

THEOLOGICAL MODERNISM AND THE FAITH

Jim E. Waldron

Elders who have caused their congregations over the past generation to sup at the table of liberalism may be somewhat surprised to find the flock drinking from the modernist's cup. It is a true axiom, "they sow the wind and reap the whirlwind" (Hos. 8:7). Historically liberalism holds a position of denying Bible authority. It is a giant step in the direction of modernism.

Theological modernism declares that the Bible is not God's truth, but that it contains truth from God. Theologians according to this view must search out truth for the masses. They suggest a need to demythologize the Bible and are not above branding the Bible account of creation, the fall of man, the flood, the crossing of the Red Sea, the story of Jonah, the virgin birth and even the resurrection of our Lord as myth. When they do such they fly in the face of the eternal God and His Son.

Attributing the supernatural events of the Bible to mythology is to lower God's book to that of human wisdom and defy the Creator "who made the earth and the sea and all that in them is" (Acts 14:15). Such a philosophy humanizes the Bible and leaves men with hope only in this life and no prospect of immortality, which our Savior made possible when he abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light **through the gospel** (II Tim. 1:10).

It is only by knowing the gospel of the eternal Father and His Son that a person can obtain immortality for the Son declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). The written word alone is able "to thoroughly furnish a man unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The scriptures did not come by human wisdom, but "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21). Faith must be based on the written word of God not in the modernistic pronouncements of an unbelieving clergy.

In the church of Christ the Bible must always serve as the only rule and guide in faith and practice lest we drift into the limbo of theological liberalism and modernism. The apostle Paul told the elders in Ephesus, "I testify to you this day, that I am innocent from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God." (Acts 20:26-27). It is possible to preach some Bible and still not preach the whole counsel of God. In matters of faith we must speak as the "the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:11). If we cease to do so we have no right or reason to exist as a religious body. P.O. Box 123, Dunlap, TN 37327

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DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BELIEVE THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Garland Robinson

Romans 15:4 clearly teaches the Old Testament was written for our learning. We profit from it by learning that when men obeyed God they were blessed, and when they disobeyed God they were punished. "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known" (Deut. 11:26-28).

The great stories and events of the Old Testament bear witness to the great truth of the New Testament. Gospel preachers constantly refer to the lessons of the OT! "All scripture is inspired of God" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). With a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, the New Testament is easier to understand. The Old complements the New.

The church of Christ does not follow the Old Testament in respect to learning and knowing how to worship God today. It was for another people (Israel) at another time (before Christ). Jesus died in order to take the Old Testament out of the way (Col. 2:14; Heb. 7:12; Heb. 8:7). He took away the first (Old Testament) that he might establish the second (New Testament) (Heb. 10-9-10). Even when the Old Covenant was given it was temporary and was to last only until Christ came (Gal. 3:16,19, 23-25). People are no longer under the Old Testament law, i.e., not obligated to observe it (Gal. 3:24). Men today will be judged by the words of Jesus, his apostles and inspired writers (John 12:48; cf. James 1:21; Rev. 20:12) not by the Old Testament.

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COMMON SENSE AND THE DIVORCE-REMARriage ISSUE

Jon Gary Williams

On several occasions over the years, preachers and teachers have advocated that non-Christians are not subject to the New Testament teaching relative to divorce and remarriage as found in Matthew 19:9; Romans 7:1-6; 13:9. They say these texts apply only to a marriage between two Christians. This teaching has created controversy in a number of congregations, and many brethren and non-Christians have been misled.

A few years ago I wrote to a brother well known for holding this position. This was to inquire exactly how much responsibility he believed the non-Christian has to the marriage relationship. I asked these three questions:

- (1) **“Does God recognize the marriage of two non-Christians?”** His response was **“Yes.”**
- (2) **“Can either of these non-Christians violate their marriage?”** His answer was **“Yes.”**
- (3) **“Exactly how can the non-Christian violate the marriage relationship?”** He offered 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, which speaks of “adultery” and “fornication,” implying the non-Christian could violate the marriage by committing the act of adultery or fornication.

This series of questions was followed by a fourth: **“Could not this violation of the marriage by a non-Christian include a case of divorce and remarriage?”** His answer was **“No.”**

I then wrote him a fifth question. **“Based on what you have told me thus far, am I correct in assuming you believe it is**

not a sin when a non-Christian breaks a marriage relationship and begins to live “legally” with another person?” I illustrated my point with this actual incident:

Last year I was approached by a lady of our congregation whose non-Christian husband was planning to leave her for another woman. She asked me to try and help. I talked to this man, and he admitted that what she had told me was true. I explained to him that it was wrong for him to divorce his wife, break up his home with three small sons, and get married to this other woman. Now, brother do you believe I did right or wrong in so advising him?

No direct response came but rather a three-page single-spaced, mimeographed response titled “A Hard Question.” Apparently copies of this response were made available for others as well.

The first two pages contained a list of other difficult to answer questions about divorce and remarriage. Finally, on page 3 he gave what amounted to an indirect answer. He wrote. *“I could not tell him that God did not permit him to divorce.”* I interpreted this to mean that he believed I had done wrong in advising this non-Christian that it was sinful for him to divorce his Christian wife and marry this other woman. This is exactly what his answer implied.

In my last letter to this brother I wrote:

I believe you are too good a man to really believe this non-Christian did right in the situation described, but your position forces this conclusion. Hence, you felt it necessary to give an evasive reply. Would you tell me plainly – did I do right or wrong? Was the doctrine I taught contrary to divine will or in harmony with divine will? It seems to me you have no alternative but to say I did wrong. And this is saying, in essence, that all gospel preachers have been in error who preached it is sin for a non-Christian to divorce his wife and marry another to gratify his lust of the flesh.

The position that one, just because he is a pagan, can forsake his mate, divorce her and marry another for selfish gratification violates all principles of godly morality and common sense. It violates the Golden Rule as well as God’s plan for marriage from the beginning (Matthew 19:4-8).

Brethren who have been misled by this false teaching need to remember that any doctrine that leads to an illogical and anti-biblical conclusion and practice must be fundamentally wrong. The conclusion that it is wrong to tell a non-Christian he cannot violate the marriage relationship by divorce and remarriage violates all common sense and biblical morality. It is an affront to our sense of good judgment and an encouragement to those who wish to live in sin.

May God help us not to forsake the use of good old common sense and to stand always for the decency and morality taught in the Bible.
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EXPOSING “CHANGE AGENTS”

Often elders and gospel preachers, who are aware of the insidious nature of the self-styled change agents, find it difficult to explain the problem to others. Paul in his second letter to the church at Corinth gives a reason why some may not be readily able to ascertain who is a wolf in sheep’s clothing (cf. Matt. 7:15). He wrote of those like the modern change agents: “Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:13-14).



Brother Glenn Colley, son of Gary and Maggie Colley of McMinnville, TN has written a book for the classroom called **Loose Change**. It contains 85 pages in 13 lessons and is an excellent study book on the subject with questions at the end of each chapter.

Please purchase directly from him. Ten books may be purchased for \$45.00 postpaid or a single copy for \$6.00. The address: **Glenn Colley, 575 W. Shelton Rd., Collierville, TN 38017.**

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VORCE
BATE

February 21, 22, 24 and 25 1977 Olan Hicks and Jim E. Waldron met in debate on two propositions related to questions on marriage, divorce and remarriage. Hicks at the time was preaching for the church in Harriman, TN. Waldron was serving as instructor with the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. Clinton Hicks was moderator for his father. Brothers Roy Deaver and Thomas Eaves, Sr. assisted Waldron.

The debate is now in its fourth printing (11,000 total). The book is bound in beautiful red, blue and pink perfect binding and it contains 234 pages. It also contains dozens of charts by both speakers. You may have a copy at cost, plus postage and packaging – a total of \$3. Or you may have ten copies for only \$20 mailed to the same address. Dealer’s inquiries are welcome. Send check or money order to **Randall Standefer at P. O. Box 123, Dunlap, TN 37327.**