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Our Religion Not An Evolution

The *Kansas City Times* of January 27 reports a very interesting discussion of the future religion of America, which throws light on the trend of religious thought of our times. Among other things the report says:

Taking for his theme "The future of religion in America," Doctor A. Ross Hill, president of the University of Missouri, in a speech at Westminster Forum last night, declared that religion evolved; that it is now undergoing the third and most important phase of its evolution; that creeds, rituals, and dogmas must and will be swept away; that a new religion is springing into life which will be known as practical Christianity, and that this new religion will be a religion of the spirit, which will assign to each individual the working out of his own salvation, that he may not only have life, but in the words of Jesus, "have it more abundantly."

Doctor Hill's audience, many of whom were local ministers, applauded vigorously his rather brief speech, and afterwards asked many questions concerning the application of this new religion in the church and every-day life.

The church is not dead or dying—it is only dropping the shell of dogma and taking on new life. The spirit of our preachers is showing a tendency to get life more abundantly, and the decline of doctrinal teaching.

The spiritual religion is in essence democratic in that it recognizes the essential work of the individual soul. The new religion can recognize no authority except human experience.

Doctor Hill assumes that religion is an evolution. In this he is not alone. He was vigorously applauded by his hearers, many of whom were ministers. This attitude takes into account only one factor of religion. True religion involves the apprehension and appreciation of God by the worshiper—it consists of the "life of God in the soul of man." The revelation of God to man is the explanation of the means of developing this life in the soul of man, and a disregard of the "word of God" is dangerous.

God revealed himself to mankind in language and terms that were appropriate to man's understanding; but God was perfect from the beginning, and so was his law. The everlasting gospel, in which the righteousness of God is revealed, is not changeable; no evolution is necessary with the divine plan. Only the plans of men, such as civil government, education, economic and social life, are evolutions. The true religion of Jesus Christ is complete and perfect in its

first revelation and only requires that man obey it. It is not the business of conferences, councils, synods, and such conclaves to make or develop the religion of Christ, its dogma or doctrine. It is the duty of man to receive the word of God revealed to man and obey the same. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

The idea that "life more abundantly" is connected with the "decline of doctrinal teaching" is not new, but is just as dangerous as it was in the past. The advocates of evolution in religion which brings a decline in doctrinal teaching have either overlooked the word of God or have discarded it knowingly. John says, "Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ he hath both the Father and the Son." Any religious experiment or evolution that leaves God and Christ out is to be shunned as dangerous in the extreme; it can have no fellowship with God and his children.

This new religion, when fully evolved, "can recognize no authority except human experience." How perfect will be the separation from God in this "new religion" towards which the American people, we are assured, are tending! This is very similar to the experience of man in the past. Jesus said, "I do only those things that my Father hath commanded me"; "He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them I will liken unto a wise man," and the people were astonished at "his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes." This was the attitude of the men who crucified him, and both the men and their religion were rejected of God.

Any religious movement that seeks harmony and unity at the loss of Christ and his doctrine must be rejected. It can bring no honor to God and no blessing to his children. Let us be true to God and his Christ, no matter what anyone may say or believe concerning us. Let us avoid any religious movement that seeks to evolve out of and away from Jesus, and the everlasting gospel.

W. W. S.