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The Sermon Course on Modernism.

How old the new! We are suffering at present from a flood of atheism, a veritable pest of locusts. It is not atheism in the strict sense of absolute denial of the existence of a Supreme Being (for David said (Ps. 13:1): "The fool said in his heart, there is no God," and that foolish statement is still restricted to utter fools) but it is effective atheism in that it shears God of His power, His majesty, His provident goodness, His personality. And it is all old, old as the hills. In its present form it is the child of skepticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which was the legitimate offspring of the principle of private interpretation of God's Word. And it goes back to much more ancient times, to the age of the Fathers of the Church.

The term Modernism was first applied to the modern chaos of religious thought by Pope Pius X. In two encyclical letters, Pascendi and Lamentabili, the Holy Father analyze the current errors, showed their source in a false conception of knowledge, and catalogued their principal manifestations. This was in 1907. That ended the Modernism that was oozing from within the Church as a pestilent sore, but it did not put a stop to what was called Liberal Protestantism, which is now parading itself through the channels of literature, journalism, and secular education, it is eating its way again into Catholics.

"The synthesis of all heresies," was the descriptive label Pius X attached to this plague, and it was an excellent description, for Modernism contained nothing new and missed little that was old in heresy. Worse than that, the difficulties it proposed against Christianity had all been much better stated in other times when men were better thinkers. Go over the tenets of Modernism today (the best list of them is the one drawn up for condemnation in the Lamentabili -- it is so complete that most modernists have not heard of many of them, but all Modernists hold some or other of them) and you will find an excellent review of the negative work of the Fathers of the Church -- negative in the sense of refutation of error.

The intention of the course of sermons for this semester is to give you an idea of the root-errors of Modernism, show their source, and give you the Catholic answer to them -- primarily for the benefit of your own faith, to protect you against their insidious influence which crops up everywhere today, and secondarily for the benefit of your neighbor, Catholic or non-Catholic, who has not enjoyed the opportunity that is yours.

St. Paul had to tell the Romans they were inexcusable in refusing to acknowledge God, "for the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power also, and divinity;" and since the Materialists and Pantheists and Agnostics of our day are as blind as the disciples of Democritus and Epicurus and Heraclitus and the Stoics, we need the sermon, "Is there a God?" And the answer to the question, "Is Christ a King?" demands a personal God in answer to the ancient Pantheists of both East and West as well as the Deists and Christian Scientists and Emersonians of today.

"Has Man A Soul?" was asked by the Epicurians as well as by the French Encyclopaedists and Watson and Durant. "Must God be worshipped?" ask the frozen Indifferentists when St. Augustine wrote his "Civitas Dei," and they still ask it today. The Arians, the Nestorians, the Pelagians, the Sabellians, the Monophysites, Luther, Calvin, all have had their heresies dragged out and decked in the newer and sorrier dresses by the Humanitarians and Rationalists of today. Pay attention to this sermon course, and when you hear a new one you can say, "Oh, yeah?"

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Prayers: The deceased mother of Art Funk, '06; a friend, dying; Vince McIntyre's sister is quite ill; so is a brother of one of the Ave Maria printers