

## The Modernist Preacher

He was an ordained minister, but modern in his views.  
He preached his twisted doctrines to people in the pews.  
He would not hurt their feelings, whate'er the cost would be,  
But for their smiles and friendship and compliments sought he.  
His church was filled with wicked souls that should be saved from sin,  
But never once he showed the way or tried a soul to win.  
He preached about the lovely birds that twitter in the trees,  
The babl'ing of the running brooks, the murm'ring of the seas.

He quoted fancy poetry that tickled list'ning ears  
When sorrow came to some, he tried to laugh away their tears.  
His smooth and slipp'ry sermons made the people slide to hell.  
The harm he did by preaching goes beyond what we can tell.  
He took our Holy Bible, and preached it full of holes,  
The Virgin Birth, said he can't be believed by honest souls,  
The miracles of Jesus and the resurrection tale  
For educated ones like us, today, cannot avail.  
We're living in an age, said he, when wisdom rules and reigns,  
When man's intelligence is great and superstition wanes.

He said, we're all God's children who live upon this earth,  
No message of salvation, no need of second birth.  
His coat was bought with money that he had wrongly gained,  
For through his twisted sermons his wealth he had obtained.  
He was just like the Roman soldiers that watched at Jesus' grave,  
For money in abundance, to them, the people gave;  
It all was theirs by telling what was a sinful lie -  
A resurrected Savior, they, too, were to deny.

The day at last had come for the minister to die,  
When to his congregation, he had to say good-bye.  
His form lay cold and lifeless, his ministry was past,  
His tongue with all its poison was hushed and stilled at last.  
His funeral was grand; he was lauded to the skies-  
They preached him into heaven where there are no good-byes.  
Upon the lonely hill, underneath the shady trees,  
His form was laid to rest in the whisp'ring of the breeze.

A tombstone was erected with words: "He is at rest,  
He's gone to heaven's glories to live among the blest."  
His body now is lifeless, but Ah! His soul lives on,  
He failed to enter in where they thought that he had gone.  
The letters on the tombstone or that sermon some had heard,  
Could not decide his destiny, 'twas not the final word.  
He still had God to deal with, the one who knows the heart;  
While others entered heaven, he heard the word, "Depart."

He pauses for a moment upon the brink of hell;  
He stares into a depth where he evermore will dwell.  
He hears the cries and groanings of souls he had misled,  
He recognizes faces among the screaming dead.  
He sees departed deacons which he had highly praised.  
Their fingers pointing at him as they their voices raised:  
"You stood behind the pulpit, and lived in awful sin,  
We took you for a saint, but a liar you have been."  
Accusing cries! He hears them, "Ah! You have been to blame,  
You led us into darkness when you were seeking fame."

"You preached your deadly doctrine, we thought you knew the way.  
We fed you and we clothed you, we even raised your pay.  
You've robbed us of a home where no tear-drops ever flow,  
Where days are always fair and the heav'nly breezes blow.  
Where living streams are flowing, and saints and Angels sing,  
Where every one is happy, and Hallelujahs ring.  
We're in this place of torment, from which no soul returns;  
We hear the cry of lost ones, we feel the sizzling burns;  
Give us a drop of water, we're tortured in this flame;  
You failed to preach salvation to us through Jesus' Name."

The preacher turns in horror, he tries to leave the scene,  
He knows the awful future for every soul unclean,  
But there he meets the devil, whom he has served so well,  
He feels the demon powers as they drag him into hell.  
Throughout eternal ages, his groans, too, must be heard-  
He, too, must suffer torment-he failed to heed God's Word.  
He feels God's wrath upon him, he hears the hot flames roar,  
His doctrine now is different, he ridicules no more.

-Oscar C. Eliason