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The Modernist's Creed

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The following statements from leading modernists show their position on the great doctrinal questions now being discussed. They also show whether the modernist has been misrepresented by his opponents in the debate and whether the doctrinal defection is of much consequence or little, and how the modernist caricatures orthodoxy:

“The physical resurrection of Christ is unnecessary to the faith, and making it so would be fundamental heresy, because it makes the physical more important than the spiritual.” — Leighton Parks

“It is no time to sit on the safety valve. It is time for the new prophets to cry aloud, and for the priests of old to retire gracefully.”—Charles Francis Potter

“No book is the word of God. Jesus Christ is the only word of God. No book can be inspired.”—William Norman Guthrie

“Some timid people are afraid to use their brains in things religious. If our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, our brains must be included.”—Bishop William B. Lawrence.

“There are those who cling to the doctrine of the virgin as physical fact. There are those among us who believe that Jesus was in all things and in every way both God and man, the incarnation of God and the son of Joseph.”—Lee W. Heaton.

“Christ never mentioned the fact (virgin birth) even in the most incidental or casual way. His disciples never referred to the fact; nor Paul, nor any of the New Testament teachers.”—Signed, “Elder.”

“Jesus Christ in whom the divine element in man came to its complete development and fully dominated his natures and his life.”—President John Grier Hibben.

“The absence of error from the books of the Old and New Testaments, the necessity of expiation in order to be forgiven, the dependence of the future life for man upon reunion with the body vacated at death, and the return of Jesus of Nazareth in the flesh, no longer as Savior, but as Judge—the ideas cited are not only wanting in the character of fundamentals, but are simple foolishness.”—Geo. A. Gordon.

“Christ was a modernist, and the Pharisees fundamental literalist. . . . Unscholarly views of the books of the Bible have broken down, and the story of the flood has proved to be an ancient Babylonian myth. Job and Jonah have suffered under the keen analysis of Higher Criticism. Thus the Old Testament has been reconstructed, and is so taught in all the seminaries.”—Carl E. Grammar.

“Already there are two Bibles, the Bible of the fundamentalists, which nobody understands, for the reason that without critical insight it is incomprehensible; the other is the Bible of modern science

and scholarship, and the charter of all social and spiritual progress.”—Elwood Worcester.

“The Bible is so far out of date that it has lost its usefulness.”—Prof. Edward Chiera.

“Gods in the skies—Jesus, Jehovah, Allah and Buddha—are all right as subjective symbols of human potentialities and attributes, and of natural laws; even as the stars and stripes on a pole are all right as such symbols; but such gods are all wrong.”—Bishop William M. Brown.

“The birth, death, descension, resurrection and ascension of all Saviour-Gods, not excepting Jesus, are versions of the sun myth. There is no rational doubt about the fictitious character of the divine Jesus. I doubt that he lived. As an objectivity there is no such divinity—meaning the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is a subjectivity existing in the imagination of orthodox Christians.”—Bishop William M. Brown.

“If the Anglican creed is not elastic enough to permit one to read into it all that one believes to be the result of modern intellectual progress, then perhaps I ought to be put out. However, I consider that in excommunicating me under such conditions the Anglican communion is, in effect, saying that it is incapable of progress, and does not want intelligent membership.”—Bishop William M. Brown.

“Protestantism may accept as true all the miracle stories in the Bible that are not unworthy of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But to make acceptance of the literal historical accuracy of every story in the Bible, a test of Christian standing is to deny the real Protestant faith. It is to manifest an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the Living God.”—William P. Merrill.

“As a religion of miracle alone, Christianity cannot live.”—Percy Stickney Grant.

“The Presbyterian Assembly adopted language alleging what no man can prove, what the Bible does not remotely suggest, what the Westminster fathers were too wise to maintain, that in the composition of the Scriptures their authors were miraculously preserved from every sort of error—even errors which did not in any sense affect religion.”—Nolan R. Best.