

THE CHURCH OF
"PSYCHIANA"

(THE TEACHING WHICH IS BRINGING NEW LIFE TO A SPIRITUALLY DEAD WORLD)

ADVANCED TEACHING
NUMBER TWO

by
DR. FRANK B. ROBINSON



"PSYCHIANA"



LESSON NO. 18

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THIRD ADVANCED TEACHING

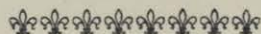
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LESSON NO. 18

BY

DR. FRANK B. ROBINSON

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Mr. Cless' Address continued:

If they were the only two people so afflicted, it wouldn't deserve a passing comment but I believe that they are typical in this respect of probably millions of people and no one knows better than I what the psychological effect of this terrible sin complex is upon their life.

Whether you preach this orthodox tenet of Christianity or not makes no difference. It doesn't change the fact that the thing I am talking about stands irrevocably as one of the fundamentals of orthodox Christianity revealed in the book accepted openly, if not privately, by the church as the ultimate and infallible authority.

Again, my intelligence cannot accept such a philosophy which is not only not saving mankind but is detrimental to the welfare and well-being of mankind. Any book, such as the Bible, which is used as the ultimate authority for a philosophy that throws mankind into such a form of mental slavery should not be allowed to exist. I am very much in agreement with one of America's greatest scientists and philosophers who says:

"Who is this God of Isaac we are asked to worship, who so bungled

creation that he had to employ a snake and a fig leaf to find an excuse for a Flood, and then had to send his son to redeem mankind? As a child I was ordered to fear God and keep his commandments. Now I want to know why I should fear him or anybody, and whether or not his commandments are worth keeping. If I carry a load of guilt and am full of sin, I want to know just what guilt and sin are before I try to unload my guilt and wash away my sins. I see that unloading and washing process going on around me, but I have not been able to see that anybody is lighter or cleaner. The real question, as I see it, is whether the Bible itself is not the burden that weighs on humanity, the sin that makes for hypocrisy and social injustice and puts an insuperable barrier between human lives and sound, sane, healthy human living."

But these things that I have mentioned do not yet comprise the most serious challenge which is slowly, gradually but surely being hurled at the leaders of the church.

Again I say that my intelligence refused to accept as the ultimate authority a book, the story and philosophy of which are revamped myths from the ancient East put into our Bible of the West and palmed off on an unsuspecting public as a divinely inspired and supernaturally revealed document.

It is only possible for me to take time to give you a few illustrations of what I mean by this. The Bible is a man-made set of books written, edited and re-edited by men. The Book of Genesis with its "in the beginnings" and other books of the Pentateuch which one would think should be the first to be revealed by God to man were among the last books of the Bible written. The story of the creation and the flood were just stories stolen from earlier Babylonian mythology.

Note the Egyptian worship of Osiris, God of Resurrection, who was born on December 27th, traveled about the country, was a supreme king, was betrayed by Typhon, Prince of Darkness, was killed, placed in a coffin and came back to life.

The birth of the Hindu, Krishna, was announced by a star and during his life he performed miracles, raised the dead and healed lepers, deaf and the blind. He championed the poor and had a beloved disciple whose name was John. He was killed, went to hell, rose from the dead, went to heaven and will return to judge the quick and the dead.

On December 21 the Persian God or Christ, Mithra, was born in a cave and of a virgin. He traveled around as a teacher and had twelve disciples. He, too, rose from the dead and was called a savior, remembered by his followers in sacramental feast.

And so on and so on. Illustration after illustration can be given of pagan Christs paralleling the birth, life, death and significance of the Christian Christ.

Then Christianity comes along and to the long list of earlier deities this new religion adds another --- Jesus. In the light of the historical evidence, we have in Christianity only another religion.

Ever since the dawn of time, man, afraid of the unknown and all the forces of nature which he could not understand, has bowed down before and prayed to some kind of a god to save him. All these gods have failed. Another one is produced. This time it is Jesus - the son of God of the Christian religion. He came as a savior. He is the hope of the world. Only through Jesus can we be saved in every sense of the word. How well has he succeeded.

Look at the record. That little country of Ethiopia has boasted of having the oldest Christian Church in the world. It has been working at Christianity longer than any other organized church now in existence yet that country has never risen above the level of a poor, decrepit, ignorant, poverty-stricken, dried-up, moth-eaten kind of civilization.

We boast of our Christian civilization. I don't think we should boast too loudly. The claim is made -- no Christianity -- no civilization; civilization has been saved by Christianity. If so, how does one account for the great services rendered and contributions made to our American civilization, for example, by a great long list of infidels, atheists, deists and free-thinkers including such distinguished names as Benjamin Franklin, Gouverneur Morris, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, George Washington, William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Parker and Abraham Lincoln.

The record of history, past and present, shows that in every country on the face of the earth where organized religion has been a dominating, ruling force, you find the people reduced to a status worse than slavery. I have been through many of the great cathedrals of Europe. Their alleged glory, majesty and beauty didn't thrill me one bit. I saw no beauty at all. I saw on their walls only the blood stains of humanity; within their walls only the evidences of exploitation of men and women -- millions of them, living in abject poverty, bled white for the support of this vast and powerful ecclesiastical system with its so-called magnificent structures filled with a host of praying and preying priests and a wealth of gold and silver and precious stones which, if converted into a medium of exchange and put into circulation, could lift the standard of living of these people to such heights as they never dreamed possible for them.

The light is beginning to break through and men are beginning to learn that Christianity has not made good on its claims, that the ecclesiastical system and its gods can never save man, that he must save himself here on the earth and let the future take care of itself.

Why is it that we must have an ecclesiastical regimentation under which the people are told that thus and so is so when the facts are that many of these things aren't so? Why not tell them the whole story of the world's religious mythology and let them decide what god or gods they care to worship, if any?

Why is it that we have to send Christian missionaries to other lands to give the "heathen" the "true gospel" when the gospel we are exporting hasn't much more of a right to be called true than the particular gospel in vogue in this or that so-called heathen land?

But we will assume for the sake of argument that this book which we call the Bible is a divinely inspired and supernaturally revealed document, furnishing an infallible guide for all human conduct. That doesn't square with the fact that there are eleven canonical Bibles. If we have a divinely inspired and supernaturally revealed religion, then there should be only one book relating to that revelation. Why should I accept one particular Bible as the one and only true Bible? What am I going to do about the ten others? The point is that we have all done the same thing --- accepted the particular Bible as the one and true Bible which the particular religious leader or group of religious leaders with whom we were thrown in contact told us was the one and only true Bible.

So we have no argument among those who are especially trained and equipped to interpret this divine document to the people. If the leaders cannot agree, what is to be expected of the great mass of people who have neither the time nor inclination to dig out the information for themselves? When the authorities can't agree on the interpretation of the ultimate authority, I don't see any particular reason why I should accept the words of any of them.

How many church denominations, religious sects and cults are there, all using as their ultimate and final authority some form of the book known as the Bible? They run into many hundreds, don't they? We send missionaries of various denominations over to China. The minister of one denomination baptizes the heathen Chinese by sprinkling his brow with water. The missionary from another denomination comes along and says that the convert isn't wet enough and he won't be saved until he is completely immersed.

Of course it will be said that there is no agreement among leaders on social and economic principles. True, but no one claims that any social,

economic or political philosophy has its source in divine revelation. Religions, and Christianity in particular, are supposed to be supernaturally revealed to mankind and yet the battles that have been waged and are being waged today over what the creation, Jehovah and Jesus stories are all about go on and on --- but leave me cold.

A good many years ago Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick made a trip to China. Apparently he made some addresses which were not considered as strictly orthodox. A short time later I sat in a great midwestern church and heard the minister, who was a returned missionary from China, call Dr. Fosdick a "snake in the grass." He said it with more venom and bitterness in his voice than I could possibly use.

I'll continue my materialistic knitting while they wage their ecclesiastical wars.

Dr. Fosdick was forced to leave the denomination of which he was a member because he did not subscribe to and preach the strictly orthodox philosophy that was the accepted thought of his denomination. Perhaps Dr. Fosdick should have left voluntarily. Perhaps no man has a right to stay in a denomination or in a church or with a religion to which he cannot entirely subscribe. It may be that if such a person does not retire voluntarily, he should be forced out. But it seems to me that the sane and sensible thing for those in authority to do is to say, "Well, let's wait a minute. Let's ponder this thing a bit. Perhaps that man has something which we have overlooked or missed. Let's investigate and analyze this thing fully, carefully and impartially."

That, in my opinion, would be the sane, sensible and scientific approach to the problem. But apparently it isn't the Christian way. The church says that the Holy Writ says thus and so. A man says something else, so, right or wrong, he's got to get out.

Last summer a great church denomination held its annual convention at which there again burst into flame a doctrinal feud which has been smoldering for a number of years. These churchmen just couldn't get together on what the so-called divinely inspired and revealed word of God meant. The upshot of the matter was that several of these ministers were suspended from the church. I am not interested in the beliefs of either side. I am concerned only over the fact that when certain brethren couldn't agree with other brethren on what the divine word of God means, one group gets thrown out of the inner sanctuary of the holy of holies.

Just recently a very prominent man has been brought up for trial in the Presbyterian Church. The charge and specifications against him as con-

tained in a paper mailed to him said: "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges you, a ruling elder of said Church and of Fort Washington Presbyterian Church of New York, although not a member of its session, with defiance and acts of contravention of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, contrary to the word of God and to the rules and regulations of this church founded thereupon."

Here is a man who, it is said, defied the government and discipline of a certain church contrary to the word of God and to the rules of the church which are based on the word of God. It seems to me that to an intelligent, thinking person such words, actions and pronouncements are utterly childish and silly. Is it any wonder that men and women are turning away from this authority and regimentation under the ecclesiastical system?

Christianity is heralded as the religion of peace and good-will among men; so to prove what a God of peace and good-will the philosophy of Christianity has, Randolph H. McKim hurled these peaceful words from his pulpit in Washington at the time of the World War:

"It is God who has summoned us to this war. It is his war we are fighting . . . This conflict is indeed a crusade. The greatest in history -- the holiest. It is in the profoundest and truest sense a Holy War . . . Yes, it is Christ, the King of Righteousness, who calls us to grapple in deadly strife with this unholy and blasphemous power."

About the same time Dr. Lyman Abbott proclaimed: "In this hour every Christian Church should be a recruiting office for the Kingdom of God The Christian Church and the Christian ministry should hear the voice of the Master saying, 'I have come not to send peace but a sword.' And they should lead Christ's followers forth, his cross on their hearts, his sword in their hands"

And again at that same time, Dr. Frank Mason North, President of the Federal Council of Churches, declared that there was no excuse for a church which "with the nation under arms for the very principles of righteousness and good-will for which its Lord gave himself in the agony of the Cross, does not promptly, effectively and sacrificially mobilize all its resources for high achievements both in arms and in devotion of its moral and spiritual energy."

And then in the face of this, I heard a minister say not long ago that there is one certain, sure thing --- that God is on the side of those things that are beautiful, kind and lovely and not on the side of those influences which are ugly, unkind or degrading.

The fact is that any honest person, acquainted with the facts, must

admit that history records no crimes worse than those which have been committed under the banner of Christianity and that the personal, anthropomorphic God, set up by the Christian religion, is nothing more than a convenient instrument to be moved around wherever the manipulators of this God want him to be in order to serve their particular purposes and ends of the moment.

If, as Hugh S. Johnson said, "Any human economic and political system has failed when people can no longer live it by their own efforts," cannot something similar be said about the divine ecclesiastical system under which man has never been able to live very successfully. Freedom to save himself has been denied him. He has been regimented under false and supernatural philosophies and placed in mental bondage to the will of some god who is maneuvered around as a god of this today and that tomorrow depending upon the temper of the mass mind or upon what it is desired to accomplish at the moment.

Anyone can look around the world today and see the religious revolt in which this ecclesiastical system is being liquidated. I don't say that the liquidation here will come within the next month or the next year or the next ten years or that it will come with the same ruthlessness that it came in Russia, Spain, Mexico, Germany and is apparently about to come in France. But that it will come I feel quite certain if for no other reason than that an ever-increasing number of people are analyzing their experience, checking what they are told with what they see, evaluating the currents and cross currents in this rapidly flowing stream of life and asking this disturbing question:

"Are we not devoting too much time, thought, energy and money to the principle of doling out just enough weak soup and watered milk to keep the flesh and bones of society from falling apart and to the principle of saving souls for heaven via the ecclesiastical system and not enough time, thought, energy and money to the principle of reviving, rebuilding or creating, if necessary, a social and economic system that will enable mankind to attain the goal of a safe, sane, secure, normal, happy and abundant life here and now on this earth earthy?"

That question sweeps a wide horizon and whether we like it or not, that question stands as a challenge that can't be laughed off, scoffed out, discouraged by colorful damning nor drowned by haughty, self-righteous contempt.

But at once I am confronted with the statement from ministers of individual churches, that they are minimizing all the supernatural and doctrinal features of Christianity and emphasizing the social and economic problems here and now, helping them correct their maladjustments and carrying on those other types of activity which deal with the material welfare of man here and now in contrast to those ecclesiastical programs with their soul-saving, supernatural, ritualistic ceremonies.

And that is true. I admit it and I congratulate those ministers who are looking that far ahead. Still I am not satisfied. Their works are forward-looking but they still cling to the old, antiquated, outworn, orthodox and false terminology and phraseology. They still preach in the name of Jehovah and Jesus. They can't go on and carry on that work and let it stand on its own merits. They still have to link it up with some supernatural beings. They still accept, perfunctorily at any rate, the Bible as their sole and ultimate authority or their point of departure. They are trying to do the realistic thing but they are still clinging to the supernatural forms. When they have the courage to make this final break, then I can see some hope for the world.

A friend of mine has put it this way: "It would seem that the most reasonable field for the functioning of religion in contemporary society is in the way of providing for the mass organization of the group sentiment of mankind in support of the larger principles of kindness, sympathy, right, justice, honesty and decency."

Or again as the same man puts it, "The function of the church then would be to organize the mass mind and the mass activities in such a fashion as to benefit secular society and not to please God."

The church leaders will then say that these "larger principles" are inherent in Christianity and can be made universal only through the practice of Christianity. The fact is that Christianity has only taken a copyright on these principles which were in existence long before Jesus Christ was ever heard or thought of. They are inherent in man and some even in the dumb animals which don't know any more about any religion than the man in the moon.

From the standpoint of practical application, the essence of Christianity is: "Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

Many of these so-called commandments should be kept but not because they are in the Bible or supposedly issued by some supernatural being. If they are worth obeying, it is because they square with the human needs of society here and now.

It is not the duty of man to submit to any will of any God. In fact, there is too much disagreement on what God's will is for it to be very important to the man who looks at the question unemotionally and objectively. It is far more important for man to know, understand and conform to the great physical and biological laws of the universe than to concern himself with so-called supernatural revelations handed down through the self-assumed authority of a man-made ecclesiastical system. It is far less important for man to promote his relationship with some supernatural being than it is for man to devote his energies to-

ward socially useful ends.

No, the hope of the world does not rest in Christianity or any other supernatural religion. In the long run nothing that the church can do to draw the people back to this form of religion will succeed. Much ado about nothing, in my opinion, best describes the wordy commotion over Dr. Fleming's action because his suggestion is simply a futile plan in an attempt to halt a process of decay and deterioration that only a major operation can stop.

Dr. Fleming admits that we refuse to listen, or listen with reluctance, to the prevailing type of sermon. A "no sermon" policy will not rectify the situation because the real issue lies in the fact that people in ever-increasing numbers are turning away from ritualistic churchianity, institutionalized Christianity, that is based on the mysterious, magical, miraculous, supernatural mythology which has been passed along to struggling mankind for thousands of years.

A great hope for the world and the creation of a civilization really fit to live in lies in a complete overthrow of the whole ecclesiastical system that is based on divine law and supernatural revelation and the establishment of a unifying, practical, sensible, secular religion (philosophy of life) divorced from all the supernatural stage scenery and window dressing --- a secular religion that tends to unite instead of divide mankind over scores of theological creeds and doctrines --- a secular religion that shows man how to live not with or for some God but in harmony with his fellow men, letting the nebulous next world take care of itself --- a secular religion which strives to create for mankind what I have termed previously as a healthy, safe, sane, secure, normal, happy and abundant life for him here and now on this earth earthy.

Can an organization which has for so many centuries been devoted almost exclusively to the understanding, control and exploitation of the supernatural world completely transform itself into an organization devoted to the service of man as an end rather than to man as the means to an end?

Frankly, I don't know. But I do know that the church has its back to the wall. It is making a rear guard fight and I believe that, unless its leaders devise the technique that will meet these imperatives, the whole church system as we know it today is marching straight toward oblivion.

GEORGE H. CLESS, JR.