

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS

A DIVINE SPARK?

As Christ puts human beings at the centre of creation, calling them sons and daughters of God and calling God their father, Christianity is surely a part of humanism. The materialist Nietzsche saw the essence of every religion as a recognition of values that lie beyond life. But who was to judge life? The living? They would be biased. And the dead certainly couldn't.

Nevertheless, transcendent humanism does exist – in the mere recognition of values for which we would be prepared to risk our lives. And in love first and foremost, with all its variants. We may love art, culture, science, or another person, but we can also love justice, home, beauty or the truth.

Transcendent humanism is 'man-God' humanism: if human beings did not possess a divine spark, would they still be human? Isn't the most outstanding thing about human beings the image of God, that inner conviction that motivates them to give their lives for other people? John's gospel tells us: 'No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.' (John 15, 13)

For mortal beings this sacrifice is a deed which takes them outside their own time and space, and beyond the scope of their knowledge. Surely the person who sacrifices himself does so in the unconscious certainty that he is clearly hearing the call of his creator whom he cannot imagine, irrespective of whether he believes in Him, rejects Him or ignores Him?

The visible expression of transcendence is a human being's capacity to love. But what is divine is not tangible; it can be grasped intuitively within the core of the ego-consciousness, the self.

'The Word was the real light that gives light to everyone; he was coming into the world...But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name, who were born not from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself.' (John 1, 9-13)

