

LECTURE II

Masonic Temple, Portland, Oregon
Monday, November 29, 1937

I announced last night that my subject tonight would be "Can a Dying Church Be Saved." I want to state at this point that I respect the beliefs of every man and woman. I may not agree with them at all, but I will defend their right to their own religious conviction. In turn, I ask the same right. Just as long as that flag waves o'er this land, we are supposed to have religious freedom, and will have it. It may be that I shall speak plainly tonight, but neither in this meeting nor in any other meeting I conduct, will anything be said deliberately designed to hurt anyone's feelings. Not that I care so much for the feelings, but I do want, and must be true to the Power of the Spirit of God which came into my life and provided me with my message to this day and age.

Sometimes I think I would rather someone else would have caught the vision, for it has been a fight and a hard one, from the very day this Teaching was released. And the pity of it all is, that the opposition came from other religious movements. If the day ever comes in America when freedom of religious thought is barred, we shall be a nation of slaves.

Truth is an evolution. What suited the minds of men 2,000 years or 500 years ago, is very apt to not suit them today. What was considered truth 400 years ago, regardless of how earnestly that truth may have ^{been} held, may not be truth today. We progress in every line except the religious line and there we are told to go back, ^{and} look back for our inspiration. I don't think that is the way. Religious vision comes through looking ahead and where there is no vision, there can be no growth. So whatever I say tonight will be said to you under the guidance and under the influence of the Power of the Spirit of God. I have no other object in life, and, regardless of what you may have heard about "this terrible atheist" you never saw him before in your life--it was heresay, judge the man by the message.

Now in handling this question of whether or not a dying church can be saved, first of all, is it dying? When I use the word "church" I am

talking about the Protestant religion. I don't consider the other a religion at all, so I waste no time on it. And in calling to your attention the fact I shall call to your attention, I am doing it kindly and doing it in an attempt to bring light and Power to an organization which I think is dying very, very fast. Last night I read to you the closing paragraph from Dr. Jean Milner's book "The Sky Is Red." Let me read it again please. Dr. Milner occupies the pulpit in the Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis, the same pulpit formerly occupied by Henry Ward Beecher. Dr. Milner is a man of wide experience and he knows the situation. Here's his last paragraph: "We are living in one of those rare periods of Time from which greatness can emerge through the renewal of the human spirit by a more vital contact with the Great Spirit. Such moments, so pregnant with tremendous possibilities are not often vouchsafed to man. A sweeping movement climbing upward toward the building of the world of our dreams--or--a spiral downward toward disaster, seems to lie just beyond the borders of our day. One cannot view with serenity the possibility of our failing to take advantage of this supreme moment in Time. Out of such periods magnificence comes. The Christian Church has an opportunity now, which, if she let slip through her hands, she may never have again. She must prove herself worthy of the leadership demanded of her. She will serve the modern world with Christian greatness or be repudiated by it. The Spirit of Christ will not leave the earth, but His Spirit will live in institutions other than our own."

And you will notice that Dr. Milner admits the possibility of that very thing happening. Now I read you also last night a statement by Bishop Ralph Magee of the Methodist Church, and here's what he says: "Bishop J. Ralph Magee of St. Paul urged adult education here yesterday to combat slumps in Sunday school attendance. He said the M.E. (north) church lost 2,859 Sunday schools and 732,271 students during the 12 months ending in 1935.

"He cited as causes for the Sunday school slumps late hours

Saturday nights and Sunday travel by automobile. The bishop also urged the broadening in scope of materials studied in Sunday schools and suggested that pastors devote two or three days a month to problems of Sunday school administrations."

That's the Presbyterians and Methodists, and on the 25th of last month the Episcopal Church held a convention in Chicago... "The Right Rev. Bishop Henry St. George Tucker, newly elected primate of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, issued a frank warning today that unless the Christian church developed 'an enthusiasm for its work comparable to that of soviet Russia or warring Japan the Christian cause may fail and pass out of existence.'

"A student of history, the bishop from Virginia pointed to the downfall of religions in the past as part of his warning to the Christian church of today. These dead religions, he said, have died because they lacked enthusiasm and aggressive programs of expansions; because they didn't meet the emergencies of ages just such as the present.

"The enthusiasm of the world today lies largely outside the sphere of organized religion,' asserted Bishop Tucker in what is considered his keynote message to his church throughout the world. 'There is much less interest and enthusiasm in the Christian cause than in many secular causes.'

"Bishop Tucker let it be known that the basic policy of his church will be the development of a driving missionary energy for the extension of the church's work into every field of human life and into every country where the Episcopal church carries on a missionary program."

.....and, these are not my words, beloved. I do not want to see any Christian cause fail and die, and I will do anything in my power to save it, but in the light of statements of that type, do you not think the time is ripe for someone with courage enough and with enough of the Spirit of God in his life, to get down to bed-rock and find out what's wrong? I think it is.

A yes-man in the church can do more harm than all the doubters can ever do. An honest doubter is the one through whom light invariably comes.

I will not forget in a hurry the day I was graduated from divinity school. (I am an old man now, did you know that?--fifty-two.) The instructor called me into conference and said, "Frank, we want you to be very, very careful." I said, "Why?"

"Well, the Lord has a wonderful work for you." I said, "What makes you think that?" They gave me the reason and I turned around and said, "Dr. Stevens, I am not going to preach one sermon--" And you could have knocked him over with a feather. He said, "Why?" And I said, "Because I am not so sure that your philosophy is true." Now that was a Baptist Bible School and you can imagine what happened. They immediately called a prayer meeting and went into a huddle to pray for Frank Bruce Robinson. I appreciated that because, even at that time I knew that there was a work somewhere for me to do for the kingdom of God. I didn't dream it would come so ^{many} years later.

Dr. Imire called on me the next day, and said, "I am going to convert you, you never were converted." I said, "Doctor, what do you mean?" And he said, "Why, I don't believe you ever believed in the fundamentals of our religion."

"I admit that, for while I was studying your religion and philosophy I was studying others too."

"What do you mean?" he said. I said, "I mean this, that I just simply cannot and do not accept the very fundamentals of your philosophy!"

He was a wonderful man and if alive, still is, however, I don't know. He asked me what part of it there was that I didn't accept and I told him that I didn't believe for one second that the great infinite God of this universe ever came down to this earth in the form of a man, to be crucified on the cross in order that the sins of the human race could be washed away by this atonement. And he said to me, "That story is true, don't you believe

it?" I told him I did not and he had courage enough to ask me why, and I told him and I am going to tell you tonight. Then, if after I have told you why, you care to continue to believe it, that is your business...I have a right to give you the reasons why I don't.

Now listen, whether I do or not, or whether you do or not, makes no difference to the presence of the Spirit of God in your life. Get that fact? That is entirely beside the question. For it is possible for you and for me to live a life in tune with the infinite God, and utterly discard that story, and that's the stumbling block the church has put in our way. In the first place it has been told so many times before. Now I wrote a book not long ago and a lot of attempts were made to stop that book. I wrote it that the truths might be known, and I am speaking to you tonight, only that the truth might be known. You can check and double check on any statement I make, and I want you, if you have pen and paper, to write down the names and the dates of these sixteen crucified Saviors I am going to give you. And if this story, beloved, was told twenty-five or thirty times before the Christian religion was ever heard of, then where did it come from? Let me read you the first crucified world Savior before the time of Christ.

Now, if there are any here who think they are going to feel uncomfortable and can't stand this straight talk, I shall appreciate it if they would leave now, so that the rest of us can find out what the truth is.

(1) In the year 1200 B.C. there was crucified on a cross a God who had three times as many followers as the Christ of Christianity has today. He was born on the 25th day of December, and was born of a virgin. He came into the world as a God to save the people from sin. (Now remember, this is 1200 B.C.) His miraculous birth was foretold by prophets. The mother and child were visited by shepherds, wise men and the angelic host who joyously sang, "In thy delivery, O favored among women, all nations shall have cause to exult." The edict of the tyrant ruler Cansa, ordering all the first born to be put to death, went out. (In the Christian story Herod issued that order.) This child and mother made a miraculous escape,

and the River Jumna opened itself in order to allow them to pass through, like the River Jordan did in our story. This child was baptised in the River Ganges, ours was baptised in the River Jordan. He was transfigured at Madura, where he assured his disciples that "present or absent, I will always be with you." He had a favorite disciple (Arjoon), who was his bosom friend, as John was Christ's. He was anointed with oil by women, like Christ--and I am speaking of the God Krishna, of India, look it up in the public library. Now that was in 1200 B. C., and do you think it was just a coincidence that those two stories should be so similar? But let's go back a little farther.

(2) In 600 B.C. another God was crucified on the cross. This one was Sakya, another Hindu God. He was called "the Savior of the World," "the Benevolent One," "the Dispenser of Grace," "the Light of the World," etc., and he came to save this world from sin. He was crucified on the cross, and descended into Hell, arose and now sits at the right hand of God in heaven. That's three we have up there.

(3) In 1160 B.C. Thammuz, a God of Syria came down from heaven in the form of a man, ^{and} was crucified for the sins of this world.

(4) In 552 B. C., Wittoba of the Telingonese, was crucified for the sins of the world.

(5) In 622 B. C. we have Iao of Nepal.

(6) In 834 B. C. we have another God called Hesus. Now note the similarity of those two names and also notice the similarity between Jeseus Krishna and Jesus Christ, and one 1200 years before the other, with the same, identical stories.

(7) In 587 B. C., Quetzalcoatl, the Mexican Savior, was crucified on the cross and the paintings of "Codex Borgianus" picture that God on the cross with nail holes in his hands and feet. How does that happen? He was born on the 25th day of December, was crucified and arose from the dead three days after, and is now at the right hand of God.

Please don't laugh. I don't want to give them, but in duty to you and God, I am going to give them. You have a right to know these facts because they have been very carefully withheld from you by the religious leaders, and it wouldn't be fair for them to give you half, and that's all. That's something like the Catholics who won't even let you read the Bible.

(8) In 506 B. C. Quirinus of Rome, was crucified on the cross. He was conceived and brought forth by a virgin. His life was sought by the reigning King (Amulius). He was of royal blood, his mother being of kingly descent. He was "put to death by wicked hands" crucified, resurrected, and ascended back to heaven.

You know that this is more than coincidence. You probably thought that the story of crucifixion and resurrection had never been known on this earth until the time of Christ, but thousands of years before that, millions of people knew the entire story from beginning to end, and that is the part of the Christian religion I question. I want to know why it is so similar and I want to know how the other twenty-five could be all false and this story be true, when the others had more followers than this one, and until the church can clear that up, I shall not believe that part of the story. No man living, ever believed more in the Power of the Spirit of God than I do, but I don't believe that resurrection story. It may be symbolic and if it is, let them come out and say so. They just say that this is the story and if you believe it you will be saved and if you don't believe it, you will be damned. But, according to those three statements I read, that story is not registering with American people today. We have been threatened by hell, lured by heaven, and yet that doesn't register and I contend that there is something wrong somewhere.

(9) In 547 B. C., Aeschylus or Prometheus was crucified on a cross. If you will go to the New American Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, page 157, you will find this significant declaration: "It is doubtful whether there is

to be found in the whole range of Greek letters deeper pathos than that of the divine woe of the beneficent demigod Prometheus, crucified on his Scythian crags for his love to mortals."

How many crucified Gods think you it takes to save this world from sin? Now when this God died, the whole frame of nature became convulsed. The earth shook, the rocks were rent,^{and} the graves were opened--did you ever hear that before? And they called this God "Our Lord and Savior" Prometheus.

Now I will hurry through---here's another.

(10) 1700 B. C. Thulis of Egypt, (put it down and look it up) suffered death on the cross, was buried, but rose again, ascended into heaven, and there became "the judge of the dead."

(11) Indra of Thibet, 725 B. C., was born of a virgin on the 25th day of December, (note that). He walked upon the water and told his followers to cast the net on the other side of the boat. His followers were called "Heavenly Teachers."

(12) Alcestis of Euripides was crucified in 600B.C. The story of this God can be found in volume 37 of the English Classical Journal. This was the only female God or Goddess the world has ever known.

(13) Atys of Phrygia was crucified in 1170 B.C. He was suspended on a tree, crucified, buried and rose again.

(14) Crite of Chaldea was known as the "Ever Blessed Son of God," "the Atoning Offering for an Angry God" and when he was crucified, both heaven and earth were shaken to their foundation.

(15) Bali of Orissa was crucified in 725 B. C. and was called the second person of the trinity.

(16) Mithra of Persia was born on the 25th day of December, crucified on a tree.....and I could go on and give you fifteen more if I wanted to, but the point I am trying to make is this, and the point I am sure of is this--that instead of the Christian Church preaching and worshipping

the message, it has and still is trying to worship the messenger. Granting the existence of Christ, what did he say? "I can't of my own self do anything but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works..." and yet I can't hold membership in any church in the United States because I will not say that Jesus Christ came to earth to personally wash away my sins, and there are others too, who do not believe it.

Now can the church be saved? Yes, whether it will be or not, I don't know, but it can be. How? First of all by being honest with itself and fully and frankly admitting, "We think this story is true, but we don't know so we will put it to one side and we'll preach the Power of the Spirit of God, here and now." And what would that do? It would make the present-day Protestant Church power houses for the kingdom of God--that's what it would do.

You have a city of churches here and if every preacher in this city forgot all about his crucified God and preached a Living God, he would find a Power coming into his church that it had never known before. In the first place the story isn't reasonable. Can you conceive of the creator of this universe destroying man, the finest of his creations? I think not. The Spirit of the Living God does not work in that manner. Nor would the creative intelligence behind this universe ever make a creation that was born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Now, after 400 years, what do we find? Your leaders say it's going to die. Dr. Milner says it is going to be repudiated by the world and that the Spirit of God is going to operate through other institutions. Conceive of that--the Spirit of God operating through other institutions than the church! Do you think it can? You are mistaken--it IS operating through my Movement and it will continue to operate just as long as its leader stays in tune with the Infinite. That's all that is necessary to follow the vision.

The third leader said they shut up 2800 Sunday schools in one

LECTURE II--10

year. That means that the youth in this country ^{is} are not being either won or held by that story and if the Christian Church has any brains at all, it will get rid of it so fast it will make your head swim.

But you say, "Dr. Robinson, wouldn't that be the downfall of religion?" You can't kill religion. Anything of God cannot be killed. Organizations may fall, yes, but you cannot kill religion, for RELIGION IS GOD. Do you see that? There is an infinite peace in the Realm of the Spirit of God and there is infinite light to guide you along your path and Cardinal Newman knew it when his little ship was calmed on the Mediterranean. He looked up and said:

"Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on:
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet! I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

And there is an infinite love in the Power of the Spirit of God and Dr. George Matheson, the Scotch minister knew that. Dr. Matheson was engaged to be married to a beautiful girl and was suddenly struck blind. He offered to release her and she accepted and in the agony of that heart he wrote the song "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go." His human love had failed but back of that sits the Infinite Life, the Infinite Power, and reserve of Power in God, and it doesn't take belief in any man-made dogmas to find it.

What about the four gospels that the story is found in? Why don't the ministers tell you that no one knows who wrote them? They don't tell you that. There are a lot of things they don't tell you, and the church had better be honest with the American people. Do you know what's happening on this earth today? The Spirit of God is abroad in it and it doesn't inhabit houses/^{made}with hands, and men and women are groping for something that they feel is just beyond their fingertips. I know what they want and the moment the Church preaches God, it will open its doors.

At the raising of Lazarus, as he stood before the tomb, listen--

he lifted up his eyes and prayed. Remember what he said? He told them that he didn't need to pray personally, but that those people might know that it was his father, God.

He is asleep on a little ship on the lake. A storm arises and the fishermen awaken him out of his slumber. "What's the matter?"

"Why master, the storm, we shall perish!"

And what did he say--"Where is your faith?" In other words, "You wouldn't need to have awakened me, had you the faith."

And with the little child, the disciples admitted their absolute inability to heal the child, but Jesus said, "Bring him to me...", and the child was healed. The disciples asked, "Why couldn't we do that?" And his answer shot back, "Because of your unbelief."

And if these church organizations were to ask me what the trouble is, I would say because of their unbelief. I don't blame the ministers because they are tied down by those above them. For instance I know a Nazarene minister who told me that he would like to preach this gospel but when he entered the Nazarene ministry he agreed to either preach what they told him to preach or get out. As long as restrictions of that type are placed on ministers, then of course there can be no Truth or progress in the field of religion.

I want to leave this word with the churchmen of Portland and it will be born out in the next ten years--that if it doesn't change and preach the present existence of the Power of the Spirit of God, it will go down to oblivion and other organizations will rise up, and through that Power will satisfy human hearts. Oh, what an opportunity for God. What an opportunity! Will they take it? I don't know...I don't know. I question very much whether they will because religious superstition is a terrible thing.

But I want you folk to think over what I have said to you and recognize the fact, regardless of who you are, that the Spirit of the Living God exists here and now for you, for perfect peace, perfect health,

perfect liberation, and that without any dogma, ritual, or superstition of any kind.

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, will worship him in Spirit and in Truth"--not in one half Spirit and one half untruth.

You can go home now, and may the Power of the Spirit of God go with you. My Students who want to meet me, can come up on this side of the stage and down the other, and anyone else who would like to meet me.

--Frank B. Robinson

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