



The devil called humanism

3. Achievement of aims

Geoff Walker

The Christian's progress

THE PROSPECT of ruling the earth for God with Jesus Christ as King is most appealing, and indeed thrilling, for the Christian. He anticipates teaching all nations God's just laws and then enforcing them in a merciful way. With such a tremendous future in his view, how is it that the Christian has the confidence that he can fulfil such a role? Looking back over history, seeing the attempts of men of ability and goodwill being continually thwarted, how could he succeed? He knows from his own experience that he is limited in both his mental and physical capacity. He knows also that he tends to be naturally selfish, not a characteristic best suited for caring for others.

Yet into his experience there has come an influence which has changed his whole attitude with regard to his future responsibility. God has spoken, and the Christian is able to hear His Word for himself as he reads his Bible. As he accepts without the shadow of a doubt that this Word reveals the mind of his Creator, and as he absorbs the ideas into his own mind, so he will develop Godlike characteristics, which will be absolutely essential if he is to rule the world in the way that God knows is best. Firstly, then, the prosecution of his prime aim in life must lie in a diligent reading of the whole of the Bible in order to develop a balanced view of all God's character and ways, and for them to be etched onto his brain. And because of his own natural tendency to please himself in his life his reading must be thorough and ongoing.

Looking to the future

His careful reading will also portray for him a pleasing picture in his mind of the Kingdom of God coming on the earth. This will fortify his resolve to develop a godly character. Following

their leader, Jesus Christ, Christians have always faced bitter opposition, which has sought to nullify their hopes. In the early years the enemies were Judaism and paganism; in the Middle Ages false Christianity and Islam were formidable foes; now humanism is the opposition (the devil) as it assiduously attacks the truth of the Word of their God. Yet from the beginning to the end of the Bible the repeated vision of a fertile and fruitful earth encourages the Bible reader to withstand all the wiles of the devil. He has the example of his leader, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2).

The Christian accepts that any suffering he may undergo as a result of such opposition will, if he patiently endures it, mature his character; he is following the example of his Master, who was made "perfect through sufferings" (2:10). Consequently he does not fight in order to alleviate any wrong done against him, but "resist[s] not evil" (Mt. 5:39), encouraging himself in the certainty of everlasting joy in God's Kingdom, as is so emphatically forecast in the Scripture.

As his conviction grows, and as opposition intensifies, that is, as humanistic ideas prevail generally, his prayers to his God become more earnest: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth"; because he knows the Scripture which says, "shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him . . . ?" (Lk. 18:7).

Loving neighbour

Further, because of his strong conviction from whence the ultimate blessing of all nations will come, he is constrained to let his neighbours know, both by word and action, that he is patiently waiting for God to act to fulfil His promises. This he considers is the greatest love that he can possibly show to his neighbour, for without an acceptance of God's way his neighbour will surely perish. In contrast to the humanist, the

Christian must show that God has worked, is working, and will work, for the good of mankind.

The Christian's way of life will reflect his convictions. This will involve keeping, as well as he is able, the commandments of his Master, whom he looks forward to working for in the coming Kingdom of God. He accepts that such selfless service is not only good training for the age to come, but that it provides the most satisfying way to live his present life. He notes, for example, his leader's strong view concerning marriage, that there should be no 'putting asunder', and his equally strong condemnation of adultery. He will try to ensure that his love for his partner will grow, smoothing out any difficulties that arise. Such deepening love will indicate a Christian fitting himself for his caring role in the age to come.

Forgiveness of sins

How does the Christian cope with his own inability to keep his Master's commands as well as he would like? He knows that, contrary to his inmost desire, he does at times sin, and he knows that Scripture's law is, "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). That would appear to eliminate any possibility of ruling for ever in God's Kingdom. Then he recalls the scripture, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jno. 3:16).

In pursuance of his aim, despite his natural tendency to slip when trying to keep his Master's commands, the Christian devotes his life to increasing his faith, that is, his belief in the faithfulness of his God to fulfil His promises as set out in Scripture. Then he knows God will overlook his sins, and grant him everlasting life, when sin will not intrude.

In these ways the Christian depends on his God, and it is the continual deepening of this trust that is his life's work.

The humanist's progress

IN contrast to the Christian, the humanist is not concerned with the development of character while waiting for God to act, but with the acquisition of knowledge so that he himself may manipulate the world for the betterment of mankind. This has been the age of learning, both in the sciences and in the humanities. Education has always been the cardinal activity and the main

hope of the humanist movement. A high proportion of the British Humanist Association are teachers, and a humanist teacher's association has been formed to tackle special problems and concerns.

Of course this teaching has no intention of educating students in Divine ways or values as outlined in the Bible. The success of this method of promoting humanistic philosophy is shown by the way that in present society the education system inculcates in children ideas about human rights, the freedom of the individual, the importance of democracy, and so on. Such is the power of education to propagate humanistic ideas that it is now common, even among nominal churchgoers, to regard parts of the Old Testament as unnecessarily bloodthirsty, or to consider the God of both Testaments as unfairly vindictive.

Another success for humanistic education is apparent in the way in which children have come to accept evolution as fact, thereby tacitly rejecting the Bible account of Creation. It seems that, nowadays, Western society dare not admit the existence of a God Who is greater than man himself. So humanism prospers, and 'advancement' of knowledge about the world goes on.

Historical perspectives

The teaching of history reveals the same humanistic influences. For example, the evolution of the British parliamentary system is presented as a welcome progression from the Middle Ages, when kings had power in their own right, to the present time, when a democratic parliament rules. Thus children grow up considering that democracy is a good thing, even the best form of government that there can be; thus having no conception that God's rule is the most caring dominion there can be.

Similarly the teaching of history represents the economic and technological development of the West as desirable—another building block in the edifice of humanism. It takes for granted that we all want more and better material provisions and benefits, thus promoting the worship of Mammon.

Progress against Christianity

In the main-line churches the teaching of humanism has made considerable inroads. Humanist influence has become so much a part of the Western way of thinking that ideas such as the rights of man, freedom and democracy are seen by most people as beyond dispute, and the

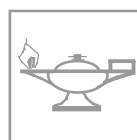
Church finds a place for them in its philosophy. Many Church leaders have joined their voices in the secular clamour for an end to the nuclear arms race. Catholic theologians have been formulating a 'Christian humanism' in order to slot previously unacceptable ideas into their theological framework. The pope now talks of the 'brotherhood of man' and the rights of the individual. In Anglicanism, the influence of humanism can be seen in its attitude to so many modern issues; for example in its increasing tolerance of homosexuality and the shift in its attitudes to women priests. The humanist argument that as

something becomes culturally acceptable it becomes morally acceptable is the argument that is used by the Church's liberal reformers.

The Church's acceptance of humanism has meant that, far from preaching that men should be content to suffer in this life, they have supported the cause of 'fair shares for all'. Such departure from Bible teaching is justified by proposing that the values of the first-century Christians and of the Israelites before them were only relative values, which have to be updated for succeeding generations.

So the tide of humanism rolls on.

[\(To be concluded\)](#)



Encounter

The Law given through Moses (2)*

Islip Collyer

IF WE COMPARE the two foundation principles of the Mosaic Law with the Ten Commandments, we find the difference between positives and negatives as bearing on human duty. The positives are far more comprehensive and in every way far better for those who can respond to them. The negatives are more explicit and are rendered necessary by human weakness. The positives present an ideal toward which men may continually climb. The negatives draw lines by which men may be judged. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour", says the Apostle, "therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

But the law of negatives might be kept quite well without any real love as driving force. A man might observe all the provisions of the Ten Commandments and yet have less real love for God and man than some others who through fleshly weakness have been guilty of obvious transgression.

Here we may note the startling significance of those words by the Lord Jesus which have seemed mysterious to many Christians: "A new

commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another" (Jno. 13:34). In view of the fact that the command to love is one of the oldest of Divine instructions, and was, as the Lord Jesus said, at the very foundation of the old Law, the question has been asked, In what sense could it be called new?

THE answer is surely on the surface. The ideal basis of the Mosaic Law was not included in the rules by which men were judged. It was impossible for mortals to adjudicate on an issue so completely hidden from mortal eyes. The judges under the old Law were guided by the sight of the eye and the hearing of the ear. If a man made idols or turned to alien worship, his sin could be attested by human witnesses and condemned by a human judge. In the absence of such external signs, no mortal witness could declare that the love of God was not in his heart. If one committed murder or theft or adultery, if he bore false witness or tried to obtain possession of other

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