

Harmony of Religion and Science

(slightly adapted from *Bahá'í Principles for Children*, by R. E. Ford, illustrated by E. Povey)

There was a wise man who had two quite clever sons. One had chosen to be a scientist, while the other had chosen to study and teach religion. The trouble was, and this upset the father very much, they just could not agree.

The scientist said that through science alone, man would change the world and solve all of its problems. Though he was a good man he did not really believe in God, but felt that only through science could mankind progress. The religious son disagreed very strongly and said that the world would only progress if it turned to God and religion. He felt that religion could provide the answer to all mankind's problems.



So they argued and argued, much to their father's disappointment. Then he could stand it no longer and sending for his scientist son he said to him: "Go and wait for me in the market place and I will come to you at sunset and prove to you that there is a God!"

The son was very surprised and went to the market place as instructed and soon a great crowd gathered with him. As the setting sun cast its golden rays across the earth and became tinged with red, the crowd became excited. The father did not arrive. It grew dark and the crowd became restless, but still he did not arrive.

It had been dark for several hours, many of the people had gone home and those who were still waiting and wondering lit great fires to warm themselves, when suddenly the father came down the road and strode up to his

son. In a loud voice for all to hear he said:

“My son, I am sorry you have been kept waiting so long. I will tell you what happened. When I came to the river, I found that the bridge had been washed away. I decided that the only thing to do was to pray. Then to my amazement the logs and pieces of wood that were floating about, came together and formed a raft. I boarded the raft and came slowly to the other bank of the river.”

The crowd gasped with amazement at this story, but the son said: “Father, I cannot believe that such a thing happened. Those logs could not come together by themselves.”

The father then said: “But you, as a scientist, tell us that the sun and stars, the moon and the earth and everything upon the earth all came about without a Creator, and yet you do not believe that a few logs can come together by themselves.”

The crowd broke into hearty laughter at this and the son understood how his father had tricked him into seeing that there must indeed be a God to create all the wonders of the world and the universe.

The following day the wise father called his other son to him and said: “You have chosen the religious way of life and have decided to teach others this way. But you must be humble and not too proud to learn new ideas, for that is progress. You must also remember that people do not wish to know about you but about the teachings you bring. You are but a servant, serving God!”

Then the father told a story to his religious son, saying: “There was once a donkey that was used to carry a holy relic in a religious procession. They covered the donkey in a fine cloth and placed the relic upon its back and led him through the town. When the donkey saw all the people bowing down before him he thought how important he must be, and feeling very proud he refused to walk any further. The man who was leading him began to beat him with a stick saying: ‘You foolish animal! It is not you that the people worship, but what you are carrying upon your back!’

“So you see, my son, when you argue with your brother and fail to understand his ideas you are placing too much importance upon yourself. People need religion to help them to understand God’s ways and to lead better lives and they need science to enable them to make their lives easier and overcome physical problems. Religion and science are like the two wings of a bird. If a bird wishes to fly properly, both wings must be of the same size and shape.”

This is religion and science in harmony, as God meant it to be.