

Talk at St. James Methodist Church

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From Stenographic Notes

Praise be to God! It is with a deep realization of happiness that I am present here this evening, for I am looking upon the faces of those who are earnest in their search for reality and who sincerely long to attain knowledge of truth. God has created man and endowed him with the power of reason whereby he may arrive at [pg 313] valid conclusions. Therefore, man must endeavor in all things to investigate the fundamental reality. If he does not independently investigate, he has failed to utilize the talent God has bestowed upon him. I am pleased with the American people because, as a rule, they are independent seekers of the truth; their minds are actively employed instead of remaining idle and unproductive. This is most praiseworthy.

Some souls imagine that there is a cessation to the bounties of God, as if at one time the divine bestowals are poured out, at another time withheld from mankind and ceasing. If we carefully reflect upon this matter, we find that such a statement is in fact a denial of Divinity, for the reality of Divinity is evidenced by virtue of its outpourings or bestowals. The cessation of the bestowals of God at any time would be equivalent to the cessation of the sovereignty of God. The sun is the sun because of its ray and heat; it is the sun because of its bestowal; but if at any time its effulgence, splendor and radiance should cease to emanate, it would no longer be the sun. Consequently, it is inconceivable that the bounties of Divinity should cease, for the attributes of Divinity are everexistent. God has ever been divine; He hath ever exercised His sovereignty and still possesses everlasting divinity and sovereignty. He is like the sun, which has ever had its splendor, heat and radiance and will continue to possess these bounties and



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attributes. If at any time its splendor and heat should cease, it would no longer be pronounced the sun. Therefore, the sound reasoning mind concludes that the bounties of the Holy Spirit are continuous and that holy souls are ever the recipients of these divine emanations. The potency of the Holy Spirit is everlasting, not temporary; for the sanctity of the Holy Spirit is its power and efficacy manifest in the spirits it quickens. We pray that all of us may become recipients of its bestowals, that we may be illumined by the lights of heaven, edified through the teachings of God and imbued with the virtues of divine character, as mirrors reflecting the light of the sun. Unless the mirror reflects the sunlight, it is only dark, inanimate matter. Likewise, the hearts and spirits of mankind, when deprived and without their portion of the bounties of the Holy Spirit, linger in the abyss of darkness and ignorance.

From time immemorial the divine teachings have been successively revealed, and the bounties of the Holy Spirit have ever been emanating. All the teachings are one reality, for reality is single and does not admit multiplicity. Therefore, the divine Prophets are one, inasmuch as They reveal the one reality, the Word of God. Abraham announced teachings founded upon reality, Moses proclaimed reality, Christ established reality and Bahá'u'lláh was the Messenger and Herald of reality. But humanity, having forsaken the one essential and fundamental reality which underlies the religion of God, and holding blindly to imitations of ancestral forms and interpretations of belief, is separated and divided in the strife, contention and bigotry of various sects and religious factions. If all should be true to the original reality of the Prophet and His teaching, the peoples and nations of the world would become unified, and these differences which cause separation would be lost sight of. To accomplish this great and needful unity in reality, Bahá'u'lláh appeared in the Orient and renewed the foundations of the divine teachings. His revelation of the Word embodies completely the teachings of all the Prophets, expressed in principles and precepts applicable to the needs and conditions of the modern world, amplified and adapted to present-day questions and critical human problems. That is to say, the words of Bahá'u'lláh are the essences of the words of the Prophets of the past. They are the very spirit of the age and the cause of the unity and illumination of the East and the West. The followers of His teachings are in conformity with the precepts and commands of all the former heavenly Messengers. Differences and dissensions, which destroy the foundations of the world of humanity and are contrary to the will and good pleasure of God, disappear completely in the light of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh; difficult problems are solved, unity and love are established. For the good pleasure of God is the effulgence of love and the establishment of unity and fellowship in the human world, whereas discord, contention, warfare and strife are satanic outcomes and contrary to the will of the Merciful. In order that human souls, minds and spirits may attain advancement, tranquillity and vision in broader horizons of unity and knowledge, Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed certain principles or teachings, some of which I will mention.

First, man must independently investigate reality, for the disagreements and dissensions which afflict and affect humanity primarily proceed from imitations of ancestral beliefs and adherences to hereditary forms of worship. These imitations are accidental and without sanction in the Holy Books. They are the outcomes of human interpretations and teachings which have arisen, gradually obscuring the real light of divine meaning and causing men to differ and dissent. The reality proclaimed in the heavenly Books and divine teachings is ever conducive to love, unity and fellowship.

Second, the oneness of the world of humanity shall be realized,[pg 315] accepted and established. When we reflect upon this blessed principle, it will become evident and manifest that it is the healing remedy for all human conditions. All mankind are the servants of the glorious God, our Creator. He has created all. Assuredly He must have loved them equally**;** otherwise, He would not have created them. He protects all. Assuredly He loves His creatures; otherwise, He would not protect them. He provides for all, proving His love for all without distinction or preference. He manifests His perfect goodness and loving-kindness toward all. He does not punish us for our sins and shortcomings, and we are all immersed in the ocean of His infinite mercy. Inasmuch as God is clement and loving to His children, lenient and merciful toward our shortcomings, why should we be unkind and unforgiving toward each other? As He loves humanity without distinction or preference, why should we not love all? Can we conceive of a plan and policy superior to the divine purpose? Manifestly, we cannot. Therefore, we must strive to do the will of the glorious Lord and emulate His policy of loving all mankind. The wisdom and policy of God are reality and truth, whereas human policy is accidental and limited to our finite understanding. The policy of God is infinite. We must emulate His example. If a soul be ailing and infirm, we must produce remedies; if ignorant, we must provide education; if defective, we must train and perfect that which is lacking; if immature and undeveloped, we must supply the means of attainment to maturity. No soul should be hated, none neglected; nay, rather, their very imperfections should demand greater kindness and tender compassion. Therefore, if we follow the example of the Lord of divinity, we will love all mankind from our hearts, and the means of the unity of the world of humanity will become as evident and manifest to us as the light of the sun. And from our example the light of the love of God will be enkindled among men. For God is love, and all phenomena find source and emanation in that divine current of creation. The love of God haloes all created things. Were it not for the love of God, no animate being would exist. This is clear, manifest vision and truth unless a man is veiled by superstitions and a captive to imaginations, differentiating mankind according to his own estimate, loving some and hating others. Such an attitude is most unworthy and ignoble.

Third, religion must be the mainspring and source of love in the world, for religion is the revelation of the will of God, the divine fundamental of which is love. Therefore, if

religion should prove to be the cause of enmity and hatred instead of love, its absence is preferable to its existence.[pg 316]

Fourth, religion must reconcile and be in harmony with science and reason. If the religious beliefs of mankind are contrary to science and opposed to reason, they are none other than superstitions and without divine authority, for the Lord God has endowed man with the faculty of reason in order that through its exercise he may arrive at the verities of existence. Reason is the discoverer of the realities of things, and that which conflicts with its conclusions is the product of human fancy and imagination.

Fifth, prejudice — whether it be religious, racial, patriotic or political in its origin and aspect — is the destroyer of human foundations and opposed to the commands of God. God has sent forth His Prophets for the sole purpose of creating love and unity in the world of human hearts. All the heavenly Books are the written word of love. If they prove to be the cause of prejudice and human estrangement, they have become fruitless. Therefore, religious prejudice is especially opposed to the will and command of God. Racial and national prejudices which separate mankind into groups and branches, likewise, have a false and unjustifiable foundation, for all men are the children of Adam and essentially of one family. There should be no racial alienation or national division among humankind. Such distinctions as French, German, Persian, Anglo-Saxon are human and artificial; they have neither significance nor recognition in the estimation of God. In His estimate all are one, the children of one family; and God is equally kind to them. The earth has one surface. God has not divided this surface by boundaries and barriers to separate races and peoples. Man has set up and established these imaginary lines, giving to each restricted area a name and the limitation of a native land or nationhood. By this division and separation into groups and branches of mankind, prejudice is engendered which becomes a fruitful source of war and strife. Impelled by this prejudice, races and nations declare war against each other; the blood of the innocent is poured out, and the earth torn by violence. Therefore, it has been decreed by God in this day that these prejudices and differences shall be laid aside. All are commanded to seek the good pleasure of the Lord of unity, to follow His command and obey His will; in this way the world of humanity shall become illumined with the reality of love and reconciliation.

Sixth, the world of humanity is in need of the confirmations of the Holy Spirit. True distinction among mankind is through divine bestowals and receiving the intuitions of the Holy Spirit. If man does not become the recipient of the heavenly bestowals and spiritual bounties, he remains in the plane and kingdom of the animal.[pg 317] For the distinction between the animal and man is that man is endowed with the potentiality of divinity in his nature, whereas the animal is entirely bereft of that gift and attainment. Therefore, if a man is bereft of the intuitive breathings of the Holy Spirit, deprived of divine bestowals, out of touch with the heavenly world and negligent of the

eternal truths, though in image and likeness he is human, in reality he is an animal; even as Christ declared, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." This means that if man be a captive of physical susceptibilities and be lacking the quickening of spiritual emotions, he is merely an animal. But every soul who possesses spiritual susceptibilities and has attained a goodly portion of the bestowals of the Holy Spirit is alive with the divine life of the higher Kingdom. The soul that is portionless and bereft is as dead. Therefore, He said, "Let the dead bury their dead." Just as the physical body of man is in need of its force of life, even so the human soul is in need of the divine animus and vivification emanating from the Holy Spirit. Without this vivification and sustenance, man would be an animal, nay, rather, dead.

Seventh, the necessity of education for all mankind is evident. Children especially must be trained and taught. If the parent cannot afford to do this owing to lack of means, the body politic must make necessary provision for its accomplishment. Through the broadening spirit of education illiteracy will disappear, and misunderstandings due to ignorance will pass away.

Eighth, universal peace will be established among the nations of the world by international agreement. The greatest catastrophe in the world of humanity today is war. Europe is a storehouse of explosives awaiting a spark. All the European nations are on edge, and a single flame will set on fire the whole of that continent. Implements of war and death are multiplied and increased to an inconceivable degree, and the burden of military maintenance is taxing the various countries beyond the point of endurance. Armies and navies devour the substance and possessions of the people; the toiling poor, the innocent and helpless are forced by taxation to provide munitions and armament for governments bent upon conquest of territory and defense against powerful rival nations. There is no greater or more woeful ordeal in the world of humanity today than impending war. Therefore, international peace is a crucial necessity. An arbitral court of justice shall be established by which international disputes are to be settled. Through this means all possibility of discord and war between the nations will be obviated.[pg 318]

Ninth, there must be an equality of rights between men and women. Women shall receive an equal privilege of education. This will enable them to qualify and progress in all degrees of occupation and accomplishment. For the world of humanity possesses two wings: man and woman. If one wing remains incapable and defective, it will restrict the power of the other, and full flight will be impossible. Therefore, the completeness and perfection of the human world are dependent upon the equal development of these two wings.

Tenth, there shall be an equality of rights and prerogatives for all mankind.

Eleventh, one language must be selected as an international medium of speech and communication. Through this means misunderstandings will be lessened, fellowship established and unity assured.

These are a few of the principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. He has provided the remedy for the ailments which now afflict the human world, solved the difficult problems of individual, social, national and universal welfare and laid the foundation of divine reality upon which material and spiritual civilization are to be founded throughout the centuries before us.

Praise be to God! I find these two great American nations highly capable and advanced in all that appertains to progress and civilization. These governments are fair and equitable. The motives and purposes of these people are lofty and inspiring. Therefore, it is my hope that these revered nations may become prominent factors in the establishment of international peace and the oneness of the world of humanity; that they may lay the foundations of equality and spiritual brotherhood among mankind; that they may manifest the highest virtues of the human world, revere the divine lights of the Prophets of God and establish the reality of unity so necessary today in the affairs of nations. I pray that the nations of the East and West shall become one flock under the care and guidance of the divine Shepherd. Verily, this is the bestowal of God and the greatest honor of man. This is the glory of humanity. This is the good pleasure of God. I ask God for this with a contrite heart.

O my Lord! Thou Who art ever-forgiving! Verily, this assembly hath turned its face toward Thy Kingdom. Verily, they are all of Thy flock, and Thou art the one Shepherd of all. O Thou real Shepherd! Educate and train Thy sheep in Thy green and verdant pastures. Suffer these birds of Thine to build their nests in Thy rose garden. Adorn Thine orchard with these fresh plants and flowers. Refresh these human trees by Thy shower of beneficence and [pg 319] favor. O God! Verily, we are all Thy servants — all Thine — and Thou art the One Lord. We all adore Thee, and Thou art the beneficent Master. O Lord! Render the eyes perceptive that they may witness the lights of Thy Kingdom. Render the ears attentive that they may hear the heavenly summons. Resuscitate the spirits that they may be exhilarated through the breath of the Holy Spirit. O Lord! Verily, we are weak, but Thou art almighty. We are poor, but Thou art rich. Have mercy upon us. Apportion unto us a goodly share of Thy realities, and lead us into the arena of Thine attainments. Thou art the Powerful. Thou art the Able. Thou art the kind Lord. [pg 320]

