

# Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank K. Moxey

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Notes by Esther Foster

I offer thanks to God for this meeting with you. From the outer standpoint such meetings are inconceivable, for we are orientals whereas you are occidentals. Between us there is no patriotic, linguistic, racial, commercial nor political relation. No worldly bond nor connection of any kind exists between us that would justify such a gathering as this. The love of God has brought us together, and this is the best of means and motive. Every other bond of friendship is limited in effectiveness, but fellowship based upon the love of God is unlimited, everlasting, divine and radiant. Therefore, we must be thankful to God for uniting us in love and agreement, praise Him for creating such affinity between us that those from the faraway Orient may associate with the beloved ones of the West in the utmost fragrance.

Surely for everything there is an all-comprehending wisdom, especially for the great and important affairs of life. The supreme and most important happening in the human world is the Manifestation of God and the descent of the law of God. The holy, divine Manifestations did not reveal themselves for the purpose of founding a nation, sect or faction. They did not appear in order that a certain number might acknowledge Their Prophethood. They did not declare Their heavenly mission and message in order to lay the foundation for a religious belief. Even Christ did not become manifest that we should merely believe in Him as the Christ, follow Him [pg 443] and adore His mention. All these are limited in scope and requirement, whereas the reality of Christ is an



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unlimited essence. The infinite and unlimited Reality cannot be bounded by any limitation. Nay, rather, Christ appeared in order to illumine the world of humanity, to render the earthly world celestial, to make the human kingdom a realm of angels, to unite the hearts, to enkindle the light of love in human souls, so that such souls might become independent, attaining complete unity and fellowship, turning to God, entering into the divine Kingdom, receiving the bounties and bestowals of God and partaking of the manna from heaven. Through Christ they were intended to be baptized by the Holy Spirit, attain a new spirit and realize the everlasting life. All the holy precepts and the announcements of prophetic laws were for these various and heavenly purposes. Therefore, we offer thanks to God that although no earthly relation obtains among us, yet — praise be to God! — ideal and divine bonds blend us together. We have gathered here in this meeting, eagerly anticipating the showing forth of the divine bestowals.

In past centuries the nations of the world have imagined that the law of God demanded blind imitation of ancestral forms of belief and worship. For example, the Jews were captives of hereditary racial religious observances. The Muslims, likewise, have been held in the bondage of traditionary forms and ceremonials. The Christians also have been implicit followers of ancient tradition and hereditary teaching. At the same time the basic foundation of the religion of God, which was ever the principle of love, unity and the fellowship of humanity, has been forsaken and cast aside, each religious system holding tenaciously to imitations of ancestral forms as the supreme essential. Therefore, hatred and hostility have appeared in the world instead of the divine fruitage of unity and love. By reason of this it has been impossible for the followers of religion to meet together in fellowship and agreement. Even contact and communication have been considered contaminating, and the outcome has been a condition of complete alienation and mutual bigotry. There has been no investigation of the essential underlying basis of reality. One whose father was a Jew invariably proved to be a Jew, a Muslim was born of a Muslim, a Buddhist was a Buddhist because of the faith of his father before him, and so on. In brief, religion was a heritage descending from father to son, ancestry to posterity, without investigation of the fundamental reality; consequently, all religionists were veiled, obscured and at variance.

Praise be to God! We are living in this most radiant century[pg 444] wherein human perceptions have developed and investigations of real foundations characterize mankind. Individually and collectively man is proving and penetrating into the reality of outer and inner conditions. Therefore, it has come to pass that we are renouncing all that savors of blind imitation, and impartially and independently investigating truth. Let us understand what constitutes the reality of the divine religions. If a Christian sets aside traditionary forms and blind imitation of ceremonials and investigates the reality of the Gospels, he will discover that the foundation principles of the teachings of Christ were mercy, love, fellowship, benevolence, altruism, the resplendence or radiance of

divine bestowals, acquisition of the breaths of the Holy Spirit and oneness with God. Furthermore, he will learn that Christ declared that the Father “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” The meaning of this declaration is that the mercy of God encircles all mankind, that not a single individual is deprived of the mercy of God, and no soul is denied the resplendent bestowals of God. The whole human race is submerged in the sea of the mercy of the Lord, and we are all the sheep of the one divine Shepherd. Whatever shortcomings exist among us must be remedied. For example, those who are ignorant must be educated so that they may become wise; the sick must be treated until they recover; those who are immature must be trained in order to reach maturity; those asleep must be awakened. All this must be accomplished through love and not through hatred and hostility. Furthermore, Jesus Christ, referring to the prophecy of Isaiah, spoke of those who having eyes, see not, having ears, hear not, having hearts, understand not; yet they were to be healed. Therefore, it is evident that the bounties of Christ transformed the eye which was blind into a seeing one, rendered the ear which was formerly deaf, attentive, and made the hard, callous heart tender and sensitive. In other words, the meaning is that although the people possess external eyes, yet the insight, or perception, of the soul is blind; although the outer ear hears, the spiritual hearing is deaf; although they possess conscious hearts, they are without illumination; and the bounties of Christ save souls from these conditions. It is evident, then, that the manifestation of the Messiah was synonymous with universal mercy. His providence was universal, and His teachings were for all. His lights were not restricted to a few. Every Christ came to the world of mankind. Therefore, we must investigate the foundation of divine religion, discover its reality, reestablish it and spread its message throughout the world so that it may become the source of illumination and enlightenment[pg 445] to mankind, the spiritually dead become alive, the spiritually blind receive sight and those who are inattentive to God become awakened.

The teachings and ordinances of the divine religions are of two kinds. The first are spiritual and essential in nature — such as faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in Moses, faith in Abraham, faith in Muḥammad, the love of God and the oneness of the world of humanity. These divine principles shall be spread throughout the world. Strife and enmity shall disappear, ignorance, hatred and hostility cease and all the human race be bound together. The second kind of ordinances and teachings concern the outer conditions and transactions of the world of mankind. They are the nonessential, accidental or temporary laws of human affairs which are subject to change and transformation according to the exigencies of time and place. For instance, during the time of Moses divorce was permitted, but in the time of Christ it was made unlawful. In the Torah there are ten commandments concerning retribution for murder, which would not be possible to enforce at the present time and under existing conditions of the world. Therefore, these nonessential, temporary laws are superseded and abrogated to suit the exigencies and requirements of successive periods.

But the followers of the divine religions have turned away from the principles and ordinances which are essential and unchanging in the Word of God, forsaking those fundamental realities which have to do with the life of the human world, the eternal life — such as the love of God, faith in God, philanthropy, knowledge, spiritual perception, divine guidance — holding these to be contingent and nonessential while wrangling and disagreeing over such questions as whether divorce is lawful or unlawful, or whether this or that observance of a minor law is orthodox and true. The Jews consider divorce lawful; the Catholic Christians deem it unlawful; the outcome is discord and hostility between them. If they would investigate the one fundamental reality underlying the laws revealed by Moses and Christ, this condition of hatred and misunderstanding would be dispelled and divine unity prevail.

Christ commanded that if we are smitten upon the right cheek, we should turn the other cheek also. Consider what is happening now in the Balkans. What conformity with the teachings of Christ do we witness in that deplorable picture? Has not man absolutely forgotten and forsaken the divine command of Christ? In fact, such discord and warfare are evidences of disagreement upon the non-essential precepts and laws of religious belief. Investigation of the one fundamental reality and allegiance to the essential unchanging [pg 446] principles of the Word of God can alone establish unity and love in human hearts.

Throughout the Orient in the nineteenth century spiritual darkness prevailed, and the religions were submerged in the ocean of blind imitations and adherence to hereditary forms. There was no trace of the essential foundation of divine revelation. Because of this, hostility and hatred surrounded mankind; discord, rancor and warfare afflicted humanity; blood overspread the horizons of the eastern world. Instead of fellowship and agreement, religion had become the cause of hatred; instead of unity, it produced discord, enmity and strife. The conditions were similar to those existing in the Balkans today, where it might appear as if the basis of divine religion were war and conflict, the adherents of one religion seeking to extirpate and destroy another, and the adherents of both imbued with the fanatical impulse to kill. They consider the pathway to the good pleasure of God a pathway of blood, and the more a religionist kills, the nearer he draws to God. These are the results of blind imitations. How gloomy and destructive to humanity is such an outcome! If this be the foundation of divine religion, its absence is preferable; for even the infidels do not shed blood in this way, nor are they hostile toward each other. The forces of hostility and strife are the religions of the present day, and that which should have contributed to the illumination and betterment of the world has become productive of gross darkness and degradation.

To resume: Consider how similar blind imitations had made the darkness in the Orient all-encircling. At such a time Bahá'u'lláh dawned from the eastern horizon like the glory of the sun. He renewed the basis of the religions of God, destroyed blind adherence to ancestral forms and established in their stead love and spiritual fellowship so that no

strife, discord or hostility remained. This reconciliation of divergent sects is visible and evident. They now live together in love and unity. If you should enter one of their meetings, you would realize that they have become as one race, one native land, one religion; that they associate together in brotherhood and agreement. Praise be to God! These blind imitations and this darkness have ceased to exist, and the reality of the oneness of humanity has been practically proven.

I consider the American people a highly civilized and intelligent nation, a nation investigating truth and reality. It is my hope that through the efforts of this noble nation the solidarity of humanity may be continually advanced, that the illumination of the human world may become widespread, that the banner of universal peace may be held aloft, the lamp of the oneness of the human world be[pg 447] ignited and the hearts of the East and West be conjoined. Then the reality of the divine religions shall become resplendent and refulgent, indicating that they were meant to be the cause of unity and love and that through them heavenly bestowals have ever been conferring light upon the human world.

