

# **The unequal yoke (5)**

## The philanthropic yoke

### **Charles Henry Mackintosh**

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We have only now to consider the philanthropic phase of the unequal yoke. Many will say, "I quite admit that we ought not to mingle ourselves with positive unbelievers in the worship or service of God; but, then, we can freely unite with such for the furtherance of objects of philanthropy – such, for instance, as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, reclaiming the vicious, in providing asylums for the blind and Lunatic, hospitals and infirmaries for the sick and infirm, places of refuge for the homeless and houseless, the fatherless and the widow; and, in short, for the furtherance of everything that tends to promote the amelioration of our fellow-creatures, physically, morally, and intellectually."

This, at first sight, seems fair enough; for I may be asked, if I would not help a man, by the road-side, to get his cart out of the ditch? I reply, Certainly; but if I were asked to become a member of a mixed society for the purpose of getting carts out of ditches, I should refuse – not because of my superior sanctity, but because God's word says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." This would be my answer, no matter what were the object proposed by a mixed society. The servant of Christ is commanded "to be ready to every good work" – "to do good to all" – "to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction;" but then, it is as the servant of Christ, and not as the member of a society or a committee in which there may be infidels and atheists, and all sorts of wicked and godless men. Moreover, we must remember, that all God's philanthropy is connected with the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the channel through which God will bless – that the mighty lever by which He will elevate man, physically, morally, and intellectually. "After that the kindness and philanthropy (*philanthropia*) of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." (Titus 3:4 -6) This is God's philanthropy. This is His mode of ameliorating man's condition. With all who understand its worth the Christian can readily yoke himself, but with none other.

The men of the world know naught of this, care not for it. They may seek reformation, but it is reformation without Christ. They may promote amelioration, but it is amelioration without the cross. They wish to advance, but Jesus is neither the starting-post nor the goal of their course. How, then, can the Christian yoke himself with them? They want to work without Christ, the very One to whom he owes everything. Can he be satisfied to work with them? Can he have an object in common with them? If men come to me and say, "We want your co-operation in feeding the hungry, in clothing the naked, in founding hospitals and lunatic asylums, in feeding and educating orphans, in improving the physical condition of our fellow mortals; but you must remember that a leading rule of the society, the board, or the committee, formed for such objects, is, that the name of Christ is not to be introduced, as it would only lead to controversy. Our objects being not at all religious, but undividedly philanthropic, the subject of religion must be studiously excluded from all our public meetings. We are met as men, for a benevolent purpose, and therefore Infidels, Atheists, Socinians, Arians, Romanists, and all sorts, can happily yoke themselves to move onward the glorious machine of philanthropy." What should be my answer to such an application? The fact is, words would fail one, who really loved the Lord Jesus, in attempting to reply to an appeal so monstrous. What! benefit mortals by the exclusion of Christ? God forbid! If I cannot gain the objects of pure philanthropy without setting aside that blessed One who lived and died, and lives eternally for me, then away with

your philanthropy, for it, assuredly, is not God's, but Satan's. If it were God's, the word is, "He shed it on us abundantly THROUGH Jesus Christ," the very One whom your rule leaves entirely out. Hence your rule must be the direct dictation of Satan, the enemy of Christ. Satan would always like to leave out the Son of God; and when he can get men to do the same, he will allow them to be benevolent, charitable, and philanthropic.

But, in good truth, such benevolence and philanthropy ought to be termed malevolence and misanthropy, for how can you more effectually exhibit ill-will and hatred toward men, than by leaving out THE ONLY ONE who can really bless them, for time or for eternity. But what must be the moral condition of a heart, in reference to Christ, who could take his seat at a board, or on a platform, on the condition that that name must not be introduced? It must be cold indeed; yea, it proves that the plans and operations of unconverted men are of sufficient importance, in his judgment, to lead him to throw his Master overboard, for the purpose of carrying them out. Let us not mistake matters. This is the true aspect in which to view the world's philanthropy. The men of this world can "sell ointment for three hundred pence, and give to the poor;" while they pronounce it *waste* to pour that ointment on the head of Christ. Will the Christian consent to this? Will he yoke himself with such? Will he seek to improve the world without Christ? Will he join with men to deck and garnish a scene which is stained with his Master's blood? Peter could say, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Peter would heal a cripple by the power of the name of Jesus; but what would he have said, if asked to join a committee or society to alleviate cripples, on the condition of leaving that name out altogether? It requires no great stretch of imagination to conceive; his answer. His whole soul would recoil from such a thought. He only healed the cripple for the purpose of exalting the name of Jesus, and setting forth its worth, its excellency, and its glory, in the view of men; but the very reverse is the object of the world's philanthropy; inasmuch as it sets aside His blessed name entirely, and banishes Him from its boards, its committees, and its platforms.

May we not, therefore, well say, "Shame on the Christian who is found in a place from which his Master is shut out?" Oh! let him go forth, and, in the energy of love to Jesus, and by the power of that name, do all the good he can; but let him not yoke himself with unbelievers, to counteract the effects of sin by excluding the cross of Christ. God's grand object is to exalt His Son - "that all should honour the Son even as they honour the Father." This should be the Christian's object likewise; to this end he should "do good to all;" but if he join a society or a committee in order to do good, it is not "in the name of Jesus" he acts, but in the name of the society or committee, without the name of Jesus. This ought to be enough for every true and loyal heart. God has no other way of blessing men, but through Christ; and no other object in blessing them but to exalt Christ. As with Pharaoh of old, when the hungry Egyptians flocked to his presence, his word was, "Go to Joseph;" so God's word to all is, "Come to Jesus." Yes, for soul and body, time and eternity, we must go to Jesus; but the men of the world know Him not, and want him not; what, therefore, has the Christian to do with such? How can He act in yoke with them? He can only do so on the ground of practically denying his Saviour's name. Many do not see this; but that does not alter the case for those who do. We ought to act honestly, as in the light; and, even though the feelings and affections of the new nature were not sufficiently strong in us to lead us to shrink from ranking ourselves with the enemies of Christ, the conscience ought, at least, to bow to the commanding authority of that word, BE

NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS.

May the Holy Ghost clothe His own word with heavenly power, and make its edge sharp to pierce the conscience, that so the saints of God may be delivered from everything that hinders their “running the race that is set before them!” Time is short. The Lord Himself will soon be here. Then many an unequal yoke will be broken in a moment; many a sheep and goat shall then be eternally severed. May we be enabled to purge ourselves from every unclean association and every unhallowed influence, so that, when Jesus returns, we may not be ashamed, but meet Him with a joyful heart and an approving conscience!

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