

The life and writings of frederick douglass essay



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The technical definition of religion is belief, feeling and recognition of super power that has the control of human life. According to Frederick Douglass, God has the power to control humanity; he is able to observe what the people are doing. Righteous people need to reason and perform their duties according to the will of God.

In his speech, he challenges the ruling class and wishes that his concerns could be answered with the intervention of God. He portrays that despite the oppression that the slave had undergone, there was superior power that they could lean on to soften the hearts of their lords (Foner).

In the third paragraph of his speech, he laments that he was invited to an occasion of joy but he should be mourning of the oppression the slaves were getting from the American leaders. He recognises that the class differences occurring in the society was God given where different allocations of power wealth and strength. He condemns the oppression the slaves underwent, at the end of the speech he recognised that the deed of the Americans mocked God; they brought shame to holy spirits as they were not human.

According to the speech Douglass was a Christian by religion; he made some quotes from the bible that portrayed oppression in the Jews community and brought the same picture to the situation in America.

According to him, religion was supposed to bring people together and control the way they do things; it should be a form of constitution with a solution to all problems of humanity if well understood and practiced. The teaching of the religion called for no oppression of either group, the haves should not

mock the southerner's slaves but they should be guided by the bible to give them their rights and respect (Foner).

Douglass felt that the lords made rules and regulation with the need to oppress the Negroes, he was of the view that the American Lords had developed the religion of Christianity and enforced it to the Negroes but they did not practice the religion. He was of the opinion that the Americans could do the Negro good not to enforce Christianity practices among the Negroes if they were themselves not practising the religion.

The felt that religion was used to justify means that the misfortunes in the life are of the Negroes and the Lords were hiding behind the religion as they oppressed the slaves. On the other hand, there is a book called the bible that governs the religion; in case believer does not comply with the requirement of the bible then the God's power is supposed to punish the individual.

This rule was operated in exemption where the Negroes could be made to suffer if they went out of the religion but the Americans Lords could not be punished for violating the rules of religion (Foner).

No single definition can capture the full meaning of religion; the technicality of the definition is when we talk of religion everyone who belief in it thinks religion is only what she or he beliefs. The Christian talks of you being religious he will only think of you as a fellow Christian and not a Muslim; in the case of Douglass, Christianity was the religion practiced, it is the religion the American and the slaves abided to however, it was taken for the advantage of one party as the other was oppressed.

Despite that, there are some generally accepted elements that each religion seems to believe in, the same religion can be used to oppress and benefit a certain group in the community at the expense of another. The Americans had enforced Christianity to the Negroes so that they can have a soft way of controlling and misusing them.

Each religious belief recognizes the existence of a super national force or power that have control over men and the activities that man do; with this notion in mind, Douglass could have thought that the American could have seen the oppression they are subjecting the Negroes to and in the spirit of religion they would have treated them better.

Religion is used to give justification why some people have more Liberty and power in the community. It also is seen to enforce inequality. A common characteristic found among all religion is that they present a complex of feelings and attitudes towards mysteries in life. Thus, religion comprises of systems of attitude, beliefs and symbols, which are based on the assumption that certain kind of social elements are sacred and supreme. There is also a structure of activities governed or influenced by this system (Petton 12-56).

In the case of Douglass, he felt that there was need to respect, practice and keep religion as holy; he felt that the religion has been enforced to slave workers by their lords so that the lords can have an easy controlling point. He felt that the religion was used to enforce inequality and justify the differences that existed among the communities. The haves, Americans had ignored the religion they purported to practice so that they can oppress the Negroes.

In normal situations, religion is taken as a social movement and belief that held people together and gave them an identity as they recognised themselves with supreme beings. The belief that there is supernatural power that oversees and controls the functions of human beings should be used to hold people together and solve the differences that they might have. The role of religion as we know is different from the way Douglass had portrayed it to be. He saw it as a making for the benefit of the Americans (Murrin 205).

The tone of the speech made by Douglass could tell the pain and oppression that the slaves had. The tone shows the hypocrisy that the Americans had and the way they hide behind religion. He describes religion as evil since he saw it as one of the most effective tools that the American lords used to oppress and exploit Negroes.

The pain that the Southerner's slaves suffered was justified by religion; he saw Christianity to have been moulded to justify the differences and inequality existing in the then American community. In the poem, Douglass, refers to Christianity as the source of hope for the slaves only if the American lords could respect and practice Christianity as they purported to (Foner).

Foner, Philip. *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, Volume II. Pre-Civil War Decade 1850-1860*. New York: International Publishers Co., Inc., 1950. Web.

Murrin, John et al. *Liberty Equality Power: A History of the American People, Volume I: To 1877*. Kentucky: Wadsworth-Thomson Learning, 2005. Print.

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Petton, Kimberley . Religion of the Gods, ritual, paradox and reflexivity. New York: Oxford press, 2009. Print.