

Bahai Nest

19

Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria

March 11th 1914

Dear friends!

A book under the name of "Almanach of Confessions of Faiths" published in Lugan by Maison d'édition du Coenobium in the current year contains beside many others the Confession of Faith by Prof. T. K. Cheyne of Oxford, England. As he is already known to the Bahai world ^{a few translated} extracts from his Confession may be of interest to our friends. He says: "Religion always occupies my thoughts but almost never do I find it necessary to observe forms and ceremonies. Now that I am old I am less inclined than ever to form. I am impatiently desirous of the epoch in which all religious souls will be conscious of their unity rather than have a dogmatic basis for their common spiritual experience. I distinguish between Religion and religious. These last are in good part are formal and conventional while the first is the experience of the ideal

Reality and is therefore moral and spiritual. Be it far from you to understand that I deny the religious a greater or less portion of the spirit of true Religion, for it is precisely for the absorption of this element that they have continued to live up to the present time. At various periods great prophets have arisen or Men who reveal^{and} apply religious truths. Their country was nearly the Orient although I dare not refuse the 'title' of prophet to Dante, Carlyle and Ruskin. Among the modern Oriental Prophets we may make special mention of Baha-o-llah. I do not believe it useful to construct theories about God but on the other hand it is impossible not to fashion some idea concerning the attributes of Deity. There is a God, a hidden God and there is a God that manifests himself in whom we live, move and have our being. To be conscious of God, in reality, seems to me the greatest form of prayer and means to be immersed in the ocean of his love; of his strength and of his truths. In the inaccessible and deep cells of

our memories live the remembrance of our childhood's prayers. The religious sentiment is the consciousness of an affinity with the most sublime ideals, the Foundation and the Center of which the believers joyously call God. The religious sentiment is a requisite necessity to religious experience. It is present in a greater or less degree in all the human races. Perhaps the most efficacious means for awakening It is in the cultivation of the artistic instinct and the contemplation of works of art. This you can apply to the study of history and natural science. My religious education was dogmatic - that is intellectual and in consequence I never felt in my youth any acute religious emotion. Later the wonders of nature and art opened my eyes to the Ideal and awakened my religious sentiments. The problem of a future life never left my thoughts from the time I studied Bible Criticism and recognized the weakness of the arguments for the resurrection of Jesus. Now I would prefer to consider Immortality as a natural consequence of the divine nature of ^{the}

I believe as the Indian thinker that God is the only permanent Reality. Reflecting on the changeableness of religious expressions it seems absurd that an assemblage of theologians should establish for all times a law concerning the form of belief and religious thought. A church founded on dogmatic forms cannot last. Faith and science belong to different spheres; however in the process of purification which periodically religious expressions must be ^{subjected} to, science can render valuable aid. I am not persuaded of the existence of a malefic being, opposed to good Sin is the shadow of good I wish they would read in the schools extracts from the sacred Scriptures of humanity and as much as possible explain them historically trying to penetrate their real significance. "

who is ~~one~~ ^{of} the greatest Biblical authorities & critics in the world &

This is the message of an ~~very~~ ^{old} man, ^{very} who feels himself deeply attracted to the Bahai teachings ^{that} and ~~who~~ at this advanced period of his life ^{in spite of physical infirmity he} is engaged in writing a book on this Cause.

From morning till evening ^{Master} ~~the~~ met the believers individually and spoke with each according to his capacity. Nine of the Pilgrims are given permission to leave for their homes after 3 days. Many of these were received by the Beloved in private, answering their questions, supplying all their spiritual sustenance and encouraging them as much of their time as they can spare to the spread of the Cause of God and the promotion of the Word of God. "This is the most important work. This is the light of the religion of God. This sea must be kept tempestuous. This fountain must always flow. This garden must never turn into autumn. The believers of God must not relax in their labor of teaching, not even for one second. The Cause is the Cup, teaching is the ruby wine with which the souls are intoxicated. The Cause is the body, teaching is the spirit animating and energizing ^{that} body." In these and similar words he would exhort everyone who stood in his Presence.

The following extract from a Tablet revealed this morning to a believer in Rasht may bring this letter to a close;—

"O thou who art firm in the Covenant! Thy manifold services in the Kingdom of Abba are mentioned and thy hardships in the path of God are well-known and evident. Truly I say, in those parts, thou art the means of the promotion of the Word of God. This is through the Invisible Confirmation of the Blessed Perfection; for every soul is not worthy to serve the True One and every person is not deserving of self-sacrifice in the lordly Path. This is the Crown of Providence, every head is not entitled to it. This is the Necklace of everlasting Sovereignty every neck is not qualified for it. Thank thou God that thou art assisted and confirmed with such Bestowment.

Glorify Him a thousand time with every breath for thus thou art honored with such Graces.

Praise be to God that the Sun of Reality has cast a brilliant effulgence upon that household;—so that the members of that family may become

eternally dignified and elevated with this Garment of Divine Favor We are adorers of the light of Justice, no matter from what horizon it may dawn. We are lovers of the beauty of rose, no matter in what garden it may grow. His Holiness Baha-ollah in numerous Tablets hath called the attention of the Bahais to this matter and hath awakened them and taught them that they must entertain no religious, sectional, racial ^{or} and patriotic prejudices, but be under the Flag of the oneness of the world of humanity. Amongst other injunctions, addressing the world of humanity he says:— 'O ye people of the world.' Ye are all the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch. Again he says:— 'Glory is not in this that a man loves his country, but glory is rather in this, that he love his kind' "

The Master was interviewed by an Arabic correspondent today and with him he spoke in detail on the principles of the Cause and his journey ^{through} America and Europe.