

A Letter from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original English



Blessed is he who is free from the sea of names. —

(Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Íqán)

Chapter VI

A Letter from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás

Written from Port Sa’íd, Egypt, to the Honorable Secretary

of the

Sixth International Congress of Free and Progressive

Christians and other Religious

Paris, France, July 16-22, 1913

He is God!



ORIGINAL

My honorable and dear friend: Your kind letter was received and its contents became the means of happiness, for it indicated the fact that a number of the well-wishers of humanity have put forth a mighty effort to organize the Sixth International Congress of Free and Progressive Christians and other Religious Liberals, so that they may establish good-fellowship among the various sects and unveil the reality of religion, investigate the foundation of divine faith and remove the present misunderstandings rampant among the nations. This is a [pg 160] most noble intention, for it means service to human kind. This effort belongs to the realm of merciful susceptibilities. I hope that the noble congress may become assisted in the affiliation of the hearts of the peoples of the world and create a compact of eternal peace among the adherents of religion; so that the world may become free from strangeness and all the followers of religions may be ushered into the tent of amity which is the universal tabernacle of the oneness of the world of humanity.

I entertain the greatest longing to present myself before this august International Congress and I regret exceedingly that at this time I am living in Egypt and the condition of my health prevents my journey. Apologizing for my inability to attend in person, I send this letter on the subject of religion.

It is evident and clear to the wise men of nations — those wise men who are the wooers of absolute reality — that the purpose of the divine messengers and the revelation of the heavenly books and the establishment of the religion of God has been none other than to create amity and justice between the children of the races. True religion is the foundation of spiritual union, the union of thought, the union of susceptibilities, the unity of customs and the ideal chain binding together all the children of men. Through its practical realization, the minds and souls will receive development by divine instruction; [pg 161] they will become assisted to investigate reality, attain to a lofty station of wisdom and establish the basis of a divine civilization.

There are two kinds of civilization, — material civilization which serves the physical world and divine civilization which renders service to the world of morality. The founders of the material, practical civilization are the scientists and investigators and the establishers of divine civilization are the celestial universal teachers.

True religion is the basis of divine civilization. Material civilization is like unto the body; divine civilization is like unto the spirit. A body without the spirit is dead, although it may be clothed in the utmost beauty and comeliness.

In short, by religion we mean those necessary bonds which have power to unify. This has ever been the essence of the religion of God. This is the eternal bestowal of God! This is the object of divine teachings and laws! This is the light of the everlasting life! Alas! A thousand times alas! that this solid foundation is abandoned and forgotten and the leaders of religions have fabricated a set of superstitions and rituals which are at complete variance with the underlying thought. As these man-made ideas differ from each other they cause dissension which breeds strife and ends in war and bloodshed; the blood of innocent people is spilled, their possessions are pillaged and their children become captives and orphans.

Thus religion which was destined to become [pg 162] the cause of friendship has become the cause of enmity. Religion, which was meant to be sweet honey, is changed into bitter poison. Religion, the function of which was to illumine humanity, has become the factor of obscurity and gloom. Religion, which was to confer the consciousness of everlasting life, has become the fiendish instrument of death. As long as these superstitions are in the hands and these nets of dissimulation and hypocrisy in the fingers, religion will be the most harmful agency on this planet. These superannuated traditions, which are inherited unto the present day, must be abandoned, and thus free from past superstitions we must investigate the original intention. The basis on which they have fabricated the superstructures will be seen to be one, and that one, absolute reality; and as reality is indivisible, complete unity and amity will be instituted and the true religion of God will become unveiled in all its beauty and sublimity in the assemblage of the world.

Hence, to this honorable congress I say, "Tear asunder the veils and curtains of these dogmas, remove these accumulated, suffocating increments, dispel these dark impenetrable clouds, that the sun of reality may shine from the horizon of eternity."

Praise be to God that this century is the century of sciences! This cycle is the cycle of reality! The minds have developed; the thoughts [pg 163] have taken a wider range of vision; the intellects

have become keener; the emotions have become more sensitized; the inventions have transformed the face of the earth, and this age has acquired a glorious capacity for the majestic revelation of the oneness of the world of humanity.

If the members of this honorable congress engage their deliberations upon the elucidation of the world of reality and disperse the darkness of doctrines which overshadow the devotees of the various shrines and which are contrary to the divine plan, undoubtedly this world will become another world; the earthly sphere will become the sphere of the kingdom; the world of humanity an arena for the display of truth; the rays of the sun of the realm on high will shine upon it; the east and west will become enlightened; the north and the south embrace each other; all the various cults and sects become truth-seekers and speakers of reality; eternal institutions will be established in the human world, and day unto day the superstructure of the palace of the solidarity and the oneness of mankind will be raised to the loftiest pinnacle of heaven!

This is the hope of this exiled one! From the throne of the Almighty I beg for you assistance and confirmation, so that you may become strengthened to accomplish such a work, the feasibility of which has been considered impossible and utopian since the dawn of creation. May this work be accomplished through you, in [pg 164] this radiant century, with the utmost brilliancy and grandeur.

Upon ye be greeting and praise!

'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás. [pg 165]

