

SHINTOISM AND NON-PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

TEXT FOR PRAYER

“ BRING FORTH FRUIT “

I shall read from “Christ’s Object Lessons,” p. 60, the first two paragraphs :

“God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of the Scriptures.

“‘And bring forth fruit.’ Those who, having heard the word, keep it, will bring forth fruit in obedience. The word of God, received into the soul, will be manifest in good works. Its results will be seen in a Christ like character and life. Christ said of Himself, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within My heart.’ ‘I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me.’ And the Scripture says, ‘He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.’”

What shall we now pray for ? --- Pray for power to enable us to meditate upon His love and mercy and thus cause our perception of Truth to become higher and holier; pray to realize that the soul that dwells in the atmosphere of holy thought is transformed; pray to learn by experience that the Word of God received into the soul, does manifest Itself in good works.

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SABBATH, FEBRUARY 7, 1948
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Our text for this afternoon's study is found in ----

Jeremiah 10 : 23 -- "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself : it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

In this verse we are told that the way man should go is not in himself, that he of himself does not know how to direct his steps. Someone else must direct them if he is to go in the right direction. For this very reason God's people are led by a prophet and are preserved by a prophet. (Hosea 12 : 13) So it was that through the medium of the prophets God led and preserved the Church of the Old Testament, and by the same Spirit He founded, led, and has to this day preserved the New Testament Church, although the spirit that rebelled against God's leadership anciently, is still in the Church today.

Naturally men are unconscious of the fact that they cannot direct their own steps even after God starts them out as a father starts out his little son. We should never forget that when God's ancient people rejected the prophets, including John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles, when He could no longer lead them, their feet slipped in every direction, they fell from grace and lost everything. Only the followers of the prophets remained with God and they only composed the Christian Church in its beginning. No other than God did direct their steps into the Church.

Let us take another example : The world at large today, with but a few exceptions, is Buddhist, Mohammedan, or Christian. Two-thirds of the world's population is still following in the steps of Buddha, who lived about 550 years before Christ. Think of it ! Two-third, a little less than a billion of the world's inhabitants are still followers of Buddha !

And who was Buddha ? What kind of a man was he – good or bad ? Was he a deceiver or was he a teacher of righteousness ?

To find the answer, let us first take into consideration the kind of people he was in contact with. He was not in touch with the Hebrews, nor with the Christians, but only with the degraded people of the Orient. And those who did not come in contact with Buddha's teachings, -- those of the south sea islands in particular – are to a large extent still cannibals.

Taking these facts into consideration before passing judgment we may ask, What did Buddha deceive his followers from ? – From nothing is the overall answer. And what did he lead them to ? History gives this answer : “What he taught the people was that they should seek salvation not through the observance of religious rites and ceremonies, but through honesty and purity of heart, through charity and tenderness and compassion toward all creatures than have life.” – **“General History,” p. 66.**

Since Buddha's kind of teaching certainly does not come from the Devil, and since he led his followers from bad to better, he could not have been a deceiver. Buddha, moreover, not only taught good morals, but, if history is reliable, he himself lived up to what he taught. Finally, in keeping with his great influence he could have been a rich man, but he died poor. And if standards of living have any virtues at all, Buddha's standards, if lived up to, could have lifted the people of the Orient higher than the level of many so-called Christians in our day.

Buddha therefore appears to have been a preacher of righteousness in his day, for his standard of behavior was practically the standard of the Ten Commandments, the standards of the Bible. Where did he get such a standard ? Certainly not from the Devil. We may now ask the question, Was God in Buddha's day interested only in the Hebrew nation ? Did He entirely neglect the rest of the world ? And did He deliberately permit a third of the earth's inhabitants to be led by Buddha from bad to worse ? or did He see that they be led from bad to better ?

There is but one answer that we can honestly and wisely give : That God through Buddha did for the heathen that which could not have been done through Moses or through any of the Hebrew prophets.

Comparatively speaking, God through Buddha raised the heathen from the pit in which they were as many inches up, as Moses raised the Hebrew's from the pit in which they were. The Hebrews, of course, rose much closer to God than the followers of Buddha because the pit in which Buddha found the heathen was much deeper than the pit in which Moses found the Hebrew nation.

Buddha himself never thought that after his death he would be worshipped as a god by his followers --- no, no more than the prophets, the Apostles, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, thought they would be worshipped after their death.

You can now see that while Buddha was directing the steps of his people, the people were led closer to the standards of the Bible and to the ideals of Christ than they were before his day. Since this is so, then Buddha was not a deceiver.

As soon as Buddha died, though, his followers ran against a wall, as it were, and their progress toward God, the Bible, and Christ, stopped where Buddha stopped. Indeed they could not have advanced further for they made the death of Buddha become their block against progress toward God. How did they do it ? ---

It is a known fact that when people give credit of a Divine deed to a finite human being, then their hope of another as great, or greater ever coming to help them is forever gone. They do not believe that God lives, that He will raise another even greater to lead them further, but believe that there is no need of another and no need for more Truth. Consequently as they do not expect another, when one comes they reject him. Thus the Buddhist put a stop to their spiritual progress. So you see that when the light that is in you becomes darkness, "How great is that darkness !"

Matthew 6 : 23.

Judging from the experiences of the past, the freedom of a nation and the assassin's bullet this year are likely to bring forth another god --- Mohandus K. Gandhi. He is likely to become the Buddha of today. Yes, the Hindu millions are already giving to Mr. Gandhi the credit for all his good and Godly deeds.

He, like Buddha, certainly was a good man, with high standards and good morals, the standards and morals of the Bible and of Jesus Christ.

This brings us to another hard question to answer --- Since Gandhi lived in the Christian era why did he not become Christian ? --- Perhaps he would have, but I suppose he took into account that to become a Christian and join the Christian Church would lower rather than lift his standard of behavior.

As he saw it, it looked to him that the so-called Christian nation was sapping the blood of his people, that she was abusing and treating them as inferior human beings. In fact, he himself, for his stand on national decency and national freedom spent about twelve years in jail. These are the things that most likely kept Mr. Gandhi from joining the Christian church and people. He certainly did not turn away from Christianity to avoid any sacrifices, or to indulge in any sin.

Gandhi's theory, moreover, for freedom by non-violence, by neither sword nor gun, succeeded and freed over 400.000.000 people who had been servants of the strong for nearly 200 years ! This he accomplished while the Christians were killing one another by the thousands ! These are some of the things which most likely kept Mr. Gandhi from becoming a Christian.

Let us now for a moment consider Mohammed, to whom something like 220.000.000 people bow. What kind of man was he ? Was he a deceiver ? or was he a teacher of righteousness ? -- Let us also consider the people who were taught by him. They were the descendants of Lot and Abraham, --- Moabites, the Esauites, and Ishmaelites, etc., all of them bitter enemies of the Hebrews, and their religion.

Since Mohammed led millions of Arabs closer to the Hebrew-Christian religion than the so-called Christians in his day would have led them, it is hardly possible that he was a deceiver. He led his followers to a higher moral standard of living, modesty, cleanliness, regularity of prayer and Biblical diet than the Christians of his day would have led them. Mohammed's theory of religion according to history, and as Mohammedanism has it now is this :

“Mohammedanism, the name commonly given in Christian countries to the creed established by Mohammed. His followers call their creed Islam (entire submission to the decrees of God), and their common formula of faith is, ‘There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet.’ The dogmatic or theoretical part of Mohammedanism embraces the following points : (1) Belief in God, who is without beginning or end, the sole Creator and Lord of the universe, having absolute power, knowledge, glory, and perfection. (2) Belief in his angels, who are impeccable beings, created of light. (3) Belief in good and evil Jinn (genii), who are created of smokeless fire, and are subject to death. (4) Belief in the Holy Scriptures, which are his uncreated word revealed to the prophets. Of these there now exist, but in a greatly corrupted form, the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Gospels; and in an uncorrupted and incorruptible state the Koran, which abrogates and surpasses all preceding revelation. (See Koran.) (5) Belief in God's prophets and apostles, the most distinguished of whom are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. Mohammed is the greatest of them all, the last of the prophets and the most excellent of the creatures of God. (6) Belief in a general resurrection and final judgment, and in the future rewards and punishments, chiefly of a physical nature. (7) The belief, even to the extent of fatalism, of God's absolute fore-knowledge and predestination of all events both good and evil.” – **“The Twentieth Century Cyclopaedia,” p. 507.**

In view of the fact that Mohammed led his people closer to the religion of the Bible than they had been before, could he truly be called a deceiver ? If so, tell me what did he deceive them from ?

Since Mohammed was so near to believing the Christian religion, we may ask, Why did he not become a Christian ? – Let us consider the possibilities that could have prevented him from so doing :

Mohammed lived in the seventh century of the Christian era, in the midst of the Dark Ages of religion, when the Christian church was deepest in idol worship, graft and immorality, practices that are prohibited by the Scriptures. If nothing else could have kept him from joining the Christian church, then idol worship along with the prevalent use of swine's flesh, practice that is against all Bible religion, was enough to turn Mohammed from Christianity.

Mohammed, I believe, did the very best he could , considering that in his time the so-called Christian church was at a very low ebb, and that his morals and behavior were much higher than were the morals and behavior of the Christianized pagans. In view of all this, who can say that Mohammed was a bad man, that he was a deceiver ?

As we still inquiring why God permitted Mohammed to teach his religion to millions of the earth's inhabitants ? And do we still wonder why he did not become a Christian ? --- If so, here is a second answer :

God permitted him because Mohammed was making the people better than they were, and because Mohammedanism in that day brought one closer to the religion of the Bible than could have paganized Christianity. But why are the Mohammedans still Mohammedans ? --- Mohammedans are still Mohammedans, for the same reason that Buddhist are still Buddhists; that is, because after Mohammed died, they did just what the Buddhists did : In the progress of religion the Mohammedans stopped where Mohammed stopped – at his tomb. They stopped there to make sure that their followers would never join another sect. They taught the people that there was to be no other prophet, that Mohammed was the last, that there was no need for another, that they had all the Truth to lead them to the pearly gates. Thus corrupt Mohammedanism drilled this false idea into the minds of the common people then, and still more corrupted Mohammedanism of today, like all other sects, including corrupt Adventism, still does the same. Thus it is that no sect as a people, but only as individuals, has ever accepted an additional message and this is the reason for the multi-sectarian world.

So to ask why Mohammedans and Buddhists are still Mohammedans and Buddhists --- why have they not advanced since Mohammed and Buddha died, is like asking why Catholics have not yet become Lutherans, why Lutherans have not

yet become Presbyterians, why Presbyterians have not yet become Methodists, why Methodists have not yet become Baptists, why Baptists have not yet become Seventh-Day Adventists, and why Seventh-Day Adventists have not yet become Davidian Seventh-Day Adventists ? The overall answer is that each successive denomination has failed to keep pace with the progress of the Truth because each has failed to climb higher than the height of the founder of each respective denomination could possibly have led them in his life time.

The Jews never rose higher than the height to which Moses led them. When Moses died, they as it were died with him so far as spiritual progress was concerned. Thus it was that they rejected and killed the prophets that came after Moses, not sparing the Son of God.

The same spirit prevailed in the Christian Church. She never rose above the level on which the Apostles left her, and for a time she even fell almost to the bottom of the pit. And she would have dropped out had God not again visited His people in the persons of Luther, Knox, Wesley, Campbell and the other reformers, through whom the Lord brought to light certain parts of Bible Truth that had long been trampled under foot. But did the Christian world as a whole see the Light ? And did all walk in It ? No, indeed not, not as a people, but only as individuals. This is what accounts for the present multi-sectarian world; that is, as it became necessary for Christ to organize a new church, the Christian, separate from the mother church, the Jewish, in His day, just so the reformers found themselves cast out from the mother churches, and necessarily were obliged to organize the followers of the advancing Truth into a new denomination, one after another.

In this light, you see the spirit which keeps the Jews still Jews, the Buddhists still Buddhists, the Mohammedans still Mohammedans, the Catholics still Catholics, the Lutherans still Lutherans, the Methodists still Methodists, the Baptists still Baptists – the very same spirit is today working within our own denomination, the Seventh-Day Adventists, presumptuously believing that they are rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing more. It, too, thinks that its dead founder was the last in the line of the prophets, that there is no need of another. It feels certain that the light and energy in its ship, Zion, is sufficient to take it to the shore of the Kingdom, though they well know that their message, the Judgment for the Dead is not the last, but that the Judgment for the Living, the which they do not yet have, is the last ! This spirit of sliding back rather than going forward, of opposing spiritual growth, and at the same time fostering the spirit of Luke warmness, is successfully working with many in spite of the fact that the prophecies of the Bible which point to our day, are to them still mysteries. They care not to know them.

There is therefore yet a great work to be done, not only for all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples, but for the Church herself, if any are to be saved from the

coming doom. According to Jeremiah's prophecy, corrupt Christianity is nothing short of a form of Shintoism :

Jeremiah 10 : 1 – 5 : “Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel : Thus said the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain : for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not : they must needs be born, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they, cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.”

The widely used Christmas tree, on the 25th of December --- a tree cut down from its source of life and fastened up by nails --- does not symbolize a birth, but rather one's death and a futile effort to make him live. By cutting down the tree, to the heathen it symbolized their dead chief, and by propping it up, it symbolized life though one be dead. Now the fact that the spurious Christmas tree is widely celebrated not only by Christians, but also by non-Christians, the world by this act is worshiping the dead, a form of Shintoism. Worshiping the dead prophets and killing the living ones, is a brutal effort to block the progress of Truth, to deceive self and others.

Finally, had it not been for the fact that some wide-awake ones throughout the ages have dared take up their cross and follow God through His prophets in order to be led from one height of Truth to another, the world would not have stood this long.

There is no doubt, the Church from creation till today has been led and preserved by the prophets, and she can continue in no other way from here on.

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