

# Talk at Montclair, New Jersey

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



75

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Notes by Frank E. Osborne

*'Abdu'l-Bahá:* You are always smiling.

*Mr. Osborne:* Surely our faces should reflect happiness in this presence.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá:* Yes! This is the day of Bahá'u'lláh, the age of the Blessed Perfection, the cycle of the Greatest Name. If you do not smile now, for what time will you await and what greater happiness could you expect? This is the springtime of manifestation. The vernal shower has descended from the cloud of divine mercy; the life-giving breeze of the Holy Spirit is wafting the perfume of blossoms. From field and meadow rises a fragrant breath of thanksgiving like pure incense ascending to the throne of God. The world has become a new world; souls are quickened, spirits renewed, refreshed. Truly it is a time for happiness.

(To people coming in)

Welcome! Welcome! You are very welcome!

(The church bells begin to ring)

I was not feeling very well this morning, or I would have gone to church. Everywhere we hear the call of the spiritual world; in everything we behold the works of God. The church bells are pealing in memory of Jesus Christ although more than nineteen hundred years have passed since He lived upon the earth. This is through the power of the spirit. No material power could do this. Yet people in their blindness deny Christ, seeking to perpetuate their names in worldly deeds. Everyone wishes to be



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remembered. Through earthly and material accomplishments one will hardly be remembered nine years, while the memory and glory of Christ continue after nineteen hundred have passed. For His name is eternal and His glory everlasting. Therefore, man should hear with attentive ear the call of the spiritual world, seeking first the Kingdom of God and its perfections. This is eternal life; this is everlasting remembrance.

How great the difference between the glory of Christ and the glory of an earthly conqueror! It is related by historians that Napoleon [pg 211] Bonaparte I embarked secretly by night from Egypt. His destination was France. During his campaign in Palestine revolution had broken out and grave difficulties had arisen in the home government. Christian worship had been forbidden by the revolutionists. The priests of Christianity had fled in terror. France had become atheistic; anarchy prevailed. The ship sailed out into a night brilliant with the light of the moon. Napoleon was pacing up and down the deck. His officers were sitting together, talking. One of them spoke of the similarity between Bonaparte and Christ. Napoleon stopped and said grimly, "Do you think I am going back to France to establish religion?"

Jesus Christ established the religion of God through love. His sovereignty is everlasting. Napoleon overthrew governments in war and bloodshed. His dominion passed away; he himself was dethroned. Bonaparte destroyed human life; Christ was a Savior. Bonaparte controlled the physical bodies of men; Christ was a conqueror of human hearts. None of the Prophets of God were famous men, but They were unique in spiritual power. Love is the eternal sovereignty. Love is the divine power. By it all the kings of earth are overthrown and conquered. What evidence of this could be greater than the accomplishment of Bahá'u'lláh? He appeared in the East and was exiled. He was sent to the prison of 'Akká in Palestine. Two powerful despotic kings arose against Him. During His exile and imprisonment He wrote Tablets of authority to the kings and rulers of the world, announcing His spiritual sovereignty, establishing the religion of God, upraising the heavenly banners of the Cause of God. One of these Tablets was sent to Napoleon III, Emperor of France. He received it with contempt and cast it behind his back. Bahá'u'lláh addressed a second Tablet to him, containing these words, "Hadst thou been sincere in thy words, thou wouldst have not cast behind thy back the Book of God, when it was sent unto thee.... We have proved thee through it, and found thee other than that which thou didst profess. Arise, and make amends for that which escaped thee. Erelong the world and all that thou possesseth will perish, and the kingdom will remain unto God. ...For what thou hast done, thy kingdom shall be thrown into confusion, and thine empire shall pass from thine hands, as a punishment for that which thou hast wrought. Then wilt thou know how thou hast plainly erred... Thy pomp ... shall soon pass away, unless thou holdest fast by this firm Cord. We see abasement hastening after thee...." All this happened just as announced by Bahá'u'lláh. Napoleon III was dethroned and exiled. His empire passed away and became nonexistent while the dominion and sovereignty [pg 212] of Bahá'u'lláh, the Prisoner,

has become eternal through the confirmation of God. This is as evident as the light of the sun at midday except to those who are spiritually blind. If we are afflicted with a cold, we cannot inhale the delicate fragrances emanating from the rose garden of the divine Kingdom.

In brief, the nations of the world are becoming united under the sovereignty of the divine Kingdom. The East and the West are embracing here in love and affection today. This is not a commercial or political unity, but unity through the love of God. We have crossed the sea to spread that love in America, to announce the call of the Kingdom, to establish the spiritual foundations of international peace. Although men may arise against the Kingdom, the dominion and sovereignty of God will be set up. It is an eternal Kingdom, a divine sovereignty. In His day Christ was called Satan, Beelzebub, but hear the bells now ringing for Him! He was the Word of God and not Satan. They mocked Him, led Him through the city upon a donkey, crowned Him with thorns, spat upon His blessed face and crucified Him, but He is now with God and in God because He was the Word and not Satan. Fifty years ago no one would touch the Christian Bible in Persia. Bahá'u'lláh came and asked, "Why?" They said, "It is not the Word of God." He said, "You must read it with understanding of its meanings, not as those who merely recite its words." Now Bahá'ís all over the East read the Bible and understand its spiritual teaching. Bahá'u'lláh spread the Cause of Christ and opened the book of the Christians and Jews. He removed the barriers of names. He proved that all the divine Prophets taught the same reality and that to deny One is to deny the Others, for all are in perfect oneness with God.

In London some of the Christians said we were deniers of Christ. We say Christ is the Word of God. We are gathered here this morning for His mention. The bells have called us together in love and unity. This house is the temple of God. All are welcome! Very welcome!

*Question:* How shall we determine the truth or error of certain biblical interpretation, as, for instance, the higher criticism and other present-day Christian teachings?

*'Abdu'l-Bahá:* Your question is an abstruse and important one. Complete answer to it would require a long time. I will reply to it briefly. The only true Explainer of the Book of God is the Holy Spirit, for no two minds are alike, no two can comprehend alike, no two can speak alike. That is to say, from the mere human standpoint of interpretation there could be neither truth nor agreement.[pg 213]

*Question:* Do you approve of the new thought in which the control of mind over matter is the central principle?

*'Abdu'l-Bahá:* Philosophy develops the mind. Christ and the Word of God are revealed through the Spirit. Plato says, "The mental conclusions are so and so." Christ says, "Be led of the Spirit."

*Question:* Should children be allowed to read the higher criticism?

*'Abdu'l-Bahá:* They should first be taught the reality of religion as a foundation. For instance, in the Catholic Church the child is taught that through some act of the priest the bread and wine of the sacrament become the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. The mind cannot accept this. The child must be taught that this transformation is symbolical of the truth that Christ is the food from heaven, the eating of which produces eternal life. The Jews had memorized the Bible but failed to grasp its meanings. If they had understood the spiritual significances of the scriptures, they would have been the first believers in Christ. You are among the first believers in this country. You are the children of the Kingdom. Bahá'u'lláh has taught you the reality of religion. There are many of the Bahá'í friends in Persia whom we do not know, but we know you here in America. Turn your faces to the Sun of Reality. That Sun has always risen in the East. Find the answer to your questions in your heart. Be as little children. Until the soil is prepared, it cannot receive the benefit of planting.

