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July 1, 2008: The Secularist's Prayer

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Title: The Secularist's Prayer

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7/1/2008--I have been thinking about Pascal's wager on the existence of God and I realize that somehow the secularist may be able to love God more truly than can the religious person. The religious person, despite best efforts to the contrary, hopes to see God after death. That is a reward. The secularist, in contrast, knows that all such hopes are in vain. The secularist lives constantly before death—and yet loves God all the same: a God who does not exist. I also heard from a religious critic who asked about the daily life of Hallowed Secularism. Well, daily life must have prayer, so here is one possible prayer from a Hallowed Secularist. Dear God—the one I learned to pray to as a child. I know you do not exist. The regularities of nature do not admit of intervention. We cannot survive without our bodies. You are not. But I love you all the same. You stand for me for the power of good—in the universe, in our history, and in my life. And you stand for me against my sinful nature. I wish I could know you. Dear Jesus—who did exist. You cannot be the son of God. I understand why you thought so. It is as if you were. Thank you for the good things your followers brought: science, freedom, equality, democracy. I promise to try to live my life close to yours.