

Material and Spiritual Progress

'Abdu'l-Bahá

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How beautiful the weather is today, the sky is clear, the sun shines, and the heart of man is made glad thereby!

Such bright and beautiful weather gives new life and strength to man, and if he has been sick, he feels once more in his heart the joyous hope of health renewed. All these gifts of nature concern the physical side of man, for it is only his body that can receive material benefits.

If a man is successful in his business, art, or profession he is thereby enabled to increase his physical wellbeing and to give his body the amount of ease and comfort in which it delights. All around us today we see how man surrounds himself with every modern convenience and luxury, and denies nothing to the physical and material side of his nature. But, take heed, lest in thinking too earnestly of the things of the body you forget the things of the soul: for material advantages[pg 63] do not elevate the spirit of a man. Perfection in worldly things is a joy to the body of a man but in no wise does it glorify his soul.

It may be that a man who has every material benefit, and who lives surrounded by all the greatest comfort modern civilization can give him, is denied the all important gift of the Holy Spirit.

It is indeed a good and praiseworthy thing to progress materially, but in so doing, let us not neglect the more important spiritual progress, and close our eyes to the Divine light shining in our midst.

Only by improving spiritually as well as materially can we make any real progress, and become perfect beings. It was in order to bring this spiritual life and light into the world that all the great Teachers have appeared. They came so that the Sun of Truth might



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be manifested, and shine in the hearts of men, and that through its wondrous power men might attain unto Everlasting Light.

When the Lord Christ came He spread the light of the Holy Spirit on all around Him, and His disciples and all who received His illumination became enlightened, spiritual beings.

It was to manifest this light that Bahá'u'lláh was born, and came into the world. He taught Eternal Truth to men, and shed the rays of Divine Light in all lands.

Alas! behold how man disregards this Light. He still goes on his way of darkness, and disunity, and quarrels and fierce war are still rife.

He uses material progress to gratify his lust for war,[pg 64] and he makes destructive implements and appliances to destroy his brother man.

But let us rather exert ourselves for the attainment of spiritual advantages, for this is the only way of true progress, that which cometh from God and is alone Godly.

I pray for you one and all that you may receive the Bounties of the Holy Spirit; so will you become in truth enlightened, and progress ever onward and upward to the Kingdom of God. Then shall your hearts be prepared to receive the glad tidings, your eyes shall be opened and you will see the Glory of God; your ears shall be unstopped and you will hear the call of the Kingdom, and with tongue made eloquent shall you call men to the realization of the Divine Power and Love of God!

