THE DEADLY DANGER OF HUMANISM

Please remember that God knows no man after the flesh, so God is not a *humanist*. Keep that in mind tonight, as I try to give you a message that I only preached one other time about 20 years ago. When we preached along this line, God was pleased to come on the scene, and several grown men were soundly converted under that message. Just why the Lord never allowed me to preach this again until now, I don't know. But it is His business, and so we come to look at "The Deadly Danger of Humanism." God is not concerned so much about this human flesh, but His work is upon your spirit in preparation for the eternal world. But practically all religion of this present hour is working on your old flesh—cake walks, ice cream suppers, entertainment, ball games, or anything else that can appeal to and stimulate your flesh and keep you in a good humor. That is the activity of the churches in this evil day. They entertain the old sinner while he goes on his way to Hell. There is nothing so terrible as to see our churches going into the entertainment business.

What is happening in the churches today, I fear, is the work of the anti-Christ and not the Christ of the Bible. The spirit that energizes all of this fleshly activity in the name of church work and worship is the spirit of Satan and not the Holy Spirit of God. Oh, what an evil day we are in religiously, and we must warn men against this ungodly fleshly "ministry." Oh, I know that when you entertain the flesh, appeal to the flesh, comfort the flesh and ignore God's Word, you can get the whole world almost to follow along after you! But when you have nothing to offer but the Word of God and the way of the cross, you will have to travel many miles before you find somebody who is willing to listen to Divine truth.

Our text is 2 Corinthians 5:16, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." And John 6:63 tells us, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." About 75 to 100 years ago, the spirit of anti-Christ appeared and brought in four new things to entertain the flesh; the preachers and denominations were completely sold on these new methods.

- 1. The invitation system. I challenge anybody to show me in the Bible where God ever invited anybody except His own people. We have the "universal invitation" and that is as un-scriptural as anything in the religious world. When Noah completed work on the Ark, God said, "Noah, I want you and your wife, your three sons and their wives to come into the Ark." Nobody else was invited to come in but this little family of faith! And I declare today, whether you believe it or not, that God has no invitations to anybody but His elect people—no universal invitations are found in this Bible.
- 2. The altar call. The altar in the Bible, my friends, means death and not the beginning of life! Practice the "altar call" or public invitation, and invite people to come and get life in Christ—how foreign to the Scriptures.

Another item that was sold to this world by the spirit of Satan was 3. The mourners bench. The preachers would beg people to come to the "mourners bench" at the front of the church, and there they would mourn and mourn. And that was a great demonstration of the flesh and not of the Spirit of God.

Then, 4. The healing line. Get people all stirred up, place a lot of emphasis on bodily healing and so-called supernatural gifts, and get people to line up and come up to the preacher. Here, then, are the four false methods and every one of them brought in by Satan within the last hundred years. None of them are taught in the Bible, and nowhere in church history will you find anything of this nature.

Now, think with me. The invitation system, the altar call, the mourners bench and the healing line are mere fleshly inventions, and have not contributed anything to genuine revival, but with these things

the Devil has put forth his great program of humanism within almost all denominations and churches. And so we will ask several questions tonight that will help you to see the most dangerous activity in the world. Follow along with me.

- I. WHAT SHALL WE SAY ABOUT HUMANISM? Well, actually *humanism* embraces all the major religious heresies of the past, present and the future. All the heresies and false ways of salvation that you can name are actually included under the title of "humanism." Well, what is humanism? Stay with me and we will show you what God's Word has to say on this terrible, deadly delusion.
- 1. Humanism is *a religion of the mind*. Many people join the secret orders of this world, but when they get involved with it they find it is a religion of the mind. Much of what the Pharisees had was merely a mental religion; they appealed to the mind and the flesh, but the Lord Jesus Christ never appealed merely to your mind or your flesh. He appealed to the soul and spirit of man, because these are involved in eternal salvation. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).
- 2. Humanism is *a religion of works*. You are doing something—some work of the flesh—work, work, work! But if you are to be saved by something that you do, how would you ever know when you have done enough works or the right kind of works? You see, there are good works and bad works, and if your religion is based on works, how are you going to know anything? What will be your standard? Oh, no, you are not saved by what you do, nor are you saved by what you don't do.
- 3. Then humanism is *a religion of the flesh*. It pampers your old flesh and makes you glory in what you can do. Many ask me, "Well, Mr. Caldwell, what can I do?" Nothing, not one thing that is pleasing to God! That is your trouble—you want to put all the emphasis on yourself and what you either do or don't do. It's a religion that caters to the flesh and the flesh alone, ignoring the Word of God and the way of salvation by Christ the Lord. It is not what you do, sinner! It is not even what you believe, but WHOM you believe! In 2 Timothy 1:12, Paul said, "*I know whom I have believed*," not placing the emphasis on WHAT he believed but upon the PERSON in whom he believed. Paul knew and believed a lot of "what" before he was saved, but now he knows the Great Person of salvation Who was revealed to his soul, not merely to his flesh or his mind. This is an important distinction.
- 4. Humanism is *the religion of the anti-Christ*. Hear me, my children, for the religion of anti-Christ is the religion of Satan! Oh, how solemn! Notice 2 Corinthians 11:4, where Paul warns of a certain group of religionists. "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted ..." These religious teachers are apostate, ungodly, anti-Christ and absolutely spreading another gospel, not the Gospel of Christ but the gospel of humanism.
- 4. Humanism is the religion of the rejected apostates. It is the religion of Cain, of Balaam, of Korah—whose works were rejected of God. "Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core" (Jude 11). These three great apostates of the Old Testament were highly religious and offered this world a way of religion. It was entirely a humanistic religion. Notice: Cain gave the world a religion without blood. He offered the fruits of the ground, the works of his own hands; he came to the altar, came to the right place and tried to approach the right Person, but he came in the wrong way. There was no blood sacrifice in his offering and Cain was rejected. He went out and took a wife and built a city, but the mark of false worship was upon him and the city he built was not God's holy city. It was all in the energy of humanism, something that man can do apart from God's divine work of grace. Then the old false prophet Balaam came along and offered a religion without anything supernatural in it. All you had to do was make a decision. That's all! So you see where this came from—the religion of old Balaam. Then Korah offered the world a religion without a Mediator—you don't need any prophet

or priest or king, just come to God yourself. No, you and I in our nature do not come to God—the Holy Ghost of God reaches down to where we are and brings us to the Lord Jesus and He brings us to God! The Lord Jesus Christ is the "one mediator" (1 Timothy 2:5) who brings us to God. The Bible is not your mediator; Mary is not your mediator; the church is not your mediator; neither the ordinances of the church. When Cain and Balaam and Korah were teaching rebellion against God's way of salvation, that was the heart of deadly humanism! That is proud Pharisaism. It's Romanism; it's Arminianism; it's antinomianism—all the religions of this world are concluded under the general title of humanism, self-centered man, exalting himself above God and His Word. Then all these far-out religions of the world—Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Shintoism, paganism, etc.—are merely other forms of humanism.

- II. **NOW WHAT IS HUMANISM?** It is a human Jesus, or a human prophet. Remember Paul said that we don't know Jesus after the flesh; that fleshly knowledge of a man called Jesus will send you straight to Hell! Ah, listen!
- 1. Humanism has *a human "Saviour" and a human faith*. Oh, they say now, "All people have faith, and it's just a matter of turning his faith loose and making it effective." The Bible said that men by nature have no faith—either this teaching or the Bible is wrong! We hear that all you need is faith, all you need is obedience, all you need is to come to Jesus. But your coming after the flesh is no good; you must be obedient to the faith of God's elect, the faith God gives you.
- 2. Humanism *puts the emphasis on the sinner's natural faith*, when he has nothing that God will accept. Then by some means the sinner must come into the true faith that believes God. With his humanistic "faith," the Devil leads him and comforts him in a human "gospel" and a human "decision" and a fleshly "profession" of religion. But nowhere in the Bible does God call upon anybody to make a decision in the matter of salvation; nowhere does He make the sinner a proposition; nowhere in the Bible does God seek to persuade the natural man. God commands the sinner and God works in the sinner's heart. "Lazarus, come forth!"—that is not an invitation or an offer but a command. "Zacchaeus, come down!"—this is another command of Jesus but not a proposition. He never gave them an alternative, but a positive command. "Repent and believe the Gospel" is a universal command, but is not a proposition to the dead, alien sinner. He did not say, "Repent, believe, come down, and I will save you." No, that would be a proposition that turns on the sinner's will, and it would dethrone God and destroy salvation by grace and put it on the basis of humanism.
- 3. Then humanism is *emotionalism without truth*. When you have all this high-powered, popular, emotional singing in the churches, you bring out the mere emotions of the flesh and get people deceived in their mind and in their feelings, in their affections. Then when the emotions are burned out, there is nothing left for the poor soul but to wander about with a mist over his mind—deceived, deluded and damned in Hell forever! You see, this all plays on the emotions and that is all there is to it. Our Lord Jesus never appealed to man's emotions or carnal feelings. His teaching never appealed to the mind but to the soul. So humanism is emotionalism without the truth—sentimentalism, feelings, flesh and mind—but all the time ignoring the Word of God. Such mere fleshly stuff leaves the sinner without God and without hope. What is sentimentalism? We find it in the Gospels when men broke branches of palm trees, spread them in the road, and cried out, "Hosanna! Here comes the King of the Jews!" And you would think these people had the truth and the right attitude toward the Son of God—but wait a minute! Do you know this is the same gang who within a day or two killed the Lord of Glory? All they had was a little temporary sentimentalism.
- 4. Humanism is *a religion without the Holy Ghost*. In Matthew 25 we find 10 virgins, five were wise and five were foolish. Five had oil in their lamps, but five had no oil and were caught in this deadly thing of a religious profession apart from the Holy Ghost. No oil, no Spirit, no life! All they had

was just a deadly *humanism*, without the Spirit of God and without the Christ of God, empty and vain. The five wise were filled with oil, were filled with the Holy Spirit and went out to meet their Lord in peace. We receive the truth either in the letter or in the Spirit; if in the letter only, that religious person can only operate in the realms of the flesh and of the mind. No wonder we are told in the Revelation that they will "wander after the Beast"! They know not God.

5. Humanism is a religion of persuasion. Notice what Paul tells us in Galatians chapter 1: "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man" (Galatians 1:10-11). How could you possibly persuade a natural man to become a Christian? How can you persuade a dead corpse to get up and walk? Suppose you come to the tomb of Lazarus and say, "Lazarus, I would like to persuade you to get up out of that tomb, and if you will God will save you!" How can anybody be so stupid and ignorant in the face of death? But Paul said, "I don't persuade men, and I don't persuade God." Men are trying to pray and beg God to save somebody—that is foolish, for Christ died for His people and He is going to save them. Prayer is not ordained as a means of changing God or getting God to do something that we desire, but prayer gets us up in the realm of the Spirit where God dwells and puts us in tune with the will and purposes of a Holy and Sovereign God. Oh, the glory of God in it all! God is going to be successful in saving His chosen people. And so Paul says that he preached the Gospel, but he didn't do it after man or in a humanistic manner, but as the servant (bond slave) of Jesus Christ and for the glory of God.

Paul did not know Christ after the flesh, and he did not receive his Gospel according to the will or works of the flesh. He says, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). Amen! The only way you can get any truth is for God to reveal it to you by His grace. I was asked after the Sunday night service if men can or cannot reject the truth. I said, "No, you never get that far! God does not present His truth to you for your free-will acceptance or rejection! That is humanism!" God reveals truth, but He never reveals it to anybody but those whose hearts are prepared to accept it. There is no such thing as the sinner rejecting Christ—oh, no, you do not get that far in the natural! True, you can reject or refuse to hear the *preaching* of the Word of God. But the knowledge of the truth comes to your heart by the Holy Ghost alone. Listen to the words of Jesus: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matthew 11:25-27). God reveals His truth to one group of people and hides it from another. If you are caught up in humanism, you don't see this or believe a word I'm saying! You cannot believe it and will never meet God in peace. Paul knew this revelation. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Galatians 1:15-16). I want you to notice that expression, "to reveal his Son in me"—not "to me," but "in me." God reveals Himself in your heart, not to your outward flesh! "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

I am dealing here with the divine reality of salvation in Christ Jesus the Lord. I am not preaching to you something you can do. Now everybody wants to ask the old sinner, "What will you do with Jesus?" But that is not the point; the issue is, "What will HE do with me?" And, brother, if the people of this city ever come to see that, they will shake and tremble under the mighty power of God! That's the message of the hour. You are in God's hands and your hope depends on His revelation alone.

III. WHAT IS THE DEADLY DANGER IN HUMANISM? Let us show you six deadly things.

- 1. Humanism *deceives poor men*, leaves them completely confused as to the things of God.
- 2. It robs God of His glory, and places the emphasis on man and his works or goodness.
- 3. It never shuts men up to God. But I tell you that until you are completely shut up to God, until God closes your mouth and demands that you pay some attention to Him and His Word, you'll never be saved. The Law of God is the great mouth-stopper, that we might sit still and wait upon God to do His great work. All you can do is recognize that you are shut up to the mercy of God—God can show you mercy or reject you. Throw yourself back upon the mercy of God, knowing that He is not obligated to give you mercy just because you need it. He must be just, and He may show mercy. When I was out in Texas, some of the preachers thought I was crazy. I said, "Come to Jesus and get saved—if you can!" But most of them were accustomed to this "come to the altar and accept the Lord" proposition. That shook them. "Come and get saved IF YOU CAN!" How are you going to get saved unless God is in the matter? And I am going to repeat that it is not a matter of you accepting God, but will God accept you? Paul in his ministry was not persuading sinners or persuading God to save them, but simply preaching the truth and shutting them up to the work of God and God alone!
- 4. Humanism's gospel *does not recognize total depravity*. The sinner is totally depraved, totally dead, not half dead but plumb dead! And a dead man can do nothing but stink and decay. How could he ever find God? Man is totally lost, dead in trespasses and in sins and his greatest need is a resurrection.
- 5. Humanism *leaves man to work out his own destiny*. Oh, how terrible! They preach today that a sinner's destiny is in his own hands. But salvation is not in the hands of the sinner but of the Saviour. Had it not been this way, I never would have come to God. I was lost and dead in sins, and what could I do about it? Not a thing in the world. It was God's work to secure my eternal destiny in Christ.
- 6. It heals the wounds of sinners slightly. "For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 8:11). That is the work of the false prophets in the humanism of today. What a deception! God will never lift the white flag of peace in any man's soul until all rebellion has been conquered. Talk about peace—you will never have any peace until you are brought to bow to God's sovereign grace and sovereign mercy!
- IV. WHAT DOES THE HUMANIST HATE? There are at least five great truths that every humanist hates and will fight against like a bull dog fighting a rattlesnake.
- 1. They *hate the election of God*, that God would be first in salvation and would choose those upon whom He bestows His blessing.
 - 2. They hate the sovereignty of God. This puts God in control and not man.
- 3. They *hate the sovereign mercy of God*. It is not in the hands of men, and this takes away from all the dignity of man as set forth in the humanist beliefs. That man *needs* mercy is a slap in the face of their exalted view of themselves.
- 4. They *hate God's sovereign grace*. That God is the One who works salvation on the basis of His sovereign will—they cannot take this!
- 5. The humanist *hates eternal predestination*. Talk about a death-blow to humanism—the eternal predestination of God takes away all emphasis on the flesh and the natural man, and places it upon the decree and purpose and power of an Eternal Jehovah God. These great truths leave the sinner hanging upon the will of God, and they bring the sinner down. You know, you will never turn to God until you are brought to "wits end corner." But the humanist is all built up in his own heady, high-minded opinion. In Luke chapter 4 the Lord Jesus read a passage from the Old Testament and then preached all the great truths about God's sovereign grace. What did the people do? Read all of it from verse 17 on

down to verses 28, 29 and 30, for when they heard Him preach the predestination of God, "All they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way." Jesus goes into the synagogue and proclaims these five great truths that are hated by all humanists; what did the people do? They seized Him and tried to kill Him. They still do. Some of the enemies of truth have been plotting to kill me for years, but God has pulled me through it all. They can lie; they can pilfer; they can attack; but they cannot answer these truths—only ignore them or oppose them.

God's predestination and sovereign work of grace is very clearly stated in Romans 9:15-16: "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Well, you will come back and say that salvation is of "whosoever will." Can you find that stated in the Bible? No. It is not of human will, and that's what the humanists oppose. You will find "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13), and you will find, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17)—but these admonitions are addressed to God's quickened people who come in divinely-given repentance and faith. The "whosoever will gospel" of the present day turns salvation back upon the natural will of man—what a man can do, and not what God gives—and that is the heart of HUMANISM. Your salvation, if you are ever saved, must be not of the human will but of God's "I will," that is, "of God that showeth mercy." Go on to verse 18, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." If God chooses not to show you mercy but to harden you and send you to Hell, what can you do about it? Remember that God owes you no mercy; He owes you nothing but Hell and can pay you off any time! Don't kick against God's right in this matter. But isn't it good that the Lord would lay hold of a sinner like you and bring the rebel to his knees, and bring you down to the point that the only hope you have is that GOD would show mercy?

- V. WHY DO THEY HATE DIVINE TRUTH? God's eternal truth opposes them in four ways.
- 1. It kills the flesh. If you are shut up to God's sovereign mercy, what can the flesh do?
- 2. It *robs man of his glory*. He wants to boast in doing something to get himself "saved," or how many "converts" he has won. That is glorying in man!
- 3. It *shuts the sinner up to faith*. Your salvation is by faith and "not by works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9).
- 4. It *shuts man up to the sovereignty of God*. They don't want God to be on the throne. "*But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased*" (Psalm 115:3). I like to quote this verse back to God in prayer; He does whatsoever He pleases! But today we have a little puny God who is trying to save sinners but they won't allow Him. That won't work! That is not the God of the Bible! IF God is sovereign—and He is—then neither man nor devil can do one thing but what God permits him to do. No wonder the humanists oppose such a God!
- VI. WHAT IS THE TRUE GOSPEL? The true Gospel will tell you that salvation is by revelation and not by human decision. It declares salvation by repentance and not by reformation. It proclaims the whole message of Christ—Christ on the cross and Christ on the throne. A preacher met me the other day and asked me what the Gospel is. Before I could answer him, of course, he proceeded to tell me what it is. Finally I said, "If you already knew what it was, why did you ask me?" He said, "I'm preaching the death, burial and resurrection of Christ." But I insisted, "That is not the whole Gospel. The Gospel is Christ on the cross and a Risen Christ on the throne! If you never come to the exaltation, the Lordship and Kingship of Christ, you are not preaching the Gospel!" Well, of course,

that insulted him. But, ladies and gentlemen, Christ on the cross cannot save you unless He came to His throne, and Christ on the throne could not save you unless He is the same Christ of that bloody cross. I know that Christ while still on the cross saved the dying thief, but He saved him in view of His KINGDOM; that thief saw Christ's glory and on that basis he bowed to Him and cried for mercy.

Jesus on the cross and Jesus on the throne—that is the full story of the Gospel. And His throne is included in the Gospel of His resurrection. Why did God raise Him up? To seat Him on the throne! When our Lord Jesus arose from the dead, He robbed Hell of all her keys, defeated the devil and his demons, triumphing over them in it and making an open show of them. He went back to Heaven and sat down at God's right hand, and He has the scepter in His hand and has control of every situation. He is on that throne right now! I wonder, my children, will God ever save you, or will He put you in Hell? Well, you say, "God has got to be fair," but that's your fleshly idea of what is fair. No, you don't have any claim on God. The God of this Bible will do what is right, and in one sense if He does what is right He must put every one of us in Hell. Now, let's get off our high horse and fall before Him and worship. Look seriously at the implications of God's sovereign grace in salvation. I believe we are still waiting in this late hour for a true prophet of God to come on the scene and tell this crazy religious world the truth!

Yes, the most dangerous thing in the world is to be caught up in this humanism. Remember Paul said, "I know no man after the flesh." He said, "I don't even know the Lord Jesus after the flesh!"

- VII. WHAT ARE THE MARKS OF A MAN SAVED BY GOD'S GRACE? Among this little company there are some of you who would like to know whether you are saved. I trust the Lord will open your eyes to your true condition as we look at seven marks of a saved person. If you come up short of these seven marks, you are either not saved or have some serious defect in your experience.
- 1. The mark of divine love. This is not a little shallow, poodle-dog or puppy-dog love, but a solid divine love. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).
- 2. The mark of divine faith. Not a natural, humanistic faith; not a faith you can exercise at will. God's grace is not like turning on a faucet. You have no power to turn on faith or turn it off. It is of God's grace.
- 3. The mark of divine repentance. You begin to repent when the Lord opens your heart, when He crosses your path with the truth. You start repenting then and you continue to repent all the way through. It is of God, and my desire is to preach repentance and see you experience repentance before God and saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4. The mark of a divine reformation in heart and life. You start doing better because it is an inward reformation that works out in all the details of your life. A humanistic "reformation" starts on the surface and that is where it ends.
- 5. The mark of divine peace. When God saves a man, He gives him the "peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).
- 6. *The next is the mark of divine boldness*. Not afraid of anything but sin, he is bold for the truth of God.
- 7. The mark of divine fruit. What are the fruits of a Christian? They are what God says and not what man thinks in his puny, humanistic reasoning! In Galatians Paul names the fruit of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (5:22-23).

Now if these divine marks are not found in you, it is highly probable that you have been deceived by some soul winner and do not know the Lord. You cannot control these marks; they are not after the flesh but the Spirit of God. And God's Spirit indwells you if you are saved.

We come back again to our text, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Corinthians 5:16). A human Jesus, a fleshly Jesus is one you can push about at your will, but that is not the Christ of God.

My dear children, have you been born again? Do you know Christ? Do you have the inward witness? Is the call of God upon your soul? In this lonely, dark and desperate hour, how we need to hear from Heaven and to know the work of the Holy Ghost! Are you interested enough in the salvation of your soul to seek the Lord and to turn a deaf ear to all the heresies of humanism? God grant it for His name's sake. Amen.

B. B. Caldwell (1899-1976)

■ Date originally preached is unknown, but probably around 1973. Transcribed from tape and slightly abridged by Wylie Fulton. Hear some of Caldwell's sermons in MP3 format via the Internet at: www.sermonaudio.com/barnard