

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CAUSE OF GOD

PRAYER OF THE COVENANT

550 My God! My God! I ask Thee to forgive everything save my servitude to Thy Supreme Threshold, and I declare myself innocent of any proclamation or praise, save my adoration for Thy Merciful Presence. I deprive myself of every adornment, save that of humiliation and contrition and evanescence before Thy Oneness. I flee from every station save that of arrival in the court of Thy Divine Eternity. By Thy Power, verily, the sweetness of servitude is the food of my spirit; with the fragrance of servitude my breast will be dilated, my being refreshed, my heart delighted, my eyes brightened, my nostrils perfumed, and in it is the healing of my disease, the allaying of my burning thirst, the soothing of my pain.

Immerse me, O my God, in this most bounteous, rolling Ocean; give me to drink of this sweet, abundant Water; cause me to enter this Gateway of Righteousness; ordain me for this praiseworthy Station; cause me to obtain this Cup which is overflowing with the living water; light in the crystal of my heart this Lamp which is giving forth its illuminating, brilliant radiance; and strengthen me for the service of Thy Cause, O my Lord, the Forgiver! Accept my servitude in the court of Thy Holy Oneness, O Thou, the Manifestor of Mount Sinai. Assist me to abide in its conditions, O Thou, the Authority of Manifestation. Aid me to assist Thy Cause in the eastern and western parts of the earth, O Thou the Possessor of the Day of Resurrection. I ask Thee, by Thy written Book, dispersed writings—by Thy Hidden Mystery, and Thy firm proclamations—to cause me to be steadfast in servitude to Thee, O my Lord, the Forgiver! Verily, Thou art the powerful over that which Thou wishest; and verily, Thou art the Merciful, the Compassionate.

O Thou, who art calling by the Testament, in the Pivot of the horizons! This servant, according to the clear statements in the Book of Aqdas, and the unambiguous texts of the Holy Book, is the Commentator and the Interpreter, of the Books of God. All the faithful ones, who are assured and firm in the Testament and Covenant of God, must neither overreach the clear explanation of this servant, nor the unambiguous interpretation of this slave. If any one overreaches, he follows his own suppositions. This servant gives the real meaning, and the meaning of the real also. The mystery of mysteries of these texts, words and lines, is servitude to the Holy Presence of the Beauty of ‘Abhá, and effacement, evanescence and perfect dispersion before the Blessed Threshold. This is my brilliant diadem, and my glorious crown. With this, I will be glorified in the Heavenly Kingdom, and the kingdom of this world. And with it, I will approach unto the Beauty among the nearest ones to God, and no one is allowed to interpret other than this, and this is the perspicuous truth.

O thou, who art proclaiming the mention of God! The indicated Commentator is the Interpreter of the Words, and this servant is aside from praise, qualities, names,

characteristics, virtues, peculiarities, eulogies and honors; but my name, being, reality and personality is servitude to the Beauty of ‘Abhá, and I am not worthy to be considered as having the shadow of arising.

As the Manifestation said: “Plant this Branch in the earth of the hearts, and make it Holy from shadow and arising.”

THE DAY OF GOD

551 Do you know in what Day you are living? Do you realize in what Dispensation you are alive? Have you not heard in the Holy Scriptures that at the consummation of the ages there shall appear a Day which is the Sun of all the past Days? This is the Day in which the Lord of Hosts has come down from heaven on the clouds of glory! This is the Day in which the inhabitants of all the world shall enter under the shelter of the Word of God.

This is the Day whose real sovereign is His Highness the Almighty. This is the Day when the East and the West shall embrace each other like unto two lovers. This is the Day in which war and contention shall be forgotten. This is the Day in which nations and governments will enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This Century is the fulfillment of the Promised Century.

This Day is the dawn of the appearances of the traces of the glorious vision of the past prophets and sages.

Now is the dawn; ere long the effulgent Sun shall rise and station itself in the meridian of its majesty. Then you shall observe the effects of the Sun. Then you shall behold what heavenly illumination has become manifest. Then you shall comprehend that these are the infinite bestowals of God! Then you shall see that this world has become another world. Then you shall perceive that the Teachings of God have universally spread.

Rest ye assured that this darkness shall be dispelled and these impenetrable clouds which have darkened the horizon shall be scattered, and the Sun of Reality shall appear in its full splendor. Its rays shall melt the icebergs of hatred and differences which have transformed the moving sea of humanity into hard frozen immensity. The vices of the world of nature shall be changed into praiseworthy attributes, and the lights of the excellencies of the Divine realm shall appear.

The principles of His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh, like unto the spirit, shall penetrate the dead body of the world, and the Love of God, like unto an artery, shall beat through the heart of the five continents.

The East shall become illumined, the West perfumed, and the children of men shall enter beneath the all-embracing canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity.

In this Day the rest of the people are asleep. Praise be to God that you are

awakened! They are all uninformed, but praise be to God you are informed of the mysteries of God! Thank ye God that in this arena you have preceded others. I hope that each one of you may become a pillar of the palace of the oneness of the world of humanity. May each one of you become a luminous star of this heaven, thus lighting the path of those who are seeking the goal of human perfection.

Paris, France
March 10, 1913.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

552 In the divine Holy Books there are unmistakable prophecies giving the Glad Tidings of a certain Day in which the promised One of all the Books would appear, a radiant Dispensation be established, the banner of the Most Great Peace and reconciliation be hoisted, and the oneness of the world of humanity proclaimed. Among the various nations and peoples of the world no enmity or hatred would remain. All heart were to be connected one with another. These things are recorded in the Taurat or Old Testament, in the Gospel, in the Qur'án, in the Zend Avesta, in the Books of Buddha and in the Book of Confucius. In brief, all the Holy Books contain these Glad Tidings. In all of them it is announced that after the world has been surrounded by darkness, then radiance shall appear. For just as the night, when it becomes excessively dark, precedes the dawn of a new day, so likewise when the darkness of religious apathy and heedlessness overtakes the world, when human souls become negligent of God, when materialistic ideas overshadow idealism and spirituality, when nations become submerged in the world of matter and forget God—at such a time as this shall the Divine Sun shine forth and the Radiant Morn appear.

553 Consider to what a remarkable extent the spirituality of people has been overcome by materialism, so that spiritual susceptibility seems to have vanished, Divine civilization does not exist, and guidance and knowledge of God no longer remain. All are submerged in the sea of materialism. Although some attend churches and temples for worship and devotion, it is in accordance with the traditions and imitations of their fathers and not for the investigation of Reality. For it is evident that they have not found the Reality and are not engaged in adoration of It. They are holding to certain imitations which have descended to them from their fathers and ancestors. They have become accustomed to passing a certain length of time in temple worship and conforming to imitations and ceremonies. The proof of this is that the son of every Jewish father becomes a Jew and not a Christian; the son of every Muhammadan becomes a follower of Islám; the son of every Christian proves to be a Christian; the son of every Zoroastrian is a Zoroastrian, etc., etc. Therefore religious faith and belief is merely a remnant of blind imitations which have descended through fathers and ancestors. Because this

man's father was a Jew, he considers himself a Jew; not that he has investigated the Reality and proved satisfactorily to himself that Judaism is right; nay, rather he is aware that his forefathers have followed this course, therefore he has held to it himself.

The purpose of this is to explain that the darkness of imitations encompasses the world. Every nation is holding to its traditional religious forms. The Light of Reality is obscured. Were these various nations to investigate the Reality, there is no doubt they would attain to It. As Reality is One, all nations would then become as one nation. But so long as they adhere to various imitations and are deprived of the Reality, strife and warfare still continue and rancor and sedition prevail. But if they investigate the Reality, neither enmity nor rancor will remain and they will attain to the utmost concord among themselves.

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During the years when the darkness of heedlessness was most intense in the Orient and the people were so submerged in imitations that nations were thirsting for each other's blood, considering one another as contaminated and refusing mutual association—at such a time as this His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh appeared. He arose in the Orient, uprooting the very foundations of superstition and brought the dawn of the Light of Reality. Various nations became united, because all desired the Reality. Inasmuch as they investigated the Reality of religion they found that all men are the servants of God, all are the posterity of Adam, all are children of one household, and that the foundations of all the Prophets are one. For inasmuch as the teachings of the Prophets are Reality, their foundations are one. The enmity and strife of nations are therefore due to religious imitations and not to the Reality which underlies the teachings of the Prophets. Through Bahá'u'lláh the nations and peoples grew to understand and comprehend this. Therefore hearts became united and lives were cemented together. After centuries of hatred and bitterness the Christian, Jew, Zoroastrian, Muhammadan and Buddhist arose for amity; all of them in the utmost love and unity. They became welded and cemented because they had all arrived at Reality.

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The Divine Prophets are conjoined in the utmost state of love. Each former one has given the glad tidings of His successor's coming, and each later one has sanctioned the one who preceded Him. They were in the utmost unity, but their nations were in strife. For instance, Moses gave the message of the glad tidings of Christ and Christ confirmed the Prophethood of Moses. Therefore between Moses and Jesus there is no variation and conflict. They are in the utmost unity. But between the Jew and the Christian there is conflict. Now therefore if the Christian and Jewish people investigate the Reality underlying their Prophets' teachings they will become kind in their attitude toward each other and associate in the utmost love, for Reality is one and not dual or multiple. If this investigation of Reality becomes universal, all the divergent nations will ratify all the Divine Prophets and all will confirm all the Holy Books. No strife or rancor will remain and all of us will become united. Then will we associate together in the utmost love. We will become as fathers and sons, as brothers and sisters living together in the utmost unity, love and happiness, for this century is the Century of Light. It is not like former centuries. Former centuries were epochs of oppression. Now human intellects have developed and human intelligence has increased. Each soul is investigating the

Reality. This is not a time when we shall wage war and be hostile toward each other. We are living at a time when we should enjoy the utmost friendship.

556 Fifty years ago, His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh sent epistles to all the kings and nations of the world, at a time when there was no mention of Universal Peace. One of these epistles was sent by Him to the President of the American Democracy. In these communications, He summoned all to International Peace and the oneness of the human world. He summoned all to the fundamentals of the teachings of all the Prophets. Some of the European kings were haughty. Among them was Napoleon Bonaparte III. Bahá'u'lláh wrote a second epistle to him, which was published thirty years ago. The context is this: "O Napoleon! thou hast indeed become haughty. Thou hast become proud. Thou hast forgotten God. Thou dost imagine that this majesty is permanent for thee—this dominion is abiding for thee. A letter We have sent unto thee for acceptance with thy greatest love; but instead thou hast shown haughtiness. Therefore God shall uproot this edifice of thy sovereignty; thy country shall flee away from thee. Thou shalt find humiliation hastening after thee because thou didst not arise for that which was enjoined upon thee—whereas that which was a duty incumbent upon thee was the cause of life to the world. The punishment of God shall soon be dealt out to thee."

This epistle was revealed in the year 1869, and after one year the foundations of the Napoleonic sovereignty were utterly destroyed.

557 Among these epistles (Tablets) was a very lengthy one to the Sháh of Persia. It was printed and spread broadcast throughout all the countries of the world. This epistle was revealed in the year 1870. In it He admonished the Sháh of Persia to be kind to all his subjects—summoning him to justice—counseling him to make no distinction among the religions—with Jew, Christian, Muhammadan, Zoroastrian, was he to deal equally and the oppressions prevalent in his country were to be removed. The Jews were greatly oppressed in Persia.

Bahá'u'lláh especially recommended justice for them, saying that all people are the servants of God, and in the eye of the Government they should be of equal estimate, the Government should be just to all. ... "If justice is not dealt out, if these oppressions are not removed and if thou dost not obey God, the foundations of thy Government will be razed and thou shalt become evanescent—become as nothing. Thou shouldst gather all the learned men, and then summon Me. I shall be present there. I will then advance proofs and evidences of My validity. I will manifest My proof, and anything that you may ask. I am ready. But if no attention is paid to this Book, thou, like unto the kings who became non-existent, shalt likewise become non-existent." The Sháh did not answer this Tablet of the Blessed Perfection. Then God destroyed the foundations of his sovereignty.

558 Amongst those to whom He wrote was the Sultán of Turkey. In it He arraigned him, saying: "Verily, thou didst incarcerate and make Me a prisoner. Dost thou imagine that imprisonment is a loss to Me—that imprisonment is a humiliation for Me? This imprisonment is a glory for Me because it is in the pathway of God. I have not committed a crime. It is for the sake of God that I have received this ordeal. Therefore I am very happy. I am exceedingly joyous. But thou must wait: God will send thee a punishment—thou shalt receive retribution. Ere long thou shalt observe

how ordeals shall descend upon thee like rain, and thou shalt become non-existent.”
And even so it was.

559 Likewise He sent messages to the other kings and crowned heads of the earth, summoning all of them to love, equity, international peace and the oneness of mankind, in order that all mankind might become unified and agreed; that strife, warfare and sedition might pass away; that bitterness and enmity might cease, and all might become united and agreed and arise to serve the One God.

Now I have spoken. If you have anything to say, let it be heard. You have listened most attentively. ... I will add a little more.

560 In brief, two kings arose against Bahá'u'lláh—the Sháh of Persia and the Sultán of Turkey. They imprisoned His Holiness in the fortress of 'Akká in order to extinguish His Light and exterminate His Cause. But Bahá'u'lláh while in prison wrote them letters of severe arraignment. He declared that imprisonment was no obstacle to Him. He said: “This imprisonment will prove to be the means of the promotion of My Cause. This imprisonment will be the incentive for the spreading of My Teachings. No harm shall come to Me because I have sacrificed My life, sacrificed My blood, sacrificed My possessions—all have I sacrificed, and for Me this imprisonment is no loss.” And just as He declared, so it came to pass. In prison He hoisted His banner, and His Cause was spread throughout the world. It has reached America. Now in all parts of the world the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is spread broadcast. You go to Asia and wherever you travel you will find Bahá'ís. You go to Africa, Europe, there you will find the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. In America it is but just beginning to grow and spread.

These two kings could not do anything to withstand Bahá'u'lláh, but through Him God was able to destroy both sovereignties. I, too, was in prison. God removed the chains from my neck and placed them around the neck of 'Abdu'l-Hamíd. It was done suddenly—not in a long time—in a moment as it were. The same hour that the Young Turks declared liberty, the Committee of Union and Progress set me free. They lifted the chains from my neck and threw them around the neck of 'Abdu'l-Hamíd. That which he did to me was inflicted on him. Now the position is precisely reversed. His days are spent in prison just as I passed the days in prison at 'Akká, with this difference: that I was happy in imprisonment. I was in the utmost elation, because I was not a criminal. They had imprisoned me in the Path of God.

New York City
July 5, 1912.

THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

561 O noble friends, seekers after God! Praise be to God! Today the light of Truth is shining upon the world in its abundance; the breezes of the heavenly garden are

blowing throughout all regions; the call of the Kingdom is heard in all lands, and the breath of the Holy Spirit is felt in all hearts that are faithful. The Spirit of God is giving eternal life. In this wonderful age the East is enlightened, the West is fragrant, and everywhere the soul inhales the holy perfume. The sea of the unity of mankind is lifting up its waves with joy, for there is real communication between the hearts and minds of men. The banner of the Holy Spirit is uplifted, and men see it, and are assured with the knowledge that this is a new day.

This is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of unity of the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes. You are loosed from ancient superstitions which have kept men ignorant, destroying the foundations of true humanity.

The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and of the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between nations, and by the will of God the Most Great Peace shall come; the world will be seen as a new world, and all men will live as brothers.

In the days of old an instinct for warfare was developed in the struggle with wild animals; this is no longer necessary; nay, rather, cooperation and mutual understanding are seen to produce the greatest welfare of mankind. Enmity is now the result of prejudice only.

In the "Hidden Words" Bahá'u'lláh says, "Justice is to be loved above all." Praise be to God, in this country the standard of justice has been raised; a great effort is being made to give all souls an equal and a true place. This is the desire of all noble natures; this is today the teaching for the East and for the West; therefore the East and the West will understand each other and reverence each other, and embrace like long-parted lovers who have found each other.

There is one God; mankind is one; the foundations of religion are one. Let us worship Him, and give praise for all His great Prophets and Messengers who have manifested His brightness and glory.

The blessing of the Eternal One be with you in all its richness, that each soul according to his measure may take freely of Him.

Amen.

City Temple, London
September 10, 1911.

THE PRINCIPLES OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH

562 Every age requires a central impetus or movement. In this age, the boundaries of terrestrial things have extended; minds have taken on a broader range of vision;

realities have been unfolded and the secrets of being have been brought into the realm of visibility. What is the spirit of this age, what is its focal point? It is the establishment of Universal Peace, the establishment of the knowledge that humanity is one family. Think on the conditions in this world of humanity. Nations have become like unto armed camps waiting to be ignited by the combustion of war.

563 Whereas in reality God has created man for love's sake. God has endowed man with creation so that he may illumine the world with the flame of brotherhood and express the utmost state of unity and accord. This state would express God's good pleasure; this would be the prosperity of the world of humanity. A thousand times, alas! this glorious century has been besmeared with war and strife, hatred and rancor. Bloodthirsty wolves are tearing the sheep of God. Destruction is more widespread than in all the ages of the past.

We hear on every side praises of the wonders of this cycle, its achievements, its refinements, its genius; calling the past the age of mediaeval horror. What mediaeval age held the horror of a Krupp gun, a Mauser rifle or a shrapnel shell that kills a whole camp? On the sea we have the submarine and the dreadnought. If you compare the past with this age, impartial judgment will call this the age of human fratricide.

564 All the religions are revealed for the sake of good fellowship. The fundamentals, the foundations, of all are fellowship, unity and love. The heavenly books were revealed and divine love bestowed to bring about peace. What has man made of religion? He has made it the cause of bloodshed and strife; enmity and hatred. Religion was destined to be a remedy for the sickness of humanity; an illumination for the darkness of uncertainty. Have we then forgotten the divine teachings, cast aside the heavenly books, created imaginary thoughts and illusions and made them the basis of rancor and strife? The Bible commands the practice of peace and justice. God desires love. In the Gospel we find the golden statement that man should be expressive of love even unto his enemy; he should be expressive of love to his ill-wishers; he should be expressive of love to all his fellowmen. He must have an eye to pardon: he must have an eye to benevolence. All the divine books invite men to these teachings. All the divine prophets suffered that man might realize these teachings. Consider what His Holiness Christ endured, how many vicissitudes he underwent, every day tasting a new poison, finally sacrificing his own life, so that the tent of love and concord might be raised over the world of humanity so that this dark world might be invested with divine light. Alas! that all the travail of these holy souls and sanctified prophets should be wasted. The world of humanity is in a stupor of sleep and it cannot grasp the realities. The horizons of the minds are still beclouded and the hearts are occupied with phantasmal longings. We seem never to think of the reason of creation; never to strive to proclaim those principles which enlighten humanity. In the sea of materialism we are sinking and of the Kingdom of God we know nothing. We are not living in accord with those precious teachings of God.

565 Nearly sixty years ago when the horizon of the Orient was in a state of the utmost gloom, warfare existed and there was enmity between the various creeds; darkness brooded over the children of men and foul clouds of ignorance hid the sky

—at such a time His Highness Bahá'u'lláh arose from the horizon of Persia like unto a shining sun. He boldly proclaimed peace, writing to the kings of the earth and calling upon them to arise and assist in the hoisting of this banner. In order to bring peace out of the chaos, he established certain precepts or principles:

Investigation of Truth

566 The first principle Bahá'u'lláh urged was the independent investigation of truth. “Each individual,” he said, “is following the faith of his ancestors who themselves are lost in the maze of tradition. Reality is steeped in dogmas and doctrines. If each investigate for himself, he will find that Reality is one; does not admit of multiplicity; is not divisible. All will find the same foundation and all will be at peace.”

The Oneness of Mankind

567 The second principles of Bahá'u'lláh proclaims the oneness of the human race. He states that humanity constitutes the sheep of God. God is the real shepherd. When this shepherd is compassionate and kind, why should the sheep quarrel amongst themselves? Addressing all humanity, Bahá'u'lláh says, “Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch. All the nations, peoples and tongues are the branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits of this great tree of humanity.” God created all; protects all; provides for all and is kind to all; why should you be unkind? If God had not loved humanity he would not have created it. Creation presupposes love. God is the real father; all are his children. All the creatures are equal in this one family of God save whosoever is more kind, more compassionate—he is nearer to God.

International Peace

568 The third principles of the religion of Bahá'u'lláh is in regard to international peace. There must be peace between the fatherlands; peace between the religions. In this period of evolution the world of humanity is in danger. Every war is against the good pleasure of the Lord of mankind. Man is the edifice of God. War destroys the divine edifice. Peace is the stay of life; war the cause of death. If an active, actual peace is brought about the human world will attain to the utmost serenity and composure. Wolves will be transformed into lambs; devils into angels and terrors into divine splendors in less than the twinkling of an eye.

Religion must Conform to Science and Reason

569 The fourth principle declares that religion must be in conformity to science and reason. If a religion does not agree with the postulates of science nor accord with the regulations of reason it is a bundle of superstitions; a phantasm of the brain. Science and religion are realities, and if that religion to which we adhere be a reality it must needs conform to the fundamental reality of all things.

Prejudice must be Forever Banished

570 The fifth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is this: that religious, racial, political and patriotic prejudice are the destroyers of human society. As long as these prejudices

last the world of humanity will not attain to poise and perfection. As long as these threatening clouds are in the sky of humanity, the sun of reality cannot dawn.

Equality of Sexes

571 The sixth principle of Bahá'u'lláh regards the equality of men and women. The male and female of the human kingdom are equal before God. God is no respecter of gender. Whosoever practices more faith, whosoever practices more humanitarianism is nearer to God; but between the male and female there is no innate difference because they share in common all the faculties. The world of humanity has two wings, one the male; the other the female. When both wings are reinforced with the same impulse the bird will be enabled to wing its flight heavenward to the summit of progress. Woman must be given the same opportunities as man for perfecting herself in the attainments of learning, science and arts. God has created the man and the woman equal, why should she be deprived of exercising the fullest opportunities afforded by life? Why should we ever raise the question of superiority and inferiority? In the animal kingdom the male and female enjoy suffrage and in the vegetable kingdom the plants all enjoy equal suffrage. In the human kingdom, which claims to be the realm of brotherhood and solidarity, why should we raise this question?

The Social Plan

572 The seventh teaching suggests a plan whereby all the individual members may enjoy the utmost comfort and welfare. The degrees of society must be preserved. The farmer will continue to till the soil, the artist pursue his art, the banker to finance the nation. An army has need of its general, captain, and private soldiers. The degrees varying with the pursuits are essential. But in this Bahá'í plan there is no class hatred. Each is to be protected and each individual member of the body politic is to live in the greatest comfort and happiness. Work is to be provided for all and there will be no needy ones seen in the streets.

The Parliament of Man

573 The eighth principle declares that there must needs be established the parliament of man or court of last appeals for international questions. The members of this arbitral court of justice will be representatives of all the nations. In each nation the members must be ratified by the government and the king or ruler, and this international parliament will be under the protection of the world of humanity. In it all international difficulties will be settled.

Universal Education

574 The ninth admonition is in regard to education. All the children must be educated so that there will not remain one single individual without an education. In cases of inability on the part of the parents through sickness, death, etc., the state must educate the child. In addition to this widespread education, each child must be taught a profession or trade so that each individual member of the body politic will be enabled to earn his own living and at the same time serve the community. Work done in the spirit of service is worship. From this universal system of education

misunderstandings will be expelled from amongst the children of men.

Universal Language

575 The tenth principles is the establishment of a universal language so that we shall not have to acquire so many languages in the future. In the schools they will study two, the mother tongue and the international auxiliary language. The use of an international auxiliary language will become a great means of dispelling the differences between nations.

576 There are many other teachings. I have given you but a few. Praise be to God! that day by day we are advancing and every day we see some new blessing descending. Let all of us render thanksgiving to our generous Lord that He may bless our eyes with sight and give unto our hearts understanding. May we become resuscitated with the breath of the Holy Spirit. May we be enabled to leave behind the world of matter in beholding the bounties of God. The divine table is spread, the heavenly illumination is all-encircling; eternal life is provided for all; divine food is prepared for all! Therefore let us practice the divine essence of love and love each other from our very hearts and souls so that the East and West shall embrace each other and realize that all are the sheep of God. God is the good shepherd—then shall we gather under the tabernacle of His mercy!

Clifton, England
January 16, 1913.

THE COVENANT

577 In the world of existence there are various bonds which unite the hearts, but none of these bonds is efficient. For instance, the first and foremost bond is the family bond, but this bond is not effective, for how often it happens that in some families divergence and difference obtains. A patriotic bond may be the means of amity and fellowship; but the oneness of nativity will not suffice, for if we examine history we shall find that the inhabitants of the same fatherland have often waged war against each other. In civil strife how often they have shed each others' blood; how often they have pillaged each others' property! Hence, it becomes evident that oneness of nativity is not sufficient. Another means of amity is the racial oneness. How often we have seen that men of the same race have engaged in the severest strife. They have spilled each other's blood; they have laid their country waste—which proves that the oneness of race is not oneness in reality. Among the bonds of unity is the political bond. How often we find that certain governments have been politically bound together, amongst them obtaining a political intercourse and oneness which afterwards was subjected to change and these governments arose against each other on the field of battle. Thus the oneness of politics is not sufficient.

That which is the cause of perfect unity and amity in the world of existence is the oneness of Reality. If Reality enters the arena, the fundamental reality can conserve the states, and that Reality—the oneness of humanity—is a oneness which can only come into being through the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, for the efficacy of the Holy Spirit is like unto the spirit in the body; it dispels all differences and ushers all beneath the same solidarity and unity. Regard how numerous are the parts and members of the human organism, but the oneness of the spirit animating it keeps its various parts and elements together in perfect co-ordination and solidarity. It brings such a unity into the organism that were each member to be subjected to any injury or were it to become diseased, all the other members would sympathetically suffer, due to the existence of their perfect unity. Hence, it becomes evident that the oneness of Reality—perfect amity amongst mankind—cannot be accomplished save through the power of the Holy Spirit, for the world of humanity is likened to the body and the Holy Spirit is likened to the animating power of the body; just as the human spirit is the cause of the cohesion of the various parts of the human organism, likewise the Holy Spirit is the cause of the unity and amity of all mankind.

Hence we must strive in order that the power of the Holy Spirit may become effective throughout all humanity, in order that it may confer a new life upon the body politic, that all of the body politic may be ushered beneath the shelter of the same Word. Then the world of humanity shall become the angelic world, the ethereal darkness shall pass away and celestial illumination shall take its place; the defects of the human world shall be erased and the Divine virtues shall become resplendent; and this is unobtainable save through the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the greatest need of the world of humanity today is to receive the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Until the Holy Spirit becomes effective, interpenetrating the hearts and spirits, and until perfect, reasonable faith shall obtain in the minds of men, it is impossible for the social body to be inspired with security and confidence. Nay, on the contrary, day by day enmity and strife shall increase among men and the differences and divergences of the nations shall augment; day by day additions to armies and navies of the world shall be made, and great is the fear of the great pandemic war, the war unparalleled in history; for armaments which heretofore have been so limited are now becoming amplified on a grand scale. It is becoming severe, drawing nigh unto the degree that men shall war upon the seas, war upon the plains, nay, rather, shall war in the very atmosphere; and such conditions of warfare never obtained in bygone days. The dangers of war grow equally with the growth of armaments.

578 Therefore we must endeavor that the Holy Spirit shall peacefully influence the minds and hearts; that the bounties of God shall surround; that all the Divine effulgences shall become successive, in order that human souls may advance, minds expand in liberalism, souls become more holy and the world of humanity be rid of this great danger.

For this, His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh endured all the hardships, ordeals and vicissitudes of life, sacrificing His very being, sacrificing His comfort, forfeiting His possessions, forfeiting His estates, forfeiting His honor—all that pertains to human existence—not for one year, nay, rather for fifty years. For fifty years He bore hardships, endured ordeals; was cast into prison; was banished from His home; was

subjected to severities and four times exiled. He was first exiled from Persia to Baghdád; then from Baghdád to Constantinople; thereafter from Constantinople to Roumelia, and from Roumelia was He exiled to the Great Prison, 'Akká, the great fortress of 'Akká, where He passed the remainder of His life. Every day a new exposure to danger and every day a new ordeal, until in the dungeon He winged His way to the very Heaven: that is to say, returned unto His Lord. The purpose of enduring all these ordeals and difficulties was no other than the illumination of the human world, that this earthly world might become heavenly; that the realm of the Kingdom might become a reality; that the individual members of humanity might advance, minds progress, the efficacy of the Holy Spirit become greater in penetration and thereby the happiness of the human world be assured. For all He desired composure and ease, and He exercised love and kindness towards all nations regardless of distinction. And He addressed humanity, saying: "O ye humankind! verily ye are all the leaves of one tree; ye are all the fruits of one tree; ye are all one. Hence associate with each other in amity; love one another; abandon the prejudices of race; forget forever this gloomy darkness of ignorance, for the Century of Light, the Sun of Reality, hath appeared. Now is the time for affiliation and now is the period for unification. For six thousand years ye have been contending and warring. It is sufficient! Now is the time for unity. Ye should abandon selfish purposes, and know ye for a certainty that all mankind are the servants of one God and all are to be mutually bound."

579

And inasmuch as in the past there have been caused great differences and divergences, and denominations have been created, every man with a new idea attributing it to God, therefore He desired that among Bahá'ís no difference should occur. Wherefore with His pen He wrote the Book of His Covenant, addressing all Bahá'ís and all His relations, saying: "Verily, I have appointed a person who is the Center of My Covenant. All must obey Him; all must turn to him; he is the expounder of My Book and he is informed of My purposes. All must turn to him. Whatsoever he says is true, for verily, he knoweth the texts of My Book. Other than he, none knoweth the Book." And this He said because among the Bahá'ís there is not to take place any difference; all are to be unified and agreed. Also He said in His prayer: "O God, whosoever violateth My Covenant, humiliate him. Verily, whosoever violateth My Covenant, him, O God, efface and destroy." In all His Tablets, among which is the Tablet of the Branch, He has elucidated the various qualities or characteristics of that (appointed) person; He has expounded the potency and power of that person, so that no one with a new desire shall say, "I understand this from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh," for He appointed the Center or Expounder of the Book. He said: "Verily, he is the appointed one; other than he, none is," so that no sects or prejudices might be formed, and lest every man with a new thought arise and create a party. It is as though a king should appoint a governor general. Whosoever obeys that governor general has obeyed the king. Whosoever has denied the governor general has denied the king. Thus whosoever obeys the Center of the Covenant appointed by Bahá'u'lláh, has obeyed Bahá'u'lláh; and whosoever disobeys him has disobeyed Bahá'u'lláh. The matter does not concern the personality of the Center of the Covenant, precisely as in the case of the governor general of a king: it is the king who is obeyed in obeying the governor general; it is the king who is disobeyed in

disobeying the governor general.

580

Therefore, you must read the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh. You must read the Tablet of the Branch. You must regard that which He has clearly stated. Beware! beware! lest any one declare his own ideas or create a party round about himself. Beware! beware! you should not heed such a person, according to the explicit Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh shuns such souls, and for the conservation of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh I have expounded the matter for you, so that you may be informed lest any souls shall deceive you, lest any souls shall cause suspicion among you. You must love all people, though if any soul casts you into doubt, you must know that Bahá'u'lláh is quit of him. Any one who works for unity, who works for amity, is a servant of Bahá'u'lláh and Bahá'u'lláh is his Help and his Assistance. ... 5

338 Kenmore Avenue,
Chicago September 16, 1912.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

581

The Holy, Divine Manifestations are unique and peerless. They are the archetypes of celestial and spiritual virtues in their own age and cycle. They stand on the summit of the Mount of Vision and they foreshadow the perfections of evolving humanity.

For example: during the dispensation of His Holiness Moses—peace be upon Him!—there was not a single human soul similar or like unto Him. He surpassed all the Holy Souls who came after Him, even the hosts of the prophets of Israel. In a similar manner all the people who lived during the cycle of His Holiness Christ—may my life be a sacrifice to Him!—were under His spiritual authority. They had no will of their own. He was the Sun and others were the lamps. He was unique and peerless, the center and the focal point of the mighty forces. Every one else was under His shadow. He was the Orb and the others were the stars. Every one caught the rays of Light from Him, and was enkindled through his Fire. In a like manner was the epoch of His Holiness the Báb— may the life of aught else be a ransom to Him!—and He was matchless and without peer. All the rivers received their strength from that great sea.

582

Finally during the cycle of the Blessed Perfection—may my life be a sacrifice to His believers!— all are beneath His shadow. He is the unique and peerless One until the next Manifestation. It is not definite, however, that this will be 100 years; it may be 2000 or 10,000 or 20,000 years; but it is definite that for the coming 1000 years that shall appear no Manifestation—for 1000 years there shall arise no Sun. All the appearances will be beneath the shadow of the Most Great Appearance: they will be as stars of guidance. All of them shall gather around this Fountain of Life; all of them will become illumined with the rays of this Sun; all of them will receive a

share and a portion from this great Sea; all of them will become vivified with this soul-impacting breeze; all will be under the downpour of this rain. The aim is this: His Holiness the Báb gave the glad tidings concerning the appearance of the Manifestation of God, and His Holiness, the Blessed Perfection, was the Promised One of all the nations and religions. The Báb was the Morning Star heralding the glorious Dawn of the Sun of Reality. Now all of us are under Its shadow and receive the refulgent bestowals from It.

583 I am ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’, and no more. I am not pleased with whosoever praises me with any other title. I am the Servant at the Threshold of the Blessed Perfection, and I hope that this Servitude of mine will become acceptable. Whosoever mentions any other name save this will not please me at all. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’, and no more. No person must praise me except by this name: “‘Abdu’l-Bahá’.”

584 The Blessed Perfection and the Báb are unique and peerless in this Dispensation and until the next Manifestation. The belief, the opinion and the thoughts of all believers must revolve around this common Center. This oneness of belief must become fully realized so that in the future they may arise no differences. His Holiness the Báb was the Morn of Guidance. The Blessed Perfection was the Desired One of all the religions and nations, and all of us are under the Blessed Shadow, non-existent and evanescent. All of us are the servants of this Holy Threshold. All of us are the thralls, humble and lowly. All of us receive the Light from that Sun of Reality. There is no other mention, no other quality, no other appellation for us save this. I am ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’. The believers must be satisfied with this explanation so that I may be pleased with them. All of the friends must be united on this matter. Praise be to God! that up to this time, through the favor and providence of the Blessed Perfection, no other title or word save ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’ has appeared either from my tongue or pen. I hope that all the believers will walk in my footsteps so that I may become satisfied with all of them. Our highest aspiration must be this: that we may become confirmed to render some slight service in the Path of God. There is no greater station than this.

585 After the Departure of the Blessed Perfection and until the Appearance of the next Manifestation there is no other station save the Station of Servitude, pure and absolute. Not a servitude liable to interpretation; but an unconditional and unqualified servitude. This is the real fact. Whosoever expresses any other interpretation, I will not be pleased with you. This is my advice to you. This is my counsel to you. This is my desire. This is my good pleasure. This is my last request from all the believers of God! The balsam of my wound is servitude at the Holy Threshold. My Sudrat-ul-Muntaha is servitude at the Holy Threshold! My highest destination is servitude at the Holy Threshold! My supreme Paradise is servitude at the Holy Threshold! The most shining Crown is servitude at the Holy Threshold!

What diadem is more glorious than servitude at the Holy Threshold? I hope that all of us will become assisted in this servitude. I hope each one of us will become confirmed in absolute humility and meekness at the Holy Threshold. This is the Delectable Paradise of the righteous ones! This is the zenith of the hope of the favored ones!

MIRZÁ AHMAD SOHRAB,

HISTORY OF THE CAUSE

586 Tonight I wish to tell you something of the history of the Bahá'í Revelation.

The Blessed Perfection Bahá'u'lláh belonged to the royal family of Persia. From earliest childhood he was distinguished among his relatives and friends. They said, "This child has extraordinary power." In wisdom, intelligence and as a source of new knowledge he was advanced beyond his age and superior to his surroundings. All who knew him were astonished at his precocity. It was usual for them to say, "Such a child will not live" for it is commonly believed that precocious children do not reach maturity. During the period of youth the Blessed Perfection did not enter school. He was not willing to be taught. This fact is well established among the Persians of Tihrán. Nevertheless he was capable of solving difficult problems of all who came to him. In whatever meeting, scientific assembly or theological discussion he was found, he became the authority of explanation upon intricate and abstruse questions presented.

Until his father passed away, Bahá'u'lláh did not seek position or political station notwithstanding his connection with the government. This occasioned surprise and comment. It was frequently said, "How is it that a young man of such keen intelligence and subtle perception does not seek lucrative appointments? As a matter of fact every position is open to him." This is an historical statement fully attested by the people of Persia.

He was most generous, giving abundantly to the poor. None who came to him were turned away. The doors of his house were open to all. He always had many guests. This unbounded generosity was conducive to greater astonishment from the fact that he sought neither position nor prominence. In commenting upon this his friends said he would become impoverished, for his expenses were many and his wealth becoming more and more limited. "Why is he not thinking of his own affairs?" they inquired of each other; but some who were wise declared "This personage is connected with another world; he has something sublime within him that is not evident now; the day is coming when it will be manifested." In truth the Blessed perfection was a refuge for every weak one, a shelter for every fearing one, kind to every indigent one, lenient and loving to all creatures.

587 He became well-known in regard to these qualities before His Holiness the Báb appeared. Then Bahá'u'lláh declared the Báb's mission to be true and promulgated his teachings. The Báb announced that the greater manifestation would take place after him and called the promise one "Him whom God would manifest," saying that nine years later the reality of his own mission would become apparent. In his writing he stated that in the ninth year his expected one would be known; in the

ninth year they would attain to all glory and felicity; in the ninth year they would advance rapidly. Between Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb there was communication privately. The Báb wrote a letter containing three hundred and sixty derivatives of the root "Bahá." The Báb was martyred in Tabríz, and Bahá'u'lláh, exiled into 'Iráq-Arabí in 1852, announced himself in Baghdád. For the Persian government had decided that as long as he remained in Persia the peace of the country would be disturbed; therefore he was exiled in the expectation that Persia would become quiet. His banishment, however, produced the opposite effect. New tumult arose and the mention of his greatness and influence spread everywhere throughout the country. The proclamation of his manifestation and mission was made in Baghdád. He called his friends together there and spoke to them of God. Afterward he left the city and went alone into the mountains of Kurdistán where he made his abode in caves and grottoes. A part of this time he lived in the city of Sulimáníyyih. Two years passed during which neither his friends nor family knew just where he was.

588 Although solitary, secluded and unknown in his retirement, the report spread throughout Kurdistán that this was a most remarkable and learned personage gifted with a wonderful power of attraction. In a short time Kurdistán was magnetized with his love. During this period Bahá'u'lláh lived in poverty. His garments were those of the poor and needy. His food was that of the indigent and lowly. An atmosphere of majesty halloed him as the sun at midday. Everywhere he was greatly revered and beloved.

After two years, he returned to Baghdád. Friends he had known in Sulimáníyyih came to visit him. They found him in his accustomed environment of ease and affluence and were astonished at the appointments of one who had lived in seclusion under such frugal conditions in Kurdistán.

589 The Persian government believed the banishment of the Blessed Perfection from Persia would be the extermination of his cause in that country. These rulers now realized that it spread more rapidly. His prestige increased, his teachings became more widely circulated. The chiefs of Persia then used their influence to have Bahá'u'lláh exiled from Baghdád. He was summoned to Constantinople by the Turkish authorities. While in Constantinople he ignored every restriction, especially the hostility of ministers of state and clergy. The official representatives of Persia again brought their influence to bear upon the Turkish authorities and succeeded in having Bahá'u'lláh banished from Constantinople to Adrianople, the object being to keep him as far away as possible from Persia and render his communication with that country more difficult. Nevertheless the cause still spread and strengthened.

590 Finally they consulted together and said, "We have banished Bahá'u'lláh from place to place but each time he is exiled his cause is more widely extended, his proclamation increases in power and day by day his lamp is becoming brighter. This is due to the fact that we have exiled him to large cities and populous centers. Therefore we will send him to a penal colony as a prisoner so that all may know he is the associate of murderers, robbers and criminals; in a short time he and his followers will perish." The Sultán of Turkey than banished him to the prison of 'Akká in Syria.

591 When Bahá'u'lláh arrived at 'Akká, through the power of God he was able to

hoist his banner. His light at first had been a star; now it became a mighty sun and the illumination of his cause expanded from the east to the west. Inside prison walls he wrote epistles to all the kings and rulers of nations summoning them to arbitration and Universal Peace. Some of the kings received his words with disdain and contempt. One of these was the Sultán of the Ottoman kingdom. Napoleon III of France did not reply. A second epistle was addressed to him. It stated "I have written you an epistle before this, summoning you to the cause of God but you are of the heedless. You have proclaimed that you were the defender of the oppressed; now it hath become evident that you are not. Nor are you kind to your own suffering and oppressed people. Your actions are contrary to your own interests and your kingly pride must fall. Because of your arrogance God shortly will destroy your sovereignty. France will flee away from you and you will be overwhelmed by a great conquest. There will be lamentation and mourning, women bemoaning the loss of their sons." This arraignment of Napoleon III was published and spread.

Read it and consider: One prisoner, single and solitary, without assistant or defender, a foreigner and stranger imprisoned in the fortress of 'Akká writing such letters to the Emperor of France and Sultán of Turkey. Reflect upon this, how Bahá'u'lláh upraised the standard of his cause in prison. Refer to history. It is without parallel. No such thing has happened before that time nor since; a prisoner and an exile advancing his cause and spreading his teachings broadcast so that eventually he became powerful enough to conquer the very King who banished him.

592 His cause spread more and more. The Blessed Perfection was a prisoner twenty-five years. During all this time he was subjected to the indignities and revilement of the people. He was persecuted, mocked and put in chains. In Persia his properties were pillaged and his possessions confiscated. First, banishment from Persia to Baghdád; then to Constantinople; then to Adrianople; finally from Roumelia to the prison fortress of 'Akká.

During his lifetime he was intensely active. His energy was unlimited. Scarcely one night passed in restful sleep. He bore these ordeals, suffered these calamities and difficulties in order that a manifestation of selflessness and service might become apparent in the world of humanity; that the "Most Great Peace" should become a reality; that human souls might appear as the angels of heaven; that heavenly miracles would be wrought among men; that human faith should be strengthened and perfected; that the precious, priceless bestowal of God—the human mind—might be developed to its fullest capacity in the temple of the body; and man become the reflection and likeness of God, even as it hath been revealed in the Bible: "We shall create man in our own image."

593 Briefly; the Blessed Perfection bore all these ordeals and calamities in order that our hearts might become enkindled and radiant, our spirits be glorified, our faults become virtues, our ignorance transformed into knowledge; in order that we might attain the real fruits of humanity and acquire heavenly graces; although pilgrims upon earth we might travel the road of the heavenly kingdom; although needy and poor we might receive the treasures of life eternal. For this has he borne these difficulties and sorrows.

Trust all to God. The lights of God are resplendent. The blessed Epistles are

spreading. The blessed teachings are promulgated throughout the East and the West. Soon you will see that the heavenly Words have established the oneness of the world of humanity. The banner of the “Most Great Peace” has been unfurled and the “great community” is appearing.

273 West 90th Street,
New York City
April 18, 1912.

SCIENTIFIC PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

594 Today someone asked a question regarding the existence of God. What are the proofs through which one can establish the existence of God?

People are divided into two sections, one which is satisfied with the knowledge of the attributes of divinity, and the other which strives to establish the existence of divinity, and be informed of the fundamental principles of divine philosophy.

Therefore today I will speak to you of the proofs which establish scientifically the existence of God.

595 I will not quote to you the scriptural proofs from the Old and the New Testament or the Qur’án, for you are more or less familiar with those ideas. Consequently, I will deal with this subject from an intellectual standpoint. As it is an abstruse subject I request you to give your utmost attention.

596 When we look upon all forms of phenomena, we observe that they are the results of composition. For example, certain single atoms are brought together through the inherent law of elective affinity existing between these various particles, the result of which is the human being. A number of primordial atoms have gone into the make-up of a plant, the result of which is the flower.

Again, looking into the mineral kingdom we observe that this law of cohesion is working in the same manner in that kingdom, for we see that many atoms go into the composition of a piece of stone which through purification may reach to the state of a mirror.

In short, the existence of life depends upon the composition and decomposition of phenomena. When the particles of a given composition are disintegrated this may be called non-existence, but the original simple atoms will go back to their primary elements and are ever existent.

For instance, the body of man being the resultant factor of the composition of these atoms, when this body becomes the subject of decomposition, we call that death, but those atoms of which the body of man was composed, being simple and primordial, are indestructible. Consequently it is proved that the existence of phenomena depends upon composition and their mortality upon decomposition.

This is a scientific principle; science approves of it, because it is not a matter of belief. There is a great difference between theories upheld by belief, and facts which are substantiated by science.

Beliefs are the susceptibilities of conscience, but scientific facts are the deductions of reason and inexorable logic.

Therefore it is logically proven that the existence of phenomena depends upon composition, and their destruction upon disintegration.

Now going back to our subject and the facts upheld by materialists. They state that inasmuch as it is proven and upheld by science that the life of phenomena depends upon composition and their destruction upon disintegration, then where comes in the need or necessity of a Creator—the self-subsistent Lord?

For if we see with our own eyes that these infinite beings go through myriads of compositions and in every composition appearing under a certain form showing certain characteristics virtues, then we are independent of any divine maker.

597 This is the argument of the materialists. On the other hand those who are informed of divine philosophy answer in the following terms:

Composition is of three kinds.

1. Accidental composition.
2. Involuntary composition.
3. Voluntary composition.

There is no fourth kind of composition. Composition is restricted to these three categories.

If we say that composition is accidental, this is philosophically a false theory, because then we have to believe in an effect without a cause, and philosophically, no effect is conceivable without a cause. We cannot think of an effect without some primal cause, and composition being an effect, there must naturally be a cause behind it.

As to the second composition i.e., the involuntary composition. Involuntary composition means that each element has within it, as an inherent function this power of composition. For example, certain elements have flowed towards each other, and as an inherent necessity of their being they are composed. That is, it is the imminent need of these elements to enter into composition.

For example, the inherent quality of fire is burning or heat. Heat is an original property of fire.

Humidity is the inherent nature of water. You cannot conceive of H₂O, which is the chemical form of water, without having humidity connected, for that is its inherent quality, inseparable and indivisible.

Now as long as it is the inherent necessity of these elements to be composed, there should not be any decomposition. While we observe that after each composite organism, there is a process of decomposition we learn that the composition of the organisms of life is neither accidental nor involuntary. Then what have we as a form of composition? It is the third, that is the voluntary composition. And that

means that the infinite forms of organisms are composed through a superior will, the eternal will, the will of the living and self-subsistent Lord.

This is a rational proof, that the Will of the Creator is effected through the process of composition.

Ponder over this carefully. When you comprehend the significance of this subject you will then be able to convey it to others. The more you think over this the greater will be your comprehension.

Thank God that He has given you such a power through which you can comprehend these divine mysteries. Reflect deeply, ponder carefully, think minutely, and then the doors of knowledge shall be opened unto you.

Paris, France
February 9, 1913.

THE NEED OF THE PERFECT MASTER

598 Those who are uninformed of the world of reality, who do not comprehend the existent beings, who do not perceive the realities of things, who do not discover the real mysteries of the existent objects, and who have but a superficial grasp of things—such persons are but embodiments of pure ignorance. They believe only in that which they have learned from their fathers and ancestors. They of themselves have no hearing, no sight, no reason, no intellect; they rely upon tradition. They follow after the thoughts of their father and forebears. Such persons imagine that the dominion of God is an accidental dominion or kingdom.

For instance, they imagine that this world of existence was created but six or seven thousand years ago—as though God did not reign before this period of seven thousand years, had no creation before this, had no world before this. They think that Divinity is accidental, for to them Divinity is dependent upon existent things, while, as a matter of fact, as long as there has been a God, He has had a creation. As long as there has been light, there have been recipients of that light, for the light does not have a manifestation unless there are those who perceive and appreciate it. The world of divinity presupposes creation, presupposes recipients of bounty, presupposes the existence of worlds.

No Divinity can be conceived as separate from creation, for otherwise it would be like imagining an empire without a people. A king must needs have a kingdom, must needs have an army, must needs have subjects. Is it possible to be a king and have no country, no army, no subjects? This is an absurdity. Were we to say that there was a time when there was no country, no army, and no subjects, how then could there be a king, a ruler? For a king must needs have a country, an army and subjects.

Consequently, just as the reality of Divinity has no beginning,—that is, God has ever been the Creator, God has ever been the Provider, God has ever been a Quickener, God has been a Bestower—so there never has been a time when the attributes of God have not had expression. The sun is the sun because of its rays, because of its heat. Were we to conceive of there ever having been a time when there was a sun and yet it had no heat, no light—that would imply and prove that there had been no sun at all, and that it became the sun afterward. So, likewise, were we to say that there was a time when God had no creation, had no created beings, had no recipients of His bounties, that His names and attributes had not been manifest—this would mean a thorough denial of the Divinity, for it would mean that Divinity is accidental. To put it still more clearly, if we think that fifty thousand years ago—or one hundred thousand years ago—there was no creation, that there were no worlds, no human beings, no animals—this thought of ours would mean that previous to fifty thousand years ago, there was no Divinity. For were we to say that there was a time when there was a king but there were no subjects, no army, no country for him to rule over, it would be assuming that there was a time when there was no king, and that the king is accidental. So just as the reality of Divinity is without a beginning, so is creation without a beginning. This is as clear as the sun. When we contemplate this machinery of power and perceive this infinite space and its numerous worlds, then it will easily become clear to us that the lifetime of this great creation is more than six thousand years—nay, it is very ancient.

599 But we read in Genesis, in the Old Testament, that the lifetime of creation is but six thousand years. Now this has a meaning. This is not to be taken literally. For instance, it is said in the Old Testament, in the first day such and such a thing was created,—in the first day! Then the narrative shows that the sun was not yet created! How could we conceive a day if there were no sun created? For the day depends upon the existence of the sun. While no creation of the sun was yet made, how then was the first day realized? Therefore, these things have significances other than literal.

600 To be brief: my purpose is to say that the kingdom of God, the divine sovereignty, is an ancient sovereignty. It is not an accidental sovereignty, and that sovereignty presupposes the presence of subjects, of an army, of a country; for otherwise, the state of dominion, authority and kingdom cannot be conceived of. So, were one to imagine that the Creator is accidental, while the divine bounty is ever flowing, and the rays of the Sun of Truth are continuously shining. No cessation is possible to the Divine Bounty, just as no cessation is possible to the rays of the sun. This is clear and obvious.

Thus there have been many holy Manifestations of God. One thousand years ago, two hundred thousand years ago, one million years ago, the bounty of God was flowing, the radiance of God was shining, the dominion of God was reigning.

601 Why do these holy Manifestations of God become manifest? What is the wisdom of their coming? What is the result obtained through them? It is clear that human personality is endowed with two aspects. One is the aspect of its being the image of God, and the other is the satanic aspect; and the human reality stands between these

two aspects—the divine and the satanic. It is manifest that beyond this body man is endowed with another reality, which reality is in the world of exemplars, and which is the heavenly body of man. At the time of speech man says: “I said,” “I saw.” Who is this “I”? It is obvious that this “I” is different from this body. It is clear that when man is thinking, it is as though he were consulting with some other person. Whom is he consulting with? It is evident that it is another reality or one aside from this body with whom he enters into consultation, when he thinks of himself, saying, “Shall I do this work or not?” “What shall be the fruit of my doing this?” Or, when he asks the other reality, “What is the harm of this work if I do it?” And then that reality in man communicates to him its opinion concerning the point at issue. Therefore, that reality in man is obviously and clearly other than this body, with which man enters into consultation and whose opinion man seeks.

Many a time, man makes his mind up positively about a thing; for instance, he makes up his mind and determines to undertake a journey. Then, he begins to think, that is, he consults his inner reality, and finally concludes that he will give up his journey. Why is it? How is it he gave up his original purpose? Thus it is evident that there is a reality in him and he consults that reality, and that reality expresses to him the harm which such a journey would cause. Therefore the man minds that reality and gives up the plan of the journey.

602

Furthermore, in the world of dreams man sees things. He travels in the East, he travels in the West, although his body is stationary. His body is here, yet it is that reality in him which makes the journey to the West while the body sleeps. There is no doubt that a reality is there other than the outward, physical reality. For instance, a person is dead, is buried in the ground. We see him in the world of dreams, we speak with him. While that person’s body is interred in the ground, who then is the person whom you see in your dreams, talk to, and who also speaks to you? Therefore, this again proves that there is another reality, different from this physical one which dies and is buried. Thus it is evident that in man, there is a reality other than this physical one which is not his body. For instance, the body becomes weak, but that reality is in its normal state of existence. This body becomes strengthened, but that reality in man is in its normal state, unchangeable. For instance, the body of man may lose one arm, but the reality of man, which is not visible, loses nothing and is in its own normal state. This body goes to sleep, becomes as one dead, but that reality in that body which is asleep is moving about, is comprehending things, is expressing them, is discovering the realities of things.

Consequently, it is known that in man there is a reality other than this material one which is called body, and that reality which is other than this physical one is called the heavenly body of man; and we call that body the ethereal form which corresponds to this body. It is that reality which discovers the inner meaning of things; otherwise, this body of man does not discover anything. That reality grasps the mysteries of existence. It discovers scientific facts. It discovers technical points. It discovers electricity, telegraphy, the telephone, and so on, discovering all the arts—and yet the reality which makes all these discoveries is other than this body, for, were it this body, then the animal would likewise be able to make these scientific and wonderful discoveries, for the animal shares with man all physical limitation and physical powers. What then is that power which discovers the realities of things

which is not to be found in the animal? There is no doubt that it is the inner reality of man; and that reality comprehends all things, throws light upon the inner mysteries of existence, discovers the Kingdom, grasps the mysteries of God, and distinguishes man from the brute. That reality penetrates the inner core of beings; and it is evident that man is endowed with that reality and there is no doubt therein.

603 This human reality stands between two grades, between the world of the animal and the world of Divinity. Were the animal in man to become predominant, man would become even lower than the brute. Were the heavenly powers in man to become predominant, man would become the most superior being in the world of existence. For instance, consider in man there is rancor; in man there is struggle for existence; in the nature of man there is propensity for warfare; innate in man there is love of self; in him there is jealousy, and so on with all the other imperfections and thus, in a word, all the imperfections found in the animal are to be found in man. For instance, in the animal there is ferocity; there is also ferocity in man. In the animal there is what is called hypocrisy or slyness, like unto that in the fox; and in the animal there is greed—and there is ignorance. So there are all these in man. In the animal there are injustice and tyranny; so likewise are they in man. The reality of man, therefore, is clad, you might say, in its outer form in the garment of the animal, in the garment of the world of nature, of the world of darkness; that is the world of imperfection, that is the world of infinite baseness.

604 On the other hand, we find that there is justice in man, there is sincerity in man, faithfulness, knowledge, wisdom, light, and that there is mercy and pity in man; that there is in him intellect, comprehension, the power to grasp the reality of things, the ability to discover the reality of existence. All these great perfections are to be found in man. Consequently, we say that man is a reality which stands between light and darkness, that he has three aspects, three phases; one is the human aspect, one is the divine, heavenly aspect, and one is the natural, or animal aspect. The animal or natural aspect is darkness. The heavenly aspect is light in light.

605 Now to return to the point: The holy Manifestations of God come into the world in order to effect the disappearance of the physical, the animal, dark aspect of man, so that the darkness in him may be dispelled, his imperfections be eradicated, his spiritual, heavenly phase may become manifest, his God-like aspect may become paramount and his perfections may become visible; his innate great power may become known, and that all the virtues of the world of humanity potential within him may come to life. Thus, these holy Manifestations of God are the educators and trainers of the world of existence and they are the teachers of the world of humanity. These holy Manifestations of God liberate men from the world of darkness and nature. They deliver him from gloom, from error, from hideousness, from ignorance, from imperfections, and likewise from all the evil qualities. Then they cause him to be clad in the garment of perfection and high virtues. Men are ignorant; the Manifestations of God make them wise. They are animalistic; the Manifestations make them human. They are ferocious; the Manifestations cause them to become kingdoms of light. They are unjust; the Manifestations cause them to be just. Man is selfish; they cause him to be severed from self and desire. Men are haughty; the Manifestations cause them to become meek and amiable. They are

earthly; the Manifestations cause them to become heavenly. They are material; they cause them to become divine. They are immature children; the Manifestations cause them to become mature. Men are poor; they cause them to become wealthy. They are base; they cause them to become noble. Men are mean; and they cause them to become lofty.

To be brief: these holy Manifestations liberate the world of humanity from the imperfections which beset it and cause men to appear in the garment of heavenly perfections. Were it not for the coming of these holy Manifestations of God, all men would be found on the plane of the animal. They would be similar to ignorant individuals who have never seen a school, who have never had a trainer. For such individuals will undoubtedly remain ignorant.

606 Leave these mountains, these hills, to the world of nature and they will remain a jungle, and you will not find any fruitful tree among them. But a true gardener changes this forest and jungle into a garden, training its trees into fruitful ones, and causing numerous kinds of flowers and myrtles to grow therein. In the same way these holy Manifestations of God are the ideal gardeners. The world of existence is but a jungle of confusion. The state of nature is confusion such as that of a jungle, producing fruitless, useless trees. As the holy Manifestations of God are the ideal gardeners, they, therefore, train these human trees and cause them to become fruitful and bestow upon them freshness and verdancy in order that they may grow day by day and produce every kind of pure fruit, and thus become the cause of adorning the world of being and continue flourishing and in the utmost purity.

Consequently, we cannot say that the divine bounty has ceased, that the glory of the Divinity is exhausted, or the Sun of Truth has sunk down into eternal sunset—in that sunset which is not followed by a dawn, into that darkness which is not followed by light, into that death which is not followed by life, into that error which is not followed by truth! Is it conceivable that the Sun of Truth should sink into an eternal sunset? No, the sun was created in order that it may shed light upon the world, and train all existing things. How then can the Sun set forever? For this would mean the cessation of the divine bounty, and the divine bounty is ceaseless; it is continuous. Its Sun is ever shining; its cloud is ever producing rain; its breezes are ever blowing; its bounties are all-comprehending; its gift is ever perfect. Consequently, we must always anticipate and always be hopeful and pray to God to send unto us his holy Manifestation in the most perfect might, with divine, penetrative power, with the Divine Word, so that these divine Manifestations may be distinguished above all other beings in every respect, in every phase; in the same way as the sun is distinguished above the stars.

607 Although the stars are scintillating, yet the sun is superior to them in luminosity. Likewise these holy, divine Manifestations are and must always be distinguished above all other beings in every attribute of glory and perfection, in order that it may be proven that the Manifestation is the true teacher, that he is the real trainer, that he is the Sun of Truth, that he is endowed with a great light, and in order that it may be proven that he is endowed with a heavenly aspect. For, otherwise, it is not possible for us to train any one human individual, and after training him to believe that he is the holy, divine Manifestation. The holy, divine

Manifestation must be endowed with divine knowledge and not be one instructed in school learning. He must be the educator and not the educated. The holy Manifestations of God must be perfect and not imperfect. They must be great and not weak and impotent. They must be wealthy and not indigent. In a word, the holy Manifestation of God must be in every great aspect distinguished above all else in order that he may be able to train the human body politic, in order that he may have power to eliminate the darkness, cause the advancing of the world of humanity from one plane to a higher one, be able through the penetrative power of his word to promote and spread broadcast the Universal Peace among men, bring about the unification of men and religions through a divine power, harmonize all sects and branches and convert all nativities and regions into one nativity and fatherland.

Thus it is our hope that the bounties of God will encompass us all and the gifts of the divine will become manifest, the lights of the Sun of Truth will illumine our eyes and inspire our hearts and convey to our souls cheerful glad-tidings of God and cause our thoughts to become lofty, and our efforts to become productive of glorious results. In a word, it is my hope that we may attain to that which is the summit of human aspirations and wishes.

Theosophical Society
New York City
December 4, 1912.

THE GREAT MASTER

608 As to the coming of the Great Master. His appearance is dependent upon the realization of certain conditions. Investigate the reality, and in whomsoever those conditions are fulfilled, know ye of a certainty that He is the Great Master.

First. The Great Master will be the educator of the world of humanity.

Second. His teachings must be universal and confer illumination upon mankind.

Third. His knowledge must be innate and spontaneous, and not acquired knowledge.

Fourth. He must answer the questions of all the sages, solve all the difficult problems of humanity, and be able to withstand all the persecutions and sufferings heaped upon Him.

Fifth. He must be a joy-bringer and the herald of the Kingdom of happiness.

Sixth. His knowledge must be infinite and His wisdom all-comprehensive.

Eighth. Sorrows and tribulations must not vex Him. His courage and conviction must be godlike. Day by day, He must become firmer and more zealous.

Ninth. He must be the establisher of universal civilization, the unifier of

religions, the standard- bearer of universal peace and the embodiment of all the highest and noblest virtues of the world of humanity.

Wherever you find these conditions realized in a human temple, turn to Him for guidance and illumination.

Theosophical Society
Budha Pesth
April 12, 1913.

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

609 God is Love and Peace. God is Truth. God is Omniscience. God is without beginning and without end. God is uncreated and uncreating, yet the Source, the Causeless Cause. God is pure Essence, and cannot be said to be anywhere or in any place.

God is infinite; and as terms are finite, the nature of God cannot be expressed in terms, but as man desires to express God in some way, he calls God "Love" and "Truth," because these are the highest things he knows. Life is eternal; so man, in order to express God's infinity, calls God "Life." But these things in themselves are not God. God is the Source of all, and all things that are, are mirrors reflecting His Glory.

But while God does not create, the first principle of God, Love, is the creative principle. Love is an outpour from God, and is pure spirit. It is one aspect of the Logos, the Holy Spirit. It is the immediate cause of the laws which govern nature, the endless verities of nature which science has uncovered. In brief, it is Divine Law and a Manifestation of God. This Manifestation of God is active, creative, spiritual. It reflects the positive aspect of God.

There is another Manifestation of God which is characterized by passivity, quiescence, inactivity. In itself it is without creative power. It reflects the negative aspect of God. This Manifestation is matter.

Matter, reflecting the negative aspect of God, is self-existent, eternal, and fills all space. Spirit, flowing out from God, permeates all matter. This spirit, Love, reflecting the positive and active aspect of God, impresses its nature upon the atoms and elements. By its power, they are attracted to each other under certain ordered relations, and thus, uniting and continuing to unite, give birth to worlds and systems of worlds. The same laws working under developed conditions bring into existence living beings. Spirit is the life of the form, and the form is shaped by the spirit. The evolution of life and form proceeds hand in hand. The powers of spirit are evolved by the experiences of the form, and the plasticity of the matter of the form is developed by the activity of the spirit. Working up through the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, sense-perception is reached in the animal, and the perfection of form is attained in man.

610 The forms or bodies of component parts, infinite in variety, which in the course of evolution spirit builds as the vehicles of its expression, are, because of the instability of matter, subject to dissolution. As they disappear, others are built following the same patterns, carrying on the characteristics of each.

611 Sense-perception gives rise to desire, desire to will, will to action, and action again to sense-perception. This chain ever repeats itself, and so the powers of thought, memory, reason, and the emotional capacities are evolved in spirit. These powers and capacities of spirit, expressed in individual human beings, constitute human characters.

Through these successive evolutionary steps, spirit develops characters having Divine attributes. The positive, creative aspect of God is reflected in them. Individuality is derived from expression in individual form. Self-consciousness accompanies individualized character, and the being thus endowed has the potentiality of rising to the knowledge of God.

Characters inspired by the universal human spirit continue in lines of specific developing types, as did species in the vegetable and animal kingdoms.

612 Similar types recur again and again, but without a continuing individual life from one human being to another. This recurrence may be likened to that of the seasons. Spring, summer, autumn and winter return in succession, each season the counterpart of the like season in the previous year—the same, yet not the same. So flower and fruits come this year from like seed or from the same bush or tree as those of last year, each in the line of succession of its kind, the same in essence, but differing in substance.

613 In the latter case, the power which causes the seed to rot in the ground and a new growth to spring from it, or in the bush or tree to put forth again leaves and fruit, is the power of the Spirit, the active aspect of God as Life.

614 So in the case of man. Life is eternal, but the individual human consciousness is not inherently so. It can only gain immortality by uniting with the pure Divine Essence. This union man may reach by a pure life and love for God and his fellow men.

615 When in the course of evolution, the stage of thought and reason has been reached, the human mind acts as a mirror reflecting the glory of God.

The face of nature is illumined, the grass, the stones, the hills and valleys shine; but they shine not of themselves, but because they reflect the rays of the sun. It is the sun which shines. In the same way, our minds reflect God. Those who live thinking good thoughts, doing good deeds, and with love in their hearts—the minds of these become ever clearer, reflecting more and more perfectly the love of God, while the minds of those who live in ignorance and desire are clouded and obscured, and give forth His light but meagerly.

A stone reflects but slightly the rays of the sun; but if a mirror be held up, though it be small, the whole of the sun will be reflected in it, because the mirror is clear and bright. Just so it is with the minds of men and the Sun of Reality. The great Masters and Teachers so purified their minds by the love of God and of men that they became like polished mirrors, reflecting faithfully the Glory of God.

TABLET TO INDIA

616 His Highness the Merciful One hath caused the appearance of the splendors of love and affinity in the world of humanity, so that the individuals of mankind might be perfectly united and the rays of unity be revealed amongst the children of men. Hence He sent forth the holy Manifestations, inspired their hearts with the contexts of the heavenly books and instituted divine religions, in order that these sanctified personages, these revealed books, these religions of God might become the means of unity and accord, love and good fellowship in the human world.

Should we study the divine religions with the perception of truth, we would then conclude that their underlying principle is the One Reality. All the religions of God are the reality. Reality does not admit multiplicity and division. But alas! that the fundamental reality is laid aside and forgotten, and a catalogue of creeds, dogmas and rites have taken its place which are the basis of differences, the cause of hatred and prejudice, and the establishment of the religion of God is totally forgotten and neglected.

617 When this impenetrable gloom—that is, the gloom of the traditions of ancestors—surrounded the world, and the pristine light of the divine religions was changed into the darkness of the ideas of men, then the true morn dawned and the Sun of Reality (Bahá'u'lláh) arose from the horizon of Persia, reflecting in the mirror of the world of humanity the effulgence of the heavenly unity. Thus he destroyed the foundations of the structure of blind dogmas and man-made creeds and rituals which are the result of ignorant prejudices. It is owing to this fact that this light is spreading with the greatest rapidity in all the countries of the world. The influence of these divine teachings in the heart of the world is like the influence of the spirit over the bodies.

618 Consequently, through the breaths of this divine spirit, the followers of the different religions in Persia have rent asunder the veil of superstitions, are freed from the effect of unenlightened doctrines, and have attained to the Beloved of Reality. These antagonistic faiths are united with the bond of perfect love and amity. For this reason great meetings are organized, in which are represented Muhammadans, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Turks, Arabs, Parsees, Persians, Kurds, English, French and Americans, who associate and mingle with each other as brothers. Like the sheep of God, they are grazing in the pastures of truth under the protecting staff of the heavenly Shepherd.

619 Should you reflect with the insight of reality, you will observe that these antiquated and superannuated dogmas have ever been the cause of massacre and

carnage among the nations and peoples.

620 As this is the cycle of sciences, there must needs be new teachings, a new revelation is required and a new life wanted. The minds and hearts refute the veracity of ancient opinions. New ideas are called for and new principles are urgently demanded which may fill the requirements of this age, be as the spirit of this century and as the life of this period.

621 Search, labor, investigate, work and show extraordinary effort, so that the center of the light of Reality, like unto the witness of love, may become revealed in the assemblages of mankind.

622 There is a power in this Cause, a mysterious power, far, far, far away from the ken of men and angels. That invisible power is the source of all these outward activities. It moves the hearts. It rends the mountains. It administers the complicated affairs of the Cause. It inspires the friends. It dashes into a thousand pieces all the forces of opposition. It creates new spiritual worlds. This is a mystery of the Kingdom of 'Abhá.

Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab,
Diary Notes,
July 7, 1914.

GENERAL TABLET

623 O ye spiritual friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá'!

“Perfume Thou the East! Illumine Thou the West! Bestow Thou light to the North! Grant Thou life to the South!”

This verse hath been revealed from the lips of the Center of the Covenant one year after the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. But the violators (not understanding its spiritual purport) wondered and derided. Praise be to God! that now its signs have become manifest, its power evident, and its proofs plain. Thanks be unto Him! that the East and the West are stirred into cheerfulness, and through the Holy Fragrances all directions are perfumed.

624 The Blessed Perfection, in a clear text, hath promised us in the Book: “Verily, I behold you from the Horizon of 'Abhá, and will make victorious whosoever will arise in the service of My Cause with the hosts of the Supreme Concourse and the cohorts of the favored angels!” Praise be to God! that this victory and confirmation became visible and manifest and hath shone forth from the horizon of the world like unto the sun.

625 Therefore, O ye friends of God! Show ye forth an earnest endeavor and display ye a resolute effort, so that ye may become assisted in the adoration of the Ancient Beauty and the Manifest Light; to be the cause of spreading the light of the Sun of

Truth; to infuse into the dead, antiquated body of the world a new spirit; to cast in the fields of hearts pure seeds; to arise in the service of the Cause; to speak with eloquent tongues; to become candles of guidance in the assemblage of the world; to become shining stars in the horizon of the existent being; to become merciful birds in the rose-garden of oneness; to sing the melodies of reality and significances; to spend every breath of your lives in the most great Cause; and to devote the period of your existence to the service of this conspicuous Light; so that in the end ye may be freed from loss and failure and attain to the inexhaustible treasury of the Kingdom. For the life of man is wholly subject to danger and impermanency. A person cannot put his assurance even in one moment's continuity. Notwithstanding this, the nations of the world, deceived by the mirage of superstition, imagine themselves secure in the heavenly path. Alas! Alas! Former communities, in bygone ages, entertained the same perishing thoughts; but by one of those periodical fluctuations they were all hidden under the ground and affiliated with deprivation and loss, except those souls who had become pure evanescence and had arisen with great self-abnegation in the path of God. Such souls shine forth as brilliant stars from the Horizon on Ancient Glory, and the results which emanated from their lives in succeeding ages and cycles are the proofs that this statement is true. Therefore, do ye not rest, neither day nor night; seek ye not for composure; talk ye of the mystery of servitude, and seek ye the path of thralldom; so that through the promised confirmations ye may become assisted from the Kingdom of Oneness.

626 O ye friends! Dense and gloomy clouds have covered the horizon of the world, and the darkness of hatred, malignity, persecution, tyranny, and the greatest cruelty is spreading. All the people are drunk with the wine of heedlessness; and blood-thirstiness and rapaciousness are considered the noblest excellencies of the world of men.

627 His Highness the Almighty hath chosen the friends from among the concourse of men and hath specialized them with the most eminent guidance and the highest gift; so that we may, with soul and heart exert ourselves, sacrifice our lives, be engaged in the guidance of the people and the training of souls; so that the wild beasts may become the gazelles of the meadows of unity; the wolves may become the lambs of God; the bloodthirsty ones the heavenly angels; the fire of malice be extinguished and the flame of safety in the Blessed Tabernacle bestow illumination; the odor of the nether realm of infidelity be dispelled and the fragrances of the rose-garden of faithfulness be diffused into all parts; the weak draw light from the Universal Reason and evil souls seek to be purified with the holy and divine Breath. There are needed manifestors for this gift; farmers for this field; gardeners for this rose-garden; fishers for this sea; luminous stars for this heaven; spiritual physicians for these sick ones, and loving guides for these wanderers; so that they may bestow a share to those who are deprived, grant a portion to those who are portionless, give unmeasured treasure to the indigent ones, and show forth the power of proof to those who seek.

628 Glory be unto Thee, O my God! I supplicate unto Thee, O Thou my Helper! I invoke Thee, O Thou my Refuge! My agonies I declare unto Thee, O Thou my Physician, and entreat Thee with all my heart, my soul and my spirit, saying:

O my God! O my God! Verily, the gloomy night hath fallen upon all religions and the clouds of ignorance have extended over all parts; the people are immersed in the darkness of surmise and the tyrants are sunk in the depths of brutality and lawlessness; the red glare of the burning fire is flashing forth from the nether world; roaring, ominous voices are rising from the cruel, destructive and terrible armaments; every region is crying out with its dumb secret tongue: "Nothing that I possess hath benefited me, and power and strength are taken away from me!" Verily, O my God, the lamps of guidance are extinguished; the fire of animosity is enkindled; wrath and antipathy are spread abroad, and provocation and maliciousness are disseminated upon the face of the earth. Yet I see only Thy wronged followers who are crying at the tops of their voices, summoning the people:

"Hasten ye toward affinity!

"Hasten ye toward faithfulness!

"Hasten ye toward generosity!

"Hasten ye toward guidance!

"Hasten ye toward union!

"Hasten ye to behold the Light of the World!

"Hasten ye toward love and prosperity!

"Hasten ye toward the law of disarmament!

"Hasten ye toward harmony and stability!

"Hasten ye toward cooperation and mutual help in the path of guidance!"

Verily, these wronged ones do sacrifice themselves with infinite joy and happiness for the sake of the people, with all their soul and spirit, in every region. Verily, Thou beholdest them weeping at the misfortunes of every one of Thy creatures and grieved at the distress of Thy children; they are kind to all people and pained at the sight of the calamities of the inhabitants of the world. O my Lord! Make the wings of prosperity to grow upon their shoulders, so that they may ever soar toward the apex of their aspirations; strengthen their loins in the service of Thy people, and confirm them in the servitude and adoration of the threshold of Thy Holiness.

Verily, Thou art the Merciful! Thou art the Clement, and there is no God but Thee, the Powerful, the Compassionate and the Ancient.

Volume 2,
Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The function of the sun as a luminary is to reveal the realities of objects. All that which is potential within the earth, is revealed or unfolded by the heat and light of the sun. That which is hidden within the tree, through that luminary, is brought forth and exposed to view. Therefore we can say that a function of the sun is the revelation of things mysterious, and things hidden within the substance of the earth. Inasmuch as this is the century of light, the Sun of Reality has gloriously revealed itself to all humanity. One of the great things which was hidden in the realm of existence was the potential capability or capacity of womankind. Through the light of the Sun of Reality in this age of illumination, the might and capacity of womankind has become manifest to the extent that the equality of man and woman is now an established fact. In past ages, woman was wronged and oppressed. Alas! most especially was this the case in Asia and in Africa and in Australia. In these three continents, women were most greatly oppressed; so much so that in certain parts of Asia women were not considered as members or parts of humankind. They considered woman as an inferior people, or race, or kind. There is a certain people, known as the Nosyrians, who held to this belief for a long period, namely, that woman was the manifestation of the evil spirit or Satan, and that man alone was the manifestation of the Merciful One, or the Lord. At last this century of light arrived. In this age, the realities of things have been exposed. Many mysterious things became revealed, and among them was this very subject. So that outside of Europe and America, even in the Orient today, it is a well-known fact, if not well practised, that woman is equal to man. There have appeared women who have been verily the signs of guidance, might and power! Some have been notable poets. Some philosophic minds. Some brave and courageous. Among the brave were those who exhibited their valor and courage on the battlefield. And the poetesses have left their poetical works, which are masterpieces of poetry. To the latter class belongs Qurratu'l-Ayn, who was a Bahá'í. She was the one who discomfited all the learned men of Persia. In whatsoever meeting she entered, the learned were silent. She was so well versed in the philosophy and science of the times that the learned men always considered her first. And her courage was unparalleled, to the extent that she withstood her enemies until she was killed. She withstood a king and monarch, the Sháh of Persia, who was a most despotic man, a despot who through his decree could kill a thousand men each day. There was not a day during which he did not kill many people. This woman, singly and alone, was capable of withstanding such a monarch until her last breath, and then she offered her life—sacrificed it.

Consider what mysteries have been revealed! All this has been due to the effulgence of the Sun of Reality, which in this century and this age has become gloriously manifested. Man must impartially investigate reality. He must not be prejudiced. What is the difference between man and woman? Both are human. In all functions and powers they are co-partners. At most it has been this: that woman has not had the opportunities which man has so long enjoyed, especially education. She has not had military tactics. If she cannot go on the battlefield and kill, is that a shortcoming? Suppose she has not used a gun, nor worked the cannon, if we present a cannon to a woman and ask her to fire it and she should fail, is that an imperfection? At most we can say such is a compliment or praise to her, that in hardness of heart she is inferior to man! If we say to womankind: come along and

kill people, they will say: I cannot do it. Now that is not a shortcoming! But be it known that if women had been trained according to military tactics, I believe that they could kill as many, too. But God forbid that women learn military tactics! May they never make up their minds to use the gun. Because that is not a glory. Home-making and joy-creating and comfort-bringing are truly glories of mankind. Man should not glory in this, that he can kill. Man should glory in this, that he can love. When we study the realm of existence and consider the various kingdoms other than the human kingdom, we discover that male and female are not the distinction of gender peculiar to man. Nay, rather in all created beings there is this distinction of kind. Among the animals there is the male and the female, but is there any distinction of superiority made between them? In plant life or the vegetable kingdom we find likewise the masculine and feminine, but there is no distinction whatsoever between the male and the female. And if we should impartially investigate the matter, perchance we may find that the female is preferable or superior to the male, because in the vegetable kingdom there are some trees the female order of which is fruitful, whereas the male is fruitless. For example, the male fig tree is fruitless, whereas the female fig tree is fruitful. The male palm tree is valueless, whereas the female date tree is fruitful.

Now, when we find that in the other kingdoms, among the existing things in the animal and the vegetable, there is no distinction between the male and the female, is it becoming of man to make such a distinction? The male type of the animals does not glory in its being male and at all superior to the female. In fact, an equality is manifested. Is it meet that man, so superior as a creature, should deprive himself of this equality which the animals enjoy? The male animals do not exercise this attitude. They declare that they are equal with the female. In all rights they consider themselves equal. How is it possible that man, the most reasonable and the most noble, should consider himself superior? Whereas, in fact, they are all the servants of one God and all are considered in His estimation as human; and when we find that the word, "man" is used as a generic name it applies to all creatures, especially humankind; for example, in the Bible the statement is made that "man is created after our own image and likeness"—that does not mean that the female was not created. You may be interested to know that in Persian and Arabic there are two distinct words which in English are translated as "man." In Persian and Arabic there is this distinction, and when the word "man" is used in one sense it means both man and woman, and the pronoun is referable to both, whereas there is also a word which distinguishes the male and female. We use the word "man" as applicable to the male alone, whereas it does not at all. We use the word "man" in English as applicable to both. In the Hebrew it is the same.

That which God has not created, that distinction which He has not made, we must not observe. It is a superstition. The thing to be considered, however, is this: that woman must be more highly educated. They must have equal opportunities with men. There must be no distinction whatever between their education. And until this reality, namely the equality between the male and the female of the human kingdom, is fully established, is fully realized, the highest attainment for society is not rendered possible. Suppose woman is inferior to man in a certain degree—even if that be the case, it ought not to be considered, because this very

distinction is going to create discord and trouble. They will say: well, if woman is inferior, then she is not to be qualified with all the qualities man has.

In brief, man thinks himself superior, and the ambition of women may wax cold, saying that we will not attempt to attain because it is impossible from the very nature of creation. Their love of progress would decrease. They would become helpless. On the contrary, we must declare that the capacity of woman is greater. When one attempts to educate a person, one should inspire him with hope and ambition so his capacity for progress may increase. He should not be told that he is inferior or weaker in qualities. If you tell a pupil in school that his intelligence is less than that of the other pupils, it is a very great obstacle to his advancement. On the contrary, he must be encouraged to advance, saying: you are most capable, and if you endeavor you will reach the highest pitch—and that is the way it should be.

In short, my hope is that in the five continents, where this is not fully established, it may be established and the banner of equality raised. And let it be known once more that until woman and man realize this equality, progress is impossible. The world of humanity consists of two division, of two parts. One part or member is woman, the other is man. Until the two are equal in strength, the oneness of humanity cannot be realized. And the happiness of mankind will not be a reality. God willing, this is to be so.

Federation of Women's Clubs
La Salle Hotel, Chicago
May 2, 1912.

THE "MOST GREAT PEACE"

630 When we glance at history, we find that from the beginning up to the present day, strife and warfare have prevailed among men. It has either been religious warfare, a warfare of races, or a war among the nations. All these wars have arisen from the ignorance of humanity, because of misunderstandings, and through the lack of the education of human kind.

631 Let us first touch upon religious warfare. It is self-evident that the Divine Prophets have appeared for no other purpose than to establish love and amity among humanity, for they were the shepherds and not the wolves. The shepherd comes forth to gather together his flock. He has not come to scatter his flock and to create strife among them. Every Divine Shepherd has gathered together a certain flock which formerly had been scattered. Among the Shepherds was His Holiness Moses. He assembled the various tribes of Israel and united them; afterward He took them over to the Holy Land. At a time when the Tribes of Israel were scattered and dispersed He was able to unite them, to assemble them together, and cause their development along degrees of human progress. By Him their degradation was

transformed into glory, their poverty changed into wealth. Their vices were replaced by virtues until they reached such a zenith that the Solomonic Sovereignty was made possible, and the fame of their glory reached the East and the West. Hence it is evident that His Holiness Moses was a Divine Shepherd for He united the scattered tribes of Israel and gathered them together.

When the Messianic Star dawned, He declared, "I shall gather together the scattered tribes or flocks of Moses." He not only united the flock of Israel, nay rather, He was confirmed in bringing together the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Syrians, Ancient Assyrians and Phoenicians. These people were in a state of the utmost rancor; they were thirsty for the blood of each other; attacking one another with the ferocity of animals. But His Holiness Jesus Christ united them, assembled and cemented them together, established a bond of love among them so that strife, rancor and warfare were banished. Therefore it is evident that the Divine religions are meant to create a bond of love among humanity, and to bind the people together for no other purpose than amity. Divine religion is not a cause for discord and disagreement. If religion be the cause of discord and difference, then no religion is preferable, for religion is meant to be life to the body politic. If it be the cause of death to humanity, then its non-existence is preferable. Therefore, in this day religion is to be sought, for religious teachings may well be likened to remedies. If a remedy be productive of worse symptoms, the lack or absence of the remedy is preferable.

632 At a time when the Arabian tribes and nomadic people were in the utmost state of division, thirsty for the blood of each other, living in the deserts under lawless conditions, strife rampant among them, not a single soul enjoying composure, no tribe at ease;—at such a critical time Muḥammad appeared. He gathered them together and reconciled them toward each other, united and caused them to agree, so that no strife and warfare remained. The Arabian nation immediately advanced until their sovereignty progressed and extended as far west as Spain and Andalusia. From these premises we may conclude that the foundation of the divine religions is for peace and not for strife, warfare and shedding of blood. Inasmuch as the foundation of the religions of God is one reality, which is love and amity, these warfares and dissensions are caused by imitations which creep in afterwards. Religion is a reality, and reality is one. The fundamentals of the religions of God are one in Reality. There is no difference in the fundamentals. The difference is caused by the imitations which arise later, and inasmuch as imitations differ, strife, discord and quarreling take place. If the religions of this time should forsake imitations and seek the fundamentals, all of them would agree and strife and discord would pass away—for Reality is one and not multiple.

633 As to racial wars, these are caused by purely imaginary racial differences. For humanity is one in kind, it is one race, it is one progeny, inhabiting the same globe, and in the original genesis no difference obtains. God has created all humanity. God has not originally created Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, Germans, Italians or Spaniards. There is no difference as regards creation and kind; all belong to one household; all are the leaves of one tree; all are the fruits of one branch; all are the flowers of the same garden; all are the waves of the same sea.

Let us glance at the animal kingdom. We find the animals do not observe any distinction. If you gather together the sheep of the East and those of the West, they would mix quite harmoniously. The Oriental sheep would not look surprised and strange, saying: "You belong to the Occident; whereas I belong to the Orient." They would live together in the utmost accord. They would gather together and enjoy the same pasture. There is no racial difference among them. If the birds of the East and the birds of the West were together, they would be found in a state of the utmost unity and amity. There would not be any distinctions observed. We find virtues in the animal. Is it becoming of man to be deprived of those virtues? The animal does not observe those imaginary distinctions. Is it becoming for man to observe them? Man is reasonable, has the manifestation of the Divine bestowals, the perceptive faculty, adoration, memory; and with all these Divine bestowals, shall he allow these racial ideas to change him;—one saying, "I am a German"; another, "I am a Frenchman"; a third, "I am an Englishman"? Through these superstitions shall he wage war? Is this becoming? God forbid! It is not necessary at all. If the animal does not condescend to observe such lowering thoughts, shall man be willing to stoop to this level? Why should he fetter himself with such groundless imaginations and superstitions? They are purely imaginary.

As to war which has been caused by nativity;—the idea that this is an Eastern nativity, the other is a Western, this is Northern and that is Southern; this is likewise purely imaginary. The globe of this earth is one globe, and it is the nativity of all humanity; therefore, the human race should not observe any of these distinctions which are conducive to war. We have come from the East. Praise be to God! we find the American continent prosperous, its climate most delightful, its weather salubrious, the inhabitants possessed of courteous manners and the United States government a fair government. Is it becoming for us to entertain anything but love for them, saying, "This land does not belong to us, this is not our nativity and because it is not our nativity it shall not be acceptable?" This would be utter ignorance to which man must not condescend. Man must investigate realities and the reality is this: that all humanity is one in kind, that this earth is one globe and therefore one home. Hence it is proved that the factors and causes of warfare are entirely false. Grant this.

Consider what is taking place in Tripoli. How many of the poor are being killed, how much blood of the oppressed is shed upon both sides! How many children become fatherless; how many fathers lose their sons; how many mothers bemoan the loss of their dear ones! And what is the result after all?—nothing. Is it just, is it becoming for man to be so blood-thirsty? Consider how domestic animals never cause animosity; that is an attribute of the ferocious animals. For example, if you gather together a flock of one thousand sheep they do not cause the shedding of blood. If you bring together many flocks of birds, no war takes place. But when wolves, dogs and lions meet, they fight. Even these ferocious animals are ferocious because of their necessary bereft of food. But man does not need to exercise that sort of ferocity; his livelihood is made possible otherwise. Out of greed, enmity and self-glory, the blood of the oppressed is spilt. The great ones among the nations rest and enjoy luxuries in their palaces, but send the poor common people to the battlefield. They offer them as targets before the cannons. Every day they invent

new instruments of destruction to destroy more fully the foundations of the human race. They are absolutely merciless toward their kind—toward these mothers who have so tenderly cared for their sons. How many nights have these mothers spent sleepless? How many days have they labored from morning until evening nurturing their children until they reached maturity! How many of their kith and kin do these warring ones allow to be torn asunder in one day! What savagery! What ignorance! What greed! What enmity! What degradation, which even the ferocious animals do not understand! For the ferocious animal may tear to pieces one in a single day; the wolf, for instance, may carry away one sheep, but some unjust man kills one hundred thousand of his kind a day, and glories in it, saying: “I am a great general; I am a great commander-in-chief, for in one day I have done away with one hundred thousand of my kind!” Consider how ignorant the human race is. If a man kills another man,—one single soul,—no matter what the cause may be,—he is at once pronounced a murderer, meets with capital punishment, or is put in prison for life. But the man who kills one hundred thousand of his kind is called a “Conqueror,” a “Hero,” a “Great General.” If a man should commit the theft of one dollar he is called a thief and sent to the penitentiary; but if a general should pillage a whole country, they call him a great “Conqueror” of the highest heroism. “This is a hero!” “This is a conqueror of the world!” How ignorant man is! How low!

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In Persia, among the various nations and peoples, religions and denominations there existed the greatest animosity, envy and hatred. At that time all the other nations of Asia were in the same condition. The religions were hostile toward one another; the sects were at enmity; the races were filled with hatred; the tribes were constantly at war; at all times strife, warfare and bloodshed prevailed. Men shunned each other and were thirsty for each other’s lives. They considered the glory for man was to be able to kill man of his kind. Each religionist considered the killing of one belonging to another religion or denomination a great and praiseworthy deed. At such a time as this, His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh appeared in Persia. He founded the oneness of the world of humanity. He declared that all humanity is the servant of God, and that God is kind to all, that He created all and provides for all; that He nurtures all; therefore why should we be unkind? Inasmuch as God is kind and merciful to all His creatures and manifests His care and goodwill to them in every way, why should we show forth that which is contrary? Inasmuch as God loves all, why should we entertain animosity or envy? For if God did not love all, He would not have provided for all; He would not have created man; He would not have trained him. Now that He has created, provided for all and preserved man, it is therefore evident that God is kind to all. Why then should man be unkind to man? This is the Divine policy. Shall we consider human policy to be better than the Divine policy? Is that conceivable? Is not that impossible? Therefore, we must emulate the policy of God. Just as God deals with all humanity—so kindly, so lovingly—we must deal with each other. Bahá’u’lláh declared the “Most Great Peace” and International Arbitration. He voiced His sentiments with regard to peace in numerous epistles upon that subject, which were scattered and broadcast throughout the East. He wrote to all the kings and crowned heads, encouraging all and admonishing them in regard to peace. He made it evident with conclusive proofs that the happiness and glory of humanity can only be insured through peace. He made it evident with

conclusive proofs that the happiness and glory of humanity can only be insured through peace. This took place about fifty years ago. Because He promulgated International Peace and gave numerous instructions about it, the kings of the Orient arose against Him, for they did not find their personal benefits advanced thereby. They arose to persecute and molest Him; inflicted upon Him every torment, imprisoned Him, bastinadoed Him, banished Him, eventually confined Him to a fortress. Then they rose against those who followed Him. For the establishment of International Peace the blood of twenty-thousand Bahá'ís was spilt. How many homes were destroyed! How many of the young were made captives! How many of the houses were pillaged! Yet none of them waxed cold. Even unto this day they still persecute them, for the Bahá'ís put forth the greatest efforts. They not only promulgate principle; they are people of action. Now you see the same people who were formerly at enmity and strife in far off Persia—people of various religions and denominations—through the great teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, living in the utmost peace. Enmity has passed away and they exercise the utmost love toward all mankind. For they know that all are the servants of God. At most it is simply this: that some are still ignorant, they must be educated; some are sick, they must be treated; some are as children, they must be helped to reach the age of maturity. We must not molest any one because he is an infant or child; we must not be inimical to any one because he is still ignorant, we must not reject any one because he is sick; but we must treat the sick, educate the children until they reach the age of maturity; and help those who are ignorant in order that they may reach knowledge. Therefore the essentials of the foundations of the religions of God are love and amity among all humanity. If a Divine religion should be productive of discord among society, it is a destroyer and not Divine; for religion means unity and binding together. Mere knowledge of anything is not sufficient. We all know that justice is good, but there is need for volition and executive force to carry it out. For example, should we think it good to build a church, simply thinking of it as being a good thing will not help its erection. We must will to build it. Then wealth is needed for its erection; simply thinking will not be sufficient. All of us know that International Peace is good; that it is conducive to the general welfare of humanity and the glory of man; but we are in need of will, volition and action. We must act. Inasmuch as this century is a century of light, it has capacity for action. Surely this is so, for the time is ripe for it. The human race knows, verily, that war is a destroyer of the human foundation, and in all the countries of the world there are those who favor this issue.

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When I came to America, I found this to be an exceedingly progressive country, the people in a state of readiness, the government a just one, and equality established to an extraordinary degree. Now, inasmuch as the standard of International Peace must needs be hoisted, I hope that it may be hoisted upon this continent, for the American continent is more deserving, has greater capacity therefor, and is not like other countries. If other nations should take such a step, everybody will misinterpret the motive. For example, if Great Britain should take the step, it will be said that it is done in order to insure the safety of her colonies. If France should hoist the standard, they will say she has some interest therein. If Russia should raise the ensign, the whole Russian nation would say it is an effort to preserve the homogeneity of Russia. But the American government has no selfish

interest in this. You have, strictly speaking, no colonies to preserve. You are not endeavoring to extend your domains; nor have you any need for territorial aggressiveness. Therefore if America takes the first step toward this direction, it is certain to be ascribed to altruism. It will be said by humanity, "There was no other purpose than altruism and service to humankind." Therefore it is my hope that you may be the cause, and that you may hoist this banner—for this banner will be hoisted. Raise it aloft, for you are deserving above all other nations. In the other countries there are many who are waiting for this summons, anxiously anticipating this call from some nation bidding all to the "Most Great Peace," for the people are distressed because of the excessive and irreparable damage of war. Thousands of the farmers are taxed and expenses collected for war. Every year the tax increases and the people have come to their end. Just now, you can say Europe is a battlefield; like ammunition ready for a spark, and one spark can set aflame the whole world. Before these complications and colossal events happen, take a step and prevent it. The foundations of all the Divine religions are peace and amity; but misunderstandings have crept into them. If these misunderstandings disappear, you will see that all the religious agencies will work for peace, and promulgate the oneness of human kind. For the foundation of all is One Reality and Reality is not multiple or divisible. For example, His Holiness Moses founded this Reality; His Holiness Jesus hoisted the tent of Reality, and the light of this Reality shone forth in all the religions. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed this Reality and promulgated the "Most Great Peace." In the prison He rested not until He lighted this lamp in the East.

638 Praise be to God! all the people who have accepted the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are peace lovers and ready to sacrifice their lives and forfeit their fortunes for it. Now let this standard be hoisted in the West and many shall respond to the call. Just as America has become renowned because of her discoveries, inventions and skill; famous for the equity of her government and colossal undertakings,—may she also become noted for the "Most Great Peace." Let this be her undertaking, and let it spread from her to other countries. And I pray for all of you that you may render this service to the world of humanity.

Grace Methodist Episcopal Church
New York City
May 12, 1912.

THE NEW AGE

639 Everything in life, in its inception, does not know to the full extent of its potentiality. Development and progress is gradual. For example, spiritual advancement may be likened to the light in the early morning. This light of dawn is rather dim in its effulgence, but a wise man who looks at the early morn and sees the march of the

sunrise at the beginning can verily foretell the ascendancy of the sun with all its glory and effulgence. He knows for a certainty that it is the beginning of manifestation, and that later it will assume great power and potency. Again, for example, if he takes a grain, and observes that it is growing, he can rest assured that the growing seed shall ere long become a tree. Now is the beginning of the manifestation of the spiritual power, and surely day by day its potency will assume greater and greater proportions. Therefore, this twentieth century is the beginning or dawn of the spiritual illumination, and it is evident that day by day it will advance. It will reach such a degree that spiritual effulgences shall overcome the material; so that Divine susceptibilities shall overpower material intelligence and the heavenly light shall dispel and banish earthly darkness; Divine healing shall cure all ills and the cloud of mercy shall pour down its rain. The Sun of Reality shall shine and all the earth shall put on its beautiful green carpet.

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Among the results of the manifestation of the spiritual forces will be: that the human world shall take on a new social form; the justice of God will become manifest; human equality will be established. For the poor there will be a great bestowal, and for the rich eternal happiness. For although just now the rich enjoy the greatest luxury and all comfort, yet they are deprived of eternal happiness, for eternal happiness is contingent upon giving, and the poor are in the state of abject poverty. Through the manifestation of God's great equity, the poor of the world will be fully rewarded, so that in the future there will not be the abnormally rich nor the abject poor. The poor will enjoy comfort as well as the rich, for in the future, owing to certain restrictions, the rich will not accumulate so much as to be beyond management, and the poor will not retain this state of absolute want and misery. The rich shall enjoy his palace, and the poor shall have his comfortable cottage.

The purpose is this: that Divine justice shall be manifest and all human kind shall find comfort. I do not mean that all will be equal, for inequality in degree is a principle of nature. There will be of necessity rich people and those who will be in want of their livelihood, but there will be an equalization and readjustment. In the future, there will be no very rich people, nor extremely poor people. There will be an equilibrium, and a condition will be established which will make both the rich and the poor comfortable. This shall be an eternal and blessed outcome of this glorious century, which in the future will become realized. The purpose is this: that all the promises of the Prophets, all the glad tidings given in the Holy Books, will be fulfilled. Await ye for that manifestation!

Brotherhood Church Jersey City,
New Jersey
May 19, 1912.

O thou whom my heart addresses!

Know thou, verily, the Covenant is an Orb which shines and gleams forth unto the universe. Verily, its light will dispel darkness, its sea will cast out the thick foam of suspicions upon the shore of perdition. Verily, naught in the world can ever resist the power of the Kingdom. Should all mankind assemble, could they prevent the sun from its light, the winds from their blowing, the clouds from their showers, the mountains from their firmness or the stars from their beaming? No! By thy Lord, the Clement! Everything is subject to corruption; but the Covenant of thy Lord shall continue to pervade all regions.

Assist thou the waverers and say: “Have ye forgotten that which transpired in the time of Christ? Are ye not informed of the events which took place in His blessed Day? Did not the Pharisees rise against Him? Did they not give verdict to the shedding of His blood, to the murder of His friends and to the oppression of His chosen ones? Have ye not heard concerning the heretics, the violators of His Covenant after Him? Are ye not informed of those kings, princes, learned and prominent men who persecuted Him? Did ye not see what has been the end of the persecutors?”

And do thou advise them and illumine their innermost part, and say unto them: “By God, the True One! Verily, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’ is assisted by the Beauty of El-Abhá who helps him with a power whereunto all heads are made humble. Ye shall surely find the banner of hypocrisy reversed, the foundations of discord demolished and the standards of peace and harmony waving throughout all regions!”

O my friend! Verily, Bahá hath commanded me to be forbearing and patient, to conceal, to forgive and pardon. Otherwise I would have rent their covering, disclosed their sins, divulged their deeds, depicted their character and unveiled their manners. Verily, thou art already informed of some of their deeds, and it is sufficient for you.

Consequently, turn thy face unto the Kingdom of the Covenant, thy heart beating with the Love of God, thy soul attracted to the fragrances of God, thy tongue speaking of the appearances of the Kingdom of God, thy insight rending veils asunder and disclosing the realities of things—and with a power which may move the heart of all in the world.

This is a confirmation from the Lord of the Effulgence, while all else save this shall never profit thee! This is that by reason of which thy face shall gleam, thy heart shall be dilated with joy, thy soul become pure, thy back strengthened, thy spirit rejoiced and thy identity quickened. Leave the people of suspicion behind thy back and adhere to the manifest Signs.

Star of the West,
Vol. 4, No. 10.

THE ILLUMINATI

642 About one thousand years ago, a Society was formed in Persia called the Society of the Friends, who gathered together for silent communion with the Almighty.

They divided Divine Philosophy into two parts: one part, the knowledge of which can be acquired through lectures and study in schools, and the second part that sought by the Illuminati, or followers of the Inner Light. The schools of this Philosophy were held in silence. Meditating, and turning their faces to the Source of Light, the mysteries of the Kingdom were reflected from that central Light into their hearts. All the divine problems were solved by this power of illumination.

This Society of Friends increased greatly in Persia, and their meetings take place even at the present time. Many books and epistles were written by their leaders. When the Friends assemble in their Meeting House, they sit in silence and contemplate. Their leader proposes a certain problem, saying to the assembly, "This is the problem on which to meditate." Then, freeing their minds from everything else, they sit quietly and reflect, and before long, the answer is revealed to them. Many abstruse divine questions are solved by means of this illumination.

Some of the great questions unfolding from the rays of the Sun of Reality upon the minds of men are: the problem of the reality of the spirit of man; of the origin of the spirit; of its birth from this world into the world of God; the question of the inner life of the spirit and its fate after ascension from the body.

They also meditate upon the scientific questions of the day, and these are likewise solved.

These people, who are called "Followers of the Inner Light," attain to a superlative degree of power, and are entirely freed from blind dogmas and imitations. Men rely on the statements of these people; by themselves, within themselves, they solve all mysteries.

If they find a solution through the assistance of the Inner Light, they accept it, and afterwards declare it; otherwise they would consider it a matter of blind imitation. They go so far as to reflect upon the essential nature of the Divinity, of the divine Revelation, of the Manifestation of the Deity, in this world. All the divine and scientific questions are solved by them through the power of the spirit.

643 Bahá'u'lláh says there is a sign from God in every phenomenon. The sign of the intellect is contemplation, and the sign of contemplation is silence, because it is impossible for a man to do two things at once—he cannot both speak and meditate.

It is an axiomatic fact that while you meditate you are speaking with your own spirit. In that state of mind you put certain questions to your spirit and the spirit answers: the light breaks forth and reality is revealed.

You cannot apply the name "man" to any being devoid of this faculty of meditation; without it man is a mere animal, lower than the beasts.

Through the faculty of meditation, man attains to eternal life; through it, he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit—the bestowals of the Spirit are given during reflection and meditation.

The spirit of man is itself informed and strengthened during meditation; through it, affairs of which man knew nothing are unfolded before his view. Through it he receives divine inspiration, and through it he partakes of heavenly food.

Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state man abstracts himself; in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective condition he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things in themselves. To illustrate this, think of man as endowed with two kinds of sight: when the power of insight is being used, the power of outward vision does not function.

644 This faculty of meditation frees man from the animal nature, discerns the reality of things, puts man in touch with God.

This faculty brings forth the sciences and arts from the invisible plane. Through the meditative faculty, inventions are made possible, colossal undertakings are carried out. Through it, governments can run smoothly. Through this faculty, man enters into the very Kingdom of God.

Nevertheless some thoughts are useless to man: they are like waves moving in the sea without result. But if the faculty of meditation is bathed in the Inner Light and characterized with divine attributes, the results will be confirmed.

The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror: if you put it before earthly objects, it will reflect the earthly objects. Therefore if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly objects he will become informed of these.

But if you turn the mirror of your spirit heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained.

Therefore let us keep this faculty rightly directed—turning it to the divine Sun and not to earthly objects—so that we may comprehend the allegories of the Bible, the mysteries of the Spirit, and discover the hidden secrets of the Kingdom.

May we indeed become mirrors reflecting the divine realities, and may we become so pure as to reflect the stars of heaven!

Friends' Meeting House
St. Martin's Lane, London
January 12, 1913.

EVOLUTION

645 Man in the world of existence has traversed certain degrees until he has arrived at the world of manhood. In every degree he has attained the capacity for advancement to the next degree. While in the mineral kingdom, he was attaining

the capacity for promotion into the vegetable kingdom. In the vegetable kingdom he has received preparation and capacity for the animal kingdom. He has come from the vegetable kingdom to the animal and then on to the human kingdom.

In the beginning of his life man was in the matrix world. In the world of the matrix he obtained capacity and preparation for this world. The forces and powers necessary for this world he attained there. In this world he needed eyes; he received them potentially, in the other. He needed ears; therefore he obtained them in the world of the matrix. All the powers he needed in this world he attained potentially in the world of the matrix. In the world of the matrix therefore he was prepared for this world; so that when he came to this world he found that all the necessary forces were ready—all his needs for material sustenance were provided.

Therefore, in this world also he must prepare himself and get ready for the life hereafter. That of which he is in need in the world of the Kingdom he must obtain here. Just as he prepared himself by acquiring the forces necessary in this world in the world of the matrix, so likewise it is necessary that all needful in the Kingdom, all the forces of the Kingdom—must be acquired in this world.

646 What is he in need of in the Kingdom after he is transferred from this world to the other world? That world is a world of sanctity, therefore it is necessary that he acquire sanctity in this world. In that world there is need of radiance, therefore radiance must be acquired in this world. In that world there is need of spirituality. In this world he must acquire spirituality. In that world faith and assurance, the knowledge of God, the love of God, are needed. These he must acquire in this world so that after he ascends from this mortal to that immortal world he shall find all that is needful in that life eternal ready for him.

It is self-evident that that world is a world of Lights; therefore there is need for illumination. That world is a world of Love! hence love of God is needed. That world is a world of perfections; virtues or perfections must be acquired. That world is a world of the Breaths of the Holy Spirit and in this world must they be acquired. That world is a world of the Life Eternal. In this world must he acquire it. But how can he? By what means can he acquire these things? How is he to obtain these merciful powers?

647 First,—through the knowledge of God. Second,—through the love of God. Third,—through faith. Fourth,—through philanthropic deeds. Fifth,—through self-sacrifice. Sixth,—through severance from this world. Seventh,—through sanctity and holiness. Unless he obtain these forces, unless he attain to these requirements, surely he will be deprived of the Life Eternal. But if he attain the knowledge of God, becomes ignited through the fire of the love of God, witnesses the great and mighty signs, becomes the cause of love among mankind and lives in the utmost state of sanctity and holiness, surely he shall attain to second birth, will be baptized through the Holy Spirit and witness the Life Eternal.

648 It is astonishing! It is a most amazing thing!—that God has created all humanity for the knowledge of Himself, for the love of Himself, for the virtues of the human world, for the Life Eternal;—for perfect spirituality, for heavenly illumination has He created man;—nevertheless, man is utterly negligent of all this! He is seeking the knowledge of everything except the knowledge of God. He seeks, for example, to

know the lowest stratum of the earth. His utmost desire is this. Day and night he strives to know what he can find ten meters below the surface; what he can discover within the stone; what he can learn archaeologically through the dust! He puts forth arduous labors to penetrate a mystery of terrestrial mysteries; but he is not at all thoughtful of knowing the mysteries of the Kingdom, traversing the fields of the Kingdom, becoming aware of the verities of the Kingdom, discovering the secrets of God, arriving at the knowledge of God, witnessing the lights of Reality and becoming informed of the verities of the Kingdom. He is not at all thoughtful of these. How much he is attracted to the mysteries of matter, and how utterly unaware he is of the mysteries of Divinity! Nay, he is even utterly careless of the mysteries of Divinity! How stupid this is! How ignorant this is! How conducive to degradation this is! It is like this—that a son should have a very kind Father, who has provided for him great Books, in order that he may become aware of the mysteries of creation, and supplied also many means of adornment, comfort and enjoyment. But the son, because of immaturity and lack of intelligence, loses sight of all these and lays them aside, attaching himself to pebbles, passing his time, day and night with playthings, neglectful of all the gifts which his Father has provided for him. How ignorant such a child is! How heedless! The Father has wished for him glory eternal, and he is content with the greatest deprivation. The Father has built for him a royal palace, but he is playing with dust. The Father has prepared for him garments of silk, but he is content with his nakedness. The Father has prepared for him the most delicious foods and most luscious fruits, while he seeks the grasses of the fields. Such is the analogy.

Praise be to God! you have heard the call of the Kingdom! You have opened your eyes; you have turned to God. Your object is the good pleasure of God. Your purpose is the understanding of the mysteries of the heart and your intention is to discover the realities. Day and night must you think, strive and investigate, that you may attain to the mysteries of the Kingdom; that you may attain certainty in knowledge; that you may know this world has a Creator, has a Maker, has a Resuscitator, has a Provider, has an Architect—but know this through proofs and evidences, not through susceptibilities; nay rather through decisive proofs, evident arguments and real vision—that is to say, visualizing it just as you visualize the sun. May you with complete certainty behold the signs of God and attain to the knowledge of the holy divine Manifestations.

649

You must come into the knowledge of the divine Manifestations through proofs and evidences. You must know the teachings of the holy divine Manifestations. You must learn the mysteries of the divine Kingdom. You must become capable of discovering the realities of things. Thus may you become the manifestations of the mercy of God and real believers,—firm and steadfast in the Cause of God.

Praise be to God! the door of the knowledge of God has been opened by Bahá'u'lláh. For He has laid the foundation whereby man may become acquainted with the verities of heaven and earth, and has bestowed the utmost confirmation. He is our teacher; He is our adviser; He is our seer. He is the one clement towards us. He has prepared all His gifts. He has vouchsafed His Providence. Every admonition has He given unto us. Every behest has He uttered for us. He has prepared for us the means of eternal majesty. He has breathed for us the breaths of

the Holy Spirit. He has opened before our faces the doors of the Paradise of 'Abhá. The lights of the Sun of Reality has He caused to shine upon us. The clouds of mercy have poured down upon us. The sea of favor is surging towards us. The spiritual springtime has come. The infinite bounties and favors have appeared. What therefore is greater than this? What bestowal is greater than this? We must appreciate this and act in accordance with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, so that all good may be stored up for us and in both worlds we shall become precious, attain to the blessing everlasting, taste the delicacy of the love of God, find the sweetness of the knowledge of God, see the bestowal of Heaven and witness the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is my advice and this is my admonition.

309 West 78th Street,
New York City,
July 6, 1912.

THE TEMPLE

650 Among the institutes of the Holy Books is that of the foundation of the Divine Temple. That is to say, an edifice is to be constructed in order that humanity may find therein a place of meeting; and this is to be conducive to unity and fellowship amongst them. The real Temple is the very Law of God, for to that all humanity must resort, and that is the Point of Unity for all mankind. That is the collective center. That is the cause of accord and unity of the hearts. That is the cause of the solidarity of the human race. There is the source of eternal life. Temples are the symbols of that uniting force, in order that when people gather there in a given edifice of God, in the House and Temple of God, they may recall the fact that the law has been revealed for them and that that law is to unite them. That just as this edifice was founded for the unification of mankind, the law preceding and creating this Temple was issued therefor. ... In brief, the purpose of places of worship and edifices for adoration is simply that of unity, in order that various nations, divergent races, varying souls, may gather there and among them amity, love and accord may be realized. The original purpose is this.

That is why His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has commanded that a place be built for all the religionists of the world; that all religions and races and sects may gather together; that the oneness of the human world may be proclaimed; that all the human race are the servants of God, and all are submerged in the ocean of God's mercy. The world of existence may be likened to this. It is the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Just as the external world is a place where various peoples of different hues and colors, of various faiths and denominations, meet; just as they are submerged in the same Sea of Favors; likewise all may meet under the dome of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and adore the One God in the same spirit of truth, for the ages of darkness have

passed away and the century of light has come. The prejudices of imagination are in the process of dispersion and the Light of Unity is shining. The difference which exists among the nations and the peoples is soon to pass away, and the fundamentals of the Divine Religions, which are no other than the solidarity and the oneness of the human race, are to be established. For six thousand years the human race has been at war. It is enough! Now let them, for a time at least, consort in unity. Formerly they entertained enmity. Let them for a period exercise love. For six thousand years have they negated each other, each nation considering the other as infidel. It is sufficient! We must know that we are the servants of One God; that we are turning to One God; that we have one kind Father; that we have one divine Law; that we have one reality; that we have one desire. Thus may we live together in the utmost of amity and love, and for this love, for this amity, the favors of God shall surround us; the world of humanity will be reformed; human kind will find a new life; eternal light shall shine; merciful and heavenly morals shall become manifested. The Divine policies shall rule, for the Divine policy is the oneness of the human world. God is kind to all. He considers all as His servants. He does not exclude anybody, and the policy of God is the correct and just policy. No matter how complete human policy and foresight be, it is imperfect.

If we do not emulate the policy of God, or if we refuse to follow His dictates, that will be a presumptive evidence of our saying, as it were, that we know better than God; that we are knowing and wise, whereas God is ignorant; that we are sagacious, while God is not. God forbid! We seek shelter in God's mercy therefor! No matter how far the human intelligence shall advance, it is still as a drop, whereas the Divine Omniscience is the very ocean. Is it just for us to say that a drop is imbued or endowed with qualities whereof the ocean itself is minus or not endowed? To say that the policy of the atom or the drop is greater and superior to that of the ocean? There is no greater ignorance than this! At most it is this: that there are some people like unto children. They are ignorant, and with the utmost love are we to educate them in order that they may become wise. They are sick; they are ill. We must tenderly care for them and treat them until they become well. Their morals are unpraiseworthy. We must train them in order that they may become imbued with morals that are commendable. Otherwise we are all the servants of One God, and we are beneath the protection and institutes of One God.

These are the institutes of God and the foundations of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, or His Temple. The outer edifice is a symbol of the inner. May the people be admonished thereby! I pray in your behalf, that your hearts may be enlightened with the light of the love of God; that your minds may develop daily; that your spirits may be set aglow with the fire of His Glad Tidings; until the divine foundations in the human world may become promulgated. And the first of these institutions is the oneness of the human world and love among all mankind, and secondly is the Most Great Peace. Praise be to God, this American Democracy presents capacity, showing forth its readiness to become the flag bearer of the Most Great Peace. May they be the hosts of the oneness of humanity. May its people serve the threshold of God and promulgate that which is the good pleasure of God!

Bahá'í Temple Unity
Convention Masonic Temple, Chicago

April 30, 1912.

THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

651 This is a goodly temple and congregation, for—Praise be to God!—this is a house of worship wherein conscientious opinion has free sway. Every religion and every religious aspiration may be freely voiced and expressed here. Just as in the world of politics there is a need for free thought, likewise in the world of religion there should be the right of unrestricted individual belief. Consider what a vast difference exists between modern democracy and the old forms of despotism. Under an autocratic government the opinions of men are not free, and development is stifled; whereas in democracy, because thought and speech are not restricted, the greatest progress is witnessed. It is likewise true in the world of religion. When freedom of conscience, liberty of thought and right of speech prevail, that is to say, when every man according to his own idealization may give expression to his beliefs, development and growth are inevitable. Therefore this is a blessed church because its pulpit is open to every religion, the ideals of which may be set forth with openness and freedom. For this reason I am most grateful to the reverend doctor; I find him indeed a servant of the oneness of humanity.

652 The holy manifestations who have been the sources or founders of the various religious systems were united and agreed in purpose and teaching. His Holiness Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muḥammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are one in spirit and reality. Moreover each prophet fulfilled the promise of the one who came before him and likewise each announced the one who would follow. Consider how His Holiness Abraham foretold the coming of Moses and Moses embodied the Abrahamic statement. His Holiness Moses prophesied the Messianic cycle and His Holiness Christ fulfilled the law of Moses. It is evident therefore that the holy manifestations who founded the religious systems are united and agreed; there is no differentiation possible in their mission and teachings; all are reflectors of reality and all are promulgators of the religion of God. The divine religion is reality and reality is not multiple; it is one. Therefore the foundations of the religious systems are one because all proceed from the indivisible reality; but the followers of these systems have disagreed; discord, strife and warfare have arisen among them, for they have forsaken the foundation and held to that which is but imitation and semblance. Inasmuch as imitations differ, enmity and dissension have resulted. For example, His Holiness Jesus Christ—may my spirit be a sacrifice unto Him!—laid the foundation of eternal reality, but after His departure many sects and divisions appeared in Christianity. What was the cause of this? There is no doubt that they originated in dogmatic imitations, for the foundations of Christ were reality itself in which no divergence exists. When imitations appeared, sects and denominations were formed.

If Christians of all denominations and divisions should investigate reality, the foundations of His Holiness Christ would unite them. No enmity or hatred will remain for they will all be under the one guidance of reality itself. Likewise in the wider field, if all the existing religious systems will turn away from ancestral imitations and investigate the reality, seeking the real meanings of the Holy Books, they will unite and agree upon the same foundation, the reality itself. As long as they follow counterfeit doctrines or imitations instead of reality, animosity and discord will exist and increase. Let me illustrate this. His Holiness Moses and the prophets of Israel announced the advent of the Messiah but expressed it in the language of symbols. When His Holiness Christ appeared, the Jews rejected Him although they were expecting His manifestation, and in their temples and synagogues were crying and lamenting, saying "O God, hasten the coming of the Messiah!" Why did they deny Him when He announced Himself? Because they had followed ancestral forms and interpretations and were blind to the reality of Christ. They had not perceived the inner significances of the Holy Bible. They voiced their objections, saying, "We are expecting His Holiness Christ, but His coming is conditioned upon certain fulfillments and prophetic announcements. Among the signs of His appearance is one that He shall come from an unknown place, whereas now this claimant of Messiahship has come from Nazareth. We know and we are acquainted with his mother.

"Second: One of the signs or messianic conditions is that his scepter would be an iron rod, and this Christ has not even a wooden staff.

"Third: He was to be seated upon the throne of David whereas this messianic king is in the utmost state of poverty and has not even a mat.

"Fourth: He was to conquer the East and the West. This person has not even conquered a village. How can he be Messiah?

"Fifth: He was to promulgate the laws of the Bible. This one has not only failed to promulgate the laws of the Bible but he has broken the law of the Sabbath.

"Sixth: Messiah was to gather together all the Jews who were scattered in Palestine and restore them to honor and prestige but this one has degraded the Jews instead of lifting them up.

"Seventh: During his sovereignty even the animals were to enjoy blessings and comforts, for according to the prophetic texts he should establish peace to such a universal extent that the eagle and quail would live together, the lion and deer would feed in the same meadow, the wolf and lamb would lie down in the same pasture. In the human kingdom warfare was to cease entirely, spears would be turned into pruning hooks and swords into plough shares. Now we see in the day of this would-be Messiah such injustice prevails that even he himself is sacrificed. How could he be the promised Christ?"

And so they spoke infamous words regarding Him.

Now inasmuch as the Jews were submerged in the sea of ancestral imitations, they could not comprehend the meaning of these prophecies. All the words of the prophets were fulfilled but because the Jews held tenaciously to hereditary interpretations, they did not understand the inner meanings of the Holy Bible;

therefore they denied His Holiness Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The purpose of the prophetic words was not the outward or literal meaning but the inner symbolical significance. For example, it was announced that Messiah was to come from an unknown place. This did not refer to the birthplace of the physical body of Jesus. It has reference to the reality of the Christ; that is to say, the Christ reality was to appear from the invisible realm, for the divine reality of Christ is holy and sanctified above place.

654 His sword was to be a sword of iron. This signified His tongue which should separate the true from the false and by which great sword of attack He would conquer the kingdoms of hearts. He did not conquer by the physical power of an iron rod; He conquered the East and the West by the sword of His utterance.

655 He was seated upon the throne of David but His sovereignty was not a Napoleonic sovereignty nor the vanishing dominion of a Pharaoh. The Christ kingdom was everlasting, eternal in the heaven of the divine Will.

656 By His promulgating the laws of the Bible, the reality of the law of Moses was meant. The Sinaitic law is the foundation of the reality of Christianity. Christ promulgated it and gave it higher, spiritual expression.

657 He conquered and subdued the East and the West. His conquests were effected through the breaths of the Holy Spirit which eliminated all boundaries and shone from all horizons.

658 In His day, according to prophecy, the wolf and the lamb were to drink from the same fountain. This was realized in Christ. The fountain referred to was the Gospel from which the Water of Life gushes forth. The wolf and lamb are opposed and divergent races symbolized by these animals. Their meeting and association were impossible, but having become believers in Jesus Christ those who were formerly as wolves and lambs became united through the words of the Gospel.

659 The purport is that all the meanings of the prophecies were fulfilled but because the Jews were captives of ancestral imitations and did not perceive the reality of the meanings of these words, they denied His Holiness Christ; nay, they even went so far as to crucify Him. Consider how harmful is imitation. These were interpretations handed down from fathers and ancestors, and because the Jews held fast to them, they were deprived.

660 It is evident then that we must forsake all such imitations and beliefs so that we may not commit this error. We must investigate reality, lay aside selfish notions and banish hearsay from our minds. The Jews considered His Holiness Christ the enemy of Moses whereas on the contrary His Holiness Christ promoted the Word of Moses. He spread the name of Moses throughout the Orient and Occident. He promulgated the teachings of Moses. Had it not been for His Holiness Christ you would not have heard the name of Moses; and unless the manifestation of Messiahship had appeared in Christ he would not have received the Old Testament.

The truth is that His Holiness fulfilled the Mosaic law and in every way upheld Moses; but the Jews, blinded by imitations and prejudices, considered His Holiness the enemy of Moses.

661 Among the great religious systems of the world is Muhammadanism. About

three hundred millions of people acknowledge it. For more than a thousand years there has been enmity and strife between Muhammadans and Christians owing to misunderstanding and spiritual blindness. If prejudices and imitations were abandoned there would be no enmity whatever between them, and these hundreds of millions of antagonistic religionists would adorn the world of humanity by their unity.

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I wish now to call your attention to a most important point. All Islám considers the Qur'án the Word of God. In this sacred Book there are explicit texts which are not traditional, stating that His Holiness Christ was the Word of God, that He was the spirit of God, that Jesus Christ came into this world through the quickening breaths of the Holy Spirit, and that Her Grace Mary, His mother, was holy and sanctified. In the Qur'án a whole chapter is devoted to the story of Jesus. It records that in the time of His youth He worshipped God at the temple at Jerusalem; that manna descended from heaven for His sustenance and that He uttered words immediately after His birth. In brief, in the Qur'án there is eulogy and commendation of Christ such as you do not find in the Gospel. The Gospel does not record that the child Jesus spoke at birth or that God caused sustenance to descend from heaven for Him; but in the Qur'án it is repeatedly stated that God sent down manna day by day as food for Him. Furthermore, it is significant and convincing that when His Holiness Muḥammad proclaimed his work and mission, His first objection to His own followers was: "Why have you not believed on Jesus Christ? Why have you not accepted the Gospel? Why have you not believed in Moses? Why have you not followed the precepts of the Old Testament? Why have you not understood the prophets of Israel? Why have you not believed in the disciples of Christ? The first duty incumbent upon you; O Arabians! is to accept and believe in these. You must consider Moses as a prophet. You must accept Jesus Christ as the Word of God. You must believe in Jesus Christ as the product of the Holy Spirit." His people answered: "O Muḥammad! we will become believers although our fathers and ancestors were not believers and we are proud of them. Tell us what is going to become of them?" Muḥammad replied: "I declare unto you that they occupy the lowest stratum of hell because they did not believe in Moses and Christ and because they did not accept the Bible; and although they are my own ancestors, yet they are in despair in hell." This is an explicit text of the Qur'án; it is not a story or tradition but from the Qur'án itself which is in the hands of the people. Therefore it is evident that ignorance and misunderstanding have caused so much warfare and strife between Christians and Muhammadans. If both should investigate the underlying truth of their religious beliefs, the outcome would be unity and agreement; strife and bitterness would pass away forever and the world of humanity find peace and composure. Consider that there are two hundred and fifty million Christians and three hundred million Muhammadans. How much blood has flowed in their wars; how many nations have been destroyed; how many children have been made fatherless; how many fathers and mothers have mourned the loss of dear ones! All this has been due to prejudice, misunderstanding and imitations of ancestral beliefs without investigation of the reality. If the Holy Books were rightly understood none of this discord and distress would have existed, but love and fellowship would have prevailed instead. This is true with all the other religions as well. The essential

purpose of the religion of God is to establish unity among mankind. The divine Manifestations were founders of the means of fellowship and love. They did not come to create discord, strife and hatred in the world. The religion of God is the cause of love, but if it is made to be the source of enmity and bloodshed, surely its absence is preferable to its existence; for then it becomes satanic, detrimental and an obstacle to the human world.

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In the Orient the various peoples and nations were in a state of antagonism and strife, manifesting the utmost enmity and hatred toward one another. Darkness encompassed the world of mankind. At such a time as this, Bahá'u'lláh appeared. He removed all the imitations and prejudices which had cause separation and misunderstanding, and laid the foundation of the one religion of God. When this was accomplished, Muhammadans, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists all were united in actual fellowship and love. The souls who followed Bahá'u'lláh from every nation have become as one family living in agreement and accord, willing to sacrifice life for each other. The Muhammadan will give his life for the Christian, the Christian for the Jew, and all of them for the Zoroastrian. They live together in love, fellowship and unity. They have attained to the condition of rebirth in the spirit of God. They have become revived and regenerated through the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Praise be to God! this light has come forth from the East and eventually there shall be no discord or enmity in the Orient. Through the power of Bahá'u'lláh all will be united. His Holiness upraised this standard of the oneness of humanity, in prison. When subjected to banishment by two kings, while a refugee from enemies of all nations and during the days of His long imprisonment He wrote to the kings and rulers of the world in words of wonderful eloquence arraigning them severely and summoning them to the divine standard of unity and justice. He exhorted them to peace and international agreement, making it incumbent upon them to establish a board of international arbitration; that from all nations and governments of the world there should be delegates selected for a congress of nations which should constitute a universal arbitral court of justice to settle international disputes. He wrote to Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, the Czar of Russia, the Emperor of Germany, Napoleon III of France, and others, inviting them to world unity and peace. Through a heavenly power he was enabled to promulgate these ideals in the Orient. Kings could not withstand Him. They endeavored to extinguish His light but served only to increase its intensity and illumination. While in prison He stood against the Sháh of Persia and Sultán of Turkey and promulgated His teachings until He firmly established the banner of truth and the oneness of humankind. I was a prisoner with him for forty years until the Young Turks of the Committee of Union and Progress overthrew the despotism of 'Abdu'l-Hamíd, dethroned him and proclaimed liberty. This committee set me free from tyranny and oppression; otherwise I should have been in prison until the days of my life were ended. The purport is this, that Bahá'u'lláh, in prison, was able to proclaim and establish the foundations of peace, although two despotic kings were His enemies and oppressors. The King of Persia, Násiri'd-Dín Sháh had killed twenty thousand Bahá'ís, martyrs who in absolute severance and complete willingness offered their lives joyfully for their faith. These two powerful and tyrannical kings could not withstand a prisoner; this prisoner upheld the standard of humanity and

brought the people of the Orient into agreement and unity. Today in the East, only those who have not followed Bahá'u'lláh are in opposition and enmity. The people of the nations who have accepted Him as the standard of divine guidance enjoy a condition of actual fellowship and love. If you should attend a meeting in the East you could not distinguish between Christian and Mussulman; you would not know which was Jew, Zoroastrian or Buddhist, so completely have they become fraternized and their religious differences been leveled. They associate in the utmost love and spiritual fragrance as if they belonged to one family, as if they were one people.

Central Congregational Church,
Brooklyn, New York.
June 16, 1912.

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

664 Every movement which promotes unity and harmony in the world is good, and everything which creates discord and discontent is bad. This is a century of illumination, surpassing all others in its many discoveries, its great inventions, and its vast and varied undertakings. But the greatest achievement of the age in conferring profit and pleasure on mankind is the creation of an auxiliary language for all. Oneness of language engenders peace and harmony. Oneness of language creates oneness of heart. It sweeps away all misunderstandings among peoples. It establishes harmony among the children of men. It gives to the human intellect a broader conception, a more commanding point of view.

Today the greatest need of humanity is to understand and to be understood. With the help of the International Language, every individual member of a community can learn of world happenings and become in touch with the ethical and scientific discoveries of the age. The auxiliary international language gives to us the key—the key of keys—which unlocks the secret of the past. By its aid every nation henceforth will be able easily and without difficulty to work out its own scientific discoveries.

It is a well-known fact that the Oriental student coming to the West, in his efforts to acquaint himself with the discoveries and achievements of Western civilization, must spend precious years of his life in acquiring the language of the land to which he comes before he can turn to the study of the special science in which he is interested. For example, let us suppose that a youth from India, Persia, Turkestan or Arabia comes to this country to study medicine. He must first struggle with the English language for four years, to the exclusion of all else, before he can even begin the study of medicine. Whereas, if the auxiliary international language were taught in all the schools during his childhood, he would learn the language in his own country, and afterwards, wherever he wished to go, he could easily pursue

his specialty without loss of some of the best years of his life.

Today if one wishes to travel abroad, even though possessed of several languages, he is likely to be seriously handicapped because he does not know the particular language of some one people. I have studied Oriental languages profoundly and know the Arabic better than the Arabians themselves. I have studied Turkish and Persian in my native land, besides other languages of the East; nevertheless, when I visited the West I had to take an interpreter with me quite as if I knew no language. Now if the International Language were generally spoken, that and the Persian language would be sufficient for me in every country of the world.

Only think how the International Language will facilitate intercommunication among all the nations of the earth. Half of our lives are consumed in acquiring a knowledge of languages, for in this enlightened age every man who hopes to travel in Asia and Africa and Europe must learn several languages, in order that he may converse with their peoples. But no sooner does he acquire one language than another is needed. Thus one's whole life may be passed in acquiring those languages which are a hindrance to international communication. The International Language frees humanity from all these problems.

In a word, to understand and be understood, there must be an international medium. The teacher and the pupil must know each other's language, in order that the teacher must impart his knowledge and the pupil receive it. In all the world there is nothing more important than to be understood by your fellowmen, for upon this depends the progress of civilization itself. To acquire a knowledge of the arts and sciences one must know how to speak, to understand and at the same time to make himself understood, and this matter of understanding and being understood depends on language. Once establish this auxiliary language and all will be enabled to understand each other.

I recall an incident which occurred in Baghhdád. There were two friends who knew not each other's language. One fell ill, the other visited him, but not being able to express his sympathy in words, resorted to gesture, as if to say, "How do you feel?" with another sign the sick replied, "I shall soon be dead," and his visitor, believing the gesture to indicate that he was getting better, said, "God be praised!"

From such illustrations you will admit that the greatest thing in the world is to be able to make yourself understood by your friends and to understand them, and that there is no greater handicap in the world than not to be able to communicate your thoughts to others. But with the auxiliary language all these difficulties disappear.

665 Now, praise be to God, that language has been created—Esperanto. This is one of the special gifts of this luminous century, one of the most remarkable achievements of this great age.

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh many years ago wrote a book called "The Most Holy Book," one of the fundamental principles of which is the necessity of creating an International Language, and He explains the great good and advantage that will result from its use.

Now let us thank the Lord because the Esperanto language has been created. We

have commanded all the Bahá'ís in the Orient to study this language very carefully, and ere long it will spread all over the East. I pray you, Esperantists and non-Esperantists, to work with zeal for the spread of this language, for it will hasten the coming of that Day, that Millennial Day, foretold by prophets and seers, that Day when, it is said, the wolf and the lamb shall drink from the same fountain, the lion and the deer shall feed in the same pasture. The meaning of this holy word is that hostile races, warring nations, differing religions, shall become united in the spirit of love.

I repeat, the most important thing in the world is the realization of an auxiliary international language. Oneness of language will transform mankind into one world, remove religious misunderstandings, and unite East and West in the spirit of brotherhood and love. Oneness of language will change this world from many families into one family. This auxiliary international language will gather the nations under one standard, as if the five continents of the world had become one, for then mutual interchange of thought will be possible for all. It will remove ignorance and superstition, since each child of whatever race or nation can pursue his studies in science and art, needing but two languages—his own and the International. The world of matter will become the expression of the world of mind. Then discoveries will be revealed, inventions will multiply, the sciences advance by leaps and bounds, the scientific culture of the earth will develop along broader lines. Then the nations will be enabled to utilize the latest and best thought, because expressed in the International Language.

If the International Language becomes a factor of the future, all the Eastern peoples will be enabled to acquaint themselves with the sciences of the West, and in turn the Western nations will become familiar with the thoughts and ideas of the East, thereby improving the condition of both. In short, with the establishment of this International Language the world of mankind will become another world and extraordinary will be the progress. It is our hope then, that the language Esperanto will soon spread throughout the whole world, in order that all people may be able to live together in the spirit of friendship and love.

Esperanto Society
Edinburgh
January 7, 1913.

SOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM

666 The solution of this problem is one of the fundamental principles of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. But it must be solved with justice and not with force. If this problem is not solved lovingly it will result in war. Perfect communism and equality are an impossibility because they would upset the affairs and the order of the world. But there is a fair method which will not leave the poor in such need, nor the rich in

such wealth. The poor and the rich, according to their degrees, can live happily, with ease and tranquillity. The first person in the world who had this idea was the king of Sparta. He sacrificed his kingdom for this work. He lived before Alexander the Great was born. This thought came to his mind, that he could render a service which would be higher than all services and become the cause of happiness to many. Thus he divided the people of Sparta in to three divisions. One division consisted of the ancient inhabitants, and they were the farmers. Another division consisted of the industrial people; another were the Greeks, who were originally from Phoenicia. The name of this king was Lycurgus. He desired real equality among these three divisions, and in this manner established a just government. He said that the ancient people, who were the farmers, were free from any obligation except that they had to pay one-tenth of their products and no more. The people of industry and commerce had to pay yearly taxes and nothing else. The third class, who were the noble and descendants of the rulers, whose occupations were in politics, war and the defense of the country, had all the land of Sparta. He measured the whole land and divided it equally among them. For example, there were nine thousand of them. He divided all the land in nine thousand equal parts and gave one part to each one of them. He gave one-tenth of the product of each piece of land to the one who owned it. He also made other laws and ordinances for the citizens. When he found that he had accomplished what he wanted, he said: "I am going to Syria, but I am afraid that after I go away you will change my laws. Therefore take an oath that you will not make any change before my return." They took an oath in the temple and assured him that they would never make any change and that they would maintain these laws always until the return of the king. But the king left the temple, traveled and never returned. He gave up his kingdom in order that these laws might be preserved. This equality of distribution, in a short time, became the cause of discord, because one of the men had five children, another three children, and another two children. Differences accrued and the whole thing was upset. Therefore the matter of equality is an impossibility.

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But here is the real solution. The rich should be merciful to the poor, but with their free-will, not with force. Should it be with force it would be useless. It should be according to law and not by violence, so that through a general law every one might know his duty. For example, a rich person has a large income and a poor person a small income. To put it in a more explicit way: a rich person in this case must be exempt from taxes. If the poor person gives one-tenth of his income and the rich person one-tenth of his income, it will be unjust. Thus in this way a law should be made that the poor person who has only ten kilos and needs them all for his necessary food, be exempt from paying taxes. But if the rich person, who has ten thousand kilos, pays one-tenth or two-tenths taxes on his products, it will not be a hardship to him. For example, if he gives two thousand kilos, he will still have eight thousand kilos. If a person has fifty thousand kilos, even though he gives ten thousand kilos he will still have forty thousand kilos. Therefore, laws must be made in this way. These laws must do away with the present system of wages and earnings. If today the owners of factories increase the wages of their employees, after a month or a year, they will again cry and strike and ask for more increase. This work has no end.

Now I want to tell you about the law of God. According to the divine law no wages should be given to the employee. Nay, rather, indeed they are partners in every work. For example, the farmers plant near a village. They get products from their cultivation. They take one-tenth from the rich and the poor according to their income. A general store may be built in that village for all the incomes and products to be brought therein. Then it will be considered who is rich and who is poor. The farmers whose incomes are sufficient only for their food and expenses must be free from paying taxes. All products and incomes gathered and collected must be put in the general store. If there is a helpless one in that village his daily needs must be given to him. On the other hand, a rich person who needs only fifty kilos of products and still have five hundred thousand kilos, after all his expenses are paid, should be taxed two-tenths and at the end of the year whatever remains in the store should be distributed for the general expenses.

The question of socialization is very important. It will not be solved by strikes for wages. All the governments of the world must be united and organize an assembly, the members of which should be elected from the parliaments and the nobles of the nations. These must plan, with the utmost wisdom and power, so that neither the capitalists suffer from enormous losses, nor the laborers become needy. In the utmost moderation they should make the law, then announce to the public that the rights of the working people are to be strongly preserved. Also the rights of the capitalists are to be protected. When such a general plan is adopted by the will of both sides, should a strike occur, all the governments of the world collectively should resist it. Otherwise, the work will lead to much destruction, especially in Europe. Terrible things will take place. One of the several causes of a universal European war will be this question. For instance, the owners of properties, mines and factories should share their incomes with their employees, and give a certain fair percentage of their products to their workingmen, in order that the employees may receive, besides their wages, some of the general income of the factory, so that the employee may strive with his soul in the work.

No more trusts will remain in the future. The question of the trusts will be wiped away entirely. Also, every factory that has ten thousand shares, will give two thousand shares of these ten thousand to its employees, and will write them in their names so that they may have them, and the rest will belong to the capitalists. Then at the end of the month, or year, whatever they may earn, after the expenses and wages are paid, according to the number of share, should be divided among both. In reality, so far, great injustice has befallen the common people. Laws must be made because it is impossible for the laborers to be satisfied with the present system. They will strike every month and every year. Finally the capitalists will lose. In the ancient times a strike occurred among the Turkish soldiers. They said to the government: "Our wages are very small and they should be increased." The government was forced to give them their demands. Shortly afterwards they struck again. Finally all the incomes went to the pockets of the soldiers, to the extent that they killed the king, saying: "Why didst thou not increase the income so that we might have received more?"

It is impossible for a country to live easily without laws. To solve this problem, strong laws must be made, so that all the governments of the world may be the

protectors thereof.

The essence of this matter is that strikes are conducive to destruction, but laws are the cause of life. Laws must be framed. Demands should be according to the laws, and not with strikes, force and harshness. Tonight you have spoken of politics, but we are not accustomed to talk on politics. We speak about the world of spirit. We speak of the wealth of the kingdom, not of the wealth of the nether world.

Star of the West, Vol. 7, No. 9.

LAMENTATION

671 Look thou with seeing eyes at the world about thee, and at the inhabitants thereof. Upon the stage of this immense theatre most spectacular plays are being enacted. On one side thou wilt see the victorious and the vanquished legions of profit and loss. On the other side thou wilt observe the waves of the sea of folly rising and falling. Cries are being raised on every side and the agonies of revolution, revolt and unrest reach unto the ears of progressive men. There is a tremendous strike and clash between capital and labor, and the war between the aristocrats and democrats is carried on relentlessly with bow and arrow, sword and javelin. The phalanxes of a great army are drawn in battle array, each division taking its position. Armed troops and artillery are to be found in every part of the field. The flash of the swords of enmity blind the eyes from even the most remote distance, the lightning effect of breastplate and lance and the sparkle of the bucklers of hatred light up the night and bewilder the sight. In short: strife, battle, slaughter and war are prepared in organized perfection.

On the other hand, thou wilt hear from every house strains of music are raised, and confusing melodies of harp, lyre, cymbal and flute are heard, and mad revelers are dancing to the tunes while inebriated with the wine of vanishing pleasures. In one place thou wilt behold the wanton and soiled decorations, and in another the flimsy shows of the gilded class of creatures. On the one hand is to be seen the embellishment and luxury made possible through illicit wealth, and on the other hand, the ravishing from this mortal world of its beautiful appearance.

From different parts are to be heard sighs of anguish, lamentations of poverty, cries of agony and misery—and the calls for succor have reached to the gate of heaven. One hears the weeping of the hopeless, the appeals of the oppressed, the trembling murmurs of the helpless, the harrowing wails of the shipwrecked in the sea of persecution. The heat of the conflagration of opposition spreads on all sides, the fire of longing is raging with great intensity and the tongues of the flames of calamity leap forth in every direction. Here one sees the oppression of kings and the thoughtlessness of cabinet ministers; there one sees conflict on the battlefield of thoughts and ideals between ambitious generals, statesmen and administrators of

the nations and countries. They consult, scheme, plot and exchange views; they organize fallacious and superfluous companies and falsify the established values; and thus they do lay and destroy the foundation of their political careers.

In short: when thou observest these things with the eye of reality, thou wilt see that the outcome, result and fruit of all these theatrical performances are mirages, and their sweetness is bitter poison. A few days the earth shall roll on its axis, and these fleeting visions will be completely forgotten.

When thou shuttest thine eyes to this dark world and lookest upward and heavenward, thou wilt see light upon light stretching from eternity to eternity. The reality of the mysteries will be revealed. Happy is the pure soul who does not attach himself to transient conditions and comforts, but rather seeks to attach himself to the purity, nobility and splendor of the world which endures.

Ramleh, Egypt
September, 1913.

THE ONENESS OF HUMANITY

672 Today I wish to speak to you upon the subject of the "Oneness of Humanity," for in this great century, the most important of all subjects is the oneness of the world of humankind. Although in past centuries and bygone ages, this great subject received some measure of mention and consideration, it was little compared to its attainment and importance in this day. In past ages and centuries history shows that the various peoples, tribes, nations and sects fought and warred against each other in enmity and hatred. But—Praise be to God!—in this century of illumination hearts are inclined toward amity and fellowship and minds are thoughtful upon the question of the unification of mankind. There is an emanation of the Universal Consciousness today which clearly indicates the dawn of a great unity.

In investigation of a subject the right method of approach is to carefully examine its premises. Therefore in the examination of this subject of human solidarity, let us go back to the foundation upon which it rests, namely: that all mankind belong to one family,—that all are one progeny of Adam,—all are servants of the one God—all have been created by one God,—God is the provider for all—God nurtures all,—all are submerged in the sea of the mercy and grace of God,—and God is kind to all.

All humankind share in common the intellectual and spiritual faculties of a created endowment. All are equally subject to the various exigencies of human life, and are similarly employed in acquiring the means of earthly livelihood. In every respect from the viewpoint of creation all stand upon the same footing—all have the same requirements,—all are seeking the happiness and comfort of earthly conditions; that is to say, the things they share in common are numerous and

manifest. This very sharing or partnership in matters intellectual and spiritual is a valid basis for the unification of mankind.

Consider how, for six thousand years, discord and dissension have prevailed in this great human family. Its members have ever been engaged in war and bloodshed. Heretofore, the world of humanity has not attained nor enjoyed any measure of peace on account of these conditions of war and strife. Consult history,—you will find a continuous record of war brought about by religious, sectarian, patriotic, racial and political causes. The world of humanity has found no rest. Men have always been in conflict, engaged in destroying the foundations of each other, pillaging the properties and possessions of each other and shedding blood, especially in the earlier period of savagery when they carried away as captives the wives and children of each other. Consider the tremendous losses of human life which have been the fruit of this strife. What powers and forces have been employed in the means of war and applied to inhuman purposes of conflict and bloodshed! Now it has become necessary to divert these energies and utilize them in other directions; to try the new path of fellowship and unity in this most radiant century. We have observed after long trial and experience the harmfulness of war and dissension. Now we must seek after the means of procuring the benefits of unity and peace. When such means are found, we must give them a trial.

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Consider the harm which comes to a family through discord and dissension. Consider, too, what favors and blessings descend upon that family when unity exists among its various members. Likewise reflect what would descend upon the great human family,—upon humanity in general—if unity were established. Although the benefits and good results of unity are clearly manifest and the harm and ill effects of discord apparent, yet in this century means are witnessed for assisting man in the attainment of fellowship and unity. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has provided the means by which discord may be removed from the human world. He has left no possibility or means for dissension.

First, He has proclaimed the Oneness of Mankind and specialized religious teachings for humanity. The first form of dissension among mankind arises from religious differences. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has given full teachings to the world which are conducive to fellowship and unity in religion. In past years each religious system has boasted of its own superiority and excellence, abasing and scorning the validity of all others. Each has accounted its own belief as light and all others as darkness. The various followers have considered the world of humanity to be as two trees,—one a merciful tree and the other satanic. They have considered some of mankind the branches, twigs and leaves of the merciful tree and others belonging to the tree which is satanic. This sedition and warfare among the people of the religions was continuous, causing ceaseless bloodshed and strife. The greatest cause of human alienation has been religion because each considered the belief of the other as anathema and deprived of the mercy of God.

The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh which are specialized to Him are as follows: He has founded the premises by addressing all humanity, saying, “Ye are all the leaves of one tree,”—not of two trees, one merciful and the other satanic. He has said all humanity belongs to one tree—the merciful. Each individual member of the human

family is a leaf, twig or branch upon this tree. All belong to the Adamic tree,—all are sheltered beneath the protecting mercy and providence of God. All are the children of God; all are fruit upon the one tree of His love. God is clement and kind to all the branches, leaves and fruit of this tree and there is no existence or interference of a satanic tree whatever,—Satan being a creation of human proclivities. God alone is the Creator and all are creatures of His might. Therefore we must love all mankind as His creatures and realize that all are growing upon the Tree of His mercy—that all are servants of His almighty Will and manifestations of His good pleasure.

Even supposing we find a branch or leaf of this tree defective or a blossom imperfect, it nevertheless belongs to this tree and not another. Therefore it is our duty to try and protect that tree,—guard and cultivate it until the fruit reaches perfection. If we test its fruit and find it imperfect we must strive to make it perfect. No doubt we will find in the human world souls who are ignorant; we must make them knowing. Some souls growing upon the tree are weak and ailing; we must put them in the way of attaining health and recovery. If they be as infants in development we must minister to them until they attain maturity. Never should we detest and shun them, or consider them as bad. We must honor, respect and be kind to them all, for God has created them and not Satan. They are not manifestations of the wrath of God but of His divine favor. God the Creator has endowed them with eyes, ears, hearts, physical, mental and spiritual faculties; that is to say they are creatures of His Will, not of His wrath. Therefore souls are manifestations of the favor of God—that is to say, all humanity must be shown the utmost love, kindness and respect because what we behold in them are no less than the signs and traces of God Himself. All are evidences of God, therefore how shall we be justified in debasing them, uttering anathema and seeking to deprive them of drawing near unto His mercy? This is sheer ignorance, complete injustice and God is not pleased with it because in the sight of God all are His servants.

674 Another cause of dissension and discord is the fact that religion has been pronounced at variance with science. Between religionists and scientists there has always been warfare for the reason that the former have proclaimed religion superior to science and considered science opposed to religion. For this reason strife and enmity have existed between them. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh declared this to be a mistake, for religion is in harmony with science and reason. If it be at variance, it proceeds from the mind of man only and not from God and is therefore unworthy of belief and not deserving of attention. The heart finds no rest in it and confidence is not established. How can man believe that which he knows to be at variance with reason? Is this possible? Is it possible for the heart to accept that which reason refuses? Reason is the first faculty of man and the religion of God is in harmony with it. Bahá'u'lláh has removed this form of dissension and discord from among mankind and reconciled science with religion. This is His unique accomplishment in this Day.

675 Still another cause of disagreement and dissension has been the formation of religious sects and denominations. Bahá'u'lláh said that God has sent religion for fellowship among humankind and not for strife and discord, for all religion is founded upon the love of humanity. His Holiness Abraham promulgated the principles of love among mankind. His Holiness Christ established the love of

mankind. His Holiness Muḥammad directed all to the love of mankind. This is the reality of religion. If you investigate the reality and inner significance of their teachings you will find it so. You must not listen to hearsay but investigate the reality. The purpose is that religion is the cause of amity, love and fellowship, not of discord, enmity and estrangement. But man forsaking the foundation of Divine Religion, has adhered to certain blind imitations. Each nation has clung to its own imitations and because these imitations are at variance, they have caused warfare, bloodshed and the destruction of the foundations of humanity. But the religion of God is based upon amity and agreement. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has said that “if religion and faith are the causes of enmity and sedition it is far better to be non-religions; that lack of such religion is better than religion; for we desire religion to be the cause of amity and fellowship. If enmity and hatred exist, irreligion is preferable.” Therefore the removal of this dissension has been specialized in Bahá'u'lláh, for religion is a remedy for human antagonism. If a remedy is the cause of disease, it would be better to do without the remedy.

676 Other causes of human dissension are political, patriotic and racial prejudices. These have been removed by Bahá'u'lláh. He has said and has guarded His statement by rational proofs from the Holy Books that the world of humanity is one race, the surface of the earth one place of residence and these suppositions of racial and political boundaries are baseless and without foundation. It is not becoming of man to be the captive of these illusions and suppositions. Consider,—the surface of the earth is one, and one atmosphere encompasses all humanity. No difference or preference is made by God. But man, following illusions and superstitions, has come to consider nationalities various and races separate in rights and importance, thereby laying the foundation of prejudice, hatred and discord.

677 Diversity of languages has been a fruitful cause of discord. The function of language is to convey the thought and purpose of one to another. Therefore it matters not what language man speaks or employs. Nevertheless, Bahá'u'lláh, sixty years ago advocated one language as the greatest means of unity and the basis of international conference. Sixty years ago, He wrote to the kings of the earth recommending the unification of languages; that one language should be adopted and sanctioned by all governments and promulgated by all nations. By this means, every nation might have its own natal tongue and acquire the universal language. All nations would then be able to communicate and consult with perfect facility and the dissension due to diversity of language would not remain.

678 Another teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is in relation to the Most Great Peace; that all mankind must be awakened to and become conscious of the harm of war; that they should become informed of the benefit of peace and know that peace is from God, while warfare is from Satan. War among nations is a trait and manifestation of Satan. Man must emulate the Merciful and not Satan, in order that public opinion shall incline toward peace, love and unity, and the discord of war vanish.

679 I will mention another cause of dissension: the lack of equality between man and woman. Bahá'u'lláh has named this as a great cause of discord and division among humanity, for so long as humanity remains unequally divided as male and female in right and importance, no amity or unity can be established. In a perfect

human body, it could not be possible for one organ to be perfect and another defective. In the great body of humanity how could it be possible to bring about unity, love and fellowship if one factor is considered perfect and the other imperfect? When both are perfect in function, perfect fellowship and harmony will be witnessed. Therefore it is the greatest mistake to assume one member of the family of humanity is perfect and the other defective or not deserving. God has created man and woman equal as to faculties; He has made no distinction between them. Woman has not reached the level of man in human accomplishment because of lack of education. The education of man has been of one kind and of woman another. If education were equal and similar, these two factors would be equal in attainment. God has made no difference between them which should produce discord. He has endowed all with human faculties and all are manifestations of His mercy. If we say mankind is different creationally in endowment that is contrary to Divine justice. Both are human. If God has created one perfect and the other defective, He is unjust. But God is just. None are created imperfect or defective; all are perfect in creative endowment. To assume imperfection in the creature is to presuppose imperfection in the Almighty Creator.

In brief: woman must receive equal education with man. The soul which is most excellent in the estimate of God is acceptable before God.

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We have for our subject and consideration the reconciliation of the religious systems of the world. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has said that if from each of the varying religious systems one intelligent member be selected and these representatives come together seeking to investigate the reality of religion, they would establish an inter-religious body before which all disputes and difference of religious belief could be presented for investigation and discussion. These questions could then be weighed and settled from the standpoint of reality and all imitations discarded. In this way all religious sects and systems would become one.

Do not question the practicability of this and be not astonished. It has been effected and accomplished in Persia. In that country the various religionists have gathered together to investigate the reality and have united in the utmost fellowship and love. No trace of discord or differences remain; the utmost love, kindness and unity are apparent. They are unified and live together like a single family in harmony and accord. Discord and strife have passed away. Love and fellowship now prevail instead. Furthermore those souls who have obeyed Bahá'u'lláh and attained this condition of accord, fellowship and affiliation are Muhammadans, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Nestorians, Shiites, Sunnites, and others. No discord exists among them. This is a proof of the possibility of universal unification among the religionists of the world through practical means. Imitations which have held men apart have been discarded and the reality of religion envelops them in its perfect unity. When reality envelops the soul of man, love is possible. The divine purpose in religion is pure love and amity. The Prophets of God were in the utmost love for all. Each one announced the glad tidings of His successor and each subsequent one confirmed the teachings and prophecies of the former. There was no discord or variance in the reality of their teachings and mission. The discord has arisen among their followers, who held fast to imitations. If imitations be done away with the radiant shining Reality dawn in the souls of men, love and unity must

prevail. Thus will humanity be rescued from the strife and wars of six thousand years, dissensions will pass away and the illumination of unity dawn. Consider how all the Prophets of God were persecuted and what hardships they experienced. His Holiness Jesus Christ endured affliction and accepted martyrdom upon the cross in order to call men to unity and love. What sacrifice could be greater? He brought the religion of love and fellowship to the world. Shall we make use of it to create discord, violence and hatred among men?

681 Moses was persecuted and driven out into the desert; Abraham was banished; Muḥammad took refuge in caves; the Báb was killed and Bahá'u'lláh was exiled and imprisoned fifty years. Yet all of them desired only fellowship and love among men. They endured hardships, suffered persecution and death for our sakes that we might be taught to love one another, be united and affiliated instead of discordant and at variance. Enough of these six thousand years which have brought such vicissitudes and hardships into the world! Now in this radiant century, let us try to carry out the good pleasure of God, that we may be rescued from these things of darkness and come forth into the boundless illumination of heaven,—shunning division and welcoming the divine oneness of humanity. Perchance, God willing, this terrestrial world may become as a mirror celestial upon which we may behold the imprint of the traces of Divinity, and the fundamental qualities of a New Creation may be reflected from the reality of love shining in human hearts. Thus from the light and semblance of God in us may it be indeed proved and witnessed that God has created man after His own image and likeness.

PRAYER

682 O my God! O my God! Verily, I invoke Thee and supplicate before Thy threshold, asking Thee that all Thy mercies may descend upon these souls. Specialize them for Thy favor and Thy truth, O Lord! Unite and bind together the hearts, join in accord all the souls and exhilarate the spirits through the signs of Thy sanctity and oneness. O Lord! suffer these faces to become radiant through the light of Thy oneness. Strengthen the loins of Thy servants in the service of Thy Kingdom, O Lord! Thou Possessor of great mercy! O Lord of forgiveness and pardon! forgive our sins, suffer us to be pardoned for our shortcomings and cause us to turn to the Kingdom of Thy clemency, invoking the Kingdom of Might and Power, humble at Thy shrine and submissive at the appearance of Thy evidences. O Lord God! make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, united, agreed, fresh and verdant through the bounties of Thy love. O Lord! dilate the breasts through the signs of Thy oneness and make all humanity as waves of the same ocean, as star shining from the same height of glory, as luscious fruits borne upon Thy Tree of Life. Verily, Thou Art the Almighty, the Self-subsistent, the Giver, the Forgiving, the Pardoner, the Omniscient, the One Creator!

LOVE

683 Every subject presented to a thoughtful audience must be supported by rational proofs and logical arguments. Proofs are of four kinds: first, through sense-perception; second, through the reasoning faculty; third, from traditional or scriptural authority; fourth, through the medium of inspiration. That is to say there are four criterions or standards of judgment by which the human mind reaches its conclusions.

We will first consider the criterion of the senses. This is a standard still held to by the materialistic philosophers of the world. They believe that whatever is perceptible to the senses is a verity, a certainty, and without doubt existent. For example they say "here is a lamp which you see, and because it is perceptible to the sense of sight you cannot doubt its existence. There is a tree; your sense of vision assures you of its reality, which is beyond question. This is a man; you see that he is a man—therefore he exists." In a word, everything confirmed by the sense is assumed to be as undoubted and unquestioned as the product of five multiplied by five: it cannot be twenty-six nor less than twenty-five. Consequently the materialistic philosophers consider the criterion of the senses to be first and foremost.

But in the estimation of the divine philosophers, this proof and assurance is not reliable; nay, rather, they deem the standard of the senses to be false because it is imperfect. Sight, for instance, is one of the most important of the senses, yet it is subject to many aberrations and inaccuracies. The eye sees the mirage as a body of water—regards images in the mirror as realities when they are but reflections. A man sailing upon the river imagines that objects upon the shore are moving, whereas he is in motion and they are stationary. To the eye, the earth appears fixed while the sun and stars revolve about it. As a matter of fact the heavenly orbs are stationary and the earth turning upon its axis. The colossal suns, planets and constellations which shine in the heavens appear small, nay infinitesimal to human vision, whereas in reality they are vastly greater than the earth in dimension and volume. A whirling spark appears to the sight as a circle of fire. There are numberless instances of this kind which show the error and inaccuracy of the senses. Therefore the divine philosophers have considered this standard of judgment to be defective and unreliable.

The second criterion is that of the intellect. The ancient philosophers in particular considered the intellect to be the most important agency of judgment. Among the wise men of Greece, Rome, Persia and Egypt, the criterion of true proof

was reason. They held that every matter submitted to the reasoning faculty could be proved true or false, and must be accepted or rejected accordingly. But in the estimation of the people of insight this criterion is likewise defective and unreliable, for these same philosophers who held to reason or intellect as the standard of human judgment have differed widely among themselves upon every subject of investigation. The statements of the Greek philosophers are contradictory to the conclusions of the Persian sages. Even among the Greek philosophers themselves there is continual variance and lack of agreement upon any given subject. Great difference of opinion also prevailed between the wise men of Greece and Rome. Therefore, if the criterion of reason or intellect constituted a correct and infallible standard of judgment, those who tested and applied it should have arrived at the same conclusions. As they differ and are contradictory in conclusions, it is an evidence that the method and standard of test must have been faulty and insufficient.

The third criterion or standard of proof is traditional or scriptural, namely that every statement or conclusion should be supported by traditions recorded in certain religious books. When we come to consider even the Holy Books—the Books of God—we are led to ask: “Who understands these books? By what authority of explanation may these books be understood?” It must be the authority of human reason, and if reason or intellect finds itself incapable of explaining certain questions, or if the possessors of intellect contradict each other in the interpretation of traditions, how can such a criterion be relied upon for accurate conclusions?

The fourth standard is that of inspiration. In past centuries many philosophers have claimed illumination or revelation, prefacing their statements by the announcement that “this subject has been revealed through me,” or “thus do I speak by inspiration.” Of this class were the philosophers of the Illuminati. Inspirations are the prompting or susceptibilities of the human heart. The prompting of the heart are sometimes satanic. How are we to differentiate them? How are we to tell whether a given statement is an inspiration and prompting of the heart through the Merciful assistance or through the satanic agency?

Consequently it has become evident that the four criteria or standards of judgment by which the human mind reaches its conclusions are faulty and inaccurate. All of them are liable to mistake and error in conclusions. But a statement presented to the mind accompanied by proofs which the senses can accept, which the faculty of reason can accept, which is in accord with traditional authority and sanctioned by the promptings of the heart, can be adjudged and relied upon as perfectly correct, for it has been proved and tested by all the standards of judgment and found to be complete. When we apply but one test there are possibilities of mistake. This is self-evident and manifest.

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We will now consider the subject of Love which has been suggested, submitting it to the four standards of judgment and thereby reaching our conclusions.

We declare that love is the cause of the existence of all phenomena and that the absence of love is the cause of disintegration or non-existence. Love is the conscious bestowal of God—the bond of affiliation in all phenomena. We will first consider the proof of this through sense-perception. As we look upon the universe we observe

that all composite beings or existing phenomena are made up primarily of single elements bound together by a power of attraction. Through this power of attraction, cohesion has become manifest between the atoms of these constituent elements. The resultant being is a phenomenon of the lower, contingent type. The power of cohesion expressed in the mineral kingdom is in reality love or affinity manifested in a low degree according to the exigencies of the mineral world. We take a step higher into the vegetable kingdom where we find an increased power of attraction has become manifest among the several elements which form phenomena. Through this degree of attraction, a cellular admixture is produced among these elements which make up the body of a plant. Therefore in the degree of the vegetable kingdom there is love. We enter the animal kingdom and find the attractive power binding single elements as in the mineral, plus the cellular admixture as in the vegetable, plus the phenomena of feelings or susceptibilities. We observe that the animals are susceptible to certain affiliation and fellowship, and that they exercise natural selection.

Finally we come to the kingdom of man. As this is the superior kingdom, the light of love is more resplendent. In man we find the power of attraction among the elements which compose his material body, plus the attraction which produces cellular admixture or power augmentative, plus the attraction which characterizes the sensibilities of the animal kingdom, but still above and beyond all these powers we discover in the being of man the attraction of heart, the susceptibilities and affinities which bind men together, enabling them to live and associate in friendship and solidarity. It is therefore evident that in the world of humanity, the greatest king and sovereign is love. If love were extinguished, the power of attraction dispelled, the affinity of human hearts destroyed, the phenomena of human life would disappear.

This is a proof perceptible to the senses, acceptable to reason, in accord with traditions and teachings of the Holy Books and verified by the promptings of human hearts themselves. It is a proof upon which we can absolutely rely and declare to be complete.

But these are only degrees of love which exist in the natural or physical world. Their manifestation is ever according to the requirement of natural conditions and standards. Real love is the love which exists between God and His servants—the love which binds together holy souls. This is the love of the spiritual world, not the love of physical bodies and organisms. For example, consider and observe how the bestowals of God successively descend upon mankind; how the divine effulgences ever shine upon the human world! There can be no doubt that these bestowals, these bounties, these effulgences emanate from love. Unless Love be the divine motive, it would be impossible for the heart of man to attain or receive them. Unless love exists, the divine blessing could not descend upon any object or thing. Unless there be love, the recipient of divine effulgence could not radiate and reflect that Effulgence upon other objects. If we are of those who perceive, we realize that the bounties of God manifest themselves continuously, even as the rays of the sun unceasingly emanate from the solar center. The phenomenal world, through the resplendent effulgence of the sun is radiant and bright. In the same way, the realm of hearts and spirits is illumined and resuscitated through the shining rays of the

Sun of Reality and the bounties of the love of God. Thereby the world of existence, the kingdom of hearts and spirits, is ever quickened into life. Were it not for the love of God, hearts would be inanimate, spirits would wither and the reality of man would be bereft of the everlasting Bestowals.

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Consider to what an extent the love of God makes itself manifest. Among the signs of His Love which appear in the world are the Dawning-Points of His Manifestations. What an infinite degree of Love is reflected by the Divine Manifestations toward mankind! For the sake of guiding the people they have willingly forfeited their lives to resuscitate human hearts. They have accepted the cross. To enable human souls to attain the supreme degree of advancement they have suffered during their limited years extreme ordeals and difficulties. If His Holiness Jesus Christ had not possessed love for the world of humanity, surely He would not have welcomed the cross. He was crucified for the love of mankind. Consider the infinite degree of that love! Without love for humanity John the Baptist would not have offered His life. It has been likewise with all the prophets and holy souls. If His Holiness the Báb had not manifested love for mankind surely He would not have offered His breast for a thousand bullets. If His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh had not been aflame with love for humanity, He would not have willingly accepted fifty years' imprisonment.

Observe how rarely human souls sacrifice their pleasure or comfort for others; how improbable that a man would offer his eye or suffer himself to be dismembered for the benefit of another. Yet all the Divine Manifestations suffered, offered their lives and blood, sacrificed their existence, comfort and all they possessed for the sake of mankind. Therefore consider how much they love! Were it not for their love for humanity, Spiritual Love would be a mere name. Were it not for their illumination, human souls would not be radiant. How effective is their love! This is a sign of the love of God; a ray of the Sun of Reality.

Therefore we must give praise unto God, for it is the light of His bounty which has shone upon us through His love which is everlasting. His Divine Manifestations have offered their lives through love for us. Consider then what the love of God means. Were it not for the love of God all the spirits would be inanimate. The meaning of this is not physical death; nay, rather it is that condition concerning which His Holiness Christ declared, "Let the dead bury their dead, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of spirit is spirit." Were it not for the love of God, the hearts would not be illumined. Were it not for the love of God, the pathway of the Kingdom would not be opened. Were it not for the love of God the Holy Books would not have been revealed. Were it not for the love of God, the Divine Prophets would not have been sent to the world. The foundation of all these bestowals is the love of God. Therefore in the human world there is no greater power than the love of God. It is the love of God which has brought us here together tonight. It is the love of God which is affiliating the East and the West. It is the love of God which has resuscitated the world. Now must we offer thanks to God that such a great Bestowal and Effulgence has been revealed to us.

Green Acre,
Maine

THE ESSENTIAL UNITY

686

He is El-Abhá!

O ye who are turned to the Supreme Appearance!

Day and night, morn and eve, at sunrise and at sunset, we are remembering with all our hearts and souls, the friends of the Merciful One, asking God's help and confirmation that the believers of the pure territory, the Holy Land, may become excellent in all conditions of morality, characteristics, behaviour, manners, conduct and actions, that they may appear with ecstasy, enthusiasm, love, consciousness, assurance, steadfastness, firmness, concord and harmony, with bright faces and splendid beauty in the community of the world.

O ye friends of God! Today is the day of union and this age is the age of harmony in the world of existence. "Verily, God loveth those who are working in His path in groups, for they are a solid foundation." Consider ye that he says "in groups," united and bounded together, supporting one another. "To work," mentioned in this holy verse, does not mean, in this greatest age, to perform it with swords, spears, shafts and arrows, but rather with sincere intentions, good designs, useful advices, divine moralities, beautiful actions, spiritual qualities, educating the public, guiding the souls of mankind, diffusing spiritual fragrances, explaining divine illustrations, showing convincing proofs and doing charitable deeds. When the holy souls, through the angelic power, will arise to show forth these celestial characteristics, establishing a band of harmony, each of these souls shall be regarded as one thousand persons and the waves of this greatest ocean shall be considered as the army of the hosts of the Supreme Concourse.

What a great blessing it is when the torrents, streams, currents, tides, and drops are all gathered in one place! They will form a great ocean and the real harmony shall overcome and reign in such a manner that all the rules, laws, distinctions and differences of the imaginations of these souls shall disappear and vanish like little drops and shall be submerged in the ocean of spiritual unity. By the Ancient Beauty, in this case and condition, the blessings of the great ocean will overflow and canals shall become as spacious an endless ocean and each drop shall become as a boundless sea!

O ye friends of God! Strive to attain to this high and sublime station and show forth such a brightness in these days, that its radiance may appear from the eternal horizons. This is the real foundation of the Cause of God; this is the essence of the divine doctrine; this is the cause of the revelation of the heavenly Scriptures; this is the means of the appearance of the Sun of the divine world; this is the way of the establishment of God upon the bodily throne.

687 O ye friends of God! Notice that His Holiness the Báb—May the souls of all the creatures be a ransom to Him!—for this very eminent intention, exposed His holy breast to the arrows of all casualties. So, as the principal design of the Blessed Perfection—May the souls of the people of the Supreme Concourse be a ransom to Him!—was the same great intention, therefore His Holiness the Báb made His blessed breast the target for thousands of bullets from the people of enmity and rancor in this path, and was martyred with great oppression. The pure blood of thousands of divine and holy souls was shed and poured in this path, and how many blessed bodies of the sincere friends of the divine God were hanged on the scaffold!

688 The Blessed Beauty of El-Abhá—May the divine souls of the existence be a ransom to His friends!—endured personally all kinds of calamities and bore the most violent ordeals. There remained no torture which did not come to His holy body and no suffering which did not descend upon His pure spirit. How many nights He could not take rest, under the chains and heaviness of fetters, and how many days He gave himself not a minute's repose because of the burden of fetters and chains!

From Niyavirán to Tihrán, that pure spirit, who was brought up on a bed of down, was forced to run, with bare head and bare feet, under chains and fetters, and, in a dark and narrow subterranean prison, He was put with murderers, thieves, criminals and malefactors; at every moment a new torture was inflicted upon Him and at every moment His martyrdom was expected by all.

After a long time, he was sent from the city of His residence to foreign countries. For many years, in Baghdád, at every moment a new arrow was darted toward His holy breast, and at every instant a sword was bent on His pure body. At no instant was there any hope for safety and security, and the enemies, with utmost dexterity were attacking the blessed soul from all sides, and He alone, personally, resisted them all.

After all these hardships and calamities, He was sent from Baghdád in Asia to Europe, and in that terrible exile, great affliction, vehement torture and constant attack, the plots, calumnations, enmity, rancor and hatred of the people of the Bayán were added to those which came from the people of the Qur'án. The pen is unable to explain it all, but surely you have heard and learned about it.

After twenty-four years in the greatest prison, 'Akká, His life was ended in great trouble and hardship.

In short, all the time of the sojourn of the Blessed Perfection (Bahá'u'lláh)—May the souls of all existence be a ransom to His forbearance!—in this mortal world, He was either restrained with chains or kept under hanging swords, enduring the most painful afflictions. At last, in this greatest prison, His holy body was extremely weakened from the intense sufferings and His beautiful person became as weak as a web from this continual hardship. His main purpose in bearing this heavy burden and all these troubles which gave forth their waves like an ocean, accepting the chains and fetters and showing forth the great forbearance, was for the sake of harmony, concord and union among all the people of the world and for the establishment of the signs of the real unity among all nations, until the essential Unity (of God) might (at last) appear in the existing realities, and the light of the

saying: "Thou seest no difference among the creatures of God" might shine forth upon the whole world.

689 O friends of God! Now is the time of movement and striving—then try and endeavor! As the Blessed Perfection—May my soul be a ransom to the dust under the feet of His friends!—was constantly in the field of martyrdom, we, also, must endeavor to pour out our lives, and to hear, with our spiritual ears, the divine advices and exhortations, leaving our limited beings and forsaking the vain ideas of differences of the physical world, in order to serve this eminent purpose and this principal design, which has been planted by the hand of divine favor; and not veil, with the dark clouds of self-interest and superstition, the light emanating from the Kingdom of 'Abhá, nor become as barring dikes to the waves of the supreme ocean, nor prevent the diffusion of the fragrances of the garden of the glorious Beauty, nor stop the inundation of the rains of the divine grace in this day, nor hinder the rays of the Sun of Reality.

This is what God has commanded in His Scriptures, Books and holy Tablets, declaring His commandments to His sincere servants.

Upon you be the mercy and the blessings of God!

Star of the West, Vol. 7, No. 5.

SPIRIT

690 In the world of existence there is nothing so important as spirit. Nothing is as essential as the spirit of man. The spirit of man is the most noble of phenomena. The spirit of man is the meeting between man and God. The spirit of man is the cause of human life. The spirit of man is the collective center of all virtues. The spirit of man is the cause of the illumination of this world. The world may be likened to the body and man may be likened to the spirit of the body, because the light of the world is this spirit. Man in the world is the life of the world, and the life of man is the spirit. The happiness of the world depends upon man, and the happiness of man is dependent upon the spirit. The world may be likened to the lamp chimney, whereas man may be likened to the light itself. Man may be likened to the lamp, the spirit to the very light within the lamp. Therefore let us speak these human emanations have come. To them the eye and the ear are due; by them the senses of taste, smell and touch are caused; and when these elements are decomposed, these senses are likewise decomposed. This is the statement of the materialistic philosophers.

691 But the philosophers of God say, No! the spirit does exist; the spirit is living and eternal. Because of the objections of the materialistic philosophers, therefore, the wise men of God have advanced rational proofs in regard to the validity of the spirit. The materialistic philosophers do not believe in the Books of God, and, hence, for them traditional proofs are no evidence; materialistic proofs are necessary.

Consequently, the philosophers and wise men of God have said that it is firmly established that existing phenomena may be resolved into grades, that is to say, the mineral, vegetable or animal kingdoms, which possess either the functions augmentative or the functions tangible.

692 When we look at the mineral we discover that it exists and is possessed of virtue, that is to say, the power of cohesion. When we consider the vegetable we see that it possesses the power of the mineral plus the power of growth. Therefore, it is evident that the vegetable kingdom is superior to the mineral. When we look at the animal kingdom we discover that the animal possesses both the power of the vegetable and those of the mineral, because it is both material and endowed with the virtues augmentative. It is possessed of the virtues of a kingdom, whereof the mineral and vegetable are deprived. That is to say, the animal has the sense of hearing, sight, taste, smell and touch, the five senses of perception. It likewise has the power of memory. These do not exist in the lower kingdoms.

693 Just as the animal is more noble than the vegetable and the mineral, so is man superior to the animal. When we look at the animal we see that, although it possesses the five senses, it is bereft of ideation; that is to say, it is not in touch with that which lies beyond nature, it is bereft of spiritual susceptibilities, it is bereft of the attractions of conscience, it is not in touch with the world of God, it cannot deviate one hair's breadth from the law of nature. It is different from man. Man is possessed of the emanations of conscience; he has intelligence and perception and is capable of discovering mysteries in the universe. All the human industries we see, all the inventions and undertakings we observe, are mysteries of nature and at one time were hidden; but the reality of man has discovered these mysteries. As a matter of fact, according to nature's laws, these things should be hidden and latent, but man having transcended the laws of nature, discovered these mysteries and brought them from the invisible state to the visible plane. See what a marvel man is! Consider electricity—one of the mysteries of creation. Under the requirement of natural law it should remain latent, but man discovered this power, brought it forth from the invisible state to the visible plane and utilized its energies. That is to say, man transcended this law of nature. How many of the mysteries of nature have been penetrated! Columbus, while in Spain, discovered America. Man is capable of discovering that the sun is stationary, while the earth revolves around it. The animal cannot do this. Man perceives the mirage is an illusion. This is beyond the power of the animal. The animal can only perceive through sense impressions, but cannot grasp intellectual realities. The animal cannot conceive of the power of thought. This is an intellectual matter and not limited to the senses. The animal cannot conceive of the fact that the earth is spherical. Intellectual phenomena are human powers. All creation is captive of nature; it cannot deviate a hair's breadth from the laws established by nature. But man wrests the sword from nature's hand and uses it upon nature's head. For example, it is a requirement of nature that man should be a dweller upon the earth, but the power of the human spirit transcends the law and he soars aloft in airplanes. This is contrary to the law and requirement of nature. He sails at high speed upon the ocean. He dives beneath its surface in submarines. He imprisons the voice in a phonograph. He communicates in the twinkling of an eye from the East to the West. These are some of the things we know

to be contrary to the law of nature. Man transcends nature's laws. The animal, the vegetable, the mineral cannot do this. This can only be done through the power of the spirit, because the spirit is the reality. But in the physical powers and senses man and the animal are partners. In fact, animal is often superior to man in sense perception. For instance, the vision of some animals is exceedingly acute; the ear of the animal can detect a voice at a long distance. Consider the instinct of a dog; it is much greater than a man's. But although the animal shares with man all the physical virtues and senses, a spiritual power is bestowed upon man, of which the animal is devoid. This is proof that there is something in man which is absent in the animal; there is a faculty in man which is minus in the animal; there is a virtue in man which is lacking in the animal. This is the spirit of man. All these wonderful accomplishments are due to the efficacy and penetration of the spirit of man. Were man bereft of this spirit, none of these accomplishments would have been possible. This is a proof that man is possessed of a spirit. This is evident as the sun at midday.

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All creatures of material organism are limited to an image or form. That is to say, every created material being is possessed of one form. It cannot possess two forms at the same time. For example, a body may be triangular, spherical, square, a hexagon or an octagon, but it is impossible for a given object to be triangular and spherical simultaneously; it cannot possess two shapes at one time. It may be either triangular or square. If it is to become square it must first rid itself of the triangular shape. It is absolutely impossible for it to be a square and triangular at the same time. That is to say, in the reality of the creatures the different forms cannot be simultaneously possessed. But in the reality of man all geometrical figures can be simultaneously conceived. In other realities one image must be forsaken in order that another might be possible. This is the law of change and transformation, and change and transformation are harbingers of mortality. Were it not for change and transformation in form, phenomena would be immortal, but because phenomena are subject to change and transformation from one figure or shape to another, they are mortal. But the reality of man is possessed of all virtues; he does not have to give up one image for another as other mere bodies do. Therefore in that reality there is no change and transformation; there it is immortal and everlasting. Verily, the body of man may be in America but his spirit laboring and working in the far East, discovering, organizing and systematizing. Although governing, making laws, erecting a building in Russia, his body is still here in America. What is this power, which notwithstanding it is embodied in America, is still working in the east, organizing, systematizing, destroying, up-building? It is the spirit of man. This is irrefutable.

When you wish to reflect upon or consider a matter you consult something within you. You say, shall I do it, or shall I not do it? Is it better to do this or abandon it? Whom do you consult? Who is within you deciding this question? Surely there is a distinct power, a distinct ego. Were it not distinct from your ego you would not be consulting it. It is greater than the faculty of thought. It is your spirit which teaches you, which inspires and decides upon matters. Who is it that interrogates? Who is it that answers? There is no doubt that it is the spirit and that there is no change or transformation there, for it is not composed of composite elements; and anything that is not composed of elements is eternal. Change and

transformation are peculiarities of composition. There is no change and transformation in the spirit. In proof of this the body may become weakened in its members. It may be dismembered or one of its members may be incapacitated. The whole body may be paralyzed and yet the mind, the spirit, remains ever the same. The mind decides, the thought is perfect and yet the hand is withered, the feet have become useless, the spinal column is paralyzed, and there is no muscular movement at all, but the spirit is in the same status. Dismember a healthy man—the spirit is not dismembered. Amputate his feet; his spirit is there. He may become lame, the spirit is not affected. The spirit is ever the same; no change or transformation can you perceive, and because there is no change or transformation, it is everlasting and permanent.

695 Consider man while in the state of sleep; it is evident that all his parts and members are at a standstill, are functionless. His eye does not see, his ear does not hear, his feet and hands are motionless, but, nevertheless, he does see in the world of dreams, he does hear, he speaks, he walks, he may even fly in an airplane. Therefore it becomes evident that though the body may be dead yet the spirit is permanent. Nay, the perceptions may be keener when man's body is asleep, the flight may be higher, the hearing may be better; all the functions are there and yet the body is at a standstill. Hence it is proof that there is a spirit in the man and in this spirit there is no distinction as to whether the body be asleep or absolutely dead and dependent. The spirit is not incapacitated by these conditions; it is not bereft of its existence, it is not bereft of its perfections. The proofs are many – innumerable.

These are all rational proofs. Nobody can deny them. As we have shown there is a spirit and that this spirit is permanent and everlasting, we must strive to learn of it. May you become informed of this spirit, hasten to render it divine, to have it become sanctified and holy, and that it may become the very light of the world illuminating the East and the West.

I wish I might come and talk with you every night. I entertain great love for you all and am greatly pleased with this meeting.

Theosophical Society
Boston, Mass.
July 24, 1912.

THE SECOND BIRTH

696

Supplication.

O Thou kind God! In the utmost state of humility and submission do we entreat and supplicate at Thy Threshold, seeking Thy endless confirmations and illimitable assistance. O Thou Lord! regenerate these souls and confer upon them a new Life. Animate the spirits, inform the hearts, open the eyes and make the ears attentive.

From Thy ancient Treasury confer a new being and animus and from Thy pre-existent Abode assist them to attain to new confirmations.

O God! Verily, the world is in need of reformation. Bestow upon it a new existence. Give it newness of thoughts and reveal unto it heavenly sciences. Breathe into it a fresh spirit and grant unto it a holier and higher purpose.

O God! Verily, Thou hast made this century radiant and in it Thou has manifested Thy merciful Effulgence. Thou hast effaced the darkness of superstitions and permitted the Light of Assurance to shine. O God! grant that these servants may be acceptable at Thy Threshold. Reveal a new heaven and spread out a new earth for habitation. Let a new Jerusalem descend from on high. Bestow new thoughts, new life upon mankind. Endow souls with new perceptions, and confer upon them new virtues. Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the Powerful! Thou art the Giver, the Generous!

697 It is easy to bring human bodies under control. A king can bring under his rule and authority the bodies of his subjects throughout a whole country. In former centuries kings and rulers have brought under their individual control many millions of men and have been thereby enabled to carry out whatsoever they desired. If they willed to bestow happiness and peace they could do so, and if they determined to inflict suffering and discomfort they were equally capable. If they desired to send men to the field of battle, none could oppose their authority, and if they decreed their kingdoms should enjoy the bliss and serenity of immunity from war, this condition prevailed. In a word, how many kings and rulers have been able to control millions of human beings and have exercised that authority!

The point is this, that to gain control over physical bodies is an extremely easy matter, but to bring spirits within the bonds of serenity is a most arduous undertaking. This is not the work of everybody. It necessitates a divine and holy potency, the potency of Inspiration, the power of the Holy Spirit. For example, His Holiness Christ was capable of leading spirits into that abode of serenity. He was capable of guiding hearts into that haven of rest. From the day of His Manifestation to the present time, He has been resuscitating hearts and quickening spirits. He has exercised that vivifying influence in the realm of hearts and spirits, therefore His resuscitation is everlasting.

698 In this century of the “latter times” Bahá’u’lláh has appeared and so resuscitated spirits that they have manifested powers more than human. Thousands of His followers have given their lives and while under the sword, shedding their blood, they have proclaimed “Yá Bahá’u’l-‘Abhá!” Such resuscitation is impossible except through a heavenly potency, a power supernatural, the divine power of the Holy Spirit. Through a natural and mere human power this is impossible. Therefore the question arises, “How is this resuscitation to be accomplished?”

699 There is certain means for its accomplishment by which mankind is regenerated and quickened with a new birth. This is the “second birth” mentioned in the Heavenly Books. Its accomplishment is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The resuscitation or rebirth of the spirit of man is through the science of the Love of God. It is through the efficacy of the Water of Life. This life and quickening is the regeneration of the phenomenal world. After the coming of the spiritual springtime,

the falling of the vernal showers, the shining of the Sun of Reality, the blowing of the breezes of perfection all phenomena become imbued with the life of a new creation and are reformed in the process of a new genesis. Reflect upon the material springtime. When winter comes the trees are leafless, the fields and meadows withered, the flowers die away into the dust-heaps; in prairie, mountain and garden no freshness lingers, no beauty is visible, no verdure can be seen. Everything is clad in the robe of death. Wherever you look around you will find the expression of death and decay. But when the spring comes, and the showers descend, and the sun floods the meadows and plains with light, you will observe creation clad in a new robe of expression. The showers have made the meadows green and verdant. The warm breezes have caused the trees to put on their garments of leaves. They have blossomed and soon will produce new, fresh and delightful fruits. Everything appears endowed with a newness of life; a new animus and spirit is everywhere visible. The spring has resuscitated all phenomena and has adorned the earth with beauty as it willeth.

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Even so is the Spiritual Springtime when it comes. When the Holy, Divine Manifestations or Prophets appear in the world, a cycle of radiance, an age of mercy dawns. Everything is renewed. Minds, hearts and all human forces are re-formed, perfections are quickened, sciences, discoveries and investigations are stimulated afresh and everything appertaining to the virtues of the human world is re-vitalized. Consider this present century of radiance and compare it with past centuries. What a vast difference exists between them! How minds have developed! How perception have deepened! How discoveries have increased! What great projects have been accomplished! How many realities have become manifest! How many mysteries of creation have been probed and penetrated! What is the cause of this? It is through the efficacy of the Spiritual Springtime in which we are living. Day by day the world attains a new bounty. In this radiant century neither the old customs nor the old sciences, crafts, laws and regulations have remained. The old political principles are undergoing change and a new body politic is in process of formation. Nevertheless some whose thoughts are congealed and whose souls are bereft of the light of the Sun of Reality seek to arrest this development in the world of the minds of men. Is this possible?

In the unmistakable and universal re-formation we are witnessing when outer conditions of humanity are receiving such impetus, when human life is assuming a new aspect, when sciences are stimulated afresh, inventions and discoveries increasing, civic laws undergoing change and moralities evidencing uplift and betterment, is it possible that spiritual impulses and influences should not be renewed and reformed? Naturally new spiritual thoughts and inclinations must also become manifest. If spirituality be not renewed, what fruits come from mere physical reformation? For instance, the body of man may improve, the quality of bone and sinew may advance, the hand may develop, other limbs and members may increase in excellence, but if the mind fails to develop of what use is the rest? The important factor in human improvement is the mind. In the world of the mind there must needs be development and improvement. There must be reformation in the kingdom of the human spirit, otherwise no result will be attained from betterment of the mere physical structure.

In this new year new fruits must be forthcoming, for that is the provision and intention of spiritual reformation. The renewal of the leaf is fruitless. From the reformation of bark or branch no fruit will come forth. The renewal of verdure produces nothing. If there be no renewal of fruit from the tree, of what avail is the reformation of bark, blossom, branch and trunk? For a fruitless tree is of no special value. Similarly, of what avail is the reformation of physical condition unless they are concomitant with spiritual reformations? For the essential reality is the spirit; the foundational basis is the spirit; the life of man is due to the spirit; the happiness, the animus, the radiance, the glory of man—all are due to the spirit; and if in the spirit no reformation takes place, there will be no result to human existence.

Therefore we must strive, with life and heart, that the material and physical world may be reformed, human perception become keener, the merciful Effulgence manifest and the radiance of Reality shine. Then the Star of Love shall appear and the world of humanity become illumined. The purpose is that the world of existence is dependent for its progress upon reformation; otherwise it will be as dead. Consider, if a new springtime failed to appear, what would be the effect upon this globe, the earth? Undoubtedly it would become dissolute and life extinct. The earth has need of an annual coming of spring. It is necessary that a new bounty should be forthcoming. If it comes not, life would be effaced. In the same way, the world of spirit needs new life, the world of mind necessitates new animus and development, the world of souls a new bounty, the world of morality a reformation, the world of divine effulgence ever new bestowals. Were it not for this replenishment, the life of the world would become effaced and extinguished. If this room is not ventilated and the air freshened, respiration will cease after a length of time. If no rain falls all life-organisms will perish. If new light does not come, the darkness of death will envelop the earth. If a new springtime does not arrive, life upon this globe will be obliterated.

Therefore, thoughts must be lofty and ideals uplifted in order that the world of humanity may become assisted in new conditions of reform. When this reformation affects every degree, then will come the very "Day of the Lord" of which all the Prophets have spoken. That is the day wherein the whole world will be regenerated. Consider: are the laws of past ages applicable to present human conditions? Evidently they are not. For example, the laws of former centuries sanctioned despotic forms of government. Are the laws of despotic control fitted for present day conditions? How could they be applied to solve the questions surrounding modern nations? Similarly, we ask, would the status of ancient thought, the crudeness of arts and crafts, the insufficiency of scientific attainment, serve us today? Would the agricultural methods of the ancients suffice in the twentieth century? Transportation in the former ages was restricted to conveyance by animals. How would it provide for human needs today? If modes of transportation had not been reformed the teeming millions now upon the earth would die of starvation. Without the railway and fast-going steamship, the world of the present day would be as dead. How could great cities, such as New York and London, subsist if dependent upon ancient means of conveyance? It is also true of other things which have been reformed in proportion to the needs of the present time. Had they not been reformed, man could not find subsistence.

If these material tendencies are in such need of reformation, how much greater the need of the world of the human spirit, the world of human thought, perception, virtues and bounties! Is it possible that need has remained stationary while the world has been advancing in every other condition and direction? It is impossible!

Therefore, we must invoke and supplicate God and strive with the utmost effort in order that the world of human existence in all its degrees may receive a mighty impulse, complete human happiness be attained and the resuscitation of all spirits and emanations be realized through the boundless favor of the Mercy of God.

New Thought Forum
Boston, Mass.
August 25, 1912.

BAHÁ'Í CENTERS

701 I have the utmost joy to find in the distant West such an established Bahá'í center, where the friends of God have assembled associating with each other in the utmost love. This affords me great joy and I ask God that this revered assemblage may be made the cause of illumining the East and the West. This is my wish, and with the utmost happiness I am grateful on account of the susceptibilities of your conscience.

Today the people in general are self-occupied. They are engaged either in warfare, or in commercial, political, industrial, or agricultural pursuits. Their interests are of a personal nature; they are thinking of self-aggrandizement, having no desire, no purpose save the acquisition of worldly possessions.

The assemblage in the world which today is thoughtful of God, the assemblage which is occupied with the thought of illumining the world of humanity, the assemblage which is occupied with the mentioning of the kingdom of God, the assemblage which has as its chief motive the good pleasure of the Lord of Hosts, is verily the assemblage of Bahá'ís, for they have no intention, aim, or purpose save the attainment of the good pleasure of God, and entrance into the Kingdom of God, and of being the promulgators of the religion of God. They are the spreaders of the fragrances of God. These are the desires of the assemblage of the Bahá'ís.

All the sects of the world are on the wane except the Bahá'í assemblages which day by day are achieving ideal progress, for they are confirmed by God's assistance.

I hope that many such assemblages may be founded in America, and that from all the centers of the world people may come to the Bahá'í assemblages and there manifest the oneness of the world of humanity.

The people in general are all asleep; they are all inadvertent; they are all slumbering, because their thoughts are confined to materialism; they are not at all thoughtful of God's thoughts except you, who are thinking of God. Verily, you are

the spirit of the world! You are the cause of the light of the world! You are the salt of the earth!

Do not look at your limited numbers now. Ere long you will see that the divine Radiance has flooded all regions. The believers in the various sects are decreasing in numbers, whereas the people of God are constantly increasing, growing stronger and greater, day by day becoming more effective.

702 Consider how the assembly of His Holiness Christ was limited to eleven souls, but that assemblage has given birth to innumerable assemblies! How many denominations are sheltered beneath it! Its efficacy is evident, and it has become the dominant factor of all the civilized world.

Now, praise be to God, your assembly is a great one; you are about two hundred in number; judge thereby of the future.

703 The Bahá'ís are not in one place only, but you will find Bahá'í centers in most parts of the world, and they are daily increasing and spreading. You must rest assured, knowing for a certainty that the confirmations of the Kingdom are yours, that the favors of Bahá'u'lláh are with you, that the power heavenly is with you, that the assistance of God is with you. If all the inhabitants of the earth should gather they will fail to withstand you, for they are on the wane, whereas you are waxing stronger. They are retrogressing; you are progressing.

704 When they exiled us from Persia, from Tihrán to Baghdád, the journey was made in thirty stages and in these thirty stages we did not find one Bahá'í. Now in every one of these places there are great numbers of Bahá'í friends.

705 Notwithstanding that the ruler of Persia and the Sultán of Turkey opposed the Cause so violently—exercising tyranny and oppression, thinking to extinguish the Lamp of God—yet this Lamp day by day grew in radiance, its powers increased and its illumination became greater, until it reached such a degree that now its lights are spread throughout the world—even as far as San Francisco, which is very far from Persia. See what this will mean in the future!

706 At the time His Holiness Jesus Christ was crucified, there were eleven disciples and even they were doubting—Peter heading them—until Mary the Magdalene, that lioness of God, strengthened them and was the cause of confirming them. Then consider how great were the results!

707 And now, His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, when He ascended, had half a million souls who were self-sacrificing and all were perfectly firm and staunch! Consider what a marvelous potency this will exercise.

Rest assured in the favor of God, and know that God is your assister. So with great power, with great confidence, strive that the lights of God may be spread and in this country from East to West the light may be shining.

Be confident! Have no doubt about it! This banner of Bahá'u'lláh will be unfurled, waving toward all regions! The lights of the Kingdom of God will illumine all these climes, and the call of God will reach the hearing of all the American Republic!

708 Hence, you must in the utmost love, in the utmost of sanctity strive night and

day that you may be the cause of spreading the light. If we are not the instruments in spreading this Cause, others will be chosen. Then let us strive so that this crown may be placed upon our heads—that we may be the promulgators of the light, that we may be the resuscitators of souls, that we may be sight-givers to the blind, that we may be the remedies to the sick, that we may guide the people. Otherwise, God will raise up a people who will hoist the standard of God, who will ignite the Lamp of God, who will conquer the cities of the hearts, who will show forth the potency of the Word of God.

But for us the desire is that we may be the instruments and thus we may be crowned. Otherwise, God is able to create instruments whereby His Word shall be published broadcast. If this does not happen today, and if not on the morrow, then on the day after tomorrow. But the desire is that today the Word may be spread, that our activity shall be beneath this banner and standard, that we shall be the cause of giving forth the summons of God, that we may invite the souls to the Kingdom, that we may be their guides.

Thus, this will be the cause of illuminating faces and will win the praise of all the Manifestations of God. This is our hope. This is the utmost of our desires, and I ask God that He may aid you all, that He may aid me, that together we may be occupied in the service of the Kingdom of God.

This is a very blessed gathering. It is a source of great joy. It is a source of great potency in the world. This very gathering has its effects. The assemblage here and the fellowship exercised are a magnet attracting the confirmations of God. Even now the confirmations of God are surrounding such a gathering as this. Ere long you will see its signs and your joy will reach the superlative degree.

Bahá'í Assembly
San Francisco
October 5, 1912.

SUMMONS TO ACTIVITY

He is God!

O God! O God! Thou dost behold me, how my forehead is laid upon the dust of humility and submission and how my face is covered in the earth of the threshold of thy singleness. O thou my Lord, the Unconstrained! Thou seest me lowly and contrite, supplicating, entreating and imploring toward the Kingdom of thy light by day and by night, that thou encircle us with the eye of thy providence and the glances of the outlook of thy mercifulness.

O Lord! Forgive our sins, pardon our shortcomings and deal with us under all circumstances through thy grace and generosity. O our Lord! We are sinners, but thou art the merciful forgiver. We are transgressors, but thou art the clement

pardoner. Absolve our iniquities, remove our sorrows, destine for us through thy bestowal severance from the world, occupation with thy mentioning, enkindlement with the fire of thy love, perpetual contemplation of thy signs, the knowledge of thy words, meditation over thy verses and the attraction of thy lights.

O Lord! O Lord! These are thy servants; they have turned their faces toward thy countenance and they have resolved their joy and happiness in thy favor and bounty. Strengthen their backs in thy obedience. Reinforce their lives in thy adoration. Perfume their hearts with the fragrances of thy holiness. Ordain for them presence in the paradise of thy meeting. Suffer them to become such servants as peruse the verses of unity in the assemblages held in thy name, as attract the rays of singleness from the lamp of thy bestowal, as who are drawn towards thy beauty, humble before thy glory; who have abandoned aught else save thee and rely upon thy protection and preservation; as those rendered meek by the sway of thy Word, made submissive before thy beloved ones; as those diffusing thy fragrances, disclosing thy mysteries, informing people with thy teachings and suffering mankind to become rejoiced through thy glad tidings. Verily, thou art powerful over that which thou willest, and thou feedest whomsoever thou willest with thy hand. The world and the Kingdom belong to thee, and thou art the mighty, the omnipotent and the beloved!

O ye believers of God! O ye dear friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’!

The goblet of the Covenant is overflowing and the outpouring of the bestowal of the Luminary of Effulgence is manifest and apparent in the regions from behind the invisible world, like unto the radiant moon. The twilight of the Moon of Guidance is scattered and the grace of the Orb of the Beauty of ‘Abhá is continuous and renowned. The fame of the grandeur of the Most Great Name hath reached the East and the West and the call of the Cause of the Blessed Perfection hath encircled the North and the South. The fragrances of sanctity are being wafted and the breeze of life is passing by. The Word of God is upheld and the everlasting Glory is revealed. The lamp of divine unity is ignited and the flame of clemency is glowing. From every direction the cry of “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá” is raised and in the Orient and in the Occident the teachings of God have struck wonder to the heart of every thinker. Pamphlets and periodicals are being published and circulated in America, Europe and Africa. A section of the press is engaged in praise and eulogy, and another section of the press is awakening the interests of the nations by exclaiming: “This Movement is stupendous and of paramount importance.” Some people express wonder and astonishment; other complain bitterly on account of their intense prejudices. One of the nations says: “After the departure of His Holiness Christ only a limited number of people were His disciples; notwithstanding this His fame became world conquering and His song reached the sphere of ether.” But the Blessed Perfection—may my life be a sacrifice to His believers!—on the eve of His ascension, hundreds and thousands were associating together under the shade of the flag of His majesty. From this illustration you can draw the conclusion that a mighty resurrection will be witnessed in the not far distant future. One of the greatest apostles of His Holiness the Spirit was the mighty Peter; but, notwithstanding this, before Christ’s crucifixion he became agitated and was harassed with fear; while thousands of souls, singing, dancing and clapping their

hands, have given up their lives and hastened toward the city of martyrdom, for the sake of and on the path to the Most Great Name—may be identity be a sacrifice to His friends!

In short, the affairs of the Cause revolve around just such a center of self-abnegation. How self-evident it is that the believers of God must clothe themselves in these days with the attributes of self-sacrifice, consecrate their time to the teachings of the heedless ones, diffuse the sweet aroma of the teachings, re-enkindle the white flame and make apparent the splendor of the Merciful.

O ye friends of God! Is it befitting that we rest for one moment after the departure of the Beauty of the Clement, or seek the organization of committees, or exhale one breath of comfort, or taste the honey of fleeting pleasure, or lay our heads on the cushions of repose, or pursue the luxury of the world of creation? No! I declare by God! This is not the condition of loyalty nor the state of faithfulness and appreciation.

Therefore, O ye friends! With heart and soul yearn for the service of the divine threshold and like unto the righteous ones become ye the guardians of the court of the merciful. Servitude at the holy threshold means the spread of the fragrances, the explanation of signs and verses, thralldom at the hall of unity and attachment to the palace of mercifulness. Consider with what severance, attraction and enkindlement the apostles of His Holiness the Spirit—may my life be a ransom to Him! arose in the promulgation of the Word of God after His crucifixion. We hope from the bestowal of the True One that we may likewise walk in the footsteps of those pure ones and hasten unhesitatingly and rejoicingly toward the arena of love and sacrifice. This is the inexhaustible outpouring. This is the grace of His Highness the forgiving Lord.

In these days the progress of the divine principles is impeded in some parts and retarded in others, and this has become conducive to the sorrow and grief of the Supreme Concourse, because the dwellers of the Kingdom of 'Abhá are expecting to see each one of us fulfilling the conditions of loyalty and for the sake of the love of the Greatest Name suffer every form of persecution. A number of the merciful friends forsook their material tranquillity and composure and traveled from city to city, nay rather, village to village, in order to diffuse the fragrances of God. These souls, endowed with such pure spirits, became the objects of the commendation of the Supreme Concourse—may my life be a ransom to them!—for they became confirmed with this most exalted grace. They spent their days amidst the greatest difficulties and hardships, and employed their time in the guidance of the negligent ones.

O ye friends! This is not the time of rest and tranquillity! This is not the season of silence and stillness. The nightingale of the rose garden of uprightness must display its wonderful melodies and trills. The bird of guidance must exhibit its eloquent speech. The light and the heat are the concomitant results of the lamp. The brilliancy of the stars must be everlasting. The existence of the ocean connotes the waves. The birds must soar toward the apex. The pearls are inseparable from their lustre and sweet fragrance must qualify the blossoms of the rose garden of knowledge. It is hoped that through the favor of the living, self-subsistent One, we may become assisted in a befitting manner.

O ye believers of God! Divine teachings are conducive to eternal life, the cause of the illumination of the world of humanity, the means of peace and conciliation, love and salvation, the basis of fellowship, uprightness and friendship in the world of creation, and the instrument of unity and accord, solidarity and interdependence amongst the individuals of the body politic. Consequently you must lay the foundation of this structure in this mortal world; thus you may confer upon it infinite and abundant life and become the source of the enlightenment of the world of existence. It is incumbent upon you to consort with all the nations and people of the world with the utmost love and kindness, and show affection, justice, assistance, consideration and courtesy to all the different communities and sects. Become ye a remedy to every pain, a balsam of healing and recovery to every wound, to every weak one become ye a support and aid and succor every one that is poor. Become ye to the fearful ones the impregnable cave of safety and to the agitated ones a sure asylum. ... In this great cycle it is more acceptable and beloved to close one's eyes to all limitations. The friends may become the manifestors of the qualities of the Merciful and Clement and arise in the service of all humanity; nay, rather they must be most kind toward the animals; for verily His mercy hath encompassed all things.

O ye believers of God! This is the time of self-abnegation and renunciation and the era of servitude and loyalty. The utmost height of this servant is the station of servitude to His Highness the Almighty. If he becomes accepted at the threshold of servitude, how glorious will be this most excellent gift. Otherwise he will be deprived of the mercy of God. Therefore the utmost hope and aspiration of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' is to open his wings in this space, to run toward this field, obtain infinite exhilaration from this wine, be intoxicated with this cup and acquire the longing of heart and spirit. Every other mention save this unchangeable, beloved name ('Abdu'l-Bahá') will become the cause of grief and sorrow and the source of the greatest regret and illimitable remorse. I request from the friends of God that day and night they may supplicate and implore at the divine Kingdom so that my servitude may become accepted in the threshold of Bahá'u'lláh.

O ye believers of God! If you wish the joy, happiness and the composure of the spirit and the peace of the conscience of 'Abdu'l-Bahá', strengthen the bonds of union and harmony amongst yourselves so that all of you may become the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the flowers of one garden, the links of one cuirass, soaring in the atmosphere and breaking forth into one glad song. This is the cause of my everlasting joy! This is the motive of the repose of my mind and heart in the eternal world! ... Today there is no greater service than union and accord amongst the believers. This is the imperative need! This is the happy consummation. This is the most great attainment and the manifest bestowal for those who are sheltered beneath the shadow of the Blessed Tree!

Upon you be greeting and praise!

Mirzá Ahmad Sohrab, Diary Notes,
January 9, 1914.

CHRISTIANITY

710 The people of Christianity have clung to literal interpretation of the statement in the Gospel that Christ came down from heaven. The Jews likewise at the time of His Manifestation held to outward and visible expectation of the fulfillment of the prophecies. They said, "Messiah shall appear from heaven. This man came from Nazareth; we know his house; we know his parents and people; it is only hearsay that he descended from heaven. This cannot be proved."

The text of the Gospel states that He came from heaven although outwardly from the matrix of the mother. The meaning is that the Divine Reality of Christ was from heaven, but the body was born of Mary.

Therefore He came according to the prophecies of the Holy Book and likewise according to natural law; His Reality from heaven; His body earthly. As He came before, so must He come this time in the same way. But some arise with objections saying, "We must have literal proof of this through the senses."

711 The Reality of Christ was always in heaven and will always be. This is the intention of the text of the Gospel. For while His Holiness Jesus Christ walked upon the earth, He said, "The Son of Man is in heaven." Therefore holding to literal interpretation and visible fulfillment of the text of the Holy Books is simply imitation of ancestral forms and beliefs. For when we perceive the Reality of Christ these texts and statements become clear and perfectly reconcilable with each other. Unless we perceive the Reality we cannot understand the meanings of the Holy Books, for these meanings are symbolical and spiritual, such as, for instance, the raising of Lazarus which has spiritual interpretation.

We must first establish the fact that the Power of God is infinite, unlimited and that it is within the Power to accomplish anything.

712 Secondly, we must understand the interpretation of Christ's words concerning "the dead." A certain disciple came to His Holiness and asked permission to go and bury his father. His Holiness answered, "Let the dead bury their dead." Therefore Christ designated as "dead" some who were still living; that is, let the living "dead," the spiritually "dead," bury their father. They were dead because they were not believers in Christ. Although physically alive they were dead spiritually. This is the meaning of Christ's words, "That which is born of flesh is flesh; that which is born of spirit is spirit." He meant that those who were simply born of the human body were dead spiritually, while those quickened by the breaths of the Holy Spirit were living, eternally alive. These are the interpretations of Christ Himself. Reflect upon them and the meanings of the Holy Books will become clear as the sun at mid-day.

713 The Holy Books have their special terminologies which must be known and understood. Physicians have their own peculiar terms, architects, philosophers have their characteristic expressions; poets have their phrases, and scientists their terminologies. In the Scripture we read the Zion is dancing. It is evident that this has other than literal interpretation. The meaning is that the people of Zion through

great joy shall rejoice. The Jews said, Christ was not Messiah but Anti-Christ, because one of the signs of the Messiah's coming was the dancing of Mount Zion, which had to yet come to pass. In reality, when His Holiness appeared, not only Mount Zion but all Palestine danced and rejoiced. Again in the Scriptures it is said, "The trees shall clap their hands." This is symbolical. There are terms and expressions of usage in every language which cannot be taken literally. For instance, in Oriental countries it is customary to say, "When my friend entered the house, the doors and walls began to sing and dance." In Persia they say, "Get at the head," meaning engage in the matter according to its own terms and usages. All these have other and inner meanings.

714 You have asked concerning approval of Christian Science treatment and healing. Spirit has influence; prayer has spiritual effect. Therefore we pray, "O God; heal this sick one!" Perchance God will answer. Does it matter who prays? God will answer the prayer of every servant if that prayer is urgent. His Mercy is vast, illimitable. He answers the prayers of all His servants. He answers the prayer of this plant. The plant prays potentially, "O God! Send me rain!" God answers this prayer and the plant grows. God will answer any one. He answers prayers potentially. Before we were born into the world did we not pray, "O God! Give me a mother; give me two fountains of bright milk; purify the air for my breathing; grant me rest and comfort; prepare food for my sustenance and living!" Did we not pray potentially for these needed blessings before we were created? When we came into this world did we not find our prayers answered? Did we not find mother, father, food, light, home and every other necessity and blessing, although we did not actually ask for them? Therefore it is natural that God will give to us when we ask Him. His Mercy is all-encircling.

715 But we ask for things which the Divine Wisdom does not desire for us, and there is no answer for our prayer. His Wisdom does not sanction what we wish. We pray, "O God! make me wealthy!" If this prayer were universally answered human affairs would be at a standstill. There would be none left to work in the streets, none to till the soil, none to build, none to run the trains. Therefore it is evident that it would not be well for us if all prayers were answered. The affairs of the world would be interfered with, energies crippled and progress hindered. But whatever we ask for, which is in accord with Divine Wisdom, God will answer. Assuredly!

For instance, a very feeble patient may ask the doctor to give him food which would be positively dangerous to his life and condition. He may beg for roast meat. The doctor is kind and wise. He knows it would be dangerous to his patient, so he refuses to allow it. The doctor is merciful, the patient ignorant. Through the doctor's kindness the patient recovers; his life is saved. Yet the patient may cry out that the doctor is unkind, not good, because he refuses to answer his pleading.

716 God is merciful. In His Mercy He answers the prayers of all His servants when according to His Supreme Wisdom it is necessary. When Christians act according to the teachings of Christ, they are called Bahá'ís. For the foundations of all the Divine Prophets and Holy Books are one. The difference among them is one of terminology only. Each springtime is identical with the former springtime. The distinction between them is only one of the calendar—1911, 1912, etc. The difference between a

Christian and a Bahá'í therefore is this; there was a former Springtime and there is a Springtime now. No other difference exists because the foundations are the same. Whoever acts completely in accordance with the teachings of Christ is a Bahá'í. The purpose is the essential meaning of "Christian," not the mere word. The purpose is the Sun itself and not its dawning points. For though the Sun is one sun, its dawning points are many. We must not adore the dawning points but worship the Sun. We must adore the reality of religion and not blindly cling to the appellation "Christianity." The Sun of Reality must be worshipped and followed. We must seek the fragrance of the rose from whatever bush it is blooming; whether Oriental or Western. Be seekers of Light, no matter from which lantern it shines forth. Be not lovers of the lantern. At one time the Light has shone from a lantern in the East, now in the West. If it comes from North, South, from whatever direction it proceeds, follow the Light.

Dublin, New Hampshire
August 5, 1912.

IMMORTALITY

717 I have great joy this evening in being present at this meeting. Praise be to God! I see before me faces of souls who have capacity, all of whom have for their greatest desire the investigation of truth, which is conducive to the greatest joy.

According to the philosophy of God, in the material or phenomenal world there are two great issues or affairs: One is that which concerns life, the other concerns death. One is relative to existence, the other to non-existence; one is composition, the other decomposition. People imagine that existence is the expression of reality or being, and that non-existence is the expression of annihilation—some imagining that man's death means his annihilation. This is a mistake. Total annihilation is an impossibility. At most, composition is subject ever to decomposition or disintegration; that is to say, existence means that certain elements have become composite and from that composite a being is formed—inasmuch as these elements have gone into the formation of endless forms of genesis we have the variegated expressions of life; and non-existence simply means the opposite or decomposition of these forms. For instance, certain elements have formed man, then this composite man is subject to disintegration. This is no other than death, but the elements remain just the same. Hence, total annihilation is an impossibility. Existence will never be non-existence. It would be the same as saying that light can become darkness, and light can never become darkness. Existence can never become non-existence, hence there is no death for man; nay, rather, man is everlasting, ever-living, and as a rational proof thereof the following is advanced, that every atom of the phenomenal elements is transferable from one form to another, from one degree to another. For example, take the grain of sand or dust; you can say that that

grain traverses all the degrees of existence. Once it goes into the formation of the mineral in becoming petrified, as the rock; once it become vegetative in becoming the tree; at another time it becomes an animal, and still at another time, a later period, it becomes man. Hence it traverses or is transferred from one degree to another degree in the phenomenal existence, but to non-existence, never.

Non-existence, therefore, is an expression applied to change of form. People consider that this transference or apparent change is death or annihilation, whereas it is never so. You may consider this very point which I presented, namely, the grain of sand which in the mineral kingdom at first existed; later on it was transferred from that lowest form of life to the vegetable, later to the animal, and at last to the human kingdom, showing that it is only a transformation and not an annihilation, for the elements are ever present, and elements only change forms, hence there is no death, it is life everlasting. For example, you can see that when clay dies in the mineral kingdom, it becomes a tree; but it does not die, it has been transformed only. It has been transferred from the mineral kingdom to the vegetable kingdom. This vegetable is used or consumed by the animal, and there, when utilized, you can say it dies, but in reality it has become transformed and transferred to the animal kingdom. The animal is utilized by man. It dies in that animal form, or kingdom, but it is transmuted or transformed to the human kingdom, consequently it becomes evident that there is no annihilation. Death, therefore, is applicable to a change or transference from one degree to another. In the mineral kingdom there was a spirit, the mineral spirit; in the vegetable kingdom it became transformed and reappeared as a vegetative spirit; in the animal kingdom it attained the animal spirit, and in the human kingdom it aspired to the human spirit, hence it is only degrees or transferences, and there never is for man annihilation. Man is everlasting, ever-living. And if we think of death it is only an imaginary term implying change.

The reality is this, that it is only a transference from one degree to another, from one form of composition or genesis to another, and transferences should never be called death. We will take, for example, this light, and supposing we say that this light, having reappeared in another incandescent lamp, has died in the one and reappeared in another. This is not death. These perfections of the mineral were translated or transformed into the vegetative, and from the vegetable kingdom they were transformed to the animal, the virtue always attaining plus, or the superlative degree, and from the vegetable kingdom they were transferred into the animal and human, and we find the same virtues manifesting themselves more fully, therefore we see that the tree never died, that the animal has not died, but what must be said is that the reality of the vegetable or animal entity, or the mineral reality, has been transferred from a lower form to a higher form, finally attaining the superlative degree. Therefore death is only an expression applicable to these changes, and the question of non-existence is a relative one. Absolute non-existence is inconceivable. For example, this rose becomes disintegrated and this symmetry is corrupted, but the elements remain changeless; nothing affects that elemental being. It is impossible for the elements whereof this rose is formed to become non-existent, and it is imply that these elements go from one degree or are transferred from one state to another, and man only through his ignorance is afraid of death; death is imaginary and absolutely unreal; it is human imagination.

The bestowal and grace of God have rendered the realm of existence alive and full of being. For existence there is no change or transformation; existence is ever existence, and it can never be translated into non-existence. It is only a graduation. A degree beneath the highest degree is considered as non-existence. For example, this dust beneath our feet as compared to our being is non-existent. The human body becomes dust and you can say it has become non-existent, therefore this dust in comparison or in relation to the higher form of human being, is as non-existent, but in its own sphere it is existent, it has its mineral being; therefore it is well proved that absolute non-existence is impossible, it is only relative. The purpose is this: that the everlasting bestowal of God vouchsafed to man is never subject to corruption; inasmuch as He has endowed existence or the phenomenal world with being, it is impossible for it to become non-being, for it is the very genesis of God; it is in the realm of creation; it is a creational world and not a subjective world, and that bounty is continuous and permanent. For instance, He endows man with the bestowal of being, and that bounty or bestowal is continuous and there is no cessation; therefore, just as the rays of the sun are continuous, the heat of the sun emanates forever, no cessation is conceived for it, even so that bestowal of God as regards humanity is ever descending upon it, is ever continuous, and never is there severance therefrom. If we say that the bestowal of existence at some time ceases, it would be the same as saying that the sun can exist with cessation of its rays. Is it possible for the sun to have a cessation of its effulgence or rays? Therefore the effulgences of existence are ever-present and continuous. The conception of annihilation is a factor in human degradation, it is the cause of human debasement, it is the cause of human fear, it is the cause of the dispersion of human thought; but the conception of composition or existence is conducive to human sublimity, the cause of human progress, the cause of human virtues, therefore it behooves man to never think of non-existence, of death—which is absolutely an imaginary thing; he must never think of that which degrades him, nor think of the degradation of the human soul. Man must see himself ever living, so that hour by hour he may advance until the human reality may become more apparent. If he considers non-existence, he will become utterly incompetent; his will will be weakened; his power will not remain; love of progress will wax cold, and the acquisition of human virtues will cease.

Therefore you must thank God that God has rendered you all alive and existent. Endeavor day and night to acquire more virtues of the human type, and consider yourselves as the lights which never have any sunset, any setting; an existence which is never non-existence; a light which is never to be followed by darkness. When man is not endowed with insight he is not informed of these important mysteries. This outer retina, so delicate, may sometimes be a hindrance to the insight, which can alone perceive. The bestowals of God which are visible in all phenomenal life are sometimes rendered invisible because of the delicate retina, which sometimes forms a hindrance, which makes him uninformed, but when those scales are off, when the veil is torn asunder, then the great signs of God will become visible, he will witness the light filling the world. The bestowals of God are all manifest. The promises of heaven are present. The favors of God are surrounding all, but if this cover should remain he is made to deny all these great signs, and is

deprived of all these manifestations of God's bestowals; therefore we must endeavor in order that the veil concealing the insight may be removed, that we may witness the manifestation of God's signs and discern the mysterious graces of God, and see that the material blessings, as compared with the spiritual blessings, are as nothing. The spiritual blessings of God are the greatest. When we were in the mineral kingdom, although there we were endowed with certain blessings of God, they were incomparable with the blessings in the human kingdom. Although when we were in the matrix of the mother we were blessed with certain blessings of God, as compared with the blessings or bestowals of this world they were as nothing. Likewise if we transfer from the phenomenal phases of life to the spiritual and attain insight, we shall consider that the material blessings, as compared with the spiritual blessings, are as nothing. In the spiritual world the divine bestowals are infinite, for that which is in the material world is subject to disintegration; for every composition there is a decomposition, but in the world of spirit there is no separation, there is no decomposition. It is absolute immortality and entire solidity and firmness. It is changeless; therefore we must thank, God for He has created for us material blessings and also spiritual bestowals. He has given us material graces and heavenly ones; He has given us sight that we may see these lights, and He has given us insight wherewith we can see the lights of God. He has given us the outer ear wherewith we can hear the melodies, and He has given us the inner hearing wherewith we can hear the melodies of God. Therefore, we must strive with heart and soul in order that the perfections and virtues latent within the realities of the phenomenal world may become developed and manifested, for the human reality may be compared to the seed. If you sow the seed and nurture it, a mighty tree can be forthcoming therefrom. The virtues of that seed will follow, become revealed, it will become branch, give its leaves and blossoms, and fructify. All these virtues were hidden within the inner part of the seed. Through the bounty or blessing of cultivation these virtues became apparent. Likewise the Merciful God has deposited within the human realities certain distinct virtues which are hidden or latent. When education touches the human being those virtues which are the deposits of God, like unto the unfoldment of the tree within the fecundated seed, will become apparent from the human reality.

Theosophical Society
Chicago
May 4, 1912.

ADDRESS TO THE JEWS

718 The first bestowal of God in the world of humanity is religion, because religion consists in Divine teachings to men; and most assuredly Divine teachings are preferable to all other sources of instruction.

Religion confers upon man the life everlasting. Religion is a service to the world of morality. Religion guides humanity to the eternal happiness. Religion is the cause of everlasting honor in the world of man.

Religion has ever helped humanity to progress. As a proof thereof, let us first investigate religion from an unbiased standpoint, and let us find out whether religion is the cause of progress and development, or whether it is not; whether or not religion is the impetus which allows man to advance extraordinarily.

Let us investigate independently, that we may not be bound by blind imitations or dogmas, for were we to be bound by blind imitations, then some will believe that religion is a cause of happiness, and others will disagree, saying that religion has been a cause of degradation. Hence, we must first investigate as to this: whether or not religion is the cause of human advancement, and let us give it impartial and thorough research, that no doubt shall linger in our minds.

How can we find this out? That is, how can we discover whether or not religion has been the cause of human progress or retrogression?

We will first investigate the founders of religions—the prophets. We will review the episodes of their lives, the events prior to their rise, and those subsequent thereto. But we shall not present to you certain tradition which are subject to both credence and refutation. Nay, rather we shall cite certain historical facts provable to all, certain facts and evidences well known throughout the world, which are irrefutable. They are these:

719 Amongst the great prophets was His Holiness Abraham who, being an iconoclast and a herald of the oneness of God, was banished by the people from his native land.

Let us observe right here how religion is an impetus to progress.

His Holiness Abraham founded a family, and this family God blessed, and it was through the religious basis that the house of Abraham made progress and advancement. Through the Divine benediction, noteworthy and famous prophets have issued from the lineage of Abraham. There appeared an Ishmael. There appeared an Isaac. There appeared a Jacob. There appeared a Joseph. There appeared a Moses. There appeared an Aaron. David issued therefrom. There appeared Solomon. The Holy Land was conquered by them and was theirs by right, and the great Solomonic wisdom was established; and this was due to the religion which they founded.

Hence, we learn that religion is the cause of honor, is the cause of advancement, is the cause of civilization, is the cause of the happiness of mankind, even as the episode of Abraham well illustrates this fact and as his family clearly points thereto. Even unto the present time his house is visible and manifest throughout the world.

Let us discover, or consider, the greater phase of it.

720 The children of Israel were in bondage and captivity in the land of Egypt. They were subject to the tyranny and oppression of the Copts. They were in the utmost state of degradation. One Copt conquered or subdued one hundred Septs. They would make use of them as workingmen or laborers.

The children of Israel were then in abject poverty, in the lowest abasement, in the lowest degree of ignorance, the lowest degree of barbarism when, suddenly, His Holiness Moses appeared amongst them.

When His Holiness Moses appeared amongst them, outwardly he was no other than a shepherd, but through the power of religion he exhibited such majesty and grandeur and influence that they continue to be seen. His prophethood was spread throughout the land. His law was the foundation of the law.

He Holiness Moses was single and alone, and this single, lone personage, through the power of religion, rescued all the children of Israel from bondage. He conducted them to the Holy land, and there he founded the great civilization which has become permanent, a civilization and an education which are most noteworthy. Thereby they attained to the highest pitch of honor and glory. He saved them from their bondage and captivity. He imbued them with qualities which caused them to progress.

721 They proved to be a civilizing people, an educated and a scholarly people. Their philosophy became noteworthy. Their industries became famous. In one word, along all the lines of advancement which characterize a progressive people they achieved progress. They reached such a height that at last they were the ones who established this Solomonic sovereignty, and their sciences and arts reached such a state of comprehensiveness that even the Greek philosophers were wont to journey to Jerusalem, in order to study with the Jews philosophy and the basis of law. According to Oriental history, this is an established fact.

Even Socrates, the Greek philosopher, came to the Holy Land and consorted with the Jewish doctors, studying wisdom or philosophy with them. He studied with them the basis of their belief, and when he returned to Greece he there formulated his basis for Divine unity, and there he advanced his belief in the immortality of the spirit after the dissolution of the body. These verities Socrates learned no doubt from the Jewish doctors with whom he came in contact.

Likewise Hippocrates and many other philosophers used to go to the Holy Land, to Palestine, and there they acquired lessons from the Jewish prophets, studying with them the basis of ethics and morality, returning to their countries with contributions which have made Greece famous.

722 A cause, or a movement, which renders a weak nation, such as the Jews were before, strong and changes them into a mighty and powerful nation; which rescues them from captivity and causes them to attain sovereignty; which transforms their ignorance into knowledge and science, and endows them with an impetus to advance along all degrees of attainment—this is not merely a theory or a story which I am telling; it is an historical fact which is provable, it is history well established in the world—makes it evident that religion is the cause of honor to men; that religion is the cause of the sublimity of man.

When we speak of religion we mean the foundation of religion, not the blind imitations, or dogmas, which has crept in afterwards, and which are ever destructive, which are ever the cause of the effacement of a nation, which are ever the cause of hindrance to national progress. Ever, as it is recorded in the Torah, and confirmed in all histories, when the Jews were fettered with imitations of religion,

then the wrath of God became manifest.

723

When they had lost the foundations of the law of God, then God sent Nebuchadnezzar, who came and conquered the Holy Land. He killed all the men; he made captive the women and children; he fired all the hamlets and villages. Seventy thousand Jews did Nebuchadnezzar make captive and take with him to Persia. He destroyed the Holy of Holies, the great Temple. In short, he burned the Torah: the Holy Bible was burned through his cause.

Thus we learn that the foundation of the Divine religions is ever the cause of progress; and thus, when it leaves the central axis, the holy foundation becomes destroyed, and as it were beclouded or surrounded by certain blind imitations. Then the reverse takes place: it is a cause of debasement, a cause of degradation.

Even so was the case with the Greek nation when they were the conquerors, and they were followed by the Romans, by whom the Israelites were almost done away.

Under Titus, the Roman emperor, when he was a general of the Roman army, the Holy Land was laid waste and made wilderness, and the Israelites were scattered broadcast in the world, because he also killed their noteworthy men, pillaged their possessions, and made Jerusalem a heap of dust. That was the scattering and dispersion of the Jews, which ever since has continued.

Hence we learn that the foundation of the religion of God, which was laid by His Holiness Moses, was the cause of eternal honor, was the cause of the advancement of the nation, was the cause of the life of the Hebrew people, was the cause of homage paid forever to this notable people. The dogmas, or blind imitations, which later crept in, proved to be the causes of the Israelites' destruction. They caused the Israelites to be scattered throughout the earth, and to be expelled from their rightful habitation, the Holy Land.

In short, what is the mission of prophets?

724

The mission of the prophets is no other than the advancement or the education of the world of humanity. The prophets are the real teachers or educators. The prophets are the universal instructors.

Should we desire to find out whether or not any of these great souls or prophets has been a prophet, we will investigate the facts of the case, and the line of our investigation will be the question of education. If he has been an educator, if he has really educated a people, if he has trained a nation, causing it to attain to the highest point of knowledge after it had been in the lowest abyss of ignorance, then we are sure that such a one is a prophet; and this is a clear and plain mode of procedure, and irrefutable.

725

We do not have to go to other proofs. We do not have to cite miracles, saying that out of rock water gushed forth, because such a miracle may be denied by others—they may refute it. We do not need such miracles.

The very deeds of Moses are proofs conclusive concerning his prophethood. We are in need of no further evidences: evidences which are usually refutable. If a man be unbiased, be fair, and investigate reality, he will without doubt bear testimony to the fact that the personage Moses was verily the man of God, a great personage.

Let us not digress. Let us go to the subject. But here I wish you to be very fair in your judgment, setting aside, for the moment, all religious prejudice.

726

All of us should thoroughly investigate or search for verities, because the purpose of the religions of God has been proved to be no other than the education of humanity and the cause of amity and fellowship among men. Therefore I wish to cite this principle: that the foundations of the religions of God are one. They are not multiple, for they are realities. Reality does not admit multiplicity, because every one of the Divine religions is divisible into two departments. One department is concerned with the world of morality, and that is essential. It is concerned with the ethical sublimity of human nature. It is concerned with the advancement of the world of humanity in general. It has to do with the knowledge of God. It has to do with the discovery of the verities of existence. This is the ideal aspect, the essential department. This department is not subject to change or transformation at all. This is one; it is the foundation of all the religions of God. As regard that, all the religions are one and the same.

The second department, or division, has to do with social transactions, or human conduct under certain special conditions, and is not the essence of reality. This is subject to change and transformation according to the exigency or requirements of the time and place.

To wit: In the time of Noah, certain conditions required that all sea-foods be allowable, or lawful. During the period of the prophethood of Abraham it was considered allowable, because of a special condition, for a man to marry his aunt; even as Sarah was the sister of Abraham's mother. During the time of Adam it was expedient that a man marry his own sister—even as Abel, Cain and Seth, the children of Adam married their own sisters, because (so they thought) it was according to the conditions of the time; but in the law of the Torah that practice was abrogated, forbidden. There were certain laws, formerly recognized, which were annulled during the time of Moses. For example, camel's flesh was accepted as food proper for man during the time of Abraham, but was made unlawful during the time of Jacob.

Such changes and variations in religious teaching have to do with the non-essential affairs of existence. They are not important.

His Holiness Moses lived in the wilderness of Terah, where retribution had to be made a matter of direct action. There were no penitentiaries. There were no means of indirect punishment. Hence, according to the exigency of the time and place, it was a law of God that an eye was to be for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. If a man's tooth were broken by another man, his tooth would be broken. If a man, for instance, caused the deafness of another, the other would make him deaf. But you cannot do that now. You would not blind a man because he accidentally blinded you. Is it possible to carry such things out?

727

In the Torah there were ten commandments concerning murder. Is it possible to carry these out? Can these ten ordinances concerning the punishment of murderers be carried out?

In modern times conditions are such that even the question of capital punishment—the one form which some nations have decided to apply in cases of

murder—is a moot question. Wise men are discussing whether it is feasible or not.

Thus, everything that is valid, is valid only for the time. The exigency of that age required that if a man committed theft of so much as one dollar they chopped off his hand, but now you cannot cut off a man's hand for a thousand dollars. You cannot do it; it is impossible. It was useful for that time, but things are useful only according to the exigencies of the time. Time changes, and when the times change, the laws have to change. But remember, these laws are not of importance—they are the externalities of religion. The essentials, which are spiritual in character, which have to do with the morality, which have to do with the ethical development of man, which have to do with the faith of man—they are of the ideal, are necessary and permanent; they have one foundation, and they are not subject to change or variation.

728

Hence, for the fundamental basis of the religion of God there is no change nor variation. That is the basis, the fundamental foundation of religion. That never, never changes.

The basis of the law of Moses His Holiness Christ promulgated. That selfsame foundation of religion was promulgated by Muḥammad. All the great prophets have served that foundation. They have served this reality. Hence, the purpose and result of all the prophets have been one and the same. They were the advancement of the body politic. They were the cause of the honor of mankind. They were the Divine civilizations of man, whose foundation is one; and, as we declared before, the proofs establishing the validity of a prophet, the proofs of his inspiration, are, after all, the very deeds of valor and greatness which he performs. If a prophet has proved to be instrumental in the elevation of mankind, undoubtedly his prophethood is valid.

Again I wish you to be very fair in the judgment of these following remarks.

729

At a time when the Israelites had again been put in captivity, at a period when the Roman Empire had dispersed and effaced the Hebrew nation because the law of God had, as it were, passed from amongst them, and the foundations of the religion of God had been destroyed: at such a time as this Jesus Christ appeared amongst them.

When His Holiness Christ appeared amongst the Jews, the first thing he did was to proclaim the validity of the Mosaic mission. He declared that the Torah, the Old Testament, was the Book of God. He declared that all the prophets of Israel were valid and true. He eulogized Moses, and through his commendation the name of Moses was spread throughout the entire world. The fame of Moses, through the Christian movement, was spread broadcast.

Before the rise of Christ it is a fact that in Persia the name of Moses had not been heard. Throughout India they had no knowledge of Judaism, and were it not for the Christianizing of Europe it would not have had the knowledge of the Old Testament which it has. Throughout Europe there was not a copy of the Old Testament. But listen to this and judge it aright: it was through the instrumentality of Christ, it was through the translation of the New Testament—the little volume of the Gospel—that the Old Testament, the Torah, was translated into six hundred languages and spread throughout the world at large.

The names of the Israelitish prophets became household names everywhere. All the nations of the world believed in this, that verily the children of Israel were chosen people of God, that this nation was a Holy nation, that the blessing of God attended this nation, and that all the prophets of God which had issued therefrom were the sources of Divine inspiration, the daysprings of inspiration, and each one of them shone like a star.

Hence, His Holiness Christ really promulgated Judaism, for he was a Jew, and not opposed to Jews. He did not deny the validity of the prophethood of Moses. Nay, he rather promoted it. He did not efface the Torah. Nay, rather did he promulgate it. At most it comes to this: that the portion of that dispensation which had to do with social transactions—this portion underwent revision, and that fact is not important; but the essential teaching of Moses he virtually promoted. To do this, he left no effort undone.

730 Likewise, with the superlative power and the efficacious Word of God he gathered together most of the nations of the East and the West. This was accomplished at a time when those nations were in the utmost of contention and strife. He ushered all of them into the overshadowing tent of the oneness of humanity. He so educated them that they united and agreed, even so that the Roman, the Greek, the Chaldean, the Assyrian and the Egyptian nations were perfectly blended, and the heavenly civilization was the result. Now, this efficacy of the Word, and this heavenly power, which are extraordinary, prove conclusively the validity of His Holiness Christ. Consider how his heavenly sovereignty is yet permanent and lasting. Verily, this is conclusive proof and manifest evidence.

731 Then we behold, appearing from another horizon, the prophet of Arabia—Muḥammad.

Perchance you do not know that the first proclamation of Muḥammad to his tribe was this statement: “Moses was verily a prophet of God, and the Torah is a book of God. Verily, O people, ye must believe in the Torah and in Moses and the prophets. Ye must accept as valid all the prophets of Israel.”

In the Qur’án, the Muhammadan Bible, there are seven statements—in fact, seven repetitions—of the episode of Moses, and in all his historical summaries, Muḥammad praises Moses.

He states that His Holiness Moses was the greatest prophet of God; that God guided him in the Sahara, or wilderness, of Terah; that through the light of guidance Moses hearkened to the summons of God; that he was the bearer of the Ten Commandments; that all the contemporary nations of the world arose against him; that eventually Moses triumphed over them all, because falsehood is ever defeated by truth.

There are many instances of this kind in Muḥammad. I am citing merely a few.

732 Consider that His Holiness Muḥammad was born amongst the savage and barbarian nations of Arabia, lived amongst them, and (outwardly) was illiterate and uninformed of the Holy Books of God.

The Arabian nations were in the utmost state of ignorance and barbarism—to the degree that they buried their daughters alive. They considered this action to be

the greatest valor and of the nature of sublimity. Under the Persian and Roman governments they lived in conditions of extreme captivity and bondage. They were scattered throughout the Arabian desert, subject to continuous strife and bloodshed.

When the light of Muḥammad dawned, the darkness of ignorance was dispelled from the Arabian desert. Those barbarous nations, in a short space of time, reached a superlative degree of civilization, so that their civilization extended even to Spain, and was established in Baghdád, whence it was transplanted to Europe.

What greater proof than this could there be concerning the prophethood of Muḥammad—unless a man close his eyes to justice and obstinately remain unfair?

Thus the Christians are now believers in Moses. They believe that he was a prophet of God, and they praise him most highly. And the Muhammadans are believers in Moses, praising him most highly, proving his validity; and likewise they believe in His Holiness Christ and praise him highly.

Has harm come to these nations—the Christians and the Muhammadans—because they have admitted the validity of Moses and accepted him? No, on the contrary, it proves that in this respect they have been fair minded.

Then what harm is there that the Jewish nation, in turn, should also now praise His Holiness Christ, should also now praise His Holiness Muḥammad, and by this humane acceptance and praiseworthy view of the subject do away forever with this enmity and hatred which have divided mankind so many centuries—that bloodshed shall cease, that this fanaticism shall pass away forever, that all mankind may be united; and this corruption shall cease as soon as that acceptance is established.

The Christians and the Muhammadans admit that Moses was the Interlocutor of God. Why do not you say that Christ was the Word of God? Why do you not say just the few words that will do away with all this sort of thing, and there will be no hatred left, no fanaticism left, no warfare in the Land of Promise, no bloodshed whatever. Then forever will there be peace.

733

Verily, I now declare unto you that Moses was no other than the Interlocutor of God; that Moses was the most noteworthy prophet of God; that Moses brought the fundamental law of God; that Moses was the founder of the ethical basis which has proved the source of human happiness.

What harm is there in this? Do I lose by saying this to you? And believing it as a Bahá'í? Not at all. On the contrary, as a Bahá'í it benefits, and the founder of the Bahá'í Movement, Bahá'u'lláh, is well pleased with me and confirms me therein. He says: "Well done; you have been fair in your judgment; you have impartially investigated the truth; you have arrived at the conclusion full well; you have believed in a prophet of God, in Moses; you have accepted the Book of God, the Torah."

Now, inasmuch as it is possible to do away with this prejudice with such a bit of liberalism in the world, why not do it?

Why not do away with this continuous strife? Why not establish a bond which can easily connect the hearts of men? What harm is there in this religion that every one should praise the teacher or the founder of another religion? Even as the other nations praise His Holiness Moses, and admit that Moses was the founder of

Judaism, why not have the Hebrews also praise the other great men?

What harm comes from it? None at all. It is no loss to you at all. Nay, rather you thereby contribute to the welfare of mankind. Nay, rather you would be instrumental in establishing the happiness of the world of humanity. Nay, rather the eternal honor of man is dependent on this modern liberalism.

Inasmuch as our God is one, and He has created us all—He provides for us all, He protects us all, and we acknowledge such a kind and clement Lord—why should we, His children, His followers, fight one another? Why should we so readily break one another's hearts?

God is so merciful and kind, and His aim in religion has ever been to establish the bond of unity and affinity!

Praise be to God, the medieval ages of darkness have passed away, and this century of radiance has dawned—this century wherein the reality of things is becoming evident; this century wherein science has discovered the means to master nature; this century which in its entirety is a service to the world of humanity; this century wherein we have established the foundation of the world of humanity. Is it fitting that we should still linger in our fanaticism and tarry in our prejudice? Is it behooving that we should still be bound with old fables and superstitions, and be handicapped by the superannuated beliefs of dark ages that are past—again waging religious wars, again fighting one another, still shedding each other's blood, shunning one another, anathematizing one another? Is it becoming?

Is it not better for us to be most loving to one another? Is it not preferable for us to enjoy fellowship together? And unite and sing anthems of unity towards God, and praise all the prophets in a good and praiseworthy spirit?

734

Then you will observe how the world shall prove to be a paradise and the promised day shall come. That will be the day when the wolves and the sheep shall quaff from the same stream; when, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, the quail and the eagle shall together enjoy the same nest, and the gazelle, or the deer, shall enjoy the same pasture with the lion.

What does this mean?

It means that this fact is symbolic of contending nations—that religions, which have formerly been as wolves and sheep, divergent creeds, will associate with each other. Notwithstanding their former attitude, they will then, through this liberality, associate with each other in perfect fellowship, in the utmost love.

This is the meaning of the statement of His Holiness Isaiah. Otherwise, you will never come to see a day when this prophecy can literally come to pass; for the wolf will never enjoy the companionship of the sheep, and the lion and the deer will never be seen together—because the lion and the deer will see each other, but the deer will be within the lion, and the sheep will be ever the prey of the wolf. As you know, the teeth of the lion are carnivorous. It has no molars to enjoy grass. Hence it must eat flesh.

Therefore this prophecy is symbolic of the following condition: when certain nations and races, symbolized or typified by lions and wolves and sheep, amongst whom there is no bond or fellowship or association, will be unified in that day of

promise, and will treat each other with the utmost kindness and liberality.

735

In a word: the age is ours when fellowship is to be established.

The century has come when all the nations are to be unified.

The century has come when all the nations shall enjoy international peace.

The century has come when all the races and tribes of the world shall do away with racial prejudice and associate fully.

The century has arrived when all the natives of the world shall prove to be one home of the human family.

Thus may mankind, in its entirety, rest comfortably and in peace under the great and broad tabernacle of the one Lord.

Congregation Emmanu-el
San Francisco
October 12, 1912

THE MICROCOSM AND THE MACROCOSM

736

When we ponder over the reality of the microcosm, we discover that in the microcosm there are deposited three realities. Man is endowed with an outer or physical reality. It belongs to the material realm, the animal kingdom, because it has sprung from the material world. This animalistic reality of man he shares in common with the animals.

The human body is like animals subject to nature's laws. But man is endowed with a second reality, the rational or intellectual reality; and the intellectual reality of man predominates over nature.

All these sciences which we enjoy were the hidden and recondite secrets of nature, unknowable to nature, but man was enabled to discover these mysteries, and out of the plane of the unseen he brought them into the plane of the seen. Thus while man's physical reality is captive to nature, man is the governor of nature through this intellectual power.

Yet there is a third reality in man, the spiritual reality. Through its medium one discovers spiritual revelations, a celestial faculty which is infinite as regards the intellectual as well as physical realms. That power is conferred upon man through the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is an eternal reality, an indestructible reality, a reality belonging to the divine, supernatural kingdom; a reality whereby the world is illumined, a reality which grants unto man eternal life. This third, spiritual reality it is which discovers past events and looks along the vistas of the future. It is the ray of the Sun of Reality. The spiritual world is enlightened through it, the whole of the Kingdom is being illumined by it. It enjoys the world of beatitude, a world which had no beginning and which shall have no end.

That celestial reality, the third reality of the microcosm, delivers man from the material world. Its power causes man to escape from nature's world. Escaping, he will find an illuminating reality, transcending the limited reality of man and causing him to attain to the infinitude of God, abstracting him from the world of superstitions and imaginations, and submerging him in the sea of the rays of the Sun of Reality.

This fact is proved from scientific as well as spiritual evidence.

737

When we ponder over the conditions of phenomena, we observe that all phenomena are composed of single elements. This singular cell-element travels and has its coursings through all the grades of existence. I wish you to ponder carefully over this. This cellular elements has at some time been in the mineral kingdom. While staying in the mineral kingdom it has had its coursings and transformations through myriads of images and forms. Having perfected its journey in the mineral kingdom, it has ascended to the vegetable kingdom; and in the vegetable kingdom it has again had its journeys and transformations through myriads of conditions. Having accomplished its functions in the vegetable kingdom, the cellular elements ascends to the animal kingdom.

In the animal kingdom again it goes through the composition of myriads of images, and then we have it in the human kingdom. In the human kingdom likewise it has its transformations and coursings through multitudes of forms. In short, this single primordial atom has had its great journeys through every stage of life, and in every stage it was endowed with a special and particular virtue or characteristic.

738

Consequently, the great divine philosophers have had the following epigram: All things are involved in all things. For every single phenomenon has enjoyed the postulates of God, and in every form of these infinite electrons it has had its characteristics of perfection.

Thus this flower once upon a time was of the soil. The animal eats the flower or its fruit, and it thereby ascends to the animal kingdom. Man eats the meat of the animal, and there you have its ascent into the human kingdom, because all phenomena are divided into that which eats and that which is eaten. Therefore, every primordial atom of these atoms, singly and indivisibly, has had its coursings throughout all the sentient creation, going constantly into the aggregation of the various elements. Hence do you have the conservation of energy and the infinity of phenomena, the indestructibility of phenomena, changeless and immutable, because life cannot suffer annihilation but only change.

The apparent annihilation is this: that the form, the outward image, goes through all these changes and transformations. Let us again take the example of this flower. The flower is indestructible. The only thing that we can see, this outer form, is indeed destroyed, but the elements, the indivisible elements which have gone into the composition of this flower are eternal and changeless. Therefore the realities of all phenomena are immutable. Extinction or mortality is nothing but the transformation of pictures and images, so to speak—the reality back of these images is eternal. And every reality of the realities is one of the bounties of God.

Some people believe that the divinity of God had a beginning. They say that before this particular beginning man had no knowledge of the divinity of God. With

this principle they have limited the operation of the influences of God.

For example, they think there was a time when man did not exist, and that there will be a time in the future when man will not exist. Such a theory circumscribes the power of God, because how can we understand the divinity of God except through scientifically understanding the manifestations of the attributes of God?

How can we understand the nature of fire except from its heat, its light? Were not heat and light in this fire, naturally we could not say that the fire existed.

Thus, if there was a time when God did not manifest His qualities, then there was no God, because the attributes of God presuppose the creation of phenomena. For example, by present consideration we say that God is the creator. Then there must always have been a creation—since the quality of creator cannot be limited to the moment when some man or men realize this attribute. The attributes that we discover one by one—these attributes themselves necessarily anticipated our discovery of them. Therefore, God has no beginning and no ending; nor is His creation limited ever as to degree. Limitations of time and degree pertain to the forms of things, not to their realities. The effulgence of God cannot be suspended. The sovereignty of God cannot be interrupted.

As long as the sovereignty of God is immemorial, therefore the creation of our world throughout infinity is presupposed. When we look at the reality of this subject, we see that the bounties of God are infinite, without beginning and without end.

739

The greatest bounties of God in this phenomenal world are His Manifestations. This is the greatest postulate. These Manifestations are the Suns of Reality. For it is through the Manifestation that the reality becomes known and established for man. History proves to us that apart from the influence of the Manifestations, man sinks back into his animal condition, using even his intellectual power to subserve an animal purpose. Therefore there is no cessation whatsoever in the future for the appearance of the Manifestations of God, because God is infinite and His purpose cannot be limited in any way. If we ever dare to limit and circumscribe God's purpose within any bounds, then of necessity we have dared to set limitations to the omnipotence of God. The created has dared to define his Creator!

Consequently, the perfect man ever beholds the rays of the Sun of Truth. The perfect man ever awaits and expects the coming of the effulgence of God, he ever ponders over the methods and purposes of God, knowing that of certainty the realities of the Divine are not finite, the Divine names and attributes are not finite. God's graces and bounties are without limit, and the coming of the Manifestations of God are not circumscribed by time. Were you to enter any Bahá'í gathering of the East, it would be difficult to tell who is Christian, who is Jew—they are like so many flames that have been one mighty flame. All these separate channels, thanks to Bahá'u'lláh, are converging into one world-stream!

The White Lodge
Wimbledon, England
January 3, 1913.

THE AFTER LIFE

740 Thou hast asked concerning the spirit and its immortality after its departure. Know thou that at the time of its translation it ascends and ascends until it reaches the presence of God, clothed in a temple (body) which will not become subject to the changes wrought by ages and cycles, nor by the contingencies of the world, nor the emanations thereof. It will continue to exist through the eternality of the Kingdom of God—its sovereignty, its dominion, its potency. From it will appear the signs of God and His qualities, the providence of God and His bestowal. Verily, the pen is unable to move in a befitting manner in explaining this truth—its exaltation and loftiness. The hand of Mercy shall cause it to enter into men’s minds, though it cannot be grasped by an explanation, nor be described by those means which are available to the world.

Blessed is the spirit which abandons the body, previously sanctified and freed from the doubts of the nations. Verily, it moves in the atmosphere of the will of its Lord, and enters into the Supreme Paradise. It is welcomed by the angels of the Most High. It associates with the prophets of God, and His chosen ones, and it converses with them, and relates to them those events which have happened to it in the path of God, the Lord of both worlds.

Were one to become informed of that which is pre-ordained for the spirit in the worlds of God, the Lord of the Throne and the earth, he would immediately become enkindled with the fire of yearning for this impregnable, exalted, holy and most glorious state of being.

741 The prophets and the messengers have come in order to guide mankind to the straight path of the True One. Their aim has been no other than the education of the people, so that at the time of death they may depart to the Supreme Friend, with perfect sanctification, purification, and severance. They are the leaven of existence and the greatest means for the appearance of sciences and arts in this world.

742 As to the question concerning the soul, know thou, verily, that “soul” is a term applied to numerous realities, according to the exigencies of the following relations with respect to development in the world of existence:

- (1) In the mineral kingdom, soul is called “latent force,” silently working for the disintegration of the substance of the mineral.
- (2) In the vegetable kingdom it is called “virtue augmentative” or the power of growth, which attracts and absorbs the delicate materials of inorganic substance found in the mineral kingdom of matter, and transforms them into the condition of growth. Thus the inorganic substance found in the mineral kingdom becomes growing vegetable life through the effect of the Word of God. This vegetable soul, i.e., “virtue augmentative,” or power of growth is a quality which is produced by the admixture of elements, and appears in accidental organisms, of which contingency is an essential attribute.

(3) In the animal kingdom it is called “sense perception” or instinct. This term soul, as applied to the animal kingdom, is also a natural quality resulting from the mixture of the elements, and it appears from their mingling and combination, for it is a quality which results from the composition of bodies (organisms), and is dispersed at their decomposition. From this we are to understand that the animal soul is not endowed with the capacity of attaining immortality, as the life force is dispersed at the decomposition of the animal tissues.

All these things up to this point are a contingent reality, and are not a divine reality. But a contingent reality which is perpetuated by the fullness of existence, will then suffer no corruption, and will thus become a divine reality, for the accidental reality is only distinguished from the existent reality by its subjection to corruption. For transformation is an essential necessity to ever contingent reality, and this is what the mature wisdom has deemed advisable.

(4) In the human world, soul signifies the “rational being” or mind. This has a potential existence before its appearance in human life. It is like unto the existence of a tree within the seed. The existence of the tree within the seed is potential; but when the seed is sown and watered, the signs thereof, its roots and branches, and all of its different qualities, appear. Likewise the “rational soul” has a potential existence before its appearance in the human body, and through the mixture of elements and a wonderful combination, according to the natural order, law, conception and birth, it appears with its identity.

Be it known that to know the reality or essence of the soul of man is impossible, for in order to know a thing, one must comprehend it, and since a thing cannot comprehend itself, to know one’s self in substance or essence is impossible. As the comprehender cannot be comprehended, man cannot know himself in reality or essence. In order to obtain knowledge of any reality, or soul of man, the student must study the manifestations, qualities, names and characteristics of man. This much can be stated, that the reality of man is a pure and unknown essence constituting a depository, emanating from the light of the Ancient Entity—God. This essence or soul of man, because of its innate purity, and its connection with the unseen Ancient Entity, is old as regards time, but new as regard individuality. This connection is similar to that of the ray to the sun—the effect to the primal Cause. Otherwise, the thing that is generated, or the creature, has no connection with or relation to its Generator or Creator.

Since the pure essence, whose identity is unknown, possesses the virtues of the worlds of matter and of the Kingdom, it has two aspects—first, the material and physical; second, the mental and spiritual—which are attributes not found as qualities of matter. It is the same reality which is given different names, according to the different conditions wherein it becomes manifest. Because of its attachment to matter and the phenomenal world, when it governs the physical functions of the body it is called the human soul. When it manifests itself as the thinker, the comprehender, it is called the mind. And when it soars into the atmosphere of God, and travels in the spiritual world, it becomes designated as spirit.

There are two sides to man. One is divine, the other worldly; one is luminous, the other dark; one is angelic, the other diabolic. In all sensuous conditions man is equal to the animals, for all animal characteristics exist in him. Likewise, divine and satanic qualities are contained in man; knowledge and ignorance; guidance and error; truth and falsehood; generosity and avarice; valor and timidity; inclination towards God and tendency towards Satan. Chastity and purity, corruption and vileness, economy and avidity, good and evil—all are contained in man.

743

(5) If the angelic aspect becomes more powerful, and the divine power and brightness surround man, then the second birth takes place, and eternal life is found at this point. Man becomes then the noblest among creatures. On the other hand, if sensuous qualities surround, and if terrestrial darkness and sensual passions predominate, if they meet in man only the worldly feelings, if they find him a captive of evil qualities and fallen into everlasting death, then such a man is the basest and most abject among all creatures. In such a man, divine power does not exist. An animal is not considered unjust and evil because of its cruelty and injustice, for it is not endowed, as is man, with divine qualities; but if man falls into the same evil condition, it is evident that he has permitted the divine qualities with which he was endowed to be overcome by his ungod-like attributes. This shows the baseness and meanness that exist in human nature.

Ahmad Sohrab, Diary Notes
February, 1914.

COMMUNE TO BE READ BY THE FRIENDS OF GOD IN PERSIA

(Revealed during the War)

744

He is God

Thou seest me, O my God, on this lofty mountain; the sublime and supreme Threshold; the shelter of every great one and the refuge of all the glorious and noble.

Verily, the youths whose hearts were burning with the fire of the love of God in past ages have taken shelter therein—the meeting place of the prophets, the refuge of His Holiness Elijah, the shelter of Isaiah. The Spirit of God, Jesus the Christ (upon Him be greeting and praise!) passed over it; and (it was) the Supreme Threshold, pressed by the feet of the Lord of Hosts.

O Lord, this is a mountain to which Thou hast given the name Carmel in the Torah. And Thou hast attributed it to Thyself in the innermost heart of the Tablets and Scriptures.

O Lord, verily, I invoke Thee in this Supreme Threshold, under the wing of the gloomy nights; pray to Thee with throbbing heart and flowing tears, imploring Thee,

supplicating between Thy hands, and cry: O my Lord, verily the fire of battles is raging in the valleys, hills and streams, and the conflagration of war is burning even under the seas and high in the air, destroying and devastating. The earth is enveloped by its own fires and the sea is encompassed by its storms, thunderbolts and floods.

O Lord, the souls are stifling, the death rattle is in their throats, the earth quakes, and has become so small that even the birds are frightened in their nests and the animals terrified in their lairs and caves.

We hear only the sighs of the maidens and the cry of the orphans, the moaning of the mothers, and the tears of the fathers because of false reports. We see only tears flowing from every bereaved mother and the heart of every father, bereft of sons, burning. Towns are being devastated, people are perishing, the children are made orphans, and the women are becoming widows. And this is only because of our heedlessness of Thy commemoration and our deprivation of Thy love. Verily, we have been occupied with ourselves. The intoxication of passion seized us; we have taken the road of heedlessness and blindness; have abandoned the path of guidance and have chosen the path of obstinacy and forgotten the commandments of the ancient Scriptures. We have forsaken the exhortations in the preserved Tablets and Parchments—the great verses.

O my Lord! O my Lord! I confess and acknowledge the sins. Verily, every dark calamity and every hard ordeal has surrounded us by our own hands in this transient world. O Lord, verily, the minds are astounded, the souls are repelled. And there remain only darkened faces, deaf ears, speechless tongues and hearts heedless of Thy commemoration, filled with human passions and desires.

O Lord, Thou hast said in Thy manifest Book and in Thy great Glad Tidings with explicit statement: “God does not change that which a people have, until they change what is within themselves.” “And when they forgot God, He made them forget themselves.”

O my Lord, verily, the nations have gone too deep into the fields of battle and strife. Nothing will check this sweeping torrent and this grinding war save Thy mercy, which has encompassed that which was and is.

O Lord, do not deal with us according to our offenses, and forgive our sins and trespasses. Imperfections are the characteristic of everything possible of creation in the arena of Thy world. And to Thy forgiveness and pardon Thou hast accustomed every one in existence.

O my Lord, only favor and mercy to every sinner who has fallen into the pit of degradation and wretchedness, is befitting to divinity, and only by the imperfections of servitude will the perfections of divinity become manifest. O Lord, verily, the brilliant rays of the Sun of Reality are the removers of the utter darkness, and the pure Water cleanses the foulness and the sorrow of the world.

O my Lord, verily, the sins are bubbling foam and Thy mercy is a full ocean. Trespasses are bitter trees and Thy pardon is a fire whose flame is intense.

O my Lord, remove the veil, scatter this dense cloud on the horizon, extinguish these fires, subdue this flood, in order to stanch the bloodshed as compassion to the

widows and mercy to the orphans, that these hurricanes may cease, the thunderbolts be extinguished, the torrents quelled, the land become visible, the souls find composure and the breasts be dilated. And we will thank Thee for Thy abundant favor, O Thou dear! O Thou forgiver!

O my Lord, verily, Thou hast clearly stated in the Tablets and Scriptures that had the ordinances fallen on solid rock, rivers would have gushed forth, and the rock had crumbled to pieces from fear of the Beloved, the Powerful. But the hearts are harder than the rock. The souls are in heedlessness and pride. The people of heedlessness do not profit by the verses and exhortations.

O my Lord, verily, Thy exhortations are celebrated and have been spread broadcast in the East and the West of the earth. Thou hast called all to love and harmony and to forsake discord in all regions, so that the East of the earth may embrace the West; the people of the desert may embrace the people of the city; their scattered members become reunited and the lost ones gathered together; that the darkness of the earth may pass away and its Lights shine forth. But the eyes and the inner sight have become blind, the ears deaf, the hearts hardened, and the susceptibilities become like rocks and stones. The minds and intellects are being confused. Souls have forgotten the explicit teachings of the Book wherein Thou hast warned them of punishment. Thus they have merited severe punishment and deserved the sentence of torment.

O Lord, forgive our sins and stumbling. Make us not an example for the possessors of insight. Guide us to the Straight Path, so that we may awake from the slumber of passion and be saved from heedlessness and blindness. Deliver us, O Lord of Revelation, from the abyss of passions, and preserve us from errors.

O my Lord, verily, we have forgotten faithfulness and are reveling in unfaithfulness. With the people of oppression and vice we are associating. There is no deliverer for us save Thee. There is no Answerer save Thee. There is no refuge save Thee. Verily, we have trusted in Thee and we lay our affairs in Thy hands. Deal with us according to Thy favor and pardon, and punish us not according to Thy justice and wrath. Verily, Thou art the compassionate. Verily, Thou art the pardoner. Verily, Thou art the forgiver!

O my Lord, the people of righteousness and goodness and the communities of freedom in every country are turning to Thee, at dusk and dawn supplicating between Thy hands during the wing of the night and in the dew of the morn, lamenting as a bereaved mother laments during the grievous nights, burning with fire of sorrow, yearning and separation. They are longing for Thy meeting even with rending of soul, as they traverse the dunes and the hills, and cross the valleys and heights. But these wars that demolish mountains have intervened so that news has ceased and the doors are closed.

O Lord, comfort them in their loneliness; deliver them from their terror and guide them in their affairs.

O my Lord, Thou knowest my sighs, my cries and my anguish, the burning pain because of their separation; my great longing for their meeting; my yearning for their love; my desire for their remembrance and my anxiety to behold them. Day and night their remembrance is my treasure and my rose garden. When night

comes my heart loves the memory of their illumined faces. I yearn for them as the nightingale yearns for the beautiful meadows.

O my Lord, O my Lord! open the doors; prepare for us the means; render the path safe and pave the way so that the sincere ones may be reunited in the lofty meetings; the attracted ones gathered together for Thy commemoration in the great assemblies, to speak among the people of Thy bestowals and taste of the honey of meeting Thee. Then the breezes of acceptance will reach them and they will be swayed thereby as if intoxicated by wine.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Doer, the Giver and verily, Thou art the Generous, the Compassionate, the Chosen One!

Star of the West, Vol. 8, No. 14.

TABLET TO THE HAGUE

745 O ye esteemed ones who are pioneers among the well-wishers of the world of humanity.

The letters which ye sent during the war were not received, but a letter dated February 11, 1916, has just come to hand, and immediately an answer is being written.

Your intention deserved a thousand praises, because you are serving the world of humanity, and this is conducive to the happiness and welfare of all. This recent war has proved to the world and the people that war is destruction while Universal Peace is construction; war is death while peace is life; war is rapacity and blood-thirstiness while peace is beneficence and humaneness; war is an appurtenance of the world of nature while peace is the foundation of the religion of God; war is darkness upon darkness while peace is Heavenly Light; war is the destroyer of the edifice of mankind while peace is the everlasting life of the world of humanity; war is like a devouring wolf while peace is like the angels of Heaven; war is the struggle for existence while peace is mutual aid and co-operation among the peoples of the world and the cause of the good pleasure of the True One in the heavenly realm.

There is not one soul whose conscience does not testify that in this day there is no more important matter in the world than that of Universal Peace. Every just one bears witness to this and adores that esteemed Assembly because its aim is that this darkness may be changed into light, this bloodthirstiness into kindness, this torment into bliss, this hardship into ease and this enmity and hatred into fellowship and love. Therefore the effort of those esteemed souls is worthy of praise and commendation.

But the wise souls who are aware of the essential relationships emanating from the realities of things consider that one single matter cannot, by itself, influence the

human reality as it ought and should, for until the minds of men become united, no important matter can be accomplished. At present Universal Peace is a matter of great importance, but unity of conscience is essential, so that the foundation of this matter may become secure, its establishment firm and its edifice strong.

746 Therefore His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, fifty years ago, expounded this question of Universal Peace at a time when he was confined in the fortress of 'Akká and was wronged and imprisoned. He wrote about this important matter of Universal Peace to all the great sovereigns of the world, and established it among his friends in the Orient. The horizon of the East was in utter darkness, nations displayed the utmost hatred and enmity towards each other, religions thirsted for each other's blood, and it was darkness upon darkness. At such a time His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh shone forth like the sun from the horizon of the East and illumined Persia with the lights of these teachings.

747 Among his teachings was the declaration of Universal Peace. People of different nations, religions and sects who followed him came together to such an extent that remarkable gatherings were instituted consisting of the various nations and religions of the East. Every soul who entered those gatherings saw but one nation, one pathway, one teaching, one order; for the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh were not limited to the establishment of Universal Peace. They embraced many teachings which supplemented and supported that of Universal Peace.

748 Among these teachings is the independent investigation of reality, so that the world of humanity might be saved from the darkness of imitation and attain to the truth; might tear off and cast away this ragged and outgrown garment of 1,000 years ago and put on the robe woven in the utmost purity and holiness in the loom of reality. As reality is one and cannot admit of multiplicity, therefore different opinions must ultimately become fused into one.

749 And among the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh is the oneness of the world of humanity; that all human beings are the sheep of God and He is the kind Shepherd. This Shepherd is kind to all the sheep, because He created them all, trained them, provided for them and protected them. There is no doubt that the Shepherd is kind to all the sheep; and should there be among these sheep ignorant ones, they must be educated; if there be children, they must be trained until they reach maturity; if there be sick ones, they must be healed. There must be no hatred and enmity, for as by a kind physician these ignorant, sick ones should be treated.

750 And among the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh is that religion must be the cause of fellowship and love. If it becomes the cause of estrangement, then it is not needed, for religion is like a remedy: if it aggravates the disease, then it becomes unnecessary.

751 And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is, that religious, racial, political, economic and patriotic prejudices destroy the edifice of humanity. As long as these prejudices prevail, the world of humanity will have no rest. For a period of 6,000 years history informs us about the world of humanity. During these 6,000 years the world of humanity has not been free from war, strife, murder and bloodthirstiness. In every period war has been waged in one country or another, and that war was due to patriotic prejudice. It has therefore been ascertained and proved that all

prejudices are destructive of the human edifice. As long as these prejudices persist, the struggle for existence must remain dominant, and bloodthirstiness and rapacity continue. Therefore, even as was the case in the past, the world of humanity cannot be saved from the darkness of nature, and cannot attain illumination, except through the abandonment of prejudices and the acquisition of the morals of the Kingdom.

If this prejudice and enmity are on account of religion, religion should be the cause of fellowship, otherwise it is fruitless. And if this prejudice be the prejudice of nationality, all mankind are of one nation; all have sprung from the tree of Adam, and Adam is the root of the tree. That tree is one and all these nations are like branches, while the individuals of humanity are like leaves, blossoms and fruits thereof. Then the establishment of various nations and the consequent shedding of blood and destruction of the edifice of humanity result from human ignorance and selfish motives.

As to the patriotic prejudice, this is also due to absolute ignorance, for the surface of the earth is one native land. Every one can live in any spot on the terrestrial globe. Therefore all the world is man's birthplace. These boundaries and outlets have been devised by man. In the creation, such boundaries and outlets were not assigned. Europe is one continent, Asia is one continent, Africa is one continent, Australia is one continent, but some of the souls from personal motive and selfish interests have divided each one of these continents and considered a certain part as their own country. God has set up no frontier between France and Germany; they are continuous. Yea, in the first centuries, selfish souls for the promotion of their own interests assigned boundaries and outlets, and day by day attached more importance to these, until this led to intense enmity, bloodshed and rapacity in subsequent centuries. In the same way this will continue indefinitely, and if this conception of patriotism remains limited within a certain circle, it will be the primary cause of the world's destruction. No wise and just person will acknowledge these imaginary distinctions. Every limited area which we call our native country we regard as our mother-land, whereas the terrestrial globe is the mother-land of all, and not any restricted area. In brief: for a few days we live on this earth and eventually we are buried in it—it is our eternal tomb. Is it worth while that we should engage in bloodshed and tear one another to pieces for this eternal tomb? Nay, far from it: God is not pleased with such conduct nor would any sane man approve of it.

Consider! The blessed animals engage in no patriotic quarrels. They are in the utmost fellowship with one another and live together in harmony. For example, if a dove from the East and a dove from the West, a dove from the North and a dove from the South chance to arrive in one spot at the same time, they immediately associate in harmony. So is it with all blessed animals and birds. But the ferocious animals, as soon as they meet, attack and fight with each other, tear each other in pieces, and it is impossible for them to live together peaceably in one place. They are all unsociable and fierce, savage and combative fighters.

Regarding the economic prejudice, it is apparent that whenever the ties between nations become strengthened and the exchange of commodities

accelerated, and any economic principle is established in one country, it will ultimately affect the other countries and universal benefits will result. Then why this prejudice?

As to the political prejudice: the policy of God must be followed, and it is indisputable that the policy of God is greater than human policy. We must follow the Divine policy and that applies alike to all individuals. He treats all individuals alike; no distinction is made, and that is the foundation of the Divine Religions.

752 And among the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh is the origination of one language that may be spread universally among the people. This teaching was revealed from the pen of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh in order that this universal language may eliminate misunderstandings from among mankind.

753 And among the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh is the unity of women and men. The world of humanity has two wings—one is woman and the other man. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly. Should one wing remain weak, flight is impossible. Not until the world of woman becomes equal to the world of man in the acquisition of virtues and perfections, can success and prosperity be attained as they ought to be.

754 And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is voluntary sharing of one's property with others among mankind. This voluntary sharing is greater than equality, and consists in this: that man should not prefer himself to others, but rather should sacrifice his life and property for others. But this should not be introduced by coercion so that it becomes a law and man is compelled to follow it. Nay, rather, man should voluntarily and of his own choice sacrifice his property and life for others, and spend willingly for the poor, just as is done in Persia among the Bahá'ís.

755 And among the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh is man's freedom: that through the Ideal Power he should be emancipated and free from the captivity of the world of nature; for as long as man is captive to nature he is a ferocious animal, as the struggle for existence is one of the exigencies of the world of nature. This matter of the struggle for existence is the fountainhead of all calamities and is the supreme affliction.

756 And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that religion is a mighty bulwark. If the edifice of religion shakes and totters, commotion and chaos will ensue and the order of things will be utterly upset, for in the world of mankind there are two safeguards that protect man from wrong doing. One is the law which punishes the criminal; but the law prevents only the manifest crime and not the concealed sin; whereas the ideal safeguard, namely, the religion of God, prevents both the manifest and the concealed crime, trains man, educates morals, compels the adoption of virtues and is the all-inclusive power which guarantees the felicity of the world of mankind. But by religion is meant that which is ascertained by investigation and not that which is based on mere imitation, the foundation of divine religions and not human imitations.

757 And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that although material civilization is one of the means for the progress of the world of mankind, yet until it becomes combined with divine civilization the desired result, which is the felicity of mankind, will not be attained. Consider! These battleships that reduce a city to ruins

within the space of an hour are the result of material civilization; likewise the Krupp guns, the Mauser rifles, dynamite, submarines, torpedo boats, armed aircraft and bombing airplanes—all these weapons of war are the malignant fruits of material civilization. Had material civilization been combined with divine civilization, these fiery weapons would never have been invented. Nay, rather, human energy would have been wholly devoted to useful inventions and would have been concentrated on praiseworthy discoveries. Material civilization is like a globe of glass. Divine civilization is the light itself, and the glass without the light is dark. Material civilization is like the body. No matter how infinitely graceful, elegant and beautiful it may be, it is dead. Divine civilization is like the spirit, and the body gets its life from the spirit, otherwise it becomes a corpse. It has thus been made evident that the world of mankind is in need for the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Without the spirit the world of mankind is lifeless, and without this light the world of mankind is in utter darkness. For the world of nature is an animal world. Until man is born again from the world of nature—that is to say, becomes detached from the world of nature, he is essentially an animal, and it is the teachings of God which convert this animal into a human soul.

758 And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is the promotion of education. Every child must be instructed in sciences as much as is necessary. If the parents are able to provide the expenses of this education, it is all right; otherwise the community must provide the means for the teaching of that child.

759 And among the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh is justice and right. Until these are realized on the plane of existence, all things will be in disorder and remain imperfect. The world of mankind is a world of oppression and cruelty, and a realm of aggression and error.

760 In fine, such teachings are numerous. These manifold principles, which constitute the greatest basis for the felicity of mankind and are of the bounties of the Merciful, must be added to the matter of Universal Peace and combined with it, so that results may accrue. Otherwise the realization of Universal Peace in the world of mankind is difficult. As the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh are combined with Universal Peace, they are like a table provided with every kind of fresh and delicious food. Every soul can find at that table of infinite bounty, that which he desires. If the question is restricted to Universal Peace alone, the remarkable results which are expected and desired will not be attained. The scope of Universal Peace must be such that all the communities and religions may find their highest wish realized in it. At present the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh are such that all the communities of the world, whether religious, political or ethical, ancient or modern, find in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the expression of their highest wish.

For example, the people of religions find, in the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, the establishment of Universal Religion—a religion that perfectly conforms with present conditions, which in reality effects the immediate cure of the incurable disease, which relieves every pain and bestows the infallible antidote for every deadly poison. For if we wish to arrange and organize the world of mankind in accordance with the present religious imitations and thereby to establish the felicity of mankind, it is impossible and impracticable: for example, the

enforcement of the laws of the Old Testament and also of the other religions in accordance with present imitations. But the essential basis of all the divine religions which pertains to the virtues of the world of mankind and is the foundation of the welfare of the world of man, is found in the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh in the most perfect presentation.

Similarly, with regard to the people who clamor for freedom: the moderate freedom which guarantees the welfare of the world of man is found in the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh.

761 Likewise with regard to the party of "equality" which seeks the solution of the economic problems: until now all proposed solutions have proved impracticable except the economic proposals in the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, which are practicable and cause no distress to society.

So with the other parties: when ye look deeply into this matter, ye will discover that the highest aims of those parties are found in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. These teachings constitute the all-inclusive power among all men, and are practicable. But there are some teachings of the past, such as those of the Torah, which cannot be carried out at the present day. It is the same with the other religions and the tenets of the various sects and the different parties.

762 For example, the question of Universal Peace, about which His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh says that the Supreme Tribunal must be established; although the League of Nations has been brought into existence, yet it is incapable of establishing Universal Peace. But the Supreme Tribunal which His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has described will fulfil this sacred task with the utmost might and power. And his plan is this: that the national assemblies of each country and nation—that is to say, parliaments—should elect two or three persons who are the choicest men of that nation, and are well informed concerning international laws and the relations between governments and aware of the essential needs of the world of humanity in this day. The number of these representatives should be in proportion to the number of inhabitants of that country. The election of these souls who are chosen by the national assembly—that is, the parliament—must be confirmed by the upper house, the congress and the cabinet and also by the president or monarch so that these persons may be the elected ones of all the nation and the government. From among these people the members of the Supreme Tribunal will be elected, and all mankind will thus have a share therein, for every one of these delegates is fully representative of his nation. When the Supreme Tribunal gives a ruling on any international question, either unanimously or by majority rule, there will no longer be any pretext for the plaintiff or ground of objection for the defendant. In case any of the governments or nations, in the execution of the irrefutable decision of the Supreme Tribunal, be negligent or dilatory, the rest of the nations will rise up against it, because all the governments and nations of the world are the supporters of this Supreme Tribunal. Consider what a firm foundation this is! But by a limited and restricted League the purpose will not be realized as it ought and should. This is the truth about the situation, which has been stated.

763 Consider how powerful are the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. At a time when His Holiness was in the prison of 'Akká and under the restrictions and threats

of two bloodthirsty kings, notwithstanding this fact, his teachings spread with all power in Persia and other countries. Should any other teaching, or any principle, or any community fall under the threat of a powerful and bloodthirsty monarch it would be annihilated within a short space of time. At present for fifty years the Bahá'ís in Persia and most regions have been under severe restrictions and the threat of sword and spear. Thousands of souls have given their lives in the arena of sacrifice and have fallen as victims under the swords of oppression and cruelty. Thousands of esteemed families have been uprooted and destroyed. Thousands of children have been made fatherless. Thousands of fathers have been bereft of their sons. Thousands of mothers have wept and lamented for their boys who have been beheaded. All this oppression and cruelty, rapacity and bloodthirstiness did not hinder or prevent the spread of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. They spread more and more every day, and their power and might became more evident.

764

It may be that some foolish person among the Persians will affix his name to the contents of the Tablets of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh or to the explanations given in the letters of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' and sent it to that esteemed Assembly. Ye must be aware of this fact, for any Persian who seeks fame or has some other intention will take the entire contents of the Tablets of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh and publish them in his own name or in that of his community, just as happened at the Universal Races' Congress in London before the War. A Persian took the substance of the Epistles of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, entered that Congress, gave them forth in his own name and published them, whereas the wording was exactly that of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. Some such souls have gone to Europe and have caused confusion in the minds of the people of Europe and have disturbed the thoughts of some Orientalists. Ye must bear this fact in mind, for not a word of these teachings was heard in Persia before the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh. Investigate this matter so that it may become to you evident and manifest. Some souls are like parrots. They learn any note which they may hear, and sing it, but they themselves are unaware of what they utter. There is a sect in Persia at present made up of a few souls who are called Bábís, who claim to be followers of His Holiness the Báb, whereas they are utterly unaware of His Holiness. They have some secret teaching which are entirely opposed to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and in Persia people know this. But when these souls come to Europe, they conceal their own teachings and utter those of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, for they know that the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh are powerful, and they therefore declare publicly those teachings, they say that they are taken from the Book of the Bayán, and the Book of the Bayán is from His Holiness the Báb. When ye get hold of the translation of the Book of the Bayán, which has been translated in Persia, ye will discover the truth that the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are utterly opposed to the teachings of this sect. Beware lest ye disregard this fact. Should ye desire to investigate the matter further, inquire from Persia.

765

In fine, when travelling and journeying throughout the world, wherever one finds construction, it is the result of fellowship and love, while everything that is in ruin shows the effect of enmity and hate. Notwithstanding this, the world of humanity has not become aware and has not awakened from the sleep of heedlessness. Again it engages in differences, in disputes and wrangling, that it may set up ranks of war and may run to and fro in the arena of battle and strife.

So is it with regard to the universe and its corruption, existence and non-existence. Every contingent being is made up of different and numerous elements, and the existence of everything is a result of composition. That is to say, when between simple elements a composition take place a being arises; the creation of beings comes about in this way. And when that composition is upset, it is followed by decomposition, the elements disintegrate, and that being become annihilated. That is to say, the annihilation of everything consists in the decomposition and the separation of elements. Therefore every union and color of leaves, of flowers and of fruits, will make an admirable garden, and will appear in the utmost loveliness, freshness and sweetness. Likewise, when difference and variety of thoughts, forms, opinions, characters and morals of the world of mankind come under the control of one Supreme Power, that influence of composition among the elements is the cause of life, while dissociation and separation is the cause of death. In short, attraction and harmony of things are the cause of the production of fruits and useful results, while repulsion and inharmony of things are the cause of disturbance and annihilation. From harmony and attraction, all living contingent beings, such as plant, animal and man, are realized, and from inharmony and repulsion decay sets in and annihilation becomes manifest. Therefore whatever is the cause of harmony, attraction and union among men is the life of the world of humanity, and whatever is the cause of difference, of repulsion and of separation is the cause of the death of mankind. And when ye pass by a garden wherein vegetable beds and plants, flowers and fragrant herbs are all combined so as to form a harmonious whole, this is an evidence that this plantation and this rose garden have been cultivated and arranged by the care of a perfect gardener, while when ye see a garden in disorder, lacking arrangement, and confused, this indicates that it has been deprived of the care of the skilful gardener, nay, rather, it is nothing but a mass of weeds. It has therefore been made evident that fellowship and harmony are indicative of training by the real Educator, while separation and dispersion prove wildness and lack of the Divine Training.

Should any one object that, since the communities and nations and races and peoples of the world have different formalities, customs, tastes, temperaments, morals, varied thoughts, minds and opinions, it is therefore impossible for ideal unity to be made manifest and for complete union among men to be realized, we say that differences are of two kinds: one leads to destruction, and that is like the different between warring peoples and competing nations who destroy one another, uproot each other's families, do away with rest and comfort and engage in bloodshed and rapacity. That is blameworthy. But the other difference consists in variation. This is perfection itself and the cause of the appearance of Divine bounty. Consider the flowers of the rose garden. Although they are of different kinds, various colors and diverse forms and appearances, yet as they drink from one water, are swayed by one breeze and grow by the warmth and light of one sun, this variation and this difference cause each to enhance the beauty and splendor of the others. The differences in manners, in customs, in habits, in thoughts, opinions and in temperaments is the cause of the adornment of the world of mankind. This is praiseworthy. Likewise this difference and this variation, like the difference and variation of the parts and members of the human body, are the cause of the

appearance of beauty and perfection. As these different parts and members are under the control of the dominant spirit, and the spirit permeates all the organs and members, and rules all the arteries and veins, this difference and variation strengthen love and harmony, and this multiplicity is the greatest aid to unity. If in a garden the flowers and fragrant herbs, the blossoms and fruits, the leaves, branches and trees are of one kind, of one form, of one colour, and of one arrangement, there is no beauty or charm, but when there is variety in the world of oneness, they will appear and be displayed in the most perfect glory, beauty, exaltation and perfection. Today nothing but the power of the Word of God which encompasses the realities of things can bring the thoughts, minds, hearts and spirits under the shade of One Tree. He is the Potent in all things, the Vivifier of souls, the Preserver and the Controller of the world of mankind. Praise be to God, in this day the light of the Word of God has shone forth upon all regions; and from all sects, communities, nations, tribes, peoples, religions and denominations, souls have gathered together under the shadow of the Word of Oneness, and have in the utmost fellowship united and harmonized!

766

Some time ago, during the war, a Tablet was written regarding the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh which may appropriately be appended to this epistle: –

O people of the world!

The dawn of the Sun of Reality is assuredly for the illumination of the world and for the manifestation of mercy. In the assemblage of the family of Adam, results and fruits are praiseworthy and the holy bestowals of every bounty are abundant. It is an absolute mercy and a complete bounty, the illumination of the world, fellowship and harmony, love and union; nay, rather mercifulness and oneness, the elimination of discord and the unity of whosoever are on the earth in the utmost of freedom and dignity. The Blessed Beauty said: “All are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch.” He likened the world of existence to one tree and all the souls to leaves, blossoms and fruits (thereon). Therefore all the branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits must be in the utmost of freshness, and the bringing about of this delicacy and sweetness depends upon union and fellowship. Therefore they must assist each other with all their power, and seek everlasting life. Thus the friends of God must manifest the mercy of the Compassionate Lord in the world of existence and must show forth the bounty of the visible and invisible King. They must purify their sight, and look upon mankind as the leaves, blossoms and fruits of the tree of creation, and must always be thinking of doing good to some one, of love, consideration, affection and assistance to somebody. They must consider every one on the earth as a friend; regard the stranger as an intimate, and the alien as a companion. They must not be bound by any tie; nay, rather they should be free from every bond. In this day the one who is favored in the threshold of grandeur is the one who offers the cup of faithfulness and bestows the pearl of gift to the enemies, even to the fallen oppressor, who lends a helping hand, and considers every bitter foe as an affectionate friend.

These are the commands of the Blessed Beauty, these are the counsels of the Greatest Name. O ye dear friends! The world is engaged in war and struggle, and mankind is in the utmost conflict and danger. The darkness of unfaithfulness has

enshrouded the earth and the illumination of faithfulness has become concealed. All nations and tribes of the world have sharpened their claws and are warring and fighting with each other. The temple of man is shattered. Thousands of families are wandering disconsolate. Thousands of thousands of souls are besmeared with dust and blood in the arena of battle and struggle every year, and the tent of happiness and life is overthrown. The prominent men become commanders and boast of bloodshed, and glory in destruction. One says: "I have severed with my sword the necks of a nation"; and one: "I have leveled a kingdom to the dust" and another: "I have overthrown the foundation of a government." This is the pivot around which revolve the pride and glory of mankind. In all regions friendship and uprightness are denounced and reconciliation and regard for truth are despised. The herald of peace, reformation, love and reconciliation is the Religion of the Blessed Beauty which has pitched its tent on the apex of the world and proclaimed its summons to the people.

Then, O ye friends of God! Appreciate the value of this precious Revelation, move and act in accordance with it and walk in the straight path and the right way. Show it to the people. Raise the melody of the Kingdom, and spread abroad the teachings and ordinances of the loving Lord so that the world may become another world, the darkened earth may become illumined and the dead body of the people may obtain new life. Every soul may seek everlasting life through the breath of the Merciful. Life in this mortal world will quickly come to an end, and this earthly glory, wealth, comfort and happiness will soon vanish and be no more. Summon ye the people to God and call the souls to the manners and conduct of the Supreme Concourse. To the orphans be ye kind fathers, and to the unfortunate a refuge and shelter. To the poor be a treasure of wealth, and to the sick a remedy and healing. Be a helper of every oppressed one, the protector of every destitute one, be ye ever mindful to serve any soul of mankind. Attach no importance to self-seeking, rejection, arrogance, oppression and enmity. Heed them not. Deal in the contrary way. Be kind in truth, not only in appearance and outwardly. Every soul of the friends of God must concentrate his mind on this, that he may manifest the mercy of God and the bounty of the Forgiving One. He must do good to every soul whom he encounters, and render benefit to him, becoming the cause of improving the morals and correcting the thoughts so that the light of guidance may shine forth and the bounty of His Holiness the Merciful may encompass. Love is light in whatsoever house it may shine, and enmity is darkness in whatsoever abode it dwell.

O friends of God! Strive ye so that this darkness may be utterly dispelled and the Hidden Mystery may be revealed and the realities of things made evident and manifest.

Haifa, Palestine
December 17, 1919.

THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE

767 Two things are most urgently necessary to the political realm: the Legislative Power, the Executive Power.

The center of the executive power is the government, and the legislative power lies in the hands of thoughtful and wise men. On the other hand, if these strong pillars and firm foundations are not complete and comprehensive, how can it be supposed that there will be safety and salvation for the nation? But as, in these latter days, such excellency is rare, the government and the whole body of the nation are in sore need of just and discerning directions. Thus it is of the utmost importance to establish an assembly of learned men who, being proficient in the different sciences and capable of dealing with all the present and future requirements, will settle the questions in accordance with forbearance and firmness.

Firstly: the elected members must be religious persons, God-fearing, high-minded and followers of the law. Secondly: they should have an accurate knowledge of the divine commandments, of the most important fundamental matters and of the rules of the loosing and binding of domestic and foreign relations; they should possess a knowledge of the sciences and arts necessary to civilization, and finally be contented with the income derived from their personal property. ...

The election of temporary members of the assemblies of the kingdom should depend upon the choice and satisfaction of the public, for members elected by the people are pledged to carry out their will and to follow out their instructions. Consequently they are careful to administer impartial justice, and to live according to true religion, so that they may establish a good reputation and keep their dignity in the eyes of the people.

768 All the civic affairs and the legislation of material laws for the increasing needs of the enlightened humanity belong to the House of Justice. This, the House of Justice, will be not only a body for the legislation of laws according to the spirit and requirement of the time, but a board of arbitration for the settlement of all disputes arising between peoples. When the Universal House of Justice is organized the members will do their utmost for the realization of greater cordiality and comity amongst the nations. The laws of Bahá'u'lláh are the unchangeable, organic laws of the Universal House of Justice. They are the very foundation upon which the structure of additional legislation is built. ... As regards the places for the convening of such a general body, it will be decided by the members. The Universal House of Justice has only the legislative function; the executive power belongs to the administrative department of government. At first, National Houses of Justice will be established in every country, and they will elect in turn members to the Universal House of Justice. Again I repeat, the House of Justice, whether National or Universal, has only legislative power, and not executive power. For example, in Europe and America the Parliament or Congress enacts laws, while the Government executes these laws. The House of Justice cannot fulfil two functions at the same time—legislative and executive ...

Friends of God! Set forth the example of Justice! Justice is a universal quality.

From the highest to the lowest, justice should be sacred; from the sovereign to the merchant, the minister of state to the artisan, all must be just. Be just, respect the rights of each man—"do unto others what you would have them do unto you." A workman who commits an injustice is as much to blame as a tyrant. Each one of us can choose between justice and injustice. I hope that you will be just in your relations with others, that you will never harm your fellows, that you will respect the rights of all men and, above all, consider the rights of others before your own.

Star of the West,
Vol. 7, No. 15.

SALUTATION TO THE FRIENDS OF GOD

769 O ye who are attracted by the fragrance of God!

Verily, this mundane world is a mirage of the desert, but the Kingdom is like unto a sea of great surges and rolling waves.

Those who longed for the mirage have indeed become more thirsty the more they hastened toward it, and for a drop of water have they perished in grief.

Ye see, as the condition really is, that the people of the world are striving day and night for the sake of attaining perfect happiness and a tranquil existence; but the result is no other to them than disappointment, affliction, lamentation and destruction.

But those who have advanced to the Kingdom of God, have assuredly advanced unto a sea of clear and limpid water, and thus have attained unto the greatest bounty, the perfect rest, and the eternal life to which there is no abrupt end. Their faces have shone with joy, their souls were delighted with happiness, their hearts were illumined and their cups overflowing with abundance. Their edifices have risen high, their palaces have been adorned, their suns have shone, their stars gleamed, and their diadems radiated dazzling light. Their dominions have expanded and their lights have spread to all ages and generations. These are their upraised thrones, their palaces, their luminous lamps and their shining moon throughout all horizons.

These are their traces in this world: how much more, then, would be their light in the highest of the high—consider therefore, O ye servants of the Merciful!

Since this is so, have no more care for the world and its desires; but rather cling to the spiritual world and its gifts; spread the fragrances of God, be submissive to the Word of God, establish a spiritual meeting place wherefrom the utterance of sanctity and purity will arise to God; assembly there with fragrance and spirituality and celebrate the name of your Lord by day and by night. At that time ye should become illumined lamps, spiritual stars—nay, rather eternal suns! This is a favor

that was longed for by the spirits of godly people and the hearts of queens in former ages.

May salutations and praise be upon you!

PRAYERS

770 Praise be unto Him whose light hath risen, whose appearance hath become exalted, whose signs are promulgated, and whose evidences are fulfilled. The tongue of the realities of all things hath uttered: “Glory be unto my God, El-Bahá!” Thanks for His manifest Beauty and for His great Splendor!—for He hath quickened mankind with the spirit of guidance and hath rendered clear the White Path of gifts, through the arguments which are brilliant and clear to the hearts of the intelligent, and whereby these hearts are moved, enlightened, illuminated and become cognizant of the Mighty Message in this Manifest Day of the manifestation of the honorable station when the mystery of existence floweth as flow the souls in the bodies.

771 My Lord! My Lord! I praise Thee and I thank Thee for that whereby Thou hast favored Thy humble servant, Thy slave beseeching and supplicating Thee, because Thou hast guided him unto Thine obvious Kingdom and caused him to hear Thine exalted Call in the contingent world and to behold Thy Signs which prove the appearance of Thy victorious reign over all things.

772 Praise be unto Thee, for Thou hast sent down unto us this spiritual table, supreme benefit and heavenly blessing. O our Lord! Strengthen us to partake of this heavenly food, so that its fine essence may run through the pillars of our spiritual being and we may thereby obtain a celestial power for serving Thy Cause, promulgating Thy Signs, and adorning Thy vineyard with lofty trees, the fruits whereof shall be near and of perfuming fragrance. Verily, Thou art the Possessor of great bounty! Verily, Thou art the Clement, the Merciful!

773 O Thou Forgiving Lord!

Although certain souls finished the days of life in ignorance, were estranged and selfish, yet the ocean of Thy forgiveness is, verily, able to redeem and make free the sinners by one of its waves. Thou redeemest whomsoever Thou willest and deprivest whomsoever Thou willest not! Shouldst Thou deal justly, we all are sinners and deserve to be deprived; and shouldst Thou observe mercy, every sinner shall be made pure and every stranger shall become a friend. Therefore, forgive and pardon and grant Thy mercy unto all. Thou art the Forgiver, the Light-giver, the Compassionate!

774O Thou Benevolent God!

Grant us a shelter in Thy threshold and inform us of Thy mysteries!

Make our eyes seeing and our ears hearing! Suffer our hearts and souls to be drawn unto Thee by the power of supplication and prayer.

O God, wandering are we: point out to us the way of Truth!

Thirsty are we: give us the Water of Life!

Hungry are we: spread before us the Supper of the Lord!

Sad are we: bring to our hearts the joy of heaven.

Prisoners of the nether world are we: bestow upon us the freedom of the realm of might!

Attached to the terrestrial world are we: make us wooers of the celestial world.

In the bondage of passion, desire and temptation are we: release us from these chains and fetters.

Humble and lowly are we: make dear to us the kingdom of Thy Glory.

Deprived are we: make us the confidants of mystery.

Faded are we: refresh and rejoice us by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Dead are we: quicken us by the life eternal, so that in this age of Lights we may obtain an abundant share from the bounties of the forgiving Lord, enter the Kingdom of God, seek after the unending Outpouring, and attain unto the Everlasting Gift.

Verily, Thou art the Giver, the Bestower, the Merciful; and Thou art the Forgiver, the Glorious, the Helper!

775 O my God! Thou art my hope and my beloved, my intended aim and desire. With great humility and entire devotion I pray to Thee to make me the minaret of Thy love in Thy region, the lamp of Thy knowledge among Thy creatures, and the banner of Thy gift in Thy kingdom.

Make me one of those who cut themselves from everything save Thee, who sanctify themselves from everything pertaining to the world, and who separate themselves from the defects of the suspicious.

O my God! Let my heart be dilated with joy by the spirit of confirmation from Thy kingdom, and illumine my sight with beholding the hosts of success continually descending upon me from Thy omnipotence. Thou art the Almighty, the Invincible, the Powerful!

776 O my Lord! O my Lord! This is a lamp, lighted by the Fire of Thy Love, and ablaze with the Flame which is ignited in the Tree of Thy Mercy.

O my Lord! Increase its enkindlement, heat and flame, with the Fire which is kindled in the Sinai of Thy Manifestation.

Verily, Thou art the Confirmer, the Assister, the Powerful, the Generous, the Loving!

777 O Creator, we are poor, shower Thy goodness upon us. We are needy; give us a portion of Thy wealth. We are in want; satisfy our needs. We are humble; raise us to honor.

All the birds and beasts are fed from the Table of Thy gifts, and all the creatures are made happy by the abundance of Thy favor! Deprive not this helpless soul from Thy great bounty, and favor this impotent one with Thy power. Give me, in a right

way, my daily living, and confer a blessing upon my necessities, that we may be independent of any beside Thee, and be free from the remembrance of any but Thee.

I beg that we may walk in Thy path, and seek Thy face, and declare Thy secrets. Thou art the loving, the powerful; and Thou art the bread-giver of the world of man!

778 O my God, my God!

I am a servant attracted to Thee, humbly coming to the door of Thy Oneness and addressing the kingdom of Thy Mercy.

Yea, my God, permit me to be entirely Thine, occupied in thinking of Thee, inflamed by the fire of Thy love, and separated from all save Thee, so that I may work in Thy Cause, spread Thy wisdom, transmit Thy knowledge and the joy of knowing Thee.

Yea, my God, I am a flame lighted by the hand of Thy power. Let it not be extinguished by the winds of trials. Increase my love for Thee, my ardor for the Beauty of Thy Oneness, the fire that burneth in me in the Sinai of Thy Singleness, and the eternal life in me, through Thy bounty and grace; for Thou art the Protector, the Watcher, the Pitiful and the Merciful!

779 O loving God! I am a young child, a suppliant, a captive. Be Thou my refuge, my support, my protector. I am in distress: give me the means of tranquillity. I am needy: bestow upon me the treasure of the Kingdom. I am dead: give me the Spirit of Life. I am weak: favor me with power and strength, so that I may be a servant in Thy Threshold, with perfect purity and sanctity; sacrifice myself unto Thee, be quit of myself and seek Thee, walk in the path of Thy good pleasure, speak Thy secret, and witness the signs of Thy Oneness wherever I look. O God! Make me ablaze, like unto the fire of Thy love, and make me free from attachment to this mortal world, until I find the peace of soul and the rest of conscience.

Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty! Thou art the Hearer, the Seer!

780 O my God! O my God!

Praise be unto Thee! for Thou hast created me of the most excellent substance, in the most honored form, and in the most exalted kind of Thy creation; didst nurture me from the breast of Thy favor, didst nurse me in the bosom of Thy mercy, until I grew up under the protection of Thy divinity, in the cradle of Thy training, and reached full growth through Thy favor and grace. Then Thou hast made me to experience various circumstances and suffer countless calamities, afflictions and troubles in myself and griefs in my soul. Thou hast guided me to the fountain of Thy favor and illumined my sight through the light of Thy guidance, quickened my spirit with Thy fragrances of holiness and moved my heart with the breeze of the garden of Thy care. Then I became rejoiced at the appearance of Thy Beauty, the rising of Thy Lights and the dawning of the morn of Thy Oneness. Thou hast delivered me from the depths of sorrows, saved me from the darkness of griefs and dilated my breast by showing unto me Thy greatest Signs in the Day of Resurrection. O my Lord! Engage me in Thy love, so as to cut myself from aught but Thee, to be consumed with the love of Thy Beauty, to burn with the fire of love for Thy Face, so that I may be entirely drawn unto Thee and become ablaze by the fire enkindled in

the Tree of Sinai. O my Lord! Verily, with Thee I am free from all else, while turning unto Thy Glorious Kingdom. Deliver me from every gloomy sorrow; shelter me under the protection of Thy greatest favor; save me from attachment to this inferior world. O my Lord! Verily, I am humble; elevate me through Thy greatest bounty! I am poor; enrich me by Thine abundant treasury! I am ill; heal me by Thy precious medicine, and make me a sign of Thy favor among Thy servants! Verily, Thou art powerful to do that which Thou willest! Verily, Thou art Potent and Supreme!

781 O my Lord!

Thou knowest that the people are encircled with pain and calamities and are environed with hardships and trouble. Every trial doth attack man and every dire adversity doth assail him like unto the attack of a serpent. There is no shelter and asylum for him except under the wing of Thy protection, preservation, guard and custody.

O Thou the Merciful One! O my Lord! Make Thy protection my armory, Thy preservation my shield, humbleness before the door of Thy Oneness my guard, and Thy custody and defense my fortress and my abode. Preserve me from the suggestions of myself and my desire, and guard me from every sickness, trial, difficulty and ordeal.

Verily, Thou art the Protector, the Guardian, the Preserver, the Sufficer, and verily, Thou art the Merciful of the Most Merciful!

782 O compassionate God! Thanks be unto Thee for Thou hast awakened me and made me conscious. Thou hast given me a seeing eye and favored me with a hearing ear; hast led me to Thy Kingdom and guided me to Thy Path. Thou hast shown me the right way and caused me to enter the Ark of Deliverance. O God! Keep me steadfast and make me firm and unyielding. Protect me from violent tests and preserve and shelter me in the strongly fortified protection of Thy Covenant and Testament. Thou art the Powerful! Thou art the Seeing! Thou art the Hearing! O Thou the Compassionate God! Bestow upon me a heart which, like unto glass, may be illumined with the light of Thy love, and confer upon me a thought which may change this world into a rose garden through the spiritual bounty. Thou art the Compassionate, the Merciful! Thou art the Supreme, Beneficent God!

783 O my Lord! Confirm me to serve Thy beloved and to be submissive and humble before Thy chosen ones. Make me to know the meaning of Thy Words and inform me of the mysteries of Thy signs. Place me in the shadow of the standard of Thy Testament and preserve me from Thy tests which break backs and unveil the sins of the black sliders and tend to disgrace the party of deception and the people of wickedness. Verily, Thou art the Mighty, the Pardoner!

784 Praise be to Thee! O my God, and the God of all things; my Splendor and the Splendor of all things; my Hope and the Hope of all things; my Sovereign and the Sovereign of all things; my King and the King of all things; my Beloved and the Beloved of all things; and my Mover and the Mover of all things!

I ask Thee not to prevent my attaining the Sea of Thy Benevolence, nor to keep me from the Shore of Thy Nearness!

O God! All else beside Thee will not profit me, and the nearness of all else save

Thee will not suffice me.

I ask Thee by Thy Riches, whereby Thou hast been independent of all else beside Thyself, to make me of those who look unto Thee and arise for Thy service.

O God! Forgive Thy servants and worshippers; verily, Thou art the Forgiver, the Merciful!

THE VICTORY OF THE COVENANT

785 He is El-Abhá!

From the lights of that shining brilliancy and brightness, the horizons have already shone:

Blessed are they who are successful!

From that blessed Tree in Mount Sinai a call has been vociferously raised:

Blessed are they who are hearing!

From that holy fragrance in that White Spot all sides and regions have been perfumed:

Blessed are they who inhale the sweet fragrance!

The Light of Unity has been transfigured in the Temple of Seclusion:

Blessed are they who are wishing for Light!

The face of El-Bahá has been uncovered:

Blessed are they who are thereby attracted!

The cup of bounty, overflowing with the wine of fulfillment, is passing around:

Blessed are they who are drinking!

The Kingdom of El-Abhá and the Supreme God has been honored and glorified:

Blessed are they who are winning a place in the Kingdom!

The clouds of generosity are overflowing with the greatest abundance—truly, it is a great abundance! The hearts have been enlightened from the Lights of the Face of the Beloved—truly, it is a clear Light!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Servant of Bahá, has clad Himself in the mantle of servitude and devotion, for the beloved of El-Bahá—truly, this is a great Victory!
