

The Bahai Magazine  
**STAR OF THE WEST**

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**STAR OF THE WEST**

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Albert Vail, *Editor*

Edna M. True, *Business Manager*

*Persian Editors*

Zia M. Bagdadi

Ahmad Sohrab

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# STAR OF THE WEST

NOVEMBER, 1922

## THE SCIENCE OF THE SPIRIT

### Abdul Baha's Wonderful Proof of God's Existence

*This tablet, one of Abdul Baha's last, was addressed to Auguste Henri Forel,*

*Zurich, Switzerland, during the autumn of 1921*

TO his honor, the esteemed and distinguished Professor, Dr. Forel.

Upon him be the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God!

O thou revered personage, lover of Truth!

Thy letter dated July 28th, 1921 has been received. Its contents were most pleasing and indicated that, praise be to God, thou art still young and searching after Truth, that thy power of thought is strong and the discoveries of thy mind, manifest. . . .

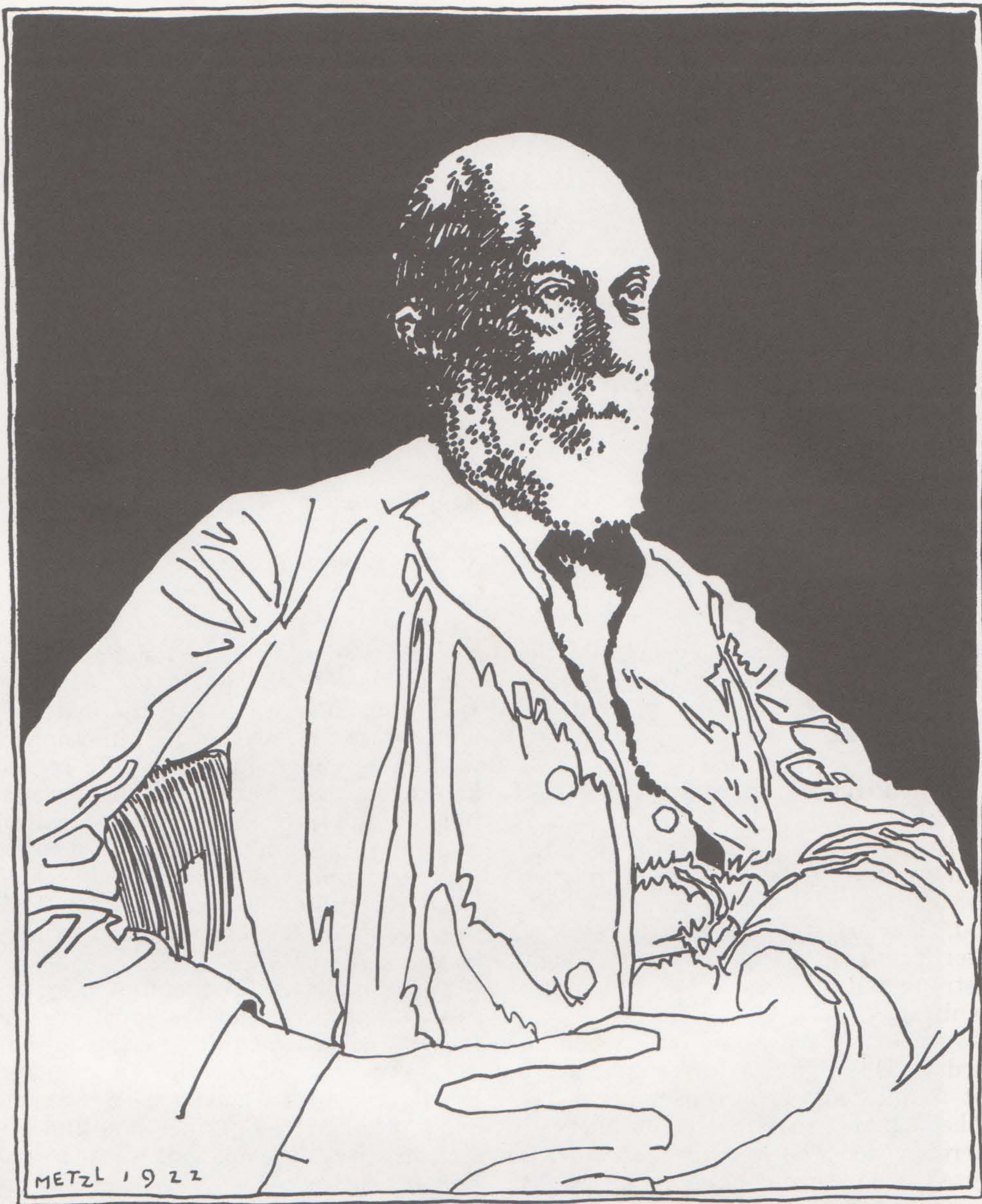
By materialists, whose belief with regard to Divinity has been explained is not meant philosophers in general but, rather, that group of materialists of narrow vision who worship that which is sensed, who depend only upon the five senses and whose criterion of knowledge is limited to what can be perceived by the senses. All that can be sensed is to them real, while whatsoever cannot be sensed is either unreal or doubtful. They even regard the existence of Deity as wholly doubtful. It is as thou hast written, not philosophers in general but narrow-minded materialists that are referred to.

As to divine philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle they are indeed worthy of esteem and of the high-

est praise for they have rendered eminent services to the world of humanity. In like manner we esteem the materialistic, scientific, moderate philosophers who have rendered service. We regard knowledge and wisdom as the foundation of the progress of the world of humanity and praise those philosophers who are endowed with broad vision. Read carefully the San Francisco University Journal that the truth may become apparent.

Concerning mental faculties they are essential properties of the spirit even as the ray is an essential property of the sun. The rays of the sun are renewed but the sun itself remains ever the same and unchanged. Consider how the human intellect develops and weakens and perhaps entirely disappears, whereas the spirit remains in one and the same condition. The manifestation of mind depends upon the soundness of the body. A sound body has a sound mind. But the spirit does not depend upon the body. It is through the power of the spirit that the mind comprehends, imagines and works, whereas the spirit itself is a free power. The mind comprehends the intangible by the aid of the tangible; but the spirit has limitless manifestations. The mind is circumscribed; the spirit is unlimited. It is through the senses such





DR. AUGUSTE FOREL

ڈاکٹر فورل

Dr. Auguste Forel of Zurich, Switzerland, one of the distinguished scientific men of Europe, was born in 1848. His special field is entomology and psychology. For many years he held the chair of psychiatry at Zurich. Among his scientific works are: *Ants and Some Other Insects*, an inquiry into the psychic powers of these animals; *Hygiene of Nerves and Mind in Health and Disease*; *Hypnotism: or, Suggestion and Psychotherapy*.

Amelia Von Ende, writing on "Literary Zurich" in *The Bookman*, November, 1913, states that "During the last two decades of the nineteenth century Zurich was much frequented by the young men and women who . . . attempted a 'revaluation' of all values. Some were taking courses at the university, where men like Dr. Auguste Forel opened to them vistas into unknown regions of the human soul, or suggested a new reading of life. . . . To his influence Carl and Gerhart Hauptmann owe their remarkable understanding of suffering humanity. His writings against alcoholism profoundly impressed the younger generation."



as sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch that the mind comprehends; whereas the spirit is independent. The spirit, as thou observest, whether it be in sleeping or waking is operating and active. Perhaps it may, in a dream, solve an intricate problem which has been unsolvable during wakefulness. When the senses cease to function the mind fails to understand; and mind is totally absent in the embryonic stage and in infancy; whereas the spirit is always in the utmost power. In short, there are many proofs which show that despite the loss of reason the power of the spirit still exists.

The spirit however possesses various grades and stations.

As to the mineral spirit: it is an indubitable fact that minerals are endowed with spirit and life according to the requirements of the mineral world. This unknown secret has also become known to the materialists who now maintain that all beings are endowed with life,—even as He saith in the Koran: “All things are living.”

In the vegetable world also there is the power of growth and that power of growth is the spirit. In the animal world there is the power of sensation. But in the human world there is an all-encircling power. In all the preceding kingdoms the power of reason is absent; but the spirit manifests and reveals itself. The power of sensation does not comprehend the spirit, but the power of the mind proves the existence thereof.

In like manner the mind proves the existence of an unseen Reality which surrounds all beings and in each of the kingdoms is made manifest and apparent. But Its essence is beyond the grasp of the mind. Thus, the mineral world understands neither the reality nor the perfections of the vegetable world; the vegetable world does not understand the reality of the animal world; nor can the animal world comprehend the human reality which discovers and embraces all things.

The animal is the captive of nature and cannot deviate from the laws thereof. In man, however, there is a power of discovery which grasps and breaks through the laws of nature. For instance, all minerals, plants and animals are cap-

tives of nature. The sun itself with all its greatness is captive to nature to such an extent that it has no will of its own and cannot deviate a hair's breadth from the laws thereof. In like manner, all other beings whether of the mineral, the vegetable or the animal world,—not one can deviate from the laws of nature nay, rather, all are the slaves thereof. Man, however, though his body is a captive of nature yet his spirit and mind are free and rule over nature.

Consider: according to the law of nature man lives and moves upon the earth. But his spirit and mind break this natural law; he becomes a bird and soars in the air, sails swiftly upon the sea and, as a fish, dives to the bottom and there makes discoveries. This is a great defeat inflicted upon the laws of nature.

So is it with the power of electricity: this unruly, violent force that cleaves mountains is imprisoned by man within a bulb. This is rending asunder the laws of nature. Likewise the hidden mysteries of nature which according to natural laws must remain concealed man discovers and brings from the invisible to the visible plane. This also is breaking the laws of nature. Man also discovers the inherent properties of things which are nature's mysteries. And he unfolds past events which have been lost to the world of nature. Furthermore, he foresees through the power of induction future happenings which are according to the laws of nature as yet unknown. Moreover, communication and communion are by the laws of nature limited to short distances, but man, through that inner power which discovers the realities of all things communicates from East to West. This also is tearing asunder the laws of nature. Likewise, according to the laws of nature the shadow vanishes, but man fixes it upon a plate. This also is rending asunder natural laws.

Consider carefully: all the sciences, arts, crafts, inventions and discoveries were once the mysteries of nature and according to natural laws should remain hidden but man through the power of discovery breaks the laws of nature and brings these hidden mysteries from the



invisible to the visible plane. This also is rending asunder the laws of nature.

In short, that inner power in man which is invisible wrests the sword from out the hand of nature and strikes it upon its head. All other beings, even those which are the greatest are deprived of these perfections. Man has the power of will and understanding; but nature is deprived thereof. Nature is coerced; man is free. Nature does not understand; man comprehends. Nature is unaware of past events; man is made aware. Nature is ignorant of future happenings; man through his discerning power is informed. Nature has no consciousness of itself; man knows all things.

Should anyone, then, declare that man is but a part of the world of nature and that, since he embodies all these perfections which are a manifestation of the world of nature therefore nature is the founder of these perfections and not deprived of them, answering, we would say: the part depends upon the whole. The part cannot possess perfections of which the whole is deprived. By nature is meant those inherent properties and necessary relations which emanate from the realities of things. These realities of beings though utterly diverse are still most closely connected. For these diverse realities an all-unifying potency is needed which shall link them one with the other. For instance, the organs, members, parts and elements of man are quite diverse but the all-unifying power, which might be called the human spirit connects them all with one another. Thus mutual aid and cooperation are obtained and the organs function regularly and under uniform laws which are the cause of the everlastingness of creation. The human body however is utterly unconscious of that all-unifying power yet it functions regularly and according to its will.

Concerning philosophers they are of two kinds, some of them like Socrates, the wise, who was a believer in the oneness of God and the immortality of the soul after death. Because his opinion was contrary to that of the uneducated and narrow-minded people they poi-

soned that divine sage. All divine philosophers and men of wisdom and understanding upon considering these endless beings have observed that in this great and infinite universe all things end in the mineral kingdom, that the outcome of the mineral kingdom is the animal kingdom, and the outcome of the animal kingdom the world of man, that the consummation of this limitless universe with all its grandeur and glory is man, himself, who in this world of being toils and suffers for a time with diverse ills and pains, and ultimately disintegrates leaving no trace and no fruit after him. If this were so there is no doubt but that this infinite universe with all its perfections would end in sham and delusion, with no result, no fruit, no permanence and no effect. It would be utterly without meaning. Therefore, they (the divine philosophers) were convinced that such is not the case, that this great workshop with all its power, its bewildering magnificence and endless perfections cannot come eventually to naught. Therefore it is beyond question that still another life exists and just as the vegetable kingdom is unaware of the human kingdom so we, too, know not of the great life hereafter which follows this life of man. However, our non-comprehension of that life is no proof of its non-existence. The mineral world, for instance, is utterly unaware of the human world and cannot comprehend it but that lack of comprehension is no proof of non-existence. Numerous and conclusive proofs exist to show that this infinite world cannot end with this human life.

Concerning the reality of Divinity: it is an Essence, the Single, the Independent; that is, it is the Real Essence and to comprehend it is impossible, for whatsoever can be conceived by man is a limited reality and not unlimited; is circumscribed, not all-encircling; can be comprehended by man and is controlled by him. Likewise it is certain that all human conceptions are of recent origin, not pre-existent, have a mental existence, not an actual one. Moreover the difference of degree as far as time is concerned is an obstacle to comprehension.



How then can the Ancient be understood by that which is of late origin? As previously mentioned, difference of degree in the contingent plane is an obstacle to comprehension. Minerals, plants and animals are unendowed with the mental faculties of man which discover the realities of all things. But man comprehends all degrees. Every superior degree comprehends that which is inferior and discovers its reality, but the inferior is unaware of that which is superior and cannot understand it. Thus man cannot grasp the Essence of Divinity but, through the laws of reason, observation, logic, intuition and unfoldment of consciousness he becomes a believer in the Exalted Divinity and discovers the divine bounties. He becomes certain that though the Divine Essence is unseen and the existence of Divinity is intangible yet conclusive divine proofs establish the existence of that Unseen Reality. However, the Divine Essence as it is in itself is beyond all description. For instance, the nature of ether is unknown but its existence is certain through the effect it produces: heat, light and electricity are its waves. By these waves the existence of ether is proved.

When we consider the Divine Bounties we are assured of the existence of Deity. For instance, we observe that the existence of beings is conditioned upon the composition of single elements and non-existence upon the decomposition of these elements for decomposition causes the disintegration of the single elements. Thus, as we observe, the elements become composite and with every composition a being is formed. These beings are infinite, that is, the effect is infinite. Therefore, how can the cause be finite?

Now composition is limited to three kinds only—there is no fourth variety—accidental, necessary and voluntary. The composition of the various single elements of beings cannot be accidental for there can be no effect without a cause. Composition cannot be compulsory for if the composition is an essential property of the constituent parts the essential property of a thing cannot be separated from it, such as light which

is the revealer of things, heat which causes the elements to expand and the solar ray which is the essential property of the sun. Thus under such conditions the decomposition of any composition is impossible for the essential properties of a thing cannot be separated from it. The third (type of) composition remains, and it is voluntary (composition), that is, an unseen force described as the Ancient Power causes these elements to come together, every composition giving rise to a distinct being.

As to the attributes and perfections such as will, knowledge, power and other ancient qualities which we ascribe to that Divine Realty these are the signs which reflect the existence of Being on the visible plane and not the absolute perfections of the Divine Essence which cannot be comprehended. For instance, when we consider the created beings, observe infinite perfections and see created things in the utmost regularity and perfection, we infer that the Ancient Power upon Whom depends the existence of these beings cannot be ignorant. So we say, It is All-Knowing. It is certain that It is not impotent. It must then be All-Powerful. It is not poor. It must be All-Possessing. It was never non-existing. It must be Ever-Existing. Our purpose is to show that in naming these attributes and perfections for that Universal Reality we are merely denying imperfections rather than affirming perfections which the human mind can conceive. Hence we say His attributes are unknowable.

In a word, that Universal Reality with all Its qualities and attributes which we have enumerated is holy and exalted above all minds and all understanding. As we reflect, however, with comprehensive minds upon this infinite universe we observe that motion without a mover and an effect without a cause are impossible; that every being has come into existence through many influences and is continually acted upon. These influences also are subservient to the action of still other influences. For instance, plants grow and flourish through the outpouring of the clouds of April, while the cloud itself is formed through vari-



ous other agencies, and these agencies in their turn are acted upon by still other forces. For example, plants and animals grow and develop under the influence of what the philosophers of our day designate as oxygen and hydrogen and through the effect of these two elements, and these in turn are formed by still other influences. The same can be said of other phenomena whether they affect other things or are affected by them. Such a process of causation goes on; but to maintain that this process continues thus indefinitely is manifestly absurd. The producers of effects and the effects must of necessity lead eventually to Him Who is the Ever-Living, the All-Powerful, Who is Self-Dependent and the Ultimate Cause. This Universal Reality cannot be perceived by the senses nor can It be seen. So must it be of necessity, for It is All-Encompassing, not circumscribed; and such attributes (as have been mentioned) qualify the effect and not the Cause.

As we reflect we observe that man is like unto a tiny microbe contained within a fruit. This fruit has developed out of the blossom, the blossom has grown out of the tree, the tree is sustained by the sap and the sap formed from earth and water. How then can this tiny microbe comprehend the nature of the Gardener, conceive of the Gardener and comprehend his being? It is manifestly impossible. Should that microbe understand and reflect it would realize that this garden, this tree, this blossom, this fruit could in no wise have come into existence in such order and perfection by themselves. In like manner the wise and reflecting soul will know of a certainty that this infinite universe with all its grandeur and perfect order could not have come into existence by itself.

Likewise, in the world of being there exist unseen forces, such as the force of ether previously mentioned which cannot be perceived by the senses nor can it be seen, yet from the effect which it produces that is from its waves and vibrations light, heat and electricity appear and are made evident. So is it with the power of growth, of feeling, of understanding, of thought, of memory, of imagination and of discernment. All

these inner faculties are invisible and cannot be perceived by the senses yet they are all manifest through the effects which they produce.

Now as to the Infinite Power which knows no limitations: limitation itself proves the existence of the limitless for the limited is known through the unlimited just as weakness proves the existence of power, ignorance the existence of knowledge, poverty the existence of wealth. Without wealth there would be no poverty; without knowledge, no ignorance; without light, no darkness. Darkness itself is a proof of the existence of light for darkness is the absence of light.

Now concerning nature, it is but the essential properties and necessary relations inherent in the realities of things. Though these infinite realities are diverse in their character yet they are in utmost harmony and are closely connected one with the other. As you broaden your vision and the matter is observed carefully it will become clear that every reality is but an essential requisite of other realities. Thus, to harmonize and connect these diverse and infinite realities an All-Unifying Power is necessary that every part of the parts of created beings may perfectly discharge its own function. Consider for instance, in man the whole body must be seen in a part thereof. Note how these diverse parts and members of the human body are closely connected and harmoniously united with each other. Every part is the essential requisite of all the other parts and has a function of its own. It is the mind, that all-unifying organ which so unites all the component parts with each other that each discharges its specific function in perfect order and thereby cooperation and reaction are made possible. All parts function under certain laws which are essential to existence. Should that all-unifying force which directs all these parts become disabled in any way there is no doubt but that the constituent parts and members would cease to function properly. Though that all-unifying potency in the temple of man may not be sensed or seen and the reality thereof be unknown yet by its effects it



manifests itself with the greatest power. Thus it has been proved and made evident that these infinite beings in this wondrous universe will perform their functions properly only when directed and controlled by that Universal Reality. Thus, order is established in the world. For example, inter-action, mutual aid and cooperation among the constituent parts of the human body are evident and indisputable. Yet this does not suffice; nay, rather, an All-Unifying means is needed which will direct and control the parts so that these through inter-action and cooperation may discharge with perfect order their necessary and respective functions.

Thou art well aware, praise be to God, that among all beings whether large or small interaction and cooperation are evident and established. Among great bodies however such as the sun interaction is evident; whereas in the case of small bodies though interaction be unknown yet the part is an indication of the whole. All these interactions therefore are connected with that All-Encircling Power which is their pivot, their center, their source and their motive power.

For instance, as we have said, cooperation and mutual aid among the parts of the human body are clearly established and these parts and members render service to all other parts. For example, the hand, the foot, the eye, the ear, the mind, the imagination help all the parts and members but all these interactions are linked together by an unseen all-encircling power which causes these interactions to be effected with perfect regularity. This is the inner faculty of man, the inner power of man which consists of the spirit and the mind both of which are invisible.

In like manner consider in the machine and work-shops the interaction existing among all the parts and sections and how they are connected one with the other. However, all these relations and interactions are connected with a central power which is the motive force, the pivot, the source of these interactions. This central power is either the power of steam or the skill of the master-mind.

It has therefore been proved and made evident that interaction, cooperation and inter-relation among beings are under the direction and will of a motive power which is the origin, the motive force and the pivot of all interactions among the contingent beings.

Likewise, every arrangement and composition which is not perfect in its order we designate as accidental; and that which is orderly, regular, perfect in its relations, every part of which is in its proper place and is the essential requisite of the other parts—this we call a composition formed through will and knowledge.

There is no doubt but that these infinite beings and the coming together of these single elements arranged in their infinite forms must have proceeded from a Reality which could not be without will or understanding. This is clear and proven to the mind and no one can deny it. This, however, does not mean that we have comprehended the Universal Reality or the attributes thereof. Neither the Essence nor any one of the attributes have we understood.

We maintain, however, that these infinite beings, these necessary relations and this complete and perfect arrangement must of necessity have proceeded from a Source that is not bereft of will and understanding. And this infinite composition cast into infinite forms must have been caused by an All-Encircling Wisdom. This no one can dispute save he who is obstinate, stubborn and a denier of clear and unmistakable evidence and who is of those to whom the blessed verse refers, "They are deaf, they are dumb, they are blind and shall return no more."

Now concerning the question whether the faculties of the mind and the human spirit are one and the same: the mental qualities, such as the power of imagination, of thought, of understanding, powers which are the essential requisites of the reality of man are the inherent properties of the spirit as the solar ray is the inherent property of the sun. The temple of man is like unto a mirror; his spirit is like the sun and his mental faculties are even as the rays which emanate from the sun. Perhaps the ray



may be cut off from the mirror and be separated from it; but it cannot be separated from the sun.

In short, the point is this, that the world of man is supernatural by comparison with the vegetable world though in reality it is not supernatural. Relative to the plant the reality of man, his power of hearing and sight are all supernatural and it is impossible for the plant to comprehend that reality and the nature of the power of man's mind.

In like manner, for mankind to comprehend the Divine Essence and the nature of the great hereafter is in no wise possible. However, the bounties of the Merciful Reality are vouchsafed unto all beings and man must ponder deeply upon the Divine Bestowals, such as the spirit, rather than upon the Divine Essence Itself. This is the limit of human understanding. As has been previously mentioned these attributes and perfections of the Divine Essence which we have enumerated we have derived from the observation of beings and their existence, and not because we have comprehended the essence and perfections of God. When we say the Divine Essence understands and is free we do not mean that we have discovered the Divine Purpose but rather that we have Knowledge of It through the Divine Grace revealed and manifested in the realities of things.

Concerning our social principles, namely the teachings of His Holiness Baha'Ullah spread fifty years ago—they include all other teachings. It is clear and evident that without these teachings progress and prosperity for the world of humanity are unattainable, impossible and inconceivable. Every community in the world finds in these divine teachings the realization of its highest aspirations. These teachings are even as that tree which bears the best fruit of all trees. For instance, philosophers find in these heavenly teachings the most perfect solution of their social problems and at the same time a true and noble exposition of matters which pertain to philosophical questions. In like manner men of faith behold the reality of religion manifestly revealed in these

heavenly teachings which clearly and conclusively proves them to be the true and real remedy for the ills and infirmities of the body politic of the world of humanity. Should these sublime teachings be spread abroad mankind would be freed from all peril, all chronic ills and sickness. In like manner are the Bahai economic principles the embodiment of the highest aspirations of all laborers and the aim of the economists.

Briefly, for all communities there is a share and a portion from the teachings of Baha'Ullah. When these teachings are proclaimed in churches, in mosques and in the places of worship of other peoples, among the followers of Buddha, Confucius, and in various societies or even among materialists all bear witness that these teachings confer a new life upon mankind and constitute the immediate remedy for all the ills of social life. No one can find fault with any of these teachings nay, rather, when once one hears them one will be rejoiced and will acknowledge their importance and exclaim, "Verily this is the truth and there is naught beside the truth but manifest error!"

In conclusion these few words are written and to every one they will be a clear and conclusive evidence of the truth. Ponder then in thy heart: the will of every sovereign prevails during his lifetime, likewise the power of the will of every philosopher influences a few of his students during his lifetime. But the power of the Holy Spirit which is manifest and radiant in the realities of the Prophets makes the power of their will so effective that it endures for thousands of years, throughout a great nation, establishes a new creation and transforms humanity from an old into a new world. Consider what a power this is! It is an extraordinary power, an all-sufficient proof of the validity of the Prophets and conclusive evidence of the power of inspiration.

Upon thee be the Glory of the Most Glorious.

(Signed) ABDUL BAHÁ ABBAS.

Translated by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi.