

BAHA'ISM CALLED THE RELIGION THAT WILL RESCUE HUMANITY

Christianity Has Proved Faithless To Its Trust, Says Robert S. Abbott; Praises Mohammedanism

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By ROBERT S. ABBOTT

WHEN Paganism gave way to Christianity, it was thought that the benign influence of the latter would proclaim the importance of the individual. It was, doubtless, this idealistic assumption which fanned to white heat the spiritual enthusiasm of the Crusaders in checking the alarming growth of feudalism.

It was hoped that the crusades would arouse the intellectual as well as the spiritual energies of the people, would

lead to a broader conception of man's duty to his fellow-man, and prepare the way for greater religious and political freedom. With the disintegration of the feudal system, the sway of the Christian church over the consciences, lives, and material interests of men was practically undisputed. Christianity was adjudged the most important instrumentality for carrying forward the fervent hopes of progressive civilization.

The Christian doctrine though capable of great good when rightly interpreted, has been perverted by the apostles of the faith. Thus, today after nearly 2,000 years of experimentation Christianity is still on trial. It has failed to bring peace and good-will among men. Why?—because it has never emphasized racial unity or oneness of mankind as a central motive of its gospel.

SACRED PRINCIPLES DISREGARDED

No country under the great heavenly dome is more highly saturated with the ointment of Christianity than America, yet, we have here the most appalling display of wanton disregard of the sacred principles of human rights, social equity and brotherly love. Yes, while the birth of Christ is heralded by thousands who lift their voices in thanksgiving to Him who so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to redeem humanity; while the wise and unwise alike are presenting gold, frankincense and myrrh to the altar upon which rests a reconstructed cradle of the Son of man, the Christian soldiers are marching onward with spears, shotguns and ropes to slay and hang innocent black men upon the altar of race prejudice and intolerance. As they wash their hands with the blood of their helpless brothers, they sing fortissimo their canticles of devotion to a personal Christian God. Upon this calvary, when the black man cries out for bread, he is given stone and when he begs for water, they give him gall.

MOHAMMEDANISM PROTECTS THE LOWLY

I know of no other creed that tolerates such religious duplicity, not even Mohammedanism. Just at the time that Gregory the Great was doing so much to strengthen the power and influence of the popes in Rome, Mohammed, then a young Arab camel driver, was meditating upon the mysteries of life and devising a religion which was des-



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igned to spread with astounding rapidity into Asia, Africa, and Europe and to become a great rival of Christianity.

The Koran, that is the Mohammedan Bible, solemnly commands the protection of the poor, the lowly, and advocates the giving of full measure, and weight with a just balance. Social justice with the faithful followers of Mohammed is not only strongly articulated but is an essential attribute of their dogmas. With them black is a symbol of purity and godliness, thus when Mohammed destroyed all the idols in the Kaaba at Mecca and forbade his followers to make any images whatsoever, he left the black stone.

Today, this sacred stone is fixed in the outside wall at the southeast corner of the Kaaba, and the pilgrims must circle the building seven times, kissing the black stone each time as they pass it. Whereas according to the Christian cult, black symbolizes the evil spirit—for, Christianity is the only religion that paints the devil black.

ABDUL-BAHA POINTS THE WAY

Fortunately for the modern world and for us blacks, a new religious philosophy is gradually neutralizing the provocative agents of strife and racial antipathy. For more than eighty years the Baha'i Cause has been steadfastly presented to the world as the expression for this age and the fulfillment of that which was but partially revealed in previous dispensations. Abdul-Baha dedicated his life to the propagation of a creed which is now effecting a permanent revolution in the psychology and collective action of the world.

Where religion has sanctioned division and difference, the Baha'i institution sanctions unity, fellowship, co-operation. Like a healing element, it is aimed at removing the physical and mental reasons for religious, racial and class prejudice, and upholding a divine standard of reality and equality embracing every member of the community. Here the circle of spiritual experience at last joins, as prayer and worship are allied directly to creative service, eliminating the static subjective elements from religion and laying a foundation for a new and higher type of human association.

A SOUND GOSPEL

My experience with the followers of this cult has convinced me of the true and sincere humanitarian gospel which animates their souls. They fear not to break bread with the members of the darker races for the cardinal theme of their spiritual postulate is the oneness of mankind. They consecrate themselves to the establishment of a bond of union between the hearts of men so that different races and souls in every capacity may come together in order that love and agreement should be manifest between them.

For thousands of years the human race has been at war. Enmity and hatred have ruled. Now comes a new prophet bearing a new warrant of love, amity and peace. Baha'ism seeks to advance religion to its ultimate cultural sphere in which all consciousness of racial differences and religious traditions shall be flooded out by the spiritual light of greater understanding and love. The frontiers of civilization will not, appreciably, be advanced and the souls of nations will not be retrieved from the abandonment into which they have sunk, unless the fundamental principles embodied in the teachings of Abdul-Baha are faithfully and fervently embraced. No religion can bring peace which sanctions prejudice and discrimination at its very door.