

Timely Greetings, Vol. 2, Nos. 25-28

Description



THE PRODUCT OF THE SCHOOL OF GOD AND THE PRODUCT OF THE SCHOOL OF MAN

TEXT FOR PRAYER
Be Good-Ground Hearers

I shall read from "Christ's Object Lessons," beginning on page 59 with the second paragraph:

"The good-ground hearer receives the word, 'not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God.' Only he who receives the Scriptures as the voice of God speaking to himself is a true learner. He trembles at the word; for to him it is a living reality. He opens his understanding and his heart to receive it. Such hearers were Cornelius and his friends, who said to the apostle Peter, 'Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.' A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest faith.... The good-ground hearers, having heard the word, keep it. Satan with all his agencies of evil is not able to catch it away. Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention and prayerful thought he must learn the meaning of the words of truth, and dink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles."

We need to pray that we be good-ground hearers and true learners; that the Word of God be a living reality in us; that we now give ear to the teaching of the Holy Spirit; that we be not merely

hearers of the Word, but doers also.

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THE PRODUCT OF THE SCHOOL OF GOD AND THE PRODUCT OF THE SCHOOL OF MAN

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, JANUARY 31, 1948
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Psa. 71:17 – “O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works.”

Here is David's own testimony of the fact that he had nothing to regret for being in God's school all his life, that he was anxious to declare God's Truth. Then, too, we know that the school of God and the schools of man have for many centuries been contemporaneously in competition, and we should now be able to make a fair comparison of the product of one with the product of the other.

We know that the schools of man have produced geniuses in many lines. For instance, men have invented giant planes to lift tons into the air, planes that travel as fast as sound, and at a great height, too. Men have also built mammoth steamships laden with thousands of tons of cargo and passengers, and they cross the oceans in a few days. The schools of man have also produced great orators and competent teachers. Men have done many things, and we give them the credit they deserve. What the schools of man are doing, we well know, but what do we know about the schools of God? Do we know as much about 24 them? If not, why not?

Let us now take a fair survey of the product of the schools of God. I shall start with the school which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, attended. In the school of God he learned some vitally important things. To begin with, Enoch learned to walk with God (Gen. 5:22). Besides, to this very day he holds the championship in aviation: Enoch, you know, took a flight, not 40, 50, or 100 miles up, not at a hundred or a thousand miles per hour, but up to an unspeakable height and at an unspeakable speed. Yes, quickly he reached the throne of God. Have the schools of man produced so great a genius as Enoch?

Like Enoch, Noah, too, learned to walk with his Lord (Gen. 6:22). His boat-building genius is wholly a credit to the school of God. Noah's boat, you know, was large enough and strong enough to house and carry a pair or more of every living creature on earth, including all necessary provisions for man and beast to last over a year! His boat withstood the hardest storm of rain and wind the world has ever known. Noah's boat survived not only the longest duration of rain and wind ever known, but even the convulsions of the earth when the fountains of the deep broke forth hurling rocks and mud hundreds and thousands of feet into the air, by which the high rugged mountains of the earth were made. Not only the boat, but every living thing inside of it survived! Noah is still the champion of boat-builders, and the champion of sea-captains, too. The product of the schools of God, you see, is far superior to anything the schools of man have ever been able to

yield.

Abraham, you know, matriculated in the school of God when God called him to leave his father's house ?5 and go to a land he had never seen. He took whatever belongings he had, and he also took his nephew in partnership. From the very start they greatly prospered, and their business expanded so rapidly that in order to take care of it they had to spread out and part company.

Abraham took the hilly country after Lot chose the fertile valley adjacent to the markets of Sodom and Gomorrah. There Lot's family left the school of God and entered the school of man. Abraham though and his household remained in the school of God, learning how to make the hills pay good dividends. Abraham became "very rich," but Lot very poor. Abraham, you see, in the school of God became the world's greatest business man in his day. He learned to make something out of nothing. Moreover, he was the world's greatest general, for you recall that with but a few men he defeated five kings, took their spoils and restored the goods to the rightful owners. All this he did without the loss of a single soldier! Still further he reared the only son that ever willingly submitted to burn on a sacrificial altar for his father's religion.

Next we shall consider Esau and Jacob, the twin sons of Isaac. Jacob graduated from the school of God, and Esau from the school of man. How do I know? I know this, because if Esau had walked with God he could not have learned to hunt, for God is not a hunter, not interested in killing and destroying the lives He created. Thus, rather than take his training in the school of God, Esau schooled himself in the schools of man. He saw no particular value in religion, and placed no greater value on his birthright than the price of a meal. Jacob, on the other hand, was anxious to walk with God and to buy Esau's birthright at any ?6 price, but got it at a bargain.

And how do I know for certain that Jacob walked with God? I know this because in the end of his first day's flight from the face of Esau, Jacob rested with God, and there he saw the angels of God walking up and down the ladder which spanned the distance from heaven to earth.

Then, after having spent another twenty years in the school of God, Jacob left Padanaram and started toward home with riches untold, although he had given fourteen years of time and labor out of the twenty years in return for which he received nothing but Laban's two daughters in marriage. Jacob, you see, in God's school learned how to turn poverty in to well-paying business. Moreover, he not only made himself rich, but he made his father-in-law rich also. He learned how to work and how to save. But he did not stop then. He continued in the school of God, and when in Egypt, his son Joseph, who was then second to the king, was not ashamed to introduce his father to Pharaoh on the throne. Jacob was a cultured man.

Joseph himself from his youth up was a devout student in the school of God. Finally, he took his post-graduate work in Egypt. When he had obtained sufficient knowledge he became a king, and all Egypt – in fact the whole ancient world – bowed down to him.

Joseph became the world's greatest economist and banker, too. Never since his day has anyone done as much: he managed to buy all his country's surplus grain for seven years, and in seven years more gathered all the people's money and their land – both cash and mortgages he deposited in Pharaoh's bank. Besides this he saved the world from starvation. You ?7 show me

such products as these from the schools of man, and I will show you that rain does not drop down from the skies.

Then there was Moses. From his youth up to his forties he went both to the school of God and the school of Pharaoh. With this dual education he felt strong and capable enough to free the Hebrew nation from Pharaoh's brickyards. He started out by killing an Egyptian, and then he fled the country. God, nevertheless, was not through with him. He took him to Mount Horeb and there He made him tend sheep. There while keeping sheep to make a living and to pay his tuition he was unlearning Pharaoh's education, and there in the school of God, he learned how to become the world's greatest emancipator-general, author, ruler, educator, lawmaker and prophet.

True, the schools of man have trained great minds, and have produced great generals such as Eisenhower and McArthur, for whom the United States and Great Britain built massive boats, giant guns and other great armaments, recruited great armies and navies. After many months of such preparation, in which millions of people participated, Eisenhower crossed the English Channel against the German super-war-machine and McArthur returned to the Philippines and occupied Japan at the cost of billions of dollars and thousands of casualties. Wonderful accomplishment, indeed! But Moses, without gun, without plane, without boat, and without anyone at home to build and send supplies, freed Israel, led them safely across the Red Sea, and sank the entire Egyptian army. He did all this without a gun or arrow, without ship or plane at the cost of neither man nor beast. He had no casualty! Where among the products of the schools of man do ?8 you find the equal to this?

The schools of man have produced great orators, too, but John the Baptist while still in his youth, by his oratory attracted all the cities and the countrysides of Judah, notwithstanding that many had to walk to get there, and all, poor and rich alike had to sit on the bare ground for hours. Multitudes went out in the desert to hear him in the open field. And the Apostles, though mere fishermen, in a little over three years in the school of Christ became the greatest preachers the world has ever known. They only of all the preachers ever since hold the record for converting three thousand souls from Judaism to Christianity with but one sermon!

Time would fail me to speak of others – of Joshua and of Caleb, of Daniel and the three Hebrews, of Samson, of David, of the prophets, and of many others even as far down as our day. It is a fact, though, that what the school of God can produce, the school of man cannot equal.

In the school of God the student is guaranteed to become the best in whatever line he undertakes. And my advice to you is that whether you be grass, or tree, so to speak, choose to be the best of its kind. Such you can be if you will to do so, for there are no failures in the school of God. You can become the best herdsman or the best king, the best teacher or the best preacher, the best banker, or the best of whatever it be.

It is of interest, too, to note that both the school of God and the school of man have textbooks. One has the books of men, which need be renewed year by year, the other has the book of God on which no one ?9 has yet been able to improve. The latter is the first and best; there has never been the like and never will be.

The school of God does not teach only from its textbook, not merely in the school-room, it teaches the practical as well as the theoretical. The practical, of course, most men dislike, and some would not take practical training even for a gift. Let us take Joseph for example. When he finished the class-room work he was initiated into the practical. His training was perhaps most trying because his vocation was to be not only one of the greatest but unique as well. Besides, his curriculum included the learning of a strange language and love for his enemies. He was to learn by experience that if one serves God faithfully, then whatever befalls him in life he is to know that it is but a gift from God, and that he is to make the best of it.

First he was sold by his own brethren, and re-sold by slave traders. He could have made himself sick with grief and fear. Had he thus succumbed to his emotions, the traders would have dropped him somewhere along the road to Egypt, for they would have known that a sick man would only be an expense to them, that they could not sell him for anything to anybody. Joseph, though, behaved himself very well, knowing that God knew all about his circumstances. The Ishmaelites, too, saw that they had not invested in an ordinary slave. They realized that he could be sold for a high price to someone who had the money. Thus it was that they took him to Potiphar, Egypt's rich man. There Joseph learned how to take orders, how to take care of other people's goods, and also how to shun lewd women.

After he graduated from Potiphar's house he took [?10](#) a course behind prison bars. There among the dreamers he learned to interpret dreams. At this point of his training he was equipped to rule Egypt and to feed the world.

The schools of man do not offer courses of this kind, but neither do they develop benefactors, kings, bankers and business men such as Joseph.

These are some of the things which we ought to know if we ourselves are ever to graduate from the school of God. Moreover, we ought to know where we are receiving our training, for it is possible that we might be in the school of self while we presumptuously think we are in the school of God.

How can we know for sure in what school we are getting our training? – To be in the school of God we must walk with God. And how can we know that we are walking with God? – I am sure that if we go to places where God would not go, and if we work where God would not work, then rather than walking with God and learning from Him, we would be walking with the Devil and receiving training from him.

How can we know that the work we are doing is the work God would have us do? – It is certain that God would not build instruments to kill regardless of the pay; that He would not work at something that the Devil works at; neither would He go into partnership with one who is not walking with God.

The question naturally arises, should we work for men or should we work for God to make a living? If God has a work for you to do, then you cannot go to work for men and yet expect to receive God's approval. But if God has not something for you in His workshop, [?11](#) so to speak, it is obvious that He would have something for you in someone else's unobjectionable shop.

The students in the school of God study from principle and with but a single aim to advance the Kingdom of God, while the students in the school of man study from an monetary viewpoint, to help no one in particular but themselves, which we as Christians cannot afford to do if we expect to become all God would have us to be. Any clear thinker, who is looking at things from God's viewpoint, would not be anything other than a product from the school of God.

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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 Christlike 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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SHINTOISM AND NON-PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, FEBRUARY 7, 1948
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Our text for this afternoon's study is found in—

Jer. 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. (Hos. 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, ^{?14} 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-thirds, 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 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 that have life.” – “General History,” p. 66.

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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 behaviour 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.

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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 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 Buddhists 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!" Matt. 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 ?17 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 behaviour.

As he saw it, it looked to him that a 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 [?18](#) the people who were taught by him. They were the descendants of Lot and Abraham, – Moabites, 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 revelations. (See Koran.) 5. Belief in Gods prophets and apostles, the most distinguished of whom are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed. Mohammed [?19](#) 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 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." – "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 behaviour were much higher than were the morals and behaviour of the Christianized pagans. In view of all this, who can say that Mohammed was a bad man, that he was a deceiver?

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Are 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 Buddhists 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 ?21 Davidian Seventh-day Adventists? The overall answer is that each successive denomination has failed to keep pace with the progress of 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 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 ?22 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 lukewarmness, 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:

Jer. 10:1-5 – “Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith 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 borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot ?23 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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CHRONICALLY ILL WITH TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE AND TOO LITTLE UNDERSTANDING

TEXT FOR PRAYER The Good-Ground Hearer

I shall read from "Christ's Object Lessons," beginning on page 60, third paragraph.

"The word of God often comes in collision with man's hereditary and cultivated traits of character and his habits of life. But the good-ground hearer, in receiving the word, accepts all its conditions and requirements....

"And he brings forth fruit 'with patience.' None who receive God's word are exempt from difficulty and trial; but when affliction comes, the true Christian does not become restless, distrustful, or despondent. Though we can not see the definite outcome of affairs, or discern the purpose of God's providence, we are not to cast away our confidence. Remembering the tender mercies of the Lord, we should cast our care upon Him, and with patience wait for His salvation.

"Through conflict the spiritual life is strengthened. Trials well borne will develop steadfastness of character, and precious spiritual graces. The perfect fruit of faith, meekness, and love often matures best amid storm-clouds and darkness."

Let us pray that our spiritual perceptions be quickened so that we shall more readily understand God's dealings in answer to our prayers; that through conflict the spiritual life is strengthened; that we throw not away our confidence when afflictions arise, but that like Paul we rejoice for having been accounted worthy to suffer in patience.

CHRONICALLY ILL WITH TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE AND TOO LITTLE UNDERSTANDING

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, FEBRUARY 14, 1948
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To illustrate the subject of our study this afternoon, let us take for example the book which the Denomination has put out on Daniel and The Revelation, the two most invaluable books of the Bible. The book which I have in mind was originally entitled *Thoughts on Daniel and The Revelation*. It is written in scholarly fashion, and so convincing are its contents that thousands of copies have been sold all over the world in a number of languages. Anyone that can write a book like it, evidently has great knowledge. We should, however, examine to see how much understanding is there on the books of Daniel and of The Revelation themselves.

Take for example Revelation chapter 12, where it speaks of the 12-star-crowned woman. The Denomination in the book I mentioned explains that this woman is a symbol of the Christian church, that her sun-clothing is the Gospel of Christ, and the public seems to take it in very nicely.

But if the brethren were asked the question: "How could the woman be a symbol of the Christian church, and at the same time be Christ's 24 mother?" They will have a time answering, for Christ Himself brought the Christian church into being thirty or more years after He was born. Consequently she could not be His mother.

And if they were asked, "How could the woman's sun-clothing symbolize the Christian church clothed with the Gospel of Christ, as you contend?" they would have a hard time answering for she was clothed with the sun before Christ was born, and before the Gospel even came into being.

Were these questions put to the brethren, I am sure they would become profoundly confused in trying to answer. But the fact that no one asks these questions, shows that there is altogether too little understanding throughout Christendom.

Again you cannot deny the fact that the Denomination has made a very scholarly exposition of The Seven Trumpets, of plowing through such an intricate symbolism, propping their explanations of it with commentaries and history and making the people take it as nicely as they do. By their scholarly methods, though, they contend that the locusts which were released as soon as the Heavenly Star unlocked "the bottomless pit" at the sounding of the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:1-3), are symbolical of the armies of the Mohammedans. This they do in spite of the fact that the locusts were not to kill anybody, but only to torment those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, whereas the Mohammedans killed everybody that stood against them, especially the Christians, those who had the seal.

Moreover, the brethren explain that the 200,000,000 horses and horsemen that were to kill 25 a

third part of men (Rev. 9:18), are symbolical of a Mohammedan cavalry, although the Mohammedans never had such a large cavalry in all their existence.

Furthermore, John the Revelator plainly tells that the horses' tails were like serpents, and their heads the heads of lions belching fire, smoke, and brimstone. Contrary to these facts, the brethren say that the horses were common Arabian horses, that Turks armed with guns were riding them, that John failed to detect that the fire, smoke and brimstone came from the guns, not from the horses' mouths.

I say for one to so garble the Scriptures and yet make people believe that he is thus unfolding Truth, he must have great ability, but too little understanding of the fact that if John was left to blunder in this part of his vision, he could have been left to blunder all through The Revelation, and that for anyone who thus voices his opinion of the Scriptures is not building but tearing down faith in all the prophets, causing one to say that if the Scriptures be so imperfect as they make them appear to be, then what good are they? And how can we find the Truth and be saved by It, for if the prophets themselves could not tell the facts, then how can any of us do so thousands of years after their time?

Since the brethren have not been able to see this, and since no one who has studied their expositions of them been able to either, then does it not appear to you that although there is much knowledge everywhere, there is very little understanding anywhere?

?6

Dealing with a situation similar to this, Paul declared:

1 Cor. 3:1 – *“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.”*

Here Paul reproved those whose knowledge seemed to be great, but their understanding dull, those who had not spiritually advanced commensurate with the time, who could not stick strictly to what the Word says, were not developed into full-grown Christians. He was, therefore urged to say:

Verse 2 – *“I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.”*

Paul was disappointed with the progress which the Corinthians had made: They were still unable to take strong meat. Concretely speaking, he said—

Verses 3, 4 – *“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”*

By taking sides, some for Paul and some for Apollos, they were actually accepting what God had

sent through one messenger, and rejecting what He had sent through the other messenger. This you will see even more vividly in the verses which follow:

Verses 5-7 – *“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the ?7 Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”*

God is everything, and the men of His appointment are only His mouthpiece.

Verses 8, 9 – *“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”*

This side-choosing was ruining the Christians in Paul’s day, and it is ruining them in our day; that is, people are setting their affections on men who bring them the knowledge of the Gospel rather than on the One Who sends them with the Gospel. And worse than this is the fact that multitudes are setting their affection even on men who have not a spark of Inspiration, men who are not sent by God at all, but who are running loose of their own accord.

Verse 10 – *“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”*

The Christian’s life is, as it were, a building under construction. One messenger of God lays the foundation, another builds thereupon. Thus to no one messenger is given all the material with which to build.

Consequently, if anyone should choose to give heed to this or to that messenger instead of to ?8 God and to all His servants as He Himself sends them one after another, that one will certainly be left with insufficient building material, and consequently without the acquirement which he needs to have at the coming of the Lord.

Verses 11-18 – *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be*

wise.”

Here we are told that the theories – wood, hay, stubble – brought in by men whom God has not sent, not inspired, such as I called your attention to at the beginning, theories which appear to arise from a great store of knowledge, but which are devoid of the Spirit, are as you already see rubbish on which the fire of God thrives and the souls of men starve.

And again we are told that worldly wisdom is foolishness with God, and that if we wish our structure of Truth to withstand the storm, we need to throw out the rubbish and take all the ?9 God-sent materials as we continue building.

Verses 19, 20 – “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.”

Since the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, we had better have nothing to do with it, and quit taking sides – one for Luther, another for Wesley, still another for Campbell, or White – but we had better stand with the Lord, and accept all the Truths from all His servants He chooses to send. Otherwise when we arrive at the door He will have to say to us, “Depart from Me, I never knew you.”

Verses 21, 22 – “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your’s; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your’s.”

To glory in man, whether it be in self or in another, is to cheat yourself of everything. Take for example the Jews: They were determined to “be of Moses,” and as they saw it, to accept the prophets, or even Christ, to them it meant to give up Moses! As a result, rather than all things being theirs, they lost everything, even Moses, and where are they today? The wood, hay, and stubble which they piled upon the structure of Truth after Moses left them, has long been swept away by the Fire of Truth, the Holy Spirit.

The only safe way to build is with Truth sent from the throne of God. This is how ?10 Moses, the prophets, and the apostles built, and this is how we must build. Moses, for example, founded his structure of Truth on the solid rock of creation, the Genesis, on the work of Him Who created the worlds (Heb. 1:1). The prophets after him, also the apostles, continued building on the same foundation, not on the theories of the priests and rabbis, the so-called religious educators of that day. And that is why their structure of Truth stands today firmer than ever before.

Knowledge, you see, devoid of Divine understanding is as devastating to the soul as is fire let loose in a house that is built of wood and hay. Let us therefore no longer be side-choosers, but come to the table which God has spread so abundantly with spiritual food, and unbiasedly and free from prejudice feast to the full, refresh our souls and strengthen our backbones with good understanding so that we may be able to stand against the chronic ills of worldly knowledge; that we overcome temptation in the strength of the Mighty One, and be permitted to have a part in

proclaiming the message when it shall swell into the Loud Cry.

?11

Soon He Comes

Long upon the mountain, weary,
Have the scattered flock been torn;
Dark the desert paths, and dreary;
Grievous trials have they borne.
Now the gathering call is sounding,
Solemn in its warning voice;
Union, faith, and love, abounding,
Bid the little flock rejoice.

Now the light of truth they're seeking,
In its onward track pursue;
All the ten commandments keeping,
They are holy, just, and true.
On the words of life they're feeding,
Precious to their taste, so sweet;
All their Master's precepts heeding,
Bowing humbly at His feet.

In that world of light and beauty,
In that golden city fair,
Soon its pearly gates they'll enter,
And of all its glories share.
There, divine the soul's expansions;
Free from sin, and death, and pain;
Tears will never dim those mansions
Where the saints immortal reign.

Soon He comes! with clouds descending;
All His saints, entombed, arise;
The redeemed, in anthems blending,
Shout their victory through the skies.
O, we long for Thine appearing;
Come, O Saviour, quickly come!
Blessed hope! our spirits cheering,
Take Thy ransomed children home.

—Annie R. Smith.

?12

THE SPIRIT THAT ORIGINATED EVIL, AND ITS MANIFESTATION TODAY

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,
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SABBATH, FEBRUARY 21, 1948
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Our text is found in Isaiah, chapter 2, verse 22.

Isa. 2:22 – “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

In this verse of Scripture God recommends that we cease from man. And the reason given is that man's breath is in his nostrils; because without breath he is but a lump of dirt, and therefore of no account. He is no God.

The plea would not have been made if the people were not putting their trust in man rather than in God for their salvation; that is, rather than doing what the noble Bereans did, studying to know whether “these things be so,” God's people are giving heed to what others think or say. They are today doing what hundreds of thousands were doing in Jesus' day: trusting in the opinions of their learned priests, scribes, and rabbis. The Jews' giving heed to hearsay instead of engaging in personal investigation and experience of their own with the source of truth is, therefore, the very **13** thing that crucified the Lord.

And where do you suppose such confidence in man originated? – We often think that evil originated with Eve when she reached for the forbidden fruit. But the fact is that evil already existed before Eve came in contact with it. Let us read this from the prophet Isaiah:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.” – Isa. 14:12-15.

We understand that Satan's name before he sinned was Lucifer, and that he sinned before Eve sinned, that he was impersonated in the serpent that deceived Eve. We shall therefore consider the sin in heaven before we further consider sin on earth.

Satan, we are told, was not the only sinner in Heaven, for with him were cast out of Heaven a third of the angelic host (Rev. 12:4). These were cast out of Heaven because they gave heed to the words of Lucifer, to a man in Heaven, rather than giving heed to the word of God. This was the angels' downfall. Lucifer himself fell when he aspired to be as God.

These two sins – trust in man, and desire to exalt self – are still the leading sin elements ?14 now here on earth. This was Eve's stumbling block and to many even today it is still the stumbling block. No, appetite alone was not the cause of Eve's downfall. The serpent did not say, "Thou shouldst eat of this fruit for it is wonderful, more delicious than any other fruit in the garden of God." But he said: "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as *gods*, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:5.

The fruit, of course, appealed to her, but she was tempted by the idea of having the opportunity to be exalted to the throne of God, to be exalted to the same position to which Lucifer himself aspired. Lucifer must have honestly believed that he would be as God if the angels in Heaven and the men on earth would but take orders from him.

And so we see that the Devil deceived Eve on the same grounds he deceived himself and his angels, the only difference being that he caused Eve to eat of the fruit which he himself and his angels would not eat. Consequently, Eve sinned against her physical being, too, by taking into it something that was not created for food, and consequently she died. But Satan and his angels still live.

This same stumbling block, the desire to exalt self, has predominated throughout the ages, and it predominates today. No, I am not making rash and empty statements. I have the facts to back up my words. For example, in the days of the Exodus Movement, there were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram who aspired to the office of Moses and Aaron as Lucifer aspired to the throne of God, the highest offices they could have longed ?15 for. And did not Lucifer fall because of wanting to be above all others for nothing more than to exalt self? And was not the same true of the fall of Korah, Dathan and Abiram?

Today we see the same clamoring for position even in our own churches. The offices of Church Elders, Sabbath School Superintendents, Secretaries, Pianists, and other such church offices, let us remember, hold no monetary compensation. But in spite of it, every year in most of the churches, as far as I have been able to observe, there is a clamor and a quarrel by men and women for one or more of these offices. Since there is no monetary remuneration for such services, then what is the fuss about if not purely for self-exaltation, if not for the purpose of being looked up to as somebody?

You see, then, that the same clamor for self-promotion that existed with Lucifer, with Eve, with others down through the ages, exists today. My statement, you see, is backed up by actual facts. Moreover, if such be the case with those who receive no monetary consideration for their services, then what could be the case with those who are well paid? This question you can answer for yourself to your own satisfaction.

Plainly, one who aspires to position simply for self-exaltation, especially when such an office holds

out spiritual responsibilities as does a church office, such a one should not be given any consideration whatsoever. And if he already has any station of responsibility, he should be relieved of it, for such high-minded leaders are spiritually blind, and they draw the multitude to themselves as did Lucifer draw the angels to himself and to doom.

?16

Moreover, this class of leaders, dead to Christ and alive to themselves, as a rule love to parade, and even to exaggerate their religious deeds. Such should therefore be branded as Satan-inspired disciple-seekers. This class of men are naturally clever. They manage to gain the confidence of the people by the same method with which the priests and rabbis in Jesus' time deceived the nation: They prayed where they could be seen; they marred their faces to appear to be fasting; they made it their business to air far and wide whatever good they did; they were adept at making themselves appear very religious, pious, philanthropic, and righteous.

Multitudes are still charmed by such so-called good men, and multitudes unquestionably accept their decisions as if they were God's decisions. Against such, remember Inspiration warns: "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. 2:22.

That these man worshipers be seen even more realistically, let me tell you something: Thousands have advised us to recant if the president of the General Conference sees no light in our teaching, if he sees no light in our revival and reformation among God's people. They seem to be just as sincere in this as were the Jews who confidently took sides against Jesus by making the high priest's decisions their own decisions!

Their wish for us to recant "if the president sees no light," shows that they are copying the Jews of old, rather than looking into the matter themselves, with confidence in the Spirit ?17 of God to show them personally what Truth is; they have absolute confidence in what man, "the president" tells them!

Was not this very spirit in the hearts of the men that rejected and crucified the Lord? Obviously this class of persons is not led by Truth, but by men of position. Such ones never ask, "Is it Truth?" but "By whom is it advocated?" And if it does not come from the channel through which they would have it to come, then, of course, Truth is rejected.

They never stop to think that God is not taking orders from them; that they are not choosing God's servants for Him, and that the General Conference president was elected by men, not because of his authority on the Scriptures, but because of his ability to command; that Truth has never yet originated through him, that whatever Bible truth he himself has ever learned is only that which inspired men of God have taught him. The laity, therefore, have never had greater need to cease from men as they have this day. And if they do not reform, God have pity on them.

It is to be remembered, though, that they are doing this foolish thing only because the ministry has so trained them, only because some ministers are in league with the spirit that was in Korah, Dathan, and Abiram when they aspired to the position of the prophets, although God has not delegated them as such.

Then, too, when a preacher begins broadcasting his good deeds and accomplishments, along

with his religious experiences; also when a preacher rubs his eyes and blows his nose ?18 unnecessarily as he preaches and endeavors to make his audience start crying; – when you see these things in a preacher, know for certain that he is pulling the wool over the eyes of his listeners, that there is something up his sleeve. I say, when you see a preacher doing these things, he is aiming to enlist your endorsement to something of his own. Beware!

You may peruse the entire Bible, and I assure you that you will not find one of these things practiced by any of the prophets. They never aimed to make God's people sad, but always to rejoice in the Lord.

Take for example Jesus Christ. His work, His mission, was greater and more important than any before Him or after Him. He had religious experience that was worth telling, and if such a procedure would have been beneficial in the work of salvation, He certainly would have taken advantage of it. Instead of preaching Himself, though, He preached the Truth. He never tried to persuade anyone by talking of Himself. He simply spoke of Bible truth, and gave God, not Himself, the credit. And if anyone can preach repentance and love, He could, but He never tried to play on the emotions of His audience, never tried to set them crying over anything.

No one, moreover, including ourselves, has ever accepted the writing of the prophets on the merits of their goodness, their education, or their personal religious experience. They wrote nothing concerning themselves, and nothing to bolster their office. All who have accepted them, have done so on the merits of their own writings. That is all. They never tried to ?19 win converts by what they themselves were or were not. Are they not to this day having success? And is it not the Truth of God that we must be after? The Jews asked for a sign, and the Greeks for wisdom, but God's people of today are asking for both sign and wisdom, rather than for Truth.

Let us, therefore, never forget that the spirit of self-exaltation originated all the evil which we see today, and which is harder at work than ever before. We should not give the Dragon a chance to trap us, and dump us into doom with the "third part of the angels" who took hold of his tail and could not let loose of it. Let us ever remember that–

"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Isa. 2:11.