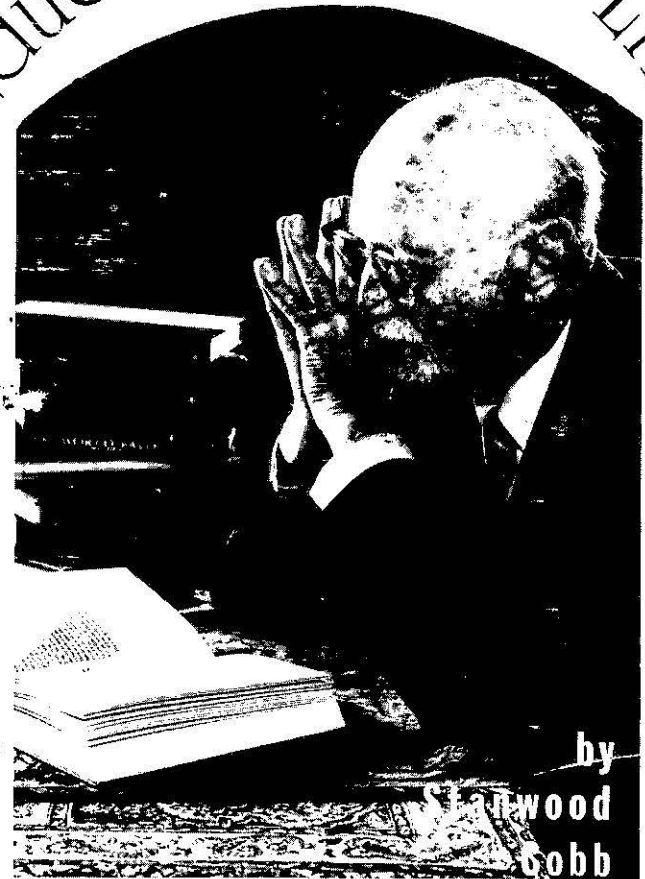


Thoughts

on

Education and Life



by

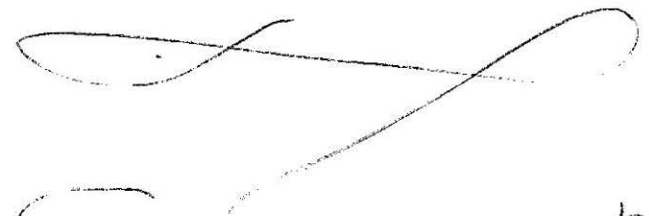
Stanwood  
Cobb

*Best wishes*

THOUGHTS ON  
EDUCATION AND LIFE

by  
Stanwood Cobb

*Best wishes*

A decorative flourish consisting of a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the right end and loops back down to the left.

*Stanwood Cobb*

THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND LIFE

Price \$3.90

AVALON PRESS  
Box 9941  
Washington, D.C. 20015

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Printed in  
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PART I

WHAT IS WRONG  
WITH  
EDUCATION TODAY?

There was a time when teaching was one of the most honored and sought-for professions. But today the most able and ambitious youth, for the most part, are drafted into business, industry, law and medicine. What education needs is more gifted and dedicated educators -- men and women able to arouse interest and guide their students into pleasurable achievement. Any educator who loves his subject deeply can inspire interest and achievement in his pupils. Today too many teachers in our secondary schools and colleges are time-servers, not sufficiently dedicated to their subject or to their students. As a result of this, subjects which might be made interesting are reduced to uninspiring drills.

The general consensus of high school students is that their work is boring. This does not need to be so. In fact, it is very important that the secondary period of education be made inspiring, sending students on to college eager to acquire more knowledge.

An Italian-American teacher of history of religions in a Wisconsin high school to whose senior class I recently lectured had cultivated this eager attitude in his students and I praised him for it. "Well," he said, "if students do not get aroused and awakened in high school, they will go through college as automatons." Alas, this is only too truly the case,

Secondary education should be a more independent unit, not merely an adjunct of the university. It should have some freedom to formulate its own arts and skills. Its very name -- secondary school, preparatory school -- displays the problem it labors under, of being subsidiary to the college. It should do more to prepare for vocations, so that youth who cannot afford or do not care to go to college can have some definite vocational skills, aptitudes and guidance.

India, in seeking to reconstruct her educational system, described in her 1953 Report of the Secondary Education Committee, described education at this level as "too bookish

and mechanical, stereotyped and rigidly uniform. The stress of examinations, the over-crowded syllabus, the methods of teaching tended to make education a burden rather than a joyous experience to the youthful mind. . . . In most cases a rigid timetable and unduly detailed syllabus prescribed did not give the teachers sufficient opportunity for self-expression or for developing self-reliant and independent thinking in their pupils."

Let our own educators ponder as to how far this criticism of secondary education in India is applicable here. India has one advantage over us. She is starting anew, while this country, in order to make secondary education what it ought to be, must work arduously to reform old and entrenched patterns.

2

Not only must the quality of teachers be improved, but the quality of methodology also needs vast improvement. Textbook memorization for the purpose of recitation and exams so usurps the students'

time and attention that they have little time to think. Both students and professors admit this sad fact as the writer calls upon them to deny or confirm this assertion. They have little time to think! What a sad travesty of an educational system which is designed to arouse and train intelligence!

The author has made it a practice throughout life to stop for several minutes and meditate upon any important fact or truth gleaned from books, magazines, or newspapers. In that way we store it in our subconscious and also integrate it into our previously acquired knowledge store. In this way the new knowledge becomes a part of us, and thereby is immortalized from mere knowledge into the higher category of wisdom.

Many educational theorists today urge that recitations and exams consist of more than textbook regurgitations. Time should be devoted to discussions. Students love to discuss. So do we all. When, years ago, an exhaustive test was made of the progress in college of students from progressive prep

schools where discussions were the mode of the day, it was found that these students excelled all others in this fascinating approach to knowledge, the approach that enabled Socrates and Plato to guide their contemporaneous and future centuries in the noble art of thinking.

In India, which has the great opportunity of starting afresh in education, special attention has been given to "substituting individual creative thinking and studying for the former practice of rote-learning and excessive dependence on memorization. A great deal of time and effort has been expended on reform of the examination system. Teacher training has advocated a switch from the old lecture methods to free and open discussion." \*/

3

An even more important change must be made in the set up of the

---

\*/ "India's Roots of Democracy," Taylor, Ensminger, Johnson and Joyce Praeger.

whole educational system. It is a biological crime to suffocate the male up to the age of 28 in a plethora of texts and tests far beyond the time when nature has intended the male should play his part in the affairs of the world, and be involved in responsibilities to others as well as to himself.

This is a biological crime. It is totally unnecessary. The eight years of preschool and college can well be cut to six by weeding out a lot of totally unnecessary stuff from the curriculum.

Then graduate work should be cut to one year in situ, further learning and skills being obtained in actual apprenticeship, with evening classes or correspondence studies. Mao is transforming Chinese education in this direction. Are we going to watch the Chinese develop a superior type of education while we condemn youth to textbook and desk till the age of 28? Kruschef also changed the course of Russian education by requiring two years of actual work between prep school and college. Years ago Antioch College organized a successful system of part-time



study and part-time work. Let us get busy in this country and totally reconstruct an educational system against which youth is desperately rebelling.

Can the Science of Spirit  
Be Introduced into Education?

When, in 1913, as a teacher in the Travel School for Boys we were visiting in Paris Abdu'l Baha, supremely knowledgeable in all that concerns the life of man upon this planet, inquired, after asking about our work: "Do you teach things of the Spirit?" Not desiring to program my work in preparing boys for college, I simply answered: "No, there is not time for that."

With these seven words, I unwittingly condemned all modern education. Abdu'l Baha did not enter into any discussion of the subject. Why? Because of intuitive power, he realized it was not necessary. He knew that my answer, my denial of time for the Spiritual in education, would rankle in my heart and form its own condemnation.

So here, sixty years after this simple discussion, we are putting on paper a discussion of the subject which we did not undertake with Abdu'l Baha in 1913.

The place of the Spiritual in education -- has it any place? Should it have any place? If Spirit is a reality, it is the unchanging, eternally creative force behind all phenomenal existence. Which, then, is more worthy of study -- material existence as created from the plane of Spirit, or the Spiritual Creative Force upon which all phenomena depend for their existence?

No time for the Spirit? Shall we, as Abdu'l Baha once remarked, dig deep into the earth to find bones with which to reconstruct history, while neglecting utterly in our educational system the study of the laws of the Spirit? Which is the more important? We will allow the reader to decide this question for himself.

\* \* \*

As this book goes to press, word comes of remarkable experiments that have been made in the New Canaan public grammar school by its principal Stephen E. Rubin. His innovation, which seems by now to be proved eminently successful, consists primarily of separating the tool subjects -- mathematics and language -- from the arts and sciences cultural subjects. By special investigation of the precise steps required for mastery of the drill subjects, and by an ungraded programming system which insures to every normal student the mastery of these drill subjects, Rubin seems to show the way to overcoming the terrifically high ratio of failures in these subjects, failures accumulating in the grammar grades and passing on into high school and college, to vitiate much of the work done there.

In the cultural subjects, also, Rubin takes new steps. Success in these fields, Rubin thinks, depends "not so much on mastery of specific skills as on broad talents of comprehension, imagination, and even sociability. Sharing insights and experiences with other children enriches the minds of all."

It would seem that Rubin has made a monumental advance for public school education. These principles that he has attempted to prove viable for the public school were implicit in the "progressive education" of the twenties and thirties, as carried out by superior educators and "progressive" private schools.

All success to this gifted educator whose school has been visited by 5,000 educators from across the country. If he can find ways to ensure for every student mastery of the drill subjects and actual enjoyment of the cultural subjects, he has opened the way for perfection of our public school system, a perfection which is bound to reach up into higher education and produce significant results there.

Let us continue diligently such perfecting of our educational system, until the time comes when every student actually enjoys his schooling. "Progressive education" proved that this was possible in private schools. Rubin is showing that it may be possible in the public school system.

So let us look forward to that ideal time when all students will actually enjoy their education and cease to feel it as a boring experience which somehow must be gone through in life.

Education shares with religion the important task of perfecting human nature on this planet. It can no longer be looked at as the monopoly of the privileged classes. It is this universal proportion of education, first endeavored in this cradle of democracy, America, that presents much of the present day problems in this country. These problems do not exist elsewhere, because elsewhere -- save in Russia and China -- no actual mass education is endeavored. We Americans have been, and still are, pioneers in the field of universal culture. Therefore, it is no wonder that our educational system faces difficulties. These obstacles are because of the very growth and progress of our educational institutionalism. And undoubtedly they will all be successfully overcome, in that day when education shares fully with religion its task to create a better world.

INTRODUCING SPIRITUAL SCIENCE

INTO EDUCATION

Spiritual qualities and values have in the past been something up in the sky, something for religious people to think, dream and pray about, but of little concern for the practical man who chooses to deal with and believe in those laws of matter which we call science. Here one is on solid ground.

When a well-proved scientific law is asserted, it is accepted and applied to daily life to the advantage of one and all. What is now needed is a scientific study of spiritual laws and values, so supported by evidence as to be beyond denial. How can this be done? It can be done by case-study -- a study of every type of spiritual experience, powers and values, gathering irrefutable evidence to weigh the scales against man's unbelief.

This is the way Professor Rhine for 30 years investigated psychic phenomena, a study that eventuated in irrefutable proof of the existence and value of these powers. Now it is time that the spiritual area of human life be scientifically investigated, to attain irrefutable proof of the existence and value of these powers.

How can this be done? By scientific case-study. Let us take for example the spiritual healings at Lourdes. For years they have been denied or unconsidered by the medical profession. To offset this negative attitude, Lourdes required medical certification before and after healing, and lately has installed two physicians on the grounds.

Let us study these laws that apply on the plane of causation -- the Spiritual plane. If the laws that apply to matter are important for man to know and use, how much more important are the laws which operate on the spiritual and causal plane, laws which matter itself implicitly obeys.

How does this apparent miracle come about? It is up to science to study into this higher field of existence, discover its laws, and add this to the vast area of certified knowledge of concern in our material existence. This Cosmic knowledge would then, by the sheer nature of things, begin to creep into our educational curriculum, perhaps in due time coming to be their dominant factor. For what,

of all things, is the greatest need and desire of all humans but the successful deployment of their abilities.

The world's religions have presented these laws, each taking a different angle of the same Truth. The Hebrews saw it as righteousness, the Taoists as harmony, the Buddhists as moderation, the Hindus as self-realization, the Christians as love, the Moslems as obedience, the Mormans as integrity, the Christian Scientists as wholeness, the Bahai's as justice. St. Paul said, "O Christ, I die unto myself daily in order that I may live in Thee." And by thus connecting himself daily with Supreme Reality was able to lead a miraculous life and to lay the foundations for evangelical Christianity.

Lives guided by the Spirit down through the ages present abundant material in proof of the so-called miraculous power of the Spirit in human affairs. The story of Evangelism is full of such incidents. And today Norman Vincent Peal organizes his successful "Foundation for Christian Living" upon the case

study of lives which had become failures both financially and in health, turned into success by obedience to Spiritual and Cosmic laws.

This is not the place to build up evidence of the possibility of getting Cosmic guidance. But we have seen miraculous instances directly of this in our own life, and in the lives of others to whom we have taught the techniques of such guidance. Gandhi was under guidance at all times in his later career, a guidance by means of which he, more than any other individual, brought about the independence of India.

Think what it would mean if all our statesmen and leaders were under such guidance, as indeed many have been, to the great advantage of society. And think what it would mean if every individual were thus saved from the unfortunate consequences of making wrong decisions.

These spiritual values are all facets of the same Truth, which is how the Universe works. Is this not worthy of earnest scientific study?

Spiritually is not something in the clouds. It is something quite down to earth. And if success and happiness in life are important, then these Cosmic laws which bring this about are important. They are more important, in fact, than any other body of knowledge. When will humanity come to this all-important realization?

2

At present religion is rigorously excluded from the curricula of public school education. This is because, due to the multitudinousness of religious denominations, no one religion can be selected to the exclusion of others. So public education leaves religious indoctrination to the church. This divorce is unavoidable under the present situation.

But what we are advocating here is not the teaching of religious, but scientific exploration of those great Cosmic laws which we call spiritual. And while there are many varieties of religion, there are no variations in the

Cosmic laws which govern life, that of the individual as well as of solar systems and constellations. Laotze in China, 2,500 years ago, founded his doctrine of Taoism on these Cosmic laws. His wisdom guided China into perennial paths of peace, and helped to endow this oriental country with a non-aggressiveness which endowed it with the longest existence of any country in history -- 2500 B.C. to 1975 A.D. The next longest duration of nationality is that of Egypt, also a peace-loving, non-aggressive country.

This correlation of peacefulness and durability was not accidental. It was because, as Laotze would say, that is how the universe works.

Laotze taught also the application of this law of cosmic harmony to individual lives, and there are those in this country who study Taoism in order to discover how to achieve without strain.

There is no reason why the study of these cosmic laws should be excluded from the field of education. In fact, there is every reason to give this cosmic

subject primary attention. It could come under the heading of psychology, which deals with individual behaviorisms. What is more important, in this field of study, than how the individual can best relate himself to the Universal?

Let us repeat, there are no differentiations in Spirituality. There is only one kind of Spirituality, and that is obedience to Cosmic laws. What are these laws and what are the values they produce in individual lives? Attention given by science to the study of these laws, and by education to the inculcation of them, would change the course of history.

Imagine for the moment that the Church had been as able to dominate education in the 19th century as it had been in the Middle Ages. In that case the discoveries and laws of what we call science would have been excluded from the curriculum, with the result that our magical technological achievements could not have taken place.

But today the tables have turned. It is technological science which now dominates the field of human

thought and study, to the undermining and weakening of the power of Spirit.

Unfortunately, we are today incapable of grasping the nature of man's complete spiritual capacity, and the powers and values it will produce when in full fruition. Let us repeat, these powers are part of man's endowment and represent the third stage of his development, the first two stages being (1) the physical development of man's machine and (2) the development of the mind. This is the destined pattern of life upon this planet -- and undoubtedly upon all planets where intelligent life exists. Perhaps beings in other planets are looking across space to pity us for being so far behind our planetary schedule.

Future people, looking back, will rejoice in seeing how little by little cosmic science began to come into its own parity with technological science, to lead the way to the fulfillment of man's final development upon the planet.

History will then show how little by little man began to develop his inner sight, his spiritual perception, until finally the study of the material sciences, which in themselves are awe-inspiring, were matched with still more ardent and successful study of the spiritual sciences that deal with the inner laws regulating man's conduct of character.



HOMOCULTURE

The cultivation of man  
to his utmost potentiality

Reprint of booklet

Chief among the forces which have forced the present system of education are those derived from the spiritual consciousness bestowed upon the world by Christ. Implicit in His teachings was the sacredness of each and every person -- no matter how humble -- as an immortal soul whose destiny was pregnant with illimitable meanings, and whose perfect development was an obligation upon the social group.

Christ taught that we are our brother's keeper. And in the name of Christ -- for the first time in the history of the Mediterranean world -- education became imbued with democratic ideals. The monastic schools of the Middle Ages were open to all, regardless of class distinction. Saintly rulers like Charlemagne and Alfred felt the obligation to bestow education upon even the humble classes, so that they might develop to the full capacity of their spiritual being.

At the close of the 18th century Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker, became inspired with the vision and

obligation to educate the children of the poor, so that they might have direct access to the Word of God with all its perfecting and developmental forces. The history of education points to this vision of Lancaster, put into organized form in the Royal Lancasterian Society, as the beginning of free universal education, not only in England but also in this country.

If so potent an influence has emanated, by mere implication, from the Teachings of Christ, it is clearly to be seen the Baha'i Faith that upholds a universal civilization and contains a wealth of explicit directions regarding education, also exerts a revolutionary and momentous effect upon directive homoculture.

One universal system of culture must eventually encompass the whole world, a common curriculum, a common aim, a common purpose underlying the distinctive educational expression of each nation.

What will be the nature of this new cosmic education which will encompass the whole world in the new age?

#### The Favorable Soil for the Cultivation of Personality

The underlying thought that inspires and directs this universal education is homoculture -- that is, the scientific cultivation of man to the point of his most complete perfectibility: just as agriculture's is the perfecting of the earth's ability to produce, or as horticulture is the training of trees to bear the highest degree and quality of fruitage.

Educators must realize the sacredness of individuality. Each child, upon coming first to school, differs from another both in the effect of its past environment upon it and in the quality and destiny of its gifts and faculties. The aim of education should be to equalize the opportunities of cultural environment for every child, but to skillfully differentiate the training of each child

in accordance with its capacities, tastes, and vocational and cultural trends.

True religion has the effect upon education of accentuating the qualities of sympathy, understanding, and appreciation. One of the chief functions of the educator is to discover and train the particular genius in each child. Professional wisdom and skill are employed to the utmost to assist in such analysis and development. Moreover, the atmosphere of kindness and mutual sympathy existing between teachers and pupils and between the pupils themselves, is such as to encourage rather than discourage the expression of individual differences and gifts. No one is derided, no matter how unique or out of the ordinary be his particular quality of thought and action. Such a spiritually fostering environment furnishes a favorable soil for the cultivation of personality to its fullest and richest perfection.

### The Chief Function of Education

Closely related to the development of individual talents is the important question of character training. What is of greater value to the unfolding life of the growing child than the formation of a character which shall be ennobled with the qualities of integrity, earnestness, responsibility, serviceableness and cooperation; a character free from egotism and completely qualified for harmonious living?

Every individual, religion teaches, has a dual nature. On the one hand he is inclined by the animal side of his nature to traits of selfishness, greed, brutality, and sensuality. On the other hand, he is inclined by the spiritual side of his nature to traits of kindness, love, service, purity, harmony and cooperation.

The chief function of education, therefore, is to aid the child to develop to the utmost his spiritual qualities while ruling, subordinating, and sublimating his animal

tendencies. "There comes a time in the development of character," said 'Abdu'l-Baha, "when nobility of expression becomes habitual. We then hardly have to try to be good." But it is a long step from the weak and ignorant child, full of careless and selfish tendencies, to the mature man or woman clothed in the wisdom and power of a spiritualized character.

Baha'i schools include spiritual training as part of their program. Children are taught spiritual precepts such as inspire and control behavior. They realize themselves as immortal souls on the quest of perfection. They know that their actions produce results that never end, that they can never escape the consequences of their own evil doing, that reward and punishment on the spiritual plane are as certain as the seasons and as the daily rising and setting of the sun. These truths they learn as the most important lessons in the evolution of character and the guidance for daily living.

Thus children are trained gradually to control and direct their actions from within, basing their deeds on ideals of spiritual perfection. They are taught to act to please God rather than man. They are helped to become unselfish, cooperative, harmonious; to realize that the undue expression of the ego is the worst thing that can happen, and that the self is their worst enemy -- the only "Satan." In this way they learn to control themselves not only outwardly in facing the world, but also in their unseen actions.

This education makes use of the spiritual training of children not only to insure security and peace within the nation but also to inculcate those glorious and all-embracing principles of world unity enunciated by Baha'u'llah which will stabilize civilization under the new dispensation. The children and youth of such schools, instead of learning from their books of history to fear and hate each other, imbibe ideals of world order and universal brotherhood. From the cradle up they are trained to look upon all the people of the

world as their brothers. They are given the vision of the essential unity, relationship and interdependence of all human beings. Thus they become in the course of their education world citizens in the fullest meaning of the word, capable of sharing in and directing the world civilization for which they are being prepared.

#### Reconciliation of Science and Religion

A serious obstacle to character development in current education has been the prevalence of scientific materialism. The encroachment of science upon religion at the end of the nineteenth century has played a large part in the chaos and disintegration of civilization in the twentieth century. The sharp cleavage between spiritual aspiration and belief on the one hand and scientific knowledge and certainty on the other not only has resulted in depriving education of all spiritual impulse; but worse than that it has caused, so to speak, duality and strife

within the individual. While in one direction the average educated man of today is seeking instinctively for that faith and guidance which alone can make life livable, in another direction he is held in rapt admiration of the miraculous precision and cosmic scope of a science which has seemed entirely hostile to religion. This struggle within the individual has been reflected in the outer life of the world. The old moralities based upon the spiritual teachings of the past have been discarded. And the empirical search for a practical morality based upon methods of trial and error has proved disastrous both to the individual and to society.

The Baha'i Faith asserts the absolute unity of science and religion. "Any religion which denies the plain truth of science," said 'Abdu'l-Baha, "is not truth, but merely superstition." The universe is one. The truth concerning it can be but one. There cannot be a truth about the universe which is scientific, and another opposing truth about the universe which is religious.

Just as there is but one universe, so there is but one truth. And it should be the aim of the educator to comprehend and to convey this unified body of truth to his students.

But the blame for this feud has not been entirely on the side of religion. Science has been equally dogmatic and fallacious. It has frequently asserted as facts ideas which were merely theoretical and which were later proved to be untrue. Now science is beginning to show a more reasonable attitude. A healthy skepticism is springing up, and the greatest scientists are beginning to wonder whether scientific knowledge is as definite as has been supposed. Many former dogmas of biology, of astronomy, chemistry, physics have been exploded. New discoveries and postulates all tend to point toward the unity of being; and in that unity of being all matter seems to dissolve into pure force. What is this Force, the primal mystery of which lies back of all the changing phantasmogoria of the material universe?

Today many of the world's greatest scientists, even though averse to proclaiming a belief in God as personified in the religious teachings of the past, admit a belief in both a Universal Force and a Plan which seems to underlie in a causal and evolutionary way all phenomena. They see the universe in terms of a Force so majestic, eternal, vast and illimitable, so perfect in plan and execution from microcosm to macrocosm, that the human intellect must stand in reverence and awe before this august, unknowable Mover of all things.

In this universal culture, science and religion are absolutely reconciled. Reason and faith are joined in a close working union. Every individual should become both scientific and spiritually minded. Baha'u'llah gave the highest praise to the work of scientists, and said that they are the pillars that support society and civilization. In the Baha'i plan for world civilization there are no clergy, and scientific and educational professions are

hold the positions of highest  
teem in the community.

Education Is A  
Spiritual Law

Current education is open to  
rave criticism on the grounds of  
its failure to elicit interest and  
earnest effort on the part of youth.  
But Baha'i students show a remark-  
ably earnest spirit of devotion to  
their studies. This is because the  
acquisition of knowledge is one of  
the religious duties of Baha'i  
youth. Baha'u'llah taught that  
to acquire learning was incumbent  
upon all: "Knowledge is like unto  
wings for the being (of man) and  
is like a ladder for ascending.  
To acquire knowledge is incumbent  
upon all, but of those sciences  
which may profit the people of the  
earth, and not such sciences as  
begin in mere words and end in  
mere words. . . . The real treasury  
of man is his knowledge. Know-  
ledge is the means of honor,  
prosperity, joy, gladness, happi-  
ness, and exultation"; and 'Abdul-  
Baha re-emphasized this obligation

of youth to acquire knowledge and  
intellectual training to the high-  
est degree possible, so as to be  
"the means of illumination and  
unlimited progress to the world."  
Therefore Baha'is from the earliest  
childhood realize it to be a  
religious obligation to acquire  
knowledge. They seek to expand  
their being to the fullest capacity  
so as to become worthy citizens of  
the new age, able both to compre-  
hend and to administer the world  
principles of Baha'u'llah and if  
possible to contribute to the  
expansion and progress of civili-  
zation.

The new education is seen as  
a spiritual process. That is to  
say, it is a complete unfolding  
and perfect functioning of the  
human soul. The traditional  
education has concerned itself  
chiefly with the intellect, which  
is after all merely one of the  
tools used by the human soul in  
its functioning upon this planet.  
This is a very limited view of  
education and necessarily has  
produced faulty and limited  
results. In fact, modern scien-  
tific intellectual education has



come near to defeating its own end; it does not arouse in the average student a desire for attaining to the perfection of his own highest powers. The stimulation, the motive, is lacking.

But now, with the renewed vision of man made in the image of God and dowered with almost unlimited gifts and powers, we see in education the means of developing that perfection which God destines for each soul. That is why education is in reality a spiritual process.

The curriculum of the future, from primary up to graduate and professional courses, will be built around the central core of a practical understanding of the universe and world in which we live. The physical sciences will be taught under the comprehensive aspect of the unity of knowledge. In the same unified way the social sciences will be taught as the history of human culture, with due reference to all influences -- geographic, climatic, political, economic, social and spiritual -- which have organized and formed

humanity into its present patterns. In all of these studies the objective is a knowledge that will lead to further progress for humanity, in accordance with Baha'u'llah's statement: "Teach not those things that begin in mere words and end in words, but rather those things that pertain to human progress."

The study of languages will be reduced to a minimum by the creation of a universal auxiliary language to become effective throughout the world. Only the native language and this auxiliary language need be taught in the future curriculum. No ancient nor modern languages will be required, though they may be studied as electives.

Algebra, geometry and higher mathematics, like ancient languages, will be relegated to the category of electives. Meaningless drudgery will be eliminated from school work. The whole curriculum will be reduced in quantity. Academic assignments in the elementary and secondary schools will not require, for the average pupil, more than five hours work a day including all the time necessary both for preparation and

recitation of lessons. (The quantity of mental work done under the existing system is excessive and in many cases actually injurious to the mind as well as to the body, said 'Abdu'l-Baha.)

The acquisition of an art, craft, trade or profession will enable every person to fit into the social structure.

The most important feature of Baha'i education is its universal quality. Intellectual and cultural isolations, provincialisms, meaningless and obstructive traditions and superstitions are transcended. The foundations of the future World Order must be laid in the schools, and its stability will be assured by the ideals and principles in which the youth of the world are trained.

Nationalistic educational systems must not be permitted to nourish a poisonous and militaristic jingoism on dogmas of untruth, hatred, fear, pride and vainglory. Youth must not be taught that their highest duty to the state is to take part in competitive

enterprises the success of which depends upon the slaughter of millions of innocent youths of other countries. Rather must they come to realize, through education, their sacred obligations to uphold at all points the cause of universal peace, of world unity and brotherhood. They must learn to advance by means of individually righteous and creative living, as well as by collective activities, the prosperity and happiness of all mankind.

MESSAGE TO YOUTH

by  
Stanwood Cobb

Reprint of  
Commencement Address

Education is primarily for the purpose of absorbing and carrying forward the world's accumulated knowledge. But has this body of planetary knowledge grown too vast in recent years to be mastered by the individual scholar? Is it possible for all of us to gain a world viewpoint and vision?

Can We Master the  
World's Knowledge?

Yes, it is still possible for a human being of intellectual intent to master the world's knowledge. How can one master all the knowledge of the world today? Plainly it must be by a process of selection, of elimination, of condensation. We can get to know something in every field of knowledge. It is not a mere smattering of miscellaneous uncollected facts which I am advocating, but a condensed abbreviated view of whole fields of knowledge.

H. G. Wells did a tremendous thing for us in this direction when he proved the possibility of

condensing the whole world's history into one volume actually attractive to lay people. This sort of condensation must be achieved in every field of human knowledge. Wells attempted it again in his Outline of Science, but failed there because he made his treatment too miscellaneous. Thus, a great opportunity lies open for someone else to create the ideal resumé and condensation of the great field of natural sciences.

Many universities are now attempting to condense great fields of knowledge and learning into brief panoramic courses for college freshmen, known as survey courses. These interesting courses cover, or intend to cover, the whole field of the natural and social sciences. Their purpose is to so acquaint the college freshman with the vast field of human knowledge in order that he can more intelligently choose for himself the fields that he will specialize in during his subsequent college years. This purpose is good. These courses have their value. But as yet, the attempt to acquaint the college freshman with the

whole field of human knowledge is a bit abortive and imperfect in its organization and achievement.

One reason is that youth come to college already alienated from learning by the routine methods of secondary education. Instead of being eager for more knowledge, they have become averse to intellectual effort. Therefore, they present a poor field for the development of these survey courses in universal knowledge.

Secondly, within the college structure itself, there is lacking the proper academic equipment for the presentation of such courses. Specialists in each field tend to dislike to abbreviate their knowledge and bring it within the comprehension of the freshman mentality. This attitude of theirs is a mistaken one. There could be no greater use of their intellectual powers than in awakening the mind of youth to the gigantic and absorbing potentialities of each respective field of knowledge.

If I had a college of my own in which to experiment at will, I would enlarge such survey courses into a general field of universal knowledge running through the whole four years. I would see to it that the college student, upon graduation, had a good bird's eye view and understanding of the great basic principles of every important field of human knowledge. He should know the nature of the sun and stars, their laws; the structure and history of the planet we live upon; the story of life upon this planet; the nature of its chemical structure and its physical laws. He should also know the story of human life upon the planet; the formation and evolution of human organization into societies and peoples; the development of civilization; the laws, insofar as we understand them, of our social and political life upon the planet.

A person so educated, thoroughly aware of the great fields of human knowledge, ardent-minded, eager to learn more from year to year -- him I should call, and him only, a truly educated and cultured

personality. The amount of his knowledge need not be large. The scope of his knowledge and his interests should be universal.

This, then, is what I urge upon youth. Go forth to college or to life intent upon so enlarging the scope of your knowledge as to include all that is of importance to humanity. Make consistent and intelligent use of all the great avenues of learning that lie about you -- newspapers, magazines, books, lectures, radio, television, conversation with people of achievement. Go on ever learning, ever expanding the horizon of your knowledge. You will have many years upon this planet during which to acquire knowledge. May your appetite for learning never diminish. As in the case of all true scholars, may you be as eager-minded at 80 as you are at 18.

Learning To Enhance Your  
Creative Power

There is a truly spiritual quality in learning, in this unfolement of our intellectual powers.

Man's power for intellection is a ray from the Great Cosmic creative force with which God has endowed him -- that same force and power with which God has created the universe. God places a faint reflection of it in man, that he may have the power both of understanding and of improving the universe he lives in. Think you that man could come to learn the secrets of nature hidden to the animal and to the savage, but patent to the scholar, if he had not in him a spark of that Infinite Power which created nature and her hidden laws?

Truly the creative power of the intellect has a spiritual dignity raising man from the plane of the animal and making him akin with the Divine. The universe, the infinite creation of Infinity Itself, is brought within the comprehension of man only through the light of that Creative Spirit which God, in His grace, causes to descend upon the mind of man to fructify and illumine it.

True learning, then, should bring us nearer to God rather than to obscure Him from our

vision. It is only false learning, the dry dust of human vanity, which, in the words of the great French positivist Comte "Chases God across the boundaries of the universe." The more we learn of the great laws of nature and the universe and the more we broaden the horizon of our knowledge the nearer we come to perceiving that majestic and driving Force which creates, sustains and guides our universe. The greatest scholars are the most humble in their human awe before the grandeur of that power which they perceive to be the unknown Planner of the universe.

Let your learning run parallel with, therefore, and not counter to your spiritual development. Let all your learning enhance your spiritual conception of life and the universe. May it bring you nearer to God and nearer to your fellow men. May learning make you more humble, more intuitive, more deeply spiritual, more kindly.

### Education for World Progress

I have unfolded to you one of the great purposes of the training of the mind -- the purpose of self-realization and self-development. But there is a much greater value and purpose in the training of the mind and the acquisition of knowledge, and that is its use in furthering human progress. Baha'u'llah, the great Persian seer, said that we should study not those subjects which begin in words and end in words, but study those things which pertain to human progress.

It seems incredible that human beings never had a concept of progress until very recently -- about 300 years ago. It was in the Intellectual Awakening of Europe -- about the 18th century -- that the concept of human progress arose. Then, for the first time, thinkers began to study history from the point of view of human progress. And they began to look ahead and to conceive more humane patterns for humanity.

Then came the great discovery of evolution. This still further strengthened the tendency of

thinkers in every field of human knowledge to focus upon the concept of progress, development, and evolution within respective fields.

Were it not for this possibility of human perfecting the acquisition of knowledge would be little more than an idle fancy leading to the knowledge of curious facts about the past and present. It would be of no more real value than prowess in picture puzzles, the solution of crossword puzzles, or the working out of solutions in detective stories. The real purpose of our intellectual development, then, should be the attaining of a knowledge and power capable of advancing human progress.

#### The Coming Race

A new race -- more magnificently endowed and more spiritually attuned to the Universe -- is on the blueprints of Destiny.

Ambition, the will to succeed, has hitherto dominated human life on this planet. Aspiration, the will spiritually to develop and

to serve, will be the dominant motivation of the future.

How can such a race be educated and trained by the old curriculum! Youth must be given a new vision of life, new directives, new knowledge of the Spirit, new conceptions of success.

The study of the science and history of the past is helpful, but this is not sufficient to create a better future. We shall also need vision and futurity. We shall need definite goals of a New World Order in order to inspire the motivations and actions of youth.

And in addition to the material sciences, we shall need to teach the Science of Spirit.

What is this Science of Spirit? That is for future man to ascertain and fervently apply to all life upon this planet.



Our Debt to the Past

In conclusion, I would urge you to develop your intellect to the utmost not only for your own sake, but also for the sake of humanity. Go on ever increasing your powers as a human being. Dedicate these powers not solely to your self-interest, but to the progress of mankind. Be idealists. Let your years of life count something for humanity as a whole.

You stand today as beneficiaries, not only of your parents, but also of all who have in the past and present helped to advance the world. If you make use of these great blessings achieved for us by thinkers and toilers of the past, only to enhance your self-interest, you will prove disloyal to your trust and to the great expenditure which the public has made in giving you an education.

But I know you will not prove disloyal to your educational trust. May the benediction of all the great thinkers of the past and the blessings of the Divine Power itself be with you throughout your lives

to inspire, guide, and enhance your intellectual and spiritual development.

And above all, may you learn how to live joyously, greeting each day with gratitude for being a living, vital, directive part of this great universe into which you have been born, You have a cosmic power and responsibility, as a consequence of your cosmic gift of consciousness and creativeness.

CULTIVATING THE SOCIAL VIRTUES

Reprint from  
Baha'i Magazine,  
1928

"In the scheme of human life the teacher and his system of teaching plays the most important role, carrying with it the heaviest responsibilities and most subtle influence."

-- "Abdu'l-Baha

## THE SOCIAL VIRTUES

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It takes a very skillful and devoted teacher to turn the energies of children -- naturally egoistic, selfish, and at times cruel -- into channels of sympathy, helpfulness, and social-mindedness.

The individual development of the child, and the freedom of the child, principles so vigorously advocated and practiced by progressive educators, do not imply a necessary abandonment of the child to individualism, egoism, selfishness. On the contrary, among the ten points which by their own vote educators deem most important to the new education stands the principle of developing in the child the social virtues -- to be kindly, cooperative, and serviceable.

The world has suffered much from individualism gone rampant. Such is not at all the aim of the progressive educator, who has a vision of a more sympathetic society, less egocentric, in which motives of service and kindness will be prevalent. On every hand we see signs of the

dawn of a civilization the keynote of which shall be cooperation. Already it is affecting the world of industry and commerce, and even that of agriculture, which is most prone to individualism and most injured by it.

It has been pointed out by those who consider this subject of cooperation that in a group thoroughly cooperating it is not a question of the individual sacrificing something of its own good for the sake of the others. It is a question of each individual laying on the table his own plans and ideas in order that from consultation a larger and better idea and plan shall result. Thus cooperation, when truly practiced, enhances the powers and achievements of each individual by enabling him to function in plans of greater vision and perfection than could have been worked out by any one member of the group, the aid and support of the group being always at hand. The group mind -- planning, creating, and achieving -- can accomplish

marvels of which the individual is incapable. For instance, an example of this in the life of commerce and industry is the laboratory work being done in electrical research by groups of men working in cooperation, by means of which most important results have been and are being achieved, results which could hardly have been achieved by any individual, no matter how brilliant, working alone. The long-distance telephone, and the radio, for example, are largely the fruit of group inventiveness.

Therefore, it is clear that one of the most important qualifications for successful achievement in the coming civilization will be the power to harmonize with one's fellow men and to work cooperatively, submerging -- or, better speaking, sublimating -- the ego for the sake of group effort and achievement.

If this vision of the future be true, then one of the most important functions of the schools of today is to prepare for such a society. The child is prone to egotism. How can we help it to

sublimate that self-seeking ambition into attitudes which are social and into habits that are cooperative? On the other hand, are there any practices in current education which should be eliminated in order to accomplish this end -- practices which exaggerate the ego, the self-conceit, the vanity and striving, the desire for personal renown and exaltation regardless of others and even at their expense?

Can we not all testify, in looking back upon our educational career, to the evil effects of the competitive marking system? Especially is this so in the case of brilliant students pushed forward to attain high competitive ranks in the class or school and to become the recipients of prizes and public honors. Yes, this system tends to invoke personal ambition, personal vanity and pride, exaggerates the egocentric qualities, and makes cooperation difficult.

The true artist knows that the best work is never done under motives of competition with others,

but only under individual inspiration and the desire of self-expression. There is the story told in the Chinese classics of a wood carver whose work was beyond that of all others. When the Emperor Yao asked him how he did such beautiful work he replied, "When I have a task to perform, I go into meditation for three days in order to forget myself. Then, with no thought of personal ambition, I go to the forest, select the finest piece of wood, and do my carving."

It is that kind of effort which we wish to encourage in the children of our school today. Let them desire to excel, yes; but not others, only themselves. Let them surpass all their previous records. Let them attain the greatest triumphs imaginable, but triumphs within their own spiritual world; not triumphs over others, not competitive ranking which places them on eminence, and by natural consequence condemns others to a

lesser position in the public eye. \*/

In the progressive schools there is an effort made to prevent this development of personal vanity and ambition in the pupils and to lead their energies into channels of group activity and group achievement. The project is, indeed, a marvelous means of developing the social sense in children. Even in young children who are working out a project, egotism, self-consciousness, recalcitrance can be realized as social faults disturbing the group and are condemned by the group as a whole. It is not the school authority which punishes the child in such a case, but the public sanction on the part of the child's social group. Thus, from the very first, the most powerful sanctions and motives are brought

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\*/ In the North Shore Country Day School the creative work of children in art, literature, etc., when on display, remains anonymous. In this way personal pride and comparisons are avoided.

to bear upon the child -- those of its social group -- to produce in it the social graces and amenities.

In the subject matter of each grade, opportunity can be made for group expression. In geography, for instance, a class scrapbook may be made, the expression of the ability of the class as a whole instead of each pupil making one of his own in competition one with the other. In Decroly's schools the children maintain collections of materials available for the whole class, bringing contributions to it from time to time; and that collection can be drawn from by any child who is working on a subject which the collection can aid. How different is this practice from a method by which the child who could succeed in getting the best material would be ranked highest and be victorious over his classmates who had not been so successful!

In the giving of plays in progressive schools group action is sought rather than individual excellence. For instance, instead of a few children being picked to

perform who already have histrionic ability and expressiveness, the whole class or the whole group take part, each according to his or her ability, the more gifted children helping the less gifted ones in their memorizing and rehearsing. When the final performance comes off -- a play, a pageant, a demonstration of rhythmic -- it is a social event in which a whole room or a whole school take part. It is not a performance so arranged that a few brilliant individuals shine for the passive enjoyment of the rest. Just as the whole town of Oberammergau throbs and vibrates with its Passion Play, so the whole school feels itself expressed in dramatic or other performances in a progressive school. This feeling is carefully cultivated by the teachers. Individual achievement, while it is encouraged, is not held up before the school for appraisal and distinction. Great care is taken to keep away those fatal enemies of man's best self -- egotism and conceit.

Where the academic work is being accomplished by a group project or individual project,

competition is practically eliminated with all its vicious results. The children are not thinking how each one can surpass the other, nor what personal success they can achieve. Their minds and efforts are put upon the task as the end in itself. Even though there may naturally be some egocentric motives in their work, it is the business of the progressive educator to watch for such symptoms and try to overcome them, praising the social qualities and fostering their development.

A very excellent practice in progressive schools is that of letting the more brilliant pupils help the slower ones in different subjects of the academic program. A child who knows its tables perfectly may do the very kindly act of drilling a poorer student in the tables instead of going on with some work which is of only selfish advantage to it.

In progressive schools, numerous enterprises are undertaken of a social value to the outside community. (Of course, such civic enterprises are not peculiar to progressive schools.

Many splendid things of this kind are being done in the public schools to develop the civic qualities in the children.) Two such activities might be described. In the Downers Grove School, children of the first and second grades undertook the project of clearing a public brook of debris and waste dumped along its banks. The point in which such a project in a progressive school differs from that in the ordinary school is that in the former type of school it is deemed important enough to form part of the academic program and it is not looked upon as an extra-curriculum activity which must find time apart from the regular program. In the Francis W. Parker School of Chicago, the children each winter have a toy hospital to which broken toys or cast-off paraphernalia are brought from the homes by the children, repaired or made over in the craft shop, and presented to children's hospitals at Christmas time. Even the parents join in this lovely project, coming in the evenings to help in the carpentry and woodwork; and the whole school vibrates to this motif for some weeks previous to Christmas. Many such civic

projects could be enumerated and described, but since they are not peculiar to progressive schools, it is not worth while to go further into this matter.

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Since progressive education aims at the all-around development of the child, it holds itself responsible as much for character training as for mental training. Our ideal average child will be honorable, sincere, self-reliant, responsible, of harmonious personality, sympathetic, serviceable; and in addition to these needed and admirable qualities we may expect a certain proportion of children to develop qualities of initiative and leadership.

Very good. The model child stands before us. But how attain it in actuality? It is easy to say how not to attain it. Children educated in an atmosphere of absolute and arbitrary authority, along the institutionalized methods which give no freedom and opportunity for the expression of personality, will not tend to manifest



the above-mentioned virtues. Of that we can be assured.

For, as Kilpatrick points out, character being the sum total of all our habits, we acquire in the way of character only what we have opportunity to practice. How can a child acquire the power of self-direction unless he has an opportunity to practice self-direction? The child, in order to develop a self-reliant and responsible character, must be allowed to make decisions. He must have opportunity to practice these good qualities. He must act in a social group, and in a social situation. How else can we expect him to develop the social, cooperative virtues?

It is clear that character-building in a progressive school, is not an isolated function of the educator, provided for under certain phases of the curriculum; but rather is an effort to make the whole daily, weekly, and monthly program of the school a training in moral living, full of opportunities for experiences in moral conduct.

Says Dr. Bamberger, in "Progressive Education and Character-Building": "The primary function of a progressive school, then, is not to teach arithmetic, nor languages, nor reading and the like, but to have children learn to make, to do, to create, to produce, to study, and to live together cooperatively and sympathetically."

In schools too crowded, too formal, too institutionalized, the employment of moral lectures, exercises, reading material and other devices, no matter how excellent or how thoroughly utilized, can never afford the opportunity and medium for character development such as the progressive schools afford through their smaller groups, their freedom of movement, their flexibility of program, their group projects, their self-government, their close cooperation with the home, and their study of and adaptation to the individual child which enables them to focus effort on any personality defect which appears in their pupils. In progressive

schools the development of personality has precedence over curriculum; and character is put before knowledge.

Whatever else be their limitations, it must be acknowledged that they are turning out splendid characters, solid, reliable, cooperative, possessed of the social virtues.

Victor E. Marriott, prominent in the field of Religious Education, gives in the magazine of that name a generous testimony to the work of progressive educators along the line of character training: "'Progressive' schools are frankly experimental. They do not start with a preconceived type of character to which all pupils are expected to conform. They confront pupils with situations in their daily round in school; they try to make the issues clear, and then trust to the judgment of the group. They are not convinced that our present standards of conduct represent the acme of development. They look for something better. They hope to release forces that shall produce a kindlier, more harmonious, and more creative individual than our present system of education is producing. The method

in which they trust is a way of freedom and bold adventure. The right, they believe, is not something to be treasured in a golden bowl, but something to be achieved."\*/

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The modern world of business and affairs puts character before cleverness as a qualification for employment and success. Inharmonious geniuses, in most lines of business, simply are not wanted. The world is strewn today with pitiful wrecks of humanity whose abilities should have assured them a high success, but whose lack of the social virtues were such that their post-educational career has proved a continuous retrogression so far as outer success is concerned.

Modern industry is geared so highly, so delicately, as to require teamwork of the most exacting kind.

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\*/ Religious Education, November 1927. "The Progressive Education Movement and Character Training."

Cooperativeness is the sine qua non. Arthur Pound, writing in the Atlantic Monthly on the human factor in modern industry, says regarding the qualifications of the desirable employee: "The indiscriminating hiring of mere hands and muscles is no more; selection of employees proceeds upon the basis of character, upon the adaptability of the applicant to fit into a system which demands steadfastness and dependability. The work depends upon men, less as doers of this or that particular thing, than as men of good intent who do what they have to do with a will."

Education is enlarging its scope to consciously include, as part of its obligation to society, the development of a properly social being. The report of a committee working under the direction of The Commonwealth Fund expressly says that "education, broadly conceived, is especially concerned with developing the habits of thought, emotional response, and behavior that are basic to the successful operating of a cooperative living."

For the individual, then, it is of the utmost importance to learn to control the tendency toward pride, self-seeking, and exploitation. In a monistic universe, the creation and the creature of one ruling Destiny and Power, it is evident that there is no room for private ambition and prowess. Sooner or later the egotist, the man of immense conceit and selfish ambition, must crash down in utter ruin and humiliation, else the universe would become an anarchy or warring wills and ambitions. Destiny knows how to use the personal efforts of selfish individuals to its own purposes. It extracts that good which can be had from them, but throws aside the empty vessel. Only the humble, only the harmonious, the cooperative individual, can permanently survive and flourish in a universe based upon law and order with harmonious interworkings of every part.

As for Society, can anyone fail to realize the vast importance to it of developing these social, these serviceable, these non-egoistic qualities in the child? In the past the world has gotten on, it is true,

through the progress made by the ambitions of its citizens pitted against each other, but it has limped and gone poorly. It has been subject to the chronic disaster of war, the direct result of egotism, of selfish competition, of the private ambition of individuals or of nationalities. The world must find a better foundation for its culture and civilization, or it will hardly survive the tremendous dangers of self-seeking competition which finds available for use the wholesale and subtle means of destruction being invented today.

Therefore, this effort of progressive education to cultivate the social virtues is in reality a spiritual effort. It is getting at the very essence of the spiritual nature and end of man, and training toward a better society. It is aiding the child's moral development more than sermons and preachments could do. It is producing a very beautiful atmosphere and spirit permeating the whole educational process, and is pointing out the one way, I believe, which

leads to character -- the habits of daily living in an environment conducive to nobility of soul.

Gertrude Hartman sums it up admirably when she says: "The future of democratic society depends upon the socialization of the schools. When they become practice communities in which young people through their growing years are trained to respond in desirable ways to social situations, when students are versed in solving social problems, when the curriculum is enriched by a broad social interpretation, we shall have the hope of creating a society capable of directing social changes instead of being overwhelmed by them."\*/

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\*/ The Social Studies - Progressive Education Reprint.

PART II

THOUGHTS ON LIFE

Selections from Editorials  
from Baha'i Magazine

### Creative Power of Spirit

The creative powers in us are, we are told, the gifts of the Spirit -- the functioning of that great Creative Force which built the universe and which constantly vitalizes it into progress.

When these gifts are used blasphemously, so to speak, for egoistic purposes only, contact is gradually cut off from the great Source of Power and these gifts either fail or are misdirected with consequent tragedy to the individual.

When on the other hand these gifts are used for the benefit of the world, and the contact with this Central Power remains unobstructed, the gifts increase in force and magnitude, guidance remains perfect, and the individual prospers and is able to aid humanity in an ever-increasing degree.

In the light of this reasoning, it is apparent that the greatest success comes to the individual in the path of service. This is a truth which humanity needs to deeply study and begin to acquire from birth.

Every child should be taught it as the most fundamental axiom of living. We shall have a different world when this spiritual principle is applied to all fields of human endeavor.

### The Transforming Power of Religion

Paganism was permeated with sexual depravity similar to that traditionally associated with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sexual laxity and indulgence were eating like a cancer into the core of the vitality of the Mediterranean culture. It had ruined the Greeks and was now reaching into the very heart of the Roman world, vitiating its ancient moralities and starting a current of degeneracy which pagan moralists were unable to prevent.

Now in the midst of all this evil there began to grow up little communities holding ideals dazzling in their beauty, chastity, and spiritual love.

The ideals were there in shining glory. But it took several generations for even these Christian

communities must begin to lead new lives wholly distinct from the pagan life about them. They must be born not of the flesh but of the spirit. They must endeavor to live the Christ-life, relying for help in their pilgrim's progress upon prayer and a sense of unity with the Christos.

What a marvelous appeal all this made to the innate spark of nobility in every man and woman! The poor, the down-trodden, the sensualist, the drunkard heard it and responded. Many in positions of social superiority, of wealth, of luxury, heard it and became attached.

Gradually complete communities grew up, isolating themselves from the pagan life about them. Communities well balanced; economically self-sufficing; representative of every strata of society; of various vocations, of various degrees of wealth.

Harmoniously and perfectly these early Christians learned to live together, in their common love for Christ and their earnest desire to follow in His steps.

Humanitarian institutions began to blossom out in these communities as a direct expression of the Christian doctrine of the love of God and man. The early Christians put forth every endeavor to bring it about that their communal life satisfied the ideals of service and cooperation which their souls acknowledged as divine truth.

Committees were formed for the care of the sick and needy; committees to distribute food and necessities to the poor; institutions to care for the orphans and widows.

In these Christian circles no longer did the law of the jungle hold -- that the race was to the swift and that the devil could take the hindermost. Now a livelihood was assured to every communicant. No one should suffer dire want while others possessed abundance. In the name of God the Father and of Christ the Son, all members of the living church were knit together in a brotherhood as efficacious in practice as it was glorious in concept.



And when the power of Rome came to an end at the assassination of the last Roman Emperor in 482 A.D., who was it that then took over the responsibilities of order and government throughout the Western Empire, including Gaul? It was to the Christian communities that all turned to then for the preservation of law and order. These communities were well organized, both in local and national degrees, and from now on -- as the brilliant Emperor Diocletian had foreseen when in 382 he had endeavored to exterminate these communities -- the pagan government ceased to exist, being taken over by Christianity which now became a secular as well as a religious power.

The Spiritual Springtime  
Abd'ul Bah'a

Religions are like the progression of the seasons of the year. When the earth becomes dead and desolate and because of frost and cold no trace of vanished spring remains, the springtime dawns again and clothes everything in a new

garment of life. . . . Each springtime that comes is the return of the springtime that has gone; this spring is the renewal of the former spring. Springtime is springtime no matter when or how often it comes.

The Divine Prophets are as the coming of spring, each renewing and quickening the teachings of the Prophets who came before Him. Just as all seasons of spring are essentially one as the newness of life, vernal showers and beauty, so the essence of the mission and accomplishment of all the Prophets is one and the same. . . . The Spiritual Springtime has come. Infinite bounties and graces have appeared. What bestowal is greater than this?

Power of Intuition

The higher wisdom which intuition brings to bear upon the problems of life is closely connected with those spiritual guidances which men and women have always sought, down through the ages, by means of prayer and earnest spiritual effort. The

higher self of man, which we may call his soul, by making contact through prayer with the Infinite Source of Wisdom, may secure a guidance which is impeccable.

There have been many individuals in the history of religious life upon this planet who have rightly managed all their affairs, even down to daily details, by means of such guidance. It is no uncommon phenomenon, if we measure it in terms of centuries; yet very rare if we measure it in terms of the habits and powers of contemporary men.

The inspiration of the artist, the intuition of the scientist and inventor, the guidance of the saint -- can we do anything by means of education to awaken, develop and train these powers? Certainly there is no process yet developed for accomplishing this -- no educational processes available in scholastic circles. Yet such means can be evolved, just as there have been evolved means for developing man's intellectual and aesthetic nature.

### One World

If we look ahead a few decades, a few centuries, we can conceive that the term "world" will be synonymous with humanity; that it will imply a human society which is homogeneous, coherent unified, not only culturally but psychically and spiritually. Then when we say "the world thinks this" -- "the world thinks that" -- it will actually be true that all humanity is moving as by one impulse and one aim.

Life would be miraculous in such a dispensation. For as the unity of many small nations into one greater empire such as Rome was able to build so mightily a civilization, what will be the result of the psychic unity of all races and peoples upon the planet?

The creative forces and effectiveness of humanity will be multiplied, not in arithmetic but in geometric ratio, by the coalescence of all the various minds and temperaments of the world into one strong, coherent force, into one vast psychic unit of culture.

Then we may conceive of the world as having but one soul. The world will be synonymous with planetary life, as a whole. It will be a unitary Being, multitudinous in its component parts but one in its spirit and directive forces and energy.

This is the golden age, perhaps, of which the poets have dreamed and philosophers philosophied. The golden age of man in his full maturity as the son of God. Then our planet achieves its final destiny.

What other planets and worlds are achieving, we do not know. Certainly life is evolving throughout the universe. Quite probably it is evolving in various planets of our own solar system, evolving in ways unique to each planet. Some day it may be our earthly destiny to merge into a still greater unity -- that of our planetary system.

The time may indeed come when other planets will join hands with this planet in ways of connection not yet possible to foresee, each planetary society expressing through its own genius the destiny established for it, the whole planetary system

vibrating to the creative evolving power of the Logos, the Lord of all Being.

"This limitless universe is like the human body all the members of which are connected and linked with one another with the greatest strength. How much the organs, the members, and the parts of the body of man are intermingled and connected for mutual aid and help, and how much they influence each other! In the same way the parts of this infinite universe have their members and elements connected with one another and influence one another spiritually and materially. . . . Since this connection, this spiritual effect and this influence exists between the members of the body of man, who is only one of the many finite beings, certainly between these universally and infinite beings there will also be a spiritual and material connection. Although by existing rules and actual science these connections cannot be discovered, nevertheless their existence between all beings is certain and absolute."

-- Abdu'l Bah'a

### Troubles

Troubles come quickly, and as quickly vanish, when their lesson is learned. And when they are gone, it is as if they had never been. They leave no trace of sorrow behind, provided that they have had their effect. As the sun dispels clouds, so the grace and mercy of God -- which brought on the trial for the soul's sake -- removes the trial when the soul has gained the needed growth.

Life, from this viewpoint, appears as a phantasmagoria suddenly assuming shapes and as suddenly changing. Life is indeed more ductile, events more fluid than we think. Existence is but clay in the hands of the potter. There is nothing that is fixed. There is no material possession that can give us security. Things can change over night. The greatest career can fall like a spent rocket when Destiny so wills.

For us lesser beings, events can change as quickly as an unexpectedly. But be it out great consolation and comfort in these

times of distress that just as misfortune can come suddenly, so it can go suddenly. We can be assured that every trial has its end, every storm its rainbow. The life of faith experiences again and again the fact that there is no difficulty which cannot be overcome when the right approach is made to God.

For spiritual man there are no cul-de-sacs, no unescapable situations. The magic ring which in fairy tales saves the periled hero is no more marvelous in its results than the power of God's love encircling his Seeker. Life rises from a three-dimensional to a four-dimensional plane, when faith is the guide and sustainer. Dangers and difficulties are indeed but dreams, the power of which ceases when we are awake to Reality.

### The Recurrence of Spring

The recurrence of Spring seems always a miracle, even the more vividly so as the individual observer moves on from the heedlessness of youth to the reflectiveness of maturity. Youth takes

for granted this wonderful phenomenon of the renewal of earth's life and enjoys it as a thing of beauty only; but age, more inquiring as to causes, realizes itself face to face here with a mystery which is very close to Life itself, and to God.

It is quite evident that Springs come not of themselves, nor by accident. They are the expression of a rhythm which is an integral part of the functioning of the universe. To the man of religious faith they are, moreover, a constant and confirming evidence of God's love and beneficence.

This mystic and hidden force which moves within all growing things, stirring them to the fullness of life expression, what is this but the Supreme Cause itself upon which all life depends? At this bright vernal season, withered and empty indeed is the heart that does not feel nearer to God, the Source of all life.

### Joy versus Sadness

In the bright and halycon days of early Christianity all Christians manifested joy. Elsewise their dear and sacred cause would not have been so marvelously spread across the confines of the Roman Empire. In the midst of the drab and murky world of paganism, the joyousness of those early Christians -- whether in facing life or death -- was like the roseate fingers of dawn upon a darkened sky in which stars and constellations had long since been obscured.

The Roman Empire was cynical, discontented, seeking insensately for pleasure and finding only the pain of disillusionment. It was a world in which faith for the most part had disappeared, in which life in general meant not service to neighbor or to state, but acquisition, self-seeking and exploitation of others. The only standard of conduct was that of skill in so matching the pieces of life together as to make, if possible, for self-satisfactions.

Why was the pagan world sad?  
Because it had no God. A world

without a God will always be sad, whether constituted on this planet or elsewhere. For what possible meaning can there be to life with the Creative and Spiritual left out of it?

Does the world seem again to have lapsed into paganism? What has come of that jubilant, faith-full attitude of Christians toward life and death? Is death not almost universally now viewed as a misfortune? If a Mr. Brown dies in midlife, is not the general comment, "Poor Brown."

Is not life too much measured in terms of what can be squeezed out of it for pleasure or self-seeking, with the result that men hover between the Scylla and Charybdis of desire and satiety?

What the world needs is a recrudescence of the Spirit which animated early Christianity. It needs SPIRIT spelled with capitals; the Holy Spirit which has come again to earth, as in the time of Christ, to renew the heart of man and turn it Godward.

### Is Man an Animal?

Every man has two natures, one human and belonging to the animal world, and one spiritual and belonging to the heavenly world. While our animal propensities are in control, we are carnal. In such a state is most of humankind today; and of this truth the biologist, the psychologist, and socialist are only too keenly aware.

As it has been said, scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar; so it may be said, scratch a civilized man and you will find an animal: walking about on two limbs, it is true; utilizing his hands as no other animal can, it is true; with the great gift of speech and writing, it is true; using his brain in analytical and inductive thinking as no other animal apparently can, this is also true.

But nonetheless, man is still basically an animal, with all the propensities that characterize the animal world waiting to express themselves in action under necessary stimuli. Lust, cruelty, vanity,

jealousy, greed -- these are the fundamental qualities which civilization has clothed for us with fair garments of culture, suavity, and adaptation, so that under ordinary circumstances we may display none of these innate faults.

If one were a materialist viewing these facts, one would become a pessimist and a cynic. It is a desperate condition, truly. But it is to change this condition that the great Teachers of humanity have appeared. It is their mission to show the way by which we can rise above our animal self, and so strengthen our spiritual self that occasions which formerly activated our lust, our cruelty, our vanity, our jealousy, our greed no longer will draw such expressions from us.

Then, at last, we may be called "spiritual man." Then the qualities of mercy, justice, humility, unselfishness, and love will have predominance. These are the qualities that would come into expression under every emergency of life. And the magic influence of this spiritual regeneration, if universally expressed,

would transform all our government, our institutions, our industry and commerce, our human relations.

It would create a new kind of civilization which could appropriately be designated: "The Kingdom of Heaven."

### What Is Success?

A leading magazine has announced a popular contest on the subject: "What Is Success?" Is there any subject of greater importance to man's welfare? Could we but know the clue to life, could we but have a goal to aim it as fixed and clear as the pole-stars which guide mariners and desert caravans to prosperous journies-end, then our energy and endeavor would not be misspent.

What is success? Opinions here are as varied as the hearts and emotions of men. Things so ardently striven for in youth may or may not in later life seem significant or wait success. Often the experience of life brings a new criterion which condemns as dross that which seemed gold to youth; but the truer judgment comes, alas, too late! There is no longer a chance to start again

and work for what seems to be mature vision as the worthier aim.

Can or cannot some standard of success be arrived at which will be universally recognized as true? Which will guide man from his very childhood, so that his every energy will be well spent and the achievements of his mature life will prove actual, satisfying, and joy-giving?

This would be the greatest conservation policy that could be inaugurated, the conservation of manpower. For the greatest loss to the world is misdirected labor; manpower applied to worthless or worse-than-worthless tasks. Could this manpower be directed from the very beginning along lines which would lead to real success, then it would make enormously for the happiness and welfare not only of the individual but also of the state.

### The Second Birth

One cannot be born into the Kingdom of Heaven by the process of physical birth, nor can one be

naturalized into citizenship in it by the mere acceptance of any given Prophet or body of religious truth.

Admittance to this celestial Kingdom is gained only by migrating from self. By leaving behind one by one the egoistic qualities -- the perversities, devices, basenesses of the primitive man buried deep in our psychism -- and advancing to the plane of severance from self and divine love and compassion for all.

Just as one is born into the physical world after a due process of physical gestation, growth and development preceding parturition, so one can be born into the spiritual world only after a due process of spiritual growth.

This spiritual coming-of-age marks such a significant transition from carnal man to spiritual man that it has been called the "second birth." One must literally be "born of the Spirit," in order to breathe successfully the life-giving air of the Kingdom and partake of its Sustenance.



### How To Find Happiness

Most of the causes of our unhappiness flow from a fundamental falseness in our cosmic adjustment. We seek first after material things, with the expectation perhaps of giving some secondary attention and effort to spiritual things as time and circumstances may permit. But we ought to do the opposite -- seek first after spiritual things and let the material things be secondary. This is what Christ taught in His parable of the Lily of the Field. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and all those other things will be added unto you."

When sought for their own selves as part only of phenomenal existence material things either elude us altogether, or if eventually captured fail to give satisfaction. Some of the least happy men and women in the world are persons who have attained to a high degree of material prizes of life.

But if we seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, these things of the world will be added unto us in due measure; and they will not then prove to be

the bearers of a false and fugacious happiness.

Material things should not be first in life, for they are not first or causal in the real nature of existence. Material things are not primal, but secondary. They are but the phenomenal expression of hidden spiritual Causation. Let a man think, feel and act wisely and on the spiritual plane of Causation, and the outer events of his life will flow to him in terms of calm happiness and abiding peace.

The trouble with us is that we are too habitually active and expressive only upon that outer periphery of life which is phenomenal, neglecting to function adequately upon the inner focal plane of life which is Spiritual and Causal.

To put it in more concrete terms, we do not avail ourselves sufficiently of that mysterious, all-pervading, and all-directing Cosmic Force -- the Spirit. Whatever causations become effective upon the material plane -- these may be traced by spiritually illumined souls to the energizing and directive radiations of the Spirit,

which in its activation in the heart of man the Quakers knew as the Inner Light.

Of this Cosmic Power, Baha'u'llah says: "The Holy Spirit heralds comfort to thee. Why does thou grieve? . . . With the joyful tidings of Light I hail thee, rejoice! To the court of holiness I summon thee; abide therein that thou mayest live in peace for evermore."

#### Guidance of Spirit

Intuition is a remarkable guide and counsellor in thought and action. Some individuals seem to have developed this power to an extraordinary degree. It is especially characteristic of the genius, who arrives at truth through ways other than that trodden by ordinary mortals. The great leaders of humanity steer safely amidst great risks and dangers by means of the guiding star of Intuition.

This power is in us all and can be cultivated. To speak in spiritual terms, we may call it the guidance of the Cosmic Mind -- a

guidance granted even to those who know not its source. Destiny, to accomplish her ends, aids men of great capacity to achieve through this magic power of intuition.

Those who use this power may or may not recognize it as divine. Napoleon did not. Washington and Lincoln did. But whether recognized or unrecognized, this force has been the principal factor in the great ideas, the great discoveries, the great achievements of the human race.

#### Pride

How can one guard against pride and vanity, which are in reality a declaration of self as separate from God? Only by turning to God for help and guidance in the utmost of humility on all occasions; only by constantly acknowledging that God alone is the Source of power and glory; only by realizing that we are not original creative forces but only channels for the Divine Force to flow through.

It takes constant prayer -- constant reliance upon the aid of Spirit -- to gain this grace of

humility. Pride, like a somber shadow of the soul, tends to follow man even when he progresses toward the Sun; and to become darkest and deepest when most exposed to Light and Glory.

Meister Eckhardt, who for years had been inspiring audiences with his spiritual discourse, suddenly one day halted, pale and speechless in the midst of a great sermon. He came silently down from the pulpit and preached not again for the space of two years.

Two years of struggle in the wilderness, two years of prayer and spiritual meditation it took him to free his soul of the taint of that pride which success and adulation had been accumulating in him. Then Meister Eckhardt returned to his pulpit and never after did he fall from grace.

That saintly Baha'i philosopher, teacher, and apostle, Mirza Abdu'l-Fadl, was in the custom of praying for long hours before dawn with ardor and weeping. Thus he kept himself in true humility and love before the Threshold of God.

If this saintly character -- so pure and revered and so deeply spiritual -- felt the need to exercise such force of prayer, how can we of lesser clay hope to achieve humility and severance except by much praying and seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit?

### The New Civilization

The new civilization can come about only as the universal expression of an individual ethics and spirituality superior to that which prevails among men today. There is no denying this fact. Merely to dream of fair and noble institutions is not sufficient to bring them into existence.

If we desire to be of aid in the establishment of a great and lofty world civilization, this can only be through the individual perfecting aid of the Holy Spirit.

We must begin at home. It is our own deeds that we must scrutinize, not those of our fellow men. It is our own hearts that we must examine

for that fatal defect of egotism and selfishness which ruins all vision and effort toward the good, either of ourselves or of the human race.

### Spiritual Unity in Affairs

The Baha'i Cause changes the individual. That is its first task. Gradually the sense of individualism is merged into the spiritual sense of unity within the group. Self-will gives place to evanescence. The group knowledge and the group wisdom achieved by consultation becomes a guide for action more efficient than the prowess of any individual.

When mankind is thus perfectly organized and ready to function according to the laws of Baha'u'llah, his nature having become spiritual and pliant to the will of God and loyal and obedient to delegated human leadership, then there can be safely committed to man's care these immense treasuries of knowledge which are accumulating ever faster.

The proper organization of humanity having thus been conceived, there will arise sublime visions of future achievements of a society where science reverently questions the universe for truth and power; and where in the spirit of true service and harmony the man of affairs applies to the world's needs the truth and power gained by the scientists.

### A Worldwide Movement Abd'ul Baha

This Cause has become worldwide. In a short space of time it has permeated throughout all religions, for it has a magnetic power which attracts all intelligent men and women to this center. As a person becomes informed of the reality of this Cause, he will believe in it for these teachings are the spirit of this age.

The Baha'i movement imparts life. It is the cause of love and amity amongst mankind. It establishes connections between various nations and religions. It removes all antagonisms and when this Cause is fully spread, warfare will be a

thing of the past, universal peace will be realized, the oneness of the world of humanity will be recognized, and religion and science will work hand in hand.

The Baha'i movement bestows upon man a new spirit, new light, and a new motion. It enlarges the sphere of thought. It illumines the horizon of the intellect. It expands the area of comprehension.

This is the ultimate goal of human life. This is the fruit of existence. This is the brilliant pearl of cosmic consciousness. This is the shining start of spiritual destiny.

#### Sunshine Behind the Clouds

How important and necessary, in this period of universal confusion, to be able to see behind the clouds! To know that the sun of reality is indeed shining; is calling dormant virtues to life; is resuscitating the world of humanity; is causing a new Springtime to appear which will eventuate in a wonderful fruitage.

The more the rain beats down today, the greater will be the harvest of tomorrow.

Baha'is stand out among others today in the possession of this vivid realization. They know not despair, nor even discouragement. The greater the tribulations, the greater the opportunities for growth.

In the beginning they see the end; in a part they see the whole. In the wreckage of old customs and institutions, they see the rise of a new spiritual organization and humanity. To this they dedicate all efforts.

#### World Peace

May the world wake up from its militaristic nightmare! May it recover from its war-madness before the frenzy of another universal combat makes holocaust of humanity!

Over sixty years ago Baha'u'llah sent his message of Peace to the crowned heads of the world: "Let not a man glory in this, that he

loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind." The brotherhood of man, based on the knowledge of One God, and on the love for Him and the love for one another, above race and above creed -- this was his message, and this is the message that Baha'is the world over are seeking to spread.

Just as Buddhism brought universal peace to India under the rule and conversion of King Asoka; just as the teachings of Christ made one the myriad races and sects of the Roman Empire as well as of barbaric Europe; just as Islam united into a powerful brotherhood the most diverse races and nationalities and warring tribes, until a peace was established from India to Spain such as enabled members of the Faith to journey in perfect safety throughout all this vast region; so now a world religion such as the Baha'i, uniting all nations and peoples into one universal brotherhood, would prove the most effective, may prove the only effective way of substituting for aggression the spirit of cooperation; for inter-racial distrust and hatreds, interracial harmony and love; and

for the red glare of war, the golden glow of that Most Great Peace, the Kingdom of God.

#### Somewhere Perfection Exists

A weekend in the country with two days' rain is apt to be depressing. Yet as one tramps through the countryside between drops of rain during a lull in the storm, the cheering thought comes that somewhere the sun is shining, somewhere skies are blue. Clouds and rain are neither the universal nor the normal type of weather upon the planet.

So in the midst of the present cataclysmic depression, worldwide though it be, there comes the thought that elsewhere in the universe there may be, in all probability are, civilizations much more perfect, more spiritual, more joyous. That this civilization of ours, as evolved up to date upon the planet Earth, may not be cosmically typical, this is a cheering idea.

If we can lift ourselves above the perturbations of this world and conceive vividly enough more ideal

ideal conditions which may exist in other worlds of being, we may realize that the catastrophies and sufferings which humanity are now undergoing here are not normal. They can be vastly minimized as we approximate here the normalcy designed by Destiny for all life -- a normalcy perhaps already attainable on other planets of our solar system or of other solar systems throughout the vast Universe.

The Inner Reality of Man  
Abd'ul Baha

It is known that in man there is a reality other than this material one which is called body, and that reality which is other than this physical body is called the heavenly body of man; and we call that body the ethereal form which corresponds to that body. It is that reality which discovers the inner meaning of things; otherwise, this body of man does not discourage anything. This reality grasps the mystery of existence. It discovers scientific facts; it discovers tehcnical points; it discovers electricity, telegraphy, the telephone, and so on -- and yet the reality which makes all these discoveries is other than this body,

for, were it this body, then the animal would rise and appear to make these scientific and wonderful discoveries, for the animal shares with man all physical limitations and physical powers.

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

Love Is a Force

Love is a force which, emanating from the heart of God, has the constructive power to mould humanity into new and more ideal patterns. And through Baha'u'llah, that great and majestic Manifestation of God promised man all down through the ages, has been revealed to man -- praise be to God! -- not only the

precise patterns for the New Civilization but the power of love that can bring this about.

Wondrously, as only God can design, is brought before us through those divine institutions -- social, economic, political -- in accordance with which man is to live in the New Day. Poverty, misery, war, hatred, and intolerance all are swept away. And in their place glorious institutions will arise outshining the most majestic conceptions of scholar, of statesman, or idealist.

Government  
Abd'ul Baha

Originally mankind was one family, united and compact; later the members of his happy family were divided and subdivided through ignorance and prejudice. Now the time has come again for their final unification. Universal peace will bring about this long-wished-for consummation.

Once the Parliament of Man is established and its constituent parts organized, the governments of the world having entered into

a covenant of eternal friendship will have no need of keeping large standing armies and navies. A few battalions to preserve internal order, and an international police to keep the highways of the seas clear, are all that will be necessary. Then these huge sums will be diverted to other more useful channels, pauperism will disappear, knowledge will increase, the victories of peace will be sung by poets and bards, knowledge will improve the conditions, and mankind will be rocked in the cradle of felicity and bliss. Then, whether a government is constitutional or republican, hereditary monarchy or democratic, the rulers will devote their time to the prosperity of their nations, the legislations of just and sane laws and the fostering of closer and more amicable relations with their neighbors -- thus will the world of humanity become a mirror reflecting the virtues and attributes of the Kingdom of God.



### How Crime Will Be Eradicated

"What are the causes of crime?" asks Professor William McDougall. The causes of crime are obvious enough. They are the natural impulses of the human heart, common to men of all times and all places; such impulses as greed, anger, lust, jealousy, envy, revenge. The essential condition of the rising tide of crime in America is the progressive weakening of the influence of tradition, and of the community which often gives the moral tradition its hold on men.

"A rising tide of neurosis (nervous disorders) has run parallel with the rising tide of crime. Neuroses in all its forms is the consequence of moral conflict; the expression a lack of harmony and integration of forces of character, the impulses of the human heart.

"Nothing tends so strongly to promote harmony and integration of character as a clear-cut moral tradition brought to bear on each man with all the force of unanimous community sentiment and unquestioned community sanctions. Under such

conditions each man knows what is right and what is wrong (or believes he does) and acts accordingly.

"But where traditions are diverse and weakened . . . men are thrown back on themselves and are perpetually called upon to make moral decision; and in the absence of clear guidance and sanction from community opinion, this is too great a task for most of us. The decisions are never made; and in the moral sense such men live from hand to mouth. Thus they become the seat of unresolved moral conflicts.

"In this modern age we no longer grow up under some one well-designed moral stand supported by the authority of unquestioned religion. . . . In such a world crime and divorce increase alarmingly, children grow scarce, the family disintegrates, and young men ask, Is life worth it?"

Can anything of a universal religion solve this grave problem? Nothing tends so strongly to promote integration of character as a clear-cut moral tradition brought to bear on each man with all the force of

unanimous community sentiment and unquestioned community sanctions.

Where, we ask, can there be found a clear-cut moral tradition, a unanimous community sentiment, and unquestioned community sentiment, except in a common, universal religion whose aegis shall grow up a definite moral code having all that binding force which comes from a belief in the Divine Source and Divine Law?

"In this modern age, we no longer grow up under some well-designed moral system supported by the authority of an unquestioned religion." And hoping conversely, it is absolutely essential for the moral tone and character of humanity that it do grow up under the moral system and authority of an unquestioned religion. What a powerful argument this is for a universal, comprehensive, definite, and authoritative religion.

Not until all the schools of the world include such definite spiritual training in the education of children will humanity arrive at that perfection destined for it, without which

perfection civilization will surely disintegrate and perish.

Meditation  
Alfred Lunt

"One hours reflection is preferable to seventy years of pious worship." Such reflection is the essence of meditation. The goal is within, not without. The consciousness must be attuned to the lordly vibrations of that situation wherein God stands "powerful, mighty and supreme." Then "harken unto the mystic voice calling from the realms of invisible."

This attuning of consciousness brings the worshipper for the first time to the point where the vibrations of powerful prayer can attune man to the Listener and the Answerer of all prayer. It is idle to suppose that a prayer launched from the inferior and worldly situation of personal outer consciousness can wing itself to the realm of holiness. But the vibrations must be of the same quality. In the spiritual world the connecting link is the love, yearning, and union in the soul of the seeker of divine gifts.

Pride

As man rises from the lower, animal state of nature to the plane of intelligence and refinement, he overcomes and sublimates the grosser evils of passion, cruelty, lust and gluttony. But one sin remains which, cancerous like, eats into the very heart of spiritual progress -- the sin of pride or egotism.

Pride is prone to grow stronger the more one advances in intelligence, in achievement and in the respect of one's fellow man. Hence of all the faults which man must overcome in the spiritual ascent, pride is the most insidious and parasitic, feeding upon the very progress and achievement made in the spiritual climb.

It might be thought that pride -- being so natural to man, so deftly persistent and so apparently innocuous -- would be overlooked or condoned by the Divine Power. But the contrary is true. Of all of the spiritual weaknesses of man, that of pride is most seriously and drastically punished, in accordance with those immutable

laws of Divine Justice which regulate not only the movements of the spheres but also the transactions of all human beings.

Whether one has learned to read these inner laws of being or draws his lesson from the outer events of life and history, the truth becomes apparent to all possessed of vision that the inevitable ultimate consequence of pride is failure, degradation and humiliation. And this holds true of nations as of individuals.

Were individuals of powerful will, of pride (the ascribing of all achievement to one's own powers and abilities) and of egotism (the desire that the self be advanced to position of honors over others) were such individuals permitted to go on continuously and successfully progressing in achievement, in position, and in the development of the will to power throughout the universe, it is clear that what we call the universe would not be a universe at all, but only a chaos of conflicting and battling wills.

### Training of the Child

The child-soul, like a garden, will not produce good fruit without cultivation. If left uncultivated, it will, like the garden, run to weeds and thorns. In other words, the child must be helped to its own best development.

The doctrine of free expression, therefore, needs serious modification, because unmodified it is not in accordance with the nature of the child. Children left to themselves from birth would grow up to be like little animals, says Abdu'l Baha. Freedom of expression, therefore, is a theory which, while high-sounding, cannot be uncategorically applied in the actual practice of education.

Freedom to express the high qualities, yes; but freedom to express the animal qualities cannot be granted to the child.

Must we turn back to the old education of restraints, of punishments, of stern authorities and sanctions on the part of the adult

world upon which rests the responsibility for the proper training of the child?

Fortunately this is not necessary. There is a Teacher and Educator of children as of adults, which works in other and miraculous ways. This is the Word of God, of which Abd'ul Baha says: "The Word of God is the storehouse of all good, all power and all wisdom." As the child-soul is awakened to the meaning and potency of true religion, as it learns to seek the guidance and assistance of the Great Educator, then there will come a remarkable development to the child and it will mature into ways sweet and radiantly good.

The Spartan disciplines and authorities are not needed. What is needed is to help the child understand its dual nature, and to teach it to turn to God for help in overcoming the animal tendencies so as to be able to express only the spiritual. And it is very important that this training come early in the child's existence, so that the animal qualities will not gain ascendancy.

Therefore it is of the utmost importance that parents, teachers, and all others responsible for the development of children be awakened spiritually and be capable of giving spiritual training to the child.

#### Prepare for Next Life

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

Carelessness and shortsightedness regarding eternal wealth is not by any means a monopoly of the very rich. Many who have no wealth of

worldly goods have no wealth either of spiritual goods, and at the point of death find themselves in unhappiness and dismay. Thus, neither does wealth or poverty guarantee tranquility, which is in essence a spiritual, not a phenomenal, possession.

There is no condemnation in material success and wealth, providing the dazzling power and enticements which these bring do not blind the possessor to the spiritual verities. "Wealth," says Abd'ul Baha, "has a tempting and drawing quality. It bewilders the sight of its charmed victims with showy appearances and draws them on and on to the edge of yawning chasms. It makes a person self-centered, self-occupied, forgetful of God and of holy things."

Great then, is the situation of those men and women, who possess wealth and do not neglect the requirements of the Kingdom. "Such rich men," said Abd'ul Baha, "are in reality the light-bearing stars of the heaven of mankind, because they have been tried and tested and have come out of the crucible of pure gold. . . unalloyed and unadulterated. With all the wealth of the world at his

feet they are yet mindful of God and humanity, they spend their acquired riches for the dispelling of the darkness of ignorance and employ their treasures for the alleviation of the misery of the children of God. The light of such rich men will never grow dim and the tree of their generosity will grow in size and stature, producing fruits in all seasons. Their every deed will be as an example for succeeding generations."

Thus it is seen that God is entirely impartial to wealth. The way to the Kingdom is open to all, rich or poor. But it is the wealth of the Kingdom which the wise acquire while on earth. This kind of wealth alone brings assurance, fortitude, and joy throughout life. As the physical powers wane, the spiritual powers grow. And when Israfil brings his kindly message and passport for a journey into further and more ethereal bournes, there is neither regret nor dread. The darkness of Death becomes transformed even this side of the grave into the light of Immortality.

### Building a Better World

What enormous possibilities await this loftiest task -- the building of a more perfect world! Humanity has only for a brief two centuries been conscious of itself as a struggling evolving society. It has only within this brief span of its existence come to envision and assume conscious goals of perfection toward which to strive.

Today the conscience of men the world over is being aroused as never before to the urgent need and the glorious responsibility of creating a new world order which shall establish security and happiness for every individual. If in this titantic effort man's ordinary intelligence stands baffled and halting, why not utilize all the creative power which religion has to give?

The mere force of the intellect will never suffice to remake the world. There is needed the heart of charity and the soul of vision.

No work to which man can dedicate himself is more noble, more inspiring, more worthy of the utmost consecration

and concentration than that of building a better world.

Within the vast scope of this superhuman task we may all be privileged to become quarriers, architects, or builders -- each one an artist in the true sense of the word, each one a creator working in the universe of the Great Architect and for the service of humanity.

"The Lord of mankind has caused His holy divine Manifestations to come into the world. He has revealed His heavenly books in order to establish spiritual brotherhood, and through the power of the Holy Spirit has made it practicable for perfect fraternity to be realized among mankind. And when through the breaths of the Holy Spirit this perfect fraternity and agreement are established, amongst men, this brotherhood and love being spiritual in character, this loving guidance being heavenly, these constraining bonds being divine, a unity appears which is indissoluble, unchanging and never subject to transformation. It is ever the same and will forever remain the same. . . . Without this influence

their animus is impossible. We may be able to realize some degrees of fraternity through other motives but these are limited associations and subject to change. When human brotherhood is founded upon the Holy Spirit, it is eternal, changeable, unlimited." -- Abd'ul Baha