

SOAR Curricular Material #12

***The Brotherhood of Man* (April 1917—Abridged version—Excerpt)**

Human nature is not responsible for the war. The millions killed and wounded represent what no-sensibly, kindly individual wants. Would it not be the case were our own country at war? No, human nature is not responsible for the war. It is State nature. This world struggle is not due to a lack of brotherly love among individuals. It is due to the jealousies and selfish scheming of great groups of individuals, which are at bottom little else than cold-blooded fighting units. Therefore, *the war in itself is no proof that the Brotherhood of Man does not exist*. And the fact that men at large deplore such slaughter and fear, that humanity has fallen to a lower level than they themselves have attained, proves that the Brotherhood of Man does exist in the minds and hearts of men. Despite all indications to the contrary, love and unselfishness are still uppermost. May we ever hold fast to our trust in each other. We must rightfully doubt our own individual perfection, but never can we doubt what our place is in God's great creation, where all men and all things work together for good. Our philosophies change, our knowledge increases, our governments are altered and our religious thinking deepens, but the great fundamental principle, of mankind is ever the same; the Brotherhood of Man, existent since the beginning of men, brought to the highest point in the life of Christianity and now the all-important factor in human affairs. In that phase is implied all the love and mutual dependence between man and man, between brother and brother. Without it all social schemes fail, all religions crumble into nothingness. On the pinnacle of our hope and idealism must be a life in which our duty to our fellow-men is uppermost. We must have the mental picture of a perfect, cohesive humanity, of which we are units. This ideal once established and our lives purposed for its accomplishment, our highest duty is done, and we may look forward with no fear but with absolute confidence to the future.

~~James M. Shields, '18

Document-Based Questions

- 1) What is the main idea of this passage?
- 2) What does the author claim to be the importance of the Brotherhood of Man?
- 3) Why does the author state that human nature was not responsible for the war?
- 4) Who is the audience of this piece?
- 5) What is the purpose of this excerpt? (to inform, persuade, entertain, etc.?)

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- 6) **Short Answer:** Provide your responses about the following statement. Use textual evidence to support your answers when necessary.

“The war in itself is no proof that the Brotherhood of Man does not exist.”

- a. What is meant by this statement? Rewrite in your own words.
- b. What is the significance of this statement in relation to the rest of the excerpt?
- c. Discuss to what extent you agree or disagree with this statement and why.