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Sermons delivered by Albert Grier while Pastor of the Church of the Truth (Divine Science), New York City.

WHY I CALL MYSELF A CHRISTIAN

It is an anomaly in human history that we should find the highest expression and revelation in the distant past. In these days of scientific discoveries and inventions we seek the latest knowledge, and it is rather surprising that we should be compelled to look back two thousand years for the hope of this and future ages; but it is a fact that practically all truly thinking people look to Jesus Christ as the hope of the world. Religionists, economists, philanthropists, reformers, practically all look to him as possessing the secret so direly needed.

That any particular concept of him and his teaching should be seized upon by one class of thinkers, and that they should name their interpretation "Christian" is obviously not fair. Yet it is a fact that the one particular belief of Jesus as the atoning savior for the sins of the world, has arrogated to itself the name of "Christian" and its followers claim that no one is a Christian who does not thus look upon him.

While there are many varieties of interpretation of certain elements of Jesus's character and teaching, practically the whole so-called Christian world has a common basis in the thought of the fall of man through Adam and the atonement for that fall by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This is basic in the teaching of the so-called Christian world, and we say at the outset of this consideration that if that is what Jesus taught and for which he came, then we are not Christians.

It should be clearly, definitely and decisively stated and understood that those of the Truth movement have no part or portion with any such concept of Jesus as that. While it may be desirable and pleasant to go under the banner of Jesus because the Christian world -- the world we know -- goes under that banner, and it may be a cause of much advantage to us to be called Christians because of the approval of others, yet I would not for one moment walk under that banner if I believed that the purpose and mission of Jesus Christ was to atone for the sins of the world by his crucifixion. If the only right interpretation of Jesus, his teaching and his mission, is the interpretation that the church has given it, then we are not Christians nor would we ask any of the emoluments or prerogatives that come from walking under that banner.

This concept of Jesus, however, is being subjected to a scrutiny today such as it has never had before. Many have taken it for granted that that is the only interpretation of the life and teaching of Jesus, as recorded in the New Testament; but it is not the only interpretation nor is it a fair and just interpretation of the words of that wondrous book.

The Japanese government which has been so wonderful in its progressive spirit, and desires the best religion as it wants the best of everything, some time ago appointed a commission to come to America to study Christianity to see if it should be adopted as the State religion of Japan. In Japan there are three religions struggling

for supremacy, or for acceptance: Shintoism, Buddhism and Christianity. The committee came to America, studied for some time the conditions and thoughts of the Christian world, so-called, and went back and made a report somewhat to the effect that there was practically no relation between the book of the Christians and the teachings of the Christian church. What they reported is true -- Christianity as taught and practiced by Christians is not the teaching of Jesus Christ. The Japanese commission not being able to reconcile the teaching of the book and the practice, did not know which was the real -- the Christianity of the book, the Christianity of the preacher or the Christianity of the followers. They were unable to make a favorable report.

The question is -- What did Jesus stand for? As Truth people we have no belief for Christianity, and no fundamental and decisive reason as to why we should be Christians. Truth is Truth no matter under what name or guise it may come, and we search for Truth and nothing but Truth.

What is the teaching of this man upon which the so-called Christianity of the world claims to be founded? What did he teach and stand for? I frankly admit that almost everything that is called orthodoxy except the Trinity has a warrant in the New Testament. There is not a word in the script of the original New Testament about the Trinity. The reason that orthodoxy is taught is not because Jesus taught it or exemplified it, but because the sense-conscious eyes interpreted him in that light. They did not perceive the wondrous picture of the great Truth -- Jesus the Christ.

We have two pictures of Jesus Christ in the New Testament -- one a sense-conscious interpretation, and the other the real Jesus who lies under and beneath but has been covered up by that sense-conscious conception.

Obviously, a Christian is one who accepts the teaching of Jesus Christ -- we might say who accepts Jesus Christ. But there are two ways of accepting a person: we can accept the person, or we can accept his message. If you go along a country road and see a sign which reads, "Williamstown 40 miles," you can accept that sign or you can accept its direction. Jesus was a sign-post. He pointed the way; but the world, instead of taking the way, has worshipped the sign-post. To accept a person truly is to accept his message. If the message is not acceptable, it is hypocrisy to pretend to accept the messenger.

We must find out what the message of Jesus is before we can see whether we accept him. In the past this has been reversed -- we were told to accept Jesus and then everything he said. Instead, we should find out what he said and if that appeals to the highest and best in us, then we can accept the message, and because of the truth of the message we accept the messenger. That is how the Truth looks upon Jesus Christ. We accept the messenger and his message because we recognize the validity of the message which he has given us.

I am a Christian because in the first place I accept the message of Jesus Christ. No one else has given me a message which fills and thrills and inspires me as his message does. Emerson has contributed more to my life than has any other human being except Jesus; but I know that Emerson was only a partial light. Ralph Waldo Emerson, with the largest view known to the world, other than Jesus, lacked in the very vital thing which Jesus Christ had and which he manifested. No other teacher or leader in all the world has thrilled my life as has Jesus Christ, and it is no artificial

thrill but a thrill that comes when one has pointed out to him in another's life that which corresponds to the deepest and highest thing in himself.

Every word that Jesus uttered regarding God I not only believe, but it is a part of the very fiber of my nature. The kind of God he tells about is the kind of God I find in my Silence, the kind of God in which I believe -- God a father, God an immediate presence, God the all-in-all, ever instantly available to the call and the need of his children.

As I accept the message of Jesus Christ about God, I also accept his message about man. We are gods, he tells us, and all power in heaven and earth is given unto us. Man is unhurttable, sinless, deathless, eternal -- the scintillating, glorious expression of God.

Jesus not only told us what man is, but he manifested in his own life the character of man as the Son of God.

I accept the message of Jesus in regard to the cause of all the earth's evils. He gave the only cure for all the sickness, sin, sorrow and poverty of the world when he said, "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." Jesus recognized that the reason that man lacked anything was because he failed to contact or keep in contact with the source of all life. Jesus taught and revealed to man that all sickness, poverty, or discord of any kind was the failure to live in God. This is the revelation of Jesus as the cause of human woe.

He also gave his revelation of healing to the world: "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free."

The Truth does not condemn people when they have doctors or resort to medicine. It is because they have not known the great stream of life pouring out of the heart of God toward all of his creatures that they seek help in other directions.

I am a Christian because I believe the message of Jesus Christ regarding the location of the Kingdom of Heaven -- he tells us the Kingdom lies within man. It is the common belief that heaven is a place in another world, entirely different from this, to which we go when we die, but according to Jesus the Kingdom is within man. This is the fundamental teaching of the Master.

I accept the teaching of Jesus Christ about the power of good. He never gave any power to force, revenge or hatred because he knew the overcoming power of good. He knew the transforming power of good, and he proclaimed it in every word and act.

I accept Jesus as the Son of God, as the only begotten of God. Only begotten means the only one that has been fully born into the consciousness of his divinity. As all men are sons of God, Jesus was a son of God, but he knew his sonship and differed from other men only so far as this element is concerned.

I accept him as a son of God, as all men are sons of God, and in accepting him I accept his statement that all power was given unto him in heaven and earth. This was not unique with Jesus, but he was the only one who ever appropriated that power, although we all have it.

I believe that Jesus possessed all power. I believe he had power to multiply fishes, walk on the waves, restore sight, cause lame men to walk, raise the dead and also that after his crucifixion he came back into his body by the supremacy of soul power. What good would it do to believe that someone else had the power to solve a

problem if he did not reveal to me that the same power was in me? Jesus came with these powers and revealed them that you and I might know that those powers are resident in us.

Jesus showed man's supremacy over what we call natural law; he showed the supremacy of man over disease, accidents, calamities; that blindness was a mental thing and death a delusion. He raised the dead from the grave and came back himself to prove the supremacy of the soul.

I believe that Jesus was crucified and buried, but not because man had any power over him. He said: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" He did not need to die, but to show the supremacy of the soul of man over death and the grave he submitted to death. He said: "No man taketh my life . . . I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." He was crucified with his consent and there followed the glorious resurrection.

I believe in the message because of the Christ which he revealed, that Christ which is, as it were, the presence of God in his universe. I believe in that substance which lies back of all things, which we call God, that spirit of the universe which is the spirit that manifested itself in Jesus.

I believe that Jesus was the highest, truest and purest expression of that spirit of life which throughout eternity God has been pressing out until at last it expressed itself in one man, and which eventually will express itself in all men. I believe in that Christ; I depend upon that Christ. When I call for help, I do not call in the name of suggestion or any other mental process but I call on that Christ which is hidden and latent in all of us. I call on that Christ to awaken and give life and new power, new energy, new wisdom and new beauty to the one for whom I pray. I believe in that Christ. There would be no hope for mankind without that "Christ in me the hope of glory." Jesus came to reveal that Christ.

I not only accept the great message of Jesus, and therefore have the right to call myself a Christian, but I accept the messenger himself. I not only accept all that he taught about God and his lovingkindness but I accept all that he taught about man as the son of God -- as sovereign in his soul -- not a slave of circumstances but sovereign over all things.

When one tells you that which rings true, which conforms to every element of your nature and which you have demonstrated in your own life to be true, you accept not only his teachings but him.

Because the teachings of Jesus do ring true to me and are demonstrable, I call myself a Christian.

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Father of Jesus Christ, and our father, make us so noble that we may truly call ourselves Christians, and may our lives be such that they will lure all men to be Christians. Thus may we become partners with Jesus in the redemption of the world. Amen.

[END.]