

TRENDS IN MODERN THEOLOGY

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Address of Dr. Allan A. MacRae at General Synod
of the Bible Presbyterian Church delivered at
Collingswood, N. J. October 21 1959

Let us start with a few verses from the Word of God. First, I would like to read II Timothy 3:12 to 4:2a. "Yea, and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the Word."

I have been asked tonight to speak on the subject, Trends in Modern Theology, and one immediately wonders just how to interpret this. The first impression you might get from it would be that I was asked to explain to you all the vagaries of Modernistic viewpoints in theology: but I refuse to accept that definition of the title. It is all too easy for people to think that modern theology, that that is modern, that that is up to date, that is the unbelieving, the Bible-destroying theology, and we belong, we are the conservatives back in the horse and buggy age who just cling to the old because it is old, and are opposed to everything that is new. Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, under whom I studied and whose assistant I was for a time, used to say, "I am more modern than the Modernists." And I think that is true.

The Gospel is the most modern, the most up to date thing there is. It is as much at home in the jet age as in the horse and buggy age, because it deals with eternal truth and it is adapted to the needs of mankind, regardless of what external conditions are, in which they are living. It is as modern, as up to date as anything there is. I reject emphatically the intimation that that which is modern is necessarily wrong. But what we call Modernism, is in my opinion, completely misnamed. Actually, the so called Modernism began in the Garden of Eden. Satan said to Eve, "Yea, hath God said, is this really what God has said?" There you have doubt, there you have unbelief. And from that moment on, you have had the struggle through the ages. Modern theology is no different in its essence than the serpent's theology in the garden of Eden as opposed to the theology of the acceptance of God's Word and the following of God's truth.

I have a book here which is called the Case for Orthodox Theology. I will say a little about this book a little later, but right at the moment I would like to quote a bit from it on the subject in which I am speaking. On page 111 of this book called the Case for Orthodox Theology, I find this statement. "Second, if it could be shown that the Chronicles are not entirely compatible with other Old Testament history, the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy would not be demolished. Orthodoxy would simply shift its conception of the thing signified. Just as the inspired author of Job gets an infallible account of what Eliphaz said, so the inspired author of Chronicles gives an infallible account of what was in the public registers and genealogical lists." And further down on the page he says, "Thirdly, we may never officially decide whether the Holy Spirit corrected the documents from which the chronicler drew his information. But this irresolution does not affect the theology of the church, for Paul received his theology directly from Jesus Christ, he did not draw on existing documents. And theology is the norm by which the Christian understands everything else in Scripture."