

GLEANINGS — February 21, A.D. 2016
Institutional Backsliding, Part Three

In Part Two we discussed the mischief of Lyell and Darwin and how the "scientific" establishment of today regards the twin errors of uniformitarianism and evolution as unquestionable truth. What about the Church? To what extent have we followed the world into this destructive error...gone down a slippery slope?

Like the little leaven that leavens the whole lump (1 Corinthians 5:6, Galatians 5:9), theological liberalism has crept into many branches of the Church - the true pillar and bulwark of truth - because of the way she reacted to the ideas of "the two Charlies." Lyell and Darwin. Instead of being willing to appear foolish for Christ's sake, to stand for the truth of Scripture though Mr. Worldly Wiseman lampooned and mocked it, some Christians compromised. They became willing to allow the Holy Spirit inspired, infallible, inerrant, fully authoritative Word of God to be judged and distorted by the sin corrupted, fallible mind of man.

Compromising doctrines such as "theistic evolution" were baptized and put forth as orthodoxy, when in reality it is as far from orthodoxy as is a Christology with no virgin conception and birth. Thus we have today not only declarations by the papacy that evolution and Christianity are compatible (*cf. easily documented statements by popes Pius XII, John II, and Francis*), but leaders and teachers of formerly evangelical bodies asserting the same thing. The sneaky lie has suddenly taken on the authority trappings of Truth!

Although the term theological liberalism is fairly new, spiritual declension of course is not. The wisdom of God in Ecclesiastes tells us that "there is nothing new under the sun". Thus we can find the same force that drives theological liberalism in the pages the Bible itself.

Consider the book of Judges. In the days when the judges ruled, when "every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6, 21:25), there is a self-evident cyclic nature to the history of God's people. Finding themselves unoppressed by enemies, prosperous, all things going well for them, they would forget God, Who gave them all their blessings. In their sinful folly, they would begin to serve other (false, of course) gods such as the Canaanite idols, Ashtoreth and Baal, forsaking the one true and living God. The Bible clearly teaches that this one true and living God is indeed the God of love, but He is also a jealous God, a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24, Hebrews 12:29).

Seeing His people forsake Him, His wrath would rise against them, yet not so as to completely destroy them. To chastise and correct them, He would raise up adversaries against them to oppress them. This would have the effect of causing them to call out to the LORD for deliverance. God would then allow Himself to be moved by their entreaty, and raise up a judge, an heroic deliverer such as Moses and Joshua had been, who would remove the yoke of bondage. For a season, all would be well. Then the cycle would repeat itself, as the people forgot God, served false gods, and were again disciplined by the true God who condescended to tolerate them again and again, having determined that He would have a people for Himself, often in spite of themselves!

This trend among the covenant people of God didn't change with the end of the period of the judges and the advent of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The prophet Jeremiah wrote - "Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be very desolate," says the LORD. "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns - broken cisterns that can hold no water. (Jeremiah 2:11-13)

to be continued...