

Talk at Second Divine Science Church

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Original English



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25 September 1912

3929 West Thirty-eighth Avenue, Denver, Colorado

From Stenographic Notes

In the Orient I was informed of the lofty purposes and wonderful attainments of the American people. When I arrived in this country, I realized that American ideals are indeed most praiseworthy and that the people here are lovers of truth. They investigate reality, and there is no trace of fanaticism among them. Today the nations of the world are on the verge of war, influenced and impelled by prejudices of ignorance and racial fanaticism. Praise be to God! You are free from such prejudice, for you believe in the oneness and solidarity of the world of humanity. There is no doubt that the divine confirmations will uphold you.

One of the forms of prejudice which afflict the world of mankind is religious bigotry and fanaticism. When this hatred burns in human hearts, it becomes the cause of revolution, destruction, abasement of humankind and deprivation of the mercy of God. For the holy Manifestations and divine Founders of religion Themselves were completely unified in love and agreement, whereas Their followers are characterized by bitter antagonism and attitudes of hostility toward each other. God has desired for mankind the effulgence of love, but through blindness and misapprehension man has enveloped himself in veils of discord, strife and hatred. The supreme need of humanity is cooperation and reciprocity. The stronger the ties of fellowship and solidarity amongst men, the greater will be the power of constructiveness and accomplishment in all the planes of human activity. Without cooperation and reciprocal attitude the



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individual member of human society remains self-centered, uninspired by altruistic purposes, limited and solitary in development like the animal and plant organisms of the lower kingdoms. The lower creatures are not in need of cooperation and reciprocity. A tree can live solitary and alone, but this is impossible for man without retrogression. Therefore, every cooperative attitude and activity of human life is praiseworthy and foreintended by the will of God. The first expression of cooperation is family relationship, which is unreliable and uncertain in its potency, for it is subject to separation and does not permanently cement together the individual members of humanity. There is also a cooperation and oneness in nativity or race which is likewise not efficient, for although its members may agree in general, they differ radically in personal and particular points of view. Racial association, therefore, will not ensure the requirements of divine relationship. There are other means in the human world by which physical association is established, but these fail to weld together the hearts and spirits of men and are correspondingly inefficient. Therefore, it is evident that God has destined and intended religion to be the cause and means of cooperative effort and accomplishment among mankind. To this end He has sent the Prophets of God, the holy Manifestations of the Word, in order that the fundamental reality and religion of God may prove to be the bond of human unity, for the divine religions revealed by these holy Messengers have one and the same foundation. All will admit, therefore, that the divine religions are intended to be the means of true human cooperation, that they are united in the purpose of making humanity one family, for they rest upon the universal foundation of love, and love is the first effulgence of Divinity.

Each one of the divine religions has established two kinds of ordinances: the essential and the accidental. The essential ordinances rest upon the firm, unchanging, eternal foundations of the Word itself. They concern spiritualities, seek to stabilize morals, awaken intuitive susceptibilities, reveal the knowledge of God and inculcate the love of all mankind. The accidental laws concern the administration of outer human actions and relations, establishing rules and regulations requisite for the world of bodies and their control. These are ever subject to change and supersedure according to exigencies of time, place and condition. For example, during the time of Moses, ten commandments concerning the punishment of murder were revealed in His Book. Divorce was sanctioned and polygamy allowable to a certain extent. If a man committed theft, his hand was cut off. This was drastic law and severe punishment applicable to the time of Moses. But when the time of Christ came, minds had developed, realizations were keener and spiritual perceptions had advanced so that certain laws concerning murder, plurality of wives and divorce were abrogated. But the essential ordinances of the Mosaic dispensation remained unchanged. These were the fundamental realities of the knowledge of God and the holy Manifestations, the purification of morals, the awakening of spiritual susceptibilities — eternal principles in which there is no change or transformation. Briefly, the foundation of the divine religions is one eternal foundation, but the laws for temporary conditions and

exigencies are subject to change. Therefore, by adherence to these temporary laws, blindly following and imitating ancestral forms, difference and divergence have arisen among followers of the various religions, resulting in disunion, strife and hatred. Blind imitations and dogmatic observances are conducive to alienation and disagreement; they lead to bloodshed and destruction of the foundations of humanity. Therefore, the religionists of the world must lay aside these imitations and investigate the essential foundation or reality itself, which is not subject to change or transformation. This is the divine means of agreement and unification.

The purpose of all the divine religions is the establishment of the bonds of love and fellowship among men, and the heavenly phenomena of the revealed Word of God are intended to be a source of knowledge and illumination to humanity. So long as man persists in his adherence to ancestral forms and imitation of obsolete ceremonials, denying higher revelations of the divine light in the world, strife and contention will destroy the purpose of religion and make love and fellowship impossible. Each of the holy Manifestations announced the glad tidings of His successor, and each One confirmed the message of His predecessor. Therefore, inasmuch as They were agreed and united in purpose and teaching, it is incumbent upon Their followers to be likewise unified in love and spiritual fellowship. In no other way will discord and alienation disappear and the oneness of the world of humanity be established.

After we have proved the validity of the Manifestations of the Word of God by investigating the divine teachings, we must discover for a certainty whether They have been real Educators of mankind. Among the revelators of the law of God was Moses. When He appeared, all the contemporaneous nations rejected Him. Notwithstanding this, single and alone He promulgated the divine teachings and liberated a nation from the lowest condition of degradation and bondage. The people of Israel were ignorant, lowly, debased in morals — a race of slaves under burdensome oppression. Moses led them out of captivity and brought them to the Holy Land. He educated and disciplined them, established among them the foundations of material and divine civilization. Through the education of Moses these ignorant people attained an advanced degree of power and prestige, culminating in the glory of the reign of Solomon. From the abyss of bereavement and slavery they were uplifted to the highest plane of progress and civilized nationhood. It is evident, therefore, that Moses was an Educator and Teacher. The purpose and mission of the holy, divine Messengers is the training and advancement of humanity, the cultivation of divine fruits in the gardens of human hearts, the reflection of heavenly effulgence in the mirrors of human souls, the quickening of mental capacity and the increase of spiritual susceptibilities. When these results and outcomes are witnessed in mankind, the function and mission of the Manifestations are unmistakable. Christ, single and alone, without schooling or outward education and trained to labor in the shop of a carpenter, appeared in the world at the time when the Jewish nation was in the greatest abasement. This radiant

Youth, without wealth, power of armies or prestige, rescued the Jews who believed on Him from tyranny and degradation and lifted them to the highest plane of development and glory. Peter, His disciple, was a fisherman. Through the power of Christ he shed light upon all the horizons of the world. Furthermore, various people of the Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Assyrian nations were brought together in unity and agreement; where warfare and bloodshed had existed, humility and love were manifest, and the foundations of divine religion were established, never to be destroyed. This proves that Christ was a heavenly Teacher and Educator of the world of humanity, for such evidences are historical and irrefutable, not based upon tradition and circumstantial report. The power of His Word in cementing these nations together is as clear and evident as the sun at midday. There is no need of further demonstration.

The proof of the validity of a Manifestation of God is the penetration and potency of His Word, the cultivation of heavenly attributes in the hearts and lives of His followers and the bestowal of divine education upon the world of humanity. This is absolute proof. The world is a school in which there must be Teachers of the Word of God. The evidence of the ability of these Teachers is efficient education of the graduating classes.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the horizon of Persia was shrouded in great darkness and ignorance. The people of that country were in a condition of barbarism. Hatred and bigotry prevailed among the various religions; bloodshed and hostility were frequent among sects and denominations of belief. There were no evidences of affiliation and unity; violent prejudice and antagonism ruled the hearts of men. At such a time as this Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed the first principle of His mission and teaching — the oneness of the world of humanity. His second announcement was the investigation of reality; the third was the oneness of the foundations of the divine religions. Through spiritual education He led the people out of darkness and ignorance into the clear light of truth, illuminated their hearts with the splendor of knowledge, laid a true and universal basis for religious teachings, cultivated the virtues of humanity, conferred spiritual susceptibilities, awakened inner perceptions and changed the dishonor of prejudiced souls to the highest degree of honor and capacity. Today in Persia and the Orient you will find the followers of Bahá'u'lláh united in the closest ties of fellowship and love. They have abandoned religious prejudices and have become as one family. When you enter their meetings, you will find Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jews and representatives of other beliefs present, all conjoined in a wonderful unity without a trace of bigotry or fanaticism, and the light of the oneness of the world of humanity reflected in their faces. Day by day they are advancing, manifesting greater and still greater love for each other. Their faith is fixed upon the unification of mankind, and their highest purpose is the oneness of religious belief. They proclaim to all humanity the sheltering mercy and infinite grace of God. They teach the reconciliation of religion with science and reason. They show forth in words and deeds the reality of love for all mankind as the servants of one God and the

recipients of His universal bounty. These are their thoughts, their beliefs, their guiding principles, their religion. No trace of religious, racial, patriotic or political prejudice can be found among them, for they are real servants of God and obedient to His will and command.

My highest hope and desire is that the strongest and most indissoluble bond shall be established between the American nation and the people of the Orient. This is my prayer to God. May the day come when through divine and spiritual activity in the human world the religions shall be reconciled and all races of mankind come together in unity and love. Fifty years ago Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed the peace of the nations and oneness of the divine religions, addressing His words to all the kings and rulers of the world in specific Tablets. Therefore, my supreme desire is the unity of the East and West, universal peace and the oneness of the world of humanity.

