

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE LOOM OF REALITY

HIS DEATHLESS SPLENDOR

He is the All-Glorious.

The world's great Light, once resplendent upon all mankind, has set to shine everlastingly from the Abhá horizon, His Kingdom of fadeless glory, shedding splendor upon His loved ones from on high, and breathing into their hearts and souls the breath of eternal life.

Ponder in your hearts that which He hath foretold in His Tablet of "The Divine Vision" that hath been spread throughout the world. Therein He saith: "Thereupon she wailed and exclaimed 'May the world and all that is therein be a ransom for Thy woes, O Sovereign of heaven and earth! Wherefore hast Thou left Thyself in the hands of the dwellers of this prison-city of 'Akká? Hasten Thou to other realms, to Thy retreats above, unknown as yet to the mortal glance of the children of the world.' We smiled and spake not. Reflect upon these most exalted words, and comprehend the purpose of this hidden and sacred mystery."

O ye beloved of the Lord! Beware, beware lest ye hesitate and waver. Let not fear fall upon you, neither be troubled nor dismayed. Take ye good heed lest this calamitous day slacken the flames of your ardor, and quench your tender hopes. Today is the day for steadfastness and constancy. Blessed are they that stand firm and immovable as the rock, and brave the storm and stress of this tempestuous hour. They, verily, shall be the recipients of God's grace, verily shall receive His divine assistance, and shall be the truly victorious. They shall shine amidst mankind with a radiance which the dwellers of the Pavilion of Glory laud and magnify. To them is proclaimed this celestial call, revealed in His most holy Book: "O My people! Be not perplexed should the star of My presence disappear, and the ocean of My utterance be stilled. In My presence among you there was the wisdom of God, and in My absence from you there is yet another, inscrutable to all but the One, the All-Knowing. Verily, We behold you from Our realm of effulgent glory, and will graciously aid whosoever striveth for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the celestial Concourse and a company of Our chosen angels."

The Sun of Truth, that most great Light, has set upon the horizon of the world to rise with deathless splendor over the Realm of the Limitless. In His most holy Book He calleth the firm and steadfast of His friends: "O peoples of the world! Should the radiance of My beauty be veiled, and the temple of My body be hidden, feel not perturbed, nay arise and bestir yourselves, that My Cause may triumph, and My Word be heard by all mankind."

THE NEW HEAVEN, THE NEW EARTH

O ye beloved of God! O ye children of His Kingdom!

Verily, verily the new heaven and the new earth are come. The holy City, new Jerusalem, hath come down from on high in the form of a maid of heaven, veiled, beauteous, and

unique, and prepared for reunion with her lovers on earth. The angelic company of the celestial Concourse have joined in a call that hath rung throughout the universe, all loudly and mightily acclaiming: "Hail, O City of God! Abide Thou, and make Thy habitation with the pure, virtue and holy servants of Thine; for they are Thy people, and Thou art their Lord."

He hath wiped away their tears, kindled their light, rejoiced their hearts and enraptured their souls. Death shall no more overtake them, neither shall sorrow, crying and tribulation afflict them. The Lord God Omnipotent hath been enthroned in His Kingdom and hath made all things new. This is the truth, and what truth greater than the Revelation of St. John the divine? He is the Alpha and Omega. He is the One that will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life, and bestow upon the sick the remedy of true salvation. He whom such grace aideth is verily he that receiveth the most glorious heritage from the prophets of God and His holy ones. The Lord will be his God, and he His dearly-beloved son.

Rejoice, then, O ye beloved of the Lord and His chosen ones and ye the children of God and His people, raise your voice and laud and magnify the Lord, the Most High; for His light hath beamed forth, His signs have appeared, and the billows of His rising ocean have scattered on every shore many a precious pearl.

SPIRITUAL SPRING

Do ye know in what cycle ye are created and in what age ye exist? This is the age of the Blessed Perfection and this is the time of the Greatest Name! This is the century of the Manifestation, the age of the Sun of the Horizons and the beautiful springtime of His Holiness the Eternal One!

The earth is in motion and growth; the mountains, hills and prairies are green and pleasant; the bounty is overflowing; the mercy universal; the rain is descending from the cloud of mercy; the brilliant Sun is shining; the full moon is ornamenting the horizon of ether; the great ocean-tide is flooding every little stream, the gifts are successive; the favors consecutive; and the refreshing breeze is blowing, wafting the fragrant perfume of the blossoms. Boundless treasure is in the hand of the King of Kings! Lift the hem of thy garment in order to receive it.

If we are not happy and joyous at this season, for what other season shall we wait and for what other time shall We look? This is the time for growing; the season for joyous gathering! Take the cup of the Testament in thy hand; leap and dance with ecstasy in the triumphal procession of the Covenant! Lay your confidence in the everlasting bounty, turn to the presence of the generous God; ask assistance from the Kingdom of Abhá; seek confirmation from the Supreme World; turn thy vision to the horizon of eternal wealth; and pray for help from the Source of Mercy!

Soon shall ye see the friends attaining their longed-for destination and pitching their tents, while we are but in the first day of our journey.

This period of time is the Promised Age, the assembling of the human race to the "Resurrection Day" and now is the great "Day of Judgment." Soon the whole world, as in

springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the winter time is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine trees; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver.

SERVE THE KINGDOM

When the darkness of ignorance and heedlessness concerning the realm of eternity and bereavement from the True One had encircled the universe, then the resplendent Luminary dawned and the brilliant Light illumined the horizon of the East. Hence, the Sun of Reality shone forth, scattering the sparkling lights of the Kingdom to the East and to the West. Those who had seeing eyes found the Most Great Glad-Tidings, began to cry the call, "O blessed are we! O blessed are we!"—and have beheld the reality of things in themselves, have discovered the mysteries of the Kingdom, were released from superstition and doubts, perceived the lights of Truth and became so intoxicated with the cup of the love of God, that, wholly forgetting themselves and the world while dancing, they ran with utmost joy and ecstasy to the city of Martyrdom, sacrificing their minds and their lives upon the altar of Love.

But those who were blinded became astonished and on account of these joyous acclamations were bewildered and beginning to cry, "Where is the light?" and said, "We do not behold any light, we do not see any rising sun! It is void of any truth! This is pure imagination!"

However, they have hastened bat-like in the darkness below the ground, and according to their own thoughts they have found a little comfort and tranquillity. Nevertheless, it is yet the early dawn and the strength of the heat and the rays of the Sun of Truth have not yet made their torrid and complete impression. When it reacheth the zenith, the heat will interpenetrate with such great intensity that it will move and spur to the greatest velocity even the insects below the earth. Although they are not able to behold the light, yet the penetration of the heat will move and agitate all of them.

Consequently, O ye friends of God, be ye thankful that in the Day of the Effulgence ye have turned your faces to the Orb of the regions and beheld the Lights! Ye have received a portion from the rays of Truth and are endowed with a share from the Everlasting Outpouring. Therefore, ye must not rest one minute, but thank Him for this bestowal.

Be ye not seated and silent! Diffuse the glad-tidings of the Kingdom far and wide to the ears, promulgate the Word of God, and put into practice the advices and covenants of God; that is, arise ye with such qualities and attributes that ye may continually bestow life to the body of the world, and nurse the infants of the universe up to the station of maturity and perfection. Enkindle with all your might in every meeting the light of the love of God, gladden and cheer every heart with the utmost loving-kindness, show forth your love to the strangers just as you show forth to your relations. If a soul is seeking to

quarrel, ask ye for reconciliation; if he blame you, praise him; if he give you a deadly poison, bestow ye an all-healing antidote; if he createth death, administer ye eternal life; if he becometh a thorn, change ye into roses and hyacinths. Perchance, through such deeds and words, this darkened world will become illuminated, this terrestrial universe will become transformed into a heavenly realm, and this satanic prison become a divine court; warfare and bloodshed be annihilated, and love and faithfulness hoist the tent of unity upon the apex of the world.

These are the results of the divine advices and exhortations, and the epitome of the teachings of the Bahá'í Cycle.

FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY

A fire from the Kingdom hath been kindled in the heart of the world, in the Blessed Tree, whose flame shall ere long set aglow the pillars of the earth and its rays illumine the horizons of the nations. All the signs have appeared, all the prophetic references have become clear, all that was revealed in the Books and Scriptures hath become fully manifest, and there is no ground for any one to hesitate in regard thereto.

Some people of former times and some sects avoided certain others as strangers, but now the glorious beloved One hath ridden upon His swift coursing steed, encircling about in the arena of truth and all that was hidden became manifest.

Let there be no more silence nor reticence, taciturnity nor negligence. The Candle is lighted—yet the moths continue motionless and melancholy behind the veils. Now is the time to roar like unto a sea and seek to ascend heavenward! If We desire to reach the apex of the Supreme Kingdom, we must unfurl our wings; if we wish to dive into the depths of the ocean, we must teach our limbs swimming. The time is short and the Divine Courser moves swiftly on; let us keep up and compete with each other and let us light a brilliant candle!

HERALDS OF HIS NAME

O phoenix of that immortal flame kindled in the sacred Tree!

Bahá'u'lláh (may my life, my soul, my spirit, be offered up as a sacrifice unto His lowly servants) hath, during His last days on earth, given the most emphatic promise that, through the outpourings of the grace of God and the aid and assistance vouchsafed from His Kingdom on high, souls will arise and holy beings appear who, as stars, would adorn the firmament of divine Guidance; illumine the dayspring of loving kindness and bounty; manifest the signs of the unity of God; shine with the light of sanctity and purity; receive their full measure of divine inspiration; raise high the sacred torch of faith; stand firm as the rock and immovable as the mountain; and grow to become luminaries in the heavens of His Revelation, mighty channels of His grace, means for the bestowals of God's bountiful care, heralds calling forth the name of the one true God, and establishers of the world's supreme foundation.

These shall labor ceaselessly by day and by night, shall heed neither trial nor woe, shall suffer no respite in their efforts, shall seek no repose, shall disregard all ease and comfort and, detached and unsullied, shall consecrate every fleeting moment of their life to the diffusion of the divine fragrance and the exaltation of God's holy Word. Their face will radiate heavenly gladness, and their hearts be filled with joy. Their souls will be inspired, and their foundation stand secure. They shall scatter in the world, and travel throughout all regions. They shall raise their voice in every assembly, and adorn and revive every gathering. They shall speak in every tongue, and interpret every hidden meaning. They shall reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom, and manifest unto every one the signs of God. They shall burn brightly even as a candle in the heart of every assembly, and beam forth as a star upon every horizon. The gentle breeze wafted from the garden of their hearts shall perfume and revive the souls of men, and the revelations of their minds, even as showers, reinvigorate the peoples and nations of the world.

I am waiting, eagerly waiting for these holy ones to appear; and yet, how long will they delay their coming? My prayer and ardent supplication, at eventide and at dawn, is that these shining stars may soon shed their radiance upon the world, that their sacred countenance may be unveiled to mortal eyes, and the billows of grace, rising from His oceans above, may flow upon all mankind. Pray ye also and supplicate unto Him that through the bountiful aid of the Ancient Beauty these souls may be unveiled to the eyes of the world.

The glory of God rest upon thee, and upon him whose face is illumined with that everlasting light that shineth from His Kingdom of Glory.

THE WORLD IS INFIRM

O ye friends of God! The world is like the body of man—it hath become sick, feeble and infirm. Its eye is devoid of sight, its ear hath become destitute of hearing and its faculties of sense are entirely dissolved. The friends of God must become as wise physicians and care for and heal this sick person, in accord with the divine teachings, in order that—God willing—it may perchance gain health, find eternal healing and that its lost powers may be restored; and that the person of the world may find such health, freshness and purity that it will appear in the utmost beauty and charm.

The first remedy is to guide the people, so that they may turn unto God, hearken unto the divine commandments and go forth with a hearing ear and seeing eye. After this swift and certain remedy hath been applied, then according to the divine teachings, they ought to be trained in the conduct, morals and deeds of the Supreme Concourse, encouraged and inspired with the gifts of the Kingdom of Abhá. The hearts should be purified and cleansed from every trace of hatred and rancor and enabled to engage in truthfulness, conciliation, uprightness and love toward the world of humanity; so that the East and the West may embrace each other like unto two lovers, enmity and animosity may vanish from the human world and the universal peace be established!

O ye friends of God! Be kind to all peoples and nations, have love for all of them, exert yourselves to purify the hearts as much as you can, and bestow abundant effort in rejoicing the souls. Be ye a sprinkling of rain to every meadow and a water of life to every

tree. Be ye as fragrant musk to every nostril and a soul-refreshing breeze to every invalid. Be ye salutary water to every thirsty one, a wise guide to every one led astray, an affectionate father or mother to every orphan, and, in the utmost joy and fragrance, a son or daughter to every one bent with age. Be ye a rich treasure to every indigent one; consider love and union as a delectable paradise, and count annoyance and hostility as the torment of hell-fire. Exert with your soul; seek no rest in body; supplicate and beseech with your heart and search for divine assistance and favor, in order that ye may make this world the Paradise of Abhá and this terrestrial globe the arena of the Supreme Kingdom. If ye make an effort, it is certain that these lights will shine, this cloud of mercy shall rain, this soul-nourishing breeze shall waft, and the scent of this most fragrant musk be diffused.

THE COVENANT

O ye beloved of God, know that steadfastness and firmness in this new and wonderful Covenant is indeed the spirit that quickeneth the hearts which are overflowing with the love of the Glorious Lord; verily, it is the power which penetrates into the hearts of the people of the world! Your Lord hath assuredly promised His servants who are firm and steadfast to render them victorious at all times, to exalt their word, propagate their power, diffuse their lights, strengthen their hearts, elevate their banners, assist their hosts, brighten their stars, increase the abundance of the showers of mercy upon them, and enable the brave lions to conquer.

Hasten, hasten, O ye firm believers! Hasten, hasten, O ye steadfast! Abandon the heedless, set aside every ignorant, take hold of the strong rope, be firm in this Great Cause, draw light from this Evident Light, be patient and be steadfast in this wise Religion! Ye shall see the hosts of inspiration descending successively from the Supreme World, the procession of attraction falling incessantly from the heights of heaven, the abundance of the Kingdom of El-Abhá outpouring continually and the teachings of God penetrating with the utmost power, while the heedless are indeed in evident loss.

Iscariot must not be forgotten; the Divine sheep must constantly be guarded against devouring wolves; the light of the Cause of God must be protected from contrary winds by means of a chimney; the oppressed fowls must be shielded against the birds of prey; blooming roses should be saved from the outstretched hands of injustice and the lambs of God must be fortified against the fierce claws of ravenous animals.

Were it not for the protecting power of the Covenant to guard the impregnable fort of the Cause of God, there would arise among the Bahá'ís, in one day, a thousand different sects as was the case in former ages. But in this Blessed Dispensation, for the sake of the permanency of the Cause of God and the avoidance of dissension amongst the people of God, the Blessed Beauty (may my soul be a sacrifice unto Him), has through the Supreme Pen written the Covenant and the Testament; He appointed a Center, the Exponent of the Book and the annuler of disputes. Whatever is written or said by Him is conformable to the truth and under the protection of the Blessed Beauty. He is infallible. The express purpose of this last Will and Testament is to set aside disputes from the world.

Suffer the friends to become firm in the Covenant and give the message of the

Kingdom of Abhá to other souls.

Praise be to God that the believers in America are steadfast but the firmer they are the better that no one might be able to intrude and introduce disputes, for disputes destroy the foundation of God's Institution.

His Holiness Abraham, on Him be peace, made a covenant concerning His Holiness Moses and gave the glad-tidings of His coming. His Holiness Moses made a covenant concerning the Promised One, i.e. His Holiness Christ, and announced the good news of His Manifestation to the world. His Holiness Christ made a covenant concerning the Paraclete and gave the tidings of His coming. His Holiness the Prophet Muḥammad made a covenant concerning His Holiness the Báb and the Báb was the One promised by Muḥammad, for Muḥammad gave the tidings of His coming. The Báb made a Covenant concerning the Blessed Beauty of Bahá'u'lláh and gave the glad-tidings of His coming for the Blessed Beauty was the One promised by His Holiness the Báb. Bahá'u'lláh made a covenant concerning a promised One who will become manifest after one thousand or thousands of years. He likewise, with His Supreme Pen, entered into a great Covenant and Testament with all the Bahá'ís whereby they were all commanded to follow the Center of the Covenant after His departure, and turn not away even to a hair's breadth from obeying Him.

In the Book of Aqdas, He has given positive command in two clear instances and has explicitly appointed the Interpreter of the Book. Also in all the Divine Tablets, especially in the Chapter of The Branch—all the meanings of which mean the Servitude of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, that is 'Abdu'l-Bahá—all that was needed to explain the Center of the Covenant and the Interpreter of the Book has been revealed from the Supreme Pen. Now as 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Interpreter of the Book He says that the "Chapter of The Branch" means 'Abdu'l-Bahá, that is, the Servitude of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and none other.

RACE UNITY

You have written that there were several meetings of joy and happiness, one for white and another for colored people. Praise be to God! As both races are under the protection of the All-Knowing God, therefore the lamps of unity must be lighted in such a manner in these meetings that no distinction be perceived between the white and colored. Colors are phenomenal, but the realities of men are essence. When there exists unity of the essence what power has the phenomenal? When the light of reality is shining what power has the darkness of the unreal? If it be possible, gather together these two races, black and white, into one Assembly, and put such love into their hearts that they shall not only unite but even intermarry. Be sure that the result of this will abolish differences and disputes between black and white. Moreover, by the Will of God, may it be so. This is a great service to humanity.

THE FIRE OF THE LOVE OF GOD

O friend! Be set aglow with the fire of the love of God, so that the hearts of the people will become enlightened by the light of thy love.

Supplicate to God, pray to Him and invoke Him at midnight and at dawn. Be humble and submissive to God and chant the verses of thanksgiving at morn and eve, for that He guided thee unto the Manifest Light and showed to thee the straight Path and destined to thee the station of nearness in His wonderful Kingdom.

Verily I ask God to augment for thee, every day, the light of guidance and His gift of virtue, comfort and ease. Thus thou mayest set a good example in that region; that He may lift up the veil from before the eyes of thy mother and father, so that they may witness the lights of the Kingdom of God, which have encompassed all regions.

YE ARE THE ANGELS

Verily, I, from this brilliant and Blessed Spot, speak to you face to face, while ye are in that far distant country, saying:

“O people of loyalty, O people of faithfulness, O people who are awakened by the Breath of God, O people who are inhaling the scent of life from the Spirit of God! The path hath become smooth, the way straightened, the carpet of the Kingdom is spread, the Tabernacle hath been elevated upon the Hill of Might, the powers of heaven have been shaken, the corners of the earth have quaked, the sun has been darkened, the moon ceased to give light, the stars have fallen, the nations of the earth have lamented, and the Son of Man hath come upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and He hath sent His angels with the sound of the great trumpet, and no one knows the meaning of these emblems save the wise and informed.

“Ye are the angels, if your feet be firm, your spirits rejoiced, your secret thoughts pure, your eyes consoled, your ears opened, your breasts dilated with joy, and your souls gladdened, and if you arise to assist the Covenant, to resist dissension and to be attracted to the Effulgence! Verily, I say unto you that the Word of God has assuredly been explained and has become an evident sign and a strong and solid proof, and its traces shall be spread in the East and West, and to these all heads shall bow and all souls shall submit and kneel down with their faces to the ground.”

REALITY OF THANKSGIVING

In these times thanksgiving for the bounty of the Merciful One consists in the illumination of the heart and the feeling of the soul.

This is the reality of thanksgiving. But, although offering thanks through speech or writings is approvable, yet, in comparison with that, it is but unreal, for the foundation is spiritual feelings and merciful sentiments. I hope that you may be favored therewith. But the lack of capacity and merit in the Day of Judgment does not prevent one from bounty and generosity, for it is the day of grace and not justice, and to give every one his due is justice. Consequently, do not look upon thy capacity, nay, rather, look upon the infinite

grace of the Bounty of Abhá whose grace is comprehending and whose bounty is perfect.

THE STRAIGHT PATH

Thank God for guiding thee unto the Straight Path, manifesting unto thee the Evident Light. He shall give thee a draught of the cup whereby thy spiritual power will be increased. Thou shalt advance unto the Lofty Station, acquire heavenly qualities and attain knowledge of the significances of the words of God in this glorious day.

It is incumbent upon thee to turn wholly unto the Kingdom of God, to enter entirely into this wonderful Cause, and to make thy thought, remembrance and effort confined to the education of thy character, the enlightenment through the light of Abhá, and to guide the people to the source of the mercy of thy Lord, the Clement, the Merciful.

Comfort thy mother and endeavor to do what is conducive to the happiness of her heart. Approach not those who are drowned in the sea of this world, but rather be enkindled by the fire of the love of God. Be thou such a flame whereby the hearts may be set aglow.

It is incumbent upon thee to assemble continuously with the beloved of God and to meet with those whose faces are illumined with the light of the love of God. Verily, I supplicate to God to make thee sincere in this love, to illumine thee with the light of His Kingdom, and to destine unto thee the illumination by the light of His attributes, to make thee a sign of mercy, a bird warbling the verses of unity; that thou mayest be nurtured in the bosom of His providence, and become a growing tree bearing fruit in the Paradise of El-Abhá.

Verily, thy Lord confirmeth him whom He willeth, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

CUT THYSELF FROM THE WORLD

If thou seekest to be intoxicated with the cup of the Most Mighty Gift, cut thyself from the world and be quit of self and desire. Exert thyself night and day until spiritual powers may penetrate thy heart and soul. Abandon the body and the material, until the merciful powers may become manifest; because not until the soil is become pure will it develop through the heavenly bounty; not until the heart is purified, will the radiance of the Sun of Truth shine therein. I beg of God that thou wilt day by day increase the purity of thy heart, the cheerfulness of thy soul, the light of thy insight and the search for Truth.

ARISE WITH GREAT POWER

Arise with every power to assist the Covenant of God and serve in His vineyard. Be confident that a confirmation will be granted unto you and a success on His part is given

unto you. Verily, He shall support you by the angels of His holiness and reinforce you with the breaths of the Spirit that ye may mount the Ark of Safety, set forth the evident signs, impart the spirit of life, declare the essence of His commands and precepts, guide the sheep who are straying from the fold in all directions, and give the blessings. Ye have to use every effort in your power and strive earnestly and wisely in this new century. By God, verily the Lord of Hosts is your support, the angels of heaven your assistance, the Holy Spirit your companion and the Center of the Covenant your helper. Be not idle, but active and fear not. Look unto those who have been in the former ages—how they have resisted all nations and suffered all persecutions and afflictions, and how their stars shone, their attacks proved successful, their teachings established, their regions expanded, their hearts gladdened, their ideas cleared and their motives effective. Ye are now in a great station and noble rank and ye shall find yourselves in evident success and prosperity, the like of which the eye of existence never saw in former ages.

DIVINE ASSISTANCE

O thou who warmest thyself by the fire of the love of God, spreading from the Tree of the Covenant! Let thy soul be at ease and thy heart in peace concerning the perfect success and progress which the pen is not able to express, for in a short time thou shalt see the flag of the Kingdom waving in those far and wide regions, and the lights of the Truth shining brilliantly in its dawn above those horizons, and thou shalt know that thou art the center of the circle of the love of God, the axis around which souls revolve in their way and supplication to God. Therefore, thou must widen thy heart, dilate thy breast, have patience in plenty, calmness of soul and cut thyself from everything but God! By God, the truth is, if thou goest according to the teachings of El-'Abd and followest the steps of Him who is annihilated in God, thou shalt see that the cohorts of the Kingdom of God will come to thy help, one after another, and that the hosts of the Might of God will be in thy presence in steady succession, the gates of the great victory opened and the rays of the brilliant morning diffused! By thy life, O my beloved! if thou didst know what God had ordained for thee, thou wouldst fly with delight and thy happiness, gladness and Joy would increase every hour. El-Bahá be upon thee!

PROOF OF NOBILITY

The necessity and the particularity of the assured and believing ones is to be firm in the Cause of God and withstand the hidden and evident tests. Thanks be to God that you are distinguished and made eminent by this blessing. Anybody can be happy in the state of comfort, ease, health, success, pleasure and joy; but if one will be happy and contented in the time of trouble, hardship and prevailing disease, it is the proof of nobility. Thanks be to God that that dear servant of God is extremely patient under the disastrous circumstances, and in the place of complaining gives thanks.

THE SOURCE OF LOVE

The advent of the prophets and the revelation of the Holy Books is intended to create love between souls and friendship between the inhabitants of the earth. Real love is impossible unless one turn his face towards God and be attracted to His Beauty.

OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE FAITH

Thou hast written of a verse in the Gospels, asking if at the time of Christ all souls did hear His call. Know that faith is of two kinds. The first is objective faith that is expressed by the outer man, obedience of the limbs and senses. The other faith is subjective, and unconscious obedience to the will of God. There is no doubt that, in the day of a Manifestation such as Christ, all contingent beings possessed subjective faith and had unconscious obedience to His Holiness Christ.

For all parts of the creational world are of one whole. Christ the Manifestor reflecting the divine Sun represented the whole. All the parts are subordinate and obedient to the whole. The contingent beings are the branches of the tree of life while the Messenger of God is the root of that tree. The branches, leaves and fruit are dependent for their existence upon the root of the tree of life. This condition of unconscious obedience constitutes subjective faith. But the discerning faith that consists of true knowledge of God and the comprehension of divine words, of such faith there is very little in any age. That is why His Holiness Christ said to His followers, "Many are called but few are chosen."

SPIRITUAL CAPACITY

Those souls who have the capacity and ability to receive the outpourings of the Kingdom and the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, they become attracted through one word. But people who have not the capacity, no matter how much one explain the divine behests and advices or breathe the breath of the Holy Spirit, it will not make an effect; nay, rather they add to their hardness and heedlessness.

No sooner is the oil touched by fire than it is ignited, but the heat of the fire will not make any effect upon the black stone. Now praise be to God that thou didst have a pure aim and great capacity so that as soon as thou didst hear the "Word" thou didst become attracted. Indeed this is one of the most great gifts of God.

THE BELOVED OF GOD

The spiritual love of God maketh man pure and holy and clotheth him with the garment of virtue and purity. And when man attacheth his heart wholly to God and becometh related to the Blessed Perfection, the divine bounty will dawn. This love is not physical,

nay, rather, it is absolutely spiritual.

The souls whose consciences are enlightened through the light of the love of God, they are like unto shining lights and resemble stars of holiness in the heaven of purity.

The real and great love is the love of God. That is holy above the imaginations and thoughts of men.

The beloved of God must each be the essence of purity and holiness; so may they be known by their purity, freedom and meekness in every land; they may drink from the eternal chalice of the love of God, enjoy its ecstasy, and through meeting the Beauty of Abhá, they should be joyful, active, aglow with zeal and wonderful. This is the station of the sincere. This is the quality of those who are firm. This is the illumination of the faces of those who are near.

Therefore, O ye friends of God, ye must in perfect purity attain spiritual unity and agreement to a degree that ye may express one spirit and one life

In this condition physical bodies play no part; the command and authority are in the hand of the spirit. When the spirit becometh all inclusive, the spiritual union shall be attained. Night and day endeavor to attain perfect harmony; be thoughtful concerning your own spiritual developments and close your eyes to the shortcomings of one another.

By good deeds, pure lives, humility and meekness be a lesson for others.

IF ONE POSSESSES THE LOVE OF GOD

O thou son of the Kingdom! If one possesses the love of God, everything that he undertakes is useful, but if the undertaking is without the love of God, then it is hurtful and the cause of veiling one's self from the Lord of the Kingdom. But with the love of God every bitterness is changed into sweetness and every gift becometh precious. For instance, a musical and melodious voice imparteth life to an attracted heart but lureth toward lust those souls who are engulfed in passion and desire.

With the love of God all sciences are accepted and beloved, but without it, are fruitless; nay, rather the cause of insanity. Every science is like unto a tree; if the fruit of it is the love of God, that is a blessed tree. Otherwise it is dried wood and finally a food for fire.

O thou sincere servant of the True One and the spiritual physician of the people! Whenever thou presentest thyself at the bed of a patient turn thy face toward the Lord of the Kingdom and supplicate assistance from the Holy Spirit and heal the ailments of the sick one. I beg of God to bestow upon thee an eloquent tongue.

THE MAGNET OF THE KINGDOM

Note that thy Lord hath manifested the Magnet of the souls and hearts in the Pole of the existing world, to which all the sacred hearts are attracted from the far distant lands and countries. The iron body is attractable although at long distances away; but the earthen one is not although in contact and very close.

Therefore, thank thou God for being an attractable body, to be drawn to the Magnet of the Kingdom of God.

THE ENCOMPASSING SPIRIT

Verily, I say unto thee that the gifts of thy Lord are encircling thee in a similar way as the spirit encircles the body at the beginning of the amalgamation of the elements and natures in the womb; the power of the spirit begins then to appear in the body gradually and successively according to the preparation and capacity to receive that everlasting abundance.

SOULS ARE LIKE MIRRORS

Souls are like unto mirrors, and the bounty of God is like unto the sun. When the mirrors pass beyond all coloring and attain purity and polish, and are confronted with the sun, they will reflect in full perfection its light and glory. In this condition one should not consider the mirror, but the power of the light of the sun, which hath penetrated the mirror, making it a reflector of the heavenly glory.

THE WORLD OF VISION

As to the question whether the souls will recognize each other in the spiritual world: This fact is certain; for the Kingdom is the world of vision where all the concealed realities will become disclosed. How much more the well-known souls will become manifest. The mysteries of which man is heedless in this earthly world, those he will discover in the heavenly world, and there will he be informed of the secret of truth; how much more will he recognize or discover persons with whom he hath been associated. Undoubtedly, the holy souls who find a pure eye and are favored with insight will, in the kingdom of lights, be acquainted with all mysteries, and will seek the bounty of witnessing the reality of every great soul. Even they will manifestly behold the Beauty of God in that world. Likewise will they find all the friends of God, both those of the former and recent times, present in the heavenly assemblage.

PRAYER IS INDISPENSABLE

O thou spiritual friend! Thou hast asked the wisdom of prayer. Know thou that prayer is indispensable and obligatory, and man under no pretext whatsoever is excused from performing the prayer unless he be mentally unsound, or an insurmountable obstacle prevent him. The wisdom of prayer is this: That it causeth a connection between the servant and the True One, because in that state man with all heart and soul turneth his

face towards His Highness the Almighty, seeking His association and desiring His love and compassion. The greatest happiness for a lover is to converse with his beloved, and the greatest gift for a seeker is to become familiar with the object of his longing; that is why with every soul who is attracted to the Kingdom of God, his greatest hope is to find an opportunity to entreat and supplicate before his Beloved, appeal for His mercy and grace and be immersed in the ocean of His utterance, goodness and generosity.

Besides all this, prayer and fasting is the cause of awakening and mindfulness and conducive to protection and preservation from tests...

TURN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Know thou, that letter sent to thee by me, was only because of my perfect love for thee and my pity upon thee, for I had the desire that the fragrance of the Holy Spirit, which hath perfumed all regions and imbued the entire body of the world with the Spirit of Life, should pass over thee and abide with thee. Notwithstanding the high position it occupieth, still, with an eloquent tongue, through which the Spirit moveth, hearts are attracted and bosoms burn, it speaketh to the pure hearts and to the good and righteous souls in every spot of the earth. This is the powerful Spirit, the dazzling light, the brilliant star and the overwhelming and universal abundance. And, from its traces, spread and divulged everywhere, thou wilt know and realize its influence and comprehend its radiance. I ask God to expose thee to its fragrance, move thee by its breeze, enkindle thee by its coals of fire and illuminate thee by its brightness. Turn thyself wholly to it—thus thou shalt be enabled to ascertain its influence and power, the strength of its life and the greatness of its confirmation. Verily, I say unto thee, that if for the appearance of that Divine Essence thou desirest to have a definite proof, an indisputable testimony and a strong, convincing evidence, thou must prepare thyself to make thy heart empty and thine eye ready to look only toward the Kingdom of God. Then, at that time, the radiance of that widespread effulgence will descend upon thee successively, and that motion rendered thee by the Holy Spirit will make thee dispense with any other strong evidence that leadeth to the appearance of this Light, because the greatest and strongest proof for showing the abundance of the Spirit to the bodies is the very appearance of its power and influence in those bodies.

INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I now assure thee, O servant of God, that, if thy mind become empty and pure from every mention and thought and thy heart attracted wholly to the Kingdom of God, forget all else besides God and come in communion with the Spirit of God, then the Holy Spirit will assist thee with a power which will enable thee to penetrate all things, and a Dazzling Spark which enlightens all sides, a Brilliant Flame in the zenith of the heavens, will teach thee that which thou dost not know of the facts of the universe and of the divine doctrine. Verily, I say unto thee, every soul which ariseth today to guide others to the path of safety and infuse in them the Spirit of Life, the Holy Spirit will inspire that soul with evidences,

proofs and facts and the lights will shine upon it from the Kingdom of God. Do not forget what I have conveyed unto thee from the breath of the Spirit. Verily, it is the shining morning and the rosy dawn which will impart unto thee the lights, reveal the mysteries and make thee competent in science, and through it the pictures of the Supreme World will be printed in thy heart and the facts of the secrets of the Kingdom of God will shine before thee.

THE INTERMEDIARY

Unless the Holy Spirit become intermediary, one cannot attain directly to the bounties of God. Do not overlook the obvious truths, for it is a self-evident fact that a child cannot be instructed without a teacher, and knowledge is a bounty from the bounties of God. The soil is not covered with grass and green without the rain of the cloud; therefore the cloud is the intermediary between the divine bounties and the soil. A body doth not develop and grow without the soul; therefore the soul is the medium of the spiritual life.

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

Now as to what thou askest concerning the spirit and its “return” to this world of humanity and this elemental space: Know that spirit in general is divided into five sorts—the vegetable spirit, the animal spirit, the human spirit, the spirit of faith, and the divine spirit of sanctity.

The vegetable spirit is the virtue augmentative, or growing or vegetative faculty, which results from the admixture of the simple elements, with the cooperation of water, air and heat.

The animal spirit is the virtue perceptive resulting from the admixture and absorption of the vital elements generated in the heart, which apprehend sense-impressions.

The human spirit consists of the rational, or logical, reasoning faculty, which apprehends general ideas and things intelligible and perceptible.

Now these “spirits” are not reckoned as Spirit in the terminology of the Scriptures and the usage of the people of the Truth, inasmuch as the laws governing them are as the laws which govern all phenomenal being in respect to generation, corruption, production, change and reversion, as is clearly indicated in the Gospel where it says: “Let the dead bury their dead;” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit”; inasmuch as he who would bury these dead was alive with the vegetative, animal and rational human soul, yet did Christ—to whom be glory!—declare such dead and devoid of life, in that this person was devoid of the spirit of faith, which is of the Kingdom of God.

In brief, for these three spirits there is no restitution or “return,” but they are subordinate to reversions and production and corruption.

But the spirit of faith which is of the Kingdom consists of the all-comprehending grace

and the perfect attainment and the power of sanctity and the divine effulgence from the Sun of Truth on luminous light-seeking essences from the presence of the divine Unity. And by this Spirit is the life of the spirit of man, when it is fortified thereby, as Christ saith: "That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." And this Spirit hath both restitution and return, inasmuch as it consists of the Light of God and the unconditioned grace. So, having regard to this state and station, Christ announced that John the Baptist was Elias, who was to come before Christ. And the likeness of this station is as that of lamps kindled: for these in respect to their glasses and oil-holders, are different, but in respect to their light, One, and in respect to their illumination, One; nay, each one is identical with the other, without imputation of plurality, or diversity or multiplicity or separateness. This is the Truth and beyond the Truth there is only error.

TRIALS A GIFT FROM GOD

Thou hast written concerning the tests that have come upon thee. To the sincere ones, tests are as a gift from God, the Exalted, for a heroic person hasteneth, with the utmost joy and gladness, to the tests of a violent battlefield, but the coward is afraid and trembles and utters moaning and lamentation. Likewise, an expert student prepareth and memorizeth his lessons and exercises with the utmost effort, and in the day of examination he appeareth with infinite joy before the master. Likewise, the pure gold shineth radiantly in the fire of test. Consequently, it is made clear that for holy souls, trials are as the gift of God, the Exalted; but for weak souls they are an unexpected calamity. This test is just as thou hast written: it removeth the rust of egotism from the mirror of the heart until the Sun of Truth may shine therein. For, no veil is greater than egotism and no matter how thin that covering may be, yet it will finally veil man entirely and prevent him from receiving a portion from the eternal bounty.

THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING

As to the subject of babes and infants and weak ones who are afflicted by the hands of oppressors: This contains great wisdom and this subject is of paramount importance. In brief, for those souls there is a recompense in another world and many details are connected with this matter. For those souls that suffering is the greatest mercy of God. Verily that mercy of the Lord is far better and preferable to all the comfort of this world and the growth and development of this place of mortality. If it be the will of God, when thou shalt be present this will be explained in detail by word of mouth.

BAHÁ'Í MARRIAGE

As to the question of marriage, according to the law of God: First you must select one, and then it depends on the consent of the father and mother. Before your selection they have

no right of interference.

Bahá'í marriage is union and cordial affection between the two parties. They must, however, exercise the utmost care and become acquainted with each other's character. This eternal bond should be made secure by a firm covenant, and the intention should be to foster harmony, fellowship and unity and to attain everlasting life ...

In a true Bahá'í marriage the two parties must become fully united both spiritually and physically, so that they may attain eternal union throughout all the worlds of God, and improve the spiritual life of each other. This is Bahá'í matrimony.

Among the majority of the people marriage consists of physical relationship and this union and relationship is temporary for at the end physical separation is destined and ordained. But the marriage of the people of Bahá must consist of both physical and spiritual relationship for both of them are intoxicated with the wine of one cup, are attracted by one Peerless Countenance, are quickened with one Life and are illumined with one Light. This is the spiritual relationship and everlasting union. Likewise in the physical world they are bound together with strong and unbreakable ties.

When relationship, union and concord exist between the two from a physical and spiritual standpoint, that is the real union, therefore everlasting. But if the union is merely from the physical point of view, unquestionably it is temporal and at the end separation is inevitable.

Consequently when the people of Bahá desire to enter the sacred union of marriage, eternal connection and ideal relationship, spiritual and physical association of thoughts and conceptions of life must exist between them, so that in all the grades of existence and all the worlds of God this union may continue forever and ever for this real union is a splendor of the light of the love of God.

Likewise if the souls become real believers they will find themselves ushered into this exalted state of relationship, becoming the manifestors of the love of the Merciful and exhilarated with the cup of the love of God. Undoubtedly that union and relationship is eternal.

The souls who sacrifice self, become detached from the imperfections of the realm of man and free from the shackles of this ephemeral world assuredly the splendors of the rays of divine union shall shine in their hearts and in the eternal paradise they shall find ideal relationship, union and happiness.

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS

Then, O ye friends of God! Ye must not only have kind and merciful feelings for mankind, but ye should also exercise the utmost kindness towards every living creature. The physical sensibilities and instincts are common to animal and man. Man is, however, negligent of this reality and imagines that sensibility is peculiar to mankind, therefore he practices cruelty to the animal. In reality what difference is there in physical sensations! Sensibility is the same whether you harm man or animal: there is no difference. Nay, rather, cruelty to the animal is more painful because man has a tongue and he sighs, complains and groans when he receives an injury and complains to the government and

the government protects him from cruelty; but the poor animal cannot speak, it can neither show its suffering nor is it able to appeal to the government. If it is harmed a thousand times by man it is not able to defend itself in words nor can it seek justice or retaliate. Therefore one must be very considerate towards animals and show greater kindness to them than to man. Educate the children in their infancy in such a way that they may become exceedingly kind and merciful to the animals. If an animal is sick they should endeavor to cure it; if it is hungry, they should feed it; if it is thirsty, they should satisfy its thirst; if it is tired, they should give it rest.

Man is generally sinful and the animal is innocent; unquestionably one must be more kind and merciful to the innocent. The harmful animals, such as the bloodthirsty wolf, the poisonous snake and other injurious animals are excepted, because mercy towards these is cruelty to man, and other animals. For instance, if you show kindness to a wolf this becomes a tyranny to the sheep, for it may destroy an entire flock of sheep. If you give the opportunity to a mad dog it may be the cause of the destruction of a thousand animals and men. Therefore, sympathy to the ferocious animal is cruelty to the peaceful animal, so they should be done away with. To the blessed animals, however, the utmost kindness should be exercised: the more the better it will be.

This sympathy and kindness is one of the fundamental principles of the divine kingdom. Ye should pay great attention to this question.

ECONOMY A GREAT TREASURE

It behoveth thee to sever thyself from all desires save thy Lord, the Supreme, expecting no help or aid from anyone in the universe, not even from thy father or children. Resign thyself to God! Content thyself with but little of this world's goods! Verily, economy is a great treasure. If one of thy relations oppress thee, complain not against him before the magistrate; rather manifest magnificent patience during every calamity and hardship. Verily thy Master is the Lord of Faithfulness! Forgive and overlook the shortcomings which have appeared in that one, for the sake of love and affection. Know that nothing will benefit thee in this life save supplication and invocation unto God, service in His vineyard, and, with a heart full of love, be in constant servitude unto Him.

If thy daily living become difficult, soon thy Lord will bestow upon thee that which shall satisfy thee. Be patient in the time of affliction and trial, endure every difficulty and hardship with a dilated heart, attracted spirit and eloquent tongue in remembrance of the Merciful. Verily this is the life of satisfaction, the spiritual existence, heavenly repose, divine benediction and the celestial table! Soon thy Lord will extenuate thy straitened circumstances even in this world.

MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD

Thou hast asked regarding the means of livelihood. Trust in God and engage in your work and practice economy; the confirmations of God shall descend and you will be enabled to

pay off your debts. Be ye occupied always with the mention of Bahá'u'lláh and seek ye no other hope and desire save Him.

SOCIALISM

Thou hast asked whether to enlist in the Socialist party. The Bahá'ís must be in the Bahá'í Cause which comprehends all the degrees and is perfect from every standpoint.

TWO METHODS OF HEALING

There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first is by the use of remedies, of medicines; the second consists in praying to God and in turning to Him. Both means should be used and practiced.

Illness caused by physical accident should be treated with medical remedies; those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus an illness caused by affliction, fear, nervous impressions, will be healed by spiritual rather than by physical treatment. Hence, both kinds of remedies should be considered. Moreover, they are not contradictory, and thou shouldst accept the physical remedies as coming from the mercy and favor of God, who hath revealed and made manifest medical science so that His servants may profit from this kind of treatment also. Thou shouldst give equal attention to spiritual treatments, for they produce marvelous effects.

Now, if thou wishest to know the divine remedy which will heal man from all sickness and will give him the health of the divine kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Guard them sacredly.

IF THOU DESIREST HEALTH

If the health and well-being of the body be expended in the path of the Kingdom, this is very acceptable and praiseworthy; and if it is expended to the benefit of the human world in general—even though it be to their material benefit and be a means of doing good—that is also acceptable. But if the health and welfare of man be spent in sensual desires, in a life on the animal plane, and in devilish pursuits—then disease is better than such health; nay, death itself is preferable to such a life. If thou art desirous of health, wish thou health for serving the Kingdom. I hope thou mayest attain a perfect insight, an inflexible resolution, a complete health and spiritual and physical strength in order that thou mayest drink from the fountain of eternal life and be assisted by the spirit of divine confirmation.

DUTY TO ATTAIN SCIENCE

Now as to what thou askest concerning giving up the scientific attainment in Paris for the sake of confining thy days to the delivery of this Truth, it is indeed acceptable and beloved, but if thou acquire both it would be better and more perfect, because in this new century the attainment of science, arts and belles lettres, whether divine or worldly, material or spiritual, is a matter which is acceptable before God and a duty which is incumbent upon us to accomplish. Therefore, never deny the spiritual things to the material, rather both are incumbent upon thee. Nevertheless, at the time when thou art working for such a scientific attainment, thou must be controlled by the attraction of the love of thy Glorious Lord and mindful of mentioning His splendid Name. This being the case, thou must attain the art thou art studying to its perfection.

WORK IS WORSHIP

In this great dispensation, art (or a profession) is identical with an act of worship and this is a clear text of the Blessed Perfection. Therefore, extreme effort should be made in art and this will not prevent the teaching of the people in that region. Nay, rather, each should assist the other in art and guidance. For instance, when the studying of art is with the intention of obeying the command of God this study will certainly be done easily and great progress will soon be made therein; and when others discover this fragrance of spirituality in the action itself, this same will cause their awakening. Likewise, managing art with propriety will become the means of sociability and affinity; and sociability and affinity themselves tend to guide others to the Truth.

SCIENCE AS WORSHIP

Thy letter was received. Praise be to God it imparted the good news of thy health and safety and indicated that thou art ready to enter into an agricultural school. This is highly suitable. Strive as much as possible to become proficient in the science of agriculture for in accordance with the Divine Teachings, the acquisition of sciences and the perfection of arts is considered as acts of worship. If a man engages with all his power in the acquisition of a science or in the perfection of an art, it is as if he has been worshipping God in the churches and temples. Thus as thou enterest a school of agriculture and strivest in the acquisition of that science thou art day and night engaged in acts of worship acts that are accepted at the threshold of the Almighty. What bounty greater than this that science should be considered as an act of worship and art as service to the Kingdom of God.

MUSIC

This wonderful age has rent asunder the veils of superstition and has condemned the prejudice of the people of the East. Among some of the nations of the Orient, music and

harmony was not approved of, but the Manifested Light, Bahá'u'lláh, in this glorious period has revealed in Holy Tablets that singing and music are the spiritual food of the hearts and souls. In this dispensation, music is one of the arts that is highly approved and is considered to be the cause of the exaltation of sad and desponding hearts.

Therefore ... set to music the verses and the divine words so that they may be sung with soul-stirring melody in the Assemblies and gatherings, and that the hearts of the listeners may become tumultuous and rise towards the Kingdom of Abhá in supplication and prayer.

SEVERANCE FROM THIS WORLD

Thou hast written of the severe calamity that hath befallen thee—the death of thy respected husband. That honourable man hath been so subjected to the stress and strain of this world that his greatest wish was for deliverance from it. Such is this mortal abode: a storehouse of afflictions and suffering. It is ignorance that binds man to it, for no comfort can be secured by any soul in this world, from monarch down to the most humble commoner. If once this life should offer a man a sweet cup, a hundred bitter ones will follow; such is the condition of this world. The wise man, therefore, doth not attach himself to this mortal life and doth not depend upon it; at some moments, even, he eagerly wisheth for death that he may thereby be freed from these sorrows and afflictions. Thus it is seen that some, under extreme pressure of anguish, have committed suicide.

As to him rest assured; he will be immersed in the ocean of pardon and forgiveness and will become the recipient of bounty and favor.

CONSOLATION OF OUR HEARTS

From the death of that beloved youth and his separation from you have caused the utmost sorrow and grief; for he winged his flight in the flower of his age and the bloom of his youth to the heavenly nest.

But as he has been freed from this sorrow-stricken shelter and has turned his face toward the everlasting nest of the Kingdom and has been delivered from a dark and narrow world and has hastened to the sanctified realm of Light, therein lies the consolation of our hearts.

The inscrutable divine wisdom underlieth such heart-rending occurrences. It is as if a kind gardener transferreth a fresh and tender shrub from a confined place to a wide open area. This transfer is not the cause of the withering, the lessening or the destruction of that shrub; nay, on the contrary, it maketh it to grow and thrive, acquire freshness and delicacy, become green and bear fruit. This hidden secret is well known to the gardener, but those souls who are unaware of this bounty suppose that the gardener, in his anger and wrath, hath uprooted the shrub. Yet to those who are aware, this concealed fact is manifest, and this predestined decree is considered a bounty. Do not feel grieved or

disconsolate, therefore, at the ascension of that bird of faithfulness; nay, under all circumstances pray for that youth, supplicating for him forgiveness and the elevation of his station.

I hope that you will attain to the utmost patience, composure and resignation, and I supplicate and entreat at the Threshold of Oneness and beg pardon and forgiveness. My hope from the infinite bounties of God is that He may cause this dove of the garden of faith to abide on the branch of the Supreme Concurrence that it may sing in the best of tunes the praises and the excellencies of the Lord of names and attributes.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE KINGDOM

Thou hast written that thou art a student in the progressive spiritual school. Happy is thy condition! If the various progressive schools join themselves to the universal university of the Kingdom, such knowledge and sciences will be brought into light that man will see that the potentialities of the "Open Tablet" of existence are infinite; will realize that all the created things are as letters and words; will be instructed in the lessons of the degrees of significances; will perceive the signs of oneness in the primordial atoms of the earth; will hear the voice of the Lord of the Kingdom; will behold the confirmations of the Holy Spirit and will find such ecstasy and joy that, being unable to contain himself in the vast area of existence, he will prepare himself for the journey toward the Kingdom and will hasten to the immensity of the Realm of Might. As soon as a bird is fledged, it cannot keep itself on the ground; nay, rather it soareth up toward the Supreme Apex except the birds whose feet are tied, whose wings are clipped and feathers broken and who are soiled with water and clay.

O thou seeker of Truth! The realm of the Kingdom is a unit. The only difference lies in this: That when the season of spring dawneth, a new and wonderful motion and rejuvenation is witnessed in all the existing things; the mountains and meadows are revived, the trees find freshness and delicacy and are clothed with radiant and bright leaves, blossoms and fruits. In a like manner the preceding Manifestations form an inseparable link with the subsequent dispensations; nay, rather they are identical with each other. Since the world is constantly developing itself, the rays become stronger, the outpouring becometh greater and the sun appeareth in the meridian orbit.

O thou yearner after the Kingdom! Each Manifestation is the heart of the world and the proficient Physician of every patient.

The world of humanity is sick, but that skilled Physician hath the healing remedy and He bestoweth divine teachings, exhortations and advices which are the remedy of every ailment and the dressing for every wound. Undoubtedly, the wise physician discovereth the needs of the patient at every season and prescribeth medicine. Therefore, when thou wilt compare the teachings of the Beauty of Abhá with the requisitions and necessities of the present time, thou wilt conclude that they are to the sick body of the world the swift healing antidote; nay, rather they are the remedy of everlasting health. The prescription of the proficient physicians of the past and the future will not be the same; nay, rather they will be in accord with the ailment of the patient. Although the medicine is changed, yet all of these are for the sole purpose of the healing of the sick. In former dispensations

the sick body of the world could not bear the strong and overpowering remedies. That is why His Highness the Christ said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of the Comforter, who is sent by the Father, is come, He will guide you into all truth." Therefore, in this age of lights, specific teachings have become universal, in order that the outpouring of the Merciful One environ both the East and the West, the oneness of the kingdom of humanity become visible and the luminosity of truth enlighten the world of consciousness. The descent of the New Jerusalem is the heavenly religion which secures the prosperity of the human world and is the effulgence of the illumination of the realm of God.

THE UNKNOWABLE ESSENCE

All the people have formed a god in the world of thought, and that form of their own imagination they worship; when the fact is that the imagined form is finite and the human mind is infinite. Surely the infinite is greater than the finite, for imagination is accidental while the mind is essential; surely the essential is greater than the accidental.

Therefore consider: All the sects and peoples worship their own thought; they create a god in their own minds and acknowledge him to be the creator of all things, when that form is a superstition—thus people adore and worship imagination.

That Essence of the Divine Entity and the Unseen of the unseen is holy above imagination and is beyond thought. Consciousness doth not reach It. Within the capacity of comprehension of a produced reality that Ancient Reality cannot be contained. It is a different world; from it there is no information; arrival thereat is impossible; attainment thereto is prohibited and inaccessible. This much is known: It exists and Its existence is certain and proven—but the condition is unknown.

All the philosophers and the doctors knew that It is, but they were perplexed in the comprehension of its existence and were at last discouraged, and in great despair they left this world. For the comprehension of the condition and mysteries of that Reality of realities and Mystery of mysteries there is need for another power and another sense. That power and sense is not possessed by mankind, therefore they have not found any information. For example: If a man possess the power of hearing, the power of tasting, the power of smelling and the power of feeling, but no power of seeing, he cannot see. Hence, through the powers and senses present in man the realization of the Unseen Reality, which is pure and holy above the reach of doubts, is impossible. Other powers are needed and other senses required. If those powers and senses are obtained, then information can be had; otherwise, not.

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

Regarding the "two wings" of the soul: These signify wings of ascent. One is the wing of knowledge, the other of faith, as this is the means of the ascent of the human soul to the lofty station of divine perfections.

KNOWLEDGE AND DEEDS

Although a person of good deeds is acceptable at the Threshold of the Almighty, yet it is first “to know” and then “to do.” Although a blind man produceth a most wonderful and exquisite art, yet he is deprived of seeing it. Consider how most animals labor for man, draw loads and facilitate travel; yet, as they are ignorant, they receive no reward for this toil and labor. The cloud raineth, roses and hyacinths grow; the plain and meadow, the garden and trees become green and blossom; yet they do not realize the results and outcome of all these. The lamp is lighted, but as it hath not a conscious knowledge of itself, no one hath become glad because of it. Moreover, a soul of excellent deeds and good manners will undoubtedly advance from whatever horizon he beholdeth the lights radiating. Herein lies the difference: By faith is meant, first, conscious knowledge, and second, the practice of good deeds.

TRAINING OF CHILDREN

As to thy question concerning training children: It is incumbent upon thee to nurture them from the breast of the love of God to urge them towards spiritual matters, to turn unto God and to acquire good manners, best characteristics and praiseworthy virtues and qualities in the world of humanity, and to study sciences with the utmost diligence; so that they may become spiritual, heavenly and attracted to the fragrances of sanctity from their childhood and be reared in a religious, spiritual and heavenly training. Verily, I beg of God to confirm them therein.

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

If thou wishest the divine knowledge and recognition, purify thy heart from all beside God, be wholly attracted to the ideal, beloved One; search for and choose Him and apply thyself to rational and authoritative arguments. For arguments are a guide to the path and by this the heart will be turned unto the Sun of Truth. And when the heart is turned unto the Sun, then the eye will be opened and will recognize the Sun through the Sun itself. Then man will be in no need of arguments (or proofs), for the Sun is altogether independent, and absolute independence is in need of nothing, and proofs are one of the things of which absolute independence has no need. Be not like Thomas; be thou like Peter. I hope you will be healed physically, mentally and spiritually.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ENLIGHTENED SOUL

As to the seven qualifications (of the divinely enlightened soul) of which thou hast asked an explanation, it is as follows:

KNOWLEDGE. Man must attain the knowledge of God.

FAITH.

STEADFASTNESS.

TRUTHFULNESS. Truthfulness is the foundation of all the virtues of the world of humanity. Without truthfulness, progress and success in all of the worlds of God are impossible for a soul. When this holy attribute is established in man, all the divine qualities will also become realized.

UPRIGHTNESS. And this is one of the greatest divine attainments.

FIDELITY. This is also a beautiful trait of the heavenly man.

EVANESCENCE or Humility. That is to say, man must become evanescent in God. Must forget his own selfish conditions that he may thus arise to the station of sacrifice. It should be to such a degree that if he sleep, it should not be for pleasure, but to rest the body in order to do better, to speak better, to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God and to prove the truths. When he remains awake, he should seek to be attentive, serve the Cause of God and sacrifice his own stations for those of God. When he attains to this station, the confirmations of the Holy Spirit will surely reach him, and man with this power can withstand all who inhabit the earth.

ETERNAL SOVEREIGNTY

All the people of the world are, as thou dost observe, in the sleep of negligence. They have forgotten God altogether. They are all busy in war and strife. They are undergoing misery and destruction. They are, like unto the loathsome worms, trying to lodge in the depth of the ground, while a single flood of rain sweeps all their nests and lodging away. Nevertheless, they do not come to their senses. Where is the majesty of the Emperor of Russia? Where is the might of the German Emperor? Where is the greatness of the Emperor of Austria? In a short time all these palaces were turned into ruins and all these pretentious edifices underwent destruction. They left no fruit and no trace, save eternal ruin.

The souls who have been enlightened with the light of the Kingdom, however, have founded eternal sovereignty. They shine, like unto the stars, upon the horizon of everlasting glory. The Apostles were fishers. Consider thou to what a high station they did rise; and to what great sovereignty they did attain, whose duration and permanence runs to eternity! Mary Magdalen was a peasant woman. She was without any name and fame or consequence. But her candle is in the assemblage of the world, lighted till eternity.

CONFIRMATION AND ASSISTANCE

It is known and clear that today the unseen divine assistance encompasseth those who deliver the Message. And if the work of delivering the Message be neglected, the assistance shall be entirely cut off, for it is impossible that the friends of God could receive assistance unless they be engaged in delivering the Message. Under all conditions the Message must be delivered, but with wisdom. If it be not possible openly, it must be done quietly. The friends should be engaged in educating the souls and should become

instruments in aiding the world of humanity to acquire spiritual joy and fragrance. For example: If every one of the friends (believers) were to establish relations of friendship and right dealings with one of the negligent souls, associate and live with him with perfect kindness, and meanwhile through good conduct and moral behavior lead him to divine instruction, to heavenly advice and teachings, surely he would gradually arouse that negligent person and would change his ignorance into knowledge.

Souls are liable to estrangement. Such methods should be adopted that the estrangement should be first removed, then the Word will have effect. If one of the believers be kind to one of the negligent ones and with perfect love should gradually make him understand the reality of the Cause of God in such a way that the latter should know in what manner the Religion of God hath been founded and what its object is, doubtless he will become changed; excepting abnormal souls who are reduced to the state of ashes and whose hearts are like stones, yea, even harder.

If by this method every one of the friends of God were to try to lead one soul to the right path, the number of the believers would be doubled every year. But this should be carried out with perfect wisdom and in such a manner that no harm would ever result therefrom.

THIS WORLD A MIRAGE

O beloved of God! Know ye that the world is like unto a mirage which the thirsty one thinks to be water; its water is a vapor; its mercy a difficulty; its repose hardship and ordeal; leave it to its people and turn unto the Kingdom of your Lord the Merciful. Thus the lights of mercy and beneficence may shine upon you, the heavenly table descend for you, your Lord may bestow upon you the greatest gifts and favors, whereby your breasts may become dilated, your hearts gladdened, your souls purified, and your eyes enlightened.

O beloved of God! Is there any giver save God? He chooseth for His mercy whomsoever He desireth. He shall open unto you the doors of His knowledge, fill your hearts with His love, rejoice your spirits by the wafting of His holy fragrances, illumine your faces by the Manifest Light and elevate your names among the people.

PROTECTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS

Throughout these years of disturbance and commotion when the world of humanity was physically and spiritually afflicted, the friends of God passed the day in rest, ease and comfort. In the western countries only a few shared in the hardship and affliction of other souls while the mass of the friends and the maid-servants of the Merciful have been living quietly and peacefully. In the Orient every nation became distracted and every gathering dispersed save the friends of God who remained all protected and sheltered from every trouble and calamity in the Fort of Bahá'u'lláh's protection. Verily this is a divine miracle that we helpless, friendless, unprotected, unsupported wanderers

in these regions should be saved amidst the fire of oppression and tyranny. This is God's miracle.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

In the day of Christ all nations were expecting that His Holiness Christ should come from heaven, and He came from heaven, though outwardly He came from the womb of Mary. Hence, He hath said in the Gospels: "No one shall ascend to heaven except the one who hath come from heaven." Now all the people expect Him to come from heaven.

If thou wishest to find the truth, compare the days of the Manifestation of the Beauty of Abhá with the days of Christ; consider this is identically like that and the same doubts and oppositions are put forth.

As to the proofs and arguments of the Beauty of Abhá, these are manifest like the sun. If Thou wishest a discerning eye and seekest for a hearing ear, set thou aside that which thou hast heard from fathers and ancestors, for such things are imitation—and then seek for the truth with the utmost attention until the divine confirmation may reach thee and the matter may be properly disclosed unto thee.

ETERNAL LIFE

Concerning thy question whether all the souls enjoy eternal life: Know thou those souls partake of the eternal life in whom the spirit of life is breathed from the Presence of God and all beside them are dead—without life, as Christ hath explained in the texts of the Gospel. Any person whose insight is opened by God seeth the souls in their stations after the disintegration of the bodies. Verily they are living and are subsisting before their Lord and he seeth also the dead souls submerged in the gulfs of mortality. Then know thou verily all the souls are created according to the nature of God and all are in the state of purity at the time of their births. But afterward they differ from one another insofar as they acquire excellencies or defects. Nevertheless, the creatures have different degrees in existence insofar as the creation goes, for capacities are different, but all of them are good and pure, then afterward they are polluted and defiled. Although there are different states of creation, yet all of them are beneficial. Glance thou over the temple of man, its members and its parts. Among them there are the eye, ear, nose, mouth, hands and fingers. Notwithstanding the differences between these organs, all of them are useful in their proper spheres. But if one of them is out of order, there is need of a remedy and if the medicine does not heal, then the amputation of that member becomes necessary.

SPREADERS OF CALUMNY

In sooth, there will be found in those regions certain persons like the Pharisees of the time of Christ, who, night and day, will exert themselves with all heart and soul to cast

forth doubts, in order that they may deprive the souls of the glad-tidings of the Holy Spirit. They will disseminate false rumors and utter many a calumny and will publish and announce stories. They will undertake all these only for the sake of earthly vanities.

And some Pharisees among the missionaries of the Gospel will hasten thither from Írán and say, "We are aware of the secret of the matter." All they may say is sheer slander.

Now know you these things, that in its time you may dispel and annihilate the darkness of those suspicions, like unto a manifest light. I beg of God that He may grant thee a power that thou mayest resist all in the earth—how much more these weak, hired individuals who receive salary and bribe for spreading such calumnies!

Be ye admonished, O possessors of understanding!

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

The body is composed, in truth, of corporeal elements and every composition is necessarily subject to decomposition; but the spirit is an essence, simple, pure, spiritual, eternal, perpetual and divine. He who seeketh Christ from the point of view of His body hath, in truth, debased Him and hath gone astray from Him; but he who seeketh Christ from the point of view of His Spirit will grow from day to day in joy, attraction, zeal, proximity, perception and vision.

Thou hast then to seek the Spirit of Christ in this marvelous day. The heaven whither Christ ascended is not an infinite space. His heaven is much rather the kingdom of His Lord, the Munificent As He said, "The Son of Man is in heaven." It is known then that His heaven is beyond the boundaries that surround existence and that He is elevated for the people who adore.

Pray God to ascend to this heaven, to taste of its food—and know thou that the people have not understood to this day the mystery of the Holy Scriptures. They believe that Christ was deprived of His heaven when He was in this world, that He had fallen from the heights of His elevation and that later He ascended to this elevated pinnacle—that is to say, towards the heaven which doth not exist, for there is only space. They expect that He will descend from this heaven seated upon a cloud. They believe that there is in the heavens a cloud upon which He will be seated and by which He will descend; while, in reality, the clouds are vapors which rise from the earth and which do not descend from the heavens. The cloud mentioned in the Holy Scriptures is the human body, because it is a veil for them, like a cloud, which prevents them from seeing the Sun of Truth which is shining in the horizon of Christ.

SALVATION

You ask if, through the appearance of the kingdom of God, every soul hath been saved. The Sun of Reality hath appeared to all the world. This luminous appearance is salvation and life; but only he who hath opened the eye of reality and who hath seen these lights

will be saved.

THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH

Thou hast questioned how thou canst accept this divine Cause, for thou art a member of the church. In the day of the Manifestation of Christ, many souls became portionless and deprived because they were members of the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem. According to that membership, they became veiled from that brilliant Beauty. Therefore, turn thou thy face to the Church of God which consists in divine instructions and merciful exhortations. For what similarity is there between the church of stone and cement and the celestial Holy of Holies!

Endeavor that thou mayest enter in this Church of God. Although thou has given oath to attend the church, yet thy spirit is under the Covenant and Testament of the spiritual Divine Church. Thou shouldst protect this. Although they consider the wine and the bread in the church as the blood and body of Christ, yet this is but the appearance and not the reality. But the reality of Christ is the words of the Holy Spirit. If thou art able, take a portion thereof.

The performance of baptismal celebration would cleanse the body, but the spirit hath no share; but the divine teachings and the exhortations of the Beauty of Bahá will baptize the soul. This is the real baptism. I hope that thou wilt receive this baptism.

THE SUPPER OF THE LORD

The Supper of the Lord which His Highness the Spirit ate with the apostles was a heavenly supper and not one of material bread and water, for material objects have no connection with spiritual objects. As at that time material food was also present, therefore the leaders of the religion of Christ thought that it was material food which was changed into spiritual food.

The proof that it was not material food is this: The apostles upon many occasions partook of material food with His Highness Christ, yet the supper of that night became designated as the "Lord's Supper." From this designation it is plain and evident that they ate heavenly food at that supper. That heavenly food consisted of the love of God, the knowledge of God, the mysteries of God and the bestowal of God.

UNDERSTANDING THE MYSTERIES

Shouldst thou come with the whole of thy being to God and be attracted to the lights of the Kingdom of God and be enkindled by the fire of the love of God, then wilt thou see that which thou canst not see today, wilt comprehend the inner significance of the Word of God and thoroughly understand the mysteries contained in the holy Books.

But as to the Jewish doctors, Christian priests and monks who read those Books, verily, they know the letter only and they utter the words, as parrots, without understanding their inner meanings. They comprehend them not, because they are engrossed in worldly desires and lusts and their hearts are attached to mundane allurements. Verily, are they not heedless of God and understand nothing and find not the right path?

REINCARNATION

As to what thou hast written concerning "Reincarnation": Believing in reincarnation is one of the old tenets held by most nations and creeds, as well as by the Greek and Roman philosophers and wise men, the old Egyptians and the chief Assyrians. But all these sayings are superstitions are vanity in the sight of God.

The greatest argument produced by those who held to reincarnation has been this: "That it is necessary to the justice of God to give every one his due. Now everybody who is afflicted by any calamity is said to have sinned; but when a little child, which is still in the womb of its mother and hath just been formed, is found to be blind, deaf or imperfect, how could it have committed any sin that we might say this imperfection is given to it as a punishment therefore—so, though such a child hath not done outwardly any sin in the womb of its mother, yet they say it must have sinned when it was in its former body, which hath caused it to suffer this punishment."

Indeed, these people have been negligent of the fact that had the creation been carried out in a uniform fashion, how could the statement be true, that "God doeth whatever He wisheth and God doeth whatever He desireth!"

Though the fact of "Return" is mentioned in the Divine Books, by this is intended the return of the qualities, characters, perfections, truths and lights, which re-appear in every age, and not of certain persons and souls. For example: If we say this lamp is the return of that of last night, or that the last year's flower hath returned in the garden, in this sense the return of the individual, or identity, or personality is not meant; nay, rather, it is intended that the same qualities and states existing in that lamp or flower, which are now seen in this lamp or flower, have returned. That is, the same perfections and virtues and properties which existed in the past springtime have returned during this present springtime. For instance: When one says, these fruits are the same as those of last year; in this sense, he hath reference to the freshness and delicacy of the fruit, which hath returned, although there is no doubt that the identical fruit of last year hath not returned.

Have the friends of God found such enjoyments and repose during their existence on this visible earth, that they might wish to have their return renewed and repeated constantly? All all these calamities, injuries, trials and difficulties of the once coming not sufficient for them that they should wish a repeated life in this world? Hath this cup been of such sweetness that they should long for it successively and repeatedly? No! the friends of the Beauty of El-Bahá never seek any recompense or reward except the meeting and the visit in the Kingdom of El-Bahá; and they never walk but in the valley of desire to attain the Supreme Height. They only wish the immortal blessing and the eternal gift, which are sanctified above the worldly understanding.

Because, when thou lookest with the iron sight, thou wilt find that all mankind is suffering in this earthly world; there is no one in such tranquillity that this state might have been a reward for his good deeds in a former life and there is no soul so happy that this might be the fruit of his past pain! Had the life of a man in his spiritual being been only confined to his life in this world, the creation would have proved useless; the divine qualities would have no result and effect; nay, all things, created beings and the world of creation would have proved abortive. I ask pardon of God for such false imaginations and for such errors!

As the usefulness and powers of the life were not seen in that dark and narrow world, but when it is brought into this vast world, all the use of its growth and development becometh manifest and obvious in it, so likewise, reward and punishment, paradise and hell, and the requital of deeds and actions done by it in the present life become manifest and evident when it is transferred to the world to come which is far from this world! Had the life and growth of the child in the womb been confined to that condition, then the existence of the child in the womb would have proved utterly abortive and unintelligible; as would the life of this world, were its deeds, actions and their results not to appear in the world to come.

Therefore, know thou that the True One possesseth invisible worlds which human meditation is unable to comprehend and the intellect of man hath no power to imagine. When thou wilt purify and clarify thy spiritual nostrils from every worldly moisture, then thou wilt inhale the holy fragrances diffusing from the merciful gardens of these worlds.

THIS GLAD-TIDINGS

O my friend, verily the Cause is great and great, and the penetration of the Word of God in the temple of all the regions is similar to the pervasion of the soul in a sound body.

By the life of Bahá, verily, the power of the Kingdom of God hath taken hold of the pillars of the world, and hath possessed all the nations. Thou wilt surely find the standards of the Testament waving in all regions, the chanting of the verses of unity raised in exalted assemblies, and the lights of the Sun of Truth and its heat dispersing the thick clouds massed on the horizon. Be rejoiced at this glad-tidings, whereby the hearts of the sincere among the beloved are cheered.

CONSIDER THE PAST

Consider the past, so that thou mayest become informed of the mysteries which shall be disclosed in the future. When the disciples were calling in the name of Christ, the Jews scoffed, scorned and laughed at them. They were saying, "They are taken with madness, and madness is made an art." They even beat them with whips, threw stones at them, prevented the people from approaching them, and were saying, "This man is naught but a sorcerer, blasphemeth God and is possessed of a devil."

Then observe how that persecution and scorn were changed to glory, honor and

reverence. Ultimately, they honored their sublime stations and acknowledged their loftiness, which was exalted, promoted and glorified in the center of the horizons until it reached the degree of exaggeration in deeds. They made for them likenesses and pictures, decorated with jewels shining in the eyes; they placed these likenesses or pictures in the temples, churches and monasteries built on the tops of the mountains, and worshipped them with respect, glory, majesty and reverence. This is the condition of the neglectful ones who are deprived of the Truth at the day of their existence among them. After the ascension of their spirits unto the center of purity and piety, then the negligent ones repent and return, making likenesses and pictures according to their own ideas, which do not bear resemblance, and worship the same. This is the station of the ignorant ones who are as animals, following every croaker and shaken by every wind. "Forsake them to play in their shallow waters."

THIS BRANCH WILL ASCEND

O maid-servant of God! This prison is indeed more precious and sweet than a garden to me, this fetter is greater than any liberty and the confinement is broader than the most spacious wilderness. Therefore, grieve not on this account. Verily, if my Lord destine unto me and causes me to taste the sweetness of the cup of the great martyrdom, my greatest desire will be fulfilled. Fear not if this Branch be severed from the material earth and cast aside the leaves nay, rather, its leaves will flourish, for this Branch will grow after it is cut from the earth, will ascend until it shelters the universe, its foliage will reach the supreme Apex and bear fruits, imparting fragrant perfume unto the world.

AFTER THIS STORM

O ye beloved of God! When the winds blow severely, rains fall fiercely, the lightning flashes, the thunder roars, the bolt descends and storms of trial become severe, grieve not; for after this storm, verily, the divine spring will arrive, the hills and fields will become verdant, the expanses of grain will joyfully wave, the earth will become covered with blossoms, the trees will be clothed with green garments and adorned with blossoms and fruits. Thus blessings become manifest in all countries. These favors are results of those storms and hurricanes.

The discerning man rejoiceth at the day of trials, his breast becometh dilated at the time of severe storms, his eyes become brightened when seeing the showers of rain and gusts of wind, whereby trees are uprooted; because he foreseeth the result and the end, the leaves, blossoms and fruits; while the ignorant person becometh troubled when he seeth a storm, is saddened when it raineth severely, is terrified by the thunder and trembleth at the surging of the waves which storm the shores.

As ye have heard of the former times, when Christ—glory be to Him!—appeared, a storm of trials arose, afflictions appeared, the winds of tests blew, the thunder of temptation descended and hosts of people surrounded the houses of the friends; then the weak ones were shaken and were misled after once being guided; but the disciples

withstood the hardships and endured the storms of ordeals, remaining firm in the Religion of God. Then observe that which occurred after the storm and what appeared subsequent to that severity, whereby the members trembled.

God changed the sorrow to joy, the destructive darkness of calamity into the shining light from the Supreme Concourse. The people at the beginning persecuted and reviled the believers in God and said of them: "These are the people of aberration." Then, when their light appeared, their stars shone and their lamps illuminated, the people returned into love and affinity; they prayed to them, offered words of glory night and day and remembered them in eulogy, reverence, honor and majesty.

Therefore, O ye beloved of God, be not grieved when people stand against you, persecute you, afflict and trouble you and say all manner of evil against you. The darkness will pass away and the light of the manifest signs will appear, the veil will be withdrawn and the Light of Reality will shine forth from the unseen Kingdom of El-Abhá. This we inform you before it occurs, so that when the hosts of people arise against you for my love, be not disturbed or troubled; nay, rather, be firm as a mountain, for this persecution and reviling of the people upon you is a pre-ordained matter. Blessed is the soul who is firm in the path!

THE CENTER

The light hath a center and if one desire to seek it otherwise but from the center, he can never attain to it. In this solar system the source of light is the sun and every light is acquired from it; even the lamps of the night are ignited through the sun, for if there were no sun the trees would not grow nor the mines develop, so that the oil be extracted from those trees and mines, and the lamps of the night be lit by it. Is it possible that one attain to the light in this globular sphere without the mediation of the sun? No, by the life of God! To suppose it, is pure imagination. But the truth is this: The main source of the lights is the sun and the rays are shed from it upon all the regions.

MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

The republic of wise men believes that the difference in minds and opinions is due to the difference of education and the acquisition of ethics. That is, that minds are equal in origin, but education and the acquisition of ethics cause minds to differ and comprehensions to be at variance; that this difference is not in entity but in education and teaching; that there is no individual distinction for any soul. Hence, the members of the human race all possess the capacity of attaining to the highest station, and the proof they adduce therefor is this: "The inhabitants of a country like Africa are all as wandering savages and wild animals; they lack intelligence and knowledge; all are uncivilized; not one civilized and wise man is to be found among them. On the contrary, consider the civilized countries, the inhabitants of which are living in the highest state of culture and ethics, solidarity and inter-dependence; possessing, with few exceptions, acute power of comprehension and sound mind. Therefore, it is made clear and evident that the

superiority and inferiority of minds and comprehensions arises from education and cultivation, or from their lack and absence. A bent branch is straightened by training and the wild fruit of the jungle is made the product of the orchard. An ignorant man by learning becomes knowing, and the world of savagery, through the bounty of a wise educator, is changed into a civilized kingdom. The sick is healed by medication, and the poor man, by learning the arts of commerce, is made rich. The follower, by attaining the virtues of the leader, becomes great, and the lowly man, by the education of the teacher, rises from the nadir of oblivion to the zenith of celebrity." These are the proofs of the wise men.

The prophets also acknowledge this opinion, to wit: That education hath a great effect upon the human race, but they declare that minds and comprehensions are originally different. And this matter is self-evident; it cannot be refuted. We see that certain children of the same age, nativity and race, nay, from the same household, under the tutorship of one teacher, differ in their minds and comprehensions. One advanceth rapidly, another is slow in catching the rays of culture, still another remaineth in the lowest degree of stupidity.

No matter how much the shell is educated, it can never become the radiant pearl. The black stone will not become the world illuming gem. The calocynth and the thorny cactus can never by training and development become the blessed tree. That is to say, training doth not change the human gem, but it produceth a marvelous effect. By this effective power all that is registered latent of virtues and capacities in the human reality will be revealed.

Cultivation by the farmer maketh of the grain the harvest, and the effort of the gardener maketh of the seed a noble tree. The gentle teacher promoteth the children of the school to the lofty altitude and the bestowal of the trainer placeth the little child upon the throne of ether. Therefore, it is demonstrated and proven that minds are different in the original entity or nature, and that education commandeth a decided and great influence. Were there no educator, all souls would remain savage, and were it not for the teacher, the children would be ignorant creatures.

It is for this reason that, in this New Cycle, education and training are recorded in the Book of God as obligatory and not voluntary. That is, it is enjoined upon the father and mother, as a duty, to strive with all effort to train the daughter and the son, to nurse them from the breast of knowledge and to rear them in the bosom of sciences and arts. Should they neglect this matter, they shall be held responsible and worthy of reproach in the presence of the stern Lord.

This is a sin unpardonable, for they have made that poor babe a wanderer in the Sahara of ignorance, unfortunate and tormented; to remain during a lifetime a captive of ignorance and pride, negligent and without discernment. Verily, if that babe depart from this world at the age of infancy, it is sweeter and better. In this sense, death is better than life; deprivation than salvation; non-existence lovelier than existence; the grave better than the palace; and the narrow, dingy tomb better than the spacious, regal home; for in the sight of mankind that child is abased and degraded and in the sight of God weak and defective. In gatherings it is ashamed and humiliated and in the arena of examination subdued and defeated by young and old. What a mistake is this! What an everlasting humiliation!

Therefore, the beloved of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful must train their children with life and heart and teach them in the school of virtue and perfection. They must not be lax in this matter; they must not be inefficient. Truly, if a babe did not live at all it were better than to let it grow ignorant, for that innocent babe, in later life, would become afflicted with innumerable defects, responsible to and questioned by God, reproached and rejected by the people. What a sin this would be and what an omission!

The first duty of the beloved of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful is this: They must strive by all possible means to educate both sexes, male and female; girls like boys; there is no difference whatsoever between them. The ignorance of both is blameworthy, and negligence in both cases is reprobable. "Are they who know and they who do not know equal?"

The command is decisive concerning both. If it be considered through the eye of reality, the training and culture of daughters is more necessary than that of sons, for these girls will come to the station of motherhood and will mold the lives of the children. The first trainer of the child is the mother. The babe, like unto a green and tender branch, will grow according to the way it is trained. If the training be right, it will grow right, and if crooked, the growth likewise, and unto the end of life it will conduct itself accordingly.

Hence, it is firmly established that an untrained and uneducated daughter, on becoming a mother, will be the prime factor in the deprivation, ignorance, negligence and the lack of training of many children.

O ye beloved of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful! Teaching and learning, according to the decisive texts of the Blessed Beauty, is a duty. Whosoever is indifferent therein depriveth himself of the great bounty.

Beware! Beware! that ye fail not in this matter. Endeavor with heart, with life, to train your children, especially the daughters. No excuse is acceptable in this matter.

Thus may eternal glory and everlasting supremacy, like unto the mid-day sun, shine forth in the assemblage of the people of Bahá, and the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá become happy and thankful.