

INSIDIOUS "MODERNISM"

By REV. D. J. BRIMM, D. D., Professor of Bible and Religion, Presbyterian College of South Carolina.

"While men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." It has ever been so. While the advocate for the truth is inert, trustful, negligent, "busy here and there," the enemy, who never sleeps and is always on the job, is mining away at this bastion and that, running his parallels up to one angle of our citadel and another, introducing his emissaries into our very fortress itself. While men who hold firmly to and are ready to "earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" are preoccupied with other things, the enemy, comes and sows error extensively. This has been disastrously done in the North, is being dangerously done in the South. Metropolitan newspapers in editorials and in their Sunday editions so widely read are constantly feeding the people sugar-coated soul-poisons. In the popular magazines, fiction writers and other purveyors of periodical pabulum, feeling because of fame or notoriety that they have plenipotentiary authority, dish out what they choose to the unsuspecting public and there are no pure food laws to protect the public from the most rotten and deleterious stuff. Books saturated with slime from the pit are being published, advertised and circulated everywhere. Much of the Sunday School literature furnished in the three attractively gotten up series for interdenominational use is saturated with rationalism of the grossest sort. These series are intended for day schools and vacation religious schools, also, as well as for Sunday Schools.

In state institutions and church institutions alike, men are employed to teach certain subjects for which they are specially trained, who go out of their way to instill into the minds of impressionable youth their subversive notions of religion, all seeming to think their position gives them authority to become propagandists in the field of religion.

The Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A., under some sinister guidance, seem to be encouraging a break away from the faith of the fathers. We were told that at Blue Ridge, this past summer, some of this radical or drastic rationalistic stuff was handed out to the young people in some conference and they were then cautioned

not to tell their parents what they had heard! And are the "seekers after truth" become thus pusillanimous?

The same is true of Young People's conferences at various summer chautauquas and assembly grounds, as at Junaluska in 1923, for example.

Dr. Frank Crane, with his piquant style, is said to have the widest reading clientele in this country. Taking advantage of his influence he is ever and anon, sometimes openly, sometimes surreptitiously trying to inject the rottenest of religious ideas into the minds of his readers.

From what I hear, and hear of from time to time, some of the pulpits in our various Southern denominations are beginning to reflect the ultraviolet rays of rationalistic teaching into the systems of their hearers. Straws sometimes show the direction of currents. I heard a minister not so long ago refer to "the devil" and immediately after refer to him as "it." A man can hardly believe implicitly that the Bible IS the Word of God and then think of the devil as an evil influence only.

"Modernism," so-called, has nothing new in it as its name would imply. It is simply old errors reheated and spiced up to deceive the modern palate. Anyone acquainted with church history knows that. And yet a Brooklyn Presbyterian minister, writing in the Homiletic Review last spring, was urging the conservatives to let these men alone who were discovering new truth! Modernism may be described as having a large dosage of religious rationalism (rejecting all the supernatural as miracle, prophecy, inspiration); to this a considerable admixture of evolutionism (the materialistic philosophy that has grown out of the original hypothesis of biological evolution of species); with a dash of pragmatism (that truth is not permanent but may change, all right so long as it works); the whole suffused and tinted with Romanticism and with Positivism, and Materialism for trimmings. Much of it is Deism. Some is Pantheism. That from a philosophical point of view. Theologically it is a hodge-podge of Arianism, Socinianism, Pelagianism and other errors long since exploded, of early Christian and Re-

formation periods, with a recrudescence of Gnosticism, for these wise-acres of our day would have us believe they know all. People are led astray because they do not know that all these errors were long since put to rout and driven in confusion to the fens and quagmires of human thought. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

The modernist wants us to pursue the laissez faire policy; all he asks is that he be let alone. So it is with the assassin, the burglar, the rat. So it was that the German spies and agents during 1914-1918 asked no more.

We are not advocating heresy-hunting, but it behooves us to be on the alert. There is no need to divide all the denominations either horizontally or perpendicularly, but we may fairly and with all charity, insist on their honestly showing their colors, and honorably getting out of the conservative denominations and going into Unitarianism where they belong, even though it may make that the strongest denomination in the United States. Let them slough out peaceably if they will, but otherwise as painlessly as possible they should be excised. We need not be bigoted, we need not persecute, but we can insist that men be honest, and honorable, show their colors, wear their true insignia. Whether ministers, missionaries, or teachers, men are NOT honorable who will receive their emoluments from the pockets of contributors and tax-payers whose dearest religious views they are insidiously doing all they can to subvert.

Incidentally, we have a right to insist that editors, magazine writers and teachers let subjects alone—especially religious subjects, which are of such supreme importance—of which they know nothing, not even the rudiments. We admire the pluck and courage of one of our girls in our own denominational college, who challenged an erratic teacher and refused to listen to his stuff. Compare with that the whole student body, save one, at William Jewell College, asking for the retention of the man (Seaton, I believe) who had been leading them astray, and see what may occur anywhere.

There is certainly a great deal of this Modernistic stuff, as well as more blatant infidelity and less aggressive agnosticism, being disseminated in the various ways or channels previously mentioned. What are we going to do about it? Most people in the church now know so little of the teaching of God in his Word that they do not know when they encounter error in its most insidious forms. Preachers need to put their people on guard about fundamental doctrines. There are two papers that every pastor can afford to get into every family, even if he has to pay for them himself, because they take a firm stand on fundamentals. They are The Sunday School Times, and The New Reformation (Chicago).

What is the irreducible minimum of essential doctrines? Somewhat difficult to say. And "essential" and "fundamental" must be distinguished. Essential doctrines are those without the acceptance of any one of which a man is not entitled to hold office in a Protestant church. Indeed, considering their interrelations it is questionable whether a person can be saved without holding them, and most generally questions involving all of them are asked of applicants for membership. We should say, (1) The inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, with miracles and prophecy implied; (2) The unity and trispersonality of God; hence, (3) The deity of Christ, including his incarnation by virgin birth and his actual bodily resurrection from Joseph's tomb; (4) The exceeding sinfulness of sin; (5) Regeneration; (6) Repentance and faith; (7) Vicarious atonement; possibly, (8) Immortality; (9) Bodily resurrection; (10) Heaven and hell.

If a man denies one of these he is pretty likely to have distorted views of all. The full-fledged Modernist rejects most of them in one way or another. Not only preachers, but people should be encouraged and urged to search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so. They should be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. The foundations of the visible church can be undermined, they are being undermined. Just as in the period of Enlightenment, so-called, it was popular and regarded as a mark of intelligence to be a Deist; and in the subsequent period of French Infidelity, all over Europe and in America, it was thought the thing to be some sort of a freethinker, so-called; so now it is becoming the fad among college men and women, to be rationalists and agnostics, because so many professors are such and are injecting the virus under a false idea of academic freedom. To take that time in life when the young person is going through his age of doubt and iconoclasm to introduce the virus of infidelity is little short of diabolical. But many a high-priced professor, battenning on the money contrib-

uted voluntarily, or being contributed through taxation by earnest, devoted, God-fearing Christians, is doing just that thing. And they object to being found out and called to account, if they are in a position where this can be done.

We can sleep and let the enemy sow his tares. There seems to be considerable disposition to do this. We encountered it at Montreal this past summer. People who patronize and support institutions have a right to know what is being taught there in morals and religion. This does not mean that the science chairs will have to be vacated either. Nobody except a fool would try to prevent the natural scientist from patiently delving into the secrets of nature, nor from laboriously deciphering the hand writing of God in his other volume, the book of nature. But let the scientist cease romancing. Let him carefully distinguish always between what is truth and what is mere hypothesis, and no one will have any complaint.

Our practical conclusion is that we need to do something definite and aggressive mighty quick. These conditions I have been talking about, are surely a fulfillment of what Paul writes in 1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:1, 2, 13; 4:3, 4; and 2 Thes. 2:3. But Paul doesn't mean that we should be torpid about it. He does not mean that we should rock away quietly lest we stir up a yellow jacket's nest. Soldiers don't always stop for yellow jackets or hornets, and we have got some fighting to do if we save the day and are not recreant to our duty.

1. Our people are entitled to know unequivocally where our teachers stand.

2. Our church needs a monthly review with a sufficient corps of reviewers to fearlessly review all books of religion and morals that come from the press, and also current periodical literature. Also clear, strong, incisive articles.

3. We need a committee to have prepared a complete up-to-date, pedagogically sound, as well as religiously sound, series of text-books for preparatory and college work.

4. This committee needs a fund for the publication of sound books on religion and ethics. One of the ablest and best known conservative teachers in the Presbyterian church in this country has, I am told, several books in manuscript, because he can not afford the expense of publication out of his salary. There are few men working in Southern institutions who can afford to have a book published. Of course, the committee having such fund in charge, would have to pass upon the soundness of books offered. Donors to such a fund would want that matter safe-guarded.

Boy Scout News

As the readers of The Chronicle have no doubt noticed, there has been no Scout news published in these columns since soon after the Musgrove Camp came to an end.

However, with the beginning of a new school year, the Scout activities should once again be gotten under way in Clinton, therefore, the chief local scribe wishes to announce that as before, all of the news for publication should be left in the store of Mr. L. B. Dillard. Only one troop is meeting at the present time so far as is known. If there are any others who have met recently, please have your report at Mr. Dillard's by Monday afternoon, so it can be published in that week's paper.

Meeting is Announced

A meeting will be held at the Lydia Mill schoolhouse on the night of October 31st. At this time a very interesting program will be carried out, including the awarding of the cup to Troop No. 1. This cup was awarded to the best troop in the council, and once again, Clinton came out ahead and brought home the bacon. Every man, woman and child in Clinton, who is interested in better boyhood in the United States, is earnestly requested to be present at this meeting.

The Jamboree

Every Scout is asked to keep in mind at all times the coming Jamboree at Greenwood. This will be the biggest day ever had in Musgrove Council. Make your plans to be present. Also make your troop get to work and let's go to Greenwood and bring back that cup also. Then, wouldn't Clinton be at the top! Let's work and put her there. Jamboree bound on November 11th.

NOTICE

To Creditors: Notice is hereby given to all persons having claims against the estate of E. R. Milam, deceased, to file the same, duly verified, with R. W. Wade, attorney, Clinton, S. C., on or before the 18th day of October, 1924, or be forever barred. D. W. MULLINAX, Administrator de bonis non of the estate of E. R. Milam, deceased. 10-16-24

WANTED—Plain sewing to do. Mrs. Fred Johnson, R. F. D. 2, Clinton, S. C. 10-23-24

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REPORT OF THE CONDITION OF

The First National Bank

AT CLINTON, S. C., IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON OCTOBER 10, 1924.

Table with columns for RESOURCES and LIABILITIES, listing various bank assets and liabilities with their corresponding amounts.