF THE BIGGEST AND BRIGHTEST STARS IN OUR GALAXY WITHIN THE NEXT FEW HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS. IT ALREADY CONTAINS EIGHT TO 10 TIMES THE MASS OF THE SUN AND IS STILL SURROUNDED BY AN ADDITIONAL 2000 SOLAR MASSES OF GAS AND DUST FROM WHICH IT CAN FEED FURTHER.

ANNIE ZAVAGNO, OF THE LABORATOIRE D'ASTROPHYSIQUE DE MARSEILLE IN FRANCE SAID, "THIS STAR CAN ONLY GROW BIGGER."

MASSIVE STARS ARE RARE AND SHORT-LIVED. TO CATCH ONE DURING FORMATION PRESENTS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO SOLVE A LONG-STANDING PARADOX IN ASTRONOMY.

ZAVAGNO SAID, "ACCORDING TO OUR CURRENT UNDERSTANDING, YOU SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FORM STARS LARGER THAN EIGHT SOLAR MASSES."

THIS IS BECAUSE THE FIERCE LIGHT EMITTED BY SUCH LARGE STARS SHOULD BLAST AWAY THEIR BIRTH CLOUDS BEFORE ANY MORE MASS CAN ACCUMULATE. BUT SOMEHOW THEY DO FORM.

MANY OF THESE "IMPOSSIBLE" STARS ARE ALREADY KNOWN, SOME CONTAINING UP TO 150 SOLAR MASSES, BUT NOW THAT HERSCHEL HAS SEEN ONE NEAR THE BEGINNING OF ITS LIFE, ASTRONOMERS CAN USE THE DATA TO INVESTIGATE HOW IT IS DEFYING THEIR THEORIES.

STAR BIRTH UP CLOSE AND FAR AWAY

HERSCHEL CAN SEE THE STELLAR BIRTH PROCESS BECAUSE AS STARS BEGIN TO FORM, THE DUST AND GAS SURROUNDING THEM IS WARMED UP AND STARTS TO EMIT LIGHT IN THE FAR-INFRARED WAVELENGTHS, WHICH HERSCHEL MEASURES. THE DIAMETER OF HERSCHEL'S MAIN MIRROR IS FOUR TIMES LARGER THAN ANY OTHER INFRARED SPACE TELESCOPE AND 1.5 TIMES LARGER THAN THE HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE.

THIS SIZE GIVES HERSCHEL ENOUGH RESOLUTION AND SENSITIVITY TO CONDUCT A CENSUS OF STAR-FORMING REGIONS IN OUR GALAXY.

SERGIO MOLINARI, ISTITUTO DI FISICA DELLO SPAZIO INTERPLANETARIO IN ROME, ITALY SAID,"BEFORE HERSCHEL, IT WAS NOT CLEAR HOW THE MATERIAL IN THE MILKY WAY CAME TOGETHER IN HIGH ENOUGH DENSITIES AND AT SUFFICIENTLY LOW TEMPERATURES TO FORM STARS."

ANOTHER NEW SPACE PHOTO RELEASED TODAY FROM THE HERSCHEL OBSERVATORY COVERS A NUMBER OF THE MILKY WAY'S STELLAR NURSERIES AND SHOW HOW STARS FORM IN THESE ENVIRONMENTS.

STELLAR EMBRYOS FIRST APPEAR INSIDE FILAMENTS OF GLOWING DUST AND GAS DRAPED ACROSS THE GALAXY. THESE FORM CHAINS OF STELLAR NURSERIES, TENS OF LIGHT-YEARS LONG, WRAPPING THE GALAXY IN A WEB OF STAR BIRTH.

HERSCHEL HAS ALSO BEEN SURVEYING DEEP SPACE BEYOND OUR GALAXY, AND HAS MEASURED THE INFRARED LIGHT FROM THOUSANDS OF OTHER GALAXIES, SPREAD ACROSS BILLIONS OF LIGHT-YEARS OF THE UNIVERSE. EACH GALAXY APPEARS AS JUST A PINPRICK BUT ITS BRIGHTNESS ALLOWS ASTRONOMERS TO DETERMINE THE RATE OF STAR BIRTH WITHIN IT — ROUGHLY SPEAKING, THE BRIGHTER THE GALAXY THE MORE STARS IT IS FORMING.

HERSCHEL HAS ALSO CHALLENGED CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IN THIS AREA BY SHOWING THAT GALAXIES HAVE BEEN EVOLVING OVER COSMIC TIME MUCH FASTER THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT. ASTRONOMERS BELIEVED THAT GALAXIES HAVE BEEN FORMING STARS AT ABOUT THE SAME RATE FOR THE LAST THREE BILLION YEARS.

BUT HERSCHEL SHOWS THIS IS NOT TRUE.

IN THE PAST, THERE WERE MANY MORE SO-CALLED 'STARBURST' GALAXIES FORMING STARS AT 10 TO 15 TIMES THE RATE WE SEE IN THE MILKY WAY TODAY. BUT WHAT TRIGGERED THIS FRANTIC ACTIVITY IS NOT COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD.

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ABROAD

INDIA ELDERS GET DEATH IN HONOR KILLING

FIRST USE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FOR THIS CRIME

THE VILLAGE ELDERS HUNTED THE YOUNG COUPLE DOWN, DRAGGING THEM FROM A BUS, STRANGLING THE GROOM AND FORCING HIS BRIDE TO DRINK PESTICIDE IN AN HONOR KILLING WITH ROOTS THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD. BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME, INDIA HAS SENTENCED THE MURDERERS TO DEATH FOR THEIR ACTIONS, SETTING UP A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN LONG-HELD TRADITION AND CRIES FOR OVERHAULING WHAT SOME SAY ARE ARCHAIC RULES.

THE RULING, WHICH CONDEMNED FIVE VILLAGE ELDERS TO DEATH FOR MURDERING THE COUPLE FOR VIOLATING LAWS DESIGNED TO PREVENT EVEN DISTANT RELATIVES FROM MARRYING, HAS SPLIT THE VILLAGE AND THE REGION. SOME, LIKE THE GROOM'S MOTHER, FEEL MARRIAGE LAWS ARE IN NEED OF AN OVERHAUL. "MY SON DID THE HONORABLE THING BY MARRYING THE GIRL HE LOVED," SHE SAYS. OTHERS ARE OUTRAGED—NOT AT THE DOUBLE MURDER, BUT AT THE LOVERS' TRANSGRESSIONS: "MANOJ AND BABLI RUBBED OUR VILLAGE'S NAME IN MUD," A LOCAL FARMER SAYS.

(MY COMMENT: MORON IS TOO IGNORANT TO REALIZE THAT IT WAS NOT THE LOVERS, BUT PEOPLE LIKE HIM, WHO HAVE RUBBED THEIR VILLAGE'S NAME IN THE MUD).

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FAMOUS QUOTES

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803 –1882) 78 YEARS.

HE WAS AN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER, ESSAYIST, AND POET, BEST REMEMBERED FOR LEADING THE TRANSCENDENTALIST MOVEMENT OF THE MID-19TH CENTURY. HIS TEACHINGS DIRECTLY INFLUENCED THE GROWING NEW THOUGHT MOVEMENT OF THE MID-1800S. HE WAS SEEN AS A CHAMPION OF INDIVIDUALISM AND A PRESCIENT CRITIC OF THE COUNTERVAILING PRESSURES OF SOCIETY.

EMERSON GRADUALLY MOVED AWAY FROM THE RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL BELIEFS OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES, FORMULATING AND EXPRESSING THE PHILOSOPHY OF TRANSCENDENTALISM IN HIS 1836 ESSAY, NATURE. AS A RESULT OF THIS GROUND-BREAKING WORK HE GAVE A SPEECH ENTITLED THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR IN 1837, WHICH OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, SR. CONSIDERED TO BE AMERICA'S "INTELLECTUAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE". CONSIDERED ONE OF THE GREAT ORATORS OF THE TIME, EMERSON'S ENTHUSIASM AND RESPECT FOR HIS AUDIENCE ENRAPTURED CROWDS. HIS SUPPORT FOR ABOLITIONISM LATE IN LIFE CREATED CONTROVERSY, AND AT TIMES HE WAS SUBJECT TO ABUSE FROM CROWDS WHILE SPEAKING ON THE TOPIC. WHEN ASKED TO SUM UP HIS WORK, HE SAID HIS CENTRAL DOCTRINE WAS "THE INFINITUDE OF THE PRIVATE MAN."

"THE RELIGION OF ONE AGE IS THE LITERARY ENTERTAINMENT OF THE NEXT."