

# the modernistic . . . Interpretation of Scripture

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### **C. ITS RELIGIOUS VIEWS (cont'd)**

#### **7. The Salvation of Man**

Since man never fell, he needs no salvation in the biblical sense of the term, and needs no Savior from sin, as he has no sin to be saved from. Man is inherently good. Salvation is no deliverance from divine wrath, but the attaining of a sense of oneness with God and with the whole human race. This union is accomplished entirely by man himself, as the man Jesus demonstrated that man is his own savior. Man does this by overcoming his selfishness, and living for the improvement of the world. The cross, of course, enters into the picture at this point, the purpose of which is intended to show that personal sacrifice must be made for the socialization of mankind. In this connection, that "Christ died for our sins" means that moral man tenaciously assumes his responsibilities for the uplift of society. The blood of the cross is not mentioned except to complain that "the slaughter-house religion belongs to the dark ages." Substitutionary atonement is denied in the assertion, "no man or God can save another man." "Christians do not continue to labor and pray expecting because of another's goodness, suffering and triumph that they shall reach his harmony and reward." Final deliverance is not reached by pinning one's faith without works to another's vicarious efforts. Salvation rather is effected by man's own personal initiative and moral earnestness. What, more particularly, is salvation? It is the world-wide establishment of humanism, the social welfare of all men, the industrial, economical, and natural integration of the races, the rising of the underprivileged nations, the habilitation of the lower classes. "Christ" is mankind liberated from superstition (the Protestant Church and the Bible), and seated on the throne of socialism. The Modernist gospel is, We have no savior but Mankind!

#### **8. The Church**

The church as conceived by Modernism is a social club which has for its purpose the absorption of the world's philosophy and ideals. The church amounts to something when it masters the ambitions, the language, the business, the industrial, the scientific aims of the world. The "word of reconciliation" which the church is to speak is the plan whereby the church would bring about the unification of the church with the modern world. The world, to be sure, does not recognize these naïve aspirations of the modern church, yet that church regards the world as essentially Christian, and itself as competent to stand with absolute equality with the world-system. That is, the Modernist church thinks of itself as qualified to conciliate every social, political, scientific and labor organization in the world, and become as much one with them as they will graciously permit. Membership in this church does not really mean membership in Christ, but in and of the world, for these members are not a whit different in their profession and life from those who utterly reject Christianity. Their doctrine and way of life are no better than those outside the pale of Christianity. This "church" makes no distinction between the body of Christ and the body of Antichrist, or between the Church of God and the church of man. In distinction from all worldly organizations which assume to

themselves the name church, the true church of Christ is that which the Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world gathers, defends and preserves to Himself by His Spirit and Word out of the whole human race; a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith, and that every believer is and forever shall remain a living member thereof.

## **9. The End Times**

One of Modernism's pet theories is that of man. By this concept is not meant what Calvinism might mean by it; but rather the unity and identity of the interests of absolutely all mankind without exception. According to this idea, the individual is one with, even identified with the race and with God. For the human and the divine are not two separate levels of reality, but merge into one entity. Man is really God humanized, and God is really man deified. The world and man are of one and the same substance with God. If this be so, there is no eternal punishment, as there is no humanity to punish, and no God to do the punishing of any sinful humanity. There is then no judgment day, and no great white throne, and no other Judge than man himself. There can be no human responsibility. For man is ultimate and final; and final agency is not responsible agency.

This is not in harmony with God's conception with mankind. For Scripture does not teach that there is but one sole single humanity with a common destiny, but that there are two humanities which spring from two human seeds, the one known as the seed of the serpent, i.e., a humanity dedicated to, and under the power of, the devil; and the other known as the seed of the woman, under the headship of the virgin-born Man. The one humanity does not have the Son of God, and therefore does not have life; does not have the Father, and therefore are the children of the wicked one, whose end is eternal death. The other humanity has life through the Son and is destined to eternal citizenship in the New Jerusalem. For Modernism there is no end, no eschatology. "For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue (*ad infinitum*) as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Peter 3:4). The Church believes that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with great noise, and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up . . . Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth" (3:10,13).

## **D. MODERNISM AND THE BIBLE**

### **1. Criticism of the Bible**

That the Bible is an infallible record of the Word of God is a most detestable thought to the Modernist, and is regarded by him as an impossibility, an absurdity fostered of stubborn ignorance. The O.T. authors and redactors together with the N.T. writers wrote as best they could; however, the Bible is not dignified with the status of being on a par with other books of the world. It is rather conceived of as a poor Jewish edition of Gentile tribal customs. As such, it consists of mere myth, erroneous history, heathen ethics, obsolete forms of worship, passe' ideas concerning the nature of God, and superstitious views of sanitation and science.

The Modernist believes he is inherently competent to stand in judgment of the Scriptures and call them into questions as unworthy the notice of the scholarly mind.

Human intelligence dictates the impossibility of the Bible ever coming from God. In certain parts it is sublime enough to come from a good man. But in other parts it is too degraded to come from God. If God were its author, He would have produced a better book. If man had written it today, it would be forbidden in the mails. It contains much not fit for children and unsuitable for mixed audience. The Trinitarian passages are emended forgeries; the passages supporting the deity of Christ are fables of the disciples. All in all, that which today stands most in the way of the modern ecumenical movement is the Bible, and a few obscurantist die-hards who regard it as the infallible rule of faith and life. Unable to remove the Bible entirely from twentieth century civilization, the Modernist movement attempts to conceal and corrupt it beyond all recognition by constantly coming out with new "translations" which are departures from the original text. As Modernism sees it, the Bible has to go. In this enlightened age, it is fit only for the scrap-pile of archaisms. Dressing it up in modern speech is an annoying hypocrisy borne of necessity.

## **2. Interpretation of the Bible**

With all the above having been averred, it does not follow that the Modernist also purposes to be done with Jesus. Rather, he regards himself more a Christian than any other, inasmuch as he has the insight to reject all the Bible except those parts which contain the words of Jesus. Be done with conglomerate nonsense, and return to Jesus alone! This sounds very pious, but the "Jesus" of the Modernist is no more real than the "bible" of the Modernist. Take the very words that the modern critic arbitrarily decides are the genuine sayings of Jesus, and there may be found doctrines antipodal and abhorrent to the modernist philosophy. A typical example of what the Modernist regards as trustworthy Bible material is Thomas Jefferson's shortened New Testament, or certain limited selections from the Sermon on the Mount, which is all the Bible some Modernists feel they need. This proves that the Modernist does not really submit to the authority of Jesus. In fact, just as he constructs a "scripture" to his own liking, so (and as must follow) he manufactures a "Jesus" out of his own imagination. He has a disparaging view of the Bible because he has a disparaging view of Jesus. Christ is not man's final authority. He was either not intellectually and spiritually equipped or too honest to claim a divine consciousness of Messiahship.

That the Bible and the Bible alone be verbally and plenarily inspired of God is a concept too mechanical and dead. So they tell us! But, on the contrary, spiritual deadness lies in the word of man, as there also are the seeds of slavery and death. God's Word alone is life. His command far from being narrow, is exceeding broad, and is, according to its own claim and our own experience, the perfect law of liberty. No surprise then that Modernism has not the faintest resemblance to true Christianity. How could it! Being without foundation, without authority, and without a Christ whose vicarious death gives eternal life to all for whom He died! Christianity stands on the impregnable rock of holy Scripture. Modernism raises up its house-of-cards religion on miasmatic quick sands of sinful, philosophic humanism.

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