

the Divine Virtues: the
sign of the

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Messianic Word is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Word means Divine Perfection, Heavenly Bestowals. No one can deny that the Divine Perfections were originally with God. It is an undoubted fact that the most ideal virtues are inseparable from the existence of God. The rays and heat of the sun are co-existent with and inseparable from the sun. In the sun there is a unity of these forces, which blends together in an [sic] harmonious whole. The Reality of Christ is like a translucent mirror — the Sun of Divinity is inclusive of the properties which are manifested in it. By this we do not mean that the Sun has left his station and entered into the mirror. For the Reality of Divinity there is no ascent and no descent, no entrance, and no exit.

2.

God, the Almighty, is the Creator. His Highness, the Divine God, has certain attributes. In thinking of God, one presupposes certain virtues and perfections. If one could for one moment imagine the cessation of the outpouring of these virtues, then would the Divinity cease. His Highness, the Almighty, is unknowable. All we human beings can know of Him, is the manifestation of His virtues: all the children of humanity can comprehend is through the showing forth of His attributes to the world.

To illustrate this point — the sun continues to be the sun only as long as it floods the world with its heat and with its rays. Therefore, we cannot think of the sun without its attributes of light and heat. If you could imagine the sun as a dark, sad body, it would no longer be the sun. It would, in fact, be impossible to imagine such a thing. If we could imagine such a thing, the reality of the sun would be accidental, not eternal. Could any one imagine a time when the sun was without rays, or without heat or light?

We attribute to the Reality of God certain virtues, or qualities, which are as follows: Knowledge, Omnipotence, Creative Power; He is the Provider, the Life-giver, the

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Perfecter. And if we could even imagine a time when God was not adorned with these attributes, then He were no longer God. We can only think of the Reality of God as an infinite and unlimited Being. If we could imagine the cessation of these virtues, the Divine World would exist no longer.

In thinking of the Divine Perfecter, one presupposes the existence of sentient beings. Knowledge presupposes the existence of certain beings who are possessed of intellect. Were it not for this power of understanding, how could we have any idea at all of God? The term Creator presupposes the existence of created beings. Were it not that we were created, how could we conceive of the Creator? In thinking of the Provider, one presupposes certain beings who are provided for, and One Who provides. In speaking of the Life-giver, one thinks of life. Were it not for the living ones, how could there be any thoughts about the Life-giver? The idea Giver supposes the idea of recipients. Were it not for the Divine Giver, how could we think of the One Who was to give?

This is a very abstruse question — attend to it. It is impossible to imagine the cessation of certain attributes and virtues which are co-existent with God. If we could imagine for a moment an interruption in the onward flow of the bounties of God, it would be to suggest that God was a finite being. We cannot imagine such a thing. This proves, therefore, that God has always been the Creator, the Provider, the Generous, the Life-giver, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent: and in the outpouring of His virtues there is no cessation at all. Think and ponder upon this very deeply, because this is a very subtle point in Divine Science. We cannot state that there could ever be a time, either in the past or in the future, when the bounties of God did not flow down upon the world of humanity. How can we limit the Divine Virtues to any special period of history? The virtues of God are as drops falling unrestrainedly from a mighty ocean — how are we to hold them back?

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How can we limited beings know anything of the Unlimited God? Or we finite

beings of the Infinite

God? How shall man dare to settle a point when the Divine Virtues shall cease?

An ignorant man, who

was devoid of any insight, might imagine such a cessation. How could he

comprehend the Reality, the

Unsearchable?

Man receives the bounty of God all his life: the bounties of God are the source

of life. The bestowals of

the Almighty are infinite; a wise man will never try to limit them. Limitation

is the property of the

mind of man.

That which is contained in the Holy Books is full of mystery, full of meaning.

Those who do not

understand, take it in a literal way: I hope that you will investigate the

reality of the meanings and

understand. For example, Christ said: "I am the bread which came down from

Heaven; whoever

partakes, will receive Everlasting Life." By the Bread of Heaven Christ meant

the Heavenly Benediction.

He who realises the Divine Virtues, and takes for himself a goodly portion of

the Heavenly Benediction,

shall have eternal life. The Jews did not understand this: so they said, "How

can we eat the flesh of this

man? Can we become cannibals? How can he claim to have come down from Heaven?

We know he was

born in Nazareth." Therefore the Jews arose in opposition to Christ. Then

again, the Vision of St. John

in the Revelation is symbolic. Likewise the description of the bride and

bridegroom in the writings of

Solomon. In short, I hope and pray that each of you may discover the Reality of

the Symbols and the

mystic meanings of the Holy Books. If the Jews had understood, they would at

once have believed in

Christ; but they only saw the literal sense, and therefore they denied Him, and

arose to oppose His

teachings. They said: "Christ come down from Heaven! We know that he was born

of Mary; he has not

a sword, not even a stick! He does not establish the throne of David. He comes

in a desert: he has no

home, and no food: he is a wanderer in the land. He has not even a mat." They

could not see the real

meanings of the Holy

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Books. His Spirit came from Heaven, but His body was earthly. His sword was His thoughts, with which

He shepherded His flock. With it He divided the right from the wrong, the truthful from the untruthful.

The power of His sword was not like that of Buonaparte [sic]; but it was an eternal unchangeable power.

This the Jews could not understand.

3.

On one occasion they told 'Abdu'l Baha a legend of the Christ: how the Christ-child gathered some roses from His garden and gave them away to His friends. His friends said: "Behold! you have given us all your roses and you have none left for yourself." "The thorns are left for me," the Christ-child answered.

"That is a very beautiful story," said 'Abdu'l Baha. "The meaning of that legend is that Christ says to us: 'For you I have desired joy and happiness; for myself I have chosen sorrow and trials. The flower springs from the thorn. Out of the thorny bush springs the blossom of happiness and joy. I choose for myself the thorns, that you may inherit the roses, the peace and joy of Earth.'"

4.

Another time the Bahai Master said: "This world is a theatre. It is not an eternal world: it is a stage where every kind of play is enacted. Man must observe every drama. There is the drama of heat and the drama of cold: the drama of Spring and the drama of Summer — the drama of happiness and of sorrow, of sickness and of health, of shame and of glory, of freedom and of prison — Yes: indeed the world is a great theatre, and man must observe each of these plays."

— Unpublished Talks by 'Abdu'l-Baha (Used by permission of the curator)