

ABDUL - BAHÁ

True Happiness, Wisdom and Progress. The Dawn of Knowledge.

BENEFITS OF GOD TO MAN.

God alone ordereth all things and is all powerful. Why then does He send trials to His servants?

The trials of man are of two kinds: (a) The consequences of his own actions. If a man eats too much he ruins his digestion. If he takes poison he becomes ill or dies. If a person gambles he will lose his money. If he drinks too much he will lose his equilibrium. All these sufferings are caused by the man himself, and it is quite clear, therefore, that certain sorrows are the results of our own deeds. (b) Other sufferings there are which come upon the faithful of God. Consider the great sorrows endured by Christ and by His apostles. Those who suffer most attain the greatest perfection. Those who declare a wish to suffer much for Christ's sake must prove their sincerity. Those who proclaim their longing to make great sacrifices can prove their truth only by their deeds. Job proved the fidelity of his love for God by being faithful through his great adversity, as well as during the prosperity of his life. The apostles of Christ who steadfastly bore all their trials and sufferings—did they not prove their faithfulness? Was not their endurance the best proof?

These griefs are now ended.

Calaphas and Peter.

Calaphas lived a comfortable and happy life, while Peter's life was full of sorrow and trial. Which of these two is the more to be envied? Assuredly we should choose the present state of Peter, for he possesses immortal life, whilst Calaphas has won eternal shame. The trials of Peter tested his fidelity. Tests are benefits from God, for which we should thank Him. Griefs and sorrows do not come to us by chance. They are sent to us by the divine mercy for our own perfecting.

While a man is happy he may forget his god; but when grief comes and sorrows overwhelm him, then will he remember his Father who is in heaven and who is able to deliver him from his humiliations.

Men who suffer not attain no perfection. The plant most pruned by the gardeners is that one which, when the summer comes, will have the most beautiful blossoms and the most abundant fruit.

Chastened for His Good.

The laborer cuts up the earth with his plow, and from that earth comes the rich and plentiful harvest. The more a man is chastened the greater is the harvest of spiritual virtues shown forth by him. A soldier is no good general until he has been in the front of the fiercest battle and has received the deepest wounds.

The prayer of the prophets of God has always been and still is: "Oh, God! I long to lay down my life in the path to Thee! I desire to shed my blood for Thee, and to make the supreme sacrifice."

When a man has found the joy of life in one place he returns to that same spot to find more joy. When a man has found gold in a mine he returns again to that mine to dig for more gold.

This shows the internal force and man, and the power of vital energy which natural instinct which God has given to is born in him.

The West has always received spiritual enlightenment from the East. The Son of the Kingdom is first heard in the East, but in the West the greater volume of sound bursts upon the listening ears.

Christ's Teachings Spread.

The Lord Christ arose as a bright star in the eastern sky, but the light of His teaching shone more perfectly in the West, where His influence has taken root more firmly and His cause has spread to a greater degree than in the land of His birth.

The sound of the song of Christ has echoed over all the lands of the western world and entered the hearts of its people.

The people of the West are firm, and the foundations on which they build are of rock. They are steadfast, and do not easily forget.

The West is like a strong, sturdy plant—when the rain falls gently upon it to give it nourishment, and the sun shines upon it, then does it blossom in due time and bring forth good fruit. It is a long time since the sun of Truth, mirrored forth by the Lord Christ, has shed its radiance upon the West, for the face of God has been veiled by the sin and forgetfulness of man.

Holy Spirit Speaks.

But, now again, praise be to God, the Holy Spirit speaks anew to the world! The constellation of love and wisdom and power is once more shining from the divine horizon to give joy to all who turn their faces to the Light of God. Bahá'ó'lláh has rent the veil of prejudice and superstition which was stifling the souls of men. Let us pray to God that the breath of the Holy Spirit may again give hope and refreshment to the people, awakening in them a desire to do the will of God. May heart and soul be verified in every man; so will they all rejoice in a new birth.

Then shall humanity put on a new garment in the radiance of the love of God, and it shall be the dawn of a new creation. Then will the mercy of the most merciful be showered upon all mankind and they will arise to a new life.

My earnest desire is that you will all strive and work for this glorious end: that you will be faithful and loving workers in the building of the new spiritual civilization; the elect of God, in willing joyful obedience carrying out His supreme design. Success is truly at hand, for the flag of divinity has been raised aloft and the sun of righteousness of God appeareth upon the horizon in the sight of all men.

(Continued next week.)