

Some Thoughts on Liberalism

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What is it? In asking this question, I am not so much concerned with the technical definition as with the practical demonstration. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary says: A movement in contemporary Protestantism emphasizing intellectual liberty and the spiritual and ethical content of Christianity." It is apparent that Liberalism cannot be defined in terms of a list of theological positions but is rather an **attitude** toward religion in general. Basically, this "ism" holds that commands, norms, patterns, laws, standards are all beneath the human mind and spirit. The end of this doctrine is to deny the inspiration of the Bible. If the Bible is not inspired, then it is not infallible and it is therefore not intended to be a pattern for the church, the conclusion follows. Some brethren have already gone this far in print.

With little doubt, there have been those in the church in every age since Pentecost who have adopted a Liberalistic stance toward spiritual truth. At one time those who became disenchanted with sound doctrine and the restoration of the Lord's church would reveal their colors and find a group with which they were more compatible (1 John. 2:19). While we could not appreciate their doctrinal stance, we could at least appreciate their honesty. It is not so now. The avowed tactic of some brethren (among whom are some so-called "big name" preachers) is to "restructure" of the church by boring from within. One has said:

We are not going to get out. There are a lot of us in the church and we are going to stay. We are not going to reveal ourselves but will stay in the church and work to make it what we think it ought to be.

Paul describes such In Acts 20:28-30.

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

I am not sure who is most responsible for the erosion of faith being caused by this element in the church. These who have embraced the liberal views and who are doing their best to lead as many as possible into a non-pattern, denominational view of the church will have much to answer for. But what of those college administrators who encourage this philosophy by repeatedly providing a platform for false teachers in their lectureships and workshops? What about elders who will not take a stand? What about those who would silence the exposure of unsound teachers? Have they no guilt?

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in the April 24, 1973, edition of *Sentinel*, weekly bulletin of the Sunset Church of Christ, Carlsbad, New Mexico, of which I was editor.]

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