**Today’s New Theology and the Bible – BD41-01**

We began way back with the philosophers—Kant who denied the absolutes of Scripture, and Hegel who denied that we could come to any conclusions but that rather everything was relative in our thinking. These men set the scene for the modern thought. Their concepts found expression in the teachings of Darwin, Marx, Freud, and Dewey, as well as many others.

**Rationalism**

The concepts of rationalism which were applied to the Bible that brought about the question and the doubt that we could know anything about what God thinks finally brought man to a position where he just didn’t know anything. Everything became pointless and profitless to pursue. It was Kierkegaard who brought this concept of frustration and nothingness into theology. The theology of existentialism found its final expression in the writings of Karl Barth in the beginning of the 20th century. What I want to do this morning is to bring you right down to our current scene today as to what the people who move in college circles, the people who move in various fields of life, educated people, the news media, the doctrines, the influences, the opinions which they have conveyed to people in one way or another, so that you will be right up to date now on the scene as it exists this morning.

**Liberalism**

Liberalism’s attempt to establish biblical authority in spiritual matters was the effort that Karl Barth brought about after liberalism realized that it had no authority with people. Barth attempted to go back to the Bible. However, he still viewed the Bible from the frame of reference of the higher critics—that it was a humanly produced book filled with errors and therefore in itself and what it said was not a reliable book. The attempt however has proceeded to abandon both biblical and natural theology, and to create what is called a “new theology.” That’s the scene in which we move today—the new theology.

**Doctrines of Demons**

Now I think you will recognize, and I must remind you constantly, that all of this that we have been talking about is what the Bible refers to as Satan’s doctrine of demons. It simply comes in one form or another. Liberalism is as much Satan’s viewpoint today as it ever was. It is the natural product of the old sin nature controlled mentality. The rejecters of the Bible as God’s Word, no matter how intellectual they are, had nothing new to offer today concerning spiritual understanding.

Now that’s what all these men attempted to do. From Kant and Hagel right on down the line they were all going to give us greater spiritual understanding. Instead they led people into increasingly greater darkness. These men, have no doubt about it, have nothing for us. It is a false hope to look to liberal theologians for spiritual guidance. As a matter of fact, it is comparatively pointless except as an academic exercise to even study their writings. It is pointless to read these writings with the hope that you are going to learn something about spiritual things. The only value that it certainly has is to show you how dumb intellectual men can be—just how really dumb men with high IQs can be. To read their writings, when you understand the Word of God and what the Bible teaches, will show you in stark contrast how pathetic is the product of these men once they cut themselves loose and say that the Bible has not spoken to us from God. What the Bible says is not absolute truth. When the Bible has spoken, everything else is settled. They are big men. They have great intellects. They have great reputations, but I want to make it very pointed and clear and get across to you, especially you college kids, lest you be inadvertently enamored with the suaveness and the sophistication and the intellectual aura that resides in these men. This is why I have said many times to you college students: If you attend a secular university, you must understand that the moment you walk onto that campus, you have walked onto the most ignorant place on the face of God’s earth relative to spiritual things. If you do not walk onto a secular campus with that understanding, you may get yourself hurt for all eternity because these men have demonstrated now from the 18th century to the 19th century and to the 20th century that they have absolutely nothing to offer. It is pathetic when you read their writings and match them up to the brilliant refreshing qualities to be found in the Word of God, and a believer who accepts it as such.

Satan’s main goal, as ever, is to draw people together in order to promote his cause. These men are part of Satan’s system to draw people together in some way to serve his cause. The drawing is increasingly going on in our day. Please remember that Satan will belittle God’s point of view. He will belittle the propositions of God’s truth. He will tolerate anything about himself, and you may not have understood this—we’re going to talk about this a little more this evening: He will tolerate any expose’ of himself providing he can preserve one thing, and that is, in our day, the drawing together of people around an emotional base. This is what Satan is doing in the tongues movement today. The tongues movement today is undoubtedly his trump card if he ever had one. If you keep your eyes open, you will be fascinated by how much Satan will tolerate against himself providing he can preserve an emotional core of activity in people to draw them together. That’s why the great denominations who listen to Kant and Hagel and Kierkegaard and Karl Barth and right down the line into darkness, this is why these groups are now drawing together. They’re being drawn together around an emotional enthusiasm for, of all things, doctrines of demons.

Alright, let’s look at where the liberal view has brought us today. For 150 years, rationalism has been fermenting its viewpoint and its ideas, and yet has been attempting to make biblical Christianity more plausible and more palatable to the modern mind which evolved out of the thinking of Kant and Hagel. Once people accepted their philosopher’s point of view—no absolutes—thinking in terms of relativity, the modern mind was born. Today you live with the thoroughly modern man as your neighbor. This is his way of thinking.

**Friedrich Schleiermacher**

Now, for 150 years they have been trying to make Christianity acceptable and palatable to this kind of modern mind. The man who put all this together in a very outstanding way was Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Schleiermacher proceeded to create a theistic influence upon rationalistic thought. So he came up with all of these concepts concerning how we think about the Bible. When he said, “What is religion all about?” he concluded it’s man’s sense of ultimate dependence. So he interpreted all the doctrines accordingly. He kept the vocabulary of biblical Christianity, but he changed all the meanings. So he rejected, to begin with, the claim of the Bible of being a revelation of divine propositions of truth from God. They view the Bible simply as a record of religious experience. They have reduced what Christianity is all about to a sense of absolute dependence, but absolute dependence on what is not known, and there are no bases of truth to depend upon.

They have reinterpreted all of Bible doctrine in terms of this dependence concept. The attributes of God are expressed in terms of our absolute dependence on him. Sin is said not to be doing evil, but it is rather man’s nature, wanting to be free, and instead it finds itself dependent. Salvation is not regeneration through faith in Christ on the cross, but it is restoration to your sense of absolute dependence on God, and usually a god who doesn’t exist.

Now Jesus Christ’s work of redemption—how does the liberal look at that when he speaks about Christ’s redemption? Well, he means incorporating people into the sense of dependence on God that Jesus Christ demonstrated. That’s how people are saved. When you capture in your spirit the sense of dependence that Jesus had, then you are born again. These are all our terms, as fundamentalists, with new meanings. But they don’t view Christ in the sense of one bearing our sins.

**Ludwig Feuerbach**

Another man who followed him was Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872). Feuerbach was an atheist. He was a student of Hagel and he set out to replace the Bible concept of God. In its place he wanted to put nature as man’s god. He went from Schleiermacher’s idea that religion is man’s sense of dependence, and he said that what man depends upon is nature. The idea that there should be a divine being is really a creation of man’s own reasoning. Man projects his own nature and his own characteristics, and he creates a super being out there, and he calls him God, Feuerbach says. Feuerbach said there’s no God out there. There’s no person out there. This is something that man by his reason looks at himself and he makes himself into a super being and puts that being out there and says, “That’s God.” Now this idea, of course, is in conflict with the Bible’s view of God—a god who is separate from nature and sovereign over it.

Now it is neo-orthodoxy and its leader, Karl Barth, who took the concepts of Schleiermacher and Feuerbach and incorporated them into what is called today neo-orthodox theology. This is the existential expression of what Kierkegaard taught—man’s hopelessness, purposelessness. You just leap out by faith that there must be something better out there to achieve, but it’s all irrational and it’s all meaningless.

**Bishop John Robinson**

Now these modern views were epitomized in a writing by a bishop of the Church of England. In 1963 he wrote a book that was a bombshell in the theological world. He didn’t intend it to be. He compared himself to Martin Luther and said, “I just wanted to write a book to bring up a few things for discussion.” No sooner did the book hit the public than it was consumed by the man in the street because it was a very readable book. It was putting in language that the man on the street could understand what the philosophers and the theologians had been talking about since the beginning of the 20th century. His name was Bishop John A. T. Robinson and he wrote the book called Honest to God. The book topped one million in sales and it represents the current viewpoint of society toward the Bible.

**Honest to God**

This view he likes to present as the new reformation—that it’s a new reformation with a completely opposite attitude toward the Bible that the old reformation of Martin Luther and John Calvin had. This book calls modern man to start being honest about God—to start admitting the truth about God and about the Bible. In the view of Bishop Robinson the truth is that there is no God out there and that the Bible is not His Book. It is the thinking which is represented by Bishop Robinson that led a few years ago to the movement that was described as “God is dead.” The battle cry of that movement was, “God is dead and Jesus Christ is His Son.” It was trying to … reduce to what Bishop Robinson says is being honest about God and about the Bible—the conditions as to how these things actually are, how they actually exist, and what we actually know. His book is in effect an atheistic volume. He told a friend that he found that he had no trouble taking any number of copies of his book into East Germany, and they are usually very adamant about not permitting religious literature to enter East Germany. But he said, “I had no trouble whatsoever taking any number of copies I wanted of my book Honest to God into East Germany,” because when the East Germans read it they thought it was atheistic propaganda. So they were glad to let it in (just to give you some idea of what’s in the book, in case you don’t want to read it).

Well the book popularized the modern revolt against biblical Christianity and clarified what is called the new theology. It calls for secular Christianity, a post-Christian faith, based on existentialism and universalism. What Robinson did was crystalized the thinking of Schleiermacher and Feuerbach in an up to date manner for us today. He rejects and he ridicules the concept of God, of a superpower person out there above and beyond the universe.

Just to quote him, in one place in his book, he says, “That God (that is, the God that the Bible presents) must die if man is to live.” In another place he said about God, “The God of the Bible is intellectually superfluous, emotionally dispensable, and morally intolerable.”

So you see the basis for the “God is dead” movement. They mean that the God of the Bible is no longer a functioning concept for 20th century modern man—that that is a concept which must go, and as long as we keep hanging on, Bishop Robinson says, to the view that the Bible gives of a God who is a super omnipotent person out there above and beyond this world to whom we as creatures must account, man will never be free and man will never find fulfillment. Now this, dear friends, is where the thinking of the 18th century philosophers, the Hagels and the Kants and then down through the 19th century of the Kierkegaards and its expression through the Darwins and the Deweys and the Freuds and so on, and where we have come through Karl Barth and where we are today. This is why I say there is no enlightenment in what these men have to say. They often touch upon problems indeed, but (concerning) our real problems that we face both as Christians and as a society, they have no solutions for them because they deny the very foundation of all solutions in the Word of God.

So this concept of God is one that he says must replace the old concept of the Bible. He says the world has come of age so it has to reject the idea of a God who is hovering over the world, and he wants people to start living (he says) as if there was no god out there. Now that’s the thesis of this book. “People, start living as if there was no God out there, then you will find your real self and your real fulfillment.”

Now this is rather shocking. You and I, by and large, move in a very restricted and protected world. It’s hard for us to think that there are people who say things like this and believe it and build their lives upon it. But I’ll guarantee you that if you were to walk on the campus of any secular university in this country, you would find that the overwhelming number of students believe exactly what Bishop Robinson presents in his book. This is their point of view. These are the people who are going to lead this nation and who are going to be influential upon our lifestyle in the years to come.

**Love**

This concept of God that he has is one of personal relationship with people. He says one’s response to all there is as if it were personal is what he calls god. It’s pantheism in effect. God is everything that you come into contact with. Your personal attitude of response is the guiding god feature of man’s existence. To believe in this god of Robinson means to give yourself to the uttermost to some object in love. This is a key word. I want you to get this. In the teachings of the modern honest-to-god existentialist expression of theology today, the key word is “love.” What is god? God is giving yourself to the uttermost in love. In other words, love is deified and it is the final ground and resting place of our being. Doctrine thereby becomes simply statements to be interpreted by love. A statement is not theological, the bishop says, because it says something about a being called “God,” that we would call Bible doctrine exposition. A statement is theological, he says, because it says that the final truth and reality is love. Anything that says that love is the last and final and ultimate thing, that is a statement of theological truth.

So Satan’s theology very interestingly pushes, of all things, the quality of love as the main thing—not truth. Now you have heard some good Christians who have pushed this same satanic doctrine. The thing that counts is love, not truth. And you get this bad-mouthing of doctrine. You get this belittling of the teachings of the Word of God. And you get this rosy world outlook that the main thing we all need is just to love one another. Now that sounds good. But when we take this new theology of love, we find that it is fantastically grotesque in its expression and in its outlook. Take the Lord Jesus Christ. Let’s apply the theology of love to Christ. Jesus Christ, his theology says, is not deity from “the other side,” who came into humanity on “this side” as the Bible declares. The Bishop says this is the Christmas myth. Jesus Christ, rather, is the perfect man who formed a window through which we can see God. Now that’s the atonement—not the Bible view of Christ bearing our punishment for our sins, but it is that man can see God through Jesus Christ. The God that man sees through Jesus Christ is “love,” the ultimate ground of man’s being.

**Is There a God?**

So if you were to go up to the bishop and say, “Now, Bishop, you say we must reject the Bible view of God as a super being out there who hovers above the world. What is God? Is there a god?” The bishop would say, “Dear friend, of course there’s a god. Yes, of course there’s a god.” And you might say, “Well, Bishop, what is god?” He would say, “He is love—whatever you give yourself to in the uttermost expression of selfless devotion—that is god working in your experience. And Jesus Christ is the epitome of the example of the selfless man for others through whom therefore we see love as the ultimate expression of deity. Now this has overtones of very true biblical points of view because the Bible tells us that God is love, but they don’t understand love in terms of its Holy Spirit fruit of the spirit “agape” concept. They don’t know anything about that.

**Prayer**

They apply the new theology of love to prayer. The bishop says that prayer is not giving oneself to one’s concern, to God out there beyond the world as the Bible says. It’s not just talking to someone out there. But intercession, rather, is listening and taking seriously what the other person has to say to you. It’s not talking to God who is out there. It’s listening to this person and taking him seriously. That’s prayer.

**Ethics**

When you apply the doctrine of the new theology of love to ethics, you really have a field day. Here the bishop says morality is not based upon receiving second-hand rules from God. In other words, that there is an authority over and above man such as the Bible presents, and that authority says there are certain things that are wrong and certain things that are right—certain things that thou shalt not do and certain things that thou shall do. The bishop says, “That’s second-hand stuff.” If you read Honest to God, you will notice that he does a great deal of ridiculing and he’s sarcastic and he caricatures the things almost to the point of blasphemy that we hold in sacred esteem.

There are no rules, the bishop says, for conduct which are always valid such as the Bible says they are. This is an idea brought down from Kant. The Ten Commandments is a moral code which is acceptable only if you add the word “ordinarily” after each statement. Thou shalt not murder “ordinarily.” Thou shalt not commit adultery “ordinarily.” Thou shalt not steal “ordinarily.” But there are times when you will do all those things justifiably. Everything that is right and wrong, the bishop says, is relative to the situation. That is Hagel’s concept. It all began back there in the 18th century and we’re still living with it today. That’s what I’m trying to get across to you as to what constitutes the thoroughly modern man and his thinking.

**Situation Ethics**

Rightness and wrongness depends on the amount that you care at the moment. What is the guide? Love. Whether a thing that you do is right or wrong is determined by whether there is true and genuine love and heart-felt concern involved with you toward that person at that moment. You will come to know this in the expression of the new morality, which as many have pointed out, is of the old immorality in disguise, and it is called situation ethics. A thing is right or wrong according to the situation, not that there are standards of right and wrong. It’s right no matter what you do if you do it in real love, in real heart-felt concern, but it is wrong if you do it without love.

So here’s a person dying of an incurable disease. They’re in pain and agony. It is right if you take a gun and blow his brains out, provided that you do it with love and deep felt concern. Bishop Robinson takes his cue from all this, of course, from another theologian, Joseph Fletcher, an Episcopalian minister who was the founder of the concept of the new morality. In his book, he will give you many situations that will cause you to consider whether there aren’t really situations that determine whether things are right.

Here are a group of people. They’re out in the old West. They are under attack by the Indians. They have found a place of shelter in a cave and they are all huddled in there. A group of people that has one baby. And the Indians are searching for them. They know they’re around there someplace. They’re well hidden. Then they give you two situations. The baby begins crying. If the baby cries, the baby will give away the location of the people. The Indians will come in and they will kill everybody in the cave. So the mother takes her child, grabs it by the throat, and chokes him to death. The baby does not cry. The baby dies. Everybody (else) is saved. Now Professor Fletcher says the mother acted in love toward the rest of the people in the cave. It was a moral ethical right thing for her to murder the child. The other option would be to let the baby cry. The Indians hear him. They come in and kill everybody in the cave. That would be an unloving thing to do according to the new morality.

You can see the subtlety in this madness when you stop and think about it. The situations can be thought up very much closer to home to you such that you might say, “I don’t really know. Maybe there is something to that.” And they’ll get you thinking that maybe they’ve got something. But you see the answer, of course, is that it’s our sovereign God’s business as to whether everybody in that cave lives or dies under those conditions. It is our sovereign God’s decision whether the baby cries and gives away the hiding place or not. But it is never our decision to take life—ours or anyone else’s on a murder basis.

**The New Morality**

The new morality has to be read and understood from the framework of the Word of God or it will throw you. Consequently the battle cry is “love.” It all comes down to what conduct is acceptable to the mind of modern man in whatever situation he finds himself, provided he cares. This, again, is doctrine of demons. This is the demon’s point of view of making love the controlling element. And perhaps it has struck you as it did me that there is quite a similarity here between what the very modern up-to-date sophisticated theologians are now teaching in the new theology concerning the all-pervading controlling influence of love, and the cry of love among emotionally-controlled Christians who are genuine believers, because these Christians also have a way of belittling Bible doctrine. They have a way of belittling the learning of the teachings of the Word of God, and they make love the all-controlling factor in their relationships. It’s not what you know that counts with them. It’s how you feel about people that counts.

Unfortunately most of them don’t know a thing about the Holy Spirit “agape” love, nor do they have the capacity to be able to love in this way. The Bible spells out very clearly to us in 2 John 5-6 how we have the capacity for this mental attitude of love—this freedom from bitterness and ill-will type of love. 2 John 5 says, “And now I beseech the, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another (“agape” love—Holy Spirit, fruit of the spirit, love). And this is love: that we walk after His commandments.” “This is love: that we walk after His commandments.”

In other words, you cannot express “agape” Holy Spirit-produced love except as you are filled with the spirit and oriented to the Word of God. Without a knowledge of doctrine you have no capacity for loving. That’s why women who marry men, or vice versa, who are ill-versed in doctrine find they are married to someone who is a poor lover. This is because they have no capacity for love. They think in terms of the human emotional aspect which even your dog or cat can express toward you. But when it comes to the kind of love that God anticipates in the glories of the marriage relationship, this cannot come to a person who does not know the Word of God. Period. Until you have the orientation of the Word of God, you don’t know the first thing about love.

So when you find someone who does a lot of mouthing about love, take a little inventory check and see how much doctrine that person knows. If that person is a do-do bird when it comes to knowing the principles and the propositions of biblical truth, you can just count on it that this person is an emotionally oriented yo-yo, and that’s the kind of love they’re talking about, and they don’t know the first thing about love. They have no capacity for it toward God, toward their opposite number, or toward their friends. This new theology is gushing with a pseudo love under Satan’s direction and it signals the apostate condition of these people, both believers and unbelievers.

**Emotions**

Please remember that Satan loves this. If there’s anything Satan loves, it’s love. Like he once said, “All the world loves a lover.” And this football pep rally emotional joy type of Christianity is what Satan is promoting today. On the other hand, we hope that you will not be one of those tiresome people—and we are surrounded with these tiresome people—who are interpreting (things) based upon the Word of God relative to a false love with the idea that we are against emotional expression—that we mean that we want people to be non-emotional. This is another doctrine of demons. You will find that when a person yells bloody murder and waves the torn and tattered flag of emotional domination of the soul love, which is what Satan is cementing people of all types together with in preparation for the world church of the antichrist—when you find a person shouting wildly with that kind of love, he is also, you will find, a person who is doctrinally disoriented and therefore doesn’t know what real love is. The two always go together. He is also, while he waves that tattered flag, he is also accusing you of being non-emotional. He is accusing you of not being able to have any feelings. He doesn’t like the word “emotion.” That bugs him. He likes the word “feelings.” But while he’s waving that flag of emotional domination love, he’s also saying, “You don’t have any feelings.” Don’t let that bug you because the people who have real depth at feelings, the people who are the keenest in the realm of affection, are those who are people with doctrinal understanding. Never make a mistake about that. I cannot warn you young people enough. Don’t marry somebody who doesn’t have that. Period. Or you’ll regret it for the rest of your life.

**Social Issues**

The new theology is preoccupied with social issues. A Christian: Who is a Christian? What is a Christian? Now we go to Bishop Robinson and we say, “Bishop, what is a Christian then?” The bishop will say, “A Christian is one who has experience”—not personal regeneration through faith in Christ; but a Christian is one who is a gracious neighbor who identifies with the needs of his community.” Most college students don’t know where they pick up the idea of social action. They have no idea in the world why they come out of school and they have these great feelings and great visions toward improving society. They’re actually ready to put their life on the line for this will of the wisp of making things better for people. The bishop means to make things better for people without personal regeneration, and this is false. Society will never be made better without the personal regeneration of every individual within it. That’s why society is going to get worse and things are going to become more disastrous, and it’s coming to a catastrophic end. Anybody who wants to give his life to chasing the will of the wisp of making society better and removing its ills is a fool—a pathetic waste of life, for you will never do it. Unless there is personal regeneration, as there will be in the millennium on the part of everybody, you will not resolve these problems. You will squelch them in one place and they will jump up in another place. You will spend billions and billions of dollars resolving a situation, and about the time you think you have it, it breaks out ten times worse than before you had it. The social planners stand their shaking their heads in disbelief, and every new generation comes up with a new vision and a new glint in its eye, and it believes that it now will be able to solve the problem. It’s going to devote itself with new zeal. Unfortunately, they start going back to the old hack ideas of the new theologians and they start off with the same misconceptions, and consequently they don’t get to first base either.

So this new theology is that you’re a good neighbor. That’s salvation—identifying with the needs of the community. It’s an attempt to completely accommodate the insights of modern scientifically oriented men. They judge the truth of the Bible, not letting the Bible judge them. They reject the Bible in content and in authority, so they don’t seek the illumination of the Holy Spirit on His word to give them divine viewpoint to guide them in the issues of life that they face.

**Neo-Evangelicals**

Neo-evangelicalism, which are people who believe the Word of God and are in our camp as conservatives, have been very much tainted by this social action concept. This stress permeates their writhing of improving changing society. However, they do recognize the need for personal regeneration. They make an effort as neo-evangelicals to bring this regeneration about. Their problem is to bring it about on such a wide-spread scale. What happens is they often find themselves cooperating with the liberal, on the liberal’s ground, on the basis of the viewpoint of someone like Bishop Robinson after everything is said and done.

Robinson want’s something for everyone according to what everybody thinks. So every unbeliever in this way can do his own thing and still be religious. He says there is no subtle purpose and meaning to life as the Bible pretends there is. He wants to make Christianity relevant to the 20th century. He will compromise and accommodate. He will play ball with whatever ideas people have in order to do this. Man is what he makes of himself by all his choices and acts, so everybody is responsible to create a better world. So man has cut himself off from all objective supernatural support. He’s existentially on his own. Satan’s doctrine of subjectivity controls him. The God of the Bible has to go. Robinson says that the God of the Bible is the greatest threat to human independence because as long as the God of the Bible is out there in the minds of people, people are under a certain dread. They have a hesitancy of living as if He wasn’t out there. Therefore they can never fulfill themselves.

**Experience**

So God, he says, has to be viewed as a dialectical process—Hagel’s idea that our god ideas are constantly changing to a new synthesis, but he is not the god of the Bible. So consequently, the liberal theologian centers on experience. Summing it all up, the big thing is experience. It’s not doctrinal statements. It’s not what the Bible says. It’s what you experience. But we have found from the Word of God that experiences are not understood apart from what the Bible tells us. When Isaiah, in Isaiah 6:6-7, had the coal put upon his lips, he didn’t understand what this symbolized in the cleansing of God until God told him. In 2 Kings 19:35, the Assyrians have 185,000 of their army killed. The Jews understood the significance of God’s act because God explained it, but the Assyrians didn’t know. Men as sinners cannot interpret correctly the acts of God in history. If we understand what God is doing in history it’s because we have the Bible to explain it to us. Though the Bible is not a text book on theology, it does have God’s revealed propositions of truth concerning Himself.

**Biblical Statements of Truth**

Now this is something that, again, the modern new theology rejects. It says that the Bible does not have statements of eternal truth. Yet in the Word of God, we read statements such as this: “I am the almighty God. Walk before me and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee and will multiply thee exceedingly.” Now what is that but a statement of direct doctrinal truth? Or, “And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.” Genesis 1:31. What is that but a propositional statement of truth? “And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth.’” Exodus 34:6. That tells us something about God. It’s a statement of truth. “My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall He behold.” Numbers 12:7-8. And the Bible is full of statements like that that are indeed statements of truth. So the liberal is wrong that the Bible is not propositions of truth.

God made Himself known through His mighty acts, but He explained what those acts meant to us, and that’s why we understand him. The liberal claims that the revelation of God is to be distinguished from the actual words. Now Karl Barth says that we have to go back to the Bible, but not back to the words that you read in the Bible. He says it is wrong to identify the Bible as the Word of God. The liberal says that it “contains” the Word of God. The bible has a divine message for the liberal, and it is hidden in the fallible words of men. So if you read the Bible and something hits you, something comes through to you, something inspires you, now you have the Word of God. If it does not come through to you, if it does not inspire you, then it is not the Word of God.

Now this is the way he gets around as a liberal wanting to say that the Bible if full of mistakes. It has errors in it, and yet we want to be able to use it for authority, to give us a message from God. But it’s a subjective decision as to what God is saying and not saying. That’s why he has to say that the Bible has no propositions of truth. Don’t gather people together in church and say, “Now we’re going to teach you Bible doctrine.” That’s false, the liberal theologian says. You can’t teach people that. There are no statements like that. It’s only what comes through to them.

**The Divine Human Encounter**

So now some of you are going to go home today. You’re going to read the newspaper. You’re going to pick up the funnies and you’re going to start reading about that famous All-American duck, Donald. And you’re going to start reading the adventures of Donald Duck and all of a sudden something is going to come through to you as you go through the frames, and before you finish it, God has touched your heart and spoken to you. And you will praise Him for the Word of God that you have just experienced through Donald the Duck. Do you see what I mean? How dumb intellectual men can be? But that’s what it amounts to. But the liberal calls this the divine human encounter. This is purely subjective. It makes man the decider as to what is the Word of God and what is not. It is impossible to separate the knowledge about God from the actual words of the Bible. Actually when the liberals use the Bible, they don’t separate it from the words either. So how can the Word of God come to us in words that are mistaken? The greatest need we have today is to return to the expository teaching and preaching of the Word of God—to uncover doctrinal propositions which convey to us the mind of God. The neo-orthodox theologian and the Dr. Robinsons say, “Oh, no, that’s static. That has no life in it.” And yet what the Word of God requires is the exegesis of its word.

Now it’s true that the Word will not be meaningful to you if it is not explained to you, and if you do not receive it under the filling of the Holy Spirit, and if you do not go positive toward it, it is true that the Word of God will be meaningless to you. But that is something entirely different than what the liberal theologian is telling us today. The Bible is authoritative in what it says. It is inspired whether you and I believe it or not, whether we have a divine human encounter or not. This is because the Bible’s authority rests upon itself as the Word of God produced by inspiration. It makes no difference how we view it. It is true that we must have the proper relationship of the guidance of the spirit of God, but God has provided that system for us.

**Summary – How to View the Bible**

So here are the conclusions that we come to as a summary this morning. How shall we look at the Word of God? 1) Do not approach the bible with the idea that you can apply to it certain tests of your own subjective invention. 2) Do not advance theories in conflict with what the Bible clearly teaches, no matter what experience may seem to suggest to you. 3) Come to the Bible as the inspired and thus inerrant revelation from God in form of doctrinal propositions of absolute truths which may be understood by us. 4) Our fallen mentality must be subject to all that God’s Word says. That’s divine viewpoint. 5) We must view the very words of the Bible as the voice of God. 6) By thus becoming captive to the voice of God through Bible doctrine, we find ourselves truly free, dealing then with reality. 7) May our rally cry in the 7th place be, “Thy Word is truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971