

Commentary on Verses of John

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The Master quotes:[1]

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you;[2] but if I depart, I will send him unto you.[3] And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth,[4] is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.”[5]

The concourse of the Gospel have presently fallen lost in the wilderness of error and purblindness and thus have considered as naught[6] these assertions of the Gospel which are explicitly clear and without allusiveness. This concourse of Christians have clung to interpretations based on their own imaginings.[7] Thus they say that the purpose of the above verses is the descent of the Holy Spirit, the descent that occurred after the ascension of His holiness Christ upon the disciples.[8] This is in truth the customary way of all peoples[9] and religious communities in that they close their eyes to the strong and firm meanings of the divine verses and then they adhere to suppositional[10] and dubious interpretations. Now you should consider how much their assertion is trivial and invalid:

Firstly. He sayeth: He shall not come unless I go away. This utterance indicates that He, the Spirit, the Comforter was not there at the time of Christ[11] and that He would come afterwards. But the Holy Spirit was inseparably and always co-existing with Christ.[12] So there would otherwise be no meaning to the saying: He shall not come unless I go

away.

Secondly. He said: I have many things to explain to you but you do not possess the capacity to bear them; but that Sanctified Spirit of Truth will expound these things and lead you into all truth.

Now consider further: In accord with Christian Teaching, the Holy Spirit is the Third Hypostasis[13] and the Spirit Jesus Christ is the Second Hypostasis.[14],[15],[16] Could it be the case that after all the training imparted by the two Hypostases[17] the veils of ignorance and lack of knowledge were not torn asunder and the disciples were not confirmed with the full guidance of truth?[18] Were they then after the ascension of that Supreme Luminary receiving the hidden unseen mysteries and the concealed and sealed Lordly wisdoms from the Third Hypostasis? Did they then only become able to hear these truths? Rather it is obvious[19] that if under the shade of guidance of that Essence of Essences and the Spirit of Spirits and with all the confirmations of the Holy spirit if souls be not educated and trained, and, if the soul's dark veils were still not burned away, then the breaths of the Holy spirit [alone] would have no effect for a hundred thousand years. And herein is manifest and recognizable truth.

Thus it has become clear and proven from those blessed Johannine verses that after the Beauty of Jesus another Honoured Soul and Great Beauty will appear Whose training will be even greater than the education imparted by Christ, the Spirit of God.

Thirdly He said: That Comforter will not speak from Himself. That means He shall be aided by the hosts of divine Revelation. He shall declare and expound all that reaches His Blessed Hearing from the Kingdom of Glory.

Consider again, how clear it is. This means that that Comforting Spirit is a Person[20] Who will be inspired with heavenly Inspirations and be the Repository of Lordly Revelations. Further, the Holy Spirit doth not have ears with which to hear.[21] The references that the disciples adduced as proof from the Torah with respect to the Advent of Christ were never with this degree of explicitness.

Notes

[1] From

Makátib ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’ Vol. 2.

[al-juz’ ath-tháni, page 59]. The title here given is provisionally added by the present editor. The commentary which follows is only a part of a longer Tablet. Date and recipient of this text are uncertain (KF’s note, modified by MW).

[2] See eg.

Summons of the Lord of Hosts: Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh, M15, H248 (MW’s note).

[3] Here, we

see Christ as the ‘Sender of Messengers’ (MW’s note).

[4] Cf.

Summons of the Lord of Hosts: Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh, M15 (MW’s note).

[5] John

16:7-15 (KF’s note).

[6]

Hích (KF’s note)

[7]

ta’wilát-i-mawhúmih (KF’s note)

[8] i.e. the

descent at Pentecost: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat

upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts, 2:1-6) (MW’s note).

[9]

Adat-i-kull-i-umam ast (KF’s note)

[10]

wahmiyya (KF’s note)

[11]

Rúh- i-tasalli-dahandih

mawjúd nabúdíh (KF's note)

[12] Cf.

Luke 4:18 (Quoting Isaiah 61:1); Qur'án 2:253; Summons of the Lord of Hosts: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, H133.

(MW's note)

[13]

uqnúm-i-thálith (KF's note).

[14] Cf. I

John 5:7: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (MW's note).

[15]

uqnúm-i-thání. 'Abdu'l-Bahá'

addresses the subject of the trinity as follows:

The Divine Reality, which is purified and sanctified from the understanding of human beings and which can never be imagined by the people of wisdom and of intelligence, is exempt from all conception. That Lordly Reality admits of no division; for division and multiplicity are properties of creatures which are contingent existences, and not accidents which happen to the self-existent.

The Divine Reality is sanctified from singleness, then how much more from plurality. The descent of that Lordly Reality into conditions and degrees would be equivalent to imperfection and contrary to perfection, and is, therefore, absolutely impossible. It perpetually has been, and is, in the exaltation of holiness and sanctity. All that is mentioned of the Manifestations and Dawning-places of God signifies the divine reflection, and not a descent into the conditions of existence.

God is pure perfection, and creatures are but imperfections. For God to descend into the conditions of existence would be the greatest of imperfections; on the contrary, His manifestation, His appearance, His rising are like the reflection of the sun in a clear, pure, polished mirror. All the creatures are evident signs of God, like the earthly beings upon all of which the rays of the sun shine. But upon the plains, the mountains, the trees and fruits, only a portion of the light shines, through which they become visible, and are reared, and attain to the object of their existence, while the Perfect Man is in the condition of a clear mirror in which the Sun of Reality becomes visible and manifest with all its qualities and perfections. So the Reality of Christ was a

clear and polished mirror of the greatest purity and fineness. The Sun of Reality, the Essence of Divinity, reflected itself in this mirror and manifested

its light and heat in it; but from the exaltation of its holiness, and the heaven of its sanctity, the Sun did not descend to dwell and abide in the mirror. No, it continues to subsist in its exaltation and sublimity, while appearing and becoming manifest in the mirror in beauty and perfection.

Now if we say that we have seen the Sun in two mirrors-- one the Christ and one the Holy Spirit--that is to say, that we have seen three Suns, one in heaven and the two others on the earth, we speak truly. And if we say that there is one Sun, and it is pure singleness, and has no partner and equal, we again speak truly.

The epitome of the discourse is that the Reality of Christ was a clear mirror, and the Sun of Reality--that is to say, the Essence of Oneness, with its infinite perfections and attributes--became visible in the mirror. The meaning is not that the Sun, which is the Essence of the Divinity, became divided and multiplied--for the Sun is one--but it appeared in the mirror. This is why Christ said, "The Father is in the Son," meaning that the Sun is visible and manifest in this mirror.

The Holy Spirit is the Bounty of God which becomes visible and evident in the Reality of Christ. The Sonship station is the heart of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the station of the spirit of Christ. Hence it has become certain and proved that the Essence of Divinity is absolutely unique and has no equal, no likeness, no equivalent.

This is the signification of the Three Persons of the Trinity. If it were otherwise, the foundations of the Religion of God would rest upon an illogical proposition which the mind could never conceive, and how can the mind be forced to believe a thing which it cannot conceive? A thing cannot be grasped by the intelligence except when it is clothed in an intelligible form; otherwise, it is but an effort of the imagination.

It has now become clear, from this explanation, what is the meaning of the Three Persons of the Trinity. The Oneness of God is also proved. (Some Answered Questions, Chap. 27, pp. 113-5) (KF's note, expanded by MW).

[16] See

Qur'án 5:76: "They do blaspheme who say: God is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them." (MW's note).

[17] i.e. of
Christ and the Holy Spirit (KF's note).

[18]
rushd va hidáyat-i-támmih (KF's
note).

[19]
Wadhíh ast (KF's note).

[20]
Shakhsí ast. Cf. Some Answered Questions, p.
109. (KF's note, expanded by MW).

[21]
sam'í nabúdíh kih istimá' namáyad
(KF's note).

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