

THE NEW WORLD ORDER

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"The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens."—Bahá'u'lláh.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. . . Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. . . And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." *Jesus (St. John).*

"National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and co-operation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of

the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race."

"A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginable vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving." *Shoghi Effendi.*

"Lift up your hearts above the present and look with eyes of faith into the future. To-day the seed is sown, the grain falls upon the earth, but behold the day will come when it shall rise a glorious tree and the branches thereof shall be laden with fruit. Rejoice and be glad that this day hath dawned, try to realise its power, for it is indeed wonderful. God has crowned you with honour and in your hearts has He set a radiant star; verily the light thereof shall brighten the whole world." *'Abdu'l-Bahá.*

Coming of Age

Our lives are set in the greatest moment of history. For long centuries we have paid lip service to the ideal of human brotherhood, but now we must either practise it or perish.

The institutions and theories which we have so vainly defended are crumbling before the ever-developing need for unity. National sovereignty is the proven enemy of world peace; racial superiority is a scientific and spiritual untruth; class distinctions are as unchristian as slums; religious prejudices undermine the spirit of religion. Competition between states and empires and social groups no longer stimulates progress; rather does it bring us to the brink of self-destruction.

The old world is falling about our ears, putting us to the necessity of building new institutions capable of meeting new needs. These needs arise from the nature of the times. Mankind, at the threshold of maturity, must put away the things of his childhood and accept the responsibility of citizenship in a world community. Unity is the need, the prayer, the healing of the age.

The early Christians, in a less mature age, were faced with a similar problem. They had to practise the new way of life and build communities to survive the general disintegration of Rome. They did it, under the impelling power of love. We can do it too, through the same power, released anew in this age by Bahá'u'lláh. "The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is the same as the Cause of Christ. It is the same Temple and the same Foundation. Both of these are spiritual springtimes and seasons of the soul-refreshing awakening and the cause of the renovation of the life of mankind. The spring of this year is the same as the spring of last year. The origins and ends are the same. The sun of to-day is the sun of yesterday. In the coming of Christ, the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh have the same basic principles, but are according to the stage of the maturity of the world and the requirements of this illumined age."

Christmas is associated with the spirit of love and fellowship manifested by Jesus Christ. Let us not forget the obligation to extend this spirit beyond the borders of family, nation and race, so that no single human being is excluded from our fellowship, and we ourselves are identified with no less a community than that of mankind. This is the first obligation, to practise brotherhood. The second, the building of new institutions, is associated with the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, for He has

shown us their pattern. Such pioneer work requires a greater sacrifice than many are ready to make, although when the new world is established and the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh has proved its validity and worth, the victory will be shared by all.

"The disciples of Christ forgot themselves and all earthly things, forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion, and engaged in calling the peoples of the world to the Divine Guidance, till at last they made the world another world, illumined the surface of the earth, and even to their last hour proved self-sacrificing in the pathway of that Beloved One of God. Finally in various lands they suffered glorious martyrdom. Let them that are men of action follow in their footsteps."

Meditation

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul;
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for
His Name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For Thou art with me,
Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me,
In the presence of mine enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil,
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

A Psalm of David.

The Union of Mankind

*(Excerpts from the writings and talks
of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.)*

God sends prophets for the education of the people and the progress of mankind. Each such manifestation of God has raised humanity. They serve the whole world by the bounty of God. The sure proof that they are the manifestations of God is in the education and progress of the people. The Jews were in the lowliest condition of ignorance, and captives under Pharaoh when Moses appeared and raised them to a high state of civilisation. Thus was the reign of Solomon brought about and science and art were made known to mankind. Even Greek philosophers became students of Solomon's teach-

ing. Thus was Moses proved to be a prophet.

After the lapse of time the Israelites deteriorated, and became subject to the Romans and the Greeks. Then the brilliant Star of Jesus rose from the horizon upon the Israelites, brightening the world, until sects and creeds and nations were taught the beauty of unity. There cannot be any better proof than this that Jesus was the Word of God.

So it was with the Arabian nations who, being uncivilised, were oppressed by the Persian and Greek governments. When the Light of Muhammad shone forth all Arabia was brightened. These oppressed and degraded peoples became enlightened and cultured; so much so, indeed, that other nations imbibed Arabian civilisation from Arabia. This was the proof of Muhammad's divine mission.

All the teaching of the prophets is one; one faith; one Divine light shining throughout the world. Now, under the banner of the oneness of humanity all people of all creeds should turn away from prejudice and become friends and believers in all the prophets. As Christians believe in Moses, so the Jews should believe in Jesus. As the Muhammadans believe in Christ and in Moses, so likewise the Jews and Christians should believe in Muhammad. Then all disputes would disappear, all then would be united. Bahá'u'lláh came for this purpose. He has made the three religions one. He has uplifted the standard of the oneness of faith and the honour of humanity in the centre of the world. To-day we must gather round it, and try with heart and soul to bring about the union of mankind.

The body-politic may be likened to the human organism. As long as the various members and parts of that organism are co-ordinated and co-operating in harmony we have as a result the expression of life in its fullest degree. When these members lack co-ordination and harmony we have the reverse, which in the human organism is disease, dissolution, death. Similarly, in the body-politic of humanity, dissension, discord and warfare are always destructive and inevitably fatal. All created beings are dependent upon peace and co-ordination, for every contingent and phenomenal being is a composition of distinct elements. As long as there is affinity and cohesion among these constituent elements strength and life are manifest, but when dissension and repulsion arise among them, disintegration follows. This is proof that peace and amity which God has willed for His children are the saving factors of human society, whereas war and strife which violate His ordinances are the cause of death and destruction. Therefore

God has sent His prophets to announce the message of good-will, peace and life to the world of mankind.

Your efforts must be lofty. Exert yourselves with heart and soul so that perchance through your efforts the light of Universal Peace may shine and this darkness of estrangement and enmity may be dispelled from amongst men; that all men may become as one family and consort together in love and kindness; that the East may assist the West and the West give help to the East—for all are the inhabitants of one planet, the people of one original nativity and the flocks of one shepherd.

Immortality

"Thou hast asked Me whether man, as apart from the Prophets of God and His chosen ones, will retain, after his physical death, the self-same individuality, personality, consciousness, and understanding that characterise his life in this world. If this should be the case, how is it, thou hast observed, that whereas such slight injuries to his mental faculties as fainting and severe illness deprive him of his understanding and consciousness, his death, which must involve the decomposition of his body and the dissolution of its elements, is powerless to destroy that understanding and extinguish that consciousness? How can any one imagine that man's consciousness and personality will be maintained, when the very instruments necessary to their existence and function will have completely disintegrated?"

"Know thou that the soul of man is exalted above, and is independent of all infirmities of body and mind. That a sick person showeth signs of weakness is due to the hindrances that interpose themselves between his soul and his body, for the soul itself remaineth unaffected by bodily ailments. Consider the light of the lamp. Though an external object may interfere with its radiance, the light itself continueth to shine with undiminished power. In like manner, every malady afflicting the body of man is an impediment that preventeth the soul from manifesting its inherent might and power. When it leaveth the body, however, it will evince such ascendancy, and reveal such influence as no force on earth can equal. Every pure, every refined and sanctified soul will be endowed with tremendous power, and shall rejoice with exceeding gladness."

"Consider the lamp which is hidden under a bushel. Though its light be shining, yet its radiance is concealed from men. Likewise, consider the sun which hath been obscured by the clouds. Observe how its splendour appeareth to have diminished, when in reality the source of that

light hath remained unchanged. The soul of man should be likened unto this sun, and all things on earth should be regarded as his body. So long as no external impediment interveneth between them, the body will, in its entirety, continue to reflect the light of the soul, and to be sustained by its power. As soon as, however, a veil interposeth itself between them, the brightness of that light seemeth to lessen."

"Consider again the sun when it is completely hidden behind the clouds. Though the earth is still illumined with its light, yet the measure of light which it receiveth is considerably reduced. Not until the clouds have dispersed, can the sun shine again in the plenitude of its glory. Neither the presence of the cloud nor its absence can, in any way, affect the inherent splendour of the sun. The soul of man is the sun by which his body is illumined, and from which it draweth its sustenance, and should be so regarded."

"Consider, moreover, how the fruit, ere it is formed, lieth potentially within the tree. Were the tree to be cut into pieces, no sign nor any part of the fruit, however small, could be detected. When it appeareth, however, it manifesteth itself, as thou hast observed, in its wondrous beauty and glorious perfection. Certain fruits, indeed, attain their fullest development only after being severed from the tree." *Bahá'u'lláh.*

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"O Son of Man! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty."

"O Son of Man! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life."

"O My Servant! Free thyself from the fetters of this world, and loose thy soul from the prison of self. Seize thy chance, for it will come to thee no more."

From "The Hidden Words" of Bahá'u'lláh.

True Civilisation

"The civilisation so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men. . . . If carried to excess, civilisation will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of

moderation. . . . The day is approaching when its flame will devour the cities. . . ." *Bahá'u'lláh.*

"True civilisation will unfurl its banner in the midmost heart of the world whenever a certain number of its distinguished and high-minded sovereigns—the shining exemplars of devotion and determination—shall, for the good and happiness of all mankind, arise, with firm resolve and clear vision, to establish the Cause of Universal Peace. They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. This supreme and noble undertaking—the real source of the peace and well-being of all the world—should be regarded as sacred by all that dwell on earth. All the forces of humanity must be mobilised to ensure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant. In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armaments of every government should be strictly limited, for if the preparations for war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicion of others. The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world, it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure." *Abdu'l-Bahá.*

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"And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." *Isaiah.*