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PRACTICAL RESULTS OF MONISM.

A current definition of monism runs thus: "The doctrine of cosmology that attempts to explain the phenomena of the cosmos by one principle of being or ultimate substance."¹⁾ Arthur Drews, a monist, defines monism as "that view of the cosmos which admits but one principle or one ground of reality." In a recent brochure, Superintendent Repke has sketched the various types of this philosophical theory.²⁾ There is a materialistic monism, which reduces every phenomenon in the universe to a basis of matter. Then there is an idealistic monism, which claims that matter has no independent existence; it is a mere conception of the mind; every phenomenon is a product of the spirit. Lastly, there is a pantheistic monism. Its chief apostle is Eduard v. Hartmann, who observes that there is a parallelism between nature and spirit: in nature he finds force and law, or a principle of energy and of order; the counterparts of these two elements in the realm of the spirit are: will and mind. Force and will represent the unlogical, law and mind the logical, in the two hemispheres which monism assumes for its cosmos. But these four elements: force, law, will, mind, are not four different substances, but manifestations of the same, in fact, of the only substance. The multitude of volitions which individuals put forth are but movements of the absolute will; and the host of ideas, or ideal distinctions, become concentrated

1) Standard Dictionary.

2) *Pantheistischer und deistischer Monismus*, in *Bibl. Zeit- und Streitfragen* VII, 8.

MODERNISM IN THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

During the late Lenten season, St. Louis was strangely stirred by a public arraignment of heretical tendencies in the teachings permitted in some of the local Protestant churches. This arraignment brought about a counter-arraignment of the adherents of orthodoxy for medievalism and traditionalism. One of the incidents of this unusual, but, we doubt not, God-sent disturbance began at the Maplewood Methodist church. The pastor, Dr. Lichliter, considered it opportune to define his doctrinal position, which he did in a sermon on "Modernism." After sketching the history of the Modernist movement in the Church of Rome, he proceeded to say:—

With this more technical phase of Modernism we have nothing to do to-night. In the popular sense Modernism is characteristic of the progressive movement in all communions. It has been described by a prominent English scholar as the shape which religion takes in the mind of the modern as distinct from the medieval man. It is, in reality, an attempt to re-express the great fundamental realities of religion in terms of modern life. In the English-speaking world this movement has been shaping itself and gathering strength since the publication of "Essays and Reviews," in 1860. It has recognized as its allies the new scientific method, the new psychology, the modern

emphasis on sociology, the new interest in the study of comparative religions, and the modern conception of the democratic ideals. Speaking generally, it may be said that in doctrine, Modernism stands for the freedom of the individual conscience and the absence of dogmatic tests. It believes in a creed, but insists that the creed be personal, positive, short, vital, and that it should function in modern life. In the social order, Modernism stands for democracy. Its great word is not charity, but justice; its goal is the establishment of the ideals of brotherhood, the kingdom of God on earth. In the church, the Modernist may sometimes be heterodox, but he is not heretical. He is often insurgent, but he is not a rebel.

It is time that the message and spirit of the Modernist be understood. He is a factor to be reckoned with in every church and in every community. He believes profoundly in his mission and in his message. The real distinction between the Modernist and the Traditionalist is not one of doctrine, but of method. And more deeply still, it is a difference in attitude of mind. The Traditionalist stands for authority; the Modernist for freedom. The one looks to the past to find his theology; the other is conscious of an ever-growing apprehension of truth. The editor of *The Biblical World* has admirably phrased the distinction: "It is not dogma that is most offensive to the modern mind; it is the finishedness and fixedness of dogma, incongruous with a view of the world in which nothing is finished, and therefore nothing should be fixed." The Modernist, therefore, keeps his face toward the sunrise, and is always willing to accept new truth when it dawns upon the world.

The spirit of the Modernist is often misrepresented. He is sometimes called an "infidel." It is represented that he is seeking to disrupt the Church. His teachings are often regarded as being destructive of faith. There are not wanting those who would eject him from the Church on the ground of that great word of Paul's, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." To all this the Modernist makes no reply. He is too busy getting his work done to stop for recriminations. He feels that there should be room enough in the Church of Jesus Christ for men of varying shades of opinion. He is eager to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. In a deep sense he is evangelical. He would, as Paul suggests, become all things to all men if thereby he might win some. He asks only that his life and his work be subjected to practical and not to theoretical tests. Is it easier or harder for men to believe in Christ because of him? Does he actually bring men to discipleship to Jesus and inspire them with a zeal for social service? Do the boys and girls in the high schools and the young people in

the universities find religion more credible or less credible because of his teaching?

Such, then, is the Modernist. What is his attitude toward the Bible? Is he destructive or constructive? He has been called a "higher critic," whatever that may mean, and has been pictured as "tearing the Bible to pieces." In view of all this, his attitude ought to be defined. Let it be acknowledged at once that he cannot stand for the infallibility of the Bible as that term is ordinarily understood. But this dissent he holds in common with many of the men who represent official orthodoxy. He believes that God reveals Himself through natural process as well as through what has been called the miraculous. And he believes that even through the imperfect and the transient in the Bible God has spoken to men. He calmly accepts the fact of error in the Bible and is not alarmed. He is concerned with its central message—not with an infinity of detail. If he does not call the Bible "the Word of God," it is because of a supreme reverence. To him the Word of God is Christ and not a book. Within the Bible, however, he finds the perfect revelation of this Word of God, and that for him is the supreme standard, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

The Modernist is not afraid of Biblical criticism. He welcomes every fresh investigation, knowing that at the last the essential truth in the book will stand forth in imperishable beauty. He, therefore, is not inclined to attack the scholarship of the world, which has been busy with a study of the book. He has no mechanical theory of inspiration which is endangered by the application of scientific methods. He is anxious only for facts, and is patient with all revisions of opinion.

When the question is asked, Do you believe the Bible is divine? he answers, Try it! The ultimate test of the Bible is practical. The ultimate proof is in experience. If a part of the Bible satisfies his spiritual yearnings, if it is as bread to a hungry soul, it is God's Word to him. If he reads another part of the Bible and finds in it no message, he simply passes it by to find pastures where the grass is green and the waters satisfy the thirsty soul. The finest tribute paid to Modernism recently was in the words of Prof. Sell in connection with the excommunication of Pastor Carl Jatho of Cologne. Dr. Sell said: "The liberals are using the Bible more honestly than the conservatives. They are more truthfully setting forth the ideas which were held by the Biblical men. They are discovering the religion of the Bible more accurately and are drawing from this an inspiration for service which is positive and constructive." If "infidels" are doing this sort of thing for the world, then may their tribe increase.

It is not difficult, from these statements, to assign to Dr. Lichliter his proper place, *viz.*, with the forces which negative and subvert the fundamentals of the old faith, and make the essence of Christianity to consist in "social uplift," "moral improvement," "ethical culture," etc.

Dr. Lichliter's statements were given publicity in a manner that strongly attracted attention in the secular press of St. Louis. It was, therefore, eminently proper and timely that in one of his Lenten discourses Pastor Hemmeter, of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, administered a rebuke to "Modernism" of the Protestant species, from which we quote the following:—

"But what is this Modernism really? In this country it is largely the echo of passing schools of Modernism in Germany. There, in the cradle of the Reformation, the Church has been largely disturbed by another generation of so-called Professors of Theology who, mistaking their calling, considered it incumbent upon themselves to revive the recurring errors of the ages and to set the Church aright according to their own evanescent evolutions of supposed truth. Germany has largely tired of these schools and has passed to further ground, or else, aroused by the issue of these schools, namely, unbelief and religious bankruptcy, is turning again to the simple Bible truth. And now it remains for us in this country to be regaled with the discarded dish of the Old World, revamped with an additional sauce of arrogance.

"Modernists, strictly speaking, have been in the world from the beginning. The precept that God gave in Eden: 'Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' was to man a revelation from his Maker, that is, dogma pure and simple. The Modernist of that day came and said, 'Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' And again, 'Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye

shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' There we have the original Modernist. And there in his first pronunciamento are all the essentials of the Modernism of all times, to-wit: contradiction of the clear Word of God, the suggestion of a better life apart from, and different from, the divine way, and the promise, 'Ye shall be as gods,' by means of a transgression which separates from the only true God.

"What our Modernists will not understand is this, that a little outside polish will not make a real Christian. It is immeasurably easier to produce a whited sepulcher than to produce a living temple. The Modernist in careless indifference neglects this fact and recommends a Christian of the fig leaf pride. Christ's word, 'Ye must be born again,' the Modernist decries as dogma and as unbearable. The claim of the Savior, 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me,' does not fit into his system, and he therefore rejects it. It is dogma, mark the word!

"To the Modernist, Jesus is only a man, and no Savior at all. To the Modernist, as Carl Jatho of Cologne, of whom a local minister, according to our local press, seems to be proud, has said, Jesus is but 'a God-seeker like unto us, though one of the most successful.' In a letter to his friend Harnack, who had disavowed him, this Modernist Jatho wrote: 'We are both of the opinion that Jesus was a man, and thereby we differentiate ourselves from those who with the teaching of the Church say: No, He was more than a man. The Church's teaching in its final consequence leads to the conception of the divinity of Christ. Our perception, on the contrary, forces us to relinquish conceding to the person of Jesus any absolute importance.'

"Such, then, is Modernism. The entire Christian religion of a Savior born in Bethlehem who is Christ the Lord; of a Messiah who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, by whose stripes we are healed; of the Son of God, whom God gave to be lifted up that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life;

of the Son of Man who shall come again to judge the quick and the dead, and before whom every knee shall bow and confess that Jesus is Lord over all—all this is by Modernism cast aside as out of date, and Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever, is to the Modernist a discarded dream.

“And withal, the Modernist dares to pose as a Christian minister. He dares to stand up in Christian pulpits and tell us that he and his kind stand for ‘justice’ rather than for ‘charity;’ that their ideal is ‘brotherhood;’ that they are eager to keep the ‘unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;’ that they ask only that their ‘life’ and their ‘work’ be subjected to practical and not to theoretical tests; that they are anxious for the ‘facts’ and are ‘patient with all revisions of opinion.’

“We ask in the name of common, practical honesty and decency: Why do these men hold Christian pulpits? Is there any ‘justice’ in their claim for ‘charity’ when, denying the Christ, the historical, Biblical Christ, they usurp, and in many cases stealthily, the leadership of congregations gathered under the confession of the Christ whom they deny? Of what sort is their ‘brotherhood’ when they deny Him who said: ‘One is your Master; all ye are brethren,’ and again, ‘I am the Vine, ye are the branches’? Of what sort is their ‘unity of the Spirit’ when they discard the ‘Spirit of Christ’ who teaches men to ‘call Jesus Lord’? Of what sort is that ‘life’ which the Modernist commends when, bearing the name of Christian, he brings shame upon the cross of Christ? Of what sort is that ‘work’ which, like the serpent of old, slinks into the garden of the Church and perverts the truth? Why, we ask?

“We ask, why? This is a land of religious liberty. Why do these Modernists not erect pulpits of their own? Why do they not go out on the highways and byways and gather flocks? Why do they not go out into heathen lands and lay down their lives for their conception of the truth? But that is not their way.

“The Modernist cries against Dogma. And yet, it is

dogma, that is, the preaching of the doctrine that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world from sin, death, and the devil, that has established the churches that give homes and rostrums now to these Modernists. The dogma, that is, the doctrine that Jesus is the Light of the world, the Truth, and the Way to the heavenly Father, has Christianized the world.

“What has the Modernist done for suffering mankind? Where are his missions, his churches, his seminaries, his colleges, his hospitals, his orphans’ and old people’s homes? Where? Where, except there where they have succeeded to reap where they have not sown?

“And now the Modernist tells us there is unrest in the churches, that the churches are not well filled. And this he tells us is the result of dogma.

“We answer, Should there not be unrest where the Modernist is so busy troubling the waters? And on the other hand we point to the actual fact which refutes the Modernist, namely, this: All over the land the Christian churches are best filled in this season of Lent when the ‘Old, old story of Jesus and His love’ is proclaimed in its greatest fullness. The Gospel, the dogma of Christ crucified, is even to-day the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth. And besides, we rejoice to know, and the voices are loud on every side, that men, real men, are growing weary of the silly claims of a ‘superior learning,’ and of a ‘more advanced ground,’ and of ‘scientific methods,’ and of the ‘results of science.’ The indefiniteness and the changeableness of the vociferations of the criers of Modernism is dawning more and more on the consciousness of long-suffering hearers, and they are beginning to ask for bread instead of stone.

“But the Church of Christ, the Son of God, will prevail, even against the gates of hell. Christ crucified will be preached to the end of days, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, and Christians will never be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.”
