

THE PASSING OF MEDIEVALISM IN RELIGION

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649357789

The Passing of Medievalism in Religion by F. E. Maddox

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

F. E. MADDOX

**THE PASSING OF
MEDIEVALISM
IN RELIGION**

The Passing of Medievalism in Religion

By Rev.
F. E. MADDOX

A series of sermons delivered in
First Presbyterian Church, Texar-
kana, Ark., issuing in a heresy trial
before Ouachita Presbytery, July
14, 1908.

THE WICKHAMIAN
TEXARKANA, ARK.
1908

PUBLISHERS' NOTICE

During the Spring of 1908 Rev. F. El Maddox, pastor of the First Presbyterian church, Texarkana, Ark., preached ten sermons on "The Passing of Medievalism in Religion." A synopsis of each sermon was published, as a matter of news, in The Daily Texarkanian. On account of the intellectuality of the preacher and his advanced views on the things that are fundamental in religion, a wide interest was created in the sermons. Many calls for papers containing the sermons were made, long after each issue was exhausted. For the purpose of meeting a popular demand we secured permission of Mr. Maddox to reprint the entire series in book form. This is the first edition.

THE VALLIANT PUBLISHING CO.

(Publishers of The Daily Texarkanian.)

Texarkana, Ark., July 10, 1908.

882
M179p

ANDOVER - HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

FOREWORD

We live in an age of theological fermentation. Changes are taking place in religious thought not less radical than in the days of the reformation and a process of reconstruction and readjustment is going on which is as widespread as it is revolutionary. We are moving away from some of the traditional positions of theology which for centuries have been regarded as bulwarks of evangelical faith, and both the pulpit and the pew of the present day are breaking with exploded theories and outgrown traditions. Christianity is being christianized and christian thought is being liberated from medieval and paganistic perversions. Much that is in the old creeds has been outgrown and the spirit of revision which is abroad today expunging and pruning old formularies is the result of a demand of the modern mind to readjust the old faith to the new facts. The difficulties of the modern man are not with religion, but outgrown views of it. The break among the educated is not with the truth of the Bible, but medieval interpretations of it.

The present discourses were born in a struggle to find a firmer footing amid the flux of theological opinion. They are a feeble attempt to restate some of the fundamental teachings of christianity in terms of common experience, and from the viewpoint of a modern man. The spirit pervading them is that of an earnest inquirer after truth, and the method pursued is that of accepting and proclaiming truth whatever its variance from orthodox positions or its effect on formulated dogma.

No one is more conscious of the defects of the whole series than the author. They were prepared from week to week amid the press of pastoral duties and handed to the press in the crude form in which they appear. No claim of absolute originality is made nor is acknowledgement always made when using the thoughts of others, since in most instances the substance has been expressed in my own language.

Many expressions of appreciation of good accomplished by the series have come to me from my own congregation and friends and this book is now sent forth with the hope that its contents may do greater good to other and larger audiences.

F. E. MADDOX.

Texarkana, Ark., July 10, 1908.

COVER 11
COVER 11
COVER 11

CONTENTS

	Page
What is Intellectual Honesty Regarding Religious Questions?	9
Who is God, and Why Should We Serve Him?	15
What is the Value of the Bible?	23
Does the Grave End All?	31
Is Prayer Reasonable?	37
Who Was Christ?	45
How Are We Saved?	53
Who is the Author of Sin?	59
What Was the Mission of Christ?	67
What is Religion?	73

WHAT IS INTELLECTUAL HONESTY REGARDING RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS?

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore, many of them believed also of honorable women, which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.—Acts 17:11-12.

NOTHING so inspires a public speaker as a responsive audience, a congregation of thoughtful men and women who receive his message with open minds. And nothing so thrills the soul of an audience as a speaker who recognizes their mental alertness, and discovers at once their intellectual plane. What inspires the thought of the speaker, as a rule, stimulates the thinking of the hearer; and all other things being equal, eloquent hearing makes eloquent speaking.

That was a supreme hour in the experience of the apostle Paul, when at Berea he stood before an audience of men and women with open minds. They brought to the occasion a frankness and an alertness which thrilled his soul. They received his message with readiness of mind, and examined his utterances to ascertain whether or not they squared with the teaching of the scriptures. It is not supposed because they received his message with readiness and willingness that they accepted his teaching without question. They took nothing for granted, but sifted the facts with open minds and impartial judgments. In matters of faith and religious opinion they reserved the right to private judgment, and were unwilling to yield their intellectual autonomy to any individual. Their mental attitude toward any man's teaching was that of frankness and open-mindedness, and instead of accepting dogmatic assertions, without question, they examined the facts for themselves.

This is intellectual honesty in the settlement of religious questions. And this is the disposition which is

most in harmony with the spirit of our time. The age in which we live is a critical one, and the scientific method by which the truth is tested, in any department of thought whatsoever, demands that we examine the facts before we draw our conclusions.

There are two classes of people in every community; and there are two methods of dealing with truth. One class receives it by acquiescence, and swallows the conclusions of others, without thought or investigation. The other class accepts nothing for which it cannot see some reason, and suspends its judgment on any question until the facts have been examined.

I remark first: One mark of intellectual honesty is to approach religious questions with an open mind. Every man ought to be eager to know the truth, and ought to open his mind to new light from any source. This is always the attitude of the thinking mind. The thinking man is not afraid of new light, from any source whatsoever, and he always looks facts squarely in the face. Only the ignorant man is content to rest in his ignorance. Children may be awed into silence by tradition and authority, but thinking men, never. The alert man wants to know; and he should know, if it is possible for him to know. No man can act intelligently who does not think sanely. Whoever declines to admit new light on subjects of religion, or allows himself to be blinded by prejudice in drawing his conclusions, commits intellectual suicide. Inane credulity is more dangerous than intellectual skepticism. We should never forget that no system of thought is yet perfect or complete, and there is no finality in our conception of the great doctrines of religion. The profound truths of religion are neither apprehended nor comprehended in a day. We do not perceive God's mind, nor apprehend his plan, at a single glance, though they be revealed in a book. With all our boasted learning, the race is still standing back in the twilight of knowledge.

No subject is exhausted on which there is difference of opinion. It takes time for the race to grow to the level of some great ideas. On questions where difference of opinion is possible, honesty demands that judgment be suspended until all the facts are in. Where truth may be seen from different angles, each man's opinion must be tested by its viewpoint. Narrowness, as a rule, results from want of light; and want of light is, not infrequently,

the result of seeing the truth from only one angle.

Unfortunately, open-mindedness is not the attitude of the majority of men. On the contrary, most men are all but impervious to new ideas. They prefer to move on in the old ruts, and rather than be disturbed in their beliefs, they continue to swing in the old orbit. They not only will not receive new light, but oppose it. It is a historic fact that every new truth, whether religious or scientific, has fought its way to recognition in the teeth of men who thought themselves conservators of truth. As a rule, men who oppose new light most vehemently, are slaves to tradition. The narrow man is most dogmatic, and most intolerant of breadth and open-mindedness. He thinks he is doing God service when he keeps the feet of the race in old paths. He would pour all men through one mould, and force all to see truth from one angle, and excommunicate all who do not swallow his creed. Such a man is shackled by prejudice and fossilized by bigotry. Orthodoxy with him is little more than mental slavery. He approaches truth, not with an open mind, but with his mind bound hand and foot with pre-conceived opinions. He has been grooved by religious education and wedded to biased views by personal interest. He has been blinded to the larger aspects of truth, because he has always seen truth from only one angle.

We live in an age of reconstruction. We must adjust the old faith to the new facts. It is not maintained that truth has changed, but our understanding of it has. All will concede that the world is wiser today touching religious questions than ever before. We know the facts of religion more thoroughly, and are better acquainted with the will of God, than were the patriarchs in Abraham's time, or the prophets in Isaiah's time, or the disciples in the time of Christ. We have an accumulated wealth of facts other ages had no means of knowing. The mind of the race is more mature; the facilities for knowing are better; and light on moral problems is clearer than at any other time in the history of the race, or the development of truth. Theology is being reconstructed in the light of larger learning; the Bible is being illuminated by the critical research of men of devout spirits and master minds, and religion is being revitalized and restated in terms of human experience.

It is the part of wisdom to break with exploded theories