

# Talk at Banquet, Great Northern Hotel

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Notes by Edna McKinney

Throughout the world there are innumerable meetings and assemblages, more or less important according to their measure of contribution to human betterment, yet limited in their purpose and object to material questions and outcomes. They are political, commercial or educational in character; they seek to promote economic advancement, further agricultural purposes, encourage scientific research and assist discoveries; they provide for the establishment of new institutions, plan financial measures and agree upon laws of civic and social control. Such meetings are useful, but their influence and intention do not extend beyond the material welfare and government of mankind — that is to say, they serve material civilization.

This meeting of yours tonight is very different in character. It is a universal gathering; it is heavenly and divine in purpose because it serves the oneness of the world of humanity and promotes international peace. It is devoted to the solidarity and brotherhood of the human race, the spiritual welfare of mankind, unity of religious belief through knowledge of God and the reconciliation of religious teaching with the principles of science and reason. It promotes love and fraternity among all humankind, seeks to abolish and destroy barriers which separate the human family, proclaims the equality of man and woman, instills divine precepts and morals, illumines and quickens minds with heavenly perception, attracts the infinite bestowals of God, removes racial, national and religious prejudices and establishes the foundation of the heavenly



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Kingdom in the hearts of all nations and peoples. The effect of such an assembly as this is conducive to divine fellowship and strengthening of the bond which cements and unifies hearts. This is the indestructible bond of spirit which conjoins the East and West. [pg 448] By it the very foundations of race prejudice are uprooted and destroyed, the banner of spiritual democracy is hoisted aloft, the world of religion is purified from superannuated beliefs and hereditary imitations of forms, and the oneness of the reality underlying all religions is revealed and disclosed. For such a meeting is established upon the very foundation of the laws of God. Therefore, in its constraining spiritual bond it unites all religions and reconciles all sects, denominations and factions in kindness and love toward each other. In this way and by the instrumentality of such a gathering the causes of animosity, hatred and bigotry are removed, and enmity and discord pass away entirely. Every limiting and restricting movement or meeting of mere personal interest is human in nature. Every universal movement unlimited in scope and purpose is divine. The Cause of God is advanced whenever and wherever a universal meeting is established among mankind.

Therefore, endeavor that your attitudes and intentions here tonight be universal and altruistic in nature. Consecrate and devote yourselves to the betterment and service of all the human race. Let no barrier of ill feeling or personal prejudice exist between these souls, for when your motives are universal and your intentions heavenly in character, when your aspirations are centered in the Kingdom, there is no doubt whatever that you will become the recipients of the bounty and good pleasure of God.

This meeting is, verily, the noblest and most worthy of all meetings in the world because of these underlying spiritual and universal purposes. Such a banquet and assemblage command the sincere devotion of all present and invite the downpouring of the blessings of God. Therefore, be ye assured and confident that the confirmations of God are descending upon you, the assistance of God will be given unto you, the breaths of the Holy Spirit will quicken you with a new life, the Sun of Reality will shine gloriously upon you, and the fragrant breezes of the rose gardens of divine mercy will waft through the windows of your souls. Be ye confident and steadfast; your services are confirmed by the powers of heaven, for your intentions are lofty, your purposes pure and worthy. God is the helper of those souls whose aim is to serve humanity and whose efforts and endeavors are devoted to the good and betterment of all mankind. [pg 449]

