Lectures

giving

The Solution *of the* World's Problems

from a

Universal Standpoint
Series No. 5

Approved and corrected by
Mirza Jenabe Fazel of Teheran, Persia[1]

Translated by
Mirza Ahmad Sohrab

1 Mírzá Asadu'lláh Fáḍil Mázandaráni (c. 1880–1957), also known as Jináb-i-Fáḍil or Fazel, was a prominent Iranian Bahá'í scholar, noted for his travel teaching in North America. He was from Bárfurúsh, Mázandarán. He was later appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi.

Man must be a mine of piety and sympathy. He must associate with all mankind with joy and fragrance. He must not turn away his face from any soul. He must raise the fallen and cheer the hopeless. He must treat with kindness both the friend and the stranger.

—Abdul Baha

Lectures
Delivered Under Auspices of
Seattle Bahai Assembly



Series five



Published by
The Bahai Literature Center
106 Madison Street
Seattle, Washington, USA.

Contents

Series V

The new vision of immortality	3
Correspondence of science and religion	31
The master key of success	44
Universal brotherhood	51

Lecture
delivered by
Prof. Jenabe Fazel

Sunday Evening, February, 1921
Spiritual Church Auditorium, Portland, Oregon.

The new vision of immortality

It gives me the greatest joy to be present today before this splendid gathering of spiritual men and women because throughout my travels in the United States wherever I have been privileged to address similar gatherings, I have always found a great susceptibility of spirit and the highest emotions of the heart manifest in the faces of the people who listened to this message. Upon entering the meetings of the Spiritualist people, invariably, I have observed the vibrations of the spirit waving over the audience; I have noticed that the emanations of the spirit were evident and manifest in their midst.

What are the emanations of the spirit? Love, harmony, unity and concord. The Western climes during the last hundred years have been so submerged in a sea of materialism that it seems the hand of God has indeed been working in bringing into outer expression such gatherings and societies as your own, the aims and pur-

poses of which are to investigate various phenomena, to bring into actual manifestation those tangible proofs which would give consolation and happiness to every soul.

The material world is like unto the glass. The spirit is similar unto the light shining through the glass. If the glass is devoid of that light, no matter how brilliant or how clear the glass may be, it is of no use; all will be darkness without the spirit of light. When we ponder over the material light, we realize that the universe is filled with the spirit. This vast ocean of air and water with which we are surrounded is charged with the spirit. One great universal spirit encircles and surrounds all existence, the core and the substance of which is no other than that one great power of spirit urging the invisible forces to appear in visible form in our world of existence. The organization and the order of this material world is dependent upon the working of that invisible spirit which is always working and manifesting itself throughout all phenomena. Infinite intelligence is similar unto the sun and all phenomena are like unto the mirrors reflecting the rays of the sun of that Infinite Intelligence. This Intelligence is the ocean and the phenomena are the waves thereof. He is the sun and all beings are the rays and the scintilla dancing in the light of the sun. He is the essence and all creation is the form. He is the unchangeable, the unfathomable and the unsearchable and all phenomena are

subject to change, transformation and dissolution.

In the shining of that great sun there is no difference, but in the manifestations of the light of that sun through the various grades of phenomena there is a great deal of difference because each phenomenon will reflect back some of the light of that universal sun according to its own ability and capacity. The mineral reflects a dim light of that sun; the vegetable a greater expansion and unfoldment of the light of the same sun; the animal more and when it comes into the human kingdom, a larger share and measure of the same spiritual sun becomes manifest. Thus there is a gradual self-revealing of that universal essence in phenomena: For example—the sun shining upon the stone; it is not able to give back anything of that luminous sun except the heat. The sun shines upon the walls of a house, it similarly gives some of the heat. The electricity gives more. The mirror gives back the disc and the fullness of the sun.

It is stated that man is the great talisman, the microcosm; that he has the most wonderful ability, the greatest power of self-unfoldment, because in him is embodied all the qualities and potentialities of development. For this reason man is the collective center of all phenomena and all the subtle attributes. All the refined elements of the lower kingdom are manifest and apparent in man. That is why we read in the sacred books—
LET US BUILD

MAN IN OUR IMAGE AND LIKENESS. What is the meaning of this image and likeness of God? Does it mean that God is a person like any one of us? No, it means that the attributes, the qualities and virtues of perfection, of knowledge, wisdom and beauty, the composite of which is God, will be revealed in man. In so far as the body of man is concerned he is a small and weak person, but according to the spirit, he is the most powerful and the most omnipotent being on the face of the earth.

The ancient philosophers and the students of psychic phenomena have divined for the development of man seven planes and seven existences. By these seven planes they do not mean to state that the progress of the soul is limited to the seven and no more, because there are thousands and thousands of planes of development and unfoldment. They desired to give to man a rough chart so that he, a mariner travelling on the sea of life, might not go on his journey unchartered. These seven planes have been allegorically explained as seven seas, seven heavens, seven cities and seven grades, however, they all mean the same. Also these seven planes have been likened unto seven circles or circles within circles in the center of which man is placed.

The first plane is the Physical or the material plane; the plane on which we live and eat and sleep and have our rest and experience. This world is so vast and great that we know even very little of the ma-

terial life with which we are surrounded. On the Physical plane man is the prisoner of earthly conditions; of circumstances over which he has no control; of experiences which will either exalt or degrade him. The Adam and the Eve created by God according to the book of Genesis is symbolic of this first plane of existence; that God fashioned man and woman from the earth, that is, he gave them a physical, material life. This natural world in which the body lives is like unto the husk or the shell and the other six planes are similar unto the meat and the kernel within the shell. The Physical Life is likewise similar unto a garment which is woven of very coarse material or like unto a cage in which the other planes similar unto the bird are imprisoned. The natural and physical world is the lowest; it is dark; it is finite; it is limited and it is surrounded with all kinds of ordeals, trials and vicissitudes.

The second plane is the Psychical which is purer and more subtle. When a man dies he is clothed with that psychical body which is being developed slowly while he is here. Just as you may put over a silken robe, a heavy coarse robe and entering a warm and cosy room put aside the heavy one, letting the silken garment with all its sheen and beauty manifest, so you throw off this physical body at death and allow the Psychical body to come forth in its own natural brilliancy. In the physical world man is endowed with eyes, with

ears, with hands and with feet; but they are not physical in the sense that we understand them. They are immaterial; incorporeal. The Persian poets have divined this condition in the psychical world to a glass of wine; the glass is so clear and the wine is so pure that the beholder may mistake one for the other. He may think it is all wine, and again he may think it only the glass. One is taken for the other on account of the purity, translucence and clearness of both. The Psychical body is exactly like the picture of a man in the mirror, the reflection in the mirror, so far as the material phase of it is concerned, has no existence and still it is a striking likeness of the man himself. Often this question is asked—Where does man go when he leaves the world? The man does not go anywhere. He is still in the world of spirit; he is present and here with us. He throws off the thick coarse garment of Physical life and is walking in the atmosphere with a rarefied, beautiful garment of spirit.

Another question that is frequently asked is—Can we communicate, realize or feel the presence of these spirits who have departed from this life? Yes. We can receive benefit and assistance from these spirits who have entered upon the Psychical plane of life. How can this communication be established? By the purification of the mirrors of our hearts. The heart must be cleansed from all the rust and the dust of human conditions so that the

sun of spiritual beings may shine upon the surface of the hearts. Can we hear and can we speak with these souls? Again, yes. With the spiritual ears and with the spiritual eyes and with the spiritual tongues we can hear, see and speak with them. When we are dreaming in sleep or sometimes in a state of inspiration or high exalted spiritual condition, these spirits reveal themselves to us and speak to us bringing to us all the happiness and joy of the other world.

The third plane is the Ethereal Plane. In this phase the body is more rarefied, more etherealized than when in the Psychical body which is now left behind. Now the higher and more translucent body is present. The vibrations of life of these souls entering this higher existence is so high and so exalted that their communication with the incarnate beings is similar unto wireless telegraphy; we receive the messages, but we do not see the sender. This is because they have ascended to such heights, to such an unapproachable kingdom that the distance is so great that there is no actual physical communication or contact, the only communication being in a spiritual manner. This has been often proven, because at a time when a soul is puzzled over the solution of a problem and no matter how much he may think over it, he cannot solve it at last giving it up, then suddenly, while sitting alone or thinking about something entirely different, the solution comes to him like an electric flash.

He does not know from where this flash comes or who is the sender of this message, but he knows that it has come and his problem is solved, his difficulty is over and everything after that is smooth sailing. Again let us realize that the spirit has not gone anywhere. It is here, but these bodies have become clearer and more pure. On the first plane man had this Physical body; having cast off the Physical he took unto himself the Psychical, and having thrown off the Psychical body he has taken on the Ethereal, just as a man in a room may remove all outer garments and yet be in the same place.

The fourth plane according to the terms of the mystics is called the Astral; the body or plane where the soul is in such heavenly and divine life that it is surrounded with light and beauty.

The fifth plane is the Spiritual, that is, the plane of the qualities and attributes of God. By this time the soul of man has so advanced, so progressed in its journey of spiritual life that he can see the Fire of Eternity; that Flame of Divinity shining and glowing in the far-off horizon.

The sixth plane is called the Celestial and is the Threshold to the Kingdom of Truth where man will be warmed with that Central Fire of Divinity.

The seventh plane is the Empyrean Plane, the highest plane of the progress of the soul from one standpoint and from another standpoint the beginning, of its divine unfoldment in the real world of God

where the soul of man will become a part of that Fire of Divinity, though not losing its individuality. This plane is likened unto the joining of the wave to the sea and the spark to the flame, or like unto throwing a piece of cold, heavy iron into the furnace; the iron becomes heated and appropriates unto itself all the qualities of fire, thus becoming a part of the fire, though retaining the distinguishable qualities and individuality of iron as compared to fire itself. The individuality of the spirit is self-persistent; it is never lost. Let us think of the millions of stars. Where are they in the daytime? They are lost in the sea of the light of the sun and yet they are manifest and clear in the world of light, each one shining with its own peculiar brilliancy and splendor. The Persian poet in this instance cries out:

> "O, how happy will I be! O, that day when I shall leave this ruined abode, seeking the peace of the mind and hoping for the meeting of the Divine Beloved, longing and yearning to reach that divine goal. I will soar, fly and dance until I reach the very center of the sun, and there kiss the lips of my divine Sweetheart."

Here is a very deep psychological matter to be thought about—that it is not necessary for us to die in order to gain these various planes of existence. Even in this world while we are living in the flesh, we have the potentiality of experiencing all the

delicious and heavenly sweetness of these spiritual ecstasies. It is possible for man living in this plane to have these joys of spiritual life, that is, to gain an insight and vision into the Psychical, Ethereal, Astral, Spiritual, Celestial and Empyrean planes of life. Christ says: "Unless you are born again, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of God." Now, he did not mean that we must die physically so that we may enter into the Kingdom of God. He meant when we can persuade ourselves to forget the Ego; when we set aside our own opinions and notions of self and concentrate our attention on the Divine, then immediately we are born into that Kingdom of the Spirit while we are enjoying all the normal attributes of this physical life. Each one of you may become a student of men and women by watching them in their daily life and soon will be able to discern in just which of these seven planes each individual lives. Some of them live all their lives on the Physical Plane, never thinking there is any higher sphere of existence for their enjoyment. They enjoy their nice silk shirt, their fine estate, their glass of wine, their rest and cosy bed and that is all they care about in this life. The ancient mystics of the Orient thought and taught that in order to actually gain these various spiritual experiences one must inflict upon himself physical torture and go through many harsh and hard disciplines. For this reason they would often seclude themselves from the association of their fellowmen for a stipulated

number of days, never doing anything but sitting silent, thinking all the time over the destiny of the soul. There are five stations through which the initiate must go, the first—to reduce the food, second to reduce the amount of his sleep, to sit speechless and silent repeating certain prayers. By these self-inflictions on the body they hoped to purify the spirit; that by the end of this certain number of days, the heart would be filled with the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. One of the leaders of these schools once said:

> "O, thou man who art unaware! Strive that thou mayest become aware. As long as thou hast not walked in the path, how canst thou ever hope to become a guide. In the school of knowledge and love and truth, make thou an effort that some day thou mayest become a teacher. Lack of concentration and excess of sleep, eating and luxuries and comforts of this life have deprived thee of reaching the Infinite. The only way that thou canst reach this, is when thou wilt refuse these things. Thou who canst not go beyond the plane of matter, how canst thou ever hope to reach the Court of Truth?"

The ideal way to reach this spiritual station has ever been to walk in the footsteps of the Manifestations of God and the Prophets who have lived normal lives in this world. For instance, Christ was able to teach his Apostles such mysteries of the Kingdom, such divine truths that in a short

space of time they were enabled to travel through all these seven planes and reach the God of Reality.

What are the obstacles with which we are surrounded and that act as stumbling blocks in our way, or are like the chains and fetters around our souls? Everyone of us, thinking within himself can realize that our souls are fettered with these chains of material conditions; the hands and the feet of the spirit are chained with these material problems and in many cases we leave them chained so long that we become accustomed to our slavery. These chains and fetters are superstitions, are dogmas, are creeds and greed, are racial, religious and national prejudices. They are like unto the dust with which the surface of the mirror of the spirit is covered. They are like unto the mud in which the wings of the bird of the spirit are imprisoned. As long as the soul is surrounded with these material conditions, with these defective attributes, when that soul desires to communicate with higher planes of life, he is like unto that man who would take a mirror, the surface of which is besmeared with rust, and expects the sun to be reflected therein in all its beauty and perfection. The world of nature is like unto the fetus world: Just as the child in the womb of the mother does not realize any of the conditions of the material world, likewise, we, living in the womb of nature, as long as we live in this environment, cannot clearly picture in our minds the beauties and perfections of the spiritual world. If

the mother is not careful about her movements during the state of pregnancy, if she falls down the stairs or is seized with some unexplainable fear, the child is born into this world defective; in the same way, we, in the womb of nature, if we are not careful of the health of the spirit within us, then when we are born into the spiritual world, we carry with us all the inheritances we have acquired here, therefore the importance of cleanliness, of purity, of spiritual hygiene. We, of course, do not want to convey the idea that once the soul has lost its chance in this world and has not equipped itself fully with all these spiritual characteristics, man will not have another chance in the other world, but the thought is this: He will retard his own progress; he will be deprived of that rapid advancement in the Kingdom of God. Just as a man walking along a road, if he is physically normal, if none of his limbs are defective, he will reach his goal in a day or two, while a lame man or blind man may lose his way and be wandering six months or a year before reaching his destination.

The thinkers of all ages, no matter how far back you may go, have always either believed or disbelieved in the Immortality of the Soul, and those who did believe in it have had different schools. One of these schools believed in Reincarnation, the second school were those people who believed that the soul will ascend from world to world, from star to star, always unfolding and expanding. One of the theories of the

ancient thinkers was this: That when a man dies and his body is returned to the material world, there it stays for 3,223 years to go through various processes of forms and shapes until the cells of that body have actually journeyed through these various kingdoms, after which time they will all come together and the body thus formed taken possession of by the original soul. This was a beautiful hypothesis, a fine speculation which could not be proven by any valid argument. Why should we not just as well believe that the body will go through these various experiences in five thousand years. Another school believed in the retaliation or the law of compensation.—As you sow, so you reap. You do not reap, they said, in the other world only, but you will reap here the result of your own deeds. Suppose I have robbed a bank.—Well I may be punished, not exactly in this way or that, but I will be punished. Then again I may escape the law of the state entirely, however, sometime in my life I will be punished for this criminal act of mine, perhaps in some unexpected way and I may not realize that this is the punishment for the act which I committed twenty or twenty-five years ago. Now there is truth in this statement because the consequences of our actions will follow us as our shadow; if we go to the end of the earth they will come. They are the nemesis over our heads and some day, somehow, under strange and peculiar circumstances we will be punished for our crimes. The positive value, the spiritual

truth that is contained in all these various schools with their conflicting doctrines is: that man in this physical world must live a pure and heavenly life in order that he may gain his reward whether by going into the other world and entering into higher experiences or whether he is born into other bodies with greater advantages. The first part of their doctrine is accepted by all the religions and schools and that is the most important part of it. In the books of Moses we read—"If you live a good, pure and heavenly life, then your cattle will increase, your farms will become more productive and your family will please you afterward." Now the aim of this teaching was the purity of life so that man may so live in this world as to leave behind a good name and spiritual consequences.

In the writings of CHRIST, we similarly read: "Live a holy life; obey my commandments of love and gentleness so that you may enter into the Kingdom of my Father." Again the aim is utilitarian, that is, to so shape our life here that the people may please us and reward us with their prayers. Buddha strikes a great and wonderful note when he says: "Do good for the sake of good. Shun evil because it is evil." The aim here is again spiritual life, sanctity, chastity and purity. Mohammed, the prophet of Arabia says: "Act in a praiseworthy manner, because then you will enter into Paradise. Avoid the companionship of evil because you will go to hell." Now what

is the aim of such a teaching but to live a good life here. The quintessence of all the teachings of these different prophets, therefore, was this very fact—to characterize our lives with the attributes of holiness, sanctity, of righteousness and rectitude. But often the people do not take the medicine that these Divine Physicians give them but go about talking about the station, the title and the position of this doctor or that doctor forgetting the principal aim which is the taking of the medicine and recovery from the disease. It is said that once in Persia a man became very sick. They brought him a doctor. The doctor wrote the prescription and departed. The nurses were so concerned about the station of the doctor, whether he was this or that, whether they should give the medicine to the patient while lying down or sitting up that by the end of the controversy they found the patient had died. Therefore, you will readily realize that the spiritual value of all these teachings in regard to the Immortality of the Soul are summed up in the Holiness of Life here, in the practical appliance of the laws of holiness and sanctity and purity in this life, and once we have done this we are sure that God will take care of the rest of our affairs, whether it is bringing us back here or going on through stages of development and into other spheres of progress.

Abdul Baha, the great teacher of the Bahai Movement, who lives today in Haifa, Palestine, tells us that the time has come when me must lay aside all these wrang-

lings and controversies over the position and station of our prophets and our messengers. What does it matter whether my prophet is the Son of God and your prophet is the Brother of God; they may all be the Sons of God, but as long as we do not live in accord with their teachings we are still living in the realm of the physical world. We must speak less and act more; this will be our salvation.

This is the age in which we must make the utmost effort and exertion so that the minds may become purified from all these superstitions and misconceptions; that knowledge and more knowledge may cover the earth; Universal Consciousness may become the dominant influence of the policies of governments and nations so that all these various planes of the spirit may be experienced in this life and on this plane thus making the world a Paradise and the inhabitants thereof the Angels of Heaven.

—Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab

Questions

Q. 1 Is Abdul Baha opposed to cremation?

A. The Manifestations of God have not come for the burning of the body or cremation; they have come—to give life and life more abundantly.—All their teachings and principles relate to life, but when the body is dead, being composed of various elements, one may dispose of that body according to

the customs and manners of the nation in which they live. All the discussions of this afternoon revolved around the matter of development of the life of man. Physically he is composed of various ingredients; nevertheless he is all spirit. Each religion and nation has had different customs in regard to the body of the dead. In the ancient days, the Hindus burned the bodies. Some of them throw the bodies into the river; others such as the Zoroastrians placed them in the towers where the vultures came and in one hour ate the whole of the body after which they threw the bones in a well. The Christians and the Jews and the Mohammedans inter them. So you see this matter is entirely dependent upon the customs of the people rather than the laws of God and the religion of Truth.

Q. 2 Do we understand that when we lay aside this fleshy body the spirit returns to the Sun or does it continue to unfold in the Christian attributes?

A. There is one ladder which has an infinite number of steps. One end of this ladder is on the physical plane, the other is lost in the heavenly clouds, so that the soul ascends the steps of this ladder according to those divine attributes and spiritual qualities with which it surrounds itself here, but we must be very careful so that we may not break our limbs—that is cripple our spiritual qualities—so that we may be able to ascend the ladder very quickly.

Q. 3 Has the Universal Language been decided upon?

A. The Universal Language is one of the principles of the Bahai Movement. The Bahais, however, do not emphasize the fact which one of these languages should be Universal, being aware of the jealousy and rivalry that exists between the different nations, so that if the representatives of all the nations of the world come together and select one of the present languages, we will be very happy to study it even if it is Chinese, provided they will all agree and teach it to their children in the schools. If a Universal Language is taught in the schools, within the course of one-half century, we will be able to communicate with all inhabitants of the globe. While there is a language called Esperanto, which is being studied increasingly and in large numbers, a language which has all the potentialities of universality, its universal use all depends upon the future.

Q. 4 Is it possible for man to live in this body indefinitely if he becomes spiritual enough?

A. No matter how much the bird longs to live in the cage, a day will come when he has to leave behind that little fleshy body of his and soar beyond the bars of the cage.

Q. 5 How is it possible for us to have life without some material manifestation. What evidence do we have that it really exists aside from these outward manifestations?

A. You are thinking and speaking of the biological growth and progress of the physical life coming up through the mineral,

vegetable and animal kingdom, but when you have reached the human kingdom you find the order of progress somewhat advanced toward the ideal, the intellectual, and, the intellectual reality, although having no tangible body, has existence which gives life. In this instance there are two existences, first the physical which is embodied in a material body and second the intellectual—love, sympathy, knowledge—they have no physical bodies. Like God, of which they are the attributes, they are invisible, intangible and ennobled realities of life. The Spirit of man belongs to this order. Now, how do you exist, how do you live? There are various theories that the more we discuss them the greater becomes the confusion of the mind and the principles over which we are debating, so the sum-total of the teachings of all these prophets was this: Men should concentrate their attention on the amelioration of their individual lives here, laying a spiritual foundation so that when they may ascend into another life they may be equipped with the proper provisions.

The Bahai Revelation

The Bahai revelation is not an organization. The Bahai cause can never be confined to an organization. The Bahai revelation is the spirit of this age. It is the essence of all the highest ideals of this century. The Bahai cause is an inclusive movement; the teachings of all religions and societies are found here. Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians, Theosophists, Freemasons, Spiritualists, etc., find their highest aims in this cause. Socialists and philosophers find their theories fully developed in this revelation.

The cause of Baha'o'llah is the same as the cause of Christ. It is the same temple and the same foundation. In the coming of Christ the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Baha'o'llah have the same basic principles, but are according to the degree of maturity of the world today and the requirements of this illumined age.

—Abdul Baha

The Bahai Cause

The Bahai revelation, which had its rise in Persia in the year 1844, today has become known throughout the world. "It is not so much a new religion as Religion renewed and unified."

This unique movement for social and spiritual reconstruction was first centered in a radiant youth called the Bab, whose mission it was to proclaim the coming of a great world messenger. Many European historians have described the wonderful charm of this pure-hearted hero of progressive religion, who AN as martyred in 1850 after six years of brilliant teaching.

Baha'o'llah,[1] a Persian noble, then appeared as the one heralded by the Bab. He announced the dawn of a new age, an age when brotherhood and peace should cover the earth even as the waters cover the sea. The principles he advocated, however, were too universal for the limited minds of his contemporaries. He and a few of his followers were driven by the reactionary powers of Persia into exile and prison, and at last, in 1868, were immured in the desolate barracks of Akka in Syria.

But the persecutions of men cannot extinguish the light of God's holy spirit when it shines from the heart of his prophets. From the "Most Great Prison" of Akka, Baha'o'llah spread his gospel of unity and love throughout western Asia. In 1892, at the end of forty years of exile and imprisonment, he passed away, leaving his eldest son, Abdul

[1] Lit. "Glory of God".

Baha,[1] as the appointed expounder of his word and the promulgator of his cause, the "Center of the Covenant".

Under the guidance of Abdul Baha the Bahai message has been carried to all lands and all religions. It has bound Christians and Mohammedans, Buddhists and Parses, Jews and Hindus, into the most spiritual brotherhood the world has ever known.

The Bahais believe this is the beginning of that Golden Age upon earth, the age of universal peace and love when, as Christ foretold, men "shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."

[1] Lit. "Servant of Baha".

Twelve basic Bahai principles

1. The oneness of mankind.
2. Independent investigation of truth.
3. The foundation of all religions is one.
4. Religion must be the cause of unity.
5. Religion must be in accord with science and reason.
6. Equality between men and women.
7. Prejudice of all kinds must be forgotten.
8. Universal peace.
9. Universal education.
10. Solution of the economic problem.
11. An international auxiliary language.
12. An international tribunal.

These twelve basic Bahai principles were enunciated by Baha'o'llah over sixty years ago and are to be found in his published writings of that time.

Compiled from the words of Abdul Baha

1. The oneness of mankind

Baha'o'llah addresses himself to the world of man saying, "Ye are all the leaves of one tree and the fruits of one arbor." That is, the world of existence is no other than one tree, and the nations or peoples are like unto the different branches or limbs thereof, and human individuals are similar to the fruits and blossoms thereof … while in all past religious books and epistles, the world of humanity has been divided into two parts: one called the "people of the Book", or the "pure tree", and the other, the "evil tree". One-half of the people of the world were looked upon as belonging to the faithful, and the other as belonging to the irreligious and the infidel; one-half of the people were consigned to the mercy of the Creator, and the other half were considered as objects of the wrath of their Maker. But Baha'o'llah proclaimed the oneness of the world of humanity—he submerged all mankind in the sea of divine generosity.

2. Independent investigation of truth

No man should follow blindly his ancestors and forefathers. Nay, each must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, and investigate truth in order that he may find the Truth; whereas the religion of forefathers and ancestors is based upon blind imitation—man should investigate the truth.

3. The foundation of all religions is one

The foundation underlying all the divine precepts is one reality. It must needs be reality, and reality is one, not multiple. Therefore the foundation of the divine religions is one. But we can see that certain forms have come in, certain imitations of forms and ceremonials have crept in. They are heretical, they are accidental, because they differ: hence they

cause differences among religions. But if we set aside these imitations and seek the reality of the foundation we shall all agree, because religion is one and not multiple.

4. Religion must be the cause of unity among mankind

Every religion is the greatest divine effulgence, the cause of life amongst men, the cause of the honor of humanity, and is productive of life everlasting amongst humankind. Religion is not for enmity or hatred. It is not for tyranny or injustice. If religion be the cause of enmity and rancor, if it should prove the cause of alienating men, assuredly non-religion would be better. For religion and the teachings which appertain to it are as a course of treatment. What is the object of any course of treatment? It is cure and healing. But if the outcome of a course of treatment should be productive of mere diagnosis and discussion of symptoms, the abolition of it is evidently preferable . In this sense, abandoning religion would be a step toward unity.

5. Religion must be in accord with science and reason

Religion must be reasonable; it must agree perfectly with science, so that science shall sanction religion and religion sanction science. The two must be brought together, indissolubly, in reality. Down to the present day it has been customary for man to accept a thing because it was called religion, even though it was not in accord with human reason.

6. Equality between men and women

This is peculiar to the teachings of Baha'o'llah, for all former religious systems placed men above women. Daughters and sons must follow the same form of study and the same education. Having one course of education promotes unity among mankind.

7. Abandonment of all prejudices

It is established that all the prophets of God have come to unite the children of men and not to disperse them, and to put in action the law of love and not enmity. Consequently we must throw aside all these prejudices,—the racial prejudice, the patriotic prejudice, the religious and political prejudices. We must become the cause of unity of the human race.

8. Universal peace

All men and nations shall make peace. There shall be universal peace amongst governments, universal peace amongst religions, universal peace amongst races, universal peace amongst the denizens of all regions. Today in the world of humanity the most important matter is the question of universal peace. The realization of this principle is the crying need of the time.

9. Universal education

All mankind should partake of both knowledge and education, and this partaking of knowledge and of education is one of the necessities of religion. The education of each child is obligatory. If there are no parents, the community must look after the child.

10. Solution of the economic problem

No religious books of the past prophets speak of the economic question, while this problem has been thoroughly solved in the teachings of Baha'o'llah. … Certain regulations are revealed which insure the welfare and well being of all humanity. Just as the rich man enjoys his rest and his pleasures surrounded by luxuries, the poor man must likewise have a home, be provided with sustenance, and not be in want. … Until this is effected happiness is impossible. All are equal in the estimation of God; their rights are one and there is no distinction for any soul; all are protected beneath the justice of God.

11. An international auxiliary language

An international auxiliary language shall be adopted which shall be taught by all the schools and academies of the world. A committee appointed by national bodies shall select a suitable language to be used as a means of international communication, and that language shall be taught in all the schools of the world in order that everyone shall need but two languages, his national tongue and the international auxiliary language. All will acquire the international auxiliary language.

12. An international tribunal

A universal tribunal under the power of God, under the protection of all men, shall be established. Each one must obey the decisions of this tribunal, in order to arrange the difficulties of every nation.

About fifty years ago Baha'o'llah commanded the people to establish universal peace and summoned all the nations to the "divine banquet of international arbitration" so that the questions of boundaries, of national honor and property and of vital interests between nations might be decided by an arbitral court of justice.

Remember, these precepts were given more than half a century ago. At that moment no one spoke of universal peace, nor of any of these principles; but Baha'o'llah proclaimed them to all the sovereigns of the world. … They are the spirit of this age, the light of this age; they are the well being of this age.

Lecture
delivered by
Prof. Jenabe Fazel

Sunday, 8 pm, January 30, 1921
New Thought Auditorium
Seattle, Washington, USA.

The correspondence of science and religion

Truly voicing the sentiment of my heart, I must say that this evening of separation is very sad indeed for me, because during the last week I have been enjoying myself through your very high and spiritual association, learning from you those beautiful laws of hospitality and loving kindness so characteristic of the American people.

During the last nine months of my travels throughout the length and breadth of the United States, I have had the privilege of speaking before many New Thought Centers, and wherever I have entered these gatherings, I have found a new vibration of receptivity, a new heart of kindness, a new mind, a new vision; I have found a new life vibrating through each individual, an international mind, universal consciousness, altruism and spiritual susceptibility which lift man heavenward. It matters not where we find these noble sentiments and emotions, they are the uplifting attributes of God.

What do we desire most in this age to accomplish? We desire the accomplishment of the oneness of the world of humanity. We desire the illumination of the hearts. We long for the expansion of the mind, for the development of those ecstatic and artistic emotions which elevate and ennoble the life of man. All these we find in such progressive societies and movements as this New Thought Center; those societies that are humanitarian, philanthropic, those so-cities who have no other aim but to alleviate the sufferings of mankind, to release those inner forces which have been hidden for all the past ages. In fact the ideals and the aims propounded and taught by this Center are very similar to the thoughts and ideas taught and explained by the ancient mystics of Persia. Those who have familiarized themselves with the poetic gems of Hafiz, Saadi and Mathnavi, the three great stars in the poetic heaven of Persia, can bear testimony to the fact that the heavenly ideals propounded by these modern institutions have been fully explained and elucidated by those vision-revealed men centuries ago.

In the world of humanity there have been always two classes of men who have served and uplifted their fellowmen. The men of Science—the inventors, the artists, the discoverers and the philosophers have constituted the first class. The Prophets—the teachers of morality, the propounders of ethical laws and ideas form the second class. The scientists and the philosophers have

freed the minds of men step by step through the revelation of laws of nature, through the discoveries of those inner forces which lie latent in the world, thus bringing into the arena of activity and usefulness those instruments and inventions which have facilitated our lives on this planet. It is self evident that science has been going through a period of evolution and has gone through many stages of development. The scientists and the philosophers had to suffer for their ideas; they had to stand firm and steadfast on their convictions in order that the eyes and the ears of humanity might be opened and the hearts of men unlocked. There was a time when the Ptolemaic system of astronomy was taught by all the thinkers of the age. They taught that this earth was the center of the universe; that the planets and the sun revolved around this globe of ours. They also taught that there were seven planets, each one within the other, like many circles. Today the Copernican system of astronomy has entirely exploded that hypothesis and has brought within our consciousness a new universe, the expanse of which is infinite, also a new stellar knowledge, the number of which is millions and billions. Again in the realm of physics, there was a time when the alchemists inculcated the principle of the four elements—the air, the earth, and water, etc. Today we have found each one of these supposed simple elements to be composed of many other elements, so that the physicists point to us not four but sev-

enty-four and many more to be discovered in the future. Were it not for these marvelous changes in the domain of science and the realm of human thought, we would not have been where we are today. The world would have been still in the period of savagery and barbarism, and mankind would be in the grip of the savage forces of nature.

While these scientific transformations were going on, the religious world was undergoing similar changes. The prophets, the messengers, the divine mouthpieces of God have been enlightening the world of morality, which is no less important than the advancement of the scientific world. In fact, Science and Religion must go hand in hand. This is self evident. If we study carefully the axiomatic facts of the prophets, not the interpretations of the people, comparing their teachings with the axioms of the scientists of any age, you will invariably find that they correspond. There is not one iota of difference. Science and Religion are like unto two hands which from time immemorial have been carrying the burden of civilization; they have been the instruments of enlightenment of the mind and the heart of man. Religion without Science is superstition, and Science without Religion is a soulless automatic machine. If we have science without the dynamic force of Religion, it is similar unto a beautiful and handsome body which has been adorned with all kinds of jewels and gems, but in it there is no life. Science without the impulse, without the stimuli of Religious feelings will bring

upon the head of humanity all kinds of calamity, destruction and war. Just look upon the last war; how much scientific skill and genius went into the inventions of deadly and infernal machines conducive only to the destruction of humanity. Science without Religion brings upon us all kinds of strife and teaches our children a kind of soldier-like patriotism that is not in the least constructive. They are taught to look upon their own nation as the most superior, the most perfect and the most enlightened, while all other races are looked upon as inferior and half civilized. Science of this kind is detrimental and has no spiritual efficacy in it whatsoever. Again Religion without the aid of Science is like a beautiful soul clothed with all kinds of tattered garments. No class of people would like to have anything to do with this kind of Religion, a religion without the enlightening influence of reason, because such religion unaided by Science and scientific minds becomes mere creeds, theologies and metaphysics. It was possible in the past ages to teach a kind of Religion which inculcated the fear of Hell and a hope of Paradise, but today we cannot teach such theories. This is the age of scientific discoveries and to be sure the home or the foundation of such erroneous teaching is completely undermined and demolished.

The children of men, today, in their courses of study, learn the lessons of astronomy and come to realize that this earth is not the result of seven days' crea-

tion; that even one of these so-called very small stars is greater by millions of times than our little planet. How can we then as parents teach them those old ideas regarding heaven and hell? It is impossible, because we cannot show them the locality of these places. It is a well known fact that the life of man is dependent upon Religion; that he could not exist without the environment of an uplifting belief in a higher and more spiritual power than himself. The world of humanity without Religion is a soulless temple; life is full of darkness and of no effect whatsoever. Hence we are in need of a type of Religion in this age which may inspire Science and a Science that may aid Religion. A Religion, all the principles and elements of which may correspond with reason, with intellect; a Religion that will not have one single belief that Science can contradict. It is not at all necessary to bring into the world a new Religion to transplant the older forms of belief, but it is necessary to purify those older beliefs from their ancestral traditions and creeds, their formulisms and various rites. If we can accomplish this and take the quintessence of the teachings of the founders, bringing them together into one harmonious whole filled with the spirit of God, with the love of God, then we will have that Universal Religion for which we have been praying and striving.

The Religions of the world today are similar unto mirrors, the surfaces of which are covered with dust and rust. The thing

we need to do is to secure a divine polisher that he may come and use his spiritual polish and cleanse these mirrors from the dust of superstition and tradition, dogmas and creeds, after which they will shine radiantly and with the utmost clearness and beauty. The various Religions are also similar unto the spring which gushes forth out of the rock. As the water leaves its source and murmurs down the mountain slope, it is clear and limpid, but as it goes along the desert, it carries with it the mud and the sand, thus by the time it reaches the mouth of the river, it is no more that limpid pure water, but flowing mud. Therefore, we must find a kind of machinery that will cleanse this water, making it palatable and pure.

Baha'o'llah rendered this service seventy years ago. He came into a world filled with wars, dissensions and strifes. He realized that all the Religions had gone astray; they had lost all meaning of the teachings of the original founders. He immediately began his work of cleansing the surface of the mirrors and to purify the muddy waters of these different Religions. He did this in such an efficient manner, in such a God-like manner, that the religionists of today have found the true, the basic principles of their founders and have become unified and agreed around one common center. Through the interpretation of the symbolical, the metaphorical and miraculous statements of the various prophets in the many religious

books, he has been able to accomplish this great work. Related in the various sacred books of these many religions are instances which are wholly unscientific. They are not only unreasonable, but they are against the visible senses, against tangible perception; so with his explanation of these symbolical statements, a new door of knowledge has been opened before the eyes of men, and all of these sayings have become intelligible and understandable to the followers. For instance, from the outward text of Genesis, the orthodox man raises the question of creation and concludes that this world was created out of nothing; that the world was created six thousand years ago, and that before the beginning of this creation God was sitting idle upon his throne with nothing especially to do. Suddenly it came to the mind of God that he might create a globe, then he would create as the noble Lord and Master of his Creation—Man. Now, what kind of reason and science could accept such an erroneous theory? A Creator without a Creation is similar unto a president without authority, without an army, a navy and without a United States to rule. Can you conceive of such a president? Now, just as light and heat are the indispensable qualities of the sun, and we cannot think of the sun without these emanations, likewise the power of creation is inherent and has ever been indispensable of the Creator. Not only the Creator is ancient and without beginning, but Creation is likewise ancient and without beginning. The only thing that

we can say is that there are many changes in forms, but not in substance.

Another phase of this theory comes in the idea of resurrection; that is at the consummation of the ages, a day will come when God will really regret that he ever created such a world and will decide to bring it to an end, after which time he will bring all mankind out of their tombs and sitting on a throne of judgment will judge them according to his laws. Now, regarding this Baha'o'llah says: All these things are written symbolically and have a spiritual meaning. The statement made in the Gospel by Jesus Christ that a day will come when the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light and the stars will fall down from heaven, according to the interpretation of the Bahais these are all symbolical sayings which have spiritual ideals which will be fulfilled in this age. Christ did not mean that these phenomenal worlds would be entirely destroyed, because if the sun became darkened, for even two or three days the world would be thrown into such an upheaval that we would not know where we were, and should the stars fall from heaven, the earth having been destroyed, where will they fall and where will we be at that time. Nay, rather he meant that at the end of the time—meaning the end of the Christian dispensation —great changes will transpire in the moral and spiritual world. Just as the life of this material world is dependent upon the light of the sun, likewise the light

of the spiritual world, the moral world, the ethical world and the world of Religion is dependent upon moral laws. Christ says a day will come when there will be so much materialism, so much agnosticism that the sun of Religion will be darkened and will give no more light. Are not we living in such a day? What was this great war but the materialism of the day when the people of the earth turned away from grace, from God and his principles? Through these darknesses, these tribulations and these sufferings the religions of the world have been going for the last one hundred and fifty years. After these prophecies Christ says, "When all these things shall come to pass, then will I come down from heaven riding on the clouds." Now, should we take this literally that Christ will come down from heaven riding on clouds of Glory surrounded by Angels? Must this phenomenal event literally take place before he can claim the confidence and belief of his people? It is indeed one of the finest plays that you can conceive in your mind of imagination, and yet God is not a theatrical manager. However, this saying has its divine and more spiritual meaning. It means that when all these dark conditions become prevalent in the world, then again the stars of His teachings, the beauty of the principles of His life will be revealed to men; that they will come down from heaven, from the heaven of divine will; from the heaven of spiritual consciousness, from the heaven of exaltation and the Kingdom of God. The Angels are

the spiritual forces which will come in this age. They are going to help us to help humanity carry this burden of civilization; to establish in the heart of men the ideals of peace, unity and oneness, realizing that the universal consciousness of Christ is with us. Once realizing that all these Angels, these spiritual forces are surrounding us, no amount of obstacles and difficulties will discourage us. Hence we are living at the dawn of that day of millennium in which the Universal consciousness of Christ has dawned and all these spiritual forces and the Angels of the Kingdom are helping to further and to establish the Kingdom of God in the hearts of the children of men. Although looking around the world we cannot find these Angels with wings and white feathers, we can look into the hearts of men, into the consciousness of the people; it is there we see the heavenly Angels dwelling. There in the service of humanity they sing their songs of Peace and Good Will toward all Men. Therefore, we are truly privileged to know that we are existing in the day which was foretold by Christ when through these mysteries, through these symbolical sayings he unfolded a panorama of the perfections of men, a vista through which we can see the future virtues of the world growing.

By resurrection he means the resurrection of these dead souls from the tombs of materialism, negligence and unawareness. A man who is devoid of spirituality, of holiness of life and of divine vision is dead; he

is an animal and not a spiritual Son of God. But when his vision is opened; when he is characterized by divine attributes and his life regenerated and transformed, he comes out of the tomb of self and is resurrected. When this quickening takes place, thousands of dead people—dead in consciousness—may be walking around him. He may be the only living soul among them, because the breath of life has dawned from his heart.

Baha'o'llah has taken these symbolical writings of the sacred books of the seven great religions and one after another has explained and interpreted them in such a manner that every intelligent man, even an atheist, can believe it. That is why in the Bahai movement you will find the perfect correspondence of religious ideas with scientific principles, and in this manner we have for the first time in the world, a human, social and spiritual religion which showers its blessings both upon the products of the intellect and upon the emotions of the heart. Baha'o'llah said the world of humanity in this age must fly with two wings. Look upon the world of humanity as a bird. One wing is scientific knowledge; the other is religious wisdom. One must help the other, for if one wing is clipped and is weakened, the bird cannot soar toward the summit of divine and human perfection. In our schools and colleges, we must teach both Science and Religion, so that the character of the children may be developed along moral and ethical lines and at the same time they must be given practical, efficient and scientific

training. The followers of the Bahai Movement, through the instruction of Baha'o'llah, have found that it is possible to have in this age a Universal Religion which is scientific, and humanitarian, the aims and object of which are for the betterment of both domains.

—Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab

Lecture
delivered by
Prof. Jenabe Fazel

Business Men's Club
Wednesday, 12 noon, February 10, 1921
Portland, Oregon.

The Master Key of Success

It gives us the greatest pleasure and joy to have this opportunity of addressing you in this beautiful gathering and bring to you the news of some of the things so vital to mankind which are transpiring in the Orient today.

It was well said by the speaker that Persia has been the cradle of the ancient civilization; that the ethical and poetical thoughts of the writers and sages of that country have held always a fascination and a charm for those who are the students of literature. In studying the peoples and the literature of Persia written nearly one thousand years ago, you will find such freshness of expression, such vivacity of thought, that the reader might conclude that the writers of that time are contemporaneous with those of today. Most of you naturally are familiar with the poet of Persia called Omar Khayyam, that pessimistic agnostic and yet happy-go-lucky being who struck a note of sympathy in the hearts of the Western readers. We

have also greater poets of Persia such as Hafez, the greatest lyric poet of the world, likewise Mathnavi, the great mystic poet. Their writings, their epigrams and their literary thoughts convey to us the Master Key of Success and Prosperity in all the phases of human life. Sadee, who lived one hundred and twenty years and traveled for forty years throughout the then known parts of the world, says: "The individuals of mankind are the members and the limbs of one body, because inherently they are created from the same elements." When one limb of this great body of humanity suffers all the other members and organs automatically suffer. Thou who art unaware of the sufferings and the vicissitudes of the rest of the world, it is not worthy to call thyself a man. From the text book of Truth I read to thee some of the signs of success, prosperity, joy and generosity: "Be thou not less than the fruitful tree, because whosoever striketh that tree with a stone it gives back the fruits. Be thou like unto the mine so that when the surface of the mine is scratched it gives back jewels and gems."

From a philosophical standpoint, if we look upon the world of humanity today with all its interlocking civilized systems, we realize that this world has become like unto one single body and the children of men have become the limbs and organs of this great social organization. Just as the body is composed of various organs—the eyes, the eyebrows, the hands, the ears and the feet, likewise this great body politic, this

great world of humanity is composed of many different professions, trades, arts and various expressions of life and activity. Now, inasmuch as the one spirit rules and dominates the body of man in order to make that body wholesome and successful, similarly one Universal spirit of unselfishness and non-egotistical desires must dominate the body of the state, of the nation and of the world in order to achieve success and prosperity.

Three rules dominate the physical life of man:—First, activity of all of the limbs and organs of the body; second, a unified, coordinated life of all the organs, and third, reciprocity and co-operation. As long as these three rules have the upper hand in the body of man, man is healthy and well, but no sooner there is discord and lack of cooperation, he becomes ill. The same rules can be applied psychologically to human society; without work, unity and co-operation there will be no success in any phase of our social, national or international life. These three rules are not only whispered into our ears by the small voice within—what we call in the Orient the inner savior of man, but by their conditions surrounding him as well. Man, however, is saved through the admonitions of the inner savior and not by the outer conditions of the world, the outer savior. All the prophets and messengers of humanity have emphasized that activity, union and co-operation will unalterably lead to success, prosperity and the expansion of the mind and heart. Because of different kinds of

superstition and imagination of men in different ages and cycles, the human and social bodies have been disorganized. Racial, national and religious prejudices have always swayed the minds of men and turned them into beasts of prey instead of Angels of Light. Why do we say that these prejudices are hindering the success and progress of man? It is because the inner savior tells us that they are pure superstition; that man is one race; that humanity is one family; that the world is one home and that all these higher international ideals that have come into the consciousness of men in the last few years have been the eternal verities from the dawn of creation.

The country of Persia has always produced great minds in various fields of thought. Seventy years ago there appeared in that country a great teacher by the name of Baha'o'llah who has been expressing these principles of action, of union and cooperation—those principles which ultimately will lead to Universal success. Baha'o'llah came from the Royal Family of Persia, but because he held and advocated these great ideals of international co-operation, he was persecuted and banished by the people of his country. However, with a power that was divine and a great spiritual force within, he began the spread of his teachings. He worked among the people, teaching them these higher laws of a new humanity. He gave the people of the Orient many keys with which they might unlock the hearts of the people. The first key was the realization

that the people of the world are one family. He taught them the oneness of the world of humanity. The second key was that in order to achieve Universal success, all the religions of the past must realize that their founders have been the divine and inspired messengers of God; that their ethical and moral principles have been identical; that these various founders have come to unify and to uplift humanity rather than raise walls and stir up strife and sedition—that with this great key, the followers of Baha'o'llah were able to unite the antagonistic people of the East so that thousands upon thousands of them have become as brothers and sisters while formerly they thirsted for the blood of each other. The third key was the establishment of the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World which he gave, saying: "The time has arrived when humanity must set aside the instruments of savagery and barbarism and unite in one great commonwealth, thus founding a United States of the World." The fourth key was the founding of an international auxiliary language by which all the people of the world may be able in the future to speak with each other, thus doing away with all the misunderstandings which have hitherto resulted from the lack of a common vehicle of expression. Ninety per cent of all the misunderstandings which have come among the people of the world owe their origin to this one barrier—the lack of a Universal language, thus the

strangeness and differences have been intensified.

A little while ago when I was in Syria—and Syria is a country in which you will find all the languages of the world spoken—a Turk and an Arab were fighting with each other hand and fist. A man went forward and asked them: "Why do you fight?" The Turk said, "This Arab called me a bear. I am not a bear; I am a man." I turned to the Arab and said: "Why do you call this man a bear?" He replied, "I did not call him a bear. I called him the apple of mine eye." So you see, in Arabic the word expressing "The apple of mine eye" was the same as the one in Turkish expressing "The bear", and these men had misunderstood each other because of the vast difference in the meaning of their languages.

So the great teacher, Abdul Baha, living on the slope of Mount Carmel, brought to the people of the world many master keys with which they might be able to establish Universal success and prosperity in their homes, in the nations and in the world. These prejudices which have kept the nations apart have led to many wars. To illustrate this more clearly, I will tell you another story. There was a Mohammedan priest very ill, in fact, he was on the bed of death and his life was only a question of a few hours. His family summoned a Christian physician. When this Mohammedan priest opened his eyes and saw this strange man, he asked: "Why have you brought this person here?" They answered:

"He is a very learned and skilled doctor and will be able to heal you." The patient angrily said, "Are you not aware if I take the medicine of this infidel, this Christian, I will go directly to hell?" The physician, not understanding, asked them to interpret the words of the patient. They gave him the translation of the priest's remark. The physician answered: "Well, whether or not he takes the medicine, he will go to hell anyhow; but if he takes the medicine he will go there a little later."

Consequently the three keys that lead invariably to success and which have been inaugurated by Baha'o'llah in the Orient are: First, action. We must be active, moving; never stationary. Second, Union—Union of all our forces of good and not evil; and, third, Co-operation and reciprocity of all the members of various phases and departments of life.

This is the scintillating dawn of a new age. People of the world, whether in the Orient or in the Occident, are thrilled through and through with the dreams of this new age; they are talking about it; they are reading about it in their various books and magazines. We must bring these thoughts and ideals within our consciousness so that the Master Key of Action, or Union and Oneness may make this world one home, the religions of the world one Religion, the nations of the world one nation; the races of the world one race; that we may have one God, one shepherd and one flock.

Lecture
delivered by
Prof. Jenabe Fazel

Thursday, 2 pm, February 10, 1921
Men's Resort, Portland, Oregon.

Universal brotherhood

We have traveled over many seas and lands, coming from the far-off country of Persia, and from the people of that country, we have brought for you the message of love, friendship and co-operation.

Praise be to God! We have arrived in an age in which the means of transportation have been so facilitated by invention that the world has become as one neighborhood. Were it not for the constant endeavor of the many inventive minds of the past age, it would have been impossible to come to this country. Amid the dangers and difficult circumstances of travel in the middle ages, it would have been impossible for a Persian to leave his home and travel over so many deserts, lofty mountains, the great seas and oceans that separate our land from yours. Today the two ends of the earth are united by railroads, steamships and telegraph.

All these inventions and discoveries of the last two centuries recall to our minds the great fact of the teachings of Christ and his injunction upon us that we must

pray so that His Kingdom may be established upon the earth; that the millenium of peace and brotherhood may dawn; that all these names and superficialities may be removed from our midst and that the world of humanity may become like unto two hands—the East and the West—co-operating in the exchange of ideas of civilization as well as material goods and commodities.

There are certain natural conditions in this world that are unalterable. For example, when a child is born, he grows from the stage of infancy to adolescence, then he reaches the stage of maturity or manhood which is life's climax, after which comes decline, a time when man is subjected to many diseases, and as a result of his own ignorance or carelessness, he may shorten his life upon this earth plane. These are natural conditions of the material plane to which people of the world have always been subjected. For instance, one person is constitutionally strong and another man is weak; one is short and a second is very tall and a fourth is stout and obese. These are not the things that we must make the subject of discussion, division and strife. Again, one is black and the other is white; one is yellow and another red. These are natural laws which exist even in the vegetable and animal kingdom, and they do not make them the subject of strife. Neither are these things based upon the law of injustice; they are all based upon the consummated laws of creation. Just as in the formation of the body of the child, these ele-

ments have gone into the make-up of various parts and organs; they have constituted the eyes or the ears, the hands and the feet. Now, each one of these organs has its own duty to perform and each one has a special responsibility to assume; they are not dependent, but interdependent each one upon the other, thus qualifying them to carry out the plan of the body—the scheme of creation.

Perhaps you have heard or read the story of the life of Buddha, the prophet of India. It is said that he was the descendant of the family of the kings of that country and his father was very anxious that he be brought up without looking upon the ailments and infirmities of life, so he compelled him to live in a great and beautiful palace, surrounded with gorgeous gardens, innumerable servants and all kinds of maidens, beautiful to behold, giving to him as wife a most wonderful woman, the perfection of creation. Buddha, becoming tired of all these things, said: "I want to go and see the world." He bade good-bye to his child and wife, and started on his journey. The first thing that he encountered along the road was an old man. So decrepit and feeble was he, that the young man comparing this old man with the youth and agility of himself, began to ask, "What can be the cause of this condition—this old age?" In deep thought he went on his way. Soon he looked up to see a man lying on the ground. As he neared this human object he observed that he was ill and crying. Again he asked himself the

reason for this ill health. As he journeyed on he saw many people crying and weeping. In front of them was being drawn a hearse, and when he enquired the meaning of this, they told him that the man had died and that they were on the way to inter the body in the cemetery. This disturbed the young man very much; he could not fathom these ups and downs of life. All these sights grieved him to such an extent that he decided to travel around the world in search of a remedy for these ills. He would find eternal youth and return to give it to all of humanity that no one may lose their sight; that no one may become deaf; that everyone may keep his youth, his beauty and strength and live forever. After a search of many years, meeting many masters and many teachers and speaking with great philosophers and thinkers, he came to the conclusion that these very events are the unalterable laws of nature; that every birth is succeeded by death; every youth is followed by old age; every beauty must give place to wrinkled faces and foreheads. He realized that, were it not for these laws, instituted by God himself from the beginning of creation, the world could not be renovated, could not be changed, and that by this time it would have been filled with a race of greedy people, thinking only of the perfection of themselves and their qualities. Then the thought came to his mind—How are we going to do away with sorrow and pain; how are we going to do away with the suffering of humanity, because wherever

there is man, these sufferings and pains follow him as his shadow? Finally the revelation came to him that in the heart of man there must be founded a palace of happiness and eternal joy; a palace of eternal life which is not subject to destruction. He said to himself: "When we build, when we lay the foundation of this palace within our hearts, then our outward circumstances will not affect our life and our equanimity of temperament. This happiness is an intangible effervescent beauty; it is within man. It is created in the heart of man and is a spiritual essence; so that when we get hold of it, if we are rich, we are happy; if we are poor, we are happy; if we are healthy, we are joyous, and if we are suffering from certain pain, again that inner happiness will keep us balanced and equipoised.

From the human standpoint it is evident that the wealthy men of the world are the ones which have least time to think, less time to give to the development of the eternal reality within them and they are always harrowed and followed by the nightmare of losing what they have gained whether it be by proper or improper means. A rich man was lying on the bed of death. His friends around him began to cry and hopelessly lament. Some one asked him, "What is your last hope and desire?" He said: "My only hope and greatest desire is that I could have died poor." They looked at him in astonishment and said: "How is this? Here you are living in a magnificent palace; you are surrounded with luxury, servants and maids,

everything that could make man happy?" He said, "This is just what is worrying me. I cannot afford to leave these people here with all this wealth and luxury when I must go under the ground. When I think of it, I shudder with fear. Now, if I were poor, I would not have any of these agonizing terrors attacking me. I would know peace and happiness, knowing that I am now going to my eternal rest."

There is also another very interesting story about Alexander the Great which illustrates the folly of riches. You will remember how he conquered the whole Asiatic world, how he went into Persia and India with his invincible legions. When he died at the age of thirty-two, having brought under his power all these Oriental countries, he should have been one of the happiest of men. However, when he wrote his last will he requested that when his body was placed in the hearse and taken to the cemetery for interment that his hands be left out in order that everyone might see them. Now, his friends and courtiers thought this a very strange request and could not understand it, but one of the philosophers of his court interpreted his wish, saying: "Alexander the Great wanted to show the hollowness of this world; the sham and hypocrisy of making conquest and wealth. He wanted to convey to the minds of men that although he had attained to all of these things, now, he must go to his tomb with empty hands."

In another short story I will illustrate to you the horrors that accompany the waking

and sleeping thoughts of the man of riches. One of the great Sultans of Turkey[1] had built for himself a great and beautiful palace overlooking the sea of Marmora, and in the summer he would spend his time there looking over the beautiful waters. One evening as lie sat enjoying this gorgeous scene of nature he saw thousands and thousands of gondolas streaming in and out of the harbors. Looking down over this long row of small vessels he saw one of the sailors looking up, and seeing the king, he began to curse him, saying "Look at this man! He has accumulated all the wealth of the country and is living at peace and rest here in this magnificent palace while I have to work for my family from early morn until late evening." The king hearing these insolent remarks sent one of his chamberlains to bring this young man to his home. In the evening the sailor was brought to the palace of the king without the knowledge of where he was going. The king had ordered his courtiers to spread before this young man one of the most sumptuous dinners, to have for him the gayest dances, in short, prepare for him an Oriental banquet the equal of which his imagination had never conceived. So when this sailor was brought into the palace he saw a fairyland and all the people were bowing down before him in such a manner that he felt as though he had been actually transformed into the Sultan of the Empire. After midnight they took him into his bed-chamber where the king had commanded that under the pillows,

[1] Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.—M.W.T.

the mattresses and the sheets they spread many needles. When the young man went to his bed, no sooner had he laid down, already dreaming of a night of peaceful sleeping in his downy haven, than the needles began to pierce him, causing him much discomfort. There was no place of comfort in this bed, for no matter what direction he turned the needles pierced him and gave him pain. All night he could not sleep. In the morning when he arose and descended into the parlor, the king greeted him saying: "How are you? Did you enjoy your feast and did you rest well? I hope you will be happy. Would you like to have the same kind of life always?" The young man replied: "No, indeed, I do not want this kind of life any more. I shall always want to work and labor and gain my livelihood. Nevermore will I long for such a life." The king then said to him. "Did you see that the first part of the feast was one side of a king's life, all that is beautiful and pleasing in life. The second part—the night and your sleep—represented the portion of a king's life that is unpleasant and bitter. The needles that were in your bed are the needles of unpleasant thoughts; they are thoughts of worry and trouble, and when a king lies down in his bed they crowd upon him in such a manner that there is no way of escape. He is constantly attacked by these thoughts and cannot know peaceful sleep."

So you see, although there are people who have not all the means of life, spiritually

and intellectually they are the free men of the earth. The aim of the prophets and their teachings of the past has been to establish an equality of rights so that these extreme points of poverty and wealth may be eliminated; that each soul, according to his merits and talent, may receive enough of the social income to enable him to live comfortably; to protect his family, educate his children and leave behind a good name, which is better than all the wealth of the world.

There are two objects intended by all the reformers: First, to make this world a happy world; to establish such equalized relationship between capital and labor, between the employees and the employers that they may live together as the happy children of one family, each co-operating with the other, each thinking to protect the rights of the other. Second, to create a paradise within, a heaven within the soul of man, that if sometime through adverse circumstances he is attacked by forces of darkness, of injustice and tyranny, he may be able to rely on that spiritual power within to overcome the storm and rise again on the crest of the waves, stronger, more powerful and better able to grapple the situation before him. But, the point is, although these great prophets have been teaching from time immemorial and giving instructions to men to love one another, to inculcate brotherhood; the ignorance and superstition of men, the prejudice and bigotry of humankind in different parts of the world

have kept them away from the realization of these simple principles.

One of the imaginations which has done much to keep men apart is racial prejudice. The racial prejudice is purely an illusion. It has no outward reality. All men are equal in the sight of God. Just think for a moment that although different nations are living in various countries, speak different languages and have different customs and manners, they are inherently one; they have the same two eyes, the same two hands and feet; they think alike on many essential problems of life. One race is just as susceptible to the laws of progress and education as another. For example if a parent sends out into the world his seven sons, each one emigrating to a different part of the globe and establishing different families, do you think they will look upon each other after awhile with the eyes of strangeness? No, they would realize that there is still that common bond of brotherhood between them. So, whether Persian or American, French or English, Arabic or Turkish, they are all the children of one Universal Father, all being fed and taken care of by the same great Maker. It is only through our own limited viewpoint that there exists divisions in the world of humanity; that there are so many races and antagonistic tribes. There is one globe, one ocean of air in which this globe rolls on toward its destiny, one universal God creating and directing all. This globe, which has been divided into so many countries with so many boundaries, borders

and frontiers by the past kings and rulers of the earth who thought that they possessed one portion of the earth, is one home. Why, the earth in reality always belonged to all mankind. Those ancient kings and monarchs, who were despotic and absolute, collected the wealth of the people and sent them in large numbers into the battlefields, making them kill each other, did so for no other purpose than to preserve what they called their divine rights—the autocratic dispensations.

Another superstition and imagination which did much to divide men was religious prejudice, because we all know that the prophets came to teach man love and unity and not hatred and animosity. But, the people misunderstood the aims and objects of the prophet and took that love and that harmony, or their own interpretations of it, as a pretext for the creation of dissension and strife. In the Oriental countries there were many kinds of prejudice in past days among the religions and the nations, each one holding aloof from the association of the other, until the whole eastern horizon was beclouded with dogmas and creeds. You will realize that the religions of the world, all of them without exception, have been founded in the Orient, but those Oriental people, instead of using their religions as the links uniting the hearts of men, placed upon the teachings of their founders, their own limited interpretations, thus making them a cause for division. Of course, this was done through ignorance or a selfish desire of

one for dominance over another. The Mohammendans,[1] the Jews and the Christians were always enemies to such an extent that if one of these was thirsty, the other would not take the trouble to offer him a cup of water on account of this great prejudice—that great gulf—difference of understanding.

Seventy years ago there appeared in Persia a great divine teacher whose name was Baha'o'llah, who established the foundation of Universal Brotherhood. Through his teachings and instructions he has spread the ideal of the oneness of the world of humanity and taught those antagonistic religions, races and nations that there is only one God, one religion and one race. He has succeeded in convincing them that the time has come for them to set aside their narrow ideas and be united; to become as brothers of one family. In his teachings he reiterated the thought—"O people of the World. Ye are all the leaves of one branch, the twigs of one trunk and the fruits of one tree, the limbs and organs of one body. The religions that have been founded in the past have been founded for the sake of love and unity. Why do you make them the cause of hatred and division? You are all one race and one nation and one people because you have descended from one Father and one Mother." This spiritual teacher was so powerful, so great and divine that although he had to contend with persecution and severe criticism of the people of his own country, he was enabled to unite the religions of the world into one brotherhood

[1] Muslims.—M.W.T.

and the nations of the world into one common bond of fraternity. Although in the beginning Baha'o'llah had to meet the ordeals and the trials that were meted out to him by his enemies, in a short space of time his teachings became most prevalent and many nations and many religions have united with love and amity.

The branches of the Bahai brotherhood are established in all the countries of the earth and the members of these great Brotherhoods have no other aim than to unite the religions, the hearts of people, and teach them to live with one another amicably and peacefully. In this way only, will the world become like one home, the inhabitants like the members of one family, each thinking about the health, the prosperity and the happiness of the other, each practicing the golden rule and changing the surface of the earth into heaven, into paradise; that the millenium may be established in the hearts and the hearts may be filled with the love of God and the love of man.

Some people after similar lectures came to us and said: "These are very beautiful thoughts and dreams, but how are you going to bring them about Looking around you one sees so much selfishness, greed and war and waves of crime. How are we going to remedy these things?" Answering from personal observation, I can say to you that during my travels throughout the world for many, many years, I have come in touch with many religions and many nations, and have seen with my own eyes that a great

spiritual sun has dawned from the horizon of the hearts and consciousness of thousands and thousands of forward looking men and women and the rays of this sun are scattering these dark clouds. Although there are many dark clouds in the horizon, those who are thinking along these problems know that the sun is shining behind the clouds and is dispelling the darkening mists as quickly as possible, and although we may have many jarring, discordant notes, there is a heavenly music being played in the hearts of men and that this heavenly music is making everything sweet, harmonious and elevating. We are hoping and working that soon the whole world will be thrilled with the melodies of this new heavenly song.

In brief, there are three points for which struggling humanity is working, and we might say that humanity today has struck its tent and is on the march. These three things are: First, the elimination of all religious prejudices so that we may have a religious brotherhood throughout the world. Second, the elimination of all racial prejudice, in order that we may have a race brotherhood. Third, the elimination of all political prejudice that we may have a Universal Patriotism and a Universal Parliament of Man.

—Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab

Series I

Fulfillment in this age of the Old and New Testament prophecies
The elements of universal religion
Why present day religions have lost their power
Mind, soul and spirit

Series II

The ideals of the new age
Palestine during the days of reconstruction
Solution of the economic problem
Bahai Movement

Series III

The universal consciousness of Christ.
The Evolution of the idea of God in all ages
Physical and spiritual healing
The Proofs for the recognition of the Manifestation of God

Series IV

Man is the collective center of all phenomena
The Teachings of all religions are identical
Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free
The true meaning of Trinity

Series V

The new vision of immortality
Correspondence of science and religion
The Master Key of success
Universal brotherhood

The lectures published in this and other pamphlets were delivered in accord with the exigency of the time and the place.