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The CHURCH and HUMANISM

by Otto Scott

MANY OF THE TROUBLES afflicting us today stem from persistent efforts to change the English language. This has gone farther than the attempt to eliminate the distinctions of gender: it has altered our dictionaries and definitions of words, much as the French Revolutionaries sought to change that language in the 1790s.

This would not have surprised George Orwell, who warned of such an effort in his book, *1984*. We are, today, past 1984 in every sense. Newspeak is here. Old Speak is discouraged and those who use it are alternately mocked or boycotted. Publishing houses give authors lists of correct words as well as lists of words that cannot be used; newspaper style books also do the same. Students who use traditional terms in their essays receive a low grade, and if they persist, a failing grade; sometimes they are dropped altogether. Debates on TV and radio and during election campaigns are heavily linked into proper words and expressions, and many subjects are now ruled *beyond* debate. A contrary view is not allowed.

As an older writer, I have no intention of bowing to such pressures. On the other hand, I can't use any of the recent American dictionaries, because they are replete with distortions. The US State Department has no American dictionary it can use in drawing up a treaty; it has to use the Oxford International dictionary. I use Webster's Unabridged Second Edition, last issued in 1950, which is nearly unobtainable today.

Definitions

IN PREPARATION I looked up the definition of the term *Humanism*. First: Human Nature or Disposition. Second: The study of the Humanities and polite learning, especially the learning or cultural impulse imported by those who

brought Greek and Roman classics into vogue during the Renaissance. Third: a mode or attitude of thought centering upon distinctly human interests or ideals, especially as contrasted with naturalistic or religious interests. Fourth: A contemporary cult or belief calling itself religious, but substituting faith in man for faith in God.

It would be nearly impossible to find a more succinct and accurate outline of the program of what Webster's called "the

"To describe Humanism is not enough: we must arm ourselves against it . . ."

cult" of Humanism. It began, as the last good dictionary of the United States says, in the Italian Renaissance — a cultural fashion, so to speak, that began at about the time of Dante's birth, and lasted to the death of Michelangelo. Humanism, which began then, has not yet died — and in fact is flourishing today. Many aspects of the Renaissance are still with us: the scholarly worship of ancient Greece and Rome, the rise of the State as despotic benefactor. New York City, for example, or London, are perfect examples of Renaissance cities, the elevated living standards and low morals. Like the Italian past centuries, we have Humanists as educators, professionals and arbiters of our culture.

To describe Humanism is not enough: we must arm ourselves against it by understanding its methods, reasoning and tactics to such an extent that we can expose it as not only hollow but dangerous and pernicious. It is a disease exhumed from the grave of the pagan past that brought Italy into seemingly permanent inferiority. It has debased our schools and

corrupted the young, and will kill the Christian civilization unless it is scotched. To arm ourselves with arguments against Humanism we should completely understand its appeal and its background, so that we can cite its results wherever it has gained a hold on a culture, beginning with its modern rebirth (for it is very ancient) in Italy.

"The Humanists," wrote Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt, "were a crowd of the most diverse sort, wearing one face today and another tomorrow; but they clearly felt themselves, and it was fully recognized by their time, that they formed a wholly new element in society."¹

He speculated that their immediate forerunners might have been the clerical vagrants of the 12th century.

"The same unstable existence, the same free and more than free views of life, and the germs at events of the same pagan tendencies in their poetry. But now, as competitors with the whole culture of the Middle Ages, which was essentially clerical and was fostered by the Church, there appeared a new civilization, founding itself on that which lay on the other side of the Middle Ages. Its active representatives became influential because they knew what the ancients wrote, because they tried to write as the ancients wrote, because they began to think, and soon to feel, as the ancients thought and felt."

They were the men whose qualities varied from the ridiculous to the impressive, who brought Paganism back first to Italy, then to all Western Europe. Their admirers maintain the Humanist Cult among us, whose followers can be found in our universities, media, government and arts today.

1. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, An Essay by Jacob Burckhardt, Phaidon Publishers, New York Graphic Society, 1955.

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Editor: Ian Hodge

Humanism and Government

THE MOST IMPORTANT feature of Humanism, which must be understood at the outset, is that it is one of the vehicles used in the expansion of Governmental power. It provides a misleading gloss of learning not only to the decorative arts, but to human behavior, to history, to the theater, to education, to the professions to religion and the State.

This may have developed slowly across the centuries in the ancient world, to transform the virile Greek civilization of Homer to the effete mobs of 5th century B.C., and to the intellectual and moral decline of the Romans from the great days of their Republic to their dreadful immorality under the Caesars. But the emergence of Humanism in Italy came with amazing speed.

It was fueled at the start by the rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman writings, which the Church had wisely kept sequestered in its isolated centers of learning during the Middle Ages. Their descriptions of unlimited power and immense wealth, of debaucheries, of the destruction of thousands of individuals and the abundance of slaves, not only provided a contrast to the austerities and limitations imposed by Christianity during the Middle Ages: they dazzled with the lure of unpunished sin.

The translators of these long semi-forbidden treasures came very quickly into remarkable eminence in Italy. Before they appeared, in 1300, everyone in Florence was said to be able to read, and even donkey drivers sang the verses of Dante. A popular encyclopedia was published, the people participated in public affairs, the city earned universal respect. There were no fashions; people wore whatever they pleased. Fashion had not turned into

a class symbol at the time. After 1400, when the Humanists and their Latin appeared, "men looked to antiquity for the solution of every problem, and consequently allowed literature to turn into mere quotation."²

Dante was, of course, partly responsible for this. He was the first to bring antiquity into the forefront of Italian culture. He treated the ancient and the Christian worlds as parallel. That he did so at a time when the Christian cycle of history was completely familiar added to his novelty and to the interest he aroused. It added to the fashion of bringing antiquity in. We hear echoes of this today; Plato and Socrates are held up. You no longer hear of the Christian scholars, and if you do they're paralleled with the ancients. In the Victorian era in particular, Plato was put alongside some of the figures of the Old Testament.

The early Humanists were scholarly and they attained great influence and celebrity. Some Humanists achieved international fame. Petrarch, who looked at the ancient ruins of Rome and declared the Christian centuries to have been "The Dark Ages", seemed to his contemporaries the reincarnation of an ancient scholar. He could write in all the styles of Latin poetry, as well as treatises on historical matters. This was the glittering surface. His underside was darkened by pornography and blackmail.

Boccaccio had an equally mixed vocation. Known all over Europe for two centuries for his Latin compilations of mythology, geography and biography, he answered arguments from the Church that these immersions into paganism were dangerous, by saying that there was no danger. True religion had triumphed long ago, paganism was dead; it was possible to study its corpse without danger. Meanwhile he wrote about revels amid the plague, adulteries and deceptions, bedrooms and betrayals.

Denial of God's Law

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, therefore, to separate Humanism from a denial of God's laws. Prior to the revival of ancient literature, theatre and politics, Italy — like the other areas of the Middle Ages were a number of independent city-states. These had inherited the liberties of the Middle Ages — liberties now forgotten and/or ignored by the general run of scholars.

It is also forgotten that these liberties, which laid the foundations of the Christian civilization and includes those often discussed but seldom enjoyed today, came from the Church.

THE FREE MARKET AND ITS ENEMY

by Leonard E. Read

Reviewed by Matthew Hodge

I HAVE TO ADMIT that I was rather dubious when Dad handed me this book, and asked me to review it. "Don't worry, Matt," he told me. "It's only a small book (67 pages). It should be easy to review." I, however remembered my experiences with Frederic Bastiat's *The Law*. Usually, if a book is small, it's either because the subject is very simple, or as it more often turns out, the concept the writer is trying to explain will generally be in more complicated words and therefore requires a lot of concentration. In *The Free Market and Its Enemy*, the author attempted to define what the actual enemy of the free market was.

Mr. Read first of all suggested that "man's earthly purpose is to expand one's own consciousness, as nearly as humanly possible, into a harmony with Infinite Consciousness or, in lay terms, to realize, as best one can, those creative potentialities uniquely his own." (p. 2) Basically, this is the humanist's reason as to why we should develop skills and be productive. It is similar to the cultural mandate to be fruitful and multiply in Genesis 1:28, except man is working towards "Infinite Consciousness" rather than working for the glory of God.

Then, the author gave us his definition of the free market. The free market, he says, is the free flowing of "trillions upon trillions of tiny but complex and interacting creativities." What he means is over the years new discoveries are made, but only because discoveries were made in the past. We never come up with a totally new idea. We are always building upon ideas that are already established. This continuous building upon creativities, when unhindered, is what the author refers to as the free market. The author says that these creativities and ideas come from a Source exterior to man. However, while we, as Christians, would say that these ideas come from God, Mr. Read puts the source down as the same thing that gives us nature (such as trees, stars, and such), but never actually admits to believing in God himself.

The thing we must realise, according to the author, is that by ourselves we can do nothing. As individuals, we do not know enough to be capable of anything. But ignorance is not the problem, Mr. Read says. Ignorance is common to everybody. The problem is people who are igno-

2. Burckhardt, *ibid.*

Feudalism made land the measure and the master of all things. Having no other source of wealth than the soil, men depended on the landlord for a means to escape starvation; and thus his power became paramount over the idea of liberty and the power of the State. Every baron, said the French maxim, is sovereign in his own domain. The nations of the West lay between the competing tyrannies of local magnates and of absolute monarchs, when a power was brought upon the scene which proved for a time superior alike to the vassal and his lord.³ That power was the Church.

That conflict lasted 400 years. If the Church had supported the kings it anointed, "all Europe would have sunk down under a Byzantine or a Muscovite despotism. . . . But although liberty was not the end for which they strove, it was the means by which the temporal and spiritual power called the nations to their aid. The towns of Italy and Germany won their franchises, France got her States-General and England her Parliament out of the alternate phases of the contest; and as long as it lasted it prevented the rise of divine right."⁴

In the Middle Ages representative government, unknown to Greece and Rome, was nearly universal.

The methods of election were crude; but the principle that no tax was lawful that was not granted by the class that paid it — that is, that taxation was inseparable from representation — was recognized not as the privilege of certain classes, but as the right of all. Not a prince in the world, said Philip de Commines, can levy a penny without the consent of the people. Slavery was almost everywhere extinct; and absolute power was deemed more intolerable and more criminal than slavery. The right of insurrection was not only admitted but defined as a duty sanctioned by religion. Even the principles of the Habeas Corpus Act and the method of the Income Tax were already known. The issue of the ancient state was an absolute state planted on slavery. The product of the Middle Ages was a system of states in which authority was restricted by the representatives of powerful classes, by privileged associations and by the

acknowledgment of duties superior to those imposed by man.⁵

By the end of the Middle Ages the feudal system had been so tightly organized that France, Spain and England fell easily into monarchies, but Italy remained a land of free city-States, until the rise of Frederick II and his infamous son in law, Ezzolino da Romano. Frederick fought the Church throughout his rule. He flouted its doctrines and used all his resources after 1231 to create an absolute monarchy. Using Mohammedan patterns, he centralized the judicial and political administration of his realm, collected onerous taxes by force and eliminated all liberty. His subjects were forbidden to marry outside his domain, freedom of study was restricted at the University of Naples for the first time in Western history (but not the last) and many industries were commandeered for his personal use.

Frederick's son in law, da Romano, was worse and demands equal attention, because he was the first Italian despot to seize power without even a pretence at legality. For the first time in the Christian world a throne was seized by open murder and force. That example would be

followed throughout the centuries of the Renaissance. Darkness, in other words, had descended upon Italy, and before it lightened it would envelop the Papacy, the Church, the people and Italian governments. Yet it was not Stygian; not unrelieved.

This is the period our scholars hold up as the great wonderful flowering of human intellect. The paradox of the Italian fate was that it was accompanied by riches for the middle and the top, great expansions of science and exploration, a flood of new tools and techniques — and all the surface signs of success. Trade and technology went up; morals went down. Oddly enough, our scholars have always connected the rise of prosperity with the decline of religion.

At the same time, however, tyrannies great and small arose in all the Italian city-States: in Florence and Genoa, Venice, Milan and others. The people lost their liberties. People lost the right to vote, to limit the government and to have a say in taxation. Humanists swung immediately towards the despot Petrarch. The first and one of the most eloquent of

rant of their ignorance. "Any person unaware of a Creation over and beyond his own mind obviously cannot but believe in his own omniscience," he states. (p. 30) These "know-it-alls" he says are the real enemy of the free market.

Government itself, the author says, is not evil. Government's purpose is to protect the free market. But when used by "know-it-alls" to control others, then government is a problem. We see many leaders nowadays who think they know enough to control our businesses and industries, and in some cases even our personal lives, such as our families, and our children's education. This is what we call socialism. According to Leonard Read, "*Socialism, in the final analysis, amounts to the frustration of willing exchange by people who are unaware of how little they know.*" (p. 41, emphasis in original)

Arguing for the free market is difficult, the author states, because we must remember, we cannot tell what will happen to a society where the free market is free to go its own way. We cannot predict what will happen in the future. We have seen from past experience that when the free market is free to run its own course without any "know-it-alls" trying to control it, great advances have been made. Have you noticed that most of our great technological advances seem to come from free countries, rather than from Communistic or Socialistic countries? Now, we can see from history that the free market, if unhindered, will produce great things, but remember, 400 years ago, we could not predict where we would be today. We cannot look into the future and see what will occur, but we know something *will* happen.

This is where the problem lies. Most people would be worried about leaving the future to run its course unrestrained. This seems to them to be unordered chaos. As the author says, "Most of us claim an affinity for freedom; but if given a choice between a freedom suspected of chaos and a regimentation assured of order, we would choose the regimentation." (p. 50) In other words, we would prefer to have our lives controlled by others, as long as we look like we know where we are going. To many people, the idea of just waiting to see what the future brings seems a lot like running into a dark cave without a torch.

Mr. Read says that while millions of little private economic decisions made independently may appear to be chaotic, it's much the same as our bodies. Millions of cells make up our body, forming incomprehensible patterns. Yet is the result chaos? No, our bodies function perfectly. It is the same with the free market.

"In the Middle Ages representative government, unknown to Greece and Rome, was nearly universal."

3. Selected Writings of Lord Acton, Vol. I, *Essays in the History of Liberty*, (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1985), p. 32.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

the Humanists, Petrarch rationalized the despot of Verona by describing him as the father of his subjects, their protector against all enemies, the maintainer of justice. Other Humanists followed, and they collectively created the great modern fiction of the ideal state, where the Prince was to take charge of everything: "Maintain and restore the churches and public buildings, keep up the municipal police, drain the marshes, look after the supply of wine and corn, to so distribute the taxes that the people can recognize their necessity; supply the sick and the helpless and give his protection and society to distinguished scholars, on whom his fame in after ages will depend."⁶

Probably the worst service the Humanists provided, however, was to unearth the late Roman system of governance and jurisprudence. Under the late Caesars the law was whatever the Prince declared, and torture was an accepted method of extracting "evidence." That was restored to Christianity by the Humanists. The Italians of Florence, Milan, Venice, Genoa and the other city-states lost their treasured freedoms: their votes, their right to resist taxation, to speak their minds, to be free. It was the Humanists who said this was good for them; that they were better off being ruled than being free, that money was worth their souls. The Humanists from the universities were the ones who sentenced the witches in later periods.

The Despots inhaled these arguments like perfume; it made their control not only smoother at a distance, but buttressed by scholarly learning it made it appear very good. With all their crimes, they wanted to be admired not only in their lifetimes — but forever. With faith in Christianity plummeting, they turned toward the pagan idea of immortality: Fame. To be remembered became more important than immortality. After all, the holy shrines had been forgotten; painters had replaced saints, Condottieri replaced the nobility. Humanists provided the enamel, and rulers were described as superior in every way; wiser, bolder, more practical, more far-seeing, better. Their errors were muffled, their triumphs blared.

By the fifteenth century all Italy outside the Vatican States was ruled by despots. Some slight idea of their morality can be gained by the fact that when Pius II was on his way to the Congress of Mantua in 1459, eight bastards of the house of Este rode to meet him at Ferrara, among them the reigning Duke Borso and his two illegitimate sons, some from his illegitimate brother and predecessor Leonello. The latter had a lawful wife, herself an

illegitimate daughter of Alphonso I of Naples by an African woman. It was a time when the sons of the Popes founded dynasties.

There was what Burckhardt called "a natural alliance" between the despot and the Humanist scholar, each relying on the other. It was only natural in such circumstances that the Humanists began first as tutors to princely families, and then to head special Latin schools, which — for the first time — separated Christian children from the Church schools where all were admitted — into two levels. In one, Latin, the language of scholarship, diplomacy and learning was taught; in the other the Italian language of the people.

This division entailed more than mere snobbery: it meant the creation of a different language for the learned than for everyone else. We see its influence among us today, whenever a profession has taken pains to create its own special language from which outsiders are barred, to the extent that the average citizen today is surrounded by a host of specialists who speak languages he cannot understand. This bars the average person from knowledge of the surrounding culture.

A natural consequence of the spread of Humanism in the Renaissance was that Humanists became secretaries for the despots and were usually in charge of correspondence. They became professors in the universities free of the strictures of the Church. This gave them influence enough to issue treatises and books on political matters. Machiavelli, one of their stars, wrote that the Prince was above morality. That absolutism has been cherished ever since by every ruling group.

There is hardly anything worse that can happen to a civilization than to lose the sense of justice, to begin to feel that society has become so unjust, that you cannot see the punishment of evil. Historians say that when this arises, a civilization is in great trouble. Italy in the Renaissance got into this sort of trouble.

Fall from Favour

IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME, however, that the Humanists fell from the favor of the upper classes — though they retained a hold on poets, historians, orators, and the common people. Their conceits had brought them into disfavor, but not only their conceits. Their careers were, as a rule, difficult to sustain. They were usually precocious as children, promoted by their parents into the unsettled life of wandering scholars, much like those of our university teachers who fail to achieve tenure.

Although the author did not say so, it is obvious to a Christian that God is behind this "incomprehensible order." God allows us to prosper and flourish. Thus, whoever stands in the way of God's creation ordinances is the true enemy of the free market.

* * * *

Apologies and Appreciation

OUR APOLOGIES TO subscribers for the lack of recent contact and the delay with the July and August newsletters. Many of you will notice from the change of address that the Hodge family has relocated to Brisbane. Your editor is currently employed as Chief Executive Officer for A.C.E. Australia Limited, distributors of the A.C.E. *School of Tomorrow* curriculum in the South Pacific.

To all those who participated in our pre-move book sale, we say a special thanks. The books we did not have to move certainly took some load off the truck. We hope and pray that those who were able to obtain books at the special prices have found the materials an encouragement and, yes, a challenge, too.

The change of occupation as well as geographical location has resulted in the newsletters being late. We are somewhat comforted by the fact that we were able to get newsletters out before we shifted in early June.

Anyway, newsletter production is back into full swing. And it is encouraging to have a new contributor to our newsletters in Nicholas Aroney. Nick is a graduate from a school using the A.C.E. curriculum, and has gone on to university recently completing his LL.M. degree in constitutional law. He is interested in pursuing an academic career in law. Those interested in Christianity and the law will find Nick's articles and research a valuable contribution to developing biblical answers to man-centred law.

Books, as usual, will be available. Dr. Rushdoony's new 2-volume *Systematic Theology* will be available soon, estimated arrival early October. Gary North's latest books will also be available soon.

* * * *

6. Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, pp 5,6.

The Humanists of the Renaissance, lacking the enormous and wasteful university system of the United States, had to rely upon the scattered courts of the Italian city-states, the relatively small nobility class and the upper middle class and the vicissitudes of open competition with one another. "It was a life of excitements in which exhausting studies, tutorships, secretaryships, offices in princely households, mortal enmities and perils, luxury and beggary, boundless admiration and boundless contempt, followed confusedly upon one another, in which the most solid worth and learning were often pushed aside by superficial impudence."⁷

That brings to mind the fates of those Humanists among us today, in advertising and literature, journalism and the arts, edge professions like psychiatry and therapies of various kinds: the fates of all those millions who earn degrees that unfit them for trades and do not fit them for professions.

The Humanists in those days had the discomforts of losing a settled home, for earning a livelihood meant a series of moves. He grew tired of people and was made restless by the enemies he created, while his patrons frequently demanded someone new. They issued terrible and scurrilous charges against one another. They used their learning to imitate or invent pornographic, presumably ancient, writings.

The historian is reminded of the Greek Sophists, who competed for pupils, but many of those were rich, and paid in gold. Eventually the people of Greece stoned them to death for killing their faith in the gods and leaving their lives empty. But they had it better than the Humanists, whose learning, after several centuries, ceased to be novel or exciting.

The Humanists also suffered from their excesses. Educated to believe that morality was unimportant or even unreal, they shared, whenever opportunities arose, in the aristocratic pleasures that they rationalized. This led to immense pride, and also to a total concentration upon themselves and their personal fates, at the expense of higher values.

None of this escaped observation and, in time, earned them contempt. They accumulated a general reputation for vanity, a dissolute private life, immorality of all descriptions, heresy, atheism, insincerity and of being an evil governmental influ-

ence flattering the great and disdaining the people.

All this could be said, of course, about the nobility and what was worse, about the Church. One can say that Humanism helped bring the Papacy down. The Popes with their mistresses and astrologers, their unbridled displays of wealth, their worldly pursuits and their wars, their ambitions for money, property and dominions, had themselves become followers of Humanism.

All this rolled up into a great national revulsion in the early 16th century. By then the morals of Italy had plummeted. Even Machiavelli noted it, and said, "We Italians are irreligious and corrupt above all others."

In the early 1500s the civilization of Italy had reached its peak, but its political ruin of Italy seemed imminent. A sense of foreboding spread throughout the land. It was the imagination of the "more highly developed Italian of this period," thought Burckhardt, which "gives to his virtues and vices a peculiar color, and under its influence his unbridled egotism shows itself in its most terrible shape." That's a profound remark, because it is only faith in Christianity that can keep man's egotism in check.

"The force of the Italian imagination," Burckhardt continued, "explains the fact that he was the first gambler on a large scale in modern times." This mania spread through all Italy, from the 14th century onward. "The great lottery-bank was called the Court of Rome. And a national lottery has been part of Italian life ever since."

More than one observer has commented also on the growth of vengeance as the single strongest element in Italian morality. Vendettas became part of the fabric of life. Claims of injured honor were accepted in the courts as valid reasons for murder, much as our courts accept the presumed outrage of minorities against their situation for their arsons and crimes. This rationale is a variation on the theme of vengeance.

This is the period when novels first appeared, and it is interesting to note that when the theme was romance, it was usually in connection with adultery. This slip-page of morals ranged far through society. A murderer who kept a brave face on the day of his execution was openly admired and the dreadful facts of his crime were

Your Wealth in an Age of Taxation

KEEPING YOUR WEALTH in an age of taxation is increasingly difficult. In 1985, the current Prime Minister assisted in the introduction of a capital gains tax. This has become a source of increasing revenue to the government. For example, in 1988 the government collected about \$95 million. By 1993, this had almost quadrupled to \$376 million.

As 1985 recedes into the past, so more and more transactions, especially the family home, will be caught in the CGT web.

A question that needs to be considered, however, is at what point in a person's life is CGT payable. The simple answer is when assets are sold. But when do assets become available for sale? Often, they become available for sale on the death of a family member. On this occasion, the CGT is serving as a death tax, or inheritance tax. It is clearly a wealth tax, and designed to take from those with more extensive assets so that the government can redistribute the wealth to the supposed poor and needy through the mechanism of the welfare system.

Families thus need to give more careful thought to their investment programs, and how to keep assets intact. The use of discretionary trusts will thus become more popular in the future, as this provides a mechanism where any assets on death do not need to be sold. They remain within the trust, until such time as the trust ceases to exist or else decides to sell them.

The government is after your money and wealth, make no mistake about that. The godly family will thus do everything necessary to keep its wealth intact for future generations. Anything less is a denial of the faith (I Tim. 5:8).

* * * *

Lost Life?

IN THE MID 1980's, Christian businessman John Leard retired from his job. Shortly thereafter, he self-published a book, *The Worst Is Yet To Come*. Since that time, very little has been heard of John Leard. This was disappointing for some, because he clearly placed his criticisms of the Australian economy and his predictions about what might happen on a sound basis. Also, his self-professed Christian convictions, being of Baptist persuasion, were obvious. Some people thought and hoped he might emerge as a Christian leader, bringing Christian principles and

7. Burckhardt, *Ibid.*, p. 164.

forgotten. Today crowds appear to protect executions no matter how the victims suffered.

The Fall of Rome II

WHEN SOCIAL MORALITY fades, when a sense of responsibility becomes dulled, public safety vanishes. "After the death of the Duke of Milan in 1480" all safety came to an end in provincial cities.⁸ In Parma the Governor, terrified by threats of murder, threw open the gaols and let loose the most abandoned criminals. His life had been threatened unless he did so. A wave of terrible crimes followed.

Churches were vandalized, and bands of brigands — a plague for which Italy eventually became famous — appeared throughout the land.

It was then that Luther visited Rome, and said it contained everything but an honest man. A short decade later, doom appeared in the form of an army of Spanish, German and even Italian mercenaries. They appeared before the walls of the Holy City; the center of Christendom, the richest city in Europe, found an opening and poured in to commit atrocities beyond number for weeks to follow.

It's odd that the Sack of Rome is so seldom discussed, for it was one of the most significant events in Western history. It shattered Italy to such an extent that it has never since regained its footing as a major power. To this day it remains disunited. You meet a man from there today and ask where he's from and he'll say "Roma!" or "Genoa!" — never Italy. It is a single nation only on paper; not in reality. Its spirit was broken in the Sack of Rome, and it has not yet recovered; it may never recover.

The punishment that befell Rome was Biblical in sweep and intensity, but even when it occurred men turned their eyes away from its significance. The Spanish ambassador, who saw and understood, told the fugitive Pope Clement VII that he hoped that the Holy See would reform

after this lesson. Clement, a dignified figure with a long beard, said, "I tell you that in this world the ideal does not correspond with the real, and he who acts from amiable motives is a fool." He could not understand that he and his predecessors for several centuries had angered God with their impiety, their rebellion and their Humanism.

"It is our task to save what remains of Christendom from a repetition of the same debacle."

No doubt when Judgement arrives for modern times there will be equally obdurate, equally blind reactions. Even today the Humanists in American universities continue their Marxist studies — despite what happened to the Kremlin — although the ruin of the people who suffered under that dwindling empire remains plain for all to see.

Conclusion

It was, of course, Luther and other Reformation leaders who saw. Young Calvin came to see: John Knox saw. The Reformation began with a handful of people. It saved all northern Europe from the fate of Italy. Luther's books swept across all Europe; Calvin's *Institutes* enthralled a whole generation.

It is our task to save what remains of Christendom from a repetition of the same debacle. The Humanists we face today — and much of the Church — have returned to the troughs of the Renaissance.

As were the men of the Reformation, we are surrounded by new marvels of science, rulers who believe in absolute power, and Humanists whose praises of the State smother all debates and silence all contradiction. But like the men of the early 16th century we are aware of doom to come. And like them we will share in the new Reformation that too will come.

convictions into political, economic, and business debate in this country. Some people hoped he might even run for a place as a member of the federal parliament. Such, however, was not to be.

Rather than develop his possible leadership skills, Mr Leard instead has become an international tourist and explorer, writing travel booklets on the places he has visited.

We don't know the real reasons for Mr Leard's departure from the scene of Christian activism. Certainly, it is disappointing because we need Christian leadership — and we need Christian leadership that has proven itself in the real world, the world of business.

Mr Leard's departure, however, indicates just how far we have to go in reform of Christianity in this country. Christian thinking has been re-routed by the influence of Anabaptist theology, or at least principles which the Anabaptists also held. Contemporary Christianity has thus been unable to develop a comprehensive biblical response to the problems of the age. Vague notions about accepting Christ as Saviour, though important, are insufficient, for this phrase does not provide real answers to real questions. It might be the starting place for an answer, but it certainly is an incomplete answer.

Underneath all this is a faulty notion about God's will for our lives. The modern view maintains that by undertaking things such as prayer, Bible study, attending church — and a number of other things might be added to the list — God's secret will for our lives can be discovered. Those who claim to have this knowledge often exhibit a false notion of perfectionism. They are not wrong when they claim to know the will of God. But their claim is also a claim to have obtained the perfect knowledge of God's will on issues that are not revealed in the Bible. This knowledge of God's will for our lives, we must insist, is an impossibility for the creature outside of the revelation of God's mind given to us in the Bible. Otherwise, we must accept the notion of extra-biblical revelation.

Only a return to the historic faith that transformed cultures of the past, that established an imperfect but nevertheless very real attempt at developing a social order based on the Bible, can alter the course of history. That is the task each one of us is called to. It remains for us to respond to the call.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 274.