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STAR  **WEST**
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IN this age His Holiness Baha'o'llah has breathed the Holy Spirit into the dead body of the world, consequently every weak soul is strengthened by these fresh Divine out-breathings—every poor man will become rich, every darkened soul will become illumined, every ignorant one will become wise, because the confirmations of the Holy Spirit are descending like torrents. A new era of Divine consciousness is upon us. The world of humanity is going through a process of transformation. A new race is being developed. The thoughts of human brotherhood are permeating all regions. New ideals are stirring the depths of hearts, and a new spirit of universal consciousness is being profoundly felt by all men.

ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

The Divine Springtime

O ye beloved of God! When the winds blow severely, rains fall fiercely, the lightning flashes, the thunder roars, the bolt descends and storms of trial become severe, grieve not; for after this storm, verily the divine spring will arrive, the hills and fields will become verdant, the expanses of grain will joyfully wave, the earth will become covered with blossoms, the trees will be clothed with green garments and adorned with blossoms and fruits. Thus blessings become manifest in all countries. These favors are results of those storms and hurricanes.

The discerning man rejoiceth at the day of trials, his breast becometh dilated at the time of severe storms, his eyes become brightened when seeing the showers of rain and gusts of wind, whereby trees are uprooted; because he foreseeth the result and the end (of these trials), the leaves, blossoms and fruits (which follow this wintry storm); while the ignorant (short-sighted) person becometh troubled when he seeth a storm, is saddened when it raineth severely, is terrified by the thunder and trembleth at the surging of the waves which storm the shores.

ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Baha 1, 73 (March 21, 1917)

No. 1

The Economic Teaching of Abdul-Baha

BY MARY HANFORD FORD

THE reader of this article may wonder at the importance attributed to the teachings and utterances of Abdul-Baha, and a word of explanation in regard to his position in the world may not be inopportune. He is the leader of the Bahai movement, a great center of progressive thought, which had its origin in the illumined message of Ali Mohammed, later called the Bab, given to the Persian people in 1844. The Bab was martyred by the Persian government in 1850, as he was considered a dangerous heretic from the Mohammedan point of view, and Mohammedanism is a state religion. As is natural in such cases, any deviation from the established faith becomes in a way treasonable in the conception of the government. Before this tragic event took place, however, the Bab had fully proclaimed his mission and prophecies. Foreseeing his own end, he told the people that he himself was but the herald of the new day, which would center in the remarkable Revelator to follow him, who would be the messenger of God for this period, and whom he always spoke of under the title of the Glory of God, or Baha'o'llah. He declared that Baha'o'llah would bring peace and unity to mankind, and revive the true knowledge of God in all the world.

The essentials of human progress were included and insisted upon in the message of the Bab; and Baha'o'llah, who followed him, has written eloquent pages outlining the tendencies of future civili-

zation. The Bahai movement which for many years has been a growing power in the Orient, in spite of the cruel persecution of governments, has at length penetrated the western world, and shows clearly that the ethical ideals of our most advanced western economics were generated and came to expression years ago, in the minds of these illumined eastern teachers.

According to the teaching of these supreme educators, messengers of God have been coming to the world from the beginning of creation, and their province is to refresh the soul of man as it grows cold to the love of God, and restore its sensitiveness to the breath of the holy spirit. Thus Moses came, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Christ came, and today the inspiring and ever necessary message has been given once more by the trinity of Persian teachers, who bring a universal teaching, through which all the races of mankind will be enlightened.

Abdul-Baha is the son of Baha'o'llah. He was imprisoned when only nine years old, at the time when his father was seized with his entire family and his immense property confiscated, simply because he had openly become a follower of the Bab, and a believer in the Oneness of God and humanity.

The Bahai conception is that three persons are always combined in the announcement of a divine message. As Christ was heralded by John the Baptist, and followed by Peter, Moses was presaged by his herald, and followed by

Joshua; the Bab, Baha'o'llah and Abdul-Baha are the trinity of today, though the station of Abdul-Baha is more nearly allied to that of the center than in any previous case. He is called the Center of the Covenant renewed today between God and man, as it was renewed in the days of Christ and his predecessors. Abdul-Baha's title means the Servant of God, and naturally he can have no successor in the movement.

The intensely humanitarian feeling of Abdul-Baha is amply shown in his life, and his economic teaching manifests a singularly accurate acquaintance with the sociological conditions of the western world. He is well aware of the fact that measures of charitable relief are only palliations rendered necessary by existing misfortune and by no means to be considered more than methods of temporary relief. Nevertheless the charity, and the spirit of instant service in the life of Abdul-Baha are most inspiring.

His childhood and his youth were passed in moving from one oriental prison to another, until at last he lived in Acca, the prison town of the Sultan, as a prisoner on parole, controlling his own household, under the surveillance of the Turkish police. In this way he became familiar with all aspects of oriental poverty, and permitted himself the privilege of relieving it. In Acca as a prisoner he could do nothing against existing abuses except palliate their results, but this he did constantly.

Every Friday morning the poor of Acca gathered in the courtyard of Abdul-Baha's house, and he went among them personally. He knew them all by name, he knew just which one needed a coat or a warm shawl, he sent a physician or healed those who were ill. Those whom he succored were never among his own followers, for the believer in the revelation of Baha'o'llah does not beg. They were Mohammedans, sectaries of the creed which had persecuted him, deprived his father of property, liberty and station, and martyred the Bab, but they loved Abdul-Baha as their bene-

factor, and did not bother their heads about his religion.

Abdul-Baha had a donkey upon which he was accustomed to ride about the town daily upon his philanthropic missions. An American woman who was his guest at one time was terribly annoyed at the nightly braying of this creature, which she declared prevented her from sleeping, but when she discovered that it was the donkey upon which Abdul-Baha visited the sick, its braying suddenly assumed a musical character, and no longer disturbed her. Often when the family of Abdul-Baha was about to sit down to dinner at night, the report would come of some unfortunate who was starving, and who had been overlooked in the visits of the day. Then quickly the hot appetizing meal would be bundled into a basket, and rushed away to the suffering family, while Abdul-Baha would smile and say, "It does not matter for us, we had dinner last night, we shall have dinner tomorrow!"

Often he sent his bed to a feverish invalid whom he discovered, because it required thirty-six hours at least to procure a bed from Haifa, the nearest point of supply, and Abdul-Baha would be perfectly comfortable wrapped in a blanket, and lying upon the floor of his room, or the roof of the house, while he would not have been able to sleep at all, conscious of a bedless invalid, feverish and pain racked. He could not endure the sight of suffering which he was able to relieve.

When he reached the Occident, however, Abdul-Baha faced a condition which troubled him greatly, because it was beyond his power to assuage the misery he saw constantly about him. Housed luxuriously at Cadogan Gardens, London, he knew that within a stone's throw of him were people who had never had enough to eat—and in New York there was exactly the same situation. These things made him exceedingly sad, and he said: "The time will come in the near future when humanity will become

so much more sensitive than at present that the man of great wealth will not enjoy his luxury, in comparison with the deplorable poverty about him. He will be forced, for his own happiness, to expend his wealth to procure better conditions for the community in which he lives."

When Abdul-Baha first arrived in England he was the guest of a friend in a village not far from London. The evident poverty around him in this wealthy country distressed him greatly. He would walk out in the town, garbed in his white turban and long Persian coat, and all eyes were centered upon this strange visitor, who, the people had been told, was "a holy man from the East." Naturally the children were attracted to him, followed him, pulled at his coat, or his hand, and were immediately taken into his arms and caressed. This delighted them, of course, and children are never afraid of Abdul-Baha, but what pleased and amazed them still more was that when they were put down they found in their little hands a shilling or sixpence from the capacious pockets of "the holy man's" long coat. Such bits of silver were a rarity in their experience, and they ran home with joy to tell the tale of the generous stranger from the Orient, possessed apparently of an endless store of shining sixpences.

The children crowded after him and so many sixpences were dispensed that the friend who entertained Abdul-Baha became alarmed, and talked the matter over with Miss Roberts, who was also a guest in the house. "It is a shame!" they said indignantly. "He comes to us accepting nothing, and is giving to our people all the time! It must not go on!"

That day Abdul-Baha had bestowed many sixpences, and people had come from the neighboring villages, bringing their children to receive the blessing from "the holy man,"—and of course the sixpences! About nine o'clock in the evening the ladies decided that no one else must see Abdul-Baha that night. But as they waited outside the cottage,

a man came up the path, carrying one baby, and with others clinging to him. When he asked for "the holy man," however, he was told severely that he could not be seen, he was very tired and had gone to bed. The man sighed, as he said, "Oh, I have walked six miles from far away to see him. I am so sorry!"

The hostess responded severely, feeling that the desire for sixpences had prompted the journey perhaps more than religious enthusiasm, and the man sighed more deeply than ever, and was turning away, when suddenly Abdul-Baha came around the corner of the house. The way in which he embraced the man and all the babies was so wonderful, that the hearts of the too careful friends melted within them, and when he at last sent away the unbidden guests, comforted, their hearts full of joy, their hands bursting with sixpences, the two friends looked at one another and said: "How wrong we were! We will never again try to manage Abdul-Baha!"

Perhaps the most beautiful encounters with the poor he had in the Occident were at the Salvation Army headquarters in London, and the Bowery Mission in New York. Here he consoled the men for their poverty, saying: "Do not consider your poverty a degradation. The greatest of men have always been poor, the poets, and philosophers and benefactors of the race. Christ had not where to lay his head. The Messengers of God are ever overwhelmed by poverty and persecution. Moses was an outcast, and Mohammed a wanderer and an exile. Baha'o'llah suffered the utmost poverty and oppression, and I have known nothing but poverty and prison walls."

In London he gave the men a sum for a New Year's dinner which should duplicate the Christmas feast, and at the Bowery Mission he shook hands with each man at the close of the evening and gave him a quarter. A year afterward nearly every one of those men had kept his quarter because as one of them said:

"That was a heavenly man, and his

quarter was not like other quarters, it will bring me luck!"

One result of Abdul-Baha's charity was the example of personal contact which it established. He said: "If the rich should see for themselves the evil conditions which exist, they would become eager to alter them. It is necessary in relieving poverty to come into direct touch with its pain. Then the world will determine to abolish it."

He said also, "The spending of money for the help of another brings a great blessing, but the mere dispatch of a check the loss of which one never feels is nothing."

Perhaps the tender heart of Abdul-Baha was never more fully manifested than in the incident which occurred in California. His hostess in San Francisco had arranged an interview with the Mayor of Berkeley. There was to be a grand reception, and many dignitaries and University people were to be present. As the appointed hour for departure approached the hostess went upstairs to warn Abdul-Baha that the time was near. He smiled and waved her away, saying "Very soon! Very soon!"

She left him with some impatience, for there was no evidence of preparation for the trip. After some time she went up again, for the automobile was honking at the door, and it looked as if the Mayor of Berkeley would be kept waiting. But she met only a smile, and "Very soon! Very soon!" from the important guest. At last her patience was quite exhausted for she knew that they could not possibly arrive at the reception in time. Suddenly there was a ring at the door bell. Immediately Abdul-Baha's step was on the stair, and when the door opened he was beside the maid, pulling over the threshold a dusty and disheveled man whom no one had ever heard of, but whom Abdul-Baha embraced like a long lost friend.

The man lived fifteen miles from San Francisco. He had read of Abdul-Baha in the newspapers. He felt that he must see him at any cost, but he had not five

cents for street car fare. So he started to walk to San Francisco, and if Abdul-Baha had set forth promptly to fill his engagement with the Mayor of Berkeley he would have missed this seeker after truth. But Abdul-Baha had felt his approach, and would not leave for his appointment until he saw this friend of the spirit seated at his hostess' table, so well panoplied with sandwiches and tea that it was fully evident his outer man would be refreshed.

Then he said: "Now I must go, but when you have finished, wait for me in my room upstairs, until I return, and then we will have a great talk."

It is with this fund of deep sympathy and a profound comprehension that Abdul-Baha approaches the modern economic problem, but he does not regard it from any sentimental point of view. The new time is coming he declares, and it will manifest itself along two lines—a change in the human heart, and new laws enacted in every country. We cannot introduce the divine civilization by legislation alone, he says, there must be a change in the human heart before this is possible.

The lines along which the better government is coming have been clearly indicated by Abdul-Baha. When he was in New York in 1912 some one was talking to him about the United States, and he said:

"You did a wonderful thing in this country in 1865 when you abolished chattel slavery, but you must do a much more wonderful thing now, you must abolish industrial slavery!"

Only a few people understood in 1912 that the curse of industrial slavery existed among us, but the events which followed this dynamic utterance of Abdul-Baha made it plainly manifest. Is there not a wireless which carries the suggestion of a powerful mind to many hearts, and commands results? It is certainly most interesting to observe how closely the economic tendencies which have developed in the United States since 1912 have carried out the possibili-

ties indicated by Abdul-Baha as denoting the future evolution of the country and the age.

In 1913 Congress appointed an Industrial Commission to investigate industrial conditions in the states, and best of all made Frank Walsh its chairman. There could hardly have been a better selection, for Frank Walsh is a criminal lawyer of wide fame and independent means, noted for his capacity to draw the truth from the most refractory witness, absolutely proof against graft, or that insidious and menacing respect for position and wealth, which so frequently prevents the escape of truth from its prison.

So the Commission went from place to place, unveiling the abuses of every locality, and two of the immediate results of its testimony are the federal laws for the prevention of Child Labor, and the Workmen's Compensation Act, neither of them perfect, but both a long step in the right direction.

Meanwhile every thinking American now knows that industrial slavery exists among us, and that it behooves us to remove it. The startling enactment of the Adamson Law is another pregnant move along the same line. Whatever may be the immediate result, great consequences must flow from it, for very soon no employer in this country will be able to enforce labor for more than eight hours a day, and this is only the beginning of change. The invention of labor-saving machinery which has been going on for many years would have had naturally the consequence of shortening the hours of labor, if the machines had not been in the hands of the capitalist class, who wished to use them only for increasing their own profits, and they must attain their natural aim of increasing the leisure of the world, so that all may have time for culture, for thought, to know God, as Abdul-Baha says.

Abdul-Baha in speaking of the changes that are coming into our economic life, said the solution of the struggle between

labor and capital will be found in co-operation and profit sharing. The workers in any institution will presently be regarded as partners, and they will receive their proper share of the profits of the business. Whether in a factory or a mercantile enterprise the same rule will be applied.

Abdul-Baha said in 1912 at Dublin, New Hampshire, in discussing economic questions: "Now I want to tell you about the law of God. According to the divine law, no wages should be given to the employé. Nay, rather indeed they are partners in every work. . . ."

"The question of socialization is very important. It will not be solved by strikes for wages. All the governments of the world must be united and organize an assembly, the members of which should be elected from the parliaments and nobles of the nations. These must plan with utmost wisdom and power, so that neither the capitalists suffer from enormous losses, nor the laborers become needy. In the utmost moderation they should make the law, then announce to the public that the rights of the working people are to be strongly preserved. Also the rights of the capitalists are to be protected. When such a general law is adopted, by the will of both sides, should a strike occur, all the governments of the world collectively should resist it. Otherwise the work will lead to much destruction, especially in Europe. Terrible things will take place. One of the several causes of a universal European war will be this question. For instance the owners of properties, mines and factories should share their incomes with their employés, and give a fairly certain percentage of their products to their workingmen, in order that the employés may receive, beside their wages, some of the general income of the factory, so that the employé may strive with his soul in his work."

As organizations for the supreme enrichment of the few, the trusts, he said, must go; but the principle of organiza-

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Baha 1, 73 (March 21, 1917)

No. 1

Naurooz Greeting

Allah'o'Abha!

This Bahai year, which corresponds to 1917 of the Christian era, we believe marks the beginning of the "blessed days" foreseen by Daniel (Chap. XII, verse 12).

With the world at war it is, no doubt, a year fraught with great events.

According to dispatches published in the daily press, armies are approaching Palestine from the south and from the north.

The prophecies concerning that blessed spot are being fulfilled.

All eyes are upon the Holy Land.

What scene of this mighty world drama—the "Time of the End"—are we about to behold?

At this hour, we are reminded of the following words of Abdul-Baha* :—

"As to you, O friends of God! Make firm your feet in the Cause of God with such firmness as cannot be shaken by the most great disasters of this world. Be not troubled by anything under any condition. Be as lofty mountains, dawning-stars from the horizon of existence, brilliant lamps in the assemblies of oneness and lowly souls, pure hearted, with the friends."

"Be signs of guidance, lights of piety, severed from the world, holding fast to the firm rope, spreaders of the spirit of life, abiders in the ark of safety, manifestations of mercy, dawning-stars of the mysteries of existence, points of revelation, day-springs of light, strengthened by the holy spirit, attracted toward God, sanctified from all things and from the (natural) qualities of people and characterized with the attributes of the angels of heaven—so ye may attain to the greatest gift in this great century and new age!"

—The Editors.

*From *Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, Vol. I, p. 5.

The Coming Convention

The annual Bahai Congress and Convention will be held in Boston this year, from April 29th to May 2nd. The directors of the Temple Unity feel that they are thus following the suggestion of Abdul-Baha, made in the recent tablet published in the STAR OF THE WEST. The spiritual radiance of the friends in Boston has been especially brilliant this last season. All of those who attend the Convention in their city in this great year of 1917 will indeed have a unique privilege. May this be the most glorious and life-imparting of all the many splendid and Pentecostal Conventions thus far held in America.

“Now, is the Beginning of a Cycle of Reality”

O ye children of the Kingdom!

It is New Year*; that is to say, the rounding of the cycle of the year. A year is the expression of a cycle (of the sun); but now is the beginning of a cycle of Reality, a New Cycle, a New Age, a New Century, a New Time and a New Year. Therefore it is very blessed.

I wish this blessing to appear and become manifest in the faces and characteristics of the believers, so that they, too, many become a new people, and having found new life and been baptized with fire and spirit, may make the world a new world, to the end that the old ideas depart and new thoughts come; old garments be cast aside and new garments put on; ancient politics whose foundation is war be discarded and modern politics founded on peace raise the standards of victory; the new star shine and gleam and the new sun illumine and radiate; new flowers bloom; the new bounty descend; the new tree give forth new fruit; the new voice become raised and this new sound reach the ears, that the new will follow the new, and all the old furnishings and adornments be cast aside and new decorations put in their places.

I desire for you that you will have this great assistance and partake of this great bounty, and that in spirit and heart you will strive and endeavor until the world of war become the world of peace; the world of darkness the world of light; satanic conduct be turned into heavenly behavior; the ruined places become built up; the sword be turned into the olive branch; the flash of hatred become the flame of the love of God and the noise of the gun the voice of the kingdom; the soldiers of death the soldiers of life; all the nations of the world one nation; all races as one race; and all national anthems harmonized into one melody.

Then this material realm will be paradise, the earth heaven and the world of satan become the world of angels.

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

This is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous. The world will become even as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of unity between the sons of men, and the drawing together of all races and all classes.—ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

*March 21st: the first day of the Bahai year, known as the Festival of Naurooz.

Mr. Randall in Montreal

SATURDAY noon, February 24th, Mr. William H. Randall spoke before the Men's Club of Canada upon the Bahai movement and its gospel of universal brotherhood; 1,700 men were present. At the close of Mr. Randall's stirring address the president of the club asked for a rising vote of thanks, saying that too little of the spiritual side of our natures was manifest. In the afternoon Mr. Randall spoke before the Woman's Club of Canada. In the evening an impromptu meeting was arranged by members of these two clubs, at which Mr. Randall spoke further of the cre-

ative words of Baha'o'llah. As he says, "The light of the Covenant shines over Montreal." His visit recalls the splendid reception accorded Abdul-Baha when he visited Montreal in 1912. It shows us further how the spiritual seed which Mrs. May Maxwell has been planting in her own inimitable way is now bearing radiant fruit. It shows also how the Montreal assembly because of its beautiful unity in the bond of love is laying the foundation of the kingdom of brotherhood and peace which is to be.

Mrs. Brittingham in Arizona—Paragraphs from a Letter

WHILE visiting friends in Douglas, Arizona, Miss Bailey, a member of the San Francisco assembly, met a woman who had heard the message in Chicago years before. Early on the morning of my arrival there, this dear newly-found Bahai sister came to me and arranged for an open meeting to be held the next Saturday night at the Y. W. C. A. club rooms. The members had just established an open forum and this was the first date of its observance. Then this dear sister opened her home and during the two weeks of my stay in Douglas a number of beautiful meetings and personal interviews were held. The result was that, in Douglas, the first Bahai assembly of Arizona has been established.

At Pearce, a small mining town, one minister, a broad-minded and spiritual man, invited me to give the principles of the Bahai movement in his church on Sunday evening. The following morning I had a brief but delightful call from him, at which time he gave me a letter of introduction to a brother clergyman in Tucson.

In Bisbee, several small meetings were held in homes. At one of them, there were nine guests, seven of whom

were Mormons. One of these had brought a Mormon preacher to institute an argument. The argument occurred, but the Beloved was present in spirit and everything was so touched by that love that there existed only perfect harmony! After the meeting, the Mormon preacher came to me, acknowledging "that I had something," and asked for literature.

In Phoenix, one of Miss Bailey's letters of introduction brought to us an invitation to the home of some lovely Christian Scientists, to meet at dinner the Governor of Arizona and his wife, and several well known New York City people. All were interested in the message. Our hostess opened her home one afternoon and called a number of her friends to hear the glad tidings. The governor's wife was present and brought the wife of the governor's private secretary. This secretary is the brother of our own dear Isabel Fraser.

About a hundred and fifty souls in Arizona, some in groups, some individually, have heard the message, and now the ground has just been broken for other traveling teachers to accomplish a fuller work in the glorious Cause of God.

Isabella D. Brittingham.

A Pilgrimage in Persia

NOTE where we are,—in Afjeh! We have come over the ground trodden by the feet of Baha'o'llah all the way from Teheran. He walked every step of the way down to Teheran in the hot summer sun without covering on his head, and loaded with heavy chains. Sorrow overflows at the thought of his enduring all so submissively that his glorious Cause might be established and that we, so unworthy, might hear of it, accept and obey his commands.

The valley of Afjeh is wide and fertile, with everflowing mountain streams, terraced wheat fields, and thousands of goats and sheep which flock down the steep paths at dusk about the time the sweet-voiced singer chants the Azan. And here at the head of the valley stand

the ruins of the castle where Baha'o'llah dwelt at that time of the beginning of trouble. Many evenings at the twilight hour we go upon the roof of the palace and there hold you all in remembrance while chanting prayers and poems of Baha'o'llah in Persian and English. We pray that all the world may soon awake and acknowledge his power and that we, his followers, may all be established in integrity and more consecrated to service.

We have a few days longer in this blessed retreat, and then go down the mountain again, tracing the path his feet have trod, to begin our life so full of work and of pure satisfaction. We hope for renewed consecration.

(Dr.) Susan I. Moody.

The Economic Teaching of Abdul-Baha

(Continued from page 7)

tion will remain for the benefit of all. The employés must benefit from them as well as the managers.

Abdul-Baha has also said some remarkable things along the line of income and inheritance taxation. He said, for instance, while in this country: "In future a manufacturer will not be allowed to leave all his property to his own family. A law will be made something like this,—that he must leave one-quarter only of his property to his family, and the other three-quarters must go to the factory workers who have created his wealth."

Indications of the realization of these predictions are already evident along many lines. A new feeling is manifesting itself in the commercial life of our country. Many of the great department stores which furnished formerly the most vivid illustrations of money mania, are now showing the new spirit. For instance, the fine establishment of Filene's in Boston has for years carried on a profit-sharing plan with its employés, which has worked admirably for the enrichment of the concern, and has created

an excellent feeling both among employés and customers. Moreover, the influence of the heads of this establishment has gone far and wide, and always in the same direction. The principle of the house has been that the endeavor of an institution must not be first of all to make money, but first to give good service to the public and fair treatment to employés. Filene's is the pioneer enterprise in realizing such principles and has given them wide publicity. Meanwhile the idea is bearing fruit everywhere and one sees its expression in the trade journals and in advertising. In former days we looked to our poets and preachers for the enunciation of noble sentiments and inspiring ideals, but now we find these not only on the stage, but in the advertising columns of our daily papers. For instance, here is an expression of feeling from Henry P. Williams who is the head of an advertising firm in Chicago:

"The man of real progress is always mentally, just a little ahead of where he is *now*. The idealist, the man of real imagination, seizes upon the present fact,

and transforms it mentally into what it may be in the future, and projects it before him. Such a man is the really practical man.

“So long as the host saw God in the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, they went forward with confidence; they followed an ideal. It was only when they lost the imaginative vision, when the cloud and the fire, being seen every day and every night became mere meteorological phenomena, that the host began to wander aimlessly.

“Blessed is the man to whom the ideal is always real; to whom the ‘pillar of fire’ of the sunset is always a sacred mystery of beauty; to whom the stars are forever an awe-inspiring revelation; to whom the business he happens to be in—the making of clothes, of shoes, or machines, or the selling of any merchandise in a fair way—is a continuous enthusiasm; to whom the prosaic business duties of each day offer a recurring opportunity for the advancing of the interests of good business, and thereby the interests of good people.”

This sentiment printed upon a card hangs upon the wall in the big store of Willard Ashton in Rockford, Illinois, and expresses the spirit of the institution, which is one of the many now endeavoring in our country to spiritualize capital, or capitalize spirit, realizing that in this day the two opposite ends of creation must be brought together.

There is a school for saleswomen in Boston, conducted by Mrs. Prince, which has had an admirable influence. This lady wishing to improve the condition of saleswomen, and believing that education, skill and intelligence would do this better than anything else, opened her school, and has had such remarkable success that her graduates are in all the leading department stores of the country, and their presence seems to carry everywhere a new atmosphere of intelligence and the necessity for justice and kindness, which are the foundation for real brotherhood.

The famous establishment of Altman’s

in New York is one where these principles have been evident for many years, and when Mr. Altman died recently he left a large portion of his fortune to be divided among his employés and as a fund for the future conduct of the store. The action of Henry Ford in declaring that his employés must share in the prosperity of his establishment has had enormous influence upon the public mind, and he has extended his generosity of late by equalizing the pay of men and women in his factory. Edison has done the same thing more quietly and for a long time has shared his profits with his employés. Both instances illustrate the statement of Abdul-Baha that in the coming time men of wealth cannot enjoy their own luxury unless they use their means to improve the condition of others.

On the Pacific coast the fruit growers and farmers have formed co-operative alliances in business which have already broken the power of the commission men, whose intensely competitive practices threatened to drive the entire Pacific coast into bankruptcy. The fruit growers are now able to sell their product independently, and while the consumer pays no more than formerly, the producer is able to live in comfort. An interesting fact in connection with the growth of the “exchanges” is that there seems to be no temptation towards graft or dishonesty in this form of business. As all transactions are for mutual benefit, no one seeks to defraud another for his own enrichment. Nor do the men try to “corner” the market to increase the price. Wall Street practices are naturally banished from these associations where the desire is to benefit the many and not the few.

In California 70 per cent of the fruit growers have formed these co-operative exchanges and last year Governor Johnson appointed Mr. Weinstock, who had become famous through his organization of the raisin-growers’ exchange, Supervisor of markets for California, which meant in reality, as the Californians

understood it, supervisor of co-operative progress, and his appointment was hailed with great delight. Recently President Wilson, through the department of agriculture sent a committee of three to the northwest to assist the farmers of that section in forming co-operative exchanges like those of California.

In these enterprises the working people do not yet share the profits. The associations have been made to break the grasping power of the middle man, and people have not yet wakened to the broader ethical aspects of the case. But the rights of the harvester must be recognized in the near future, because it is the day when the worker is coming into his own, and fortunately the harvester is at present one of the best paid workers in the United States, and cannot complain of a badly ventilated factory.

While in this country in 1912 Abdul-Baha gave a remarkable talk before the socialist club of Montreal, in which he outlined the economic development of the coming time, and suggested a form of the income tax entirely new. He gave as an illustration of the way in which the plan would work, an agricultural community.

In the beginning he said, "In reality all mankind represents one family, God desires that each individual member of the body politic should live in the utmost well being and comfort. If all do not enjoy life there is a lack of symmetry in the body politic."

He then outlined a scheme by which the utmost justice could be brought into the communal life. He said the products of the community should be stored in a storehouse, that each man's share should be noted and when the property was sold, each should receive his proportion, and the tax he should pay to the community would be estimated from his share in the property.

At the time when Abdul-Baha spoke, no such thing as a community storehouse had been heard of in this country, but during the past two years its reality has been rapidly developing in North Da-

kota. The farmers in that section have been almost driven into bankruptcy by the exactions of the banks and the grain dealers. The farmer had no elevator in which to store his grain, and the banks would lend no money until the grain was harvested. Moreover he could get no accommodation except at a rate of from 12 to 14 per cent., and even then with ruinous restrictions. So he was obliged to look on while the middle man came along and bought his grain at starvation prices, to the producer, stored it in his elevator, and then immediately borrowed money on it at the bank, with which he went forth to buy more grain at starvation prices.

When the situation became unendurable the North Dakota farmers rose up in more than protest. They formed a "Federal Association" which included the entire state. They had already endeavored in vain to elect legislators, either democratic or republican, who would pass a law enabling them to build state elevators. So this year they broke the machines of both parties, sent their own men to the legislature, and are to build state elevators for the grain of North Dakota. Naturally in the process of this communal action, the country has developed a communal feeling quite unprecedented, and certain to lead to unusual progress in the future. Meanwhile the Rural Credits law has passed, assuring them easier money, and relieving them from the exactions of the banks. The Rural Credits Law is by no means perfect. It surrounds the issuing of money to the farmer with too many restrictions and is not yet freed from the over suspicion of the banking system. But it is a step forward and brings relief where it is much needed. Undoubtedly, in the future, its restrictions will be removed, and it will enable the needy one to obtain help without such a superfluity of red tape.

However, North Dakota is to have elevators, and the first step toward the remarkable plan suggested by Abdul-Baha has thus been taken. For his plan as to

the income tax is unique, as has been said, and unlike any other that has been thought of. Most conservative people object to an income tax, and the most progressive yet attempted is to make the tax an increasing one, in proportion to the income taxed. Abdul-Baha says the tax must be levied in proportion to the excess of the income over the needs of the person taxed. If a man has an income of two thousand dollars, and expenses of two thousand dollars, he shall not be taxed at all, but if he has an income of ten thousand dollars, and expenses of two thousand or five thousand, he shall be taxed on the amount left over from his expenses. Thus if a man has an income of twenty thousand dollars, and expenses of only five, he could pay a large tax; if an income of fifty thousand dollars, and expenses of ten a still larger one.

This suggestion of taxation seems to imply a growing simplicity of life, and sincerity of heart, which do not exist today, because many a man would increase his expenses to decrease his tax, from the point of view of our time, and indulgence is so intensified by opportunity, that expenses often keep pace fully with increased income. In his illustration, however, Abdul-Baha is placing before us a condition in which communal equality and communal fair dealing have already been established, and the most surprising feature of his income tax is yet to come.

In ordinary economic planning the increased income tax is simply intended to enrich the community, and reduce excessive wealth, but in Abdul-Baha's scheme it is an elastic measure, benefiting rich and poor alike, because it takes from the citizen possessed of a surplus, to relieve the one suffering from a deficiency. Thus while the man with a surplus pays a large percentage into the treasury, the man whose expenses are greater than his income can draw from the common fund the sum lacking for the comfort or education of his family. If a man has expenses of two thousand a year, and his

income has been cut down to one, he draws the necessary surplus from the common fund, until his affairs are adjusted, and he in his turn has a surplus.

The conservative will immediately cry out against such a measure, as one encouraging mendicancy, but we must remember that this adjustment only applies to the ideal community of the future, from which both suspicion and mendicancy have been banished. The steps toward the establishment of such a commonwealth have already been taken, and may be completed in a surprisingly short time. Abdul-Baha says that in future the accumulation of immense private fortunes will cease, because man's power of spiritual vision will increase so noticeably that he will be conscious of existence after death. He will realize that the present life opens the door to the coming one, and he will not be willing to expend all his energy in the attainment of wealth or fame, which have nothing to do with eternity, which on the contrary would act as a hindrance to the advancement of the soul in its onward career. He will prefer to use his energies for the benefit of society of which he is a member, after he has provided for his own needs, and he will lose the desire to centralize splendor in himself. He will prefer to establish qualities which will remain his in the other life, rather than accumulate merely material advantages which he must leave behind him when he goes yonder. A great pugilist, or a successful financier may be enormously honored by his contemporaries, but he may not find himself too well supplied with capital in the other realm when he reaches it.

When man realizes that the continuation of life means the endless development of talent and opportunity, he will know that what he begins here, he will have the certainty of completing farther along in his career, and he will therefore look at existence from a vastly different point of view.

Abdul-Baha says the trouble with our

economics heretofore has been twofold. Its system and application have been purely material, instead of material and spiritual, they have been purely masculine, instead of masculine and feminine. We need the feminine influence in the world housekeeping, says the great educator. When he met the suffragists of London in 1912, he expressed his opinion in regard to equal rights, and then asked Mrs. Pethick Lawrence to say what she thought was wrong with the world. She replied that in her opinion humanity had been trying to fly with one wing, when in reality it needed two for perfect flight. Abdul-Baha replied, "What would you think if I said that humanity not only needs another wing, but the wing that has been lacking is the stronger, and with its aid humanity will take a wider flight than it has ever achieved before?" Then he went on to tell the beautiful story of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, and her attainments, showing that the supreme woman is not only capable of leadership and government, but that she possesses a faithful love, a power of self-sacrifice, in which she remains completely feminine, no matter what public functions her life may compass.

When Abdul-Baha had completed his tour of the western world, in 1912, he returned to London, and the editor of the *Asiatic Quarterly Review* thought it would be intensely interesting to have the opinion of the "greatest prisoner" in regard to western civilization, so different in every respect from that of the Orient. He therefore asked Abdul-Baha to write this article, and the result was a most luminous expression as to the meaning of civilization and the faults evident in that of the West.

Abdul-Baha says: "All that one observes in the Western Hemisphere are the appearances of the material world, and not of the divine world.

"As there are many defects in the world of nature, the lights of divine civilization are hidden, and nature has become the ruler over all things.

"In the world of nature the greatest dominant note is the struggle for existence—the result of which is the survival of the fittest. The law of the survival of the fittest is the origin of all difficulties. It is the cause of war and strife, hatred and animosity between human beings.

"In the world of nature there is tyranny, egoism, aggression, overbearance, usurpation of the rights of others, and other blameworthy attributes which are the defects of the animal world. Therefore so long as the requirements of the natural world play paramount part among the children of men, success and prosperity are impossible. For the success of the human world depends upon the qualities and virtues with which the *reality* of humanity is adorned; while the exigencies of the natural world work against the realization of this object.

"Nature is warlike, nature is bloodthirsty, nature is tyrannical, nature is unaware of His Highness the Almighty. That is why these cruel qualities are natural to the animal world.

"Therefore His Highness the Lord of mankind, having great love and mercy, has caused the appearance of the prophets, and the revelations of the holy books, so that through divine education the world of humanity may be released from the corruption of nature and the darkness of ignorance; be confirmed with ideal virtues, the susceptibilities of consciousness, and the spiritual attributes, and become the dawning place of merciful emotions. This is divine civilization. Today in the world of humanity material civilization is like unto a lamp of the utmost transparency, but this lamp—a thousand times alas—is deprived of light. This light is divine civilization, which is instituted by the holy divine Manifestations.

"This century is the century of light. This century is the century of the appearance of reality. This century is the century of universal progress."

Abdul-Baha goes on to tell us how we can incorporate the divine laws into

the government of the world so as to create an ideal civilization, and he says we are to do this through the study of reality, the promotion of universal fellowship, the inculcation of divine love through the power of religion, the abandonment of religious, racial, patriotic and political prejudices, and in all those pathways leading to perfection which he points out so clearly and beautifully.

In Abdul-Baha's teaching, we cannot separate religion from life—as soon as that is done religion becomes a theology. True religion is the foundation of perfect government, but this religion is the feeling of the heart, not an established hierarchy.

Speaking of the enjoyment of the animal world in this remarkable essay, Abdul-Baha goes on: "Such then is the happiness of the animal world. But the happiness of the human world comes from the virtues of the world of humanity, which enjoyment the animals know not of. That comes from the extension of the range of vision, the excellencies of the world of humanity; the love of God, the knowledge of God, equality between the people, justice and equity and ideal communication between hearts."

While in the United States in 1912, Abdul-Baha foretold the outbreak of the great war in 1914, and said it would be followed by the formation of a world council, to which all countries would send delegates, with power to settle international difficulties, which would result in a permanent peace. He said the twentieth century is the century of federation and that all the world would become united in a bond so close that war would be impossible, governments and laws would be changed everywhere for the betterment of humanity, poverty would be eliminated, and justice would reign in human affairs more completely than had ever been possible in previous times.

He seemed to have perfect faith in

the ability of the United States to maintain peace in the period of the terrible war which was imminent, and said it was her destiny to be "the peacemaker of the world," and that she would be the first of the great nations to establish ideal social conditions. He revealed a number of most beautiful prayers for this commonwealth, of which the following is one:

"O God, let this American Democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees, even as it has aspired to material degrees,—and render this great government victorious, confirm this revered nation to hoist the standard of the oneness of humanity, promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world."

The conclusion of the article in the *Asiatic Quarterly* contains a glorious promise for the future of humanity, which gives us hope that in the coming time we shall be able to incorporate, into our material civilization, those elements which will make it representative of the divine teaching we have received and of that love which will fully drive out injustice:

"In this age his holiness Baha'o'llah has breathed the holy spirit into the dead body of the world; consequently every weak soul is strengthened by these fresh divine out-breathings—every poor man will become rich, every darkened soul will become illumined, every ignorant one will become wise, because the confirmations of the holy spirit are descending like torrents. A new era of divine consciousness is upon us. The world of humanity is going through a process of transformation. A new race is being developed. The thoughts of human brotherhood are permeating all regions. New ideals are stirring the depths of hearts and a new spirit of universal consciousness is being profoundly felt by all men."

Mary Hanford Ford.

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened; that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

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No. 2

The Divine Art of Living

A COMPILATION BY MARY M. RABB

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CHAPTER III

Some Practical Applications of the Spiritual Life

MATERIAL affairs are of two kinds. The first kind are those concerns which have no direct relation to life. They contribute toward luxury, effeminacy, indolence. Indulgence in these things makes one negligent of God and stifles all traces of spirituality. The other kind are those affairs which contribute toward the maintenance of livelihood, adding to the comfort, happiness and progress of the human family. Spiritual powers come always to the assistance of such affairs,—they increase the moral insight and responsibility of man and add to his awareness and mindfulness.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, May 14, 1914.)

Man must live in contentment with the conditions of his time. He must not make himself the slave of any habit. He must eat a piece of stale bread with the same relish and enjoyment as the most sumptuous dinner. Contentment is real wealth. If one develops within himself the quality of contentment he will become independent. Contentment is the creator of happiness. When one is contented he does not care either for riches or poverty. He lives above the influence of them and is indifferent to them. When we were in Bagdad often with one pound of meat we served dinner to fifteen or twenty people. We cooked

with it Persian stew and filled the pot with water so everyone could have a bowl of thin soup. Notwithstanding this we were all very happy and thought that ours was the most delicious dinner.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 25, 1913.)

How complex is the life of the present age and how much more complex we are making it daily! The needs of humanity seem never to come to an end. The more men accumulate the more they want. There is only one way of freedom and that is by shutting one's eyes and heart to all these things which distract the mind. The Arab of the desert teaches us a great lesson in the simple life. Living as he does in the waste Sahara he lacks all the means of life except a crude tent, a rug or mat, a caldron, a sword hanging to the inside pole of the tent and a javelin tied to the outside pole. This is all his furniture. Then, if he is wealthy he has a mare, or a horse, a few camels and maybe adjoining his tent a palm grove. It never occurs to his mind that there is anything else in this world. He is happy and has no worries. His food consists of a bowl of milk and a few dates and he may well wonder at the city man, how he can digest all the different kind of dishes with their flavors and spices. His

thought is peaceful and serene, contrary to the city people who are always haunted by the nightmare of livelihood.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, September 21, 1913.)

Economy is the foundation of human prosperity. The spendthrift is always in trouble. Prodigality on the part of any person is an unpardonable sin. The fewer the habits, the better for the man. It is a divine virtue to be satisfied with very few things. Contentment is the antidote for all the social diseases. We must live an independent life. We must never live on others like a parasitic plant. Every person must have a profession, whether it be literary or manual, and must live a clean, manly, honest life, an example of purity to be imitated by others. Contentment is the master-key to all success. If the members of my family starve I will not ask money from the people. It is more kingly to be satisfied with a crust of stale bread than to enjoy a good dinner composed of many delicious dishes the money for which comes out of the pockets of others.

. . . A Bahai must be satisfied. There was a time that I lived on five cents a day and I was then much happier than I am now. The Persian Bahais often live in the utmost poverty and want, yet they never complain nor ask for money from any one. Begging they consider to be below their spiritual station. A man who is the beneficiary of the treasury of the Kingdom is not poor. There have been some rich Bahais in Persia whose properties were entirely confiscated. Being thus reduced to utter destitution they went out cheerfully to work and in their turn spent all they made for the maintenance of the poorer Bahai families. Love, yea, love must be demonstrated through deeds. Love has never been a passive verb, a figure of speech; it has always been an active verb, an ideal reality. The sign of true faith is the service of the believers of

God and service must always manifest itself in loving deeds and actions. . . .

A small business with a steady income is better than the wild, helter-skelter speculations of the financiers.

The mind of a contented person is always peaceful and his heart is at rest. He is like a monarch ruling over the whole world. How happily such a man helps himself to his frugal meals. How joyfully he takes his walks and how peacefully he sleeps!

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, August 24, 1914.)

At the table on board the *Cedric* Abdul-Baha spoke about simple diet—how much better it is for one's constitution to eat but one or two courses. One of the American Bahais asked him whether he would not prescribe a simple regime of diet for the believers, upon his arrival in America. He laughed heartily and said: "We do not interfere with their material food, but we shall give them a simple diet of spiritual food. This is our work."

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 20, 1913.)

The life of the Arabs in the interior is most simple. Their principal food consists of the milk of the camel and a few dates. These Arabs do not like the atmosphere of the city. They revel in the expansiveness of the desert. The other day a few of the Bedouin women taunted our women because they are living in the town, while the Bedouin women were happy to breathe the fresh air of the desert. When, years ago, I traveled from Acca to Tiberias, in our caravan there was a beautiful Bedouin woman riding on a camel. She was listless and thoughtful. In the same caravan there was a young Christian who was struck with the beauty of this Arab girl and her dark eyes. After some futile attempts he succeeded in establish-

ing himself in her favor. As I was near I could hear their conversation. He was telling her:

"Thou art so beautiful! Why dost thou not come to the city?"

"Why?"

"O, thou wilt be married to a rich man!"

"What will he do for me?"

"He will build for thee a lovely house, thou wilt be served as a queen; servants and maids will wait on thee; thou wilt walk through green gardens, thou wilt sleep on soft beds instead of sand; thy husband will buy for thee many precious jewels with which thou wilt decorate thy body; he will surround thee with wonderful objects the like of which thou hast never seen even in thy dreams!"

The girl straightened herself on her camel and looked at the youth with pity and contempt in her whole demeanor.

"I have my beloved desert, vast, broad, and immeasurable," she said. "What do I want with your cave-like, cage-like and boxlike houses. There the air is stuffy. Here the whole expanse of the Sahara is our avenues and boulevards. *Here* is my home—the palace of immensity, the residence of God's own children. Fie upon your town and your civilization and your snobbish manners! I hate them! I cannot bear to look at them! They are all cheap tricks sanctioned by your so-called society. You come abroad to display your crafty etiquette of mock modesty and respectability, while in reality you are physically and morally corrupt, afflicted with loathsome diseases. Away from me! Let me stay where I am! My home is the Sahara, my couch is the soft sand, my decorations are God's virtues, my lamps by night the moon and stars."

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, May 5, 1914.)

Wealth becomes the cause of heedlessness to many souls with the exception of those who are believers in God and

read the verses of God. For this reason his holiness Christ hath said: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." But blessed is the rich man whose wealth and opulence do not prevent him from turning his face toward God and whose heart is not attached to his possessions. Such a rich man is the light of the world.

Today Baron Rothschild came to Haifa. He is one of the wealthiest men of Europe. He is much interested in the Jewish colonization of Palestine and is devoting much of his time and attention to this problem. Now he has gone to Tiberias. He is busy all the time. He could not stay longer than one hour.

All the people are toiling and laboring to attain to the station of a rich man. Life to many rich men is nothing but a heavy burden. They are "wood carriers." Instead of a blessing wealth becomes a great calamity to them. The supervision of their colossal fortunes and their proper financial administration becomes the sole object of their lives. Day and night, asleep and awake, they think and work to make *their* piles larger and that of others smaller till finally they become mere money machines devoid of any other feeling or of higher emotions, wild-eyed, always hungering for more. Greed and selfishness become the dominant influences of their lives. Grab, grab, grab; right and left they grab at everything. In the mad rush and struggle for more lucre, for more worldly goods they walk over the bodies of the toilers and the children. They become the embodiment of heartlessness and cruelty. Pride and haughtiness lord it over them and they become mere tools in the hands of sordid, fiendish passion. . . . Wealth has a tempting and drawing quality. It bewilders the sight of its charmed victims with showy appearances and draws them on and on to the edge of yawning chasms. It makes a person self-centered, self-occupied, forgetful of God and of holy things.

On the other hand there are souls who

are the essence of existence; in their estimation wealth offers no attractions. If the doors of the heavenly blessings are opened before their faces, if they become the possessors of the riches of all the world, if the mountains of the earth turn into diamonds, if the oceans of the globe change into gold . . . their spiritual independence will undergo no change or alteration, their faith in God will increase, their mindfulness will augment, the heat of the fire of their love for true democracy and the education of mankind will burn away all barriers of ostentation and pride. Their intense passion for God will wax greater day by day. Such rich men are in reality the light-bearing stars of the heaven of mankind, because they have been tried and tested and have come out of the crucible as pure gold . . . unalloyed and unadulterated. With all the wealth of the world at their feet they are yet mindful of God and humanity, they spend their acquired riches for the dispelling of the darkness of ignorance and employ their treasures for the alleviation of the misery of the children of God. The light of such rich men will never grow dim and the tree of their generosity will grow in size and stature, producing fruits in all seasons. Their every deed will be as an example for succeeding generations.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, February 24, 1914.)

It behooves thee to sever thyself from all desires save from thy Lord the Supreme, expecting no help or aid from any one in the universe, not even from thy father and children! Resign thyself to God. Content thyself with but little of this world's goods. Verily, economy is a great treasure. If any one of thy relatives oppress thee, complain not against him before the magistrates; rather, manifest magnificent patience during every calamity and hardship. Verily, thy Master is the Lord of faithfulness! Forgive and overlook the

shortcomings which have appeared in that one—for the sake of love and affection. Know that nothing will benefit thee in this life save supplication and invocation unto God, service in his vineyard, and with a heart full of love to be in constant service unto him.

If thy daily living become difficult, soon God, thy Lord, will bestow upon thee that which will satisfy thee. Be patient in the time of affliction and trial, endure every difficulty and hardship with a dilated heart, attracted spirit and eloquent tongue in remembrance of the Merciful. Verily, this is the life of satisfaction, of spiritual existence, heavenly repose, divine benediction, and the celestial table. Soon the Lord will extenuate thy straightened circumstances, even in this world.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*; Vol. 1, p. 97.)

Be not grieved on account of poverty for true wealth is surging and inundating like unto the ocean.

(Words of Abdul-Baha.)

Read *Some Answered Questions*
Pages 89-91

“When I was in Paris one of the believers brought me a soft cushion and urged me to put it under my head. I became accustomed to it and as there is none in this hotel my neck has pained me all these nights. To be the slave of custom is the worst habit. I will have none of it! When I was young I often had a brick or a piece of rock as my pillow, and I slept soundly.”

Haji Niaz said that he had a soft cushion with him and asked to be allowed to go out and bring it. Abdul-Baha answered:

“No, no! I must get accustomed to my natural ways. This would not do. One must never accustom himself to any-

thing the absence of which may disturb his comfort.”

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 17, 1913.)

I cannot understand why people insist on the fact that one cannot give up a thing once he is accustomed to it. One can do it very easily if he makes up his mind fully, resolving to quit it forever. It is all a matter of character and determination.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, August 17, 1914.)

He (Abdul-Baha) eulogized unreservedly the untiring activity and zeal of Esmael Aga (the gardener).

“Devotion to and love for one’s vocation accomplishes miracles,” he said.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 11, 1914.)

Man must be tireless in his effort. Once his effort is directed in the proper channel if he does not succeed today he will succeed tomorrow. Effort in itself is one of the noblest traits of human character. Devotion to one’s calling, effort in its speedy execution, simplicity of spirit and steadfastness through all the ups and downs, these are the hallmarks of success. A person characterized with these attributes will gather the fruits of his labors and will win the happiness of the kingdom.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 8, 1914.)

This morning I (Mirza Sohrab) called on him (Abdul-Baha) early and he spoke to me about the concentration of one’s powers. “Water flowing from one spring has more force and energy than if the same water is divided between eight springs,” he said. “Try always to concentrate your activities into one

channel and let that one be the Cause of Baha’o’llah. Then you shall see how the confirmations of God will descend.”

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, December 13, 1912.)

Praise be to God that you have come into this desert and exalted the name of God. The nomads are utterly destitute of the knowledge of God. They live an animalistic life and all their thoughts are centered upon their cows, goats and crops. When they come together they speak of nothing else save these things. They know nothing else. Nominally they are Moslems, but they are unaware of the ideals of Mohammed. . . . I am most pleased with you and am satisfied with your conduct. I hope that you may become assisted and confirmed in the good pleasure of the Lord. . . . May your spiritual perception become keener, your attention to God more complete and your spirituality an example for others. When you are plowing the ground or sowing the seeds or reaping the harvest let all your thoughts and subconscious thinking be of God. Your hands and feet will be working but your heart must be attached to the Almighty. The body of man is created for this world but his heart is made for the habitation of the Holy Spirit.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, May 17, 1914.)

Cleanliness and sanctity in all conditions are characteristics of pure beings and necessities of free souls.

The primary perfection consists in cleanliness and sanctity and in purity from every defect. When man in all conditions is pure and immaculate he will become a center for the reflection of the manifest light. In all man’s actions and conduct there must first be purity, then beauty and independence. The channel must be cleansed before it can be filled with sweet water. The pure nostrils in-

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Jalal 1, 73 (April 9, 1917)

No. 2

Tidings from Egypt—Word from Elinor Hiscox

BEGINNING the winter of 1911-12, my chief work has been with the advanced student class, all of whom speak English fluently. I felt led by the spirit to invite two, whom I knew, to come to me. Much impressed by what was said, they wished to bring their friends. The number gradually increased until the group became so large that we had to divide it and two evenings every week my room would be filled with these earnest seekers for truth. The presence of the spirit was evident and I prayed much for them individually. Some of these students became devoted Bahais and attained the blessing of seeing Abdul-Baha at Ramleh. These have become active workers in the Cause and they continue to lead their friends to know the truth of Baha'o'llah. After the students graduate from the higher schools and colleges at Cairo, many go to smaller towns as lawyers, teachers, or to fill other positions. With some of them, I correspond regularly to keep them in touch with Bahai influences.

One of my best helpers in the Cause graduated from the law college here and is now a successful lawyer. He has a clear and penetrative mind, with great capacity for receiving the Truth and im-

parting it to others, and for meeting any arguments or doubts which may arise in the inquirer. Through his influence, many young men have been brought to me and have accepted the Bahai message. Among them were his two brothers, who have become devoted to the Cause, and these three brothers are now among the best known Bahais and workers in Egypt. Upon the invitation of Abdul-Baha, one of them visited him at Haifa, and Abdul-Baha requested him to have regular weekly Bahai meetings at his house in Alexandria, where he is a teacher in one of the government schools. I have seen much of his young wife and she also has become a sincere Bahai.

One devout young soul, who heard and accepted the message only during the past year, a telegraph operator in another town, has won such a spiritual influence over his associates that several of them also have become ardent Bahais.

Much of the time I am the only western Bahai in Egypt and the demands upon me are incessant and varied. To instruct inquirers, strengthen the weak or doubting ones, visit the ill and suffering, give advice and counsel, encourage and aid in the education of girls, seek positions of employment, apply for help

for the needy, comfort the afflicted,—all of these involve an endless amount of visits, interviews and letter-writing. And I have this year helped to collect and have sent funds from the Egyptian Bahais to the Mashrak-El-Azkar in America. As I usually pass the summers at

Alexandria and Ramleh, my field of service lies also there.

It is all God's work, not mine, and through much faith and prayer, I am only a channel for the spirit of God to work through.

Elinor Hiscox.

The Divine Art of Living—Chapter Three

(Continued from page 21)

hale the perfumes of the rose garden of bounty, the pure heart becomes the mirror of the beauty of truth. This is why in the heavenly books the divine counsels and commands have been compared to water. So, in the Koran it is said: "And we have caused a pure water to descend from heaven"; and in the Gospel, "Except a man has received the baptism of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Then it is evident that the divine teachings are the heavenly grace and the showers of the mercy of God which purify the hearts of men.

The meaning is in all conditions cleanliness and sanctity, purity and delicacy exalt humanity and make the contingent beings progress.

Even when applied to physical things delicacy causes the attainment of spirituality as it is established in the holy scriptures.

External cleanliness although it is but a physical thing has great influence upon spirituality. For example, although sound is but the vibration of the air which affects the typanum of the ear and although vibrations of the air are but an accident among the accidents which depend upon the air, deeply consider how the marvelous notes of a charming song influence the spirits! A wonderful song gives wings to the spirit and fills the heart with exaltation.

I return to the subject that the fact of having a pure and spotless body likewise exercises an influence upon the spirit of man. Now see how much purity is approved in the court of God that it should be especially mentioned in the holy books of the prophets! So the holy

books forbid the eating of any unclean things or the use of anything which is not pure. Certain prohibitions are absolute and imperative for all; he who commits that which is forbidden is detested by God and is excluded from the number of the elect. This applies to the things forbidden by an absolute prohibition, the perpetration of which is a grave sin; they are so vile that even to mention them is shameful. There are other forbidden things which do not cause an immediate evil and whose pernicious effect is only gradually produced. They are also abhorred, blamed and rejected by God but their prohibition is not recorded in an absolute way though cleanliness and sanctity, spotlessness and purity, the preservation of health and independence are required by these interdictions.

One of these last prohibitions is the smoking of tobacco which is unclean, malodorous, disagreeable and vulgar and of which the gradual harmfulness is universally recognized. All clever physicians have judged and have also shown by experiment that one of the constituents of tobacco is a mortal poison and that smokers are exposed to different indispositions and maladies. . . .

I wish to say that, in the sight of God, the smoking of tobacco is a thing which is blamed and condemned, very unclean and the result is by degrees injurious. Besides it is a cause of expense and of loss of time and it is a harmful habit. So, for those who are firm in the Covenant it is a thing discountenanced by the reason and by tradition, the renouncement of which giveth gradual repose and tranquillity,

permitteth one to have stainless hands and a clean mouth and hair which is not pervaded by a bad odor. . . .

As to the question of opium, disgusting and execrating, I resign myself to God for its punishment. The formal text of the *Kitab-El-Akdas* forbids and reproves it and, according to reason, its use leads to madness. Experience has shown that he who gives himself up to it is completely excluded from the world of humanity. . . . Happy is he who never mentions the word opium! . . .

O friends of God, experience has shown how much the renouncing of tobacco, wine and opium gives health, strength and intellectual enjoyment, penetration of judgment and physical vigor. There exists today a tribe, the Druses, which refrains and abstains from tobacco, alcohol and opium and it completely excels all others in power, in bravery, in health, beauty and grace. A single one of these men can withstand ten men of other tribes and this has been universally proved. That is to say, generally, the individuals of this tribe are superior to the individuals of the other tribes.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*; Vol. 3, pp. 581-585.)

Regarding the use of liquors, according to the text of the Book of *Akdas*, both strong and light drinks are prohibited. The reason for this prohibition is that liquor leads the minds astray and is the cause of weakening the body. If alcohol were beneficial it would have been brought into the world by the divine creation and not by the effort of man. Whatever is beneficial for man exists in creation. Now it has been proven and established medically and scientifically that liquors are harmful. Therefore the meaning of that which is written in the tablets—"I have chosen for thee whatsoever is in the heavens and earth"—are those things which are according to the divine creation and not the things which are

harmful. For instance, poison is one of the things: now how can we say that poisons are to be used habitually because God has created them for man? However, as to the spirituous liquors if prescribed by a doctor for the patient, and their use is necessary, then they may be used as directed.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from tablet to an American believer; translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, May 12, 1910.)

While looking from the window Abdul-Baha said: "We hear the murmur of the sea always continuing. It never ceases. Were it to cease the world would be dead, stagnant, lifeless. But the waves of the mind of man are far greater than those of the sea. They also are ceaseless. They never stop for one instant. This movement is good. If these waves of the mind are few the man is dull and quiet. What pearls and jewels are contained in the depths of the sea! But the pearls and jewels hidden in the mind of man are the knowledge, virtues, capabilities, etc. These pearls can grow and increase in lustre forever but the pearls of the sea remain always the same. These waves from our minds go forth and create movement and thought in other minds. From one strong thought of love what great results may be produced."

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from notes of Miss Rosenberg, London, England; taken at Acca, January, 1909.)

Profitless discussions fatigue and weary a person. People who call on me almost every day carry on a stream of profitless, unspiritual talk and I must listen to them with patience. We are commanded to associate with all the people. Today three persons called and they talked for one hour without any definite result.

Man's speech is the revealer of his heart. In whatever world the heart travels, man's conversation will revolve

around that center. From his words you can understand in what world he is traveling, whether he is looking upward toward the realm of light or downward to the nether world, whether he is mindful or unaware, whether he is awake or asleep, whether he is alive or dead. For this reason his holiness Ali says: "Man is hidden behind his tongue. Out of the abundance of his heart does man speak."

There are persons with whom you associate and converse whose utterances are life-imparting, joy-giving. The withered and faded are refreshed, the joyless become happy, the extinct become enkindled and the lifeless are quickened with the breaths of the Holy Spirit. The one drowned in the sea of hesitation and doubt is saved by the life-boat of certainty and assurance; the one attached to this material world becomes severed and the one steeped in blameworthy deeds is adorned with praiseworthy attributes. On the other hand there are some persons whose very respiration extinguishes the light of faith; whose conversation weakens firmness and steadfastness in the Cause of God; whose company diverts one's attention from the kingdom of Abha.

The souls who are rejoiced with the glad tidings of God, attracted to the fragrances of holiness, severed from aught else save God, who are commemorating the name of God are withdrawn from the world of darkness their thought permeated through and through with spiritual vibrations and their messages consisting of divine advices and exhortations; such souls are the manifestors of God's mercy, the educators of nations and the vivifiers of the world of humanity. They are guardian angels, the cause of human progress and the spiritual guides of the wandering children of men. Glory be unto them!

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 25, 1914.)

If a person reads the *Hidden Words*,

The Ishrakat, Tajallayat, The Glad Tidings, The Words of Wisdom and The Tarazat and lives in accord with one of these divine advices he shall reach to the station of perfection, he will become the center of merciful susceptibilities, the dawning-place of human virtues and the rays of the kingdom will become manifest from his face and character.

O ye friends of God! These advices and exhortations of the Blessed Perfection are revealed from the Supreme Pen in order to be considered as *guides for actions and not to be read only*. There are many people who read these tablets, praise their contents—but they do not *live* according to one of these words.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from tablet to the Boston Assembly of Bahais; translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 13, 1914.)

Trustworthiness is the most brilliant jewel in the diadem which crowns man's heavenly attributes.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, December 9, 1912.)

The best capital and the most profitable business is honesty in all things. Do thou continue to be honest in thy dealings for one month. Thou wilt see in the end that thou art honored and respected by all thy customers, and not considering thy spiritual welfare, thy material prosperity will be secured.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 17, 1914.)

Question: "Does the Bahai prohibition of gambling and lotteries forbid games of every description?"

Abdul-Baha answered: "No, some games are innocent, and if pursued for pastime there is no harm. But there is danger that pastime may degenerate into waste of time. Waste of time is not ac-

ceptable in the Cause of God. But recreation which may improve the bodily powers, as exercise, is desirable.”

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *A Heavenly Vista*; p. 9.)

Endeavor and make an effort that certain souls may be trained, of whom his holiness Christ said: “Ye shall know the tree by its fruits.” That is to say, every soul is known by (his) conduct, manners, words and deeds. Therefore, we must strive with life and heart that, day by day, our deeds may be better, our conduct more beautiful and our forbearance greater. That is, to cultivate love for all the world, to attain beatific character.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*; Vol. 2; p. 306.)

Ask thou of God that thou mayest attain to the age of maturity so that thou mayest recognize the beauty and ugliness of deeds and actions.

(Words of Baha’o’llah; from tablet to the Sultan of Turkey.)

God has endowed man with intelligence so that he may use his intelligence. Therefore he must supply himself with all that science can offer. He must be most deliberate and most careful. He must ever be thorough in his undertakings. He must build a thing well. Build the best ship that his ingenuity can lead him to and employ the most skilled captain, but with all that, let him rely upon God. Let him consider God as the one keeper.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; *Star of the West*; Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 16.)

Let the light of truth and honesty shine in your faces so that all may know that your word in business or pleasure

may be a word to trust and be sure of. Forget self and work for the whole. Abdul-Baha said that one must always remember that one is working for the world, not for a town or even a country, but as all are brothers so every country is as it were one’s own. Above all, remember the teaching of Baha’o’llah about gossiping and talking about others. Stories repeated about others are never good, a silent tongue is always safest.

(Message taken verbally (from memory) from Abdul-Baha to the London friends, by Mrs. Enthoven in Paris, October, 1911.)

Chastity and purity of life are the two divine standards of the spiritual and moral law. The greater the aim of man the nobler his purpose. A man must ever be thoughtful of others and be polite and courteous toward his fellow-beings. This will win for him the good pleasure of the Lord and the satisfaction of the general public. One’s sitting and rising, speech and conversation, social intercourse and communication should be based upon a firm foundation and be conducive to the glory of the world of humanity.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, September 4, 1913.)

Moderation is necessary in all affairs. Man must take a lesson from divine actions and deeds for God suffers a tree to grow a long time before it attains to perfection. He is able to make a tree grow to fruition in an instant, but wisdom requires a gradual development.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from tablet to an American believer; translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, May 18, 1914.)

The first Taraz* and the first Tajalli† is that man should know his own self and know those things which lead to loftiness or to baseness, to shame or to honor, to affluence or to poverty. After man has realized his own being and become mature then for him wealth (or competence) is needed. If this wealth is acquired through a craft and profession it is approvable and worthy of praise to men of wisdom especially to those servants (i. e., men) who arise to train the world and beautify the souls of nations.

(Words of Baha'o'llah; *Tablet of Tarazat*; p. 5.)

Be not grieved or sorrowful that no great wealth or property has been bestowed upon you. Look at the birds! The first thing in the morning they are thirsty and hungry. They go to the spring and a few drops quench their thirst; then they pick up a few seeds and are perfectly satisfied and sit upon the branches and sing the praises of God. I hope you, too, will be satisfied.

Christ says that we are like the birds. The birds have habits; one is that they are satisfied with a few grains. They have neither property nor possessions, and they are most of the time on the branches of the trees singing their beautiful melodies. Now you should be satisfied with a few worldly things and spend most of the time in spreading the truths of the Word of God.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; *Flowers From the Rose-Garden of Acca*; p. 29.)

**Taraz*, literally means ornament or an ornamented mantel. As a robe is adorned by ornaments, so likewise man is adorned by practicing these Words of Baha'o'llah.

†*Tajalli*, literally means splendor or light. As light illumines the body of the world, so likewise the inner heart of man is illumined with these Words and Commands of Baha'o'llah.

The length and shortness of life is not considered important. Whether man lives a few years or a hundred years, the purpose of his life is to achieve some definite results. If the tree of his life does not yield those luscious fruits, the purpose of his existence has not been accomplished even if he has lived many, many years. But if he has lived only a few years and the tree of his life has attained to fruition, he has obtained spiritual success. Consequently the duration of life is a conditional matter subject to the will of God. For example, this stone has existed 10,000 or 20,000 or 30,000 years but it has not advanced beyond the mineral kingdom. It has not achieved its final result. Again a merchant goes to his office every day in the year; he plans commercial enterprises, undertakes vast schemes, organizes large companies but at the end of the year he has not gained any profit. On the other hand another merchant through one stroke of good luck gains large profits in one day. Now the former merchant, although he worked harder all through the year, did not achieve any success, while the latter although he worked only one day yet the outcome of his activity was prosperous.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 11, 1914.)

His highness Christ, has addressed the world, saying: "Be like unto children." That is, men must become pure in heart. The hearts of children are of the utmost purity. They contain dust. But this is on account of weakness, not on account of strength. In the early period of childhood the hearts are pure; they have no hypocrisy nor stratagem and they cannot display any great intelligence.

But man becomes pure through the power of strength, through the power of intelligence and understanding. He becomes simple through the great power

of reason. He becomes sincere through the power of intelligence not through the power of weakness. When man attains to the great state of perfection his heart becomes pure, his spirit becomes enlightened, his soul becomes tender and receives these qualities through great strength. This is the difference between the perfect man and the child. Both have the great, simple, underlying qualities. But the child through the power of weakness and the man through the power of strength.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; *Star of the West*, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 19.)

Strive day and night and do whatever is possible that perchance you may wake the heedless, give sight to the blind, bring life to the dead, refresh the weary and bring those in despair and darkness to light and splendor. If the hope of man be limited to the material world what ultimate result is he working for? A man with even a little understanding must realize that he should live differently from the worms who hold to the earth in which they are finally buried. How can he be satisfied with this low degree? How can he find happiness there? My hope is that you may become freed from the material world and strive to understand the meaning of the heavenly world, the world of lasting qualities, the world of truth, the world of eternal kingliness so that your life may not be barren of result, for the life of the material man has no fruit of reality. But lasting results are produced by the heavenly existence.

If a man becomes touched with the divine spark, even though he be an outcast and oppressed, he will be happy, and his happiness cannot die.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; *Divine Philosophy*; p. 20.)

What must be the result of a human life? It is evident that the goal is not to eat, sleep, dress and repose on the couch of negligence. No, it is to find one's way to reality and understand the divine signs; to receive wisdom from the Lord of Lords and to move steadily forward like a great sea.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; *Divine Philosophy*; p. 25.)

The religion of God reforms the moral side of the life of mankind. It is the spreader of the virtues of the world of humanity. It is the founder of divine perfections in the hearts of men. It is nearness to God. It is the cause of attraction and enkindlement with the fire of the love of God. It is conducive to the illumination of human consciousness.

. . . All the prophets are sent by God for the guidance of the people, for the enlightenment of the minds of the inhabitants of the earth and for the promotion of the Word of Truth.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, March 12, 1914.)

To an artist, Abdul-Baha said:

"Can you paint upon the page of the world the ideal pictures of the Supreme Concourse? The pictures which are in the ideal world are eternal. I desire you to become such an artist. Man can paint those ideal pictures upon the tablet of existence with the brush of deeds.

"The holy, divine Manifestations are all heavenly artists. Upon the canvas of creation, with the brush of their deeds and lives and actions they paint immortal pictures which cannot be found in any art museum of Europe or America. But you find the masterpieces of these spiritual artists in the hearts."

(Words of Abdul-Baha; *Star of the West*, Vol. 5, No. 10, p. 149.)

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened; that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Jamal 1, 73 (April 28, 1917)

No. 3

The Distinctive Characteristics of the Teachings of Baha'o'llah

Address by Abdul-Baha, November 15, 1912, at the home of Miss Juliet Thompson, New York City

I HAVE spoken in the various Christian churches and in the synagogues, and in no assemblage has there been a dissenting voice. All have listened and all have conceded that the teachings of Baha'o'llah are superlative in character; have acknowledged the fact that they constitute the very essence or spirit of this new age and that there is no better path-way to the attainment of its ideals. Not a single voice has been raised in objection. At most there have been those who have refused to acknowledge the mission of Baha'o'llah; though they have universally admitted that he was a great teacher, a most powerful soul, a very great man.

Some of them, however, who could find no other pretext whatsoever, have said, "these teachings are not new; they are old; we have heard them before."

Therefore I wish to speak to you this evening on the distinctive characteristics of the manifestation of Baha'o'llah, and to prove that from every standpoint his Cause is distinguished from all others.

From the standpoint of its didactic character, or its method of teaching it is distinguished.

From the standpoint of its practical effects, it is distinguished.

From the standpoint of its spread and progress, it is *quite* distinguished. . . .

The story of . . . of Baha'o'llah is as follows:

When he appeared in Persia all of the contemporaneous sects and religions rose against him. His enemies were kings. While the enemies of his holiness Christ were the Jews, the Pharisees; the enemies of Baha'o'llah were rulers who could command armies and bring into the arena of operation hundreds of thousands of soldiers. These kings were the representatives of some fifty millions of people all of whom under their influence and domination were opposed to Baha'o'llah. Therefore, in effect, Baha'o'llah, singly and alone virtually withstood fifty millions of enemies. Yet these fifty millions so far from being able to dominate the situation were unable to withstand his wonderful personality and the power and influence of his wonderful Cause. Though they were bent upon extinguishing the light in that most brilliant lantern they were ultimately defeated and day unto day his light became more radiant. These fifty millions of souls tried to lessen his greatness but day unto day his greatness grew in proportion to their increased efforts to diminish it.

Surrounded by enemies who were seeking his life he made no effort whatever to conceal himself; he did nothing to

protect himself, nay, rather, in his spiritual might and power he was at all times visible before the faces of men, easy of access, ever withstanding these fifty millions who were opposing him. At last his banner was held aloft.

If we glance through history and review the pages of holy writ we will find that none of the prophets of the past ever spread his teachings or promulgated his cause from a prison. But his holiness Baha'o'llah held aloft the banner of the Cause of God while he was in a dungeon, addressing the kings of the earth from his prison cell and severely arraighing them for their oppression of their subjects and their misuse of power. The letter he sent to the Shah of Persia under such conditions may now be read by anyone. Likewise his epistle to the Sultan of Turkey is current among men as are also his epistles to Napoleon, the Emperor of the French, and to the other rulers of the world, including the President of the United States.

The book, or tablet, containing these "Epistles to the Kings," was published in India some thirty years ago and is known as the *Surat'l'Hykl*, or the "Discourse on the Temple." Whatever is recorded in these epistles has come to pass. Some of the prophecies contained in these "Epistles to the Kings" came to pass after two years; others were fulfilled after five or ten years; still others after twenty years. Some of the most important prophecies, relative to events transpiring in the Balkans are being fulfilled at the present time though written long ago. For instance, in the epistle which Baha'o'llah addressed to the Sultan of Turkey the war and the occurrences of the present day were foretold by him. These events were also prophesied in the tablet he addressed to the City of Constantinople. All of the events which are taking place in Constantinople at present were foretold by him long ago.

Now, during all this time, while he was addressing himself to these powerful rulers, he was a prisoner in a Turkish

dungeon. Consider how marvelous it was for a prisoner under the eye and control of the Turks to address so daringly, so boldly and so severely the very king who was responsible for his imprisonment! What power is this! What greatness! Nowhere in history is the record of such an episode to be found. In spite of the iron rule and absolute dominion of these kings his function was to withstand them; and so constant and firm was he that he caused their banners to come down and his own standard to be upraised; for today the flags of both the Ottoman and the Persian empires are trailing in the dust, whereas the standard of Baha'o'llah is being held aloft in the world both in the East and in the West. Consider what tremendous power this is! What a decisive argument! Although a prisoner in a fortress, he paid no heed to these kings, regarded not their power of life and death but on the contrary addressed them in plain and fearless language telling them explicitly that the time would come when their flags would be brought low, whereas his own flag would be held aloft. He declared freely:

"Ere long you will find yourselves in manifest loss. Your sovereignties will be laid waste; your empires will become a wilderness and a heap of ruins; hosts from without will come and subdue your lands; lamentation and mourning will emanate from your homes. There will be no throne; there will be no crown; there will be no palace; there will be no armies. Nay, rather, all these will be brought low. But the standard of the Cause of God will be held aloft. Then you will see that hosts and hosts will enter the Cause of God and that this mighty revelation will be spread throughout the world."

All of you should get the "Discourse on the Temple," the *Surat'l'Hykl*, read these prophecies carefully, and ponder over them.

Now this is one of the characteristics of Baha'o'llah. Of what prophetic dispensation can you recount such events?

In what cycle have such things taken place? In which one of the sacred books do you find such prophecies of the future? Turn to the holy books of the past and study them and see if you can find such explicit statements!

And now let us compare the teachings of Baha'o'llah with the holy teachings which have descended in the past.

First among the great teachings of Baha'o'llah is that of the

Investigation of Reality.

The meaning is that every individual member of humanity is exhorted to set aside superstitions, traditions and the blind imitation of ancestors and forefathers and investigate, for himself, reality. Inasmuch as the reality is one, through the investigation of reality all the religions and nations of the world will become one.

In which one of the sacred books of the past do you find the announcement of this principle?

The second great principle of the teachings of Baha'o'llah is that respecting the

Oneness of the world of humanity.

Baha'o'llah addresses all mankind, saying:

"You are all the leaves of one tree; there are no race differences or distinctions. Nay, rather, all of you are the servants of God and all of you are submerged in the ocean of his oneness. Not a single soul is bereft. On the contrary, all humanity is the recipient of the bounties of God. Every human creature has a portion of his bestowals and a share of the effulgence of his reality. God is kind to all; all mankind are his sheep and he is their real Shepherd."

In what Scriptures do you find such a statement? Where else is there such universality? Where else such breadth? Where else this unequivocal statement of the solidarity of mankind? In what

sacred record can you show such a teaching? As regards any possible distinctions the utmost that Baha'o'llah says is that conditions among men vary; that some, for instance, are defective. Therefore such souls must be educated in order that they may be brought to the level of perfection. Or, some are sick; they must be treated and cared for until they are healed. Or, some are asleep; they should be awakened. Some are but children; they should be helped to attain maturity. But all must be loved. The child must not be disliked simply because it is a child. Nay, rather, it should be educated. The sick man must not be avoided or slighted merely because he is sick. Nay, rather, he must be loved and treated until he is healed. Nor must the soul that is asleep be treated contemptuously. Nay, rather, he must be awakened.

Next, Baha'o'llah teaches that:

Religion must be in conformity with reason and science.

If it is not then it is not religion at all and is not worthy of credence.

Where do you find any such statement as this in any of the sacred books?

Another fundamental teaching of Baha'o'llah is that

Religion must be the cause of unity and good fellowship.

If it is productive of enmity, hatred and rancor then it is better to abandon it and be without any religion at all.

In which one of the sacred books do you find such a statement?

Again, Baha'o'llah declares that:

Prejudice in all its forms . . . must be abolished.

and that until these prejudices are entirely removed the world of humanity will not and cannot attain peace, prosperity and composure.

In which one of the sacred volumes do you find the annunciation of such a principle?

Abdul-Baha's First Days in America

From Diary of Miss Juliet Thompson.

(Harbor) New York,
April 11, 1912.

We had been waiting all morning at the dock; then the ship appeared through the mists The ship docked but Abdul-Baha did not appear. Suddenly I had a glimpse into the dim interior of the ship: barely visible, striding to and fro near the door was one with a step that shook you—just that one stride, charged with power, the sweep of a robe, a majestic head, turban crowned—that was all I saw, but my heart stopped.

Next we saw him at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kinney. When I arrived, Abdul-Baha was sitting in the center of the dining-room, near the flower-strewn table; his aba* was of cream color; at his knees stood Howard and Sanford Kinney, and his arms were around them. He was very white and shining; no words could describe the ineffable peace about him. The people stood around him in rows and circles, several hundred in the room. We made a dark background for his effulgence. Our tears only reflected him; there were many, many weeping just at the sight of him.

He turned his face from one child to the other, from one group to another—oh, so tenderly—with that indescribable divine grace caught by Leonardo di Vinci in his 'Christ at the Last Supper;' but in Abdul-Baha, it was irradiated with smiles, and a lifting of the eyes filled with glory, which even Leonardo with all his mastery could never paint. It was the very essence of divine tenderness.

April 11th.

A message from Abdul-Baha to my mother:

"Convey to thy dear mother the greetings of Abha. Say to her: 'Always re-

* Aba, cloak.

member my advices. It is my hope that thou mayest forget everything save God. Nothing in this world is sufficient for man. God alone is sufficient for him. God is the protector of man. All the world will not protect the soul.' "

April 13th.

Today Abdul-Baha spoke at Marjorie Morten's. Again because of the immense crowd, he spoke standing on the stairway, dominating all the beauty of that house by his heavenly beauty.

His theme that day was the spiritual seasons; and in the midst of his address a little thing happened, which, slight though it was, I want to keep. In its very slightness it will draw the people of the future closer to Abdul-Baha, just as it drew us.

Those tender little touches of his humor and simplicity—how precious they are, bridging at the moment the space between us and his perfection! The disciples in the past, looking back to those mysterious days with their Master over the abyss of their tragic separation from him, were, I suppose, awed into silence about the *little things*; so 'the Man of Sorrows' of the past has been only the Man of sorrows to us—love and sorrows. We have never formed any conception of the Man of love and joy, great buoyant joy, a Christ whose love overflowed in little tendernesses and whose joy overflowed in fun and wit—a normal, happy, smiling, laughing Christ!

But now to tell you of this little thing: with his celestial eloquence Abdul-Baha had described the spiritual springtime—the quickening and awakening to life. "Va tabestan," he began and paused for the translator—poor Ahmad could not recall the English word! But while he stood, confused and helpless, Abdul-Baha, with a smile of bright humor, translated for himself: "And summer,"

he laughed. Whereupon a little ripple of delight ran through the audience. The charm of him had captured them all!

Afterwards he went up to rest in Mr. Morten's room. He had seen one hundred and forty people that morning and was so spent that he seemed almost ill. His fatigue was evident to all and yet, the people had no pity! When I returned from an errand to the kitchen, I found that his rest was being cruelly intruded on. Literally a hundred people were streaming towards his room. A dozen were in the room; at the door were many eager faces and behind them, coming up the stairs, a procession!

"Oh *can't* we shut the door?" I asked the interpreter, but Abdul-Baha heard my question.

"Let them come now," he said gently.

The disciples' attitude and—the Master's attitude! What a difference there has always been between them! "Suffer the little children to come unto me"; and the disciples were such little children themselves that he had to put it that way—"suffer them."

Tenderly he pressed a baby to his breast, smiling and fondling it. "Beautiful baby; little dove" he said in his dear English.

April 18th.

A young single taxer began to question him. "What message shall I take to my friends?"

"Tell them," laughed Abdul-Baha, with that wonderful spice of keen humor in his face, "to come into the Kingdom of God! There they will find plenty of land and *there are no taxes on it!*"

That day (the 18th of April) he agreed to go to the Bowery Mission, and he began to speak about it.

"I want to give them some money," he said to me; "I am in love with the poor." How many poor men go to the Mission?"

"About 300."

"Take this bill to the bank, Juliet, and change it into quarters," he said. He drew from his breastpocket a thousand franc note.

"Keep the money," he further instructed me, "and meet me at the Mission with it, in a bag."

As I left the room, with some lilies-of-the-valley in my hand, a pretty little chambermaid stopped me.

"Did he give you those?" she asked.

"Yes."

"He gave me some flowers yesterday—some roses. I think he is a saint."

The next night, Friday, we went to the Bowery Mission.

To the men of the Mission, Abdul-Baha said: "Christ blessed the poor. He never said 'Blessed are the rich'; therefore, you must be thankful to God, that although in this world you are indigent, yet the treasures of God are within your reach; although in the material realm you are poor, yet in the Kingdom of God, you are precious."

At the end of the service, Abdul-Baha stood at the Mission door, to greet the men as they passed out, and more than to greet them, to add to those tender words of his, a gift. Ah, the pitiful procession—the breadline—filing past the pure, majestic Abdul-Baha; the homeless, the hungry, the moral failures, the broken figures, blurred faces, sunken men! Into each poor palm, as he clasped it, he pressed his little gift of one, two or three quarters, just the symbol, and the price of a bed; not a man was shelterless that night, and many, I could see, found a spiritual shelter, a home, in his soul. I could see it by the faces lifted to his. It was wonderful to witness the looks interchanged; first the look of grateful surprise at the gift found in the palm; then another stealing into it; then a flash of revelation from the eyes of Abdul-Baha,

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Jamal 1, 73 (April 28, 1917)

No. 3

“O Son of Clay! Be blind, that thou mayest behold My Beauty”

LETTERS FROM A BLIND JAPANESE BAHAI

Tokyo, Japan.

Dear friends:

I cannot allow another day to pass without writing you of the splendid work done here in Japan by our good Bahai sister Miss Agnes Alexander. You all know that she has devoted her time for the past three years to spreading the message and the result of her labors is beyond record.

I attended the Friday afternoon meeting and found young men students, earnest, attentive, reading the *Hidden Words* with a devotion that would put to shame many of our oldest Bahais. What struck me as the most wonderful of this wonderful gathering was a blind young man who had put into Braille the prayers, *Hidden Words* and message. Here he was reading, with his finger tips,

the blessed words. There are now three blind men, earnest students. What blessed work for this dear woman who has left home and friends and out here, surrounded by everything foreign, devoting herself to the Cause. I send a photograph. Dr. Augur is in the lower row. He comes every Friday, a long train journey, to be present at these Friday gatherings.

Cannot some of our Bahais send a couple of typewriters for the use of these blind students? Truly a better gift to the Cause could not be offered.

There is even talk of a Bahai school in the air. We pray it may materialize and become a reality.

Yours in His Greatest Name,
Emma Erskine Hahn,
of the New York Assembly.

Letter from a young blind Japanese Bahai to a lady who is working for the blind soldiers in England

Miss Helen M. Grand.
Bahai friend:

With great joy I received your letter through Miss Alexander the 23d inst. It

was such a great pleasure for me to write to the poor blinded soldiers and at once I wrote with all my heart. Indeed it is a great privilege for me to send such a

message of eternal light and hope among the blind brothers. Please use me in any way you want.

In the hearts of the oriental peoples is about to awaken a spring of peace and love, and also the darkness of the blind of Japan will be changed into the spiritual light. After this war—O after this war!—universal peace and love and unity of all mankind will surely be realized. There is no nation, no country now

in my heart, so I am very happy!

I would be very much pleased if you would inform me something about your work for the blind, as I am much interested in the education of the blind in England.

My Bahai love to you and to the Bahai friends in England.

Hoping to hear from you,

Forever your spiritual friend,

Tokugiro Torii.



Miss Alexander (upper row) and Dr. Augur (lower row) of Honolulu, with group of Japanese Bahais in Japan

Letter from the same young man to an English soldier blinded in the war

Mikawachi mura, Yoza gun,
Kyoto fu, Japan, Nov. 23, 1916.

Mr. —

My dear friend:

I have just received a letter from Miss Helen M. Grand, telling of you. I am so very happy to write to you, for I am also one of your friends who is living in darkness.

Miss Grand told me that you are suf-

fering so much in this terrible war, but never be unhappy, my friend, because this might be the last war of mankind and we should hope to meet with such a great war so that we may attain the true universal peace.

Abdul-Baha, our teacher and guide today, tells us that, after this war, the time for which all mankind have been waiting for many centuries will come, and all the

nations of the world will unite in brotherhood, and that universal peace and love will be realized. And I think to realize this happy message is our part.

I do not know how to express my admiration of you who fought so bravely that you lost your sight, but I cannot be sorry for your distress, for I know that the physical blindness is nothing for you and that soon you will be able to have the inner sight more clearly than ever. Surely God will help you if you beseech him. So, dear friend, be cheerful, praise God and keep your hope and spiritual light firmly.

Abdul-Baha tells us: "Open your spiritual sight so that you may know his secrets, attain to the highest degree of existence, become manifestors of a spiritual humanity and have your share of the heavenly favors."

Baha'o'llah, the fountain of light and hope and love, told us, as follows:

"O Son of Clay!

"Be blind, that thou mayest behold my beauty; be deaf, that thou mayest hear my sweet melody and voice; be ignorant, that thou mayest enjoy a portion from my knowledge; be poor, that thou mayest obtain an everlasting share from the sea of my eternal wealth.

"Be blind, that is, to all save my beauty; be deaf, that is, to all except my word; be ignorant, that is, of all but my knowledge. Thus shalt thou enter my holy presence with pure eyes, keen ears and a mind undimmed."

And an American lady, Miss Helen Keller, said, in her message of happiness, even though she is blind and deaf, perhaps as you know: "I am never unhappy because I cannot see or hear. No matter how small your opportunities, you can do something for the betterment of mankind."

Another time she said: "I would not part with my experience in the dark, because out of the dark I may be able to carry light."

Indeed we are never sad because of

our blindness even for a few minutes in the year. Today I took a walk with my pupils to the seashore, as I am a teacher of a small school for the blind. They enjoyed themselves very much running about the beach in the mild sunshine, chattering and joking with their friends. It seemed to me that they were not sorry at all about their blindness or rather that they knew not their own blindness or even what blindness is, or what darkness is.

I believe that it is a heavenly command for us, the blind of this century, to work for bringing happiness, peace, love, joy and hope to this world of humanity because for this great work no one needs any sight of the body and there should be no handicap between the blind and the sighted. Knowing this, I think we, the blind, must unite universally and it is much easier for the blind to unite universally than the seeing, because of their same fate, and the only instrument for this is the Esperanto language. So I hope that you will learn this language and have great joy by corresponding with many friends in the whole world.

Forget your blindness and turn your face to the bright side! This is the only way by which you can change darkness into light. Really, physical blindness is nothing, nothing for us. Believe yourself and you will find inner light therein, because a man is created so noble, although he is blind or deaf. Be not unhappy. Enjoy your enlightened life and go forward bravely holding a flag of love and peace for this glorious aim which is to bring hope and light to all mankind, as you did on the battlefield. My brave friend! This is my most hearty hope to you and to our brothers who share the same fate. Please give my best love to them.

With kindest regards and hoping you will write to me soon,

Forever your sincere friend,
Tokugiro Torii.

P. S. Please guess my English.

“China is the Country of the Future”

Words of Abdul-Baha from Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, April 3, 1917.

CHINA, China, China, China-ward the Cause of Baha'o'llah must march! Where is that holy, sanctified Bahai to become the teacher of China! China has most great capability. The Chinese people are most simple-hearted and truth-seeking. The Bahai teacher of the Chinese people must first be imbued with their spirit, know their sacred literature, study their national customs and speak to them from their own standpoint, and their own terminologies. He must entertain no thought of his own, but ever think of their spiritual welfare. In China one can teach many souls and train and educate divine personages, each one of whom may become a bright candle of the world of humanity. Truly, I say they are free from any deceit and hypocrisies and are prompted with ideal motives.

Had I been feeling well, I would have taken a journey to China myself! China is the country of the future. I hope the right kind of teacher will be inspired to go to that vast empire to lay the foundation of the Kingdom of God, to promote the principles of divine civilization, to unfurl the banner of the Cause of Baha'o'llah and to invite the people to the banquet of the Lord!

For the last twenty years I have repeatedly emphasized the matter of spreading the Cause of God. In every city there must be organized assemblies of teaching-classes to teach the young how to teach the Cause and prepare them for this most important service.

Every Bahai must acquire the lessons of teaching. This will yield results. No other service is as important as this. This service of the promotion of the revelation of Baha'o'llah is the most confirmed service. Every time one service holds the most supreme importance.

There is one season to harrow the ground, another season to scatter the seeds, still another season to irrigate the fields and still another to harvest the crop. We must attend to these various kinds of activities in their proper seasons in order to become successful. Now is the time of seed-sowing, but it seems to me some of the believers are thinking about crop-getting. This will give them no results. Whosoever is thinking of any other thing, is wasting his time.

The promotion of the principles of Baha'o'llah is the most dominant issue before the believers of God.

Abdul-Baha's First Days in America

(Continued from page 33)

while his hand closed tightly again over that other hand with the clasp that saves.

After our return to the hotel, in the upper hall, on the way to the apartment, we met the little chambermaid. In the bag there were about eighty quarters left over from the Mission, and all these Abdul-Baha gave to her, emptying them suddenly into her hands. Then he passed swiftly into his apartment, we following, all but Mr. Grundy, whom the girl stopped: “Oh, see what he has given

me!” she said; whereupon, Mr. Grundy told her about the Mission. When he had finished, she exclaimed, “I will do the same with this money; I, too, will give it!”

Later, as we sat in a group around Abdul-Baha, he was at that moment saying, with a laugh, in reply to some question as to the advisability of charity: “Surely, give to the poor! If you give them only words, when they put their hands into their pockets, they will find

themselves no richer for you." There came a little tap at the door, and there on the threshold stood the little chambermaid. Her eyes were glistening with tears, and in a sort of wonder and oblivion to the rest of us, she walked straight up to Abdul-Baha. "I came to say good-bye, sir," she said, timidly and brokenly, "and to thank you for all your goodness to me. I never expected such goodness, and—and to ask you to pray for me!" Her head bowed, her voice broke, she turned and went out quickly.

Abdul-Baha took me back to supper with him. As we drove up Broadway, that crudely glittering street, flashing with electric advertisements, he spoke to us smilingly: "Baha'o'llah," he said, "loved light. He could never get enough light. He taught us to economize in everything else, but to use light freely."

"It is marvelous," I said, "to be driving through this glitter of light, by the side of the Eternal Light."

"This is nothing," he answered; "this is only the beginning. We will be together in all the worlds of God. You cannot realize what that means; you cannot imagine it; you can form no conception here—here, in this elementary world—of what it will be to be with me in the eternal world!"

—
May 22nd.

Oh, those mornings at the Hotel Ansonia in the flower-filled rooms! Abdul-Baha would invariably keep me all the morning, calling me again and again to him. People thronged there, sometimes one hundred and fifty in a morning. Sitting in the outer room I would watch them go in, and come out all different—as if they had had a bath of life—freshened, quickened or like candles that had been lighted.

—
June 12th.

Today I went up early to his house, but not early enough. As I turned into 78th street, I saw him at the end of the block on his way to the garden, his turban a dazzling spot in the sunlight, his robes

floating out with great grace as he walked.

Later on he returned. Miss Buckton had arrived by this time, with a poor, little waif of humanity, a Jewess. She was all in black, this poor child, with a pale face, careworn and tearstained.

I had been in the kitchen with Lua Getsinger. I came out upon a scene dominated by Abdul-Baha. He was sitting as usual in the window, the strong carving of his face thrown into high relief by masses of shadow, his turban and white aba bright in the sunlight. On one side, sat Miss Buckton, on the other this poor stricken child, while the biggest tears I have ever seen splashed from her eyes. She told him her unspeakably dismal story.

"Don't grieve, now, don't grieve," he said. He was very, very still, and I think he was calming her.

"My brother has been in prison for three years. He was imprisoned unjustly. It was not his fault. He was led, he was weak, a victim of others. He has four more years to serve. My father and mother are depressed all the time. My brother-in-law, who was our support, has just died."

There it was, the sum of human misery: poverty, weakness, disgrace, sorrow, despair, and the mounting pall of gloom.

"You must trust in God," said Abdul-Baha.

"But the more I trust, the worse things become."

"You have never trusted."

"But my mother reads the Psalms all the time; she doesn't deserve that God should desert her so. I read the Psalms myself,—the ninety-first Psalm and the twenty-third Psalm every night before I go to bed. I pray too."

"To pray is not to read Psalms. To pray is to trust in God, and to be submissive in all things to Him. Be submissive, then things will change for you. Put your family in God's hands. Love God's will. Strong ships are not conquered by the sea,—they ride the waves. Now be a strong ship, not a battered one."

The Distinctive Characteristics of the Teachings of Baha'o'llah

(Continued from page 31)

Next Baha'o'llah declares that—

There shall be perfect equality between men and women.

For God, he says, has created all and has not permitted any distinction between the two. Why should man create a distinction which God does not recognize? In the kingdoms beneath man, while, indeed, there is distinction of gender, yet the differences between male and female are not found to be at all vital. The mare, for instance, is as strong and even more speedy than the horse. In the animal and vegetable kingdoms there is perfect equality between the male and female. That person the mirror of whose heart is the purest and cleanest, whose character is the highest is the nearest and dearest to God be that person male or female.

Next, Baha'o'llah has declared the necessity for a

Universal language.

that it may serve as a means of international communication and thus remove misunderstandings. This teaching as to the importance of a universal language is set forth in the *Kitab'l Akdas*, or "Book of Laws," published fifty years ago.

Next, there is a principle initiated by Baha'o'llah relative to

Universal Education.

In other words, that all mankind shall become educated and that no illiteracy shall remain.

In which one of the sacred books do you find such a text?

Work an act of worship.

Next, Baha'o'llah teaches that it is incumbent upon every soul to be qualified as the practicer of some useful trade, craft or profession and that the honest practice of such trade, craft or profession is to be regarded as an act of devotion.

But the teachings of Baha'o'llah are limitless and there is no time now to go into further details. The point is that

these teachings are new and that they are not to be found in any of the religious books of the past. Therefore if anyone should raise an objection and ask the question, "What has Baha'o'llah brought that is new," in response you should refer to and cite these statements.

In brief, the manifestation of Baha'o'llah is distinguished from every standpoint.

The majesty of his manifestation was remarkable.

The power of God shown in this dispensation is remarkable.

The efficacy of the Word of God therein is remarkable.

All the prophets during their life time were scoffed at. For instance, consider how his holiness Moses was scorned. The people called him a murderer. They said, "You killed a man and fled, for you were afraid of retribution and is it possible that now, after your former acts, you have come to be a prophet?" There are many similar episodes recorded not only of Moses but of the other prophets. How severe was their molestation! But his holiness Moses endured all these difficulties, for he had engaged in the spread of the Word of God.

How much they endeavored to belittle his holiness Christ! They placed upon his head a crown of thorns and paraded him through the streets and bazaars. One passer-by or on-looker would say, "Peace be upon thee, thou king of the Jews!" This, instead of being said with respect would be uttered in mockery. Another would bow to him backward and say in scornful tones: "Thou King of the Jews!" or "Lord of Lords, peace be upon thee!" Still another would spit upon his blessed countenance.

In short, the various forms of persecution which they used are mentioned in the books of the old cycle, whether Jewish, Roman or Greek,—the persecution which Christ suffered during the time of his manifestation. There were

no praises offered, nay, rather, the only praise which was offered Christ was offered by the believers. His holiness Peter, for instance, was one of those who praised him; and his disciples who were firm believers eulogized him. But how numerous are the books which were written against his holiness Christ! Refer to the history of the church and find how many were the books written against him by the Roman, Greek and Egyptian philosophers. How many were the calumnies which they attributed to him and how many were the libels against him!

But during the manifestation of his holiness Baha'o'llah, from the day of his appearance to the day of his disappearance all the nations of the world acknowledged his greatness and even those who were his bitterest enemies have recorded in their books: "This man was truly great; his influence was majestic. This person was a glorious man; his power was tremendous, his speech was most eloquent, but alas, he was a misleader of the people." This was the nature of their eulogies. It is evident that the writer of such a statement as this that Baha'o'llah was a misleader of the people must have been an enemy; but nevertheless, before making that statement he had first written: "This person was most glorious, was most mighty, was peerless, his speech was most eloquent." After that the writer adds: "But, alas, he was a misleader of the people!" His enemies have even written poems about him, which, though intended for satire have in reality been praise. For instance, a certain poet opposed to his Cause, has said:

"Beware! Beware! lest ye approach this person for he is possessed of such power, of such an eloquent tongue that he is a sorcerer. This person charms men, he drugs them, he is a hypnotizer and hypnotizes them. Beware! Beware! lest you read his book, lest you follow his example, lest you associate with his companions, because they are the possessors of tremendous power and they are misleaders." He used these charac-

terizations believing them to be terms of belittlement, unaware that they were in reality praises, because a wise man, after reading such a warning would say, "The power of this man must be tremendous if even his enemies acknowledge his greatness. Undoubtedly such a power is heavenly in character." This was one of the reasons that so many were moved to investigate. The more they wrote against Baha'o'llah the more the people were attracted and the greater the number who came to investigate the truth. They would say, "This is remarkable! This is a great man and we must investigate. We must look into this Cause to find out what it all means, what is the purpose, what are the proofs, that we may learn for ourselves." Thus the maligning statements of the enemies caused the people to become friends and approach.

In Persia the mullahs went so far as to go into the pulpits and from the pulpits to proclaim against the Cause of Baha'o'llah, throwing their turbans upon the ground,—a sign of great agitation,—and saying, "O people, this Baha'o'llah is a sorcerer, he is mesmerizing you, he is alienating you from your own religion, he is making you a follower of his. Beware! Beware! lest you read his book; beware! beware! lest you associate with his friends."

Of these very ones who were thus decrying him, Baha'o'llah says:

"They are my heralds; they are the ones who are proclaiming my message; they are the ones who are spreading my word. Pray that they may be multiplied, pray that their number may increase and that they may cry more vociferously. The more badly they speak of me and the greater their agitation, the more tremendous will be the efficacy of the Cause of God, the more luminous the Word and the greater the radiance of the divine sun. And eventually the gloomy darkness of the world will disappear and the light of Reality will shine, until the whole earth shall be illuminated."

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Azamat 1, 73 (May 17, 1917)

No. 4

The Divine Art of Living

A COMPILATION BY MRS. MARY M. RABB

(Chapter I appeared in issue No. 16, Vol. VII; Chapter II appeared in No. 18, Vol. VII;
Chapter III appeared in No. 2, Vol. VIII)

CHAPTER IV

Prayer

Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

(Words of Jesus.)

There is nothing sweeter in the world of existence than prayer.

Man must live in a state of prayer. The most blessed condition is the condition of prayer and supplication. Prayer is conversation with God. The greatest attainment or the sweetest state is none other than conversation with God. It creates spirituality, creates mindfulness and celestial feelings, begets new attractions of the Kingdom and engenders the susceptibilities of the higher intelligence. The highest attribute given to his holiness Moses is the following verse: "God carried along a conversation with Moses."

What is prayer? It is conversation with God. While man prays he sees himself in the presence of God. If he concentrates his attention he will surely at the time of prayer realize that he

is conversing with God. Often at night I do not sleep, and the thoughts of this world weigh heavily on my mind. I toss uneasily in my bed. Then in the darkness of the night I get up and pray—converse with God. It is most sweet and uplifting.

Prayer and supplication are so effective that they inspire one's heart for the whole day with high ideals and supreme sanctity and calmness. One's heart must be sensitive to the music of prayer. He must feel the effect of prayer. He must not be like an organ from which softest notes stream forth without having consciousness of sensation in itself.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, March 15, 1914.)

Prayer and supplication are two wings whereby man soars toward the heavenly mansion of the True One. However, verbal repetition of prayer does not suffice. One must live in a continual attitude of prayer. When man is spiritually free his mind becomes the altar of prayer and his heart the sanctuary of prayer. Then the meaning of

the verse, "We will lift up from before his eyes the veil," will become fulfilled in him.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, June 18, 1914.)

Abdul-Baha said we should speak in the language of heaven—in the language of the spirit—for there is a language of the spirit and heart. It is as different from our language as our own language is different from that of the animals, who express themselves only by cries and sounds.

When we pray to God a feeling fills our hearts. This is the language of the spirit which speaks to God.

When in prayer we are freed from all outward things and turn to God, then it is as if in our hearts we heard the voice of God. Without words we speak, we communicate, we converse with God and hear the answer. It is said that Moses in the wilderness heard the voice of God. But that wilderness, that holy land was his own heart. All of us when we attain to a true spiritual condition can hear the voice of God speaking to us in that wilderness. We must strive to attain to that condition by being separated from all things and from the people of the world and by turning to God alone. It will take some effort on the part of man to attain to that condition but he must work for it, strive for it. We can attain to it by thinking and caring less for material things and more for the spiritual. The further we go from the one, the nearer we are to the other—the choice is ours!

Our spiritual perception, our inward sight must be opened so that we can see the signs and traces of God's spirit in everything. Everything can reflect to us the light of the spirit.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; extract from a talk given to Miss Laura Barney.)

When asked if prayer was necessary

since presumably God knows the wishes of all our hearts Abdul-Baha said:

"If one friend feels love for another he will wish to say so. Though he knows that the friend is aware that he loves him, he will still wish to say so. If there is anyone that you love do you not seek an opportunity to speak with him, to speak lovingly with him, to bring him gifts, to write him letters? If you do not feel such a desire it would be that you did not love your friend. God knows the wishes of all hearts. But the impulse to pray is a natural one springing from man's love to God.

"If there be no love, if there be no pleasure or spiritual enjoyment in prayer, do not pray. Prayer should spring from love, from the desire of the person to commune with God. Just as the lover never ceases from wishing to communicate with the beloved so does the lover of God always wish for constant communication with the Deity.

"Prayer need not be in words, but in thought and attitude. But if this love and this desire are lacking it is useless to try to force them. Words without love mean nothing. If a person talks to you as an unpleasant duty with no love or pleasure in his meeting with you, do you wish to converse with him? Efforts should first be made to make attachment to God."

When asked how this attachment is to be made, how the love of God is to be obtained, since there are many people in the world who admit the existence of a Deity but without any emotion, Abdul-Baha said:

"Knowledge is love. Study, listen to exhortations, think, try to understand the wisdom and greatness of God. . . . The soil must be fertilized before the seed be sown."

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from an article in *The Fortnightly Review*, June, 1911, by Miss E. S. Stevens.)

Man becomes like a stone unless he continually supplicates to God. The

heart of man is like a mirror which is covered with dust and to cleanse it one must continually pray to God that it may become clean. The act of supplication is the polish which erases all worldly desires. The delight of supplicating and entreating before God cuts one's heart from the world. When the taste of man is nourished by honey he never likes to taste any other sweetmeat. Therefore, prayer is a key by which the doors of the kingdom are opened. There are many subjects which are difficult for man to solve. But during prayer and supplication they are unveiled and there is nothing that man cannot find out. Mohammed said: "Prayer is a ladder by which every one can ascend to heaven." If one's heart is cut from the world his prayer is the ascension to heaven.

In the highest prayer men pray only for the love of God, not because they fear him or hell or hope for bounty or heaven. Thus the souls in whose hearts the fire of love is enkindled are attracted by supplication. True supplication to God must therefore be actuated by love to God only. . . . When a man falls in love with a human being it is impossible for him to keep from mentioning the name of his beloved. How much more difficult is it to keep from mentioning the name of God when one has come to love him. One can pray for the dead and by so doing their spiritual condition will become better. The spiritual man finds no delight in anything save in commemoration of God. When one is confirmed his heart becomes rejoiced through the commemoration of God.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from notes of Miss Alma Albertson and other pilgrims, November and December, 1900.)

O thou daughter of the Kingdom! Know thou that supplication and prayer is the Water of Life. It is the cause of the vivification of existence and brings glad tidings and joy to the soul.

Show thou attention to this matter as far as thou canst and summon others to prayer and supplication.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from tablet to an American believer; translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, December 14, 1906.)

Question: "What is prayer, attitude or word?"

Answer: "Prayer is both attitude and word, it depends upon the soul-condition. It is like a song, both words and music make the song. Sometimes the melody will move us, sometimes the words."

(Words of Abdul-Baha; *Ten Days in the Light of Acca*, p. 15.)

The prayerful attitude is attained by two means. Just as a man who is going to deliver a lecture prepares therefor and his preparation consists of certain meditations and notations, so the preparation for the prayerful attitude is detaching one's mind from all other thoughts save the thought of God at the time of prayer and then praying when the prayerful attitude shall be attained.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; *A Heavenly Feast*, p. 19.)

Supplication to God at morn and eve is conducive to the joy of hearts, and prayer causes spirituality and fragrance. Thou shouldst necessarily continue therein. (p. 186.)

Neglect not praying and communing in the gloomy midnights and morn and eve and offer glory unto thy Lord, the Supreme. (p. 413.)

Know that nothing will benefit thee in this life save supplication and invocation unto God, service in his vineyard, and, with a heart full of love, to be in constant servitude unto him. (p. 98.)

Draw nigh unto God and persevere in communion with thy Lord so that the

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

HE IS GOD!

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

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Azamat 1, 73 (May 17, 1917)

No. 4

fire of God's love may glow more luminously in the heart, its heat grow stronger and give warmth to that region and its sound reach the Supreme Course. (p. 639.)

Supplicate unto him and beseech in the middle of the night and at early morn just as a needy and captive one beseeches. It is incumbent upon thee to turn unto the kingdom of God and to pray, supplicate and invoke during all times. This is the means by which thy soul shall ascend upward to the apex of the gift of God. (p. 695.)

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from tablets.)

O thou spiritual friend! Thou hast asked the wisdom of prayer. Know thou that prayer is indispensable and obligatory and man under no pretext whatsoever is excused therefrom unless he be mentally unsound or an insurmountable obstacle prevent him.

The wisdom of prayer is this, that it causes a connection between the servant and the True One because in that state of prayer man with all his heart and soul turns his face towards His Highness the Almighty, seeking his association and desiring his love and compassion. The greatest happiness for a lover is to converse with his beloved, and the greatest gift for a seeker is to become familiar

with the object of his longing. That is why the greatest hope of every soul who is attracted to the kingdom of God is to find an opportunity to entreat and supplicate at the ocean of his utterance, goodness and generosity.

Besides all this, prayer and fasting is the cause of awakening and mindfulness and is conducive to protection and preservation from tests.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, *Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 683.)

As to thy question, "Why pray? What is the wisdom thereof, for God has established everything and executes all affairs after the best order and he ordains everything according to a becoming measure and puts things in their places with the greatest propriety and perfection—therefore what is the wisdom in beseeching and supplicating and in stating one's wants and seeking help?" Know thou, verily, it is becoming of a weak one to supplicate to the strong One and it behooveth a seeker of bounty to beseech the glorious, bountiful One. When one supplicates to his Lord, turns to him and seeks bounty from his ocean this supplication is by itself a light to his heart, an illumination to his sight, a life to his soul and an exaltation to his being.

Therefore, during thy supplications to God and thy reciting "Thy name is my healing" consider how thine heart is cheered, thy soul delighted by the spirit of the love of God and thy mind attracted to the kingdom of God! By these attractions one's ability and capacity increase. When the vessel is widened the water increaseth and when the thirst grows the bounty of the cloud becomes agreeable to the taste of man. This is the mystery of supplication and the wisdom of stating one's wants.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from tablet to an American believer; translated by Mirza Ali Kuli Khan, October, 1908.)

Man is eternally in a state of communion and prayer with the source of all good. The highest and most elevating state is the state of prayer. Prayer is communion with God. . . . Its efficacy is conditional upon the freedom of the heart from extraneous suggestions and mundane thoughts. The worshipper must pray with a detached spirit, unconditional surrender of the will, concentrated attention and a magnetic spiritual passion. His innermost being must be stirred with the ethereal breeze of holiness. If the mirror of his life is polished from the dross of all desires the heavenly pictures and star-like images of the kingdom of God will become fully reflected therein. Then he will be given power to translate these celestial forms into his own daily life and the lives of many thousands.

Automatic, formalistic prayers which do not touch the core of the heart are of no avail. How sweet, how delicious, how satisfying, how spiritual is prayer in the middle of the night! While all the eyes are closed the eyes of the worshipper are wide open. While all the ears are stopped the ears of the suppliant are attuned to the subtle music of God. While the majority of the people are fast asleep the adorer of the Ideal Beloved is wakeful. All around him there is a rare and delicate silence, deep, airy,

ethereal silence, calm, magical and subtle—and there is the worshipper, communing with nature and the author of nature.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, September 3, 1914.)

Question: "How do saints become saints?"

Answer: "Through prayer, supplication, purification of the heart and good wishes."

(Words of Abdul-Baha; answers to some questions asked by some American pilgrims to Acca, spring of 1907. Mirza Moneer, translator.)

You have asked concerning approval of Christian Science treatment and healing.

Spirit has influence; prayer has spiritual effect. Therefore we pray, "O God! heal this sick one!" Perchance God will answer. Does it matter who prays? God will answer the prayer of every servant if that prayer is urgent. His mercy is vast, illimitable. He answers the prayers of all his servants. He answers the prayer of this plant. The plant prays potentially, "O God! Send me rain!" God answers this prayer and the plant grows. God will answer any one. He answers prayers potentially. Before we were born into this world did we not pray, "O God! Give me a mother; give me two fountains of bright milk; purify the air for my breathing; grant me rest and comfort; prepare food for my sustenance and living!" Did we not pray potentially for these needed blessings before we were created? When we came into this world did we not find our prayers answered? Did we not find mother, father, food, light, home and every other necessity and blessing although we did not actually ask for them? Therefore it is natural that God will

give to us when we ask him. His mercy is all-encircling.

But we ask for things which the divine wisdom does not desire for us and there is no answer to our prayer. His wisdom does not sanction what we wish. We pray, "O God! Make me wealthy." If this prayer were universally answered human affairs would be at a standstill. There would be no one left to work in the streets, no one to till the soil, no one to build, no one to run the trains. Therefore it is evident that it would not be well for us if all prayers were answered. The affairs of the world would be interfered with, energies crippled and progress hindered. But whatever we ask for which is in accord with divine wisdom, God will answer. Assuredly!

For instance, a very feeble patient may ask the doctor to give him food which would be positively dangerous to his life and condition. He may beg for roast meat. The doctor is kind and wise. He knows it would be dangerous to his patient so he refuses to allow it. The doctor is merciful, the patient ignorant. Through the doctor's kindness the patient recovers; his life is saved. Yet the patient may cry out that the doctor was unkind, not good, because he refused to answer his pleading.

God is merciful. In his mercy he answers the prayers of all his servants when they are according to his supreme wisdom.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 3, No. 18, p. 6.)

Christ said, "Go into thy chamber and shut the door, and pray to thy Father which is in heaven." Why did he say this? It is with the tongue that man expresses his feelings to another man. But with the language of the heart man prays to God. Though God is within the heart of man, is ever present in every place, yet man lifts up his eyes to heaven and prays as if God were there, seated upon a throne. Surely this is pure superstition! Why should

he utter the words, "O heavenly Father?"

Why should it be necessary for him to repeat prayers aloud and with the tongue? One reason for this is that if the heart alone is speaking the mind can be more easily disturbed. But repeating the words so that the tongue and heart act together enables the mind to become concentrated. Then the whole man is surrounded by the spirit of prayer and the act is more perfect.

Another reason is that by the outward signs of entering into his room and praying the attention of others is attracted and they begin to ask, "Why does he do this?" and are aroused to enquire about the truth.

Man may say, "I can pray to God whenever I wish, when the feelings of my heart are drawn to God; when I am in the wilderness, when I am in the city, or wherever I may be. Why should I go where others are gathered upon a special day, at a certain hour, to unite my prayers with theirs when I may not be in a frame of mind for praying?" To think in this way is useless imagination for where many are gathered together their force is greater. Separate soldiers fighting alone and individually have not the force of a united army. If all the soldiers in this spiritual war gather together then their united spiritual feelings help each other and their prayers become more acceptable.

A wise schoolmaster may send his scholars out to play or to practice gymnastics for an hour so that their minds and bodies may be refreshed and during the hour of the lesson they may learn it better. If the teacher proves that his pupils are advancing no onlooker has a right to object to his system or to question his wisdom and say, "Why does he waste the boys' time?" If a wise father plays with his children who has a right to say it is not good for them? He calls them to come to him as the hen calls her chicks, he knows that they are little and must be coaxed along, coaxed along, because they are young and tiny.

For the time of Moses the law of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" was ordained. It is very hard to see the wisdom of this, but the people then were in the wilderness and needed teaching. Different teachings were needed for different people. If you give the same teachings to all some might be retarded by them instead of helped. Christ taught some things to his disciples which he commanded them not to tell the Pharisees. It is not for the soldier to question the general's orders. If he knows him to be the real general he must carry out and obey his orders exactly. If the general orders that a certain place must be taken and held the soldiers might say, "Why risk so much by leaving this secure and safe position for a point which is the aim and target of the enemy?" But the general knows that this is the important point which must be held at all costs. The true doctor, the true teacher, the real captain must be obeyed.

If every man knew what was best for his health, if every man could teach himself, if every soldier knew how to fight by himself, if every passenger could sail the ship, what need would there be for the doctor, for the teacher, for the general or for the captain? As he has not this wisdom he must first ascertain their truth and then follow their directions. Until he does this he cannot advance.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: from notes of Mrs. L. A. C. Dreyfus-Barney.

One of our friends was sitting silent. Abdul-Baha asked her to speak. "I would rather pray quietly in thy presence," she said.

Abdul-Baha: "Mayst thou ever be in a prayerful attitude. In all the worlds of existence there is nothing more important than prayer. Prayer confers spirituality upon the heart."

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 26, 1913.)

Thou hast asked what shouldst thou do and what prayer shouldst thou offer in order to become informed of the mysteries of God. Pray thou with an *attracted* heart and supplicate thou with a spirit stirred by the glad tidings of God. Then the doors of the kingdom of mysteries shall be opened before thy face and thou shalt comprehend the realities of all things.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 26, 1913.)

Asked if we are not able through love and faith to make those who have departed from this life hear of the Cause who had not heard of it while here, Abdul-Baha replied:

"Yes, surely sincere prayer always has its effect and it has a great influence in the other world. We are never cut off from those who are there. The real and genuine influence is not in this world but in that other."

(Words from Abdul-Baha, from Notes of Mrs. Mary Hanford Ford, Paris, France, October, 1911.)

Supplication and prayer on behalf of others will surely be effective. When hearts are united, when faces are turned towards the kingdom of Abha, surely enlightenment will be the result.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, from tablet to Seattle Assembly of Bahais; translated in Haifa, Syria, August 14, 1914.)

In answer to the question, "Why should one pray through Christ as the Christians do, or through another manifestation of God and why should we not pray to God direct?" Abdul-Baha said:

"If we wish to pray we must have some object upon which to concentrate. If we turn to God we must direct our hearts to a certain center. If man worships God otherwise than through his Manifestation he must first form a conception of God and that conception is

created by his own mind. As the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite so God is not to be comprehended in this fashion. That which man conceives with his own mind he comprehends. That which he can comprehend is not God. That conception of God which a man has is but a phantasm, an image, an imagination, an illusion. There is no connection between such a conception and the Supreme Being.

“If a man wishes to know God he must find him in the perfect mirror, Christ or Baha’o’llah. In either of these mirrors he will see reflected the Sun of Divinity.

“As we know the physical sun by its splendor, by its light and heat so we know God, by the spiritual sun, when he shines forth from the temple of Manifestation by his attributes of perfection, by the beauty of his qualities and by the splendor of his light. The Manifestations of God are the focal centers of the world.

“The epitome of all worship is the worship of the attributes of Christ, not his personality.”

(Words of Abdul-Baha; a talk given to Mr. Percy Woodcock, Acca, Syria, 1909.)

Read *Some Answered Questions*, p. 268.

Turn thy face sincerely toward God; be severed from all save God; be ablaze with the fire of the love of God; be purified and sanctified, and beseech and supplicate unto God. Verily, he responds unto those who invoke him, is near unto those who pray unto him. And he is thy companion in every loneliness, and befriends every exile.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from tablet to American believer; translated by Mirza Ali Kuli Khan, Boston, February, 1908.)

Regarding thy question about the morning prayer. Both meanings are in-

cluded in the word dawn—the natural dawn, and the dawn of the kingdom. When a soul rises in the morning from sleep before everything else he must commemorate the name of God in order that he may obtain spirituality and illumination.

(Words of Abdul-Baha; from tablet to an American believer; translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, March 5, 1914, Mt. Carmel, Haifa.)

Someone present asked how it was that in prayer and meditation the heart often turns with instinctive appeal to some friend who has passed into the next life.

Abdul-Baha answered: “It is a law of God’s creation that the weak should lean upon the strong. Those to whom you turn may be mediators of God’s power to you, even as when on earth. But it is the one Holy Spirit which strengthens all men.”

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Abdul-Baha in London*, p. 98.)

Those who have ascended have different attributes from those who are still on earth, yet there is no real separation. In prayer there is a mingling of station, a mingling of condition. Pray for them as they pray for you.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Abdul-Baha in London*, p. 97.)

Read Words of Baha’o’llah: *Book of Ighan*, pp. 28-29.

O God and assister of all!
Verily, thou art the hearer of prayers, and verily, thou art powerful in all things! (Abdul-Baha.)

The heavens of thy mercy and the oceans of thy bounty are so vast that thou hast never disappointed those who begged of thee nor refused those who willed to come to thee! (Baha’o’llah.)

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened; that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Nur 1, 73 (June 5, 1917)

No. 5

“Teach the Cause! This is a matter that succeeds
most miraculously”

Words of Abdul-Baha to Pilgrims

From the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, January 30, 1914

NOW that you are returning to your respective homes you must be like unto ignited candles and set aglow the hearts of all the believers; now like unto a company of tuneful birds you must sing every melody. I have done my part, I have sung my songs and have played almost every tune. Now it is your turn. For awhile I must sit silent, ever straining my ears to hear your anthems of praise. I love to listen to your spiritual symphonies and divine harmonies, ever flying upward and filling the world with the soothing music of peace and consolation. God willing, you will fulfill my eager expectations. O! I am sure you will not disappoint me. The confirmations of the Kingdom shall descend upon you, and the Supreme reinforcement shall surround you. Rest ye assured; let your hearts abide in peace. I ever expect to receive cheering news from you. May you become the cause of the happiness of the hearts of the believers. May all the friends become glad, rejoiced and grateful through meeting you and write me that these pilgrims who passed through our cities were enkindled, attracted, eloquent and willing to serve their fellowmen!

In short, God willing, may every one of you, as you leave this Holy Land, become a herald of the Cause, a harbinger of the establishment of the Kingdom.

May each one of you shine upon each city through which you pass as a radiant star. This is the Day wherein whomsoever arises to spread the Cause of God, the cohorts of the Supreme Concurrence will assist him. Today the magnet of spiritual confirmation is teaching the Cause. Although the threshold of the Blessed Perfection was my heart, my spirit and the happiness of my soul, yet, notwithstanding this, I left everything and traveled around the world proclaiming at the top of my voice the glad tidings of the Kingdom of Abha. No affair today is as confirmed as that of the promulgation of the principles of this Cause. As much as they can the believers of God must occupy their time in conveying the Message. . . .

Teach the Cause; this is a matter that succeeds, succeeds most miraculously. Praise be to God! You are beneath the protection of the Blessed Perfection, you are environed by his bestowals. What favor do you wish greater than this? When a number of souls are beneath the protecting wings of an important personage they consider themselves very fortunate; now, praise be to God, you are beneath the protection and preservation of the Blessed Perfection. Therefore, how great must be your happiness! As you go out of this room dedicate your lives to teaching the

Cause; gird up the loins of endeavor and put forward extraordinary energy.

When a Cause is confirmed it is evident and manifest from its signs. For example, we say this earth is confirmed. Why? Because, as a result of the down-

pour of rain and the shining of the sun it is covered with green plants and flowers.

Again I say, teach the Cause! Do not tarry! Fill the goblet of every seeker with the wine of the love of God! . . .

Green Acre in 1917

SINCE last year's pentecostal outpouring on the quiet hills by the Piscataqua, "The River of Light," the friends of Green Acre have been counting the days until they might return thereto in the summer of 1917.

During the past year Miss Sarah Farmer, the founder of Green Acre, has ascended into the Supreme Concourse. A beautiful Bahai service was held at her home in South Eliot, on the occasion of her passing. Her saintly and luminous spirit will rest over the conferences this summer even more gloriously than during last August for now she is free from the prison-house of the body.

May the new and mighty wave of spiritual power which has this past year swept the Bahai world rise and burst into such splendor at Green Acre this summer that it may illumine the entire continent.

Abdul-Baha has taken great joy in Green Acre and made radiant predictions for its future. Among his first words upon his return to the city of Acca in Palestine from his world journey through Europe and America were these concerning Green Acre.

"There is a place in America," he said one evening when the friends had assembled to meet him, "called Green Acre. It is customary during the months of summer for people of different creeds and religions to gather there and the leaders of various movements and thoughts to deliver lectures and addresses. Thus they have combined most effectively education and recreation. The significance and usefulness of this unique place lie in the fact that it offers a free and unrestricted platform

to the citizens of every nation and the adherents of every religion. Thus every subject is discussed with that full liberty of conscience which is enjoyed in the United States.

"The founder of these conferences wherein every nationality and religion is worthily represented, is Sarah J. Farmer. To her is due all praise and commendation for having thus initiated this wonderful plan which must be carried out to its logical conclusion—a universal platform for all mankind, irrespective of race, religion or nationality.

"As the name, Green Acre, is similar to that of Acca, when I arrived there I was made very happy. I spent one week in that green and delightful Acca. They had a large meeting every evening at which many people gathered, and I spoke to them on spiritual subjects. I met there many cultured and educated people. It is a most beautiful country place. Its water is pure, its air salubrious and its atmosphere is spiritual. There are many pine woods; and under a cluster of fine old trees people gather to hear lectures. Mirza Abul Fazl, when in Green Acre, used to give some of his addresses under these pines, so they are known as the 'Persian pines.' I went there one afternoon; many people had gathered, and I spoke on the Bahai teachings."

While sojourning in Paris, on his return from America en route to Palestine, Abdul-Baha pictured to some friends interested in Green Acre, the ultimate ideals on which as a sure foundation its future should be built.

"In Green Acre you must concentrate your forces around the one all important

fact—the investigation of reality. Expend all your thoughts on this—that the union of opinions and expressions may be obtained

“If the circle of the activities of Green Acre be expanded so that each year the leaders of every religion and thought may associate with each other with perfect love and amity there will be good results.

“The aim of those souls who deliver addresses or who take part in the discussions must be the investigation of reality and not the presentation of dogmas and unprofitable, antiquated theories. The chief objects of Green Acre conferences must be the furtherance of universal peace, investigation of reality, brotherhood, tolerance, sympathy to all mankind, the cultivation of a better understanding between the nations of the world, the elimination of dogmas and superficialities, the illumination of the hearts with the light of truth, mutual assistance and co-operation, social service, the study of the fundamental principles of all the religions and their comparative co-ordination. Green Acre must carry away this palm of victory

“Personal ambition must be thrown to the winds and all the available will-power directed towards the realization

of the universal objects. If you outline such a practical, universal, all-inclusive programme and then invite me I will come again to Green Acre. Lay such a foundation that the influence of the confederation of religions and sects may permeate to all parts of the world from Green Acre; and Green Acre for the future ages and cycles may become the standard bearer of the oneness of the world of humanity. I will pray for the fulfilment of this truth.”

Early last winter the following tablet was received by a believer regarding the service of Green Acre, Abdul-Baha’s latest word about the “Green Acca” of America :

“O thou maid-servant of God! Thy letter was received. Thy desire to serve Green Acre is in reality a very important matter. This name (Green Acre) must appear with all its significant meaning, that is Green Acre must become the reflection of the plain of Acca, and attain to the utmost verdancy, greenness and artistic beauty. Its charms and wonder lie in this, that it may become the center of the Bahais and the cry of ‘Ya-Baha-El-Abha’ be raised from all its direction. I hope that all thy aspirations may become fully realized. Upon thee be greeting and praise.”

“Plant thou a tree which may yield sweet fruits throughout all eternity”

(A Recent Tablet from Abdul-Baha to Maria P. Wilson, Malden, Mass.)

O thou my respected hostess!

The days that I was a guest in thy home are ever before my sight. They then include happy days, for they passed away in joy.

Truly, I say, with all thy power thou didst serve us and displayed towards us the utmost kindness. This service appeared through the sincerity of thine intention, thy love for humanity, and thy praiseworthy morals. At present, also, thou art engaged day and night in the service of the Kingdom of God, and art occupied in the promotion of heavenly teachings. Plant thou a tree which may yield sweet fruits throughout all

eternity. Scatter thou such pure seeds which may produce various crops in the future ages and cycles. This is made possible through self-sacrifice in the path of God, and complete evanescence in the love of God—so that no trace of self, ego and desires be left behind; thus thou mayest consecrate thyself wholly and entirely to the heavenly Beloved.

Convey on my behalf to each and all the friends—men and women— my loving and yearning greetings.

Upon thee be greeting and praise.

(Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Haifa, Syria, Oct. 22, 1916.)

STAR OF THE WEST

PUBLISHED NINETEEN TIMES A YEAR

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Honorary Member—MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!* (Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Nur 1, 73 (June 9, 1917)

No. 5

The Promotion of the Teachings of God in Japan Budget from Agnes B. Alexander, containing Tablets from Abdul-Baha

12 Ichibancho, Kojimachi,
Tokyo, Japan, Feb. 9, 1917.

To the STAR OF THE WEST.

Beloved friends:—On the evening of the 7th, great joy came to this home and I hasten to tell you of it that you may all rejoice with us. A wonderful spirit had uplifted me all that day; I felt that when I returned home in the evening I would find a message from Abdul-Baha. I looked for the mail the first thing on returning home and there it was enclosed in a letter from our brother, Mr. Hannen of Washington—a letter for Fukuta San from Mirza Ahmad Sohrab and one for me, embodying in them Tablets from our beloved Abdul-Baha. I cannot tell you of the wonderful peace and joy that has overflowed in my heart ever since. This is the first time since receiving word from Abdul-Baha to come to Japan that any message from him has reached here and Fukuta San is blessed by being the first Japanese *in his own land* to receive words “from

that pen whose greatness, glory and splendor will shine down the ages, long after we have passed away from this earth and the traces of our service in His mighty Cause have appeared in dazzling clearness.” These wonderful words were written by a sister many years ago.

At this time the Cause is certainly spreading with great bounds in this land. Our brother, Mr. Kenzo Torikai, who is visiting his native home after an absence of twelve years, has been awake giving the Message wherever he goes. During the past week several Tokyo papers have had articles in reference to the Bahai Movement some of them giving my name and address which has brought many inquiries and many letters. Most of these are in Japanese, so that part of the work falls to Fukuta San and many come or send for the Japanese Bahai book which we keep here. The translation of one letter from a young girl in the north of Japan has touched me very much. One of the young students wrote

(Continued on page 54)

ALL the individuals of humanity are farmers. Every soul sows a certain kind of seed, but at the season of the harvest there will be gathered no result, except from the seeds which are sown by the believers of God. That alone will obtain heavenly blessing. Reflect that His Holiness Christ and His Holiness Mohammed scattered such holy seeds the fruits of which are being gathered till now; but all the other farmers were finally doomed to regret and disappointment.

—ABDUL-BAHA
(See page 56)

The Promotion of the Teachings of God in Japan

(Continued from page 52)

the translation for me and they tell me in the Japanese language it is indeed a most beautiful letter:

My dear Miss Agnes Alexander:

I am a young girl student who lives in the northern and remotest part of this mainland. I was greatly influenced when I read in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* a few days ago that you are endeavoring to promulgate in Japan the Truth of the great Persian teacher, Baha'o'llah, who teaches the equality of man and woman, racial unity and universal peace, etc., and I am one of the great admirers of your strong and never yielding spirit for the religion.

What noble and wise women there are in your country like you and Miss Stinson* (the aviatrix who is here in Japan now), and I cannot help envying you and her. Especially what glory and pride it is to your nation to have a lady like you who is so noble and godlike-hearted acting day and night to teach our people your new Faith!

I will pray to God at my country town here in Japan that the religion, which you are promulgating may be believed by all the people of this world. If I were in Tokyo, I would like, I am sure, to help you in teaching, even though my power be poor—waiting upon near your knees (this is a Japanese expression). But, alas, I am far from Tokyo and there is no way to study the religion but by the little help of newspapers, so I wish to go to the capital for this purpose without the knowledge of my parents,

but I am very sorry I have no money for the journey. I will pray that the religion will be successfully promulgated by you all over the world and I look forward to the day when it will be realized. I will never forget your glorious name as it has taken root in my bosom and also you will never forget me. It seems to me by inspiration that I must assist you in teaching when I come to womanhood. I pray you will do splendidly your calling! Be blest my dear sister! Good-by. Yours truly,

Ritsuko (Miss).

The world is going through great changes and we know not what a day will bring forth, but we can only "be still and know that I am God."

I enclose to you the words of life from our glorious beloved, Abdul-Baha, his words which never fail. Oh! what will they not mean to this country. The light and truth already shines through the clouds and nothing can prevent its shining.

Forever your sister in the Great Cause,

Agnes B. Alexander.

TABLETS FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

To the maid-servant of God, Miss Agnes Alexander—Upon her be greeting and praise!

O thou heavenly daughter!

Thy letter through Mr. Hannen received from Japan, likewise the letters

*Miss Katherine Stinson, 19-year-old aviatrix, made daring flights in Japan and China and where, "For the first time in their lives," she says, "the Chinese and Japanese had to look up to a woman."

Upon her return to the United States, in an interview, she said: "The Japanese are really the most polite people in the world, and the Chinese were just lovely, but I'm certainly glad I'm an American. They make their wives walk ten paces in the rear on all public occasions, and I wouldn't walk behind any man. I want to walk beside him.

"The women in China and Japan are waking up, though. There is a big feminist movement. In Japan a Mrs. Fujisawa, who is one of the

leaders of the woman movement there, gave me a check for \$2,500 because she was so glad to see a woman do something that no other woman had done in Japan. That was when, clad in a kimono, I made my flight over the city of Tokio. The Japanese were wonderful then. They are intensely interested in aviation, and all the city turned out. They had the aviation field fenced in with slender bamboo rods. The crowd was tremendous and the interest keen, but the Japanese were so polite that not a rod was broken."

In China Miss Stinson made a flight from the grounds of the sacred temple of agriculture over the residence of the president, which was formerly the Chinese imperial palace.—Editors.

of Mr. Fukuta. The contents of both letters imparted exceeding joy, for each word was an eloquent tongue explaining the wonders of the love of God and elucidating the story of the attraction of the heart with the breaths of the holy spirit.

Praise be to God, that thou hast become assisted to promulgate the word of God in Japan. Ere long this circle in Japan will be enlarged, obtaining heavenly blessing.

God says in the glorious Koran: "A seed, growing out of it seven ears and every ear containing one hundred kernels, and God is able to double this for whomsoever He willeth." This verse means this: Whenever the word of truth is proclaimed it is like unto a seed which sown in a pure soil brings forth seven ears and every ear produces one hundred kernels and God says again that for whomsoever he desireth he will double this number, that is: He will make the seven hundred kernels fourteen hundred.

Now I hope that thy call in Japan may be like unto that seed, so that it may obtain heavenly blessing and benediction and the souls be educated and taught the oneness and singleness of God, the truthfulness of the prophets and the usefulness of the divine teachings.

An answer is written to the letters of Mr. Fukuta and forwarded. Present it to him.

Upon thee be greeting and praise!

(Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Haifa, Syria, Oct. 27, 1916.)

To Mr. Fulsuta San.

O thou who art guided by the Light of Guidance!

Thy first and second letters were received: Praise be to God, that the light of guidance shone forth, the glass of the heart became luminous and the darkness of ignorance dispelled. The Most Great Guidance is a crown, the brilliant gems of which will shine upon all the future ages and eyles. If it is placed on the head of a servant, he will become the

object of the envy of the kings; for this is an imperishable crown and an everlasting sovereignty. God says in the great Koran: "He specializes with His mercy whomsoever He desireth."

Praise be to God, that thou hast become specialized with divine favor and bounty. Thou didst become awake, beheld the lights and hearkened unto the melody of the Supreme Concourse. In the glorious Gospel it is said: "Freely ye have received, freely give." That is you have found this bestowal; you have paid nothing for it: therefore give it to others without any exchange. Now with a heavenly power, with a lordly gift, with spiritual morals, with god-like deeds and with supreme glad-tidings be thou engaged in the promotion of the teachings of God in Japan. The confirmation of the Kingdom shall encompass you and the cohorts of the realm of might will grant triumph.

Upon thee be greeting and praise!

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

(Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Haifa, Syria, Oct. 28, 1916.)

To Miss Agnes Alexander.

O thou daughter of the kingdom!

Thy letter dated July 15th, 1916, received. Its contents indicated that thou hast organized a meeting in Japan. Consider thou what a great favor God has bestowed that such spiritual meetings are being held in Tokyo and such heavenly gifts are being distributed! God says in the Koran: "The example of the people of faith is like unto a field which obtains freshness and verdancy from the rain descending from the clouds, attaining to full fruition and finding the blessing of the Kingdom! There is no doubt that day by day it will grow and develop and in the end the ears of the sheaves will be laden with God's benediction, bringing forth an hundred fold."

Now, ye are the fields of the plain of Reality and are under the protection of the educative rays of the Sun of Truth.

At every moment ye obtain a new vitality from the rain of divine bestowals and ere long ye will produce full grown seeds which are blessed by the care and attention of the Divine Farmer. There is no doubt that such will be the end.

Convey on my behalf the utmost longing greeting to the friends residing in Tokyo as well as the recently arrived travellers and say to them: All the individuals of humanity are farmers. Every soul sows a certain kind of seed, but at the season of the harvest there

will be gathered no result, except from the seeds which are sown by the believers of God. That alone will obtain heavenly blessing. Reflect that His Holiness Christ and His Holiness Mohammed scattered such holy seeds the fruits of which are being gathered till now; but all the other farmers were finally doomed to regret and disappointment.

Upon ye be greeting and praise.

(Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Haifa, Syria, Oct. 30, 1916.)

Seed Sowing

DURING the last few months our Persian brother, Ishtear Ebn Kalandar, has been travelling to and fro in the Middle West, speaking with clear, brilliant eloquence before large audiences in Indianapolis, New Orleans, Milwaukee, Detroit, Cincinnati and many other places. Recently he spoke to an audience of 700 in the Unitarian Church of Cincinnati. There was a driving rain but the church was packed to the doors to hear of the glad tidings which Baha'o'llah and Abdul-Baha have brought to this world.

Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, despite his medical practice, through which he serves all who come to him with true Bahai bounty, has devoted his Sundays to seed-sowing journeys. He has recently spoken in the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota and Missouri.

Thus are our eastern brothers sowing the seeds of that new spiritual tree which has arisen in the East "for the healing of the nations."

A Bahai Library

FOR seven years the STAR OF THE WEST has been publishing in its pages addresses and Tablets of Abdul-Baha and extracts from the glorious writings of Baha'o'llah. These now form a beautiful library of Bahai thought and Bahai news. To make this library easily accessible to the friends of Abdul-Baha the editors of the STAR OF THE WEST are having each year's numbers attractively bound in separate volumes. These volumes may be had from the Bahai News Service at the price of \$2.50 a volume, postage or expressage additional.

Especial attention is called to Volume

II with its picture of Abdul-Baha in Paris and London, and to Volumes III and IV with their accounts of Abdul-Baha's addresses and journeys in America. Volume VII is especially significant because it contains the Five Great Teaching Tablets and the first installments of the remarkable compilation on the "Divine Art of Living."

All the volumes are full of radiant words from the heaven of light. Many of the friends are securing the entire set lest they miss any of the divine sentences which in these last few years have been flooding our western world.

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Rahmat 1, 73 (June 24, 1917)

No. 6

The Divine Art of Living

A COMPILATION BY MRS. MARY M. RABB

(Chapter I appeared in issue No. 16, Vol. VII; Chapter II appeared in issue No. 18, Vol. VII; Chapter III appeared in issue No. 2, Vol. VIII; Chapter IV appeared in issue No. 4, Vol. VIII.)

CHAPTER V

Faith, Severance, Sacrifice

NOW faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen. . . . By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear. . . .

He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him. By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with Godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. . . . By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Moses forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. . . .

And what more shall I say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Japhthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the

mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong. . . . Others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and the holes of the earth. . . .

Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

(Hebrews; from chapters 11, 12.)

All things are possible to him that believeth. . . . Verily I say unto you if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed . . . ye shall say unto this mountain, . . . Be thou taken up and cast into the sea and it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

(Words of Jesus in the Gospels.)

I say unto you that anyone who will

arise in the Cause of God at this time shall be filled with the Spirit of God. And God will send his hosts from heaven to help you and nothing shall be impossible to you if you have faith. And now I give you a commandment which shall be for a covenant, . . . that ye have faith; that your faith be steadfast as a rock which no storms can move, which nothing can disturb, and that it endure through all things even to the end. . . . Be not shaken in your faith. . . . As ye have faith so shall your powers and blessings be. This is the balance; this is the balance; this is the balance!

(Words of Abdul-Baha from *An Early Pilgrimage* by Mrs. May Maxwell.)

The foundation of praiseworthy virtues is faith. The greater the faith of man the more illumined his life. Faith is a miracle; it has a wonder-working power. Its spiritual influence refines the character, suffers man to become humble and meek, places in his heart the fear of God, prompts him to devote his time to humanitarian deeds, spiritualizes his nature, exalts his ideals and enkindles his lamp. The greater the faith of man the more numerous will be his philanthropic actions. Faith is like unto the trees, deeds are like unto the fruits. Faith is like unto the lamp, deeds are like unto the light.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Address quoted in Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, March 2, 1914.)

Question: What is real faith?

Answer: Faith outwardly means to believe in the message a Manifestation brings to the world and accept the fulfillment in him of that which the prophets have announced. But in reality faith embodies three degrees: to confess with the tongue; to believe in the heart; to show forth in our actions. These three things are essential to true faith. The important requirement is the love of

God in the heart. For instance, we say a lamp gives light. In reality the oil which burns produces the illumination, but the lamp and the chimney are necessary before the light can express itself. The love of God is the light. The tongue is the chimney or the medium by which that love finds expression. It also protects the light. Likewise the members of the body reflect the inner light by their actions. So the tongue confesses in speech and the parts of the body confess in their actions the love of God within the soul of a true believer. Thus it was that Peter confessed Christ by his tongue and his actions. When the tongue and actions reflect the love of God the real qualities of man are revealed. Christ said "You will know them by their fruits"; that is, by their deeds. If a believer shows forth divine qualities we know that true faith is in his heart. If we do not find evidence of these qualities, if he is selfish or wicked, he has not the true kind of faith. Faith is mentioned in the Scriptures as the "second birth" or "everlasting life." In this day true belief is the Spirit of God. Many claim to possess true faith, but it is rare, and when it exists it cannot be destroyed.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Ten Days in the Light of Acca*, p. 59.)

By our actions we reveal what is growing in the heart. Actions are mirrors of the soul . . .

Faith is not so much what we believe as what we carry out.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Ten Days in the Light of Acca*, pp. 11-12.)

Man must prove whatsoever he speaketh by deeds and actions. If he claims faith he must live and do according to the teachings of the Kingdom of Abha.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From a Tablet to two Chicago believers.)

Faith is the magnet which draws the confirmation of the Merciful One. Service is the magnet which attracts the heavenly strength.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 62.)

We hear there is an invention; we believe it is good; then we come and see it. We hear there is wealth; we see it; we work hard for it; we become rich ourselves and help others. We know and see the Light, we go close to it, are warmed by it, and reflect its rays on others. This is real faith, and thus we receive power to become the eternal sons of God.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Abdul-Baha in London*, p. 59.)

Question: How can one increase in faith?

Answer: You must strive. A child is uninformed. Through study he obtains knowledge. Search for truth.

There are three kinds of faith. First, that which is from tradition and birth. For example: A child is born of Mohammedan parents; he is a Mohammedan. This faith is weak, traditional faith. Second, that which comes from knowledge and is the faith of understanding. This is good. But there is a better, the faith of practice. This is the real faith.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Abdul-Baha in London*, p. 59.)

Although a person of good deeds is acceptable at the threshold of the Almighty, yet it is first *to know* and then *to do*. Although a blind man produces a most wonderful and exquisite art, yet he is deprived of seeing it. See how most animals labor for man, draw loads and facilitate travel; yet as they are ignorant they do not receive any reward for this toil and labor. The cloud rains; roses and hyacinths grow, the plains and meadows, the gardens and trees become

green and blossom, yet they do not realize the results and outcome of their activities. Therefore, they are not praised and commended, . . . This lamp is lighted, but as it has not a conscious knowledge of itself no one has become glad because of it.

Moreover, a soul of excellent deeds and good manners will undoubtedly advance, no matter from what horizon he beholds the light radiating. Herein lies the difference. By faith is meant first, conscious knowledge; second, the practice of good deeds.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 549.)

Praise be to God, you are firm in the Covenant and steadfast in the Testament. Firmness and steadfastness are the greatest conditions of faith and assurance. As long as the tree does not send its root to the bowels of the earth it will not become secure and established, neither will it grow and develop into full stature. But if it is not firmly rooted it will be broken by the blowing of one strong wind.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 24, 1914.)

There is no wonder in confessing the appearance of the Kingdom of God, but true wonder consists in good deeds, obedience to the commands and teachings of the True Lord, and firmness in this path, even when the storm is at its height.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet to American believer; received January 5, 1904.)

One of the requirements of faithfulness is that thou mayest sacrifice thyself and in the divine path, close thine eye to every pleasure and strive with all thy soul that thou mayest disappear and be

lost, like unto a drop, in the ocean of the love of God.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 552.)

The Manifestation of God is a perfect example of real obedience. Like him we must sacrifice every thing, every plan, every longing and ideal must be given up completely to the will of God. We must look to God for all we desire, all we wish to attain. The will of God must work out its purpose in us. Our human will must be laid down in sacrifice and love. Abdul-Baha has given everything in sacrifice and obedience to the will of God. . . . All our soul-powers, our outward self, our inward self must be consecrated to God in service and sacrifice. Even life must be given if necessary. If we have not reached this station of nothingness we have not attained to real obedience to the will of God. A pupil must submit entirely to the will of the teacher. This is true sacrifice, true obedience.

Real obedience and real sacrifice are identical, they are absolute readiness to follow and perform whatever you are called upon to do in the Cause of God. When you really love God you will be willing to sacrifice everything and submit yourself entirely to His will. Consecrate yourself wholly to Him. His will is everything. His service is paramount.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Ten Days in the Light of Acca*, p. 48.)

As to the fact that man must entirely forget himself. By this is meant that he should arise in the mystery of sacrifice, and that is the disappearance of mortal sentiments and the extinction of blamable morals which constitute the temporal gloom, and not that the physical health should be changed into weakness and debility.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 244.)

Asceticism is not necessary. A soul grows by the exercise of human virtues and the observance of human morals and by divine favor. The extreme asceticism of the saints was superstition. The monasticism of the Christian church was mistaken. St. Paul was responsible for much of this because in one of his epistles he praises those who do not marry and prophesied that sects would arise which would not marry. St. Paul disapproved of marriage. But God did not give us good gifts that we should reject them. He created all these blessings that His servants may bless Him.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From an article in *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1911, by Miss E. S. Stevens.)

In this day or dispensation asceticism is of the spiritual type, for spiritual asceticism is right and is productive of results. On the one hand a man may attain virtues by the inherent force of his nature; on the other hand these virtues may be due to the weakness of his nature. For instance, an infant is detached from the world. That severance or detachment is due to its weakness. But a wise man having passed to the stage of maturity will likewise be detached from the world and care nothing for the world. Severance at that stage is indicative of inherent strength of character. A withered arm is incapable of stoning or striking anybody. That harmlessness is not due to virtue, it is due to imperfection. But if a person whose arm and hand are well and whole shall not strike, then it is a symptom of strength and virtue. A man who is a mute and dumb cannot lie, but that lack of lying is an indication of his weakness, not of his perfection. But he whose tongue speaketh and yet lieth not is verily mighty. . . . A dead man is harmless, no harm can come from him but that is not eulogy. But if he be alive and harmless that is eulogizing him. Now we come to the subject.

By enduring ascetic hardships the

powers of nature will undergo dissolution which will result in great weakness whereby one is made incapable of doing anything. He will not show any temper. He will not do any evil. He will not cause a riot; he is quiet. He is wronged; he is like a lamb. But this is due to weakness. But he who has attained spiritual asceticism acquires these attributes by strength of character. When a man by nature, that is to say, by some imperfection of nature, is incapable of committing uncommendable acts, that is nothing in his favor. But if he by sheer force of will and spiritual training attains to a state of character which prevents him from doing such things, this is a great credit to him. The insane man is entirely detached from all bonds and ties; he is absolutely free from all attachments. But this is not a commendation to him. But when the disciples of Christ, who were in a normal state of mind and body let go of everything in life, that is indeed commendable. Physical asceticism will in the course of time cause absolute atrophy of the parts, resulting in the greatest weakness. There will be no love of transgression, no attachment to this life, no covetousness, no aggressiveness, but all this is due to great weakness of powers. But spiritual asceticism will help one to attain to such blossoming of powers as will enable him to make up his mind against the things that are not to be and will encourage him in the things to be. In this dispensation there is no physical or material asceticism. The spiritual are ascetics, and this asceticism is expressed by training souls and educating humanity in morals and in the acquisition of the qualities of the Kingdom.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From *Akka Lights*; Notes of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Hannen, February, 1909.)

“Fasting is a symbol. Fasting signifies abstinence from lust. Physical fasting is a symbol of that abstinence, and is a reminder; that is, just as a person

abstains from physical appetites, he is to abstain from self-appetites and self-desires. But mere abstention from food has no effect on the spirit. It is a mere symbol, a reminder. Otherwise, it is of no importance. Fasting for this purpose does not mean entire abstinence from food. The golden rule as to food is, do not take too much or too little. Moderation is necessary. There is a sect in India who practice extreme abstinence, and gradually reduce their food until they exist on almost nothing. But their intelligence suffers. A man is not fit to do service for God in brains or body if he is weakened by lack of food. He cannot see clearly.”

When told of American experiments whereby the mind was supposed to benefit personally by abstinence, Abdul-Baha replied: “It is imagination. . . . To sum up, God knows better than all. He has given us an appetite; therefore we should eat. If the body be deprived of that which is necessary for it the mind suffers. God asks of us according to our capacity. If a man who has only sufficient strength to carry fifty kilos be burdened with a hundred kilos he will fall. Moderation and common sense must be used.”

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From an article by Miss E. S. Stevens in the *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1911.)

Well done! Well done! Thou hast desired the evanescence of thy will in the will of God. . . . (p. 267.)

The reality of man is like unto a sea, and the Holy Power is like unto brilliant pearls. Not until the sea moveth in waves doth it throw a shell of pearls upon the shore. Therefore if thou wishest to become heavenly cut thy attention from the earth, that is, cease to attach thy heart unto this world and seek attachment to the Kingdom and turn unto God. And when thou doest this thou wilt become the mercy of God and a gift of the Almighty. (p. 326.)

Man must become evanescent in God,

(Continued on page 63)

STAR OF THE WEST

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Editorial Staff—ALBERT R. WINDUST—GERTRUDE BUIKEMA—DR. ZIA M. BAGDADI
Honorary Member—MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!
Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*
(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Rahmat 1, 73 (June 24, 1917)

No. 6

A prayer by Abdul-Baha

Translated by Ghodsia Khanum and Miss Juliet Thompson

O my God! O my God!
Thou beholdest and knowest
That refuge or shelter save thee
Have I not found,
Nor shall I find.
And beside the highroad of thy love
No pathway have I ever trodden,
Or shall I tread.

In mid-night's dark, fear-haunted vigils
The morn of thine infinite mercy
Awakens and brightens
The eye of my soul.
And when the Sun upriseth,
This withered heart, reviving in the light
Of thy perfection,
In rapture communes.

Each drop though infinitesimally small,
When assisted by the waves of the Eternal Outpouring
Becomes a limitless sea.
And every atom by a ray from the Effulgence
Of thy bounty baptized,
Is as a sun of beaming splendor
And of power.

Wherefore, O pure Creator!
To this thy servant,
Enraptured, afire,
Grant a shelter in thy secret habitation.
And make him while in this passing world
In thy love and friendship,
Steadfast and faithful.

And in the nest of thy loving-kindness,
Amid the branches of the Tree of Spirit,
To this bird, featherless, broken-winged,
Grant thou an abiding-place.

The Divine Art of Living—Chapter V

(Continued from page 61)

must forget his own selfish conditions in order that he may rise to the station of sacrifice. This station should be attained to such a degree that if he sleeps it should not be for pleasure but to rest the body in order to work better, to speak better, to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God and to prove His truths. When he remains awake he should seek to be attentive, serve the Cause of God and sacrifice his own stations for those of God. When he attains to this station the confirmations of the Holy Spirit will surely reach him and man with this power can withstand all who inhabit the earth. (p. 460.)

No one will obtain this great favor save he who cuts himself from this world, being attracted by the love of God; who is dead to the desires and appetites of self, sincere to God in all things and meek, humble, imploring, pleading and lowly before God. (p. 5.)

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Tablets of Abdul-Baha.*)

By being severed from the world I do not mean holding in contempt the things of the world, for civilization and education are the means of progress. I mean that one must not attach his heart to the world.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Table Talks with Abdul-Baha*, p. 23.)

All that has been created is for man who is at the apex of creation and who must be thankful for the divine bestowals. All material things are for us so that through our gratitude we may learn to understand life as a divine benefit. . .

Therefore we must be happy and pass our time in praises, appreciating all things. But there is something else—detachment. We can appreciate without attaching ourselves to the things of this world. It sometimes happens that if a man loses his fortune he is so disheartened that he dies or becomes insane. While enjoying the things of this world we must remember that perhaps one day we shall have to do without them.

Attach not thyself to anything unless in it thou seest the reality of God. This is the first step into the court of eternity. The earth life lasts but a short time, even its benefits are transitory. That which is temporary does not deserve our heart's attachment.

Detachment does not consist in setting fire to one's house or becoming bankrupt or throwing one's fortune out of the window or even in giving away all one's possessions. Detachment consists in refraining from letting our possessions possess us. A prosperous merchant who is not attached to his business knows detachment. A banker whose occupation does not prevent him from serving humanity is detached. A poor man can be attached to a small thing. . . . There are many rich people who are detached, and many poor who are not.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Divine Philosophy*, pp. 104-108.)

We must not be attached to anything in the world. It is not worth one thought. We must not desire for those we love that they should be captivated by the attachments of this world. Nay, rather, we should desire for them eternal things, the things of the Kingdom. We

should seek to free ourselves from all attachments. The things of this world are like the waves of the sea. It is impossible that they should endure. In comparison, the things of the Kingdom are like rocks, firm and enduring.

If one is attached to the demands of the human body he will never be at rest, for the body is constantly demanding change. This tree growing before the window, it is impossible that it should not die, no matter how it is tended and how well it is watered. How foolish to spend one's time and energy on that which can not endure. If one is turned toward heavenly things he will become like a rock. But if his heart be attached to anything in this world it will become subject to change. Attachments are like ropes which drag us to the earth when we try to fly. To be detached is to be free, is to be flying in a new ether, is to be light, is to be joyous—and a Bahai should be joyous. He should attain to such a station of joy that the world will enquire as to his secret. If he be entirely detached and emptied of self he will be enabled to start in a cold heart a great fire.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Quoted from a letter written Miss Juliet Thompson by Mrs. Isabel Fraser, Hamleh, September 24, 1913.)

The mystery of sacrifice is a most great subject and is inexhaustible. Briefly it is as follows: The moth is a sacrifice to the candle. The spring of water is a sacrifice to the thirsty one. The sincere lover is a sacrifice to the loved one and the longing one is a sacrifice to the beloved. One must wholly forget himself, must become a wanderer (in the Abode of the Beloved). He must seek the good pleasure of the True One, desire the face of the True One, and walk in the path of the True One; he must become intoxicated with His cup, resigned in His hand and close his eyes to life and living in order that he may shine like unto the light of truth from

the horizon of Eternity. This is the first station of sacrifice.

The second station of sacrifice is as follows: Man must become severed from the human world; be delivered from the darkness of this world; the illumination of mercifulness must shine and radiate in him, the nether world become as non-existent and the Kingdom become manifest. He must become like iron thrown within the furnace of fire. The qualities of iron such as blackness, coldness and solidity which belong to the earth disappear and vanish while the characteristics of fire such as redness, glowing and heat which belong to the Kingdom become apparent and visible. Therefore, iron hath sacrificed its qualities and grades to the fire, acquiring the virtues of that element.

Likewise, when souls are released from the fetters of the world, the imperfections of mankind and animalistic darkness and have stepped into the realm of detachment, have partaken from the outpouring of the Placeless and have acquired lordly perfection, they are the "ransomed ones" of the Sun of Truth, who are hastening to the altar of heart and soul.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 354.)

When man dedicates his life to a cause he must dedicate himself entirely, then he is really dedicated. This is not through word but through deed. One must dedicate his life completely, fully, in reality, just as the dead branch sacrifices its life to the fire, and just as the oil sacrifices its life to give light. This is the greatest station, the station of sacrifice. There is no greater than this.

In Oriental language there is the expression, "May my life be a sacrifice to you," and a man writing a hundred letters a day might use these words a hundred times and yet he would not sacrifice anything for his friend. But this is custom, a usage. Everybody who writes a letter to his friend says, "May

my life be a sacrifice to you," and perhaps he does not realize the meaning at all.

The station of sacrifice is the great foundation. When you read the Old and New Testament you will find that constantly the word sacrifice is mentioned. It is recorded that the Israelites sacrificed sheep that their sins might be forgiven. In the time of Adam Cain made a sacrifice of sheaves of wheat and Abel made sacrifice of sheep. Now this is a symbol, and this persisted after the time of Christ.

What is the symbol? Just as the sheep sacrificed its life likewise this natural state of man which is the animalistic state must be sacrificed. How should it be sacrificed? The vices of the animalistic state of man must be entirely annihilated and he must be characterized with divine virtues. It was a symbol and before His Holiness Christ appeared all the Israelitish prophets made sacrifice of animals. This was a mystery of a higher sacrifice, and when Christ came he said, "I will sacrifice myself for the sake of salvation of all." What did he mean? He meant, to change their characters and in this way make them heavenly, in this way make them God-like, spiritual and divine. This is one of the meanings of sacrifice.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 4, No. 12, p. 205.)

The greatest sacrifice is to forget one's self entirely, to sacrifice everything, as did Christ.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Daily Lessons*, p. 21. Read all of this chapter.)

Behold a candle how it gives its light. It weeps its life away, drop by drop, in order to give forth its flame of light.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From *An Early Pilgrimage*; by Mrs. May Maxwell.)

I wish for the happiness and prosperity of the believers even in this material world, but they must not be attracted by it or attached to it. Extreme wealth or utter poverty should be equal to them.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Table Talks with Abdul-Baha*, p. 10.)

Concentrate the soul upon God so that it may become as a fountain pouring out the Water of Life to a thirsty world. Live up to the principles of sacrifice. The world will then become as nothing and be without power to attract you away from God. Sacrifice your will to the will of God. The Kingdom is attained by the one who forgets self. Everything becomes yours by renunciation of everything.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Ten Days in the Light of Acca*, p. 12.)

Sacrifice of life is of two kinds. To be killed for the Cause is not so difficult as to live for it in absolute obedience to the commands of God. To attain to the condition of Mirza Abul Fazl* who cares for nothing in this world save to write something for the Cause that will be of benefit, or like Mirza Hayder Ali† who cares not for money, clothes, or even food, but only to teach someone something about the Kingdom is real attainment to the plain of sacrifice. And without attaining this condition all effort is without final result. One who cares for love, for husband, wife or children more than for the Cause of God has not attained.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, August, 1913, Ramleh.)

*†Two of the greatest and most saintly of the Bahai teachers.

All the days of his (Abul Fazl's) life were spent in the service of the Cause of God. His will and desire were devoted to the promotion of the Cause of God, to the promotion of the message of the Kingdom. He did not think of worldly comfort and tranquillity. He never tried to protect his life. He was not at all attached to the ephemeral objects of this contingent world. All his thoughts, ideals, conceptions and aims were centered upon the service of the world of the Merciful. Praise be to God, that his intellectual and spiritual life was very fruitful. All his books contain indubitable proofs and evidences concerning this impregnable, blessed Cause. Sanctified and holy, divine and spiritual, he ascended from this mortal world to the realm of light.

The disinterested actions and free-hearted deeds of a person proclaim with the sound of a trumpet his loyalty and sincerity in the Cause. He is in no need of self-justification. He lives above and beyond the criticism of petty and dwarfed assailers of his integrity and purity of motives. Their censure does not touch him. The innate nobility of his soul is not tarnished, the glories of his work are not beclouded. The river of his spiritual ideality, creative power and imaginative faculty is not dried up. The sea of his sympathy and increasing hopefulness and direct activity in the Cause is not calmed down. With a deep insight, holy vision and fresh inspiration he will cause the complete retreat of all his old enemies. With zest, unflinching courage and undisturbed spirit he will apply himself to new victories in channels of service, broader fields of labor, higher planes of triumph and the solution of vaster and more intricate problems by the magic wand of his determination. Thus he changes every stumbling block placed in his path to dishearten him from further progress into a stepping stone, advances with confident steps, ever rising higher, never looking backward but always forward, setting aside imperturbably all the seeming difficulties

and finally planting his feet on the summit of the mountain of success, beatitude and undiminished glory. Such a man was Mirza Abul Fazl. On such an unshakable rock every person must lay the foundation of the palace of his life, so that the howling of the winds, the fury of the storms and the onslaught of the wild elements may not in the least shake it. The life of Mirza Abul Fazl was God-controlled and God-propelled. Not for one second did he set his own will above the will of God. He effaced self and lived eternally in God.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, February 8, 1914.)

How humble and meek he (Mirza Abul Fazl) was! We tried our best to persuade him to keep a servant, but he would always gently decline. He desired to serve the believers personally. Whenever the believers and the non-believers called on him, although he was sick, weak and in fever, yet he would get up and prepare tea and serve his callers with his own hand. All his anxieties revolved around this supreme object—to make people satisfied and happy at any cost.

During all the days of his life I never heard from him the use of the word "I"—"I said so," or "I wrote so and so." He would say: "This servant requested them," or "This servant begged the believers." He never made a display of his knowledge, nor wished to impress upon the mind of any person that he knew such and such information. He was evanescent and lived in the station of nothingness. He was self-sacrificing at the Holy Threshold. No one inhaled from him the odor of superiority.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From the Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, January 22, 1914.)

The question was asked Mirza Abul Fazl: "If everyone's mind was entirely

given to holy thoughts of God, what would become of the world from a commercial standpoint?"

He replied: "Love, faith, and being filled with the will of God are not at variance with the temporal affairs which man has to attend to. We can be filled with the love of God and at the same time look after our worldly life and its pursuits. Though in the beginning it is difficult for us to realize this state in ourselves, yet this can become feasible and practical if we obey the laws and ordinances of God.

"Consider David. While he was attentive and watchful over his temporal affairs and worldly dominion to such an extent that he looked after each one of his soldiers, computed their number, arranged their sustenance and means of living, and while he was so alert in arranging administrative affairs that he was not at all heedless of the neighboring kings and their thoughts, even in such wise that through warfare and battles he strengthened that weak kingdom of the Israelites and glorified his people before the eyes of the great kings of Egypt, Aram and Assyria, yet, could it be thought that he was meanwhile separated from the love of God? Or, could it be said he ever was so carried away by temporal occupations and cares as to make him heedless of the commemoration of God?

"Likewise, consider His Holiness Abraham. He was a man who led a nomadic life, who possessed large herds and flocks in the desert and who gained his living by rearing sheep and cattle. He was so watchful and attentive in the administration of the affairs pertaining to temporal pursuits that nothing escaped his notice. Although he was single and alone when he migrated from Ur of the Chaldeans yet he exercised the utmost care in his worldly affairs and thus became accounted among the highest men of affluence in Syrian lands. And notwithstanding the fact that he gave personal care and attention to every single sheep, in case of sickness, yet he was

not for a single moment heedless of the commemoration of God; so mindful was he, that, among all the inhabitants of the world, at that time he alone was chosen by God as his friend.

"Consequently, we and you must likewise exert ourselves in order to reach such a state in the love of God that the world and its occupations no matter how involving they may be may not prevent us from the praise of God nor make us heedless of His commemoration.

"Mohammed, the prophet of God, has said: 'Man in this world must be so attentive to his worldly affairs and temporal, necessary pursuits that it may seem as though he thinks he is going to live forever in this world. And he must, at the same time, be so submerged in the love of God and occupied with the thoughts of the hereafter that it may seem as though he is going to die and leave this earth at the very moment'."

(An extract from a letter written by a believer containing teachings by Mirza Abul Fazl.)

It is incumbent upon every one of you to engage in some one occupation, such as arts, trades and the like. We have made this your occupation identical with the worship of God, the True One. Reflect, O people, upon the mercy of God and upon his favors; then thank him in the mornings and evenings.

Waste not your time in idleness and indolence, and occupy yourselves with that which will profit yourselves and others beside yourself. . . . Every soul who occupies himself in an art or trade—this will be accounted an act of worship before God.

(The words of Baha'o'llah in the *Glad Tidings*.)

The guidance of God is that which will always guide people in the right way. All human beings are earthly; their hearts are connected with this

world. Day and night their thoughts and occupations are earthly; all belong to this world. They think about the honors of this world, or about the riches and wealth of this world, or of name and fame in this world. Their days and nights pass in this way. The guidance of God makes it evident and plain when the way of the Kingdom, the divine path, is opened, that this is the road of the Kingdom.

It is not sufficient only to distinguish the way of the Kingdom, only to discover the heavenly way: you must travel upon it until the end is reached. For example, that a man discovers the way to America is not sufficient. He must travel in it that he may reach that country. If he remains for years discovering more about the way yet does not travel by it, he will never arrive. It is not sufficient for a child to know where the school is; he must study in it that he may gain knowledge. Faith is not merely to know which is the school and to recognize the teacher; one must acquire knowledge in this school. If one does not gain knowledge it is useless to know of the school.

This is what Christ said: "Ye shall know the tree by its fruits." If you see one who is truthful, who really believes and is just, who is attracted to the Kingdom, and whose will is annihilated in the way of God, then you will know he is a tree of the Kingdom, if he shows forth all these qualities. If you see one whose heart is attached to this world and in whom there is no truthfulness or detachment or turning to God, one who is not occupied in praising and speaking of God, or in attraction to the love of God, then you will know he is a tree of darkness. For true belief is not only to acknowledge the oneness of God: by belief we mean that the reality of a man will be characterized by divine characteristics. If his reality is dark, he will become enlightened; if he is heedless, he will become conscious; if he is sleeping, he will be awakened; if he is earthly, he will become heavenly;

if he is satanic, he will become divine. This is the meaning of true belief.

Therefore I say that man must travel in the way of God. Day by day he must endeavor to become better, his belief must increase and become firmer, his good qualities and his turning to God must be greater, the fire of his love must flame more brightly; then day by day he will make progress, for to stop advancing is the means of going back. The bird when he flies soars ever higher and higher, for as soon as he stops flying he will come down. Every day, in the morning when arising you should compare today with yesterday and see in what condition you are. If you see your belief is stronger and your heart more occupied with God and your love increased and your freedom from the world greater then thank God and ask for the increase of these qualities. You must begin to pray and repent for all that you have done which is wrong and you must implore and ask for help and assistance that you may become better than yesterday so that you may continue to make progress.

Do not let the desires of the self find a place within you; for it is certain that when you reach the highest station of spirituality one worldly desire can cause your downfall. The spirit is like a bird; when it flies in the air it is always mounting. But the self is like the hunter who is thinking all the time how to catch the bird. As when a bird is in the air the hunter aims at it and brings it down, so is it with the human desires in the soul. You will see that by one arrow, one shot, it will be brought low. This arrow is the connection with this world, the occupations of this world, the desires of this world, the honors of this world.

In many ways the hunter will stop the spirit from ascending. That is why you must ask and implore and entreat: "O God, protect me from myself!"

(Words of Abdul-Baha: from pamphlet *True Belief*.)

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Kalamat 1, 73 (July 13, 1917)

No. 7

Religion and Science in the Light of the Bahai Revelation

By J. E. ESSLEMONT, M.B.

ONE of the fundamental teachings of Baha'o'llah is that true science and true religion must always be in harmony. Truth is one and wherever conflict appears it is due not to truth but to error. Between so-called science and so-called religion there has been conflict all down the ages, but looking back on these conflicts in the light of fuller truth we can trace them every time to ignorance, prejudice, vanity, greed, narrow-mindedness, intolerance, obstinacy, vested interests or something of the kind,—something foreign to the true spirit of both science and religion for the spirit of both is one.

As Huxley tells us, "The great deeds of philosophers have been less the fruit of their intellect than the direction of that intellect by an eminently religious tone of mind. Truth has yielded herself rather to their patience, their love, their single-heartedness and self-denial than to their logical acumen." Boole, the mathematician, assures us that "geometric induction is essentially a process of prayer—an appeal from the finite mind to the Infinite for light on finite concerns." The great prophets of religion and science have never denounced one another. They have always reverently received the torch of inspiration from their predecessors in the prophetic series, and lighted the way for their successors. It is the unworthy followers of these great world-teachers—worshippers of the letter but not of the spirit of their teaching—who have always been the persecutors of the later prophets and the bitterest opponents of progress.

They have studied the light of the particular revelation which they hold sacred, and have defined its properties and peculiarities as seen by their limited vision, with the utmost care and precision. That is for them the one true light. If God in His infinite bounty sends fuller light from another quarter, and the torch of inspiration burns brighter than before from a new torch-holder, instead of welcoming the new light and worshipping with renewed gratitude the Father of all lights, they are angry and alarmed. This new light does not correspond with their definitions. It has not the orthodox color and does not shine from the orthodox place, therefore it must at all costs be extinguished lest it lead men astray into the paths of heresy! Many enemies of the prophets are of this type—blind leaders of the blind, who oppose new and fuller truth in the supposed interests of what they believe to be *the* truth. Others are of baser sort and are either moved by selfish interests to fight against truth, or else block the path of progress by reason of spiritual deadness and inertia. The appearance of a prophet is always a testing time for mankind—a day of judgment, in which the sheep are separated from the goats, those who worship the living reality of truth from those who worship only the material garments in which it is clothed. Alas! how few there have always been who were ready to welcome truth in a new garment—to welcome the spiritual light when it shone from a new torch!

The great prophets of religion have always been, at their coming, despised

and rejected of men. Both they and their early followers have given their backs to the smiters and sacrificed their possessions and their lives in the path of God. Even in our own times this has been so. Since 1844 some twenty thousand of the Babis and Bahais in Persia have suffered cruel deaths for their faith, and many more have borne imprisonment, poverty, exile and degradation. This latest of the great religions has been baptized in blood more than its predecessors, and martyrdoms have continued down to the present year.

With the prophets of science the same thing has happened. Giordano Bruno was burned as a heretic in 1600 A. D. for teaching, amongst other things, that the earth moved around the sun. A few years later the veteran philosopher Galileo had to abjure the same doctrine on his knees, in order to escape the same fate. In later times Darwin, and the pioneers of modern geology were vehemently denounced for daring to dispute the teaching of Holy Writ that the world was made in six days, and in the year 4004 B. C.! The opposition to new scientific truth has not all come from the church, however. The orthodox in science have been just as hostile to progress as the orthodox in religion. Columbus was laughed to scorn by the so-called scientists of his day who proved to their own satisfaction that if ships did succeed in getting down to the Antipodes over the side of the globe, it would be absolutely impossible for them to get up again! Galvani, the pioneer of electrical science, was scoffed at by his learned colleagues and called the "frogs' dancing master." Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood, was ridiculed and persecuted by his professional brethren on account of his heresy and driven from his lecture chair. When Stephenson invented his locomotive engine, European mathematicians of the time, instead of opening their eyes and studying the facts, went on for years proving from their preconceived ideas that an engine on smooth rails could never pull

a load, as the wheels would simply slip round and the train get no "forarder."

To examples like these one might add indefinitely, both from ancient and modern history, and even from our own times. Dr. Zamenhof, the inventor of Esperanto*, (who has just passed away), had to battle for his wonderful international language against the same sort of ridicule, contempt and stupid opposition which greeted Columbus, Galvani, and Stephenson. Even Esperanto which was given to the world less than thirty years ago has had its martyrs. In the last half century or so, however, a change has come over the spirit of the times, a New Light of Truth has arisen which has already made the controversies of last century seem strangely out of date.

Where are now the boastful materialists and dogmatic atheists who, only a few short years ago were threatening to drive religion out of the world? And where the preachers who so confidently consigned those who did not accept their dogmas to the fires of hell and the tortures of the damned? Echoes of their clamor we may still hear, but their day is done and their doctrines are discredited. We can see now that the doctrines around which their controversies waxed most bitter were neither true science nor true religion. What scientist in the light of modern psychical research, could still maintain that "brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile"?—or that decay of the body is necessarily accompanied by decay of the soul?

We now see that thought to be really free must soar to the realms of psychical and spiritual phenomena and not be confined to the material only. We realize that what we now know about nature is but as a drop in the ocean compared with what remains to be discovered. We therefore freely admit the possibility of miracles, not indeed in the sense of the breaking of nature's laws, but as manifestations of the operation of subtle forces which are still unknown to us, as electricity and X-rays to our ancestors.

*See page 80.

On the other hand who among our leading religious teachers would still declare that it is necessary to salvation to believe that the world was made in six days, or that the description of the plagues of Egypt as given in the book of Exodus is literally true, or that the sun stood still in the heavens (i. e., that the earth stopped its rotation) to let Joshua pursue his enemies? Such beliefs may still be repeated in form, but who, even among the clergy, accepts them in their literal sense and without reservation? Their hold on people's hearts and minds has gone or is fast going.

The religious world owes a debt of gratitude to the men of science who helped to tear such wornout creeds and dogmas to tatters and allowed the truth to step forth free. But the scientific world owes an even heavier debt to the real saints and mystics who, through good report and ill, held to the vital truths of spiritual experience and demonstrated to an incredulous world that the life is more than meat and the unseen greater than the seen. These scientists and saints were like the mountain peaks which caught the first rays of the rising sun and reflected them to the lower world, but now the sun has risen and its rays are illuminating the world.

In the teachings of Baha'o'llah we have a glorious revelation of truth which satisfies both heart and mind, in which religion and science are at one. Before going further let us first hear what the Bahai teachings say about the way in which we must seek the truth:

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH

Man must cut himself free from all prejudice and from the result of his own imagination so that he may search for truth unhindered. He must accept nothing as final which he has received simply on the authority of parents or ancestors or teachers. He must aim at seeing all things with his own eyes, understanding them with his own mind. If he accepts any creed or doctrine which is either opposed to his reason or beyond his com-

prehension, he is putting into practice superstition and not true faith. Teachers are necessary, of course, but they must be educators, not crammers. The real educator draws out the innate powers of his pupils so that they can grasp things for themselves, and does not aim simply at packing their memories with ready made information and rules. The good pupil is he who while accepting his teacher as an indispensable guide and help, yet tests every step of his progress by the light of his own reason and intuition—in other words, by the Inner Light of the Divine Spirit in his own mind and heart. That Inner Light must be his final authority. "Turn thy sight unto thyself that thou mayest find Me standing within thee powerful, mighty and supreme." In this spirit of search let us now examine the main features of the teaching and see whether it affords a satisfactory basis for the reconciliation of reason and faith.

TRUE AGNOSTICISM.

The Bahai teaching is at one with science and philosophy in declaring the essential nature of God to be entirely beyond human comprehension. As emphatically as Huxley and Spencer teach that the nature of the Great First Cause is unknowable, does Baha'o'llah teach that "God comprehends all; He cannot be comprehended." To knowledge of the Divine Essence "the way is barred; seeking is forbidden." How can the finite comprehend the Infinite? How can a drop contain the ocean or a mote dancing in the sunbeam embrace the universe? Yet in each drop of water are hidden oceans of meaning and in each mote is concealed a whole universe of significances, reaching far beyond the ken of the most learned scientist. The chemist and physicist, pursuing their researches into the nature of matter, have passed from masses to molecules, from molecules to atoms, from atoms to electrons and ether, but at every step the difficulties of the search increase till the most profound intellect can pene-

trate no further, and can but bow in silent awe before the Great First Cause which remains ever shrouded in inscrutable mystery.

“Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies.
I hold you here, root and all in my hand,
Little flower; but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.”

(Tennyson)

If the flower in the crannied wall, if even a single atom of matter, presents mysteries which the most profound intellect cannot solve, how is it possible for man to comprehend the universe? How dare he pretend to define or describe the Infinite Cause of all things? All theological speculations about the nature of God's Essence are thus swept aside as foolish and futile.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

But if the Essence is unknowable, the manifestations of its bounty are everywhere apparent. If the First Cause cannot be conceived, its effects appeal to our every faculty. A cat cannot comprehend the sun or fathom the mysteries of its daily appearance and disappearance, its composition, or its career through celestial space, but she can bask in its beams and appreciate their warmth. Her eyes are a miracle of organization which enable her to guide her movements by means of the sun's rays reflected from every visible object in her environment. At every step she skilfully uses these rays, although she may never dream that they have any connection with the sun. There may be cats who have never seen the sun and have no idea of its existence, yet at every moment their lives depend on it, and they know very well how to take advantage in a thousand ways of the beneficent effects of this unknown cause. So it is with our relation to God. At every moment we are absolutely dependent on Him, whether we know it or not. He has, however, given us the power to know

Him through His works. All things are from Him, and just as knowledge of a painter's pictures gives to the connoisseur a true knowledge of the artist, so knowledge of the universe in any of its aspects—knowledge of nature or of human nature, of things visible or of things invisible—is knowledge of God's handiwork, and gives to the seeker for Divine Truth a real knowledge of His glory. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge.” (Psalm xix :1.)

THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS

All things manifest the bounty of God with greater or less clearness, as all material objects exposed to the sun reflect its light in greater or less degree. A heap of soot reflects a little, a stone reflects more, a piece of chalk more still, but in none of these reflections can we trace the form and color of the glorious orb. A perfect mirror however reflects the sun's very form and color, so that looking into it is like looking at the sun itself. So is it with the way in which things speak to us of God. The stone can tell us something of the divine attributes, the flower can tell us more, the animal with its marvelous senses, instincts and powers of movement, more still. In the lowest of our fellow-men we can trace wonderful faculties which tell of a wonderful Creator. In the poet, the saint, the genius, we find a higher revelation still, but the great prophets and founders of religions, like Moses, Christ, Mohammed and Baha'o'llah are the perfect mirrors by which the love and wisdom of God are reflected to the rest of mankind. Other men's mirrors have been dulled by the stains and accretions of selfishness and prejudice, but these were pure and without blemish—wholly devoted to the will of God. Thus they became the greatest educators of mankind. The divine teachings and the power of the Holy Spirit proceeding through them have been and are the

cause of the progress of humanity, for God helps men through other men (embodied or disembodied). Each man who is higher in the ascent of life is the means of helping those below him, and those who are highest of all are the helpers of all mankind. It is as if all men were connected together by elastic cords. If a man rises a little above the general level of his fellows, the cords tighten. His former companions tend to drag him back, but with a precisely equal force he draws them upwards. The higher he gets the more he feels the weight of the whole world pulling him back, and the more dependent he is on the divine support, which reaches him through the few who are still above him. Highest of all are the great Prophets and Saviors, the Divine "Manifestations"—those Perfect Men who were each, in their day, without peer or companion, and bore the burden of the whole world, supported by God alone. "The burden of our sins was upon him" was true of each of them. Each was the "Way, the Truth and the Life" to his followers. Each was the unobstructed channel of God's bounty to every heart that would receive it.

The love that flows from the "Manifestation" is God's love. The wisdom is God's wisdom, the spirit is God's spirit. He is indeed divine—God manifest in a human temple; but God is One, and the same One God conferred the gift of His Holy Spirit through all the "Manifestations," not indeed according to His power to give, but according to the people's power to receive. The messages differed, because the peoples for whom they were given were at different stages of development, but the differences were only in the externals, the forms and ceremonies, the rules and punishments, not in the inner spiritual realities of love to God and love to man which have been the heart and soul of all the great religions.

CREATION

Baha'o'llah teaches that the universe

is without beginning in time. It is a perpetual emanation from the Great First Cause. The Creator always had His creation and always will have. This is in harmony with the teachings of science regarding the conservation of matter and energy. Worlds and systems may come and go, but the universe remains. All things that undergo composition, in time undergo decomposition, but the component elements remain. The creation of a world, a daisy or a human body is not "making something out of nothing," it is but a bringing together of elements which before were scattered, a making visible of something which before was hidden. By and by the elements will again be scattered, the form will disappear, but nothing is really lost or annihilated, ever new combinations and forms arise from the ruins of the old. Baha'o'llah has no quarrel with the scientists who claim, not six thousand, but millions and billions of years for the history of the earth's creation. The evolution theory does not deny Creative Power. It only tries to describe the method of its manifestation, and the wonderful story of the material universe which the astronomer, the geologist, the physicist and the biologist are gradually unfolding to our gaze is, rightly appreciated, far more capable of evoking the deepest reverence and worship, than the crude and bald account of creation given in the Hebrew Scriptures. The old account in the book of Genesis had however the advantage of indicating by a few bold strokes of symbolism, the essential spiritual meanings of the story, as a master painter may by a few strokes of the brush convey expressions which the mere plodder with the most laborious accuracy of detail may utterly fail to express. If the material detail blinds us to the spiritual meaning then we should be better without it, but if we have once firmly grasped the essential meaning of the whole scheme, then knowledge of the detail will give our conception a wonderful added richness and

splendor and make it a magnificent picture instead of a mere sketch plan. Of course, even the most magnificent picture which the trained imagination can frame is in itself but the rudest and crudest of sketches compared with the wonderful universe it attempts to portray.

THE DESCENT OF MAN

Neither does Baha'ollah quarrel with the biologist who finds for the body of man, a history reaching back in the development of the species, through millions of years—a history which, starting from a very simple, apparently insignificant form, gradually develops in the course of untold generations, becoming more and more complex, and better and better organized until the man of the present day is reached. Each individual human body develops through such a series of stages from a tiny round speck of jelly-like protoplasm to the fully developed man. If this is true of the individual, as nobody denies, why should we consider it derogatory to human dignity to admit a similar development for the species? This is a very different thing from claiming (as Darwin is popularly although quite erroneously supposed to have claimed) that man is descended from the monkey. The human embryo may at one time resemble a fish with gill-slits and tail, but it is not a fish. It is a human embryo. So the human species may at various stages of its long development have resembled to the outward eye various species of lower animals, but it was still the human species, possessing the mysterious latent power of developing into man as we know him today, nay more, of developing in the future, we trust, into something far higher still.

BODY AND SOUL

The materialist idea that "mind is a function of matter" is no longer tenable in the light of psychical research. A large body of scientific evidence has gradually been accumulating which in the opinion of impartial but highly crit-

ical investigators is amply sufficient to establish beyond all question the fact of a life after death—of the continued life and activity of the conscious "soul" after the dissolution of the material body. As F. W. H. Myers says in his *Human Personality*: "Observation, experiment, inference, have led many enquirers, of whom I am one, to a belief in direct or telepathic intercommunication, not only between the minds of men still on earth, but between minds or spirits still on earth and spirits departed. Such a discovery opens the door also to revelation. . . . We have shown that amid much deception and self-deception, fraud and illusion, veritable manifestations do reach us from beyond the grave."

The Bahai teachings with regard to body and soul, and the life after death, are quite in harmony with the results of psychical research. They teach that death is but a new birth—the escape from the prison of the body into a larger life. They teach that soul can affect soul independently of spoken or written communication, and that this influence is independent of the body and can take place whether the soul is embodied or disembodied. They advocate the use of prayers for the "dead" and teach that mutual communion and help are still possible between the "living" and the so-called "dead." They speak much of the "Supreme Concurrence" of holy souls, whose assistance is available for every human being who is advancing in the path of God. The relation of the soul to the body they picture as like that of a musician to his instrument. If the instrument is broken and out of tune, the musician will no longer be able to produce beautiful music from it, although he may be as capable as ever. So when the body is diseased and out of order, the soul can no longer adequately manifest through it on the material plane, and to the eye which sees only the body it might appear as if the whole man had decayed, instead of only the material instrument.

HEAVEN AND HELL

The Bahais regard the descriptions of heaven and hell given in some of the older religious writings as symbolic, like the Biblical story of the Creation, and not literally true. According to them, heaven is the state of perfection and hell that of imperfection, heaven is harmony with God's will and with one's fellows, and hell is the want of such harmony, heaven is the condition of spiritual life, and hell that of spiritual death. A man may be either in heaven or in hell while still in the body. The joys of heaven are spiritual joys, and the pains of hell consist in the deprivation of these joys. There is no worse hell in the after-death life than the hell in which many of the people around us are living. Those who have not been "born again," whose spiritual life has not awakened, are dead while they live, and although their souls continue to exist after the death of the body, their condition compared with that of those who rejoice in the love of God is as death. Even for those who have died in ignorance and sin, however, there is still hope, because the bounty of God is infinite. For these also we should pray, for our prayers can bear them help from the Source of all help.

The Bahais believe in progress in the after-life as well as in the present. The divine worlds are infinite, and the possibilities of progress in knowledge, love and good-will are without limit. This progress depends on God's infinite bounty, and that bounty is available for all who seek it. The only condition is that we must seek it. "Love Me that I may love thee, for if thou lovest Me not, My love can never reach thee." As long as we are content with the animal and material side of life and prefer self to God, so long are we spiritually dead. It is only when we turn to God and say with all our hearts, "Not my will but Thine be done," that we become spiritually alive and enter the heaven of the blessed.

With such a view as this, surely no true lover of science could quarrel. F. W. H. Myers says in the work previously quoted which summarizes much of the work of the Psychical Research Society: "By discovery and by revelation certain theses have been provisionally established with regard to such departed souls as we have been able to encounter. First and chiefly I at least see ground to believe that their state is one of endless evolution in wisdom and in love. Their loves of earth persist, and most of all those highest loves which find their outlet in adoration and worship. . . . Evil to them seems less a terrible than a slavish thing. It is embodied in no mighty potentate; rather it forms an isolating madness from which higher spirits strive to free the distorted soul. There needs no chastisement of fire; self-knowledge is man's punishment and his reward; self-knowledge and the nearness or the aloofness of companion souls. For in that world love is actually self-preservation; the communion of saints not only adorns but constitutes the life everlasting. Nay, from the laws of telepathy it follows that that communion is valid to us here and now. Even now the love of souls departed makes answer to our invocations. Even now our loving memory—love is itself a prayer—supports and strengthens those delivered spirits upon their upward way."

THE NATURE OF EVIL

According to the Bahai philosophy it follows from the doctrine of the unity of God that there can be no such thing as positive evil. There can only be One Infinite. If there were any other power in the universe outside of or opposed to the One, then the One would not be Infinite. In the realm of created things however, there is variety—variety of light and shade, of color, of consistence, of taste, of smell. Among human beings there is variety of physical strength, of health, of intelligence, of courage, of every possible faculty and attribute.

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

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“Baha’o’llah has proclaimed the promise of the Oneness of Humanity”

Address by Abdul-Baha at Green Acre, Maine, August 17, 1912

ARE you all well and happy? This is a delightful spot; the scenery is beautiful and an atmosphere of spirituality haloes everything. In the future, God willing, Green Acre shall become a great center, the cause of the unity of the world of humanity, the cause of uniting hearts, the cause of binding together the East and the West. This is my hope.

Tonight I wish to speak upon the Oneness of the World of Humanity. This is one of the important subjects of the present period. If the oneness of the human world were effected all the differences which separate mankind would be eradicated. All strife and warfare would cease and the world of humanity would find repose. Universal peace would be promoted and the East and West would be conjoined in a strong bond. All men would be sheltered beneath one tabernacle. All nationalities would become one, all races and religions be unified. The people of the world would live together in peace and their well-being would be assured.

From the beginning of human history down to the present time the various

religions of the world have anathematized and accused one another of falsity. Each religion has considered the others bereft of the face of God, rejected of God and in the direct line of divine wrath. Therefore they have shunned one another most rigidly, exercising mutual animosity and rancor. Consider the record of religious warfare,—the battles between nations, the bloodshed and destruction in the name of religion. One of the greatest religious wars, the Crusades, extended over a period of two hundred years. In this succession of great campaigns the Western Crusaders were constantly invading the Orient bent upon recovering the Holy City from the hands of the Islamic people. Army after army raised in Europe poured its fanatical legions into the East. The kings of European nations personally led these Crusades, killing and shedding the blood of the orientals. During this period of two hundred years the East and West were in a state of violence and commotion. Sometimes the Crusaders were successful,—killing, pillaging and taking captive the Mohammedan people; sometimes the Mussul-

men were victorious, inflicting bloodshed, death and ruin in turn upon the invaders. So it continued for two centuries alternately fighting with fury and relaxing from weakness until the European religionists withdrew from the East, leaving ashes of desolation behind them and finding their own nations in a condition of turbulence and upheaval.

For hundreds of thousands of human beings have been killed and untold wealth wasted in fruitless warfare. How many fathers mourned the loss of their sons! How many mothers and wives bemoaned the absence of their dear ones! Yet this was only one of the "holy" wars. Consider and reflect.

For religious wars have been many. Nine hundred thousand martyrs to the Protestant Cause was the record of conflict and difference between that sect of Christians and the Catholics. Consult history and confirm this. How many languished in prisons! How merciless the treatment of captives! All in the name of religion! Consider and estimate the outcome of other wars between the people and sects of religious belief.

From the beginning of human history down to this time the world of humanity has not enjoyed a day of absolute rest and relaxation from conflict and strife. Most of the wars have been caused by religious prejudice, fanaticism and sectarian hatred. Religionists have anathematized religionists, each considering the other as deprived of the mercy of God, abiding in gross darkness and the children of Satan. For example, the Christians and Mohammedans considered the Jews satanic and the enemies of God. Therefore they cursed and persecuted them. Great numbers of Jews were killed, their houses burned and pillaged, their children carried into captivity. The Jews in turn regarded the Christians as infidels, and the Mohammedans as enemies and destroyers of the Law of Moses. Therefore they call down vengeance upon them and curse them even to this day.

Consider what injuries, ordeals and calamities have been inflicted by humanity since the beginning of history. Every city, country, nation and people has been subjected to the destruction and havoc of war. Each one of the divine religions considers itself as belonging to a goodly and blessed tree,—the tree of the Merciful, and other religious systems as belonging to a tree of evil,—the tree of Satan. For this reason they heap execration and abuse upon one another. This is clearly apparent in books of historical record and prevailed until the time of the appearance of His Holiness Baha'o'llah.

When the light of Baha'o'llah dawned from the East, He proclaimed the promise of the oneness of humanity. He addressed all mankind, saying: "Ye are all the fruits of one tree. There are not two trees,—one a tree of divine mercy, the other the tree of Satan." Again he said, "Ye are all the fruits of one tree, the leaves of one branch." This was his announcement; this was his promise of the oneness of the world of humanity. Anathema and execration were utterly abrogated. He said, "It is not becoming in man to curse another;—it is not befitting that man should attribute darkness to another;—it is not meet that one human being should ever consider another human being as bad,—nay rather, all mankind are the servants of one God;—God is the Father of all,—there is not a single exception to that law. There are no people of Satan;—all belong to the Merciful. There is no darkness;—all is light. All are the servants of God, and man must love all humanity from his heart. He must verily behold all humanity as submerged in the divine mercy."

Baha'o'llah has made no exception to this rule. He said that among mankind there may be those who are ignorant; they must be trained. Some are sick; they must be treated. Some are immature; they must be helped to attain maturity. In other respects all humanity

is submerged in the ocean of divine mercy. God is the Father of all. He educates all. He provides for all. He loves all. For they are all His servants and His creation. Surely the Creator loves His creatures. It would be impossible to find an artist who does not love his own production. Have you ever seen a man who did not love his own actions? Even though they be bad actions he loves them. How ignorant therefore the thought that God who created man, educated and nurtured him, surrounded him with all blessings, made the sun and all phenomenal existence for his benefit, bestowed upon him tenderness and kindness, and then did not love him. This is palpable ignorance, for no matter to what religion a man belongs even though he be an atheist or materialist nevertheless God nurtures him, bestows His kindness and sheds upon him His light. How then can we believe God is inimical and unloving? How can we even imagine this when as a matter of fact, we are witnesses of the tenderness and mercy of God upon every hand. All about us we behold manifestations of the love of God. If therefore God be loving, what should we do? We have nothing else to do but to emulate Him. Just as God loves all and is kind to all, so must we really love and be kind to everybody. We must consider none bad, none worthy of detestation, no one as an enemy. We must love all;—nay we must consider every one as our relation, for all are the servants of one God. All are under the instructions of one educator. We must strive day and night that love and amity may increase,—that this bond of unity may be strengthened,—that joy and happiness may more and more prevail,—that in unity and solidarity all mankind may gather beneath the shadow of God,—that people may turn to God for their sustenance, finding in Him the life that is everlasting. Thus may they be confirmed in the Kingdom of God and live forever through His grace and bounty.

Baha'o'llah has clearly said in his Tablets that if you have an enemy, consider him not as an enemy. Do not simply be long-suffering,—nay rather love him. Your treatment of him should be that which is becoming lovers. Do not even say that he is your enemy. Do not see any enemies. Though he be your murderer, see no enemy. Look upon him with the eye of friendship. Be mindful that you do not consider him as an enemy and simply tolerate him, for that is but stratagem and hypocrisy. To consider a man your enemy and love him is hypocrisy. This is not becoming of any soul. You must behold him as a friend. You must treat him well. This is right.

We return to the subject: When we observe the phenomena of the universe, we realize the axis around which life revolves is love, while the axis around which death and destruction revolve is animosity and hatred. Let us view the mineral kingdom. Here we see that if attraction did not exist between the atoms the substance of matter would not cohere. Every existent phenomenon you look upon is composed of single elements and cellular particles. This is scientifically true and correct. If there be no attraction among the elements and among the cellular particles the composition of that phenomenon would never have come into existence. For instance the stone is an existent phenomenon. The stone is made up of single elements. A bond of attraction has brought them together and through this cohesion of ingredients this petrous object has been formed. The stone is the lowest degree of phenomena but nevertheless within it a power of attraction is manifest without which the stone could not exist. This power of attraction in the mineral world is love,—the only expression of love the stone can manifest.

Look now upon the next higher stage of life:—the vegetable kingdom. Here we see that the plant is the result of cohesion among various elements, just as the mineral in its kingdom. But furth-

ermore the plant has the power of absorption from the earth. This is a higher degree of attraction which differentiates the plant from the mineral. In the kingdom of the vegetable this is an expression of love,—the highest capacity of expression the vegetable possesses. By this power of attraction or augmentation the plant grows day by day. Therefore in this kingdom also love is the cause of life. If repulsion existed among the elements instead of attraction the result would be disintegration, destruction and non-existence. Because cohesion exists among the elements and cellular attraction is manifest, the plant appears. When this attraction disappears and the ingredients separate, the plant ceases to exist.

Then we come to the animal world which is still higher in degree than the vegetable kingdom. In it the power of love makes itself still more manifest. The light of love is more resplendent in the animal kingdom because the power of attraction whereby elements cohere, and cellular atoms commingle now reveals itself in certain emotions and sensibilities which produce instinctive fellowship and association. The animals are imbued with kindness and affinity which manifests itself among those of the same species.

Finally we reach the kingdom of man. Here we find that all the degrees of the mineral, vegetable and animal expressions of love are present plus unmistakable attractions of the conscience. That is to say, man is the possessor of a degree of attraction which is conscious and spiritual. Here is an immeasurable advance. In the human kingdom spiritual susceptibilities come into view, love exercises its superlative degree, and this is the cause of human life.

The proof is clear that in all degrees and kingdoms unity and agreement, love and fellowship are the cause of life, whereas dissension, animosity and separation are ever conducive to death. Therefore we must strive with life and soul in order that day by day unity and

agreement may be increased among humanity and that love and affinity may become more resplendently glorious and manifest. In the animal kingdom you will observe that domestic species live together in the utmost fellowship. See how sociable and friendly sheep gather together in a flock. Look at the doves and other domestic birds. There is no sectarianism among them, no separation due to notions of patriotism. They live together in the utmost love and unity, flying, feeding, associating. Ferocious animals, beasts of prey such as the wolf, bear, tiger and hyena are never amiable and do not associate together. They attack one another. Whenever they meet they fight. Three wolves are never seen associating happily. If you see them together it is with some ferocious intent. They are like selfish brutal men who are inimical, cursing and killing one another. Better that man should resemble the domestic animals than the ferocious beasts of prey, for in the estimation of God love is acceptable whereas hatred and animosity are rejected. Why should we act contrary to the good-pleasure of God? Why should we be as ferocious animals, constantly shedding blood, pillaging and destroying? Because we belong to one race or family of humankind why should we consider all others bad and inferior, deserving of death, pillage and invasion, worthy of hatred and detestation by God, people of darkness? Why does man show forth such attitude and actions toward his fellowman? We see that God is kind to all. Just as He loves us He loves all others, just as He provides for us He provides for the rest. He nurtures and trains all with equal solicitude.

God is great, God is kind! He does not behold human shortcomings; He does not regard human weaknesses. Man is a creature of His mercy and to His mercy He summons all. Why then should we despise or detest His creatures because this one is a Jew, another a Buddhist or Zoroastrian and so on? This is ignorance; for the oneness of humanity as

servants of God is an assured and certain fact.

Baha'o'llah has proclaimed the promise of the oneness of humanity. Therefore we must exercise the utmost love toward one another. We must be loving to all the people of the world. We must not consider any people the people of Satan, but know and recognize all as the servants of the one God. At most it is this,—some do not know, they must be guided and trained. They must be taught humanitarianism and encouraged in the acquisition of virtues. Some are ignorant,—they must be informed. Some

are as children, undeveloped,—they must be helped to reach maturity. Some are ailing,—their moral condition is bad,—they must be treated until their morals are purified. But the sick man is not to be hated because he is sick,—the child must not be shunned because he is a child,—the ignorant one is not to be despised because he lacks knowledge. They must be treated, educated, trained and assisted in love. Everything must be done, in order that all humanity may live under the shadow of God in the utmost security,—in happiness of the highest type.

The Religious Aspect of Esperanto

Address by Mr. Rufus W. Powell, given in New York City, recently

THE topic assigned to me this evening is one which it is very difficult to treat adequately in the ten minutes given for its presentation, and all that I can hope to do is to stimulate you to serious consideration of an important aspect of a movement which is destined to play a large part in the future adaptation of basic religious thought to the broad social and economic life of humanity. But the difficulty to a layman in speaking under such circumstances is greatly lessened by the fact that the presentation is made from a platform which represents such firm conviction in fundamental truth that it does not fear question and, while loyal to its own

form of worship and doctrine, judges others only by their faith in reality and leaves to them the full right to their own history and their own lives in the sight of God. For, no matter what any of us may say, we all believe in something beyond and above us although now but imperfectly comprehending just what that beyond and above may be. The tree does not know why its sap rises and its life begins anew each springtime. So we cannot ourselves quite understand what has given us the impulse forward.

Abdul-Baha has said that "when a man turns his face to God he sees sunshine everywhere. All men are his broth-

*Dr. Ludoviko Lazaro Zamenhof, a Russian-Polish Jew, was born in Bjalostok, Russia, December 15, 1859 (Russian calendar, December 3rd). He died in Varsovia, April 14, 1917.

His father was a teacher of French and German, therefore giving the young Zamenhof an opportunity to get acquainted with the languages in his early boyhood. At the age of four years the boy showed such brilliancy as to read and write although he was of a delicate constitution. In 1869 he commenced to study in the Bjalostok high school. Later, in 1873, his parents sent him to Varsovia to study, where his father was an education inspector and sometime later a professor.

The following quotations are from his own words (*Esperantaj Prozajoj*, pp. 239, 244, 246):

"I was born at Bjalostok, in the province of Grodno. This scene of my birth and childhood determined the trend of my future aspirations. In Bjalostok the population contains four different elements—Russians, Poles, Germans and Jews. Each of these sections speaks a different language, and is on bad terms with the others. . . . I was educated to be an idealist; I was taught that all men were brothers, while, all

the time, everything around me made me feel that men did not exist; there only existed Russians, Poles, Germans, Jews, and so on."

After describing various steps in the evolution of Esperanto, Dr. Zamenhof continues:—

"Practical experience convinced me that the language still lacked an intangible *something*, a unifying element, which would give life and a definite *spirit*. . . . I began to avoid literal translations from this or that language, and tried to think straight away in the neutral tongue. I then noticed that the language . . . acquired a spirit of its own."

Referring to the momentous final step which he took, in 1887, by publishing his language to the world, Dr. Zamenhof says:—

"I felt that I stood on the banks of the Rubicon, and that from the day that my booklet appeared, I should no longer have the possibility of retreating; I knew the fate that awaits a medical man who depends on the public, if that public looks upon him as a *crank*, as a man who occupies himself with outside matters; I felt I was staking the future peace of mind of myself and my family; but I could not give up the idea, which had entered into the fibres of my being, and I crossed the Rubicon." *The Editors.*

ers," and it is this idea which is so basic in the life and work of Dr. Zamenhof* that one cannot escape the feeling that he was, in some sense, God-inspired, and that his work will go on and profoundly influence mankind for good, not only in a social but also in a spiritual way. None of the three hundred or more attempts to form a common international tongue has had for its founder a man who went through such a pathetic personal experience as this tender-hearted Jew, and his whole life seems to us who loved him to have been developed by the work he was doing.

We are our real selves when we are at our best, for it is only then that we are more nearly at one with God. And how can we be at one with God unless we are at one with our fellow man, and how can we be at one with our fellow man if we have to judge him without the help of common thought which can more easily come through a common tongue? It is just eighty years ago that De Tocqueville said in his great book *Democracy in America*: "The tie of language is perhaps the strongest and the most durable that can unite mankind." He was writing about our national life by itself, but since then we have learned that the world is larger than our own nation, larger even than those who speak the English tongue, large as all humanity, and we are now to consider briefly how far the use of Esperanto already has been and still more may be of service to all men in their religious and spiritual life as well as in their social welfare.

Transportation by railroad and steamboat, the use of the telegraph and telephone, cable codes and maritime signals, and things of that kind, have done more to bring men together in material matters during the last 70 years than they had been unified during the 700 years preceding, and during the same 70 years men have been released from many political and religious bonds which had hampered their spiritual development, but the same progress has not yet been made in the transmission of ideas. It is the

order of the day to eliminate the middlemen in the distribution of the world's goods, so why not eliminate the middlemen, (i. e., the interpreter and the translator), in the distribution of the best ideas, both spoken and written?

The archaic translation of the common version of our English Bible, and even Moulton's adaptation of it to literary form, makes the Psalmist say that he *prevented* the night watches that he might meditate in God's word, but Zamenhof's version reads, (Ps. cxix:147) "Antau la Matenrugo mi vokas; Vian vorton mi fidas" (Before the dawn I call; in thy word I trust), and this is typical of much that might be said about the way in which we have been "prevented" by old habits of thought from awakening to the dawning of the light already beginning before the Most Great Peace which is sure to come. This is a time to remember the prophecy of Zephaniah (iii:9) where he says, "For then will I turn to the people a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." We are told that the prophets themselves did not know the full meaning of what was put into their mouths to say, and it may be that Zephaniah could not foresee that this is the time when men may be helped to a better knowledge of the largeness of God's nature through being better able to understand their fellow men.

This is the age of universals, and it is time to turn from some of our narrow conceptions of God and our mere local and inherited habits of religious thought and remember that in the human world there are two kinds of undertakings—universal and particular. The results of universal undertakings are infinite and are, therefore, limitless, and we may properly look upon Esperanto as almost limitless in its possible effects upon the minds and hearts of mankind as compared to the past use of any simply national tongue which confirmed men in their own separate interests. We can hardly imagine a family life where each

child had to address his brothers and his parents in a different language. Whatever tongue he might use in his outside work or pleasure he would most certainly use in his home that language which could be fully understood by all. And how much more important that we should have for use in our higher life with our fellow man a means of communication such as Esperanto furnishes.

You have probably heard from others here this evening about the Esperanto translation of the New Testament, said to be the best rendering yet made from the most correct Greek version; the regard that some of the best Hebrew scholars in England have for the Esperanto rendering of the Old Testament; how the prayer book of the Roman Catholics and quite a number of their spiritual writings have been acceptably rendered into Esperanto; how the Swedenborgians, the Quakers, the Theosophists, the Socialists, the Scientists, the Red Cross, the Good Templars and many other organizations of that kind are using this effective tool of common thought to make known their writings to one another and to the world. And the very best things regarding the Peace Movement have been written by Esperantists and published in the organ of the Universal Esperanto Association at their headquarters in Geneva. This ought to be a sufficient answer to the question which might properly be made as to the capacity of this common language to express their higher thought.

A still stronger example can be given by a statement about a very interesting matter so far known to but few: A few words said in the United States to a lady born in the Hawaiian Islands led her to look into the merits of Esperanto and, while in Switzerland soon afterwards, she took the study up further with a Russian lady residing in Geneva, and, while lately in Japan, she took the matter up still further with a blind Russian* who had just come from London, and this resulted in a translation into Esperanto of a part of one of the deepest

books of devotion of the East, which has since been followed by a translation just completed in England of a further part of the same work from the original Persian into Esperanto, which translation was done jointly by an English physician, a Persian prince in Teheran, a Persian merchant living in London, and finally passed upon as thoroughly satisfactory by one of the best Persian scholars in England, a retired English officer of the East Indian medical service, who has made the most correct translation of Omar Khayyam into English. This special instance ought to be a sufficient answer to any doubt as to the power of this common language to help men towards higher thought in a universal way.

Esperanto does not say that any one form of thought is the only form that is the best. It is free for the use of all. It is like the sun that shines and the rain that falls alike on the just and the unjust, but why should we not use it for the highest things, and, even dissatisfied as we are because of our imperfections, try to raise our souls into the higher atmosphere of better communion with God through sympathy with the common aspirations of our fellow man?—and, in this way, feel that we have done something to advance the world towards the New Day in which all peoples shall raise their faces towards the divine Light and be able to call to God and praise him in the same tongue; when we may all see that the sons of God have in common many noble thoughts which they will be better able to feel towards one another when a common means of expressing shall be used.

We have met here this evening to commemorate the life and work of one of the really great men of the age; a man whose life was one of constant service to humanity and who never lost his love for and his faith in his fellow man notwithstanding the many disappointments that were his lot. But he was greater than his disappointments, greater than what may seem to be his unfinished life, and it now remains for us to do what

*See STAR OF THE WEST, p. 39, Vol. VII.

we can to carry on his work and show that our love for this noble language and its founder is not simply a feeling; that it is an earnest and abiding purpose.

Religion and Science in the Light of the Bahai Revelation

(Continued from page 75)

With regard to every one of these qualities however the differences among different people are differences of degree, not of essence. Just as darkness is but the absence or lesser degree of light, so evil is but the absence or lesser degree of good—the undeveloped state. A bad man is a man with the higher side of his nature still undeveloped. If we are selfish, the evil is not in our love of self—all love, even self love, is good, is divine. The evil is that we have such a poor, inadequate, misguided love of self and such a lack of love for others and for God. We look upon ourself as only a superior sort of animal and foolishly pamper our lower nature as we might pamper a pet dog—with worse results in our own case than in that of the dog. We may be brilliantly intellectual with regard to material things but we are blind to the things of the spirit and lacking in the higher and nobler part of life. Evil is always lack of life. If the lower side of man's nature is disproportionately developed, the remedy is not less life for that side, but *more* life for the higher side, so that the balance may be restored. "I am come," said Christ, "that ye may have life and that ye may have it more abundantly." That is what we all need—life, more life, the life that is life indeed!

THE BAHAI TEACHING OF UNITY

"Ye are all the fruits of one tree, the leaves of one branch, flowers of one garden, sons and daughters of one Father whose name is Love." That is one of the most characteristic sayings of Baha'o'llah, and another is like it: "Glory is not his who loves his (own) country, but glory is his who loves his kind." Unity—unity of mankind, and of all created beings in God—is the main theme of his teaching. Men must cast away all

prejudices of race, religion, nation, class and sect, and realize that they are all "leaves of one tree." As the leaf cannot reach its best development unless the whole tree is healthy, so neither can we attain the highest life of which we are capable until the whole of humanity does so too. One man cannot be truly rich, so long as his brothers are poor, nor can he be perfectly healthy so long as his brothers are sick. We are all members of one body, and the spirit that animates that body is God's Spirit.

Each individual life is but a fragment of the whole and cannot live apart from the whole any more than a single muscle-cell or brain-cell from the human body could live apart from the rest of the body. Just as each cell of the body must live not for itself, but in the service of the whole man and in obedience to his will, so each individual man must live not for himself, but in the service of humanity and in obedience to God's will. Only so can humanity be healthy. Only so can each man truly prosper. Never must self-interest, or family interest, or church interest, or national interest or any limited interest whatever take precedence of our supreme duties to mankind and to God. God first! If our attitude to Him be right then we shall serve aright ourselves, our families, our church, our nation, our kind. Devotion to God—severance from everything that would interfere with our devotion to Him—that is the one great secret of successful living. All the evil and misery in the world come from one cause—forsaking the path of God's will and saying, "My will not Thine be done."

Baha'o'llah has given us a new and wonderful revelation of God's will. If men and nations will but obey His commands, the world will be a paradise in-

deed! Now for the first time in the history of the world have the mechanical difficulties in the way of the unity of mankind been overcome by railway trains and steamships, tunnels and aeroplanes, post office and printing press, telegraph and telephone. Now for the first time in the world (at any rate since the Tower of Babel!) has a solution for the language difficulty been found, and now for the first time in the world, as it seems to me, has a complete and adequate plan for the reconciliation of the conflicting interests of mankind been given to the world. Baha'o'llah has raised the Standard of Peace and Unity and called on all mankind to gather under its ample folds: "O people of the earth! Make not the religion of God a cause for variance among you. Verily it was revealed for the purpose of unifying the whole world. Blessed is he who loves the world simply for the sake of his generous Lord." "These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the Most Great Peace shall come, and all nations shall be as one kindred and one family."

Here again the harmony between true religion and science is evident. With every advance in science the oneness of the universe and the interdependence of its parts has become more clearly evident. The astronomer's domain is inseparably bound up with the physicist's, the physicist's with the chemist's, the chemist's with the biologist's, the biologist's with the psychologist's, and so on. Every new discovery in one field of research throws new light on other fields. Just as physical science has shown that every particle of matter in the universe attracts and influences every other particle, no matter how minute or how distant, so psychical science is finding that every soul in the universe affects and influences every other soul. Prince Kropotkin, in his book on *Mutual Aid*, shows most clearly that even among the lower animals mutual aid is absolutely necessary to continued life, while in the case of man, the progress of civilization

depends on the increasing substitution of mutual aid for mutual enmity. "Each for all and all for each" is the only principle on which a community can prosper.

CONCLUSION

All the signs of the times indicate that we are at the dawn of a new era in the history of mankind. Hitherto the young eagle of humanity has clung to the old eyrie in the solid rock of selfishness and materialism. Its attempts to use its wings have been timid and tentative. It has had restless longings for something still unattained. More and more it has been chafing in the confinement of the old dogmas and orthodoxies. But now the era of confinement is at an end, and it can launch on the wings of faith and reason into the higher realms of spiritual love and truth. It will no longer be earth-bound as it was before its wings had grown, but will soar at will to the regions of wide outlook and glorious freedom.

One thing is necessary, however, if its flight is to be sure and steady. Its wings must not only be strong, but they must act in perfect harmony and co-ordination. As Abdul-Baha says: "It cannot fly with one wing alone. If it tries to fly with the wing of religion alone it will land in the slough of superstition, and if it tries to fly with the wing of science alone it will end in the dreary bog of materialism." Perfect harmony between religion and science is the *sine qua non* of the higher life for humanity. When that is achieved, and every child is trained not only in the study of the sciences and arts, but equally in love to all mankind and in radiant acquiescence to the will of God as revealed in the progress of evolution and the teachings of the prophets, and through the Inner Light in our own hearts, then and not till then, shall the Kingdom of God have come on earth and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Then and not till then shall the Most Great Peace have fully come.

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened; that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

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No. 8

The Divine Art of Living

A COMPILATION BY MRS. MARY M. RABB

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CHAPTER VI

The Power of the Holy Spirit

THERE was the true light that lighteth every man as he cometh into the world.

(John 1:9.)

The voice of God, speaking:—

"I have placed in thee the essence of My Light: Therefore depend upon it." "My love is in thee: Seek and thou wilt find Me near."

(Baha'o'llah.)

In the world of existence there is nothing so important as spirit. Nothing is as essential as the spirit of man. The spirit of man is the most noble of phenomena. The spirit of man is the meeting between man and God. The spirit of man is the cause of human life. The spirit of man is the collective center of all virtues. The spirit of man is the cause of the illumination of this world. The world may be likened to the body and man may be likened to the spirit of the body, because the light of the world is this spirit. Man in the world is the life of the world, and the life of man is the spirit. The happiness of the world depends upon man, and the happiness of man is dependent upon the spirit. The world may be likened to the lamp chimney, whereas man may be likened to the light itself. Man may be likened to the lamp, the spirit

to the very light within the lamp. Therefore let us speak of this spirit.

The people of the world are divided into two classes. One class is the materialistic philosophers who deny the spirit and its immortality. The second class comprises the divine philosophers, the wise men of God, the wise illuminati. They believe in the spirit and its immortality. Some of the Greek philosophers declared man to consist of simply the material elements. These material elements compose the cellular elements of the human organism, and when this composition is subjected to disintegration, the life of man becomes extinct. They taught that other than the body there is no spirit. It is body and body only. From these elements these human emanations have come. To them the eye and the ear are due; by them the sense of taste, smell and touch are caused; and when these elements are decomposed, these senses are likewise decomposed. This is the statement of the materialistic philosophers.

But the philosophers of God say, No! the spirit does exist; the spirit is living and eternal. Because of the objections of the materialistic philosophers, therefore, the wise men of God have advanced rational proofs in regard to the validity of the spirit. The materialistic philoso-

phers do not believe in the books of God, and, hence, for them traditional proofs are no evidence; materialistic proofs are necessary. Consequently, the philosophers and wise men of God have said that it is firmly established that existing phenomena may be resolved into grades; that is to say, the mineral, vegetable or animal kingdoms. When we look at the mineral we discover that it exists. . . . When we consider the vegetable we see that it possesses the power of the mineral plus the power of growth. Therefore, it is evident that the vegetable kingdom is superior to the mineral. When we look at the animal kingdom we discover that the animal possesses the power of the vegetable and also those of the mineral. . . . It has in addition the sense of hearing, sight, taste, smell and touch, the five senses of perception. It likewise has the power of memory. These do not exist in the lower kingdoms.

Just as the animal is more noble than the vegetable and the mineral, so is man superior to the animal. When we look at the animal we see that, although it possesses the five senses, it is bereft of ideation; that is to say, the animal is a captive of the world of nature, it is not in touch with that which lies beyond nature, it is bereft of spiritual susceptibilities, it is bereft of the attractions of conscience, it is not in touch with the world of God, it cannot deviate one hair's breadth from the law of nature. It is different with man. Man is possessed of the promptings of conscience; he has intelligence and perception and is capable of discovering mysteries in the universe. All the human industries we see, all the inventions and undertakings we observe are mysteries of nature and at one time were hidden; but the reality of man has discovered these mysteries. As a matter of fact, according to nature's laws, these things should be hidden and latent, but man having transcended the laws of nature, discovered these mysteries and brought them from the invisible state to the visible

plane. See what a marvel man is! Consider electricity—one of the mysteries of creation. Under the requirement of natural law it should remain latent, but man discovered this power, brought it forth from the invisible state to the visible plane and utilized its energies. That is to say, man transcended this law of nature. How many of the mysteries of nature have been penetrated! Columbus, while in Spain, discovered America. Man is capable of discovering that the sun is stationary, while the earth revolves about it. The animal cannot do this. Man perceives the mirage is an illusion. This is beyond the power of the animal. The animal can only perceive through sense impressions, but cannot grasp intellectual realities. The animal cannot conceive of the power of thought. This is an intellectual matter and not limited to the senses. The animal cannot conceive of the fact that the earth is spherical. Intellectual phenomena are human powers. All creation is the captive of nature: it cannot deviate a hair's breadth from the laws established by nature. But man wrests the sword from nature's hand and uses it upon nature's head. For example, it is a requirement of nature than man should be a dweller upon the earth, but the power of the human spirit transcends the law and he soars aloft in aeroplanes. This is contrary to the law and requirement of nature. He sails at high speed upon the ocean. He dives beneath its surface in submarines. He imprisons the voice in the phonograph. He communicates in the twinkling of an eye from the East to the West.

These are some of the things we know to be contrary to the law of nature. Man transcends nature's laws. The animal, the vegetable, the mineral cannot do this. This can only be done through the power of the spirit, because the spirit is the reality. But in the physical powers and senses man and the animal are partners. In fact, animal is often superior to man in sense perception. For instance, the vision of some animals is ex-

ceedingly acute; the ear of the animal can detect a voice at a long distance. Consider the instinct of a dog; it is much greater than a man's. But although the animal shares with man all the physical virtues and senses, a spiritual power is bestowed upon man, of which the animal is devoid. This is proof that there is something in man which is absent in the animal; there is a faculty in man which is lacking in the animal. This is the spirit of man. All these wonderful accomplishments are due to the efficacy and penetration of the spirit of man. Were man bereft of this spirit, none of these accomplishments would have been possible. This is a proof that man is possessed of a spirit. This is evident as the sun at midday.

All creatures of material organization are limited to an image or form. That is to say, every created material being is possessed of one form. It cannot possess two forms at the same time. For example, a body may be triangular, spherical, square, a hexagon or an octagon, but it is impossible for a given object to be triangular and spherical simultaneously; it cannot possess two shapes at one time. It may be either triangular or square. If it is to become square it must first rid itself of the triangular shape. It is absolutely impossible for it to be square and triangular at the same time. That is to say, in the reality of the creatures the different forms cannot be simultaneously possessed. But in the reality of man all geometrical figures can be simultaneously conceived. In other realities one image must be forsaken in order that another might be possible. This is the law of change and transformation, and change and transformation are harbingers of mortality. Were it not for change and transformation in form, phenomena would be immortal, but because phenomena is subject to change and transformation from one figure or shape to another, it is mortal. But the reality of man is possessed of all virtues; he

does not have to give up one image for another as other mere bodies do. Therefore in that reality there is no change and transformation; there it is immortal and everlasting. Verily the body of man may be in America but his spirit laboring and working in the far east, discovering, organizing and systematizing. Although governing, making laws, erecting a building in Russia, his body is still here in America. What is this power, which notwithstanding it is embodied in America, is still working in the East, organizing, systematizing, destroying, upbuilding? It is the spirit of man. This is irrefutable.

When you wish to reflect upon or consider a matter you consult something within you. You say, shall I do it or shall I not do it? Is it better to do this or abandon it? Whom do you consult? Who is within you deciding this question? Surely there is a distinct power, a distinct ego. Were it not distinct from your ego, you would not be consulting it. It is greater than the faculty of thought. It is your spirit which teaches you, which inspires and decides upon matters. Who is it that interrogates? Who is it that answers? There is no doubt that it is the spirit and that there is no change or transformation there, for it is not composed of composite elements; and anything that is not composed of elements is eternal. Change and transformation are peculiarities of composition. There is no change and transformation in the spirit. In proof of this the body may become weakened in its members. It may be dismembered or one of its members may be incapacitated. The whole body may be paralyzed and yet the mind, the spirit remains ever the same. The mind decides, the thought is perfect and yet the hand is withered, the feet have become useless, the spinal column is paralyzed, and there is no muscular movement at all, but the spirit is in the same status. Dismember a healthy man:—the spirit is not dismembered. Amputate his feet; his spirit is there. He may become lame,

the spirit is not affected. The spirit is ever the same; no change or transformation can you perceive, and because there is no change or transformation, it is everlasting and permanent.

Consider man while in the state of sleep; it is evident that all his parts and members are at a standstill, are functionless. His eye does not see, his ear does not hear, his feet and hands are motionless, but, nevertheless, he does see in the world of dreams, he does hear, he speaks, he walks, he may even fly in an aeroplane. Therefore it becomes evident that though the body be dead yet the spirit is permanent. Nay, the perceptions may be keener when man's body is asleep, the flight may be higher, the hearing may be better; all the functions are there and yet the body is at a standstill. Hence it is proof that there is a

spirit in the man and in this spirit there is no distinction as to whether the body be asleep or absolutely dead and dependent. The spirit is not incapacitated by these conditions; it is not bereft of its existence, it is not bereft of its perfections. The proofs are many—innumerable.

These are all rational proofs. Nobody can deny them. As we have shown there is a spirit and that this spirit is permanent and everlasting, we must strive to learn of it. May you become informed of this spirit, hasten to render it divine, to have it become sanctified and holy, and that it may become the very light of the world illumining the East and the West.

(Words of Abdul-Baha, *Star of the West*, Vol. IV, No. 7.)

(Continued on page 96)

Recent Tablet from Abdul-Baha To Miss Jean Masson, Chicago

O thou respected one, a herald of the Kingdom of God!

The article that thou hast written* concerning the Mashrak-el-Azkar contained eloquent paragraphs and wonderful and subtle significances. At the time of writing the power of attraction was manifest and apparent and the real Teacher was instructing and inspiring. Consequently, it was composed in the utmost fluency and eloquence.

Today, whosoever turns his face toward the Lord of the Kingdom and, with sincere intention, taking the pen in his hand, engages his time in writing, there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit shall confirm him and the power of the Kingdom of God shall instruct him.

Therefore, rest thou assured in the divine graces and occupy thy time with the utmost power and seriousness in writing and composition, in talking and explanation.

Consider, how in former ages a number of women became confirmed and assisted in the demonstration of faith and assurance and how in this mortal world they left behind immortal names.

In the world of existence there are no greater women than the queens of empires. Materially they have reached the highest station of womanhood and gained great riches, infinite power and glory. Notwithstanding all these advantages, when they die and go under the earth, they disappear and become non-existent. They leave behind no name, no trace, no fruit and no sign. But the maid-servants of God who are outwardly in the utmost poverty and imprisoned by the people of oppression, humiliated and scoffed at by the outsiders, ere long they will crown their heads with the diadem of the everlasting glory and

*Refers to article reproduced on pp. 89-96.

will be established upon the eternal throne of majesty. Their signs are eternal and their fame universal. This is the glory of the Kingdom! This is the heavenly bestowal! This is the divine outpouring!

Now, praise be to God! that thou didst quaff from the goblet of the love of God, became intoxicated with the wine of the knowledge of God, unloosed thy tongue in the glorification of the Lord of the Kingdom, and became assisted and confirmed with the power of the Supreme.

Therefore, thank thou God, that thou hast become one of the chosen ones and attained to the station of the favored ones.

Upon thee be greeting and praise!

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

(Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Home of Baha'o'llah, Acca, Syria, February 27, 1917.)

The Mashrak-el-Azkar and the Bahai Movement

BY JEAN MASSON

(From *The Lake Shore News*, Thursday, October 19, 1916.)

THE citizens of Wilmette are very well aware of the fact that, in the fall of 1917, will be laid, near the southern border of the town, the corner stone of a Temple of Worship, which may seem, to the uninformed, very mysterious, very occult and, consequently, altogether undesirable. To the citizens of Wilmette this event will be hardly less momentous than to the followers themselves of the great Bahai Movement.

The Bahai Temple will be the initial building of a great institution—the Mashrak-el-Azkar. Another mysterious term, that surely has no place in America, least of all in the inoffensive town of Wilmette!

Now, about this institution and the movement, from which it emanates, there is nothing mysterious, nothing occult, nothing condemnatory.

The Bahai Movement is the most practical religious movement in the world today. It is the effort to bring again into expression in human life and service the essential teachings of the Christ. That this reversion to Christian principles is vital to the continuance of the human race, no one today will presume to deny, with the terrible European war and its vast toll of carnage and hatred and crimes unspeakable forever present in his consciousness. The Bahai Movement makes for the abolition of the hu-

man prejudices that induce division and hatred and injustice among men.

Sometimes I have been asked why we Bahais don't use intelligible English to express what we are trying to do and be, what we are trying to build.

The reason is very manifest. We have no English words succinctly expressive of these oriental terms. And the English translation is cumbersome and indirect and inadequate.

Bahai is the Arabic for glory or splendor. A Bahai, therefore, is a follower of the light. And he glories in the name, because it is significant. It is a proclamation to the world of his connection with the great founder of the movement, Baha'o'llah.

Mashrak-el-Azkar, another Arabic term, signifies "the dawning place of the mentionings of God." And this dawning place will be not only a place of prayer and the worship of God, but a place from which shall go forth actual and selfless service to humanity, a reflection of service to God.

The sign erected upon the site of the Mashrak-el-Azkar by the Bahai Assembly of Chicago embodies, in general terms, the purpose of the institution—

MASHRAK-EL-AZKAR

"These grounds are the site of an edifice to be erected as an 'evident stand-

ard' in America of the oneness of humanity.

"Its doors will be open to all nations, races and religions.

"Its charities will be dispensed without regard to race or color. 'Prejudice toward none—Love for all.'

"Here, for the first time in history, religion and science will become harmonious, each the handmaid of the other, both showering their spiritual gifts on all humanity.

"Until the erection of this great edifice, all are welcome to this beautiful spot, and in its enjoyment we ask you to keep it pure and sacred."

Today we are concerned, more than ever before, with the meaning of this Bahai Institution; more than ever before with the meaning of the Bahai Movement; with its relation to the world, and to world affairs.

The time is ripe for the Mashrak-el-Azkar—the symbol of the universal principles and truth uttered by Baha'o'llah—to begin to take impressive and visible form. It is time for the world to know that in its midst is a powerful, universal movement, whose adherents are found in every country in the world, who believe in intensive and practical Christianity; who believe with a magnificent faith in the great principles that form the substructure of the Bahai Movement.

We can no longer be provincial or isolated or insular. It is the day of the universal. It is the day of interhuman consciousness; of the coming together of all peoples into a universal brotherhood. And our religion must partake of the same universal quality. We must be ready to say, "Brother, I greet you in the name of your prophet and my prophet, in the name of our God." And so—the Bahai Movement.

The site in Wilmette was chosen for the Mashrak-el-Azkar, because it was the most beautiful to be found available in Chicago or its immediate environs. A symbol of the highest spiritual ideals,

of the noblest religious thought of all ages, to be expressed in superlative architectural beauty, should have a beautiful setting. And the Bahais of America chose well, when they purchased the land in Wilmette at the juncture of the drainage canal and Lake Michigan.

The Mashrak-el-Azkar will not be built in a day, even after the laying of the corner stone, in 1917, of the central house of worship. The building of the Temple, without any of the accessories, is concentrating the attention of Bahais today.

The Bahai Temple will be a structure of great beauty and magnificence. Many designs have already been submitted by American architects, any one of which would be celebrated far and wide for impressiveness of conception. A board of architects, however, will complete the final design for the edifice.

But, whatever the design accepted, it will embody various basic principles, symbolic of the universal tenets of the Bahai Movement. It will have nine sides and nine entrances, through which all the religions of the world may enter and unite in the worship of God. Where they have been separated in the past, by prejudice and mutual unfriendliness, here, in the Bahai house of worship will they be harmoniously united.

Throughout the structure and the ornamentation will be expressed this same dynamic thought of world unity. A massive dome, suggestive of this same unity of religions and peoples, will surmount the Temple. Picturesque and beautiful gardens will surround it. Bahais believe in the externalization, in the utmost of beauty and joy and happiness, of the great spiritual truth which they are charged to deliver to the world.

As I have said, the erection of the Mashrak-el-Azkar is not a matter of a day's work. So tremendous a thought of religious unity and universal service, as the Mashrak-el-Azkar embodies, cannot be hastily or impermanently externalized.

The erection of the Temple completed, the accessory buildings will then claim the attention of Bahais. These buildings will harmonize architecturally with the house of worship. And, in the years to come, when the last stone of the last building shall be laid, nowhere in the world will be found a group of buildings so beautiful, so imposing, so full of inspiration for humanity, as the first Mashrak-el-Azkar of America.

Not only will the Mashrak-el-Azkar usher in a new spiritual day for man; it will usher in a new architectural day, a new scientific day, a new day of universal human service.

Again and again I have been asked the purpose of so many buildings. I have been asked if this is a colonization scheme, if Bahais mean to establish a community life at the southern extremity of Wilmette. To the last question I have replied emphatically, "No!" The world is the home of Bahais. They can never be nucleated or secluded. In the Temple of Worship they will find spiritual refreshment, which they will carry out with them into the world and express in work and selfless service.

The accessory buildings will be devoted to the study and propagation of the highest scientific truths. Here will be taught that basic principle of the Bahai Revelation, that religion and science must harmonize. Art, music will find here, in the Mashrak-el-Azkar, their most perfect expression. Philanthropic service to the world, to the poor, to the unfortunate will proceed from the Mashrak-el-Azkar through its various accessories.

Bahais believe that the time will come, whether in our generation or not, when the Kingdom of God will be actually established on earth, when right living and a complete understanding of spiritual and scientific law by a unified humanity will preclude the possibility of any poor or unfortunate. Sociologic, industrial conditions will be regulated with justice to all mankind. There will

be no more oppression, no more exploitation of the weak for the aggrandizement of the strong.

Surely, when such beatific conditions prevail among us, the Kingdom of God shall have been established. And "the founding of this Mashrak-el-Azkar is to be in the inception of the organization of the Kingdom" (Abdul-Baha).

This is the faith not only of the Bahais of America, but it is the faith of millions of Bahais throughout the world.

A great institution for the spiritual, religious, scientific education of humanity—the expression of a universal movement for the realization among men of brotherhood, of the unification of religions, must be the exalted conception of a master spiritual genius, a master seer.

And, as such, Baha'o'llah is recognized today by scholars, by those that sit in high places, by the poor and the lowly. His genius makes a universal appeal to humanity. And to his genius the world is indebted for the Mashrak-el-Azkar.

The story has often been told of his heroic life, of his sufferings, of his banishment and imprisonment for the utterance of the great truths that were his by virtue of his spiritual genius. And we of the immediate day remember well the visit to America, in 1912, of his distinguished eldest son, Abdul-Baha, after his release from the prison of Acca by the establishment of the Turkish Constitution and the declaration of the Committee of Union and Progress.

It is a story that never palls, for history records no such life of supreme heroism as that manifested by Baha'o'llah and his followers.

No superficial, insignificant movement is it that will make its first momentous expression, in the western hemisphere, through the Mashrak-el-Azkar of Wilmette. It is founded on the blood of thirty thousand martyrs. It is founded on lives of complete sacrifice and self-

lessness. It is founded on the stupendous faith and love, in the midst of a world of hatred, of three of the most remarkable characters of all time—the Bab, Baha'o'llah, Abdul-Baha.

Here are the bare historical facts: On the 23d of May, 1844, a young Persian merchant proclaimed the coming of a great world teacher. Himself he called the Bab, the Arabic for door or gate—the herald of the great one. Immediately he set to work to prepare Persia spiritually for his recognition. But a skeptical Mohammedan world scoffed at the declaration of the young Persian merchant, persecuted him, imprisoned him and finally, in 1850, martyred him for his faith.

From the same country, in 1852, arose Baha'o'llah, who gathered the followers of the Bab together, who proclaimed not the coming of a world teacher, but universal principles for the guidance of the world, and the elevation of mankind into lofty realms of spiritual and religious thought.

In the middle of the last century the world had not yet been united by any of the means of intercommunication with which today we are so familiar. Nations and races and religions were separated by what seemed insurmountable barriers. And yet here, in the darkness of a dark Mohammedan land, was a man who taught the oneness of the world of humanity, the oneness of religion, the harmony of religion and science, universal peace, universal education, the equality of men and women. He urged the creation of a universal language, the independent investigation of truth. He taught that prejudice of all kinds must be forgotten, racial antipathy, religious antagonism.

And, strange as it may seem to us of the twentieth century, he declared the incumbency of establishing a universal tribunal for the arbitration of international differences.

He seemed, Baha'o'llah, to possess a vision so universal and penetrating as to embrace within its range the whole

world, and centuries and ages and cycles of time.

Men say of him now that he was far ahead of his time. The world has just begun to think in universal terms, to talk of the universal principles which he proclaimed almost seventy years ago.

And for this priority of vision, for the declaration of his great principles for the conduct of the world, Baha'o'llah with his followers was persecuted and banished, first to Bagdad, then to Constantinople, then to Adrianople, and in the summer of 1868, with seventy of his followers, to the penal colony of Acca, in Syria, on the Mediterranean coast.

The imprisonment in Acca is known as the "most great imprisonment," so prolonged it was and so terrible.

For twenty-four years here he was confined. And during all this time, as from the first day of his proclamation to the world, he gave continuous utterance to what we know today as the Bahai Revelation—religious, scientific, ethical, economic treatises; text books for the conduct of individuals and the guidance of nations, for spiritual illumination—in itself a complete cyclopaedia of knowledge.

From the prison of Acca, before the Franco-Prussian war, Baha'o'llah sent epistles to the crowned heads of Europe and to the President of the United States, calling them to universal peace and brotherhood.

That they did not heed the call, we have conclusive evidence today, when the desirability of universal peace was never so urgent, so overwhelming.

On the 28th day of May, 1892, after forty years of exile and imprisonment, Baha'o'llah passed away, an exile still and a prisoner—his message given, his work done.

A marvelous record of endurance and faith, unparalleled in history, save by the endurance and faith of Abdul-Baha, the central figure today of the Bahai Movement.

By the death of Baha'o'llah, through his last will and testament, Abdul-Baha

became the great Bahai leader. It is his mission to interpret the Revelation of Baha'o'llah, to lay the foundation of a permanent civilization, that shall be undisturbed by the horrific cataclysms of hate and carnage that tear asunder today the social and religious structure of the world.

Abdul-Baha, "the servant of God," as his name implies, was eight years old, when, in 1852, the first Bahai exile occurred. And from that date he shared the vicissitudes, the persecution, the exile, the imprisonment, meted out to his illustrious father. And, because of his spiritual perception and understanding of the Revelation, because of his worthiness to be the successor of Baha'o'llah, it was entrusted to him to continue the great work—the work of calling men and nations to unity and peace and brotherly love.

It was in 1908, sixteen years after the death of Baha'o'llah, when Abdul-Baha was released from the prison of Acca. He was sixty-four years old. The marks and the ravages of exile and imprisonment were upon him. And yet he went forth to deliver to the world the message of Baha'o'llah. He went to Europe, he came to America, proclaiming the basic principles of that message, calling the statesmen and diplomats of the world, the people of the world to universal peace.

Four years ago, on May 1st, 1912, he visited the site of the Mashrak-el-Azkar in Wilmette. He commended the beauty of the location and addressed the Bahais gathered around him upon the great importance to the world of this first Mashrak-el-Azkar of the occident.

"Thousands of Mashrak-el-Azkar,—which means the dawning point of praise for all religionists,—will be built in the world," he said. "In the orient and in the occident of the world will they be built. But this Mashrak-el-Azkar, being the first one in the occident, has great importance."

Elsewhere he has said of the Mashrak-el-Azkar—

"The Mashrak-el-Azkar of Chicago is of the greatest importance. This is a Bahai Temple, a supreme house of worship, a place of spiritual gathering and the manifestation of divine mysteries.

"This organization of the Mashrak-el-Azkar will be a type for the coming centuries and will hold the station of the Mother, and thus, later, in other cities many Mashrak-el-Azkar's will be its offspring.

"When the Mashrak-el-Azkar, with its accessories, is established in the world, aside from its religious or spiritual influence, it will have a tremendous effect upon civilization."

I wish it were within the possibilities of space to quote at length from the utterances of Baha'o'llah and Abdul-Baha. Such wealth of literature and knowledge cannot be compressed to the requirements of a short newspaper article. But the few quotations here produced may convey to the reader somewhat of the inspiration back of the Bahai Movement.

The first words of Baha'o'llah brought to America were words spoken by him in 1890 to Professor Edward Granville Browne of Cambridge University, who had succeeded in gaining access to the great prisoner—

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment. That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religions should cease and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this? Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come. Do not you in Europe need this also? Is this not what Christ foretold? Yet do

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*
(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Asma 1, 73 (August 1, 1917)

No. 8

Statement of Mashrak-el-Azkar Building Fund Account May 31, 1917

Time certificates of the Northern Trust Company, Chicago, payable to Bahai Temple Unity, bearing interest at 3%	\$50,000.00
Open account in the name of Bahai Temple Unity in the Northern Trust Company of Chicago, bearing interest upon daily balance at 2%; balance May 31, 1917	4,100.39
Total cash on hand at above date (not including accrued interest upon time certificates or balance, which will be credited July 1st, 1917)	54,100.39
PLEDGE FUND ACCOUNT.	
Total amount of all pledges, both on pledge cards and oral (of this total, \$39,086.00 is upon signed pledge cards)	\$58,590.00
Total amount paid upon pledges May 31st, 1917 (which amount has been turned over to Bahai Temple Unity and included in Fund Account above)	31,662.62
Balance due on pledges	\$26,927.38

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct statement of the treasury of Bahai Temple Unity and of its cash balance in the Northern Trust Company on May 31st, 1917.

ALBERT H. HALL, Treasurer.

The Mashrak-el-Azkar and the Bahai Movement

(Continued from page 93)

we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family.

“Let not a man glory in this that he loves his country; let him rather glory

in this that he loves his kind.”

The words that follow, with all their oriental imagery, can hardly be conceived today as words whose utterance would throw a man into prison or keep him there, if already confined. They are the words of Baha’o’llah.

“Be thou a giver; when thou art wealthy, and grateful, when thou art poor.

"Be thou trustworthy, when thou art entrusted. Face the comers with a welcome smile.

"Be thou a treasure to the poor, an adviser to the rich.

"Be an answerer to the seeker, a fulfiller of promise and faithful in all things.

"Be thou silent when amid the crowds, and let thy judgment be just.

"Be submissive to thy fellowman.

"Be a light in darkness.

"Be thou a comfort to the sorrowful, and a sea to the thirsty.

"Be thou a shelter to the distressed, and a help, an assistant and a support to the oppressed.

"Be pious in all thy actions.

"Be a home to the stranger, a healer to the sick, a stronghold to him who calls for aid, a sight to the blind, and a path to him who is led astray.

"Be thou the beauty of the face of truth, an ornament to the temple of faithfulness, a throne to the house of character, a spirit to the body of the world, a banner to the hosts of justice, and a lamp to the horizon of goodness.

"Be thou a shadow to the fertile soil, a life-boat to the sea of knowledge, a star in the heaven of generosity, a crown to the head of wisdom, a brilliancy to the forehead of the world, and a fruit to the tree of obedience.

"I ask God to protect thee from the fire of hatred and the chill of enmity, for He is the near, the Answerer."

This is the service enjoined upon every Bahai to render to the world. It is Christian service in its essence, in its purity, in its sublimity.

Abdul-Baha has been asked innumerable questions concerning the problems confronting humanity today. A few of his answers are here reproduced.

As to the Bahai Movement—

"The Bahai Movement is not an organization. You can never organize the Bahai Cause. The Bahai Movement is the spirit of this age. It is the essence of all the highest ideals of this century. The Bahai Cause is an inclusive move-

ment; the teachings of all the religions and societies are found here; the Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians, Theosophists, Freemasons, Spiritualists, etc., find their highest aims in this Cause—the Socialists and philosophers find their theories fully developed in this Movement."

"The objective aims of this Cause are the oneness of the world of humanity; universal peace; universal love; international co-operation, reciprocity; the promotion of the principle of human consanguinity and solidarity, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God, first in the hearts of men and then upon earth."

"Today, in the world of humanity, the most important matter is the question of universal peace. The realization of this principle is the crying need of the time."

"By a general agreement all the governments of the world must disarm simultaneously. It will not do if one lays down its arms and the other refuses to do so. The nations of the world must concur with one another concerning this supremely important subject, thus they may abandon together the deadly weapons of human slaughter."

"The call to arbitration, to peace, to love and to loyalty is the call of Baha'ullah. His standard has floated for fifty years, summoning all of whatever race and creed."

"Where Love dwells, there is light! Where animosity dwells, there is darkness!"

"Let your effort be to find harmony. Let brotherhood be felt among you, and carry ye its quickening power throughout the world."

Questions that have been asked with greater concern, perhaps, of Bahais, than any other questions, are—

"What relation does the Bahai Movement bear to Christianity?"

"What place does Christ hold in the Bahai Religion?"

These questions are best answered in the words of Abdul-Baha—

“Baha’o’llah established Christ in the East. He has praised Christ, honored Christ, exalted Him, called Him ‘the Word of God, the Spirit of God,’ raised the name of Christ to supreme summits of glorification. Throughout the orient Bahais have illumined the lamp of Christ and spread His mention.”

“The Cause of Baha’o’llah is the same as the Cause of Christ. It is the same temple and the same foundation. Both of these are the spiritual springs and the seasons of the soul-refreshing awakening and the cause of the renovation of the life of mankind.

“The spring of this year is the same as the spring of last year. The origin and end are the same. The sun of today is the sun of yesterday.

“In the coming of Christ the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Baha’o’llah have the same basic principles, but are according to the stage of the maturity of the world and the requirements of this illumined age.”

Back of the Mashrak-el-Azkar, whose walls will soon begin to rise in Wilmette, is a great historic world movement. The day has gone by to regard it lightly or superficially or superciliously. Great

souls have come to re-assert the constructive teachings of the Christ, in terms applicable to the complex requirements of the age.

The world needs them—the teachers and the teachings. Christians are murdering Christians today. Christians are guilty today of instituting not universal peace, but universal war to destroy millions of other Christians. And we have before us the appalling spectacle of the spoliation, the annihilation of unoffending peoples and nations by followers of the Christ. And civilization is doomed, unless we have the re-creative word spoken that shall penetrate the great aching heart of the world and lead it out of immeasurable darkness into the immeasurable light of a new and glorious day.

Bahais believe that word has again been spoken. And Bahais believe that city, in which the first Mashrak-el-Azkar of the occident is erected, is a city of brilliant destiny. They believe that before it lies a great transcendent future. They believe that it shall influence civilization for all time to come.

Let us approach then the Mashrak-el-Azkar with a spirit of humility, of prayer and thanksgiving. It was greatly conceived. Let it be greatly honored.

The Divine Art of Living—Chapter VI

(Continued from page 88)

There are five divisions of the spirit:
 First: the vegetable spirit. . . .
 After this is the animal spirit. . . .
 The human spirit. . . .

The fourth degree of spirit is the heavenly spirit; it is the spirit of faith and the bounty of God. It comes from the breath of the Holy Spirit. . . .

The fifth is the Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit is the mediator between God and his creatures. It is like a mirror facing the sun. As the pure mirror receives light from the sun and transmits this bounty to others, so the Holy Spirit is the mediator of the Holy Light from

the Sun of Reality, which it gives to the sanctified realities. It is adorned with all the divine perfections. Every time it appears the world is renewed, and a new cycle is founded. The body of the world of humanity puts on a new garment. It can be compared to the spring; whenever it comes, the world passes from one condition to another. Through the advent of the season of spring the black earth and the fields and wildernesses will become verdant and blooming, and all sorts of flowers and sweet-scented herbs will grow; the trees will have new life, and new fruits will ap

pear, and a new cycle is founded. The appearance of the Holy Spirit is like this. Whenever it appears, it renews the world of humanity and gives a new spirit to the human realities; it arrays the world of existence in a praiseworthy garment, dispels the darkness of ignorance, and causes the radiation of the light of perfections.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*; pp. 163-166.)

There is a wonderful power and strength which belongs to the human spirit, but it must receive confirmation from the Holy Spirit. . . . If it is aided by the bounty of the Holy Spirit, it will show great power, it will discover realities, it will be informed of the mysteries. Direct all the attention to the Holy Spirit, and call the attention of every soul to it. Then you will see wonderful signs. . . .

(Abdul-Baha.)

Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you.

(Words of Jesus. Acts 1:8.)

. . . The human body is in need of material force, but the spirit has need of the Holy Spirit. Were it not for the protection of the Holy Spirit the human world would be extinguished. His Holiness Jesus Christ declared, "Let the dead bury the dead." This statement of His Holiness indicates, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit," and it becomes manifest that the human spirit which is not protected beneath the Holy Spirit is dead. It is clear that the human spirit is in need of the resuscitation of the Holy Spirit, otherwise, though materially advanced, man cannot attain full and complete progress."

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 5, No. 7, p. 106.)

The power of the Holy Spirit enlightening man's intelligence has enabled him

to discover means of bending many natural laws to his will. He flies through the air, floats on the sea, and even moves under the waters. . . . The Holy Spirit will give to man greater powers than these if only he will strive after the things of the Spirit and endeavor to attune his heart to the divinely infinite love.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Talks Given in Paris*; p. 15.)

The human spirit is a power which comprehends the realities of things. All that thou seest, such as arts, inventions, traces and discoveries were once in the realm of the unknown and were a hidden matter. But the human spirit discovered such hidden mysteries and brought them out of the sphere of the unknown into the world of visibility. For instance, the power of steam, photography, phonography, telegraphy and mathematical problems were all once hidden mysteries and unknown secrets. But the human spirit discovered such invisible mysteries and brought them from the hidden into the visible world. Consequently it is evident that the human spirit is a comprehensive energy and controls the realities of things and discovers the hidden secrets in the domain of the physical world. But the divine Spirit discovereth divine realities and cosmic mysteries in the realm of the divine world. I hope thou mayest attain to the divine Spirit, discover the mysteries of the divine world and comprehend the secrets of the physical world.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Tablet translated by Mirza Ali Kuli Khan, November, 1907.)

There are several kinds of light. First, there is the visible light of the sun by whose aid we can discern the beauties of the world around us. Without this we could see nothing. Nevertheless, though it is the function of this light to make things visible to us it cannot give us the power to see them or understand what their various charms

may be for this light has no intelligence, no consciousness.

It is the light of the intellect which gives us knowledge and understanding and without this light the physical eyes would be useless. The light of the intellect is . . . born of the Light divine. The light of the intellect enables us to understand and realize all that exists. But it is the divine Light alone which can give us sight for the invisible things and which enables us to see truths that will not be visible to the world for thousands of years hence. It was the divine Light which enabled the prophets to see 2000 years in advance what was going to take place. And today we see the realization of their vision. Thus it is this Light which we must strive to seek, for it is greater than any other.

By the help of this effulgent Light all the spiritual interpretation of the holy writings has been made plain, the hidden things of God's universe have become manifest and we have been enabled to comprehend the divine purposes for man.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Talks Given in Paris*; p. 61.)

The light is of four kinds: First, the light of the sun. . . . Second, the light of the eye. . . . Third, the light of the intellect. . . . Fourth, the light of guidance. This last is the supreme Light, the conscious reality which comprehends mysteries.

"Can this last ever be cognizable through the special senses, as the eye?" was asked.

"By the insight," Abdul-Baha answered.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Heavenly Vista*; p. 25.)

Truth (the highest truth) is unattainable except through the favor of the Holy Spirit.

(Abdul-Baha.)

The (Holy) Spirit is encompassing

and surrounding all. It is holy. It is sanctified from attachment to a special place. It is present everywhere and at every time. It exists in all places, yet is placeless.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From a message to "Body of Friends" in 1910.)

The Christ is the central point of the Holy Spirit; he was born of the Holy Spirit; he was raised up of the Holy Spirit. . . . The focus of the rays of the Sun of Reality was Christ; and from this glorious focus the bounty of God was reflected upon the other mirrors which were the reality of the apostles. . . . Jesus was the sun and his rays shone upon his disciples through his teachings.

(Compiled from the words of Abdul-Baha.)

The Holy Spirit (in its completeness) is given only to the prophets; the people can possess but the rays of the Holy Spirit.

(Abdul-Baha.)

The greatest power of the Holy Spirit exists in the divine Manifestations of the Truth (i. e., the greatest world-prophets like Christ). Through the power of the Spirit, the heavenly teachings have been brought into the world of humanity.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Talks Given in Paris*; p. 82.)

When Christ appeared with those marvelous breaths of the Holy Spirit, the children of Israel said, "We are quite independent of him; we can do without him and follow Moses; we have a book and in it are found the teachings of God. What need therefore have we of this man?"

Christ said to them, "The book sufficeth you not." It is possible for a man to hold to a book of medicine and say, "I have no need of a doctor, I will act according to the book. In it every

disease is named, all symptoms are explained, the diagnosis of each ailment is completely written out and a prescription for each malady is furnished; therefore why do I need a doctor?"

This is sheer ignorance. A physician is needed to prescribe. Through his skill the principles of the book are correctly and effectively applied until the patient is restored to health. Christ was a heavenly physician. He brought spiritual health and healing into the world. Baha'o'llah is likewise a divine physician. He has revealed prescriptions for removing disease from the body politic and has remedied human conditions by spiritual power.

Therefore mere knowledge is not sufficient for complete human attainment. The teachings of the Holy Books need a heavenly power and divine potency to carry them out. A house is not builded by mere acquaintance with the plans. Money must be forthcoming, volition is necessary to construct it, a carpenter must be employed in its erection. It is not enough to say, "The plan and purpose of this house are very good; I will live in it." There are no walls of protection, there is no roof of shelter in this mere statement. The house must be actually built before we can live in it.

Briefly, the teachings of the holy books need a divine potency to complete their accomplishment in human hearts. In Persia, His Holiness Baha'o'llah reared and taught souls, established a bond of affiliation among various peoples and united divergent religious beliefs to such an extent that twenty thousand devoted ones sacrificed themselves for the Cause of God in the glorious unity of martyrdom. No differences whatever remained among these blessed souls; Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians were all blended, unified and agreed through the potency of his heavenly power—not by mere words, not by merely saying, "Unity is good and love is praiseworthy."

His Holiness Baha'o'llah not only proclaimed this unity and love; he estab-

lished it. As a heavenly physician he not only gave prescriptions for these ailments of discord and hatred, but accomplished the actual healing. We may read in a medical book that a certain form of illness requires such and such a remedy. While this may be absolutely true, the remedy is useless unless there is volition and executive force to apply it. Every man in the king's army can give a command, but when the king speaks, it is carried out. This one, that one, may say, "Go conquer a country;" but when the king says, "Go!" the army advances. Therefore it is evident that the confirmation of the Holy Spirit and the impelling influence of a heavenly power are needed to accomplish the divine purpose in human hearts and conditions. His Holiness Jesus Christ, single, solitary and alone accomplished what all the kings of the earth could not have carried out. If all the kingdoms and nations of the world had combined to effect it they would have failed.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 3, No. 18, p. 7.)

The point is this, that to gain control over physical bodies is an extremely easy matter, but to bring spirits within the bonds of serenity is a most arduous undertaking. This is not the work of everybody. It necessitates a divine and holy potency, the potency of inspiration, the power of the Holy Spirit. For example, His Holiness Christ was capable of leading spirits into that abode of serenity. He was capable of guiding hearts into that haven of rest.

In this century of the "latter times" Baha'o'llah has appeared and so resuscitated spirits that they have manifested powers more than human. Thousands of his followers have given their lives and while under the sword, shedding their blood, they have proclaimed "Ya-Baha-el-Abha!"* Such resuscitation is

*"O thou Glory of the Most Glorious!"
A prayer of intense concentration upon God.

impossible except through a heavenly potency, a power supernatural, the divine power of the Holy Spirit. Through a natural and mere human power this is impossible. Therefore the question arises, "How is this resuscitation to be accomplished?"

There are certain means for its attainment by which mankind is regenerated and quickened with a new birth. This is the "second birth" mentioned in the heavenly books. Its accomplishment is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The rebirth of the spirit of man is through the science of the love of God. It is through the efficacy of the water of life. This life and quickening is the regeneration of the phenomenal world. After the coming of the spiritual springtime, the falling of the vernal showers, the shining of the Sun of Reality, the blowing of the breezes of perfection, all phenomena become imbued with the life of a new creation and are reformed in the process of a new genesis. Reflect upon the material springtime. When winter comes the trees are leafless, the fields and meadows withered, the flowers die away into dust-heaps. In prairie, mountain and garden no freshness lingers, no beauty is visible, no verdure is seen. Everything is clad in the robe of death. Wherever you look around you will find the expression of death and decay. But when the spring comes the showers descend, the sun floods the meadows and plains with light, you will observe creation clad in a new robe of expression. The showers have made the meadows green and verdant. The warm breezes have caused the trees to put on their garments of leaves. They have blossomed and soon will produce new, fresh and delightful fruits. Everything appears endowed with a newness of life, a new life and spirit are everywhere visible. The spring has resuscitated all phenomena and has adorned the earth with beauty as it willeth.

Even so is the springtime spiritual when it comes. When the holy, divine

Manifestations or Prophets appear in the world a cycle of radiance, an age of mercy dawns. Everything is renewed. Minds, hearts and all human forces are reformed, perfections are quickened, sciences, discoveries and investigations are stimulated afresh and everything appertaining to the virtues of the human world is re-vitalized. . . .

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 4, No. 7, p. 118.)

The most important thing is that which comes through the Spirit—the breath of the Holy Spirit. The soul through the Spirit can realize the Kingdom. The soul can recognize and feel the love of God. Distance cannot prevent the receiving of spiritual bounties. Hills and mountains cannot check that. Why? Because there are no chains and bonds for the Spirit. The sun is very far,—in the highest position,—there is a great distance between the earth and sun, yet remoteness and distance cannot prevent its rays from shining.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Kinney-Beede-Thompson Notes; Acca, June 30; 1909.)

Verily the poems of Bishop Kan and John Newton are exalted, but it were possible to abridge them all to this: "O God quicken me with the breaths of the Holy Spirit." For that which contains the fulfillment of all human inspiration, for that which we supplicate in words is the breath of the Holy Spirit. Verily, it changeth the earthly man into a heavenly one, the materialist into a spiritual being, the unenlightened into a reflection of the divine, and the satanic man into a godly person. It maketh the blind to see and quickeneth the dead.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to Y. Dawud, London, 1912.)

The Holy Spirit is the only power which will ultimately unite and harmonize the races and nations of the world. The Cause of God is the only panacea which will heal for all time to come the social, economic and political diseases of mankind. The revelation of Baha'o'llah is the tree which will send its outstretched branches to all the countries and under its cool shade all the religious sects will gather there to fraternize and associate with one another. The world is full of ideas but they are either fleeting or profitless or impractical or limited in their influence or confined within a narrow scope. The beaming shafts of the light of cosmic ideals must pierce through the hearts of men and the power of the Holy Spirit is necessary to carry into execution these noble thoughts of the age. Human power is limited in its influence. It can unite two persons, or two tribes, or two communities, or at the utmost two nations. At the same time it confesses that this unity is temporal and may be abrogated by the whim of either of the high contracting parties.

But the divine power unites nations and peoples and cements them together in the bond of brotherhood and peace for ages and cycles. His Holiness Christ was one person, without any worldly assistance and help, but through the effect of the Holy Spirit he was enabled to unite many nations and religions under the standard of Christianity. Likewise Mohammed unified the wild, savage tribes of Arabs and made them the conquerors of Asia. Consequently there must needs be divine power for the accomplishment of this universal aim. Human power fails in this undertaking.

The words of those souls who are the essences of severance, who are in the utmost sanctity and purity will have an effect upon the hearts of men the result of which will be unity and good-fellowship. Save through this, ideal communication will not be made possible between the children of men. They may achieve a temporal union for a few years. Men may so compound the various ingredi-

ents as to be promiscuously mixed together. But there must needs be the solvent so that they may become perfectly blended and united. In the human world that solvent is the power of the Holy Spirit which will thoroughly mix and blend the different constituents and elements representing the various nationalities, religions and sects. I hope the believers of God will unfurl the "World Peace Flag" because their aim is altruistic and they are helped by the confirmations of the Holy Spirit. Through the power of God it is possible for one Bahai to guide one whole nation. Such spiritual victories are dependent upon the breaths and bestowals of the Holy Spirit.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 15, 1914.)

Spiritual education consists in the inculcation of the ideals of divine morality and promotes high thoughts. This spiritual education is made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. As long as the breaths of the Holy Spirit do not display any influence, spiritual education is not obtained; whereas if a soul is inspired by the Holy Spirit he will be enabled to educate a nation.

Consider the records of bygone philosophers; the utmost that they could do was to educate themselves. The circle of their influence was very limited. All that they could do was to instruct a few pupils. Of such a type was the influence of Plato and Aristotle. These philosophers were only able to train a limited number of people. But those souls who are assisted by the breath of the Holy Spirit can educate a nation. The prophets of God were neither philosophers nor celebrated for their genius. Outwardly, they belong to the common people, but as they were encircled with the all-comprehending power of the Holy Spirit they were thus enabled to impart a general education to all men. For instance, His Holiness Christ and His Holiness Mohammed were not among

the thinkers of the age neither were they counted great geniuses; but through the power of the Holy Spirit they were able to confer universal instruction upon many nations.

They illumined the world of morality. They laid the foundation of a spiritual sovereignty which is everlasting. It is the same with those souls who have entered the tabernacle of the Cause of God. Although not important in appearance, yet everyone is confirmed in stimulating the cause of general moral instruction. Therefore it has become evident that real spiritual universal education cannot be realized save through the breath of the Holy Spirit. Man must not look at his own capabilities, but think of the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, April, 1913.)

This power is not verbal. It must be actual, demonstrative, dynamic. This power has gone out of the body of Islam. The Islamic world cannot grasp the political principles of modern times and is devoid of spiritual potency. If they desire tremendous progress in as short a time as possible they must obtain spiritual potency, thus reforming and changing all the various branches of the institutional life. The western nations for the last five centuries have steadily been going forward and, with superhuman energy pushing further and further the frontiers of ignorance and illiteracy, they have attained to their present unassailable position. Now if the Islamic people start on this path with the same determination and constancy it will take them at least five centuries before they could reach the up-to-date level of western civilization. This is of course a slow process and, as I told you they must attain to celestial power. Then you will observe their magical advancement.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 25, 1913.)

The power of the Holy Spirit is here for all.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Talks Given in Paris*; p. 78.)

No philosophy, no system, has ever changed the manners and customs of the people for the better. The morals of the philosophers who are not enlightened by the divine Spirit are inferior. An ignorant man filled with the Holy Spirit, is powerful. He who is educated by the Holy Spirit can in his turn educate others in the same spirit.

The life and morals of a spiritual man are in themselves an education to others. Let your thoughts, words and actions bring life to those around you. Do not think of your own limitations; dream only of the welfare of the Kingdom of Abha. See the influence of Jesus Christ among his apostles, then consider their influence on others. These simple men were helped by the power of the Holy Spirit. So may you receive the divine assistance. Our capabilities are limited, but the help of the Kingdom of Abha is limitless. The earth of itself has no properties of life, but it is fertilized by the sun and the rain. The earth must not consider its own limited power. Likewise may you be given life, may the rain of the divine mercy and the Sun of Truth make your gardens fruitful so that many beautiful flowers of exquisite fragrance and hue may blossom there in abundance.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 6.)

The captive of the Holy Spirit is exempt from every captivity.

(Abdul-Baha.)

Verily, thy Lord will assist and inspire thee with the breath of the Holy Spirit and will cause thee to utter the

proofs and principles of thy Lord with great penetration and confidence.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Excerpt from Tablet, translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Ramleh, 1913.)

Rest assured in the fact that the breath of the Holy Spirit will aid you,—provided no doubts obtain in your hearts. Know this for a certainty.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Kinney-Beede-Thompson Notes, July 8, 1909.)

When you breathe forth the breath of the Holy Spirit from your hearts into the world, commerce and politics will take care of themselves in perfect harmony. All arts and sciences will become revealed and the knowledge of God will be manifested. It is not your work but that of the Holy Spirit which you breathe forth through the Word. This is a fundamental truth.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Waite-Harrison Notes; Acca, October 12, 1909.)

The withered and faded are refreshed, the joyless becomes happy, the extinct become enkindled and the lifeless are quickened with the breaths of the Holy Spirit.

(Abdul-Baha.)

Pay not attention to things material but reach after the Spirit. Fix your eyes on the Sun of Truth for his light floods the whole earth. Let the sun give you of his strength then the clouds of prejudice will not hide his light from your eyes, then will the sun be without clouds for you. May we share in the divine bounties of the Kingdom. May the world be for you no obstacle hiding the Sun of Truth from your sight, as the human body of Christ hid his divinity from the people of his day.

May you receive the clear vision of the Holy Spirit so that your hearts may

be illumined and see the Sun of Truth shining through all material clouds.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Notes of Mrs. Mary Hanford Ford, Paris, October 27, 1911.)

The spiritual food is the principal food, . . . the effect of the spiritual food is eternal. The material food, that is, the food for the body, is simply water and bread, but the food for the intellect is knowledge and the food for the spirit is the significances of the heavenly words and the bounties of the Holy Spirit.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Kinney-Beede-Thompson Notes, Acca, July 6, 1909.)

The teachings of Baha'o'llah are the breaths of the Holy Spirit which create men anew.

(Abdul-Baha.)

And now you, if you act in accordance with the teachings of Baha'o'llah, may rest assured that you will be aided and confirmed. In all affairs which you undertake, you shall be rendered victorious, and all the inhabitants of the earth cannot withstand you. You are the conquerors, because the power of the Holy Spirit is your assistant. Above and over physical forces, phenomenal forces, the Holy Spirit itself shall aid you.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From address, Washington, D. C., May 10, 1912.)

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit changes the small acorn into an overshadowing tree and the showers of the heavenly clouds of mercy transform the black soil into a delectable rose-garden.

(Abdul-Baha.)

The body of man is created for this world but his heart is made for the habitation of the Holy Spirit. . . . When

you are plowing the ground or sowing the seeds or reaping the harvest let all your thoughts and sub-conscious thinking be of God. Your hands and feet will be working but your heart must be attached to the Almighty.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, May 17, 1914.)

In the work of the Kingdom of God one should not consider capacity or ability; the confirmation of the Spirit will descend, because the weakest souls through the confirmation of the Holy Spirit become the most powerful. Some souls who are outwardly ignorant through this gift become learned men. The weakest souls become the strongest. Many times a woman has surpassed a thousand men, or, rather, through this help can withstand all the people of the world.

His Holiness Moses was apparently a shepherd but through the divine power he overcame Pharaoh and his armies. Likewise the disciples were the weakest souls but through the breath of the Holy Spirit and the assistance of the Kingdom of God they became the strongest ones. The thought which I wish to convey to you is this,—you should not look at your capacity or ability, nay, rather rely upon the confirmation of the Holy Spirit,—do not doubt. (After a long pause) Be confident and sure. It will help you.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Flowers from the Rose-Garden of Acca*; p. 21.)

One must never consider one's own feebleness, it is the strength of the Holy Spirit of love which gives the power to teach.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Talks Given in Paris*; p. 28.)

Upon calling Abdul-Baha's attention to some French warships in the harbor of Alexandria, he said:

"I desire that you may see the divine

ships. These ships are the blessed sails who are traversing the sea of divine mercy; their propellers are the powers of spiritual love and their captains are the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. No ship is ever wrecked in this sea; its waves are life-giving. Each one of the friends of God is like unto an ark of salvation. Each ark saves many souls from the storms of troubles. The signs and traces of these sails are never-ending and eternal. The future centuries and cycles are like the sea on the surface of which these arks glide blissfully toward their spiritual destination.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 26, 1913.)

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.

(Abdul-Baha)

Once a learned man journeyed to see me to receive my blessing, saying he knew and comprehended the Bahai teachings. When I told him that he could receive the blessings of the Holy Spirit at any time when he put himself in a receptive attitude to accept them he said that he was always in a receptive attitude.

"What would you do," I asked, "if I were to suddenly turn and strike you?" He instantly flared with indignation and strode angrily about the room.

After a little I went over and took his arm, saying, "But you must return good for evil. Whether I honored you or despised you, you should follow the teachings; now you merely read them. Remember the words of Jesus who said, 'The first shall be last, and the last first.'" The man turned, shook my hand and departed, and I have since heard of many kind acts he has done.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Abdul-Baha in London*; p. 112.)

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

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No. 9

Mashrak-el-Azkar Convention and Bahai Congress

Held by the Bahai Temple Unity

for the Exposition of the Universal Principles, Economic, Social and Religious,
of the Bahai Movement

All Sessions held at Hotel Brunswick, April 29-May 2, 1917,
Boston, Massachusetts

THE sessions of the Congress were held Sunday afternoon and each evening from Sunday to Wednesday. There were addresses upon the social, economic and spiritual principles which the Bahai Movement is today presenting to the world, and beautiful music interspersed among the addresses. The music helped to heighten the glory of that spiritual atmosphere which made the Congress often so irresistible in its appeal to the hearts and the spirits. Among the speakers were Mr. Horace Holley, Mr. Howard MacNutt, and Mr. Hooper Harris of New York, Mr. Albert H. Hall of Minneapolis, Mrs. Corinne True of Chicago, Mrs. Mary H. Ford of Kansas City, Mrs. May Maxwell of Montreal and Mr. Joseph H. Hannen of Washington. Each session of the Congress was crowded with eager listeners—their bright faces betokening the joy with which the Gospel of Baha'o'llah and Abdul-Baha is being received in this year of 1917.

The Feast of El-Rizwan

OPENING the glorious events in Boston preceding the ninth annual Mashrak-el-Azkar convention was the memorable and lovely Rizwan Feast held Saturday evening, April 28th, in Filene's great store. Fragrant and exquisite flowers made the place resemble somewhat the Garden of El-Rizwan and the spirit was the same as in that blessed and hallowed spot in the Orient. Everyone present heard the call to service, heard it as never before with throbs of longing, with yearning, with sincerity of purpose, with a determination to become "refulgent dawns." It was as

though Abdul-Baha stood in their spiritual presence and said: "Arise, shine, for Light has come! The Glory of God has arisen upon thee; the Sun of Truth is in this Word!"

Among the speakers were Mr. Wm. H. Randall, Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm, Mrs. Mary H. Ford, Mr. Louis G. Gregory, Mr. Alfred E. Lunt, and Mr. Joseph H. Hannen. Delightful music was given and a feature of the evening was the singing of the National Anthem, words and music composed by Mr. Edward B. Kinney and dedicated to the President of the United States, His Excellency, Woodrow Wilson.

Pot-Pourri of Convention Fragrances

By Martha L. Root.

THE ninth annual Mashrak-el-Azkar convention, assembled at the suggestion of Abdul-Baha, was opened at 10 o'clock, Monday morning, April 30, 1917, at Hotel Brunswick, Boston, Mass. The chairman, Mr. Alfred E. Lunt, concisely stated its purpose:

"We are here to do Abdul-Baha's will. We are here with illumined vision, we pray, with ears listening for the divine guidance, to catch the desire of the Center of the Covenant for this gathering, and to do it; for he has in a tablet indicated, as he always indicates, that there is a great purpose in each one of these gatherings.

"Those of you who have assembled in past conventions know that in each one a great and fundamental spiritual problem has come before the convention for settlement, and in every case it has been settled right and has received the blessed confirmation of Abdul-Baha later."

Importance of Teaching.

The vision of the 1917 convention was glimpsed when the teaching tablets of Abdul-Baha were read, and action was taken to translate that vision into enduring form in firm and permanent action.

Mr. Hooper Harris voiced the thought of all when he said: "The one specific call for this convention is to take up in a fitting manner the matter of the promotion of teaching."

Mrs. Ella G. Cooper added that just as the previous year the convention was fired by the inspiration of giving, so this season it would be aflame through the plan of teaching.

A motion was made at once by Mr. Albert H. Hall that the Unity co-operate in the plan of teaching and spreading the teachings in the North American continent, communicated in the five tablets by Abdul-Baha, and that the Unity

recognize the persons addressed in each of the five geographical divisions of North America as the persons best fitted to initiate the work in their several geographical boundaries fixed in the tablets. Quoting the speaker directly, "That we ask the executive board of this Unity to be elected, to co-operate and to co-ordinate the energies of this Unity with those five persons, so superintending the work in the five geographical divisions fixed by Abdul-Baha."

In the discussion on teaching which followed it was suggested by one of the speakers "that if we are to spread the light of the new Kingdom into all the cities and towns of America, we must have both organization and freedom. We must present the most great glad tidings 'systematically and enthusiastically,' Abdul-Baha has said. This requires that there be committees in each of the five great districts to systematize and guide the divine campaign in their district. It requires also a central committee which shall be a sort of clearing house to keep mutual understanding among the five districts.

"But the greatest need is for freedom, for the most glorious spontaneity which the Bahai Cause can present, lest anyone check the Holy Spirit when it is going into action. The five great tablets ring like a divine bell from the heaven of the new era calling everyone who hears to arise, if he can, and teach. If he cannot go to new cities let him then contribute some money and send or assist in sending someone else. He may send his contribution to the central committee of his district, or to his assembly, or he may send out some pure and illumined teacher himself. The great call of the hour is that the work be done and that radiant messengers of the good news enter every city and hamlet of our continent with the message that the most

great community and world brotherhood is at hand.

“In our teaching campaign consultation in the open-minded spirit of perfect love is of supreme importance for most of us gaze upon the Center of Guidance through the colored glasses of our particular temperament and training. Some see the light of God’s Center of Reality as red, others as violet or orange. Perhaps if we can unite our minds in pure love we may also combine these many colors so perfectly that they will shine forth as the pure white light of God’s truth, the perfect light from which they are all descended. Then can we send forth our teachers and go forth ourselves so firm and wise and radiant in the light of God’s new guidance that through us His light may enter the doorway of innumerable hearts.

“But let no one try to direct very much or put his own will into operation, because perhaps he does not know what God wants, and God works in a mysterious way to spread His Cause throughout America.”

Mr. Hall’s motion was then amended to the effect that “we recommend, in the spirit of loving consultation, that each one of these districts to which each one of these tablets is directed, shall get together in any way that seems wise and elect a committee of five or nine people, and let them elect a committee which has central guidance for all the committees and let the central committee feel itself merely a clearing house.”

Before putting the motion as the question of authority came up, one speaker expressed the spirit of the tablets when he said: “We are not organizing the teachings. We are organizing a little group to assist the teaching. Don’t you realize that God does the teaching? It is the Holy Spirit that is going to do the teaching. It is the pure fire from the words of the teacher that is going to illumine the world. You cannot organize this teaching; the force of the love of God will spread through this

country in spite of, and quite beyond our organization. Let us just realize that we are doing this to bring together a little harmonious group with the idea and intent of assisting those pure hearts to rise and go forth, who with their words can illumine this great continent.”

Business and Spiritual Fragrance Combined.

Interspersed with some alluring business reports were the sweet-scented spiritual messages of delegates gathered in Boston to bear witness to the power of God in this day. Mr. Wm. H. Randall well expressed how the Bahais combine business and the real spiritual fragrance in their gatherings.

“I think,” said Mr. Randall, “that we must not feel when we speak of matters which we call business, and material, that we have divorced that line from spirituality. We must have a body through which the spirit speaks, and it seems to me that a proof of our interest in the material affairs of the Mashrak-el-Azkar is the demonstration of our spirituality and our spiritual effort to see that it becomes built and established.

“To me the very greatest note we can strike in the world is to bring the business world and the economic world into line with the new spiritual economics whereby our business affairs are governed, and in the broad fields of life breathe forth the fragrance of the rose-garden of the Covenant.”

“As a delegate from Boston I have resigned, because Boston is its own delegate. The spirit of Boston is surrounding you and is bringing to you its own message of love. It is bringing you its welcome; it is filling this hall daily with many who will come to hear the spiritual message which you have brought them. Abdul-Baha at a feast once said, ‘At this feast we have entered into a new hour and that new hour in the day of God brings a new bounty.’ You have brought to Boston a new hour. You

have brought to Boston a new bounty. Boston never again will be the same. Its spiritual center has been established by the supplications of every heart here to the Center of Reality.

“Our service here is to put into motion a great spiritual tide. The tides of the ocean move to the attraction of the moon, and the tide is really the effort of the ocean to lift itself up to the moon of its attraction. And this great spiritual tide here is the effort of these hearts, and the unified love of this assembly to lift itself up to the orb of the Covenant, to the moon of guidance. Therefore, we cease to be individual in our real work, and we become a living stream of spiritual fire that shall mold the peoples of the world into the great streams which are moving always toward the orb of the Covenant.”

After giving a full Mashrak-el-Azkar report Mr. Randall mentioned that some of the pledges read “As much as we can give” and some “one-nineteenth of all I earn.” In every case where these were the forms of the subscriptions the subscriptions seemed to increase all the time. Prosperity seemed to come to the people who were giving one-nineteenth, and to those who said “I will give all I can.” “Thus many of the pledgers,” continued Mr. Randall, “have doubled and trebled the amount of their pledges. So that a little more of this wonderful prosperity, a little more of this deep spiritual insight into the great foundation of the Mashrak-el-Azkar, will, I hope, enable us to cable to our beloved Master before the fall that we have the sum which will permit us to prepare for the building.”

Mr. Randall summed the spirit of our work together in these words: “The great binding love of the Center of the Covenant is not a philosophy. That binding and unifying power is not the language of words, but it is a language of the deep spiritual love which brings us all together in the great unifying

power of oneness and the desire to make our efforts a oneness.”

The New Booklets.

Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm's attractive booklets, merrily called “Big Bens” and “Little Bens,” were one of the bright features of the convention. They made their debut at the Rizwan Feast, as favors, and so popular did they become that the edition of 15,000 is sold and another edition of 75,000 is just filled.

“Many people say,” explained Mr. Wilhelm, “Your meeting was interesting, and some very beautiful things were said, but I am not sure I know what it is all about.” Now if we can place in their hands something, at an expense so small that we can give them out liberally, something they can take home and read at their leisure and thus get the principles this movement stands for, they are very likely to speak of this matter to some good friend whose judgment they value, and pass the booklet on.”

These booklets may be purchased from the nearest assembly or from the Bahai Publishing Society, 4319 Lake Park avenue, Chicago, Ill. The price is \$19 a thousand for the big and \$9 a thousand for the little booklets. The plan is for every Bahai in the United States to keep these at hand and daily put some into circulation.

Mr. Albert H. Hall made a motion which was carried: “That this Unity recommend the early publication in standard form of all the Tablets of Baha'o'llah thus far translated into English and which are available to us through English translations approved by the board, with the exception of the *Kitab-el-Akdas* and the *Ighan*; that these publications be in a standard form, contemplating the uniformity with future publications of Abdul-Baha; and that for the purpose of promoting and accomplishing that work Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm and Miss Mary Lesch be appointed a special committee to co-ordinate this Unity with the Bahai Publishing So-

ciety, and also that they co-ordinate with them all other volunteers in this work.

He then moved that for the purpose of carrying out this work covered by the resolution just adopted, Mr. Wilhelm and Miss Lesch be appointed a special committee to co-ordinate and secure the co-operation of the Bahai Temple Unity with the Bahai Publishing Society and all other volunteers to that work who will assist therein.

Star of the West.

There was much enthusiasm over the way the STAR OF THE WEST has been growing in interest and the splendid way it has been bringing good things to readers. Mr. Hall said, "In our meetings there is nothing so good as the STAR OF THE WEST," and he made a motion that an appreciation be sent to the editors.

Mr. Wilhelm said that everything that comes out now in the STAR is so broad gauge that it is excellent to pass along. His exact words were: "Now to come down to the business end for a moment, if we could double its subscription it would be so enormously better than it is now you would not know it. Anybody that knows anything about printing will tell you that the big expense is the first thousand. There is not a single booklet that we have that is so splendidly adapted to interest people as the STAR OF THE WEST. And I move that in the first communication that is sent out to the membership at large a request be made to all believers who can, to take an additional copy. And they will see mighty quickly what a wonderful improvement it will make in the STAR OF THE WEST."

Mr. Hall suggested that there be brought to their attention the plan of ordering five, ten or twenty copies for distribution, to be paid for by the assembly, as a teaching agency.

[It was later suggested in Chicago that

it would be a great service if those who could afford it would send in five, ten, twenty or a hundred subscriptions and distribute or let traveling teachers distribute the extra copies to those who are today hungering for the life-giving words which the STAR OF THE WEST is presenting.]

Teachings for Bahai Sunday Schools.

Mr. Andrew J. Nelson, delegate from Racine, Wis., asked for information about teaching small children in a Bahai Sunday School or Saturday school or whatever day is chosen. The children in Racine are asking for a Sunday School (they did have one, but the young women teachers married and the young men have joined the United States army). "Therefore," he said, "if there is any one among you who can suggest a method to teach the children, so that they will not need to go through what the older ones have, I wish you would bear it in mind."

Mrs. Breed replied: "If you will get into communication with Mr. Joseph H. Hannen in Washington, D. C., you will get plenty of ideas for a Sunday School."

One Boston delegate said this was one of the most important suggestions made in the convention for it is a tremendous inspiration that we should not neglect these beautiful children, who really are in the world to take up the work which we shall leave almost unworthily done.

"The time has come to take up this question of teaching children," said Mrs. Grace Ober. "Abdul-Baha has promised that some very wonderful children will arise in the Cause. He was asked as to whether we should send the children to the Sunday Schools. He said, 'No! Why lay a foundation that will later need to be torn down?' So it behooves us to do some work for these children. We in Cambridge wrote all over the country for information as

to what to do for the children because we did not know enough about it; and if you had seen the shower of letters that came to us you would realize that the time has come.

“This matter is so near our hearts that we desire to have some definite action taken, so that we can go forward immediately with the work. Mrs. Joseph H. Hannen, when in Acca, received some very wonderful instructions from Abdul-Baha regarding the teaching of children. She has this material and material is coming into Cambridge from all over the land. I move that a committee be formed of possibly nine members for the collection of material to be put into some definite form which will prove of assistance all over the world, which will meet the needs not only of very little children, but the children who are in different degrees of unfolding. If we had a group of nine workers to draw from all the writings of Baha’o’llah and Abdul-Baha whatever there is on this subject, possibly then when the committee was brought together they could reduce it to a committee of three and get the matter into some definite booklet or serial form.”

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously, Mrs. Hannen being made chairman.

Mr. Hannen, who received the instructions with Mrs. Hannen at Acca, mentioned that those instructions were particularly to the effect that the Words of Baha’o’llah, such as the *Words of Wisdom* and *Hidden Words*, be made the basis of the teachings—“the very words that we have thought the deepest and the part that we would need to bring to them last.” But those were the instructions.

M. Eshte’al-Ebn Kalanter said that Abdul-Baha had told him on several different occasions that we all look to the next generation. Bahais of today have brought in with them their prejudices and it is a mighty task for each of them

to withstand the tests which are constantly nourished by these shades of bias; whereas the new generation will be free from this handicap, not having had any teachings of the schools of religion preceding Baha’o’llah, they will look upon all humanity as equal before God.

M. Kalanter also said that Mr. and Mrs. Hannen will be considered the parents of the Bahai Sunday School idea in America.

Mr. Harlan F. Ober told of Bahai night schools in India where young people attending other day schools are taught Bahai principles in the evening.

Bahai Books in Libraries.

Mr. Joseph H. Hannen gave an account of the placing of Bahai books in the leading libraries of America. A list of several hundred public libraries, representing a rather complete list from the Library of Congress was circularized in regard to Bahai books. In several instances large libraries such as that at Princeton, purchased at the full catalogue price such of the books they did not have. Other libraries willing to accept them were furnished with books. Mr. Hannen gave special praise to Mr. Ober, Mr. Harris, Mr. Remy and Miss Elizabeth Hopper for their help. Nearly six hundred copies of Mr. Remy’s two books are in American public libraries. The Shirazi family of Rangoon, Burma, had translations of these two books made by the hundreds for distribution in the Orient.

Some Beautiful Messages.

Some great meetings in the southland were spoken of by Mr. Louis G. Gregory and a new but radiant Bahai, Mr. Samuel Tait. One point made by Mr. Gregory was: “Abdul-Baha, in his tablet that was revealed since the war began, says that the hearts of the people are in a marvelous state of receptivity, and in traveling about through the country one finds just this condition. He describes

also the condition of the teachers as they go forward. They must be severed from everything but God and be willing to do the will of God wherever that leads. And he declares that if the teachers go forth with these qualifications that all opposition shall be swept away. He says something like this: The ephemeral moth shall become the soaring falcon, and the butterfly shall become the eagle of the Testament, that everything in the way of opposition shall be swept away by this resistless fire of the love of God, if the teachers only go forth equipped with the word of God to do this wonderful work."

Mr. Tait told of visits to scores of southern cities and he said: "At all of these places I found a wonderful awakening. Some of the things that impressed me after my return from the field were the demonstrations of the power of the Branch.* I never realized the power of the Branch until I returned. I have been just saturated and impregnated by the power of the Branch, the greatest Covenant! And the thought that impressed me was that in this universal movement if we only had the effulgence of this divine glory that is permeating the world and the very atoms of the universe, we could capture the world!"

Mrs. Mabel Geary speaking for the northwest announced that Seattle has recently built a hall of its own. It has also formed a little public service bureau, the only one in Seattle. When Mr. and Mrs. Gillen's daughter was married in Seattle, the Bahai service was used and the bride and bridegroom gave the nineteen-day feast in their new home that same evening. Seattle, too, has the distinction of teaching the Bahai Cause to a Japanese. Abdul-Baha sent him a tablet urging him to illumine his own land, and the young man went back to his country, spoke in eight schools, pub-

lished in Japanese a booklet about the Cause, and designed a card "Bahai, the New Revelation," which he spread over the country.

Mrs. Carre of Newark, N. J., described the Bahai burial service which was used at her daughter's funeral. Many friends of the beautiful girl accepted the Bahai teaching because she had lived it so radiantly. One man who had only known the girl by sight came to hear what religion had so illumined her face. When he heard the Message he said: "Why, from the time I was a little boy, I have wanted this Revelation, and when my mother would call me in for anything I would think, 'Oh! now she is going to tell me that wonderful thing I wanted to know.' And I have grown up and never heard of it until now." He died three weeks later, a glorious Bahai.

Here is a line from Dr. F. W. D'Evelyn's talk. He said (quoting Abdul-Baha): "'The banner of Baha'o'llah will be upraised, and all the people of America will hear the call of God.' As Abdul-Baha said to us in San Francisco, 'If all the forces of the world rise against you, they will not prevail, for they are retrogressing, but you are progressing.'"

"On our last meeting night before I left, the friends were gathered together to give me a message, and to have a vibrant keynote between myself and my colleague and those at home, and they selected that passage on page 155 of the *Paris Talks*, 'Cease the contemplation of your own finite selves, and fix your eyes upon regnant reality. Then will the soul come into the full nature of the divine power of the spirit and receive the blessing of infinite bounty.'"

He continued: "May this convention be a great creative center from which will emanate a power which shall go forward, breaking down and overcoming every barrier until there be fulfilled the promises of Baha'o'llah and Abdul-Baha, that this flag will float above every

*Refers to Abdul-Baha, the "Greatest Branch."

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Kamal 1, 73 (August 20, 1917)

No. 9

Conduct of the Assembly and Duties of Its Committee of Consultation

Words of Abdul-Baha: From the Diary of Mirza Mahmood. Translated by
Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, Chicago

ABDUL-BAHA addressed the Bahai children in the parlor of the Plaza Hotel, Chicago, on the morning of May 5, 1912. After embracing them with the utmost tenderness, and giving them candy and flowers, he said, "According to the words of Christ, you are the children of the Kingdom. And according to the words of Baha'o'llah, you are the candles of the world of humanity, for your hearts are in the utmost chastity, and your souls are in the utmost holiness. You are not entangled by this world. And like unto a mirror, your hearts are pure and clear. Your fathers and mothers must train you with the utmost tenderness and teach you the best manners and perfections, in order that you may be perfectly qualified with the virtues of the world of humanity; that you may advance in all the stations, that you may acquire sciences and arts, become the cause of the manifestation of everlasting bounties and universal progress."

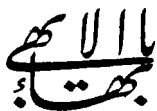
Then Abdul-Baha turned and spoke to the friends:

"I am going, but you must arise to serve the word of God. Your hearts

must become pure and your intentions sincere, in order that you may become the recipients of the divine bestowals. Consider that, although the sun shines equally upon all things, yet in the clear mirror the reflection is most brilliant and not in the black stone. That great brilliancy and its heat are produced because of the clearness of the glass and the crystal. If there were no clearness and purity, no such effects would have been manifested. Likewise, should the rain fall on salty earth, it would never have effect. But, if it falls on a good, pure soil, it becomes green and verdant and brings forth fruits.

"Today is the day when the pure hearts have a share of the everlasting bestowals and the sanctified souls are being illumined by the eternal manifestations. Praise be to God, you are believers in God; assured by the words of God and are turned to the Kingdom of God. You have heard the divine call. Your hearts are moved by the breezes of the paradise of Abha. You have good intentions. Your purpose is the good-pleasure of God. You desire to serve in the Kingdom of the Merciful One.

Therefore, arise in the utmost power. Be in the utmost unity. Never become angry with one another. Let your eyes be directed toward the Kingdom of truth and not toward the world of creation. Love the creatures for the sake of God, not for themselves. You never become angry if you love them for the sake of God, because humanity is not perfect. looks at imperfections. The eye that covers faults looks toward the Creator of the souls, because He created them all; trains them all, provides for them. To all He gives soul and life. He gives eyes and ears. Therefore, all are the signs of His grandeur. You must love all, be kind to all. The poor must be cared for, the weak protected, the sick



IN EVERY COUNTRY or government where any of this community reside [i. e., the Bahais], they must behave toward that government with faithfulness, trustfulness and truthfulness. This is that which is revealed from the Presence of the Ancient Commander! It is obligatory and incumbent on the people of the world in general, to assist this Most Great Cause,—which has descended from the Heaven of the Will of the King of Pre-existence—that perchance the fire of animosity which is ablaze in the hearts of some of the nations, may be quenched through the water of Divine Wisdom and Lordly Commands and Exhortations, and that the light of union and accord may irradiate and illumine the regions of the world.

Words of BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH
from *The Glad Tidings*.

Undoubtedly, every human being has imperfection. And you will always become unhappy if you look toward the people. But if you look toward God, you will love them and be kind to them all, because the world of God is the world of perfection and complete mercy. Therefore, do not look at the shortcomings of anybody. Look at all with the sight of forgiveness. The imperfect eye

healed, the ignorant taught and educated.

“Therefore, my hope is that the unity and the harmony of the friends of Chicago may become the cause of the unity of all the friends in America, and all the people become the recipients of their courtesy. That is, that they may become the example for all. Then the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abha and

the bestowals of the Sun of Reality will be all encircling.”

At the home of Mrs. Corinne True, November 1, 1912:

The Spiritual Committee of Consultation asked Abdul-Baha as to the duties of the Committee. He answered:

“The first duty of the members is to effect their own unity and harmony, in order to obtain good results. If there be no unity, or the Committee becomes the cause of inharmony, undoubtedly, it is better that it does not exist. If the Committee of Consultation or the general assembly becomes the cause of unhappiness, it must be abandoned. How pleased I was with the friends in California. They said: ‘We do not want a Committee of Consultation lest we fall into the thought of leadership and superiority and become the cause of dissension. But, now, praise be to God, we are serving

according to our capacity and have no thought or aim, except the spreading of the fragrances of God.’

“Therefore, when the unity of the members of the Committee is established, their second duty is to read the verses and communes, to be in a state of commemoration and mindfulness, that they may see each other as if in the presence of God.

“The third duty of the Committee is consultation and meditation regarding the teaching of the Cause of God in all regions and climes. They must arise for this great purpose with all their power; they must declare and hasten the necessary steps for teaching the Cause of God.

“Their fourth duty is to meditate and consult for the helping of the poor and the weak and the protection of the sick.

“Their fifth duty is to correct and manage the affairs of the friends and attend to other matters concerning the Cause.”

The Symbolic Meaning of Walking on the Sea

Words of Abdul-Baha: From the Notes of Miss E. Rosenberg, 1901

IN this story (the “miracle” of Jesus walking on the water) of our Lord Jesus, the Sea of Tiberius represents the ocean of creation,—the two shores represent earthly truth and spiritual truth. The boat or ark stands for arguments and reasons by which men acquire knowledge and in this boat Jesus’ disciples were tossed on the waves of the ocean of creation. The shore which Jesus left in order to come to them, walking on the water, represents earthly knowledge. The haven or shore to which he guided them represents spiritual knowledge.

There are three ways of apprehending truth: 1. The earthly way,—by means of the five senses; 2. The way of argument and reasoning—and all philosophers have taught that it is possible to reach the knowledge of all truth by this method; 3. The spiritual way,—by which man receives knowledge from the inner light or inspiration. The ancient phil-

osophers and indeed the philosophers of all times have taught that the first method,—that is by means of the five senses,—was the one certain way of knowing truth. . . . For instance, people in the desert often see a most beautiful mirage of trees and water, but the nearer you approach to this phantom, the more it fades away, and you begin to perceive its unreality. All this proves that the evidence of the senses alone is not to be relied on for conceiving the truth.

The ancient philosophers have also taught that by the intellect (the second method of argument and reasoning) accurate and absolute knowledge of everything can be obtained. . . . But it is evident that we cannot rely on this second method of obtaining knowledge to insure absolute accuracy. Successive philosophers are always contradicting each other, and propounding diverse

theories. If absolute knowledge were to be obtained by this means, the wisest philosophers would agree in saying the same things.

There is yet a third method of acquiring knowledge,—by revelation, or the inspired books; but the difficulty in this case is that every person's interpretation of the book is colored by his own individuality. In the time of Jesus Christ, the Jews were prevented from accepting him by clinging to the literal interpretation of their book. . . .

As we have before said in the account of this miracle, the disciples of Jesus attempted to sail over the sea of creation in the ark of argument and reasoning, finding great difficulty and danger in proving the truth by so doing. But when Christ, the Light of the world, who knew all things by the light of inner spiritual illumination, came to them in their boat, walking by his knowledge over the ocean of existence, and having no need of the ark of argument, then immediately they were at their desired haven.

Mashrak-el-Azkar Convention and Bahai Congress

(Continued from page 111)

region, and every ear in America will hear the call of Allah'o'Abha!"

Miss Edna McKinney, representing Denver, spoke of a November night in Chicago but ten years ago when Mrs. Corinne True gave a dinner and nine persons from as many assemblies stayed afterward to discuss the possibility of forming an association for the erection of a Mashrak-el-Azkar in this country. That night there were about ten at the dinner. At the Rizwan Feast last Saturday night in the year of 1917 nearly four hundred friends were present, drawn by one great impulse to build the temple and to serve humanity.

"There is but one thing in the world today which can cause such a quickening, and that is the power of the Center of the Covenant.

"This wonderful ninth convention is the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Baha'o'llah."

From Mrs. Josephine C. De Lagnel: "When I was in the presence of Abdul-Baha, I supplicated again and again that I might be his servant, and this one answer he always gave me: 'You know a poor, ignorant, Persian woman has become a great teacher on account of the love in her heart'."

Mrs. Claudia Stuart Coles: "In this day no matter what mistake we make, it

can be corrected, because the power of the Holy Spirit is surging through the whole world. As in the time of the apostles nineteen hundred years ago, so today the Pentecostal visitation gives to the weak and vacillating the power to go forth and die for the faith that God had lighted in their hearts.

"Our duty is merely to look at the Center of the Covenant and receive the light that is shining, and we need not bother with any fear as to how the world is to be run. But the power of the Spirit is remaking us all, and no law that we make, no word that we say, can stand before the will of God in this day which is to make us anew."

Mrs. Greenleaf quoted Abdul-Baha as saying to her: "Be patient, be magnificently patient" and again, "Be happy. Happiness is life and sorrow is death. Be happy," then she knew that happiness came through activity. Another time he said to her, "The general of the army is never so much interested in the reserve forces, but it is necessary for him to be in communication with those at the front." Mrs. Greenleaf ended her talk by saying "Baha'o'llah is the center of light in the world. Need we worry too much about the darkness? When the center rises within the sky, it takes within its bosom all the light of

the stars, and we behold not the stars for we have the dawn of the day.”

Among the stories relating to the Mashrak-el-Azkar, Roy C. Wilhelm gave the following: “Abdul-Baha told the story of the rich man who gave all he had; and he told about the widow who was left with two children to support and who supported them by knitting socks, and that of every pair of socks she knit, one went to the support of herself and her children and the other went to the building of the Mashrak-el-Azkar; and he turned and said, ‘These are the things that will build the Mashrak-el-Azkar in America.’”

Relative to certain matters which came up, Mr. A. W. Randall quoted the following words from Abdul-Baha: “There are no officers in this Cause. I do not and have not appointed any one to perform any special services, but I encourage every one to engage in the service of the Kingdom. The foundation of this Cause is purely a democracy, and not a theocracy.”

Greatest Name Used for Applause.

An innovation at the convention was that instead of clapping to show appreciation, the friends were asked to use the Greatest Name.

Suggestion: Who will write a good article for the encyclopaedias? People are turning to them for facts about the Bahai movement.

It was moved and carried that Dr. Bagdadi and M. Kalanter translate the desires of Abdul-Baha on the conduct of assemblies and the five things its committee of consultation should do and that this be published in the STAR OF THE WEST.*

Mr. Frank E. Osborne read a complete Bahai calendar on which he has been working for the past four or five years. Abdul-Baha gave it his verbal sanction. It was referred to the executive board.

Dr. Hills Cole presented a resolution which was passed that the Bahai Temple

Unity of America express its sympathy with Esperantists throughout the world in the loss of leadership sustained by them through the recent death of Dr. Zamenhof, desiring to join with them in paying tribute to the aspirations and endeavors of this true lover and advocate of universal peace, and commend to Bahais everywhere active participation in the work which, under God, Dr. Zamenhof was permitted to bring to so advanced a stage of fruition.

Membership of Executive Board.

The membership of the executive board for the coming year consists of Mr. Wm. H. Randall, chairman; Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm, Mr. Albert H. Hall, Mrs. Corinne True, Mr. Harlan F. Ober, M. Eshte'al-Ebn Kalanter, Mrs. A. S. Parsons, Mr. Alfred E. Lunt, and Mrs. H. Emogene Hoagg.

The chairman of the board read the words of Abdul-Baha: “In meetings of consultation the majority should rule, but it is far preferable that there should be such unity that there be no majority, that all should be of one mind.

“In the election of the House of Spirituality (Spiritual Assembly of Consultation) no political tactics shall enter. They must be free from self, not anxious to further their own personal ambitions. The existence of the Spiritual Assembly is for no other purpose than to discuss those means which would further the promotion of the Cause; or otherwise its non-existence is better than its existence. . . .

“The apostles of Christ never devised any political schemes whereby to win the majority of votes. The result is that when we mention the names of John, of Peter, of Matthew, a wonderful spirituality is obtained, the hearts are inspired and the souls rejoiced. The disciples were not politicians, they were harbingers of the glad tidings of the Kingdom. They did not know anything about elections, votes, initiative and referendum. They knew Him only. Sim-

*See page 112.

ilarly, this Cause is pure spiritually. It deals with the moral aspect of mankind. The hearts of the believers must be fountains of the love of Baha'o'llah. Freeing themselves from all withering restrictions, they must occupy themselves with the promulgation of the Word."

Memorial Service for Mrs. Lua Getsinger.

On the last day of Rizwan, and the last day of the convention, as it was the first anniversary of the passing from this earth of Mrs. Lua Getsinger, a short memorial service was held for her. Mrs. May Maxwell spoke thus of the spiritual mother of so many souls in America: "Lua needs no eulogy from human beings. But whenever I think of her I remember something that Abdul-Baha said about her to me, 'It is indeed the truth that Lua has guided many, many, many souls into the Kingdom.'

"I think—as the convention is disbanding and we are going forth to the really great work for which in this convention we have received such inspiration, that it has been like drinking from a fountain of living water, it is fitting that we speak of Lua. It has seemed that last year's convention was like a limpid pool that was still and calm and deep, reflecting the image of the Center of the Convent, on that day when Lua gave up her life far away in the land of Egypt. I think many of us felt last year that the spiritual temple came into being on

that day and at that convention. But this has been much more wonderful, because it has been like a surging sea, the tempestuous waves of power surging through this convention in all our hearts and souls; but the depths—those great depths of love—of wonderful love that we all feel for one another have remained untouched and undisturbed; and they are surely the basis of all that work we are going forth to do.

"And if we can attain to any part of the sacrifice and service of Lua, we shall do well, because I never knew her to refuse any call, no matter how weak, exhausted, or tired. She would always give up everything to serve. One day in Paris, at one moment's notice she gave up her trip to London and gave up her tickets to give the message to one man, because he wanted to hear it from Lua."

A silent prayer followed in memory of that one who was among the first to herald in America the new Kingdom of universal love and peace.

Adjourned to Meet in Chicago.

The Boston session was adjourned to meet in Chicago, June 17th, formally to ratify within the State of Illinois the action of the Boston meeting.

In the homes of Boston Bahais, delegates who remained a day longer, met and had wonderful times praying for the return of the pilgrims to the different parts of the country.

The One Day Convention in Chicago

ON the seventeenth of June friends from Boston, San Francisco, Minneapolis and Pittsburgh gathered in Chicago for a joyous one-day congress. The occasion of their meeting was the ratifying of the plans made in Boston for the Temple to be built in Chicago. This business was quickly finished and then came the chief glory of the day—two meetings, one in the afternoon at the Auditorium Hotel, another in the even-

ing at the Masonic Temple which the Chicago Bahais had arranged.

Both meetings were crowded with eager seekers for the light of God. And the light of God's love and truth was there, shining with conquering brilliance. At times the Holy Spirit seemed to sweep the audiences in bright waves. Many had a new and holy consciousness that the Day of God had really dawned

in this night of war. To some this consciousness was so vivid that at midnight they felt all the freshness and glory of the morning. Others who came to Chi-

ago for the day went away feeling they had been born from above by the Eternal Life flowing bright from the Kingdom of Abha.

Addresses delivered at the Bahai Congress

THE ONENESS OF HUMANITY.

Outline of Talk by Mr. Horace Holley at Boston.

WE live today in an organized, developed society, among the accumulated resources of the past. The youthful mind, feeling its own solitary weakness in the presence of so much authority and power, tends to discredit its own resources and its own power, and early becomes susceptible to the all-pervading influences of materialism. For, in the broad view of things, materialism is simply the preponderance of external influence over the innate quality of the individual spiritual life. The ordinary mind, therefore, learns to develop its imitative, memorizing qualities at the expense of its creative, independent attributes. It locates authority in institutions, and traditional customs and beliefs rather than in spiritual impulse. In all activities, however, the creative work is done by minds which use accumulated knowledge, tradition and custom as fuel to their own vision. Without such minds in art, science, politics and philisophy—to say nothing of religion—the world would rapidly become stagnant, the slave of material doctrines. The vision of the few keeps alive the faith that the ultimate authority is really invested in the individual soul, for every new advance, every improvement, comes from some soul's independent activity. The spirit creates all things, and without spiritual activity thoughts decay.

Thus when we deal with the sources of things, even those things not commonly called religious, we perceive that society is essentially a manifestation of states of mind. Though most minds are early benumbed into the belief that they are the results and not the causes of society, materialism actually creates

nothing, it merely has the power to perpetuate error and lack of faith.

Since we have come to a condition of affairs where the influence of minds upon one another is the all-determining factor in life, almost totally replacing the influence of the natural environment which determined life in earlier times, nothing is more important today than a general realization of the truth that society, in the long run, reflects mental states. We still manifest the mental states established under primitive conditions, still hold to the physical law of self-preservation and rivalry learned in the jungle, though the great war, as well as unrest and disturbance throughout society, show clearly enough that the physical law is no longer a guide but a betrayal. In other words, we stand half way between two civilizations—that in which nature determines thought, and that in which thought looks for guidance from the world of consciousness. In the world of consciousness we have a reality as universal, and far more powerful than nature, we have the Divine Manifestation, the Prophet who exemplifies not merely the Will but also the Reality of God.

Revelation is the proper environment of man's spiritual self. Revelation is the mother nature of the soul. It is the universe into which all men must be born anew to live complete, free lives. The religious teaching of love has been negative by man's fear of his fellow—the Bahai teaching of Unity casts out this fear by showing the inter-dependence in which all now live. Love or Christianity, is like a ship which has been drawn up on the sands of spiritual

ignorance. Unity, or the Bahai Movement, is the sea in which that ship can now be launched.

Long ago it was said that the proper study of mankind is man. Man, however, exemplifies all degrees of existence

from the lowest animal up. To study man in general is to find abundant proofs for every opinion about life. The proper study of mankind is really *Man*—the Revelator, the Mirror in which our true attributes can be beheld.

RELIGION MUST BE THE CAUSE OF UNITY IN THE HUMAN WORLD

From Talk by Mr. Howard MacNutt at Boston.

THIS is the Cycle of Definition;—not only have the meanings of the prophecies, terms and symbols of the heavenly books become manifest, but now is the time of clear vision, real perception and accurate observation. A few years ago, standing in the Lick observatory upon the summit of Mt. Hamilton in California, looking out into the starry abysses, an astronomer said to me, "Tonight definition is perfect; all the constellations are visible." In this day of inner perception and spiritual vision, standing in the lofty height of the Universal Manifestation, Baha'o'llah, we behold the divine Manifestations as one in the heaven of the Will of God, each constellation clear, distinct and shining in its own time and place, but all coordinated in the oneness of an infinite perfection.

Baha'o'llah is the object-glass of our spiritual telescope; Abdul-Baha is the lens or eye-piece through whom when rightly focused we view not his personality, but the light of the Abha splendor streaming through him.

Religion then is the revealed will of God by the light of which the conscious eye of man is quickened into intuitive recognition of the divine plan and Covenant. The natal hunger of human consciousness proves this knowledge must be revealed. Therefore the Word is made flesh only in the human kingdom.

Religion has been considered as codes of philosophical explanation and theological interpretation. In reality these have been satanic fancies. The very antithesis of true religion, are therefore the cause of disunion and hatred. Still the fact of the Word proclaims "Religion

must be the cause of unity in the human world."

Each Manifestation has sounded the true diapason harmony of the inner and outer spheres. Mankind wanders away from the pitch, becomes dissonant, then another Manifestation sounds the original chord, summoning the world again to the true harmony.

This is the cycle of spiritual democracy. We are in the evolutionary times of transition from autocracy to democracy; from theocracy to individual responsibility of service and greater measure of judgment. It is the cycle of universal problems and universal solutions. The various systems of religious belief were not intended to unite before this day of God. Rivers mingle in their outlet with the ocean, but not in their courses. The barriers or watersheds are the concealed ordinances and ceremonials.

The materials for the divine temple of unity are now assembled. They cannot build themselves together into the plan of the Architect. The Architect himself does not build the structure. There must be a master builder who combines the materials in obedience to the Architect's intention. This master-builder is the Center of the Covenant through whom a creative cosmic constructive power is now manifesting itself. At the point of boiling, every atom of water is in intense agitation; then a new element, steam, appears. We are at the climax of ebullition.

Once I saw thousands of fishes stranded in pools upon the beach. They could not reach the ocean nor reach one another. I tried to help them, but not until the great ocean tide itself came in

were they blended with it and brought together in salvation and unity. This unity of man in the revealed will of God, is the bounty of God descending upon those who now see the sign of the

Son of Man in the heaven of religion, coming with his angels and servants to quicken conscious perception of the heavenly Covenant and its Center, Abdul-Baha.

THE EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

Resume of Address by Mr. Louis G. Gregory at Boston

THE Day of God is the day of freedom for all the varied elements of humanity. It accords with divine justice that each and all may develop their powers without hindrance from their fellows. Hand in hand with the oneness of humanity is the other principle, the equality of men and women. Humanity "cannot exist half-slave and half-free." Women must be free in order that men may be free. Considering the physical, mental and spiritual effects: thralldom rests as heavily upon the oppressor as upon the oppressed.

Are women inferior to men on the physical plane? This proposition cannot be scientifically proved. Instances are multiplied where women perform the tasks usually assigned to men with good results. In this great cycle the latent powers of women become more and more patent. It becomes apparent that any relative weakness on the part of women can be corrected by proper exercise and training. In the lower kingdoms, the female is often more active and powerful than the male. With the opportunities now afforded to women for physical culture, men who boast of physical prowess may look to their laurels.

Are the sexes intellectually equal? Although in past ages women who arose to places of commanding influence were rare and exceptional, yet a number of such cases can be cited to prove their inherent powers. In politics they have successfully ruled nations, inspiring their subjects to growth and freedom. Their contributions to literature, art and science have won fame and even in war time they have been forces to be reckoned with. Their right to vote

grows in public favor throughout the world. Here again any seeming inequality of the sexes yields to those opportunities for education which the new cycle brings.

On the spiritual plane the attainments of women cannot be questioned. The thing speaks for itself. In nearly all religions women are in the majority and be it said to their eternal honor, they do not exercise over men the tyranny of a majority. How noble is that modesty, how spiritual is that trait, by which they so often efface themselves and vote *men into office!*

Many great women have arisen in the world. Among the very greatest was Kurrat-ul-Ayn, who was a follower of the Bab and one of the nineteen Letters of the Living. Beautiful, witty, learned, she became, through divine power, a brilliant star of reality. She spread the light of God and wrought a marvel toward the emancipation of women. She sacrificed life and more than life, in the path of God. Traces of her glorious service may now be found in all parts of the world.

The greatest attribute of God is His justice. The Most Great Peace will be permanent because its basis is divine justice. The equality of men and women is a light of reality. The Bab, Baha'o'llah and Abdul-Baha, have in oneness proclaimed this principle. The thing is done which ought to be done. The light shines, though the darkness doth not understand. In the Kingdom of El-Abha, no differences are recognized. The purest heart is most acceptable to God, whether man or woman.

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Ezzat 1, 73 (September 8, 1917)

No. 10

The Divine Art of Living

A COMPILATION BY MRS. MARY M. RABB

(Chapter I appeared in issue No. 16, Vol. VII; Chapter II appeared in issue No. 18, Vol. VII; Chapter III appeared in issue No. 2, Vol. VIII; Chapter IV appeared in issue No. 4, Vol. VIII; Chapter V appeared in issue No. 6, Vol. VIII; Chapter VI appeared in issue No. 8, Vol. VIII.)

CHAPTER VII

Love

UNITY is love. It cannot be established without love. Therefore try, as far as possible, to be filled with love. Love is perpetual life, the most perfect vitality. Consider how love has gathered us together from the East and the West! If there were no love between us our friendship would have been concluded with salutations, such as "Good morning" and "Good evening." Love draws us in friendship to the people of every race and religion. He is a Bahai, of the people of Baha, from whom we breathe the fragrance of this love again. . . . The highest love is independent of any personal advantages which we may draw from the love of the friend. If you love truly, your love for your friend will continue, even if he treats you ill. A man who really loves God, will love Him whether he be ill, or sad, or unfortunate. He does not love God because He has created him—his life may be full of disassociations and miseries. He does not love God because He has given him health or wealth, because these may disappear at any moment. He does not love Him because He has given him the strength of youth, because old age will surely come upon him. The reason for his love is not because he is grateful for certain mercies and benefits. No!

The lover of God desires and adores Him because He is perfection and because of His perfections. Love should be the very essence of love, and not dependent on outward manifestations.

A moth loves the light, though his wings are burnt. Though his wings are singed, he throws himself against the flame. He does not love the light because it has conferred some benefit upon him. Therefore he hovers round the light, though he sacrifices his wings.

This is the highest degree of love. Without this abandonment, this ecstasy, love is imperfect.

The lover of God loves Him for Himself, not for his own sake.

(Abdul-Baha: Quoted from *Fortnightly Review*; June, 1911.)

When the fire of love is become ablaze, the harvest of reason will be wholly consumed.

(Baha'o'llah: *Seven Valleys*, p. 11.)

All the divine messengers have come to this earth as specialists of the law of love. They came to teach a divine love to the children of men; they came to minister a divine healing between the

nations; they came to cement in one the hearts of men and to bring humanity into a state of unity and concord. In this pathway, each one of these divine Manifestations of God's love has accepted innumerable calamities and hardships. For the sake of a realization of love and concord among men, they have sacrificed their lives. How many persecutions have they suffered so that they might bring into a state of harmony those contending nations and religions, so that they might create peace and consolation among these various peoples of the earth.

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 3, No. 17, p. 6.)

The body-politic today is greatly in need of a physician. It is similar to a human body afflicted with nervous ailments. A doctor diagnoses the case and then prescribes treatment. He does not prescribe, however, until he has made the diagnosis. The disease which afflicts the body-politic is lack of love and absence of altruism. In the hearts of men no real love is found, and the condition is such that unless their susceptibilities are quickened by some power so that unity, love and accord may develop within them, there can be no healing, no agreement among mankind. Love and unity are the needs of the body-politic today. Without these no progress or prosperity can be attained. Therefore the friends of God must adhere to the power which will create this love and unity in the hearts of the sons of men. Science cannot cure the illness of the body-politic. Science cannot create amity and fellowship in human hearts. Neither can patriotism or racial prejudice effect a remedy. It must be accomplished solely through the divine bounties and spiritual bestowals which have descended from God, in this day, for that purpose. This is an exigency of the times, and the divine remedy has been provided. For the spiritual teachings of the re-

ligion of God can alone create this love, unity and accord in human hearts. . . .

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 3, No. 10, p. 14.)

Although the body-politic is one family, yet because of the lack of symmetry some members are comfortable and some are in the utmost misery; some members are satisfied and some are hungry; some are clothed with the most costly garments while some families are in need of food and shelter. Why? Because this family has not that reciprocity and symmetry needed. This household is not well arranged. . . . Is it possible for a member of a family to be subjected to the utmost of misery and abject poverty, and for the rest of the family to be comfortable? It is impossible, unless the rest of the family be without feeling, having become spiritually atrophied, inhospitable, unkind. . . .

The purport is this, that as we are all inhabitants of the same earth, in reality we are one family, and each one of us is a member of that family. Therefore we must all live in the utmost of happiness and comfort under a just rule and regulation in accordance with the laws of God, because this life is fleeting, and if man looks after himself only, he is no better than the animal, for the animal alone is to that degree egotistic. On the contrary man should be willing to accept hardships for himself in order that others may be happy. . . . This is characteristic of man, this is becoming to man. . . . Such a man is the honor of the world of humanity; such a man is the glory of the world of mankind; such a man is he who wins eternal bliss; such a man is nearer the threshold of God; such a man is the very manifestation of eternal happiness. . . .

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Address given at Montreal, Canada, September 3, 1912.)

The most glorious attainment is the understanding of this great saying: All beings are the fruits of one tree, the leaves of one branch, the drops of one sea. Honor is for him who loveth men, not for him who loveth his own.

(Baha'o'llah.)

O thou daughter of the Kingdom! The Lord of the Kingdom and the Sun of Truth hath sent forth a splendor and effulgence upon the world and the universe. All the contingent things found life and existence from the rays of that effulgence, entered and became manifest in the arena of being. Therefore all the objective phenomena are as surfaces of mirrors upon which the Sun of Truth hath cast the rays of the outpouring of bounty. All these surfaces (different stages of life) are mirrors reflecting the rays of the Sun of Truth. The outpouring is the One outpouring and the effulgence is the One effulgence. These complex and diversified mirrors are different from one another. Some of them are in a state of the utmost purity and clearness, reflecting the rays of the Sun of Truth, and the effulgence of the Luminary is manifest and visible in them. On the other hand there are mirrors full of dust and therefore dark; consequently, they are deprived and bereft of any radiation.

The believers of God are the translucent mirrors who, with the utmost purity and clearness, are reflecting the rays of the Orb of regions. Other communities are being darkened and bedimmed like unto stone and adamant. This condition is especially true of the people of hostility, animosity, oppression and tyranny, and the fanatical ones, who, on account of the accumulation of dust (prejudice) have become like unto the black stone, into which the rays of the sun do not penetrate and from which no light radiates.

Now we must not consider nor recognize these mirrors, which are deprived of every gift, as strangers and foreign-

ers, neither should we speak of nor know them as enemies or savages; nay rather, must we recognize them as the members of our body, showing them love and affection; not as strangers, but as associates; not as foreigners, but as friends. One must become engaged in their training and education, sympathize with and show pity to them and lead them into the heavenly characteristics, in order that the accumulated dust may disappear from the surfaces of those mirrors and the shining rays of the Sun of Truth radiate from them.

O thou daughter of the Kingdom! Be ye not a stranger to anyone, even if he be the lowest of savages on the face of the earth and knows nothing of God, or even if he be an enemy. Desire ye his association, aspire ye for his freedom and long ye for his perfection, in order that hatred and dissension, animosity and oppression, cruelty and tyranny, brutality and falsehood, pride and transgression may be removed from among mankind, the universe become the Paradise of Abha, the world be transformed into the Kingdom of Heaven, the human race become angels and the individuals of the world of humanity become the manifestors of the favors of the glorious Lord. This is the perfection of the human world. This is the divine guidance of the Almighty.

O thou daughter of the Kingdom! Display ye the utmost charity toward the poor, the orphans and the helpless ones of all communities and nations, and have ye for them exceeding consideration. Serve ye them like unto the real servants. Know ye them as excellent persons and count yourselves day and night the thralls of mankind.

(Abdul-Baha.)

O Son of Man! In My ancient entity and in My eternal being was I hidden. I knew my love in thee, therefore I created thee; upon thee I laid My image, and to thee revealed My beauty.

O Son of Man! I loved thy creation,
therefore I created thee. . . .

(From *Hidden Words*.)

—

We declare that love is the cause of the existence of all phenomena and that the absence of love is the cause of disintegration or non-existence. Love is the conscious bestowal of God,—the bond of affiliation in all phenomena. We will first consider the proof of this through sense-perception: As we look upon the universe we observe that all composite beings or existing phenomena are made up primarily of single elements bound together by a power of attraction. Through this power of attraction, cohesion has become manifest between the atoms of these composing elements. The resultant being is a phenomenon of the lower contingent type. The power of cohesion expressed in the mineral kingdom is in reality love or affinity manifested in a low degree according to the exigencies of the mineral world. We take a step higher into the vegetable kingdom where we find an increased power of attraction has become manifest among the composing elements which form phenomena. Through this degree of attraction a cellular admixture is produced among these elements which make up the body of a plant. Therefore in the degree of the vegetable kingdom there is love. We enter the animal kingdom and find the attractive power binding together single elements as in the mineral, plus the cellular admixture as in the vegetable, plus the phenomena of feelings or susceptibilities. We observe that the animals are susceptible to certain affiliation and fellowship, and that they exercise natural selection. This elemental attraction, this admixture and selective affinity is love manifest in the degree of the animal kingdom.

Finally we come to the kingdom of man. As this is the superior kingdom, the light of love is more resplendent. In man we find the power of attraction

among the elements which compose his material body, plus the attraction which produces cellular admixture or power augmentative, plus the attraction which characterizes the sensibilities of the animal kingdom, but still beyond and above all these lower powers we discover in the being of man the attraction of heart, the susceptibilities and affinities which bind men together, enabling them to live and associate in friendship and solidarity. It is therefore evident that in the world of humanity, the greatest king and sovereign is Love. If love were extinguished, the power of attraction dispelled, the affinity of human hearts destroyed, the phenomena of human life would disappear.

This is a proof perceptible to the senses, acceptable to reason, in accord with traditions and teachings of the holy books and verified by the promptings of human hearts themselves. It is a proof upon which we can absolutely rely and declare to be complete.

But these are only degrees of love which exist in the natural or physical world. Their manifestation is ever according to the requirement of natural conditions and standards. Real love is the love which exists between God and His servants,—the love which binds together holy souls. This is the love of the spiritual world, not the love of the physical bodies and organisms. For example, consider and observe how the bestowals of God successively descend upon mankind; how the divine effulgences ever shine upon the human world! There can be no doubt that these bestowals, these bounties, these effulgences emanate from love. Unless love be the divine motive, it would be impossible for the heart of man to attain or receive them. Unless love exists the divine blessing could not descend upon any object or thing. Unless there be love the recipient of divine effulgence could not radiate and reflect that effulgence upon other objects. If we are of those who perceive we realize that the bounties of

God manifest themselves continuously, even as the rays of the sun unceasingly emanate from the solar center. The phenomenal world through the resplendent effulgence of the sun is radiant and bright. In the same way the realm of hearts and spirits is illumined and resuscitated through the shining rays of the Sun of Reality and the bounties of the love of God. Thereby the world of existence, the kingdom of hearts and spirits, is ever quickened into life. Were it not for the love of God, hearts would be inanimate, spirits would wither and the reality of man would be bereft of the everlasting bestowal.

Consider to what extent the love of God makes itself manifest. Among the signs of His love which appear in the world are the dawning-points of His Manifestations. What an infinite degree of love is reflected by the divine Manifestations toward mankind! For the sake of guiding the people they have willingly forfeited their lives to resuscitate human hearts. They have accepted the cross. To enable human souls to attain the supreme degree of advancement they have suffered during their limited years extreme ordeals and difficulties. If His Holiness Jesus Christ had not possessed love for the world of humanity surely he would not have welcomed the cross. He was crucified for the love of mankind. Consider the infinite degree of that love! Without love for humanity John the Baptist would not have offered his life. It has been likewise with all the prophets and holy souls. If His Holiness the Bab had not manifested love for mankind surely he would not have offered his breast for a thousand bullets. If His Holiness Baha'ollah had not been aflame with love for humanity, he would not have willingly accepted forty years imprisonment.

Observe how rarely human souls sacrifice their pleasure or comfort for others; how improbable that a man would offer his eye or suffer himself to be dismembered for the benefit of another. Yet all the divine Manifestations suffered, of-

fered their lives and blood, sacrificed their existence, comfort and all they possessed for mankind. Therefore consider how much they love! Were it not for their illumination human souls would not be radiant. How effective is their love! This is a sign of the love of God; a ray of the Sun of Reality. . . .

Consider then what the love of God means. Were it not for the love of God all the spirits would be inanimate. The meaning of this is not physical death; nay rather it is that condition concerning which His Holiness Christ declared "Let the dead bury their dead; for that which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of spirit is spirit." Were it not for the love of God the hearts would not be illumined. Were it not for the love of God the pathway of the Kingdom would not be opened. Were it not for the love of God the holy books would not have been revealed. Were it not for the love of God the divine prophets would not have been sent to the world. The foundation of all these bestowals is the love of God. Therefore in the human world there is no greater power than the love of God.

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 3, No. 16, p. 6.)

. . . Love is greater than peace, for peace is founded upon love. Love is the objective point of peace; peace is an outcome of love. Until love obtains, peace cannot be; but you may have peace without love. The love which is from God is the fundamental. This love is the object of all human attainment, the radiance of heaven, the 'light of man.

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 3, No. 10, p. 28.)

O thou who art attracted by the fragrances of God! Know thou assuredly that—

Love is the mystery of divine revelation;

Love is the effulgent manifestation;
 Love is the spiritual fulfillment;
 Love is the light of the Kingdom;
 Love is the breath of the Holy Spirit
 inspired into the human spirit;

Love is the cause of the Manifestation
 of the Truth (God) in the phenomenal
 world;

Love is the necessary tie proceeding
 from the realities of things through di-
 vine creation;

Love is the means of the most great
 happiness in both the material and spir-
 itual worlds;

Love is a light of guidance in the dark
 night;

Love is the bond between the Creator
 and the creature in the inner world;

Love is the cause of development to
 every enlightened man;

Love is the greatest law in this vast
 universe of God;

Love is the one law which causes and
 controls order among the existing atoms;

Love is the universal magnetic power
 between the planets and the stars shin-
 ing in the lofty firmament;

Love is the cause of unfoldment, to a
 searching mind, of the secrets deposited
 in the universe by the Infinite;

Love is the spirit of life in the bounti-
 ful body of the world;

Love is the cause of the civilization of
 nations in this mortal world;

Love is the highest honor to every
 righteous nation.

The people who are confirmed therein
 are indeed glorified by the Supreme Con-
 course, the angels of heaven and the
 dwellers in the Kingdom of El-Abha.
 But, if the hearts of the people become
 void of the divine grace—the *love of
 God*—they wander in the desert of ig-
 norance, descend to the depths of ruin
 and fall to the abyss of despair where
 there is no refuge. They are like in-
 sects living on the lowest plane.

This is the path of El-Baha.

This is the religion of El-Baha.

This is the law of El-Baha.

He who has not this has no portion
 with El-Baha.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*; Vol. 3, p. 325.)

—

The cause of the creation of the con-
 tingent world was love. As it is men-
 tioned in the well known tradition
 which says, "I was a hidden treasure
 and I wished that I should be known;
 so I created the creation that I should
 be known;" therefore it is necessary
 that all should unite in the religion of
 the love of God, in such a way that not
 the slightest breeze of difference among
 the friends and companions should blow.
 All, fixing their gaze upon love, should
 move in perfect union so that no differ-
 ence among any of them could be ob-
 served. In good and evil, in gain and
 loss, in adversity and prosperity, all
 should partake. . . .

(Baha'o'llah.)

—

Abdul-Baha said there are five kinds
 of love:

First: The love of His own perfec-
 tions which caused God to create that
 His beauty might be made manifest and
 appreciated.

Second: The love between sanctified
 souls for the attributes of the divine
 which they see reflected in one another.

Third: God's love to man individu-
 ally that is gained according to the
 measure in which a man turns to God.

Fourth: Man's love for God, the
 Creator. This is the cause of his life,
 progress and happiness.

Fifth: The love of self, which if
 directed to the ego will deprive man of
 all true development, but if the love of
 self is a realization that one is a crea-
 ture of God and must therefore attain
 to the station appointed for him, this
 love will be an uplifting one.

(*A Brief Account of My Visit to Acca*;
 p. 38.)

Among the human race, the bonds of, and means for, love are numerous, for man cannot live without it; nay rather, human life is dependent upon friendship and affection. Both the material and intrinsic development of man are conditional upon amity and love and the greatest honor and pleasure in the human world is love; but the ways and means are different. Sometimes the cause of love is simply relationship and kinship: and sometimes it is a racial bond, patriotism, political affairs, etc. But, through all these various bonds and means it is impossible to obtain a real and pure love: it is rather superficial and temporary. Such love may easily be changed into enmity and rancor, for it is affected by the slightest manifestation of hostility; whereas a true and ideal love is faith and assurance. Those who believe in God and are confident in His word shall enter the Kingdom, and the essential oneness appear from among them to such an extent that all become the drops of one ocean, the rays of one sun, the fishes of one sea, the trees of one garden, the birds of one orchard, the candles of one assembly and the stars of the same heaven. Such love is real; there is no interruption for this connection, nor any separation for this union. This foundation shall never be destroyed, for it is eternal. Hence it is established that the love which exists among the beloved of God is everlasting for it is a divine bounty, a godly appearance, a melody of the Kingdom and a heavenly cohesion. In the Koran it is said: "They love Him and He loves them"—i. e., the bounty of love is one of the divine bounties which comes to man from God, just as the sun sends its rays to the mirrors and thereby the mirrors are illumined: this effulgence and splendor are from the bounty of the sun. Therefore, this love which is among the beloved is a divine bounty, a godly splendor, an

eternal manifestation and the power of divinity: it is perpetual.

(Abdul-Baha: *Bahai News*, No. 8, p. 5.)

That which is most delicious in the world of existence is love. The air of itself is not delicious, neither is water, nor in short, all the elements; but when coupled with love they are most delicious. Love is the best condiment. When love exists in the heart the slightest gesture proves welcome. When love exists in the heart, even if it be a blow it is delicious.

For instance: the food on this table is nothing, indeed very simple; yet because it is prompted by love it is delicious.

The Lord's Supper of Christ was indeed a very common thing, but because there was excessive love among the individual members who convened there, that table surpassed the royal tables and it was established as the Lord's Supper. Even now, at this time, it is known as such. This was due to the love which existed between Jesus Christ and the disciples.

. . . . The protestant missionaries were amazed at our love, and they were greatly disturbed and grieved exceedingly over it. They wonder what has cemented the Americans and Persians! . . . They do not know that the factor is the love of God and that it has united us.

The disciples of Christ represented many different nations and climes. One was a Hebrew; another a Syrian and another a Roman. How God, through His love, cemented their hearts! Even so it is now! It is the love of God which has connected us, so that in the utmost love do we assemble and are gathered together here.

The means for friendliness are multitudinous.

There is the family bond which is the cause of love. There is the patriotic

STAR OF THE WEST

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Honorary Member—MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*
(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Ezzat 1, 73 (September 8, 1917)

No. 10

Bahai Temple Unity Convention

Held at Hotel Brunswick, Boston, Massachusetts
April 30th-May 2nd, 1917

BY ALBERT H. HALL

Mr. Alfred E. Lunt was elected temporary chairman, and Mr. Harlan F. Ober, temporary secretary of the convention.

The following committees were appointed by the chair:

Credentials.

Mr. C. Mason Remy
Mrs. T. C. Rice-Wray
Mrs. Marion N. Potter

Permanent Organization.

Mrs. Claudia S. Coles
Mr. Hooper Harris
Dr. F. W. D'Evelyn

Auditing Committee.

Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm
Mr. Edward D. Struven
Mr. Willard Ashton

Mrs. Corinne True made her report as financial secretary, in epitome as follows:

Total contribution to Mashrak-el-Azkar fund, received from April 1,
1916, to March 31, 1917.....\$15,629.04
Total amount of deposits in Mashrak-el-Azkar fund.....\$29,320.67

This includes part of the money paid in on pledges, part of which is still with
pledge committee and will be reported later at this convention.

Mr. Albert H. Hall submitted his report as treasurer in epitome as follows:

Balance Mashrak-el-Azkar fund in Northern Trust Com- pany, April 1, 1916.....	\$13,496.62
Receipts in contributions from April 1, 1916, to March 31, 1917	15,629.04
Less exchange and plus interest.....	195.01
<hr/>	
Total receipts from contributions to March 31, 1917, plus interest and less exchange.....	\$29,320.67
<i>Disbursements for the year:</i>	
Taxes and assessments, including total cost of improving, paving and future maintenance of Sheridan Road...\$	4,388.15
<i>General Expense:</i>	
Congress 1916	\$390.42
Publicity and library expense.....	243.22
Legal expense	75.00
Fencing	3.85
Office expense	134.37
<hr/>	
Total general expense.....	846.86
<hr/>	
Grand Total expense.....	5,235.01

Balance on hand with Northern Trust Company to credit Bahai Temple
Unity, March 31, 1917.....\$24,085.66

On report of the committee on permanent organization, Mr. Alfred E. Lunt was made permanent chairman and Louis G. Gregory permanent secretary, with power to name an assistant, and all matters passed upon by the temporary organization were ratified and confirmed.

The chair appointed as a committee on resolutions,
Mr. Albert H. Hall Mr. Joseph H. Hannen Mr. W. S. Maxwell

The committee on credentials reported the following delegates and alternates of the Unity entitled to seats in the convention:

	<i>Delegate.</i>	<i>Alternate.</i>
Atlantic City, N. J.....	Elizabeth B. Nourse	
Augusta, Ga.	Joseph H. Hannen	
Baltimore, Md.	Mrs. E. V. Beecher	Mrs. E. K. Mann
Benton Siding, Canada.....	Alfred E. Lunt	Grace Ober
Berkeley, Calif.	Ella G. Cooper	Mrs. H. E. Hoagg
Beverly-Salem, Mass.....	Clarence H. Lunt	Edw. D. Struven
Boston, Mass.	W. H. Randall	A. W. Randall
Brooklyn, N. Y.....	Frank E. Osborne	Bertha Herklotz
Buffalo, N. Y.....	Mrs. J. H. Mills	
Cambridge, Mass.....	M. A. Doer	A. A. Hathaway
Chicago, Ill.....	Major Honore J. Jaxon	Luella Kirchner
	Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi	Jennie Johnson

	Delegate	Alternate
Cincinnati, Ohio.....	Annie L. Parmerton	Josephine Vogler
Cleveland, Ohio.....	Marion N. Potter	Millie S. Kibby
Denver, Colo.	Angela Lynch	Edna McKinney
Detroit, Mich.	Mrs. T. C. Rice-Wray	Catherine Page
Douglas, Ariz.	Mrs. J. H. Stevison	
Dublin, N. H.	Frank A. Chant	Leona St. C. Barnitz
Eliot, Maine.....	Kate C. Ives	
Fruitport, Mich.	Corinne True	
Geyersville, Calif.	Dr. F. W. D'Evelyn	
Glenolden, Pa.	Claudia S. Coles	Edna McKinney
Grand Rapids, Mich.	Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi	
Honolulu, H.	C. Mason Remy	Elizabeth Muther
Hot Springs, Ark.....	Elizabeth Diggett	
Ithaca, N. Y.	Josephine C. DeLagnel	
Jersey City, N. J.	Roy C. Wilhelm	
Kenosha, Wis.	Alfred E. Lunt	Walter Bohanan
Los Angeles, Calif.....	Helen S. Goodall	
Minneapolis, Minn.....	Albert H. Hall	Constance Hedges
Montclair, N. J.	Charles H. Edsall	Harlan F. Ober
Montreal, Canada.....	W. S. Maxwell	Elizabeth Cowles
Muskegon, Mich.	Ida Slater	
Newark, N. J.	Lulu M. Ackerman	Jeanette Nietman
New Haven, Conn.....	Emma J. Thompson	Mildred G. Thompson
New York City, N. Y.....	Hooper Harris	Roy C. Wilhelm
	Mrs. A. I. Breed	Laura Platt
Oswego, N. Y.	Mary M. Young	Grace Ober
Peoria, Ill.	Elizabeth Diggett	
Philadelphia, Pa.	Jessie E. Revell	Edna McKinney
Pittsburgh, Pa.	Martha L. Root	David Goldner
Portland, Ore.	Ella G. Cooper	Juliet Addison
Racine, Wis.	Andrew J. Nelson	Fred J. Peterson
Riverton, N. J.	Will K. Bowen	Elizabeth Bowen
Sandusky, Ohio.	Cora E. Renner	C. Mason Remy
San Diego, Calif.....	Helen S. Goodall	
San Francisco, Calif.....	Mrs. H. E. Hoagg	Ella G. Cooper
Santa Cruz, Calif.....	Dr. F. W. D'Evelyn	Ella G. Cooper
Santa Paula, Calif.....	Dr. F. W. D'Evelyn	
Schenectady, N. Y.....	A. B. McDaniel	Rhoda Nichols
Seattle, Wash.	Mabel Geary	Charlotte J. Gillen
Spokane, Wash.	Helen S. Goodall	Ella G. Cooper
Springfield, Mass.	Olive E. Balhegean	
St. John, N. B.	Henry S. Culver	Mary D. Culver
St. Louis, Mo.	Mrs. Chas. H. Greenleaf	Ella G. Cooper
Washington, D. C.....	Joseph H. Hannen	Louis G. Gregory
	Mrs. C. E. Dixon	Mrs. M. C. Hotchkiss
Worcester, Mass.	Howard Struven	Helen C. Greene

M. Eshte'al-Ebn Kalanter, being present, was duly made a delegate from Persia.

The convention continued the call of the assemblies which was responded to by the delegates or alternates, giving reports in detail of the work and progress of the Cause in their respective assemblies and vicinities.

On motion of Mr. Hannen, the convention unanimously adopted resolutions expressing the appreciation of the Unity of the life, character and work of Dr. Zamenhof, the author of Esperanto, and its sympathy with Esperantists throughout the world in the loss sustained in his recent death, and directing copy of the resolution to be sent to his widow, family and the Esperanto Association of North America and the other Esperanto associations of the world.

The secretary of the Unity reported that two-thirds of the assemblies had voted in favor of the amendments to the constitution. The chair thereupon declared that the two-thirds assent required by the constitution in favor of the amendment had been voted; that the amendments had been carried and adopted and had become a part of the constitution of the Unity.

The secretary of the Unity was directed to prepare a copy of the constitution, including all amendments thereto, to date, and to publish the same, if feasible, or to furnish each assembly and members of the executive board and interested persons with copies.

The following resolutions were adopted:

I. Resolved, That every Bahai assembly now a member of this Unity be required, within ninety days, to file a certificate of registration with the secretary of the Unity, in the following form substantially:

.....assembly
 does hereby register as a member of
 the Bahai Temple Unity of Illinois,
 and does hereby designate.....
as duly elected
 delegate to represent said assembly
 during the year.

(Signed).....
 Secretary.

II. Resolved, That any Bahai assembly, now a member of Bahai Temple Unity, which shall not within said period, file a certificate of registration (that is, within ninety days as above provided) shall be deemed to have abandoned its membership in Bahai Temple Unity, and that the secretary of the Unity shall forthwith send written notice to each and every Bahai assembly now a member of this Unity of the provisions of this resolution.

The following by-laws were unanimously adopted:

Any Bahai assembly may become a member of this Unity in the following manner:

1. It shall duly authorize, at a regular meeting thereof, an application in substantially the following form:

The Bahai assembly of.....
 hereby certifies that, at a regular meeting thereof, it was resolved to become a member of the Bahai Temple Unity, a corporation of Illinois, under and in accordance with its constitution and by-laws.

The delegate who is hereby authorized to represent this assembly, in accordance with the constitution and by-laws of the Unity, until further notice is sent or given.

Name
 Address
 By.....
 Secretary.

The application shall be sent to the secretary of the Unity and shall be presented by the secretary to the executive board for investigation and verification of the facts stated in the application. The executive board shall be entitled to ask for and to obtain any further information which it may desire, and may advise the applying assembly of its apparent acceptance, subject to final approval by the convention; but, in case of becoming convinced that, in the interest of the Bahai movement, the acceptance of such assembly is inadvisable, the executive board shall notify the applying assem-

bly of its intention to so report to the coming convention. The question of the acceptance or rejection of the application shall be decided by the convention in its consideration of the report of its regularly constituted committee on credentials.

II. Any assembly, a regularly enrolled member of this Unity, which shall fail to elect a delegate to represent it in accordance with the constitution and by-laws of the Unity for a period of two years, shall be deemed to have abandoned its membership in the Unity, provided that any such assembly may revive its membership by making application for membership in accordance with the provisions of these by-laws.

III. These by-laws may be amended by the Unity at any annual or special meeting, by resolution adopted by three-fourths of the votes cast at such meeting, provided, that notice that an amendment will be proposed, stating the general scope of the amendment, shall be sent by mail by the secretary to each of the assemblies of this Unity thirty days before the meeting at which such amendment is proposed to be submitted.

IV. All notices required by these by-laws to be given in pursuance of any provisions thereof shall be considered duly given, when mailed by the secretary to the secretaries of the assemblies of this Unity, at such address as may appear from the records of the secretary, or if no such address appear, to the address believed by the secretary to be the address of any member of said assembly.

V. These by-laws shall go into effect from and after their enactment.

The convention by resolution, supplemented by addresses of members expressed its appreciation of the work of the STAR OF THE WEST and directed that the secretary, in the first communication sent out to the membership, request therein all friends to subscribe for addi-

tional copies of the STAR OF THE WEST and that each assembly be requested to subscribe for from five to twenty copies additional for monthly distribution as a teaching agency.

The auditing committee made its report, approving the accounts of the financial secretary and treasurer; the reports were accepted and directed placed on file.

By resolution, Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi and M. Eshte'al-Ebn Kalanter were requested to translate from the Persian the instructions of Abdul-Baha, with reference to the conduct and procedure of assemblies and to furnish the secretary with a copy of such resolution and that the same be incorporated into the minutes of this meeting, and a copy sent to the secretary of each assembly of the Unity.

The committee on publication was directed to furnish to all encyclopedias accurate information concerning the Bahai movement.

It was resolved—"The Unity recommends the early publication, in standard form, of all the tablets of Baha'o'llah thus far translated into English, excepting *Kitab-el-Akdas* and the *Book of Ighan*, with the approval of the Publication Board, contemplating a standard form in uniformity with future publications of Abdul-Baha."

On motion, Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm and Miss Mary Lesch were appointed a special committee to co-ordinate and secure the co-operation of Bahai Temple Unity with the Bahai Publishing Society, and all other Bahai agencies that will assist in the publication work.

It was resolved—"This Unity recommends the hearty co-operation in the plan of teaching and spreading teachings in North America as communicated to us in the five tablets of Abdul-Baha; that we recognize the persons addressed in each of these five geographical divisions as persons best fitted to initiate the work therein, and direct the executive

board of this Unity to co-operate and co-ordinate the energies of this Unity with the persons so indicated."

The chairman was authorized to appoint a committee with Mr. Gregory as chairman to prepare a condensed statement of the proceedings and resolutions of the annual conventions of 1915, 1916 and 1917, to be published in the STAR OF THE WEST, and to contract with the STAR OF THE WEST for such publication, and that the original complete stenographic transcript of the 1917 convention be preserved with the secretary.

The convention expressed its appreciation and thanks to the Boston assembly, the host of this convention, for courteous and loving hospitality.

It was resolved—"That it be the future policy of this Unity, that one person shall represent but one assembly in the annual convention of this Unity, and that the assemblies in selecting proxies give them power of substitution to that end."

The convention proceeded by ballot to the election of an executive board for the ensuing year. The following were duly elected by the vote indicated:

Mr. Albert H. Hall.....50 votes
Mrs. Corinne True.....49 votes
Mr. Alfred E. Lunt.....49 votes
Mr. William H. Randall.....49 votes

Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm.....44 votes
Mrs. A. S. Parsons.....43 votes
Mrs. H. Emogene Hoagg.....39 votes
M. Eshte'al-Ebn Kalanter.....38 votes
Mr. Harlan F. Ober.....32 votes

It was resolved—"That the chair appoint a committee of nine to collect material into definite form, including tablets and Bahai teachings for children of all degrees of unfoldment, and to consider and act upon the best means of bringing this material to the attention of all."

It was resolved—"That this Unity communicate directly with Abdul-Baha, if possible between now and November 12, 1917, and request his directions as to the immediate beginning of the laying of the foundation of the Mashrak-el-Azkar, and upon his permission thereto, that such foundation be forthwith laid."

The report of Frank E. Osborne concerning the Bahai calendar was accepted and referred to the publication committee for action.

It was resolved—"This Unity and convention do now adjourn to meet in the city of Chicago, in the state of Illinois, at a special annual meeting of this Unity, called by the executive board for the 17th day of June, 1917."

ALFRED E. LUNT, Chairman.
(Attest): LOUIS G. GREGORY, Secretary.

Committee to Examine Manuscripts of Books and Pamphlets Composed by Bahais

August 10, 1917.

STAR OF THE WEST:

Will you kindly publish in the earliest number of the STAR available the following notice?

"The Publications Committee, authorized by the recent convention of the Bahai Temple Unity of Boston, has been appointed and is comprised as follows:

"Chairman, Miss Jean Masson, 1055 Buena Ave., Chicago, Ill.; Mr. Horace Holley, New York City; Mr. Harlan F. Ober, 10 Dana St., Cambridge.

"The tablet from Abdul-Baha upon which the authorization of the Publications Committee was made is as follows:

To Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm—Upon him be greeting and praise!

Concerning the publications of books and pamphlets: The books of Mirza Abul Fazl, the books and pamphlets of Mr. Remy, likewise the instructive books and pamphlets written by some of the friends, also the translations of the *Book of Ighan*, *Tarazat*, *Tajalleyat*, *Ishrakat*, the

Words, the Glad-Tidings, the Hidden Words, the Seven Valleys, and other translated and published works of the Blessed Perfection—likewise the new leaflet written by his honor, Mr. Remy, giving the twelve principles of the Cause—print, publish and circulate these books and pamphlets whenever necessary. But other books and pamphlets and those newly written or composed *by the friends* must be carefully read and thoroughly examined by a committee of the blessed believers *in the annual Convention of the Mashrak-el-Azkar*. If, in accord-

ance with the majority of votes they deem these publications advisable, they may print and circulate them; otherwise they may wait until the way is opened and they may forward them to the Holy Land for correction.

“All manuscripts or writings coming within the scope of the tablet should be sent to the chairman, Miss Masson, and will receive early and thorough consideration.”

Faithfully yours in His Name,

Alfred E. Lunt.

The Divine Art of Living—Chapter VII

(Continued from page 127)

bond which is a basis for love. There is the racial cause which is a source of love. There is the political one which is the cause of love and unity. Partnership in business is one sort of connection.

But there is no bond like the love of God, for the love of God is the bond eternal, and outside of it there are only temporary ones.

The love of God is that peculiar bond which is not subject to corruption; whereas, other bonds, other loves, are subject to instantaneous corruptive changes. For the least cause such another love might be changed into hate. It owes its origin to a cause; when the cause is removed, the effect will likewise disappear.

But the love of God is not dependent upon material causes. For example, our assemblage here is absolutely free from any of the petty causes.

(Abdul-Baha: *A Heavenly Feast*; p. 30.)

There are two kinds of love, one universal and one individual. You must love humanity in order to uplift and help humanity. Even if they kill you, you must love them. Individual love cannot be forced and you are not called upon to love everybody personally, but if they are in your lives see to it that they are

means of your development and that you are means of their development through your universal love for them.

(Abdul-Baha: *Unity Through Love*; p. 26.)

Question: “How can one love another whose personality is unpleasant?”

Answer: “We are creatures of the same God. We must therefore love all as children of God even though they are doing us harm. Christ loved his persecutors. It is possible for us to attain to that love. God manifested his love by creating man in His own image. Man must manifest his love by developing himself and others more and more in the image of God. The true fruit of man is, therefore, love. The purpose of a tree is to produce fruit. Man is like a tree; his fruit should be love.”

(Abdul-Baha: *Unity Through Love*; p. 27.)

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

(Jesus the Christ.)

I met a man this morning who belongs to a sect of Buddhists and I said

to him, "What is your message?" He replied, "I'Amour—Love!" I said, "Yes but what beside that?" He repeated, "Love, that is all, that is the only message."

But the word love is not a message; the word love indicates an infinite thing and how shall we bring an infinite thing into relation with humanity which is finite?

There are in reality many kinds of love, and each in itself is infinite and finite. There is the love of country, or the patriotic love, there is the family love, there is the love of friendship, the love of man and woman—each one is finite and limited. There is only one love which is unlimited and divine, and that is the love which comes with the breath of the Holy Spirit—the love of God—which breaks all barriers and sweeps all before it.

Animals are completely subject to nature, they are its slaves. They live and die in the places in which they are born, they are the victims of storm and flood, they are hemmed in by desert, forest, by the great rivers and the sea.

But man has conquered nature and is free. He is no longer the slave of the physical world, he dominates it and is free. He compels the physical world to do his will. He crosses wide spaces, sails over the ocean, and is beginning to fly through the air. He is in all things a freed being, and can give his commands to that nature in the midst of which he was born.

So man, who is freed from material things and dominates nature, should learn to render his love also unlimited and divine. He should open his soul to the breeze of God that it may blow through him and break down all barriers.

So, if you love, endeavor to love divinely. If you love your country, love it not with the narrow feeling that it must be loved because it is yours alone, but with the greater consciousness that your home is a part of the universe. If

you love brother or comrade or wife, love each one as a part of God, and not the narrow sense of possession which renders the love selfish and exclusive. Then the breeze of God blowing constantly through your love will purify it and make it divine so that the breath of the Holy Spirit will enter into your being and unite you to God.

But do not seek the honors and loves of this world, seek rather God and His love, and then the honors and loves which belong to Him will be yours. All the glory of the heavens is His, all the beauty of the flowers, the scent of the roses and the colors of the sunset. But more than this the beauty of the soul is His, so that when you look long upon His beauty, it takes many forms and re-appears in your consciousness in many figures. But all other beauty fades and disappears, all other honor but His becomes insignificant, all other love but His is undesirable.

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 2, No. 14, p. 5.)

. . . The object of the dawn of the Morn of Guidance and the effulgence of the Sun of Reality have been no other than the inculcation of the utmost love among the children of men and perfect good-fellowship between the individuals of mankind. Therefore, in the beginning the foundation of this love and unity must be laid among the believers of God, and then permeate through the nations of the world. Therefore as much as you can be ye kind towards one another, and likewise to others. The first melody of the Kingdom is the song of the love of God, and the love of God is realized in the universal love of all humanity. . . .

(Abdul-Baha: *Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab*, August 20, 1914.)

The world is black; the divine bestowal is radiant. This blackness must

be changed into light, and this narrow, dark sphere must be transformed into a vast, illimitable universe of illumination. The body of the world is like a corpse; it must be resuscitated. It is withered; it must be made fresh and blooming. It is extinct; it must be enkindled. It is the arena for the expression of animosity; it must be made the dawning-place of love and good-fellowship. It is the place of origin for the emanation of contention; we must make it the axis around which revolves unity. It is the expression of the baser qualities which lead to eternal disgrace; we must make it the rising-point of the refulgent rays of the everlasting glory. The strangers must be instructed in the lesson of neighborliness; and the heedless made aware; the enemies must be loved, and the hateful ones be shown kindness. We must become flaming torches and the burning fire of God. We must move this world and illumine this dark globe. All this depends upon the effort of the friends and the sacrifice of the beloved ones.

(Abdul-Baha: Dairy of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, August 26, 1913.)

. . . Radiate the light of the love of God to such an extent as to be able to remove entirely the gloom and darkness of hatred, bigotry and enmity from among humanity. Know all mankind of all nations, sects and tribes as your kith and kin. Consider not their deeds, but only God. Seek your reward from Him and not from them. Know the aged of all nations as your fathers, the youths as your brothers and the children as your own. No matter what lack of courtesy or what severe persecution or stern expressions of hate and unfathomable enmity you receive, you must have no excuse like the following: "So and so has spoken unkindly about me." "So and so has not done me justice,"—nay, rather you must have no excuse but live according to the divine teachings,

whether humanity prove agreeable or disagreeable, whether humanity prove hateful or loving, whether it receives you or casts you out, so that perchance you may be assisted in hoisting the standard of peace and pitching the tabernacle of oneness and solidarity of the world of humanity—so that this temporal life may ultimate in the Life Everlasting, and this darkness of ignorance which has pervaded the whole world may be converted into the illumination of guidance. . . .

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 5, No. 8, p. 130.)

This is one of the wonders of this age, that an oriental and an occidental can meet each other on a common ground. Although there exists among them no racial, no patriotic, or political relations, yet they love each other as though they belonged to the same race. This is spiritual relationship. Often two brothers, reared in the same family, are antagonistic toward each other, but you two who are remote from each other, are in reality as brother and sister. Happy are you because you have drunk from this spiritual fountain and attained to the reality of existence.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, August 6, 1913.)

. . . The test of the truth (of God) lies in the influence the conception has on our lives. If it makes us kind and loving in our relationship with our fellowman, we know it is a true one. In other words it must produce in our hearts a love of God which must be transmitted into love for man.

(Abdul-Baha: Notes of Aline Shane Devin, Acca, about 1900.)

(Chapt. VII to be continued)

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Masheyat 1, 73 (September 27, 1917)

No. 11

The Divine Art of Living

A COMPILATION BY MRS. MARY M. RABB

(Chapter I appeared in issue No. 16, Chapter II in No. 18, Vol. VII; Chapter III appeared in issue No. 2, Chapter IV in No. 4, Chapter V in No. 6, Chapter VI in No 8, and first portion of Chapter VII in No. 10, Vol. VIII.)

CHAPTER VII—Continued

Love

WHEN a man turns his face to God he finds sunshine everywhere. All men are his brothers. Let not conventionality cause you to seem cold and unsympathetic when you meet strange people from other countries. Do not look at them as though you suspected them of being evil-doers, thieves and boors, or that you think it necessary to be very careful, not to expose yourself to the risk of making acquaintance with such, possibly, undesirable people.

I ask you not to think only of yourselves. Be kind to the strangers, whether they come from Turkey, Japan, Persia, Russia, China or any other country in the world.

Help to make them feel at home; find out where they are staying, ask if you may render them any service; try to make their lives a little happier.

In this way, even if, sometimes, what you first suspected should be true, still go out of your way to be kind to them—this kindness will help them to become better.

After all, why should any foreign people be treated as strangers? . . . Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your heart burn with loving-kindness for all who may cross your path.

O you of the western nations! Be kind to those who come from the eastern world to sojourn among you. Forget

your conventionality when you speak with them; they are not accustomed to it. To eastern people this demeanor seems cold, unfriendly. Rather let your manner be sympathetic. Let it be seen that you are filled with universal love. When you meet a Persian or any other stranger, speak to him as to a friend; if he seems to be lonely try to help him, give him of your willing service; if he be sad console him, if poor succor him, if oppressed rescue him, if in misery comfort him. In so doing you will manifest that not in words only, but in deed and in truth, you think of all men as your brothers.

(Talks by Abdul-Baha given in Paris; pp. 1-3.)

. . . All the infinite beings exist by this law of mutual action and helpfulness. Should this law of joint interchange of forces be removed from the arena of life, existence would be entirely destroyed.

When we ponder deeply on the connection and interdependence of beings we clearly realize that the life of every being draws benefit and sustenance from all the other innumerable existences. This mutual helpfulness is realized either directly or through mediation and if, for the twinkling of an eye, this confirmation and assistance does not descend upon the living being, that one

will become non-existent, for all the existing things are linked together and draw help from each other. Therefore, the greatest foundation of the world of existence is this co-operation and mutuality.

Likeness of the world of existence to the temple of man. All the limbs and organs of the human body assist one another; therefore life continues. When, in this wonderful organism, there is a disconnection, life is changed into death and the parts of the body disintegrate. Likewise, among the parts of existence there is a wonderful connection and interchange of forces, which is the cause of the life of the world and the continuation of these countless phenomena.

When one considers the living beings and the growing plants, he realizes that the animals and man sustain life by inhaling the emanations from the vegetable world, and this fiery element is called oxygen. The vegetable kingdom also draws life from the living creatures in the substance called carbon. In brief, the beings of sensation acquire life from the growing beings and in turn the growing things receive life from the sensitive creatures. Therefore this interchange of forces and inter-communication is continual and uninterrupted.

From this illustration one can see the base of life is this mutual aid and helpfulness and the cause of destruction and non-existence would be the interruption of this mutual assistance. The more the world aspires to civilization the more this most important matter of co-operation and assistance becomes manifest. Therefore in the world of humanity one sees this matter of helpfulness attain to a high degree of efficiency; so much so that the continuance of humanity entirely depends upon this inter-relation. . . .

(Abdul-Baha: From a Tablet to the Oriental friends. Translated August 24, 1909.)

If you desire to love God, love thy

fellow-men. In them you can see the image and likeness of God. If you are eager to serve God, serve mankind. Renounce the self in the Self of God. When the aerial mariner steers his air-ship skyward, little by little the inharmony and incongruity of the world of matter are lost, and before his astonished vision he sees widespread the wonderful panorama of God's creation. Likewise when the student of the path of Reality has attained to the loftiest summit of divine love, he will not look upon the ugliness and misery of mankind; he will not observe any differences; he will not see any racial and patriotic differences; but he will look upon humanity with the glorified vision of a seer and a prophet. Let us all strive that we may attain to this highest pinnacle of ideal and spiritual life.

(Abdul-Baha.)

Question: "How shall I overcome seeing the faults of others—recognizing the wrong in others?"

Answer: "I will tell you. Whenever you recognize the fault of another, think of yourself: What are my imperfections?—and try to remove them. Do this whenever you are tried through the words or deeds of others. Thus you will grow, become more perfect. You will overcome self, you will not even have time to think of the faults of others. Man is blind, yet he sees far. That is puzzling. We are in Paris and we see the faults of the believers in America and in Stuttgart, but, we are so blind that we cannot see the nose (touching his nose) on our own face. While we are blind we have a far-sighted vision to America, to Germany. You must carry the glad-tidings of the Kingdom wherever you go, and make the people happy, awake them into greater activity—make them active. . . ."

(Abdul-Baha: Notes of private interview, Paris, 1913.)

Holding out in his hand, a piece of very thin paper before his eyes, Abdul-Baha said: "See what a slight thing will shut off our physical sight; so will a slight indiscretion, a cross word, an adverse criticism shut off the delicate spiritual sight."

(Abdul-Baha: From notes of Mrs. Mary Hanford Ford, Paris, 1911.)

Question: "How can we love our enemies; it is so hard?"

Answer: "There are two kinds of love: one is direct love which proceeds from a person to another person; the other is indirect love—that is to love an object for another's sake. Now we must love our enemies for God's sake and because He has created them; we must love them and not for their own personality. For instance, if your beloved sends you a rose, you appreciate it, kiss it and it is valuable to you. This love is not regarding the personality of the thing itself, but for the sake of the one who has sent it to you. We must love the house for its owner's sake."

(Abdul-Baha.)

. . . Treat ye the sinners, the tyrants and the blood-thirsty enemies as the faithful friends and the confidants of the heart. In truth ye must become the embodiment of benevolence and the expression of grace. Do not look upon the "worth" and "merit" of the people. In former ages and cycles, the command of love and non-resistance had been revealed. But there was a pretext among the people,—“merit” and “de-merit.” They would say this person is contumacious and a hypocrite and that person is blood-thirsty and cruel. And if any one practiced forgiveness that forgiveness was coupled with blame and reproach. But in this dispensation, all these pretexts are dispelled and real love and

kindness with all the soul and heart to all the nations of the earth is the absolute law. . . .

(Abdul-Baha: Tablet; translated February 5, 1907, by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab.)

His Holiness Christ came for the promulgation of the law of love; all the prophets were sent, all the Books were revealed, so that the law of love might be promoted. But a few self-seeking people subverted the original aims of the religion of God, changed its pure current and made it an instrument of hatred and rancor and quarrel and sedition. Why should we hate the members of other religions? Why should we not love one another? Why should we be tattlers and busy-bodies and gossip-mongers? Why are we not looking at our own short-comings? Why do we not let people alone? Why do we not search after our own faults? "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull the mote out of thine eye and behold, a beam is in thine own eye. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam that is in thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

Let us have love and more love, a love that melts all opposition, a love that conquers all foes, a love that sweeps away all barriers, a love that aboundeth in charity, large-heartedness, tolerance and noble-striving, a love that triumphs over all obstacles,—a boundless, resistless, sweeping love. Ah me! Each one must be a sign of love, a sea of love, a center of love, a sun of love, a star of love, a haven of love, a pearl of love, a palace of love, a mountain of love, a world of love, a universe of love. Hast thou love? Then thy power is irresistible. Hast thou sym-

STAR OF THE WEST

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Honorary Member—MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!* (Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABRAS.

Vol. VIII

Masheyat 1, 73 (September 27, 1917)

No. 11

pathy? Then all the stars will sing thy praise!

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, June 10, 1914.)

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. . . .

Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

(*I. Corinthians*, 13; 1-13.)

When the Arabs observed Mohammed's charity toward the orphans and unprotected, his extreme simplicity and democratic attitude toward all mankind, they used to say: "He is in love with his Maker." One of the sayings of the Prophet (Mohammed) is: "Do you love your Creator? Love your fellow beings first." In another place he says: "That man who is most considerate of his kind is the favorite of God." In another place he says: "How do you

think God will know you when you are in His presence? By your love of your children, of your kin, of your neighbors, of your fellow-creatures." . . .

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 2, 1913.)

We were commanded by Baha'o'llah to assist all the communities without the exclusion of any one. We do not consider their deeds and actions. We never lose sight of the fact that mankind are the children of God and their wants must be relieved without distinction of race or religion.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, January 27, 1914.)

In every dispensation the command of friendship and the law of love have been revealed, but it has been circumscribed within the circle of the believing friends and not with contrary enemies. Praise be to God, that in this wonderful cycle the laws of God are not confined within any limitations, neither must they be exercised toward a special community to the exclusion of another. He hath commanded all the friends to show love, friendship, amity and kindness to all the people of the world.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 26, 1913.)

No brotherhood appears in the world as lasting save that of the spiritual type. Only that brotherhood is permanent and eternal, for it is a spiritual brotherhood for the attainment of physical or material interests. This spiritual brotherhood has no other purpose than nearness to the Threshold of God. It is not

A Prayer for the Confirmation of the American Government

Revealed about the year 1900

O God—O thou who art the confirmer of every just power and equitable empire in eternal glory, everlasting power, continuance, steadfastness, firmness and greatness!—strengthen, by the abundance of thy mercy, every government which acts rightly towards its subjects and every dominion that protects the poor and weak by its flag.

I ask thee, by the abundance of thy holiness and that of thy bounty, to assist this just government which hath stretched out the ropes of its tent to far and wide countries; the justice of which hath manifested its proofs throughout the well inhabited, cultivated and flourishing regions belonging to such government.

O God, strengthen its soldiers and flag, give authority and influence to its word and utterance, protect its territories and dominions, guard its reputation, make its renown widely spread, divulge its traces and exalt its flag by thy conquering power and wonderful might in the kingdom of creation.

Thou are the confirmer of whomsoever thou willest. Verily, thou art the powerful and the almighty!

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS

through the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is absolutely indissoluble; permanently will it remain intact, and in all the worlds of God will it be everlasting. It is a brotherhood not based upon thoughts, but one that has emanated from the love of God. It is not founded

for defensive purposes but for the illumination of the human heart. . . .

(Abdul-Baha: Address given in Montreal, Canada, September 4, 1912.)

Material friendship is not permanent; for every kind of love which is not

purely for the sake of God is ended in hatred. Amity which is not for the sake of the Lord changeth into enmity. But the divine friends are the faithful ones; they are the consolation of the heart and the peace of my spirit. They are spirit embodied, love personified, sincerity incarnated, loyal friends and staunch lovers. Therefore they are the cause of the happiness of the heart and soul.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 26, 1913.)

Did you know what I was smiling for? There was a person inside who called me. When I entered he said:

“Two years ago I came to you and stated that you were the chief of all the infidels. Now I want to tell you that you are not an arch-infidel.”

Then Abdul-Baha laughed and said: “In either case he has not understood, he is just revealing the state of his own consciousness. We must be kind to such people.”

(Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, December 21, 1913.)

Now the believers of God must live in accord with these divine teachings. They must become kind fathers to the children of humanity, affectionate brothers to the youths of mankind and soul-sacrificing children toward those laden with age. The aim is this: you must be in the utmost state of joy and fragrance, love and kindness toward all, even toward the enemies. Meet the persecutions and adversity with the utmost faithfulness. Whenever animosity appears deal with it with forbearance. Make your breasts the targets for the arrows and spears of opposition. Brave the ridicule, the blame and the rebuke with perfect love so that all the nations may observe the power of the Most Great Name, and all the people may acknowledge the potency of the Blessed Perfection, showing how he hath destroyed the

foundation of strangeness, hath guided the inhabitants of the world to unity and love, hath illumined the realm of man and hath transformed this terrestrial globe into the delectable paradise. These people are like children, negligent and mindless. One must train these children with the utmost love and carry them in the arms of grace with infinite tenderness, in order that they may taste the spiritual love of the Merciful One, that they may shine like the candles and cause the disappearance of the darkness of the world. Thus they may behold clearly and manifestly with what glorious crown and brilliant diadem the Most Great Name, the Blessed Perfection,—May my life be a sacrifice to him!—hath adorned the heads of his believers; what graces he hath poured upon the hearts of his friends; what love he hath brought into the world of humanity and what friendship he hath caused to appear among the children of men.

(Abdul-Baha: From a Tablet in Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 26, 1913.)

O thou maid-servant of God, the penetration of the word of man depends upon the heat of the fire of the love of God. The more the splendors of the love of God become manifest in the heart the greater will be the penetration of the word.

(Abdul-Baha.)

Thy letter was received. . . . From its words I heard a sweet melody and that melody was the psalm of the love of God. Although in the world of existence the outpourings of the Almighty are infinite, yet the greatest divine outpouring is the love of God. This is the dominant, transcendental power which rises above all the natural susceptibilities of the world of humanity. Man, like the animal, is captive of the world of nature and the laws of nature exercise full control over his nature. He cannot even be compared to the beasts of

prey. For example, one of the forces of nature is ferocity. A ferocious, blood-thirsty man goes beyond the ferocious animals. If an animal tears another animal it is only for its daily food, but man destroys a hundred thousand lives in one day. Hence it becomes evident that the power of nature is the unbridled and ungovernable ruler over man. What is written concerning the "ego is always inclined to do evil" is no other than the fermentation of the passionate desires in the breast of man and the complete, unchecked sway of the carnal and natural forces over him. Therefore, man cannot win victory over these physical forces save through the "power of the love of God." The fire of the love of God is like unto the lightning which strikes upon the head of nature, emasculating it of its virility and leaving it fallen on the ground—a lifeless body. Consequently the greatest power in the world of existence is the love of God.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, August 17, 1914.)

. . . It is related that an aged and decrepit man became the guest of his holiness Abraham. He exercised toward his guest the utmost hospitality and courtesy. When dinner was served, his holiness Abraham uttered the name of God, and then started eating. On the other hand, the guest uttered the name of an idol and began to eat. His holiness was grieved, arose in wrath and rebuked his guest most severely. But even as he did so, God's revelation descended upon him. "O Abraham! For a hundred years this man has been an idol-worshipper and I have been patient with him; I have nurtured him; I have protected him. I have taken good care of him; I have trained him; I have showered on him many bounties and I have been kind and loving to him; but thou wert not able to endure his society for one night! And I, an hundred years!" His holiness Abraham was deeply

touched by this address and begged his aged guest to pardon him.

(A story told by Abdul-Baha who said that it appeared in the *Masnawi*. From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 4, 1913.)

It is very strange that when a face is not illumined with the light of the love of God it is dark. When you look into it the traces of the divine glad tidings are not manifest, but when the lights of God shine upon it, it becomes bright and enlightened, as it is said, "In their faces you shall see the verdancy of paradise, and in their countenances is the sign of worship."

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, September 3, 1913.)

The Bahais in Baghdad are not rich, but they are firm and strong believers. They keep the nineteen day feast. One morning they sent to one of the believers the word that the feast would be held that night in his house. He searched his pockets and there was no money. What should he do? He had only a watch which he had purchased for ten dollars. He took it out of his waist pocket and sent it to the bazaar to be sold at auction. Incidentally one of the Bahais passing by recognized the watch. He stopped and saw that it was going to be sold for two dollars. He raised the price half a dollar and bought it. He put it into his pocket and went home quietly. When the night came, he went to the meeting and after the refreshments were served, he went to the host and taking the watch out of his pocket offered it to him as a present. The host was very much surprised, but delighted.

(Words of Mirza Jalal, the son-in-law of Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, August 30, 1913.)

The duty of the believers of God is to be servants to one another and attend

to one another's wants. I am the servant of the friends of God.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, August 5, 1913.)

Abdul-Baha said the story of Mary and the ointment has a deep spiritual significance. The bottle which contained perfumed oil (ointment) represents the heart of Mary. The ointment is the love of God which filled her heart, and all this love she poured forth at the feet of Jesus. Then Judas said, "Why did she lavish all this love upon Jesus, who did not need it so much as the poor? Why did she not pour some of this great love and care upon them?" Then Jesus said that she did well to give him all her love.

That is what we ought to do. We must give all our heart's love to God, then for His sake and through our love for Him, we shall love all others. By "the poor" in this sense, is meant those who needed love. Baha'o'llah said, "The poor among you are My trust." Therefore we must always cherish the poor for his sake.

(Abdul-Baha: Notes of Miss Rosenberg, Acca, 1901.)

As long as ye can, strive to set aglow the hearts with love; be attracted to one another and be members of one body. Every soul of the beloved ones must honor the others, and withhold not his possessions and life from them, and by all means he must endeavor to make the others joyous and happy. But the others (the recipients of such love) must also be disinterested and life-sacrificing. Thus may this sunrise flood the horizons, this melody gladden and make happy all the people, this divine remedy become the panacea for every disease, this spirit of reality become the cause of life for every soul.

(Abdul-Baha.)

Another commandment give I unto you! That ye love one another as I love you. Great mercy and blessings are promised to the people of your land, but on one condition; that their hearts be filled with the fire of love, that they live in perfect kindness and harmony, like one soul in different bodies,—*like one soul in different bodies*. If they fail in this condition, the great blessings will be deferred. Never forget this: Look at one another with the eye of perfection. Look at me, follow me, be as I am. Take no thought for yourselves or your lives,—whether ye eat, or whether ye sleep, whether ye are comfortable, whether ye are well or ill, whether ye have friends or foes. For all of these things ye must not care at all. Look at me and be as I am. Ye must die to yourselves and to the world; so shall ye be born again and enter the kingdom of heaven. Behold a candle, how it gives its light. It weeps its life away, drop by drop, in order to give forth its flame of light.

(Abdul-Baha: From *An Early Pilgrimage*.)

Know thou that there is in the world of existence a center for each great matter and bounties shower from that center.

For instance, in the circle of the sun, the sun is the center of the light. Likewise there is a real center for pure love and now that Center is manifest in this world from which the lights of love reflect to all parts of the universe.

If thou partake but one ray from that Center thou wilt become self-sufficient from the world, finding a new condition and witnessing an exaltation which overshadows all the existence.

Pray God that thou mayst catch with all thy exertion the lights of the love from that Center.

(Tablet of Abdul-Baha to Miss Harriet Wise; received September, 1905.)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Bahai Assembly
of Chicago
cordially invites you to participate
in the celebration of the
One Hundredth Anniversary
of the birth of
Baha'ullah
to be held at the
Auditorium Hotel
from November the tenth to
the twelfth inclusive
Nineteen Hundred Seventeen

1817

Baha' o'llah

1917

IN this age, BAHÁ'O'LLAH has breathed the Holy Spirit into the dead body of the world. Consequently, every weak soul is strengthened by those divine outbreathings. Every poor man will become rich, every darkened soul will become illumined, every ignorant one will become wise, because the confirmations of the Holy Spirit are descending like unto torrents. A new era of divine consciousness is upon us. The world of humanity is going through a process of transformation. A new race is being developed. The thoughts of human brotherhood are permeating the depths of hearts and a new spirit of universal consciousness is being profoundly felt by all men.

From the utterances of
ABDUL-BAHA

PROGRAM

CENTENNIAL FESTIVAL

Saturday evening, at six o'clock

CINEMATOGRAPH EXHIBITION

Abdul-Baha in America

(Castle Theater, State and Madison Streets)

Sunday morning, at nine o'clock

BAHA'O'LLAH'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CIVILIZATION

Sunday afternoon, at half past three o'clock

SERVICE ON THE MASHRAK-EL-AZKAR GROUNDS AT WILMETTE

Monday morning, at half past ten o'clock

(weather permitting)

CONVENTION OF TEACHING

Monday afternoon, at three o'clock

THE MASHRAK-EL-AZKAR IN AMERICA

Monday evening, at eight o'clock

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Elm 1, 73 (October 16, 1917)

No. 12

Letter of Invitation to the Centennial Festival to be held in Chicago, November 10-12, 1917

Dear Friends:—

The One Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of His Holiness, Baha'o'llah, approaches. The day is anticipated by the Bahais of the world as an occasion for the universal proclamation of the supreme mission of that great and radiant Manifestation.

And, that the Message of Baha'o'llah—that dynamic Message of love for all peoples and races, that great, unifying Message—shall fittingly be acclaimed, on this significant occasion, the House of Spirituality, in behalf of the Bahai Assembly of Chicago, calls you to participate in the commemoration of the day.

God, in His bounty, has given, through the Revelation of Baha'o'llah, the spiritual remedy for the sick body of the world. God, in His mercy to humanity, through the Bab, the herald of the Kingdom; through the appointment of a supreme Center, Abdul-Baha, to whom, after the passing of Baha'o'llah, all should turn, without deviation, has fulfilled all the prophecies of the Holy Books.

So great a Message the Bahais of the world are charged to deliver.

Let the Centennial Celebration be, in reality, a festival of love. And let this Twelfth Day of November, 1917, be forever remembered in the annals of the Bahai Movement.

Let this gathering demonstrate to the world the power of the Message of Baha'o'llah to dispel all superstitions of the past; to unite the hearts of humanity and bring them into direct harmony with the divine will.

A program of great beauty and attraction has been prepared. Prominent speakers from the various Assemblies of America will be in attendance. And altogether the occasion will be one of complete joy and fragrance.

The presence of the friends in great numbers is desired, that the light of their faces and the love in their hearts may impress the world with the truth of the Message and the Mission of Baha'o'llah.

Through the courtesy of the STAR OF THE WEST, we shall be able to see again the moving pictures of Abdul-Baha, as he walked among us, during his visit to America, in 1912.

On Monday, the Anniversary Day, a pilgrimage to the Temple Grounds, weather permitting; the Convention of Teaching and the illustrated exposition of the Mashrak-el-Azkar, emphasizing its tremendous significance to the world, will close what we believe will be one of the most memorable festivals of the Bahai Calendar.

Come! And indicate your intention to do so, by writing at once to that effect to the Secretary of the House of Spirituality, 56 East Congress Street, Chicago.

Faithfully yours, in the service of El-Abha,

Carl Scheffler, Secretary.

Letter by the President of the Bahai Temple Unity

“Baha’o’llah came to *breathe* life
into the dead body of the world.”

Dear friends in El-Abha:

This Peerless Century for which all centuries have existed, in which all the horizons of the world have been illumined and which encircles the world of man with the glory of God, completes the span of its centennial Nov. 12th, the Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Baha’o’llah.

This age, the meeting point of the eternal past with the eternal future, has opened the attraction of earth to the hosts of heaven longing to follow in *His* Visitation; and to the hosts of earth has opened the doors of Heaven to walk with the Center of His Covenant. How great is the bounty that we are privileged to live in this radiant day, this age of bestowals!

“Now what will our endeavors show forth from the degrees of devotion?”

In a world torn with dissension and rent with division the Bahai body must be the dayspring of composure, the organism of unity sustaining the breath of the Holy Spirit.

“It is not your work but that of the Holy Spirit which you breathe forth through the Word. This is a fundamental truth; when you breathe forth the breath of the Holy Spirit from your hearts into the world, commerce and politics will take care of themselves in perfect harmony. All arts and sciences will become revealed and the knowledge of God will be manifested.”

Abdul-Baha.

The mystery of unity consists in spiritually breathing together, that the arteries of the world may be purified by the respiration of heaven. In all the Assemblages gathered together on Nov.

12th lovingly to commemorate with joy and glad tidings the birth of Baha’o’llah, individually and in Assembly, let us supplicate the Lordly Oneness to bestow upon His servants, as an organic body, the breath of the Holy Spirit to unite us and show forth to mankind the fruits of unity, for this breath of oneness is the attribute of God in the world of His humanity.

Thereby will we show forth the degrees of devotion.

The Chicago Convention of 1916 pledged for itself and the Bahais of America to have subscribed by this Anniversary date of Nov. 12th, the initial fund indicated by Abdul-Baha for the conception of the foundation of the Mashrak-el-Azkar.

Each feels the share of his responsibility. This accomplishment will bring to us all the joy of a new era in this Century of Light. Can we make this blessed commemoration the fulfillment of our heart’s desire, the Temple fund to start the Temple, that the spiritual and material foundations may meet?

Thus will we show forth the degrees of our endeavor.

“Verily the founding of the Mashrak-el-Azkar will mark the inception of the Kingdom of God on earth.”
Abdul-Baha.

The hand of Power has placed in our hands this kingly service.

The Executive Board sends to you its greetings, and joins with you in loving commemoration, that this meeting of Nov. 12th may fulfill the aspirations of our hopes.

Executive Board,

BAHAI TEMPLE UNITY.

William H. Randall, President.

News from Palestine

Extract from a Letter dated at Devonshire, England, August 17, 1917, from Mirza Lotfullah Hakim to Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm

I am sure you will be interested to hear some news of the beloved Abdul-Baha. Two days ago I had a letter from a friend in Cairo dated July 25, 1917, giving the following news:

"I have been hearing from home regularly lately, but they only write a few lines and simply tell me that they are all well and that Agha (i e., Abdul-Baha) is well and is sometimes at Haifa and other times at Acca. The food question is not as difficult as we hear of especially in that district; but undoubtedly there is a shortage of all imported goods, and food is tolerably expensive."

News from Japan

Tokyo, Japan, August, 1917.

To the STAR OF THE WEST.

I was so pleased you published the photograph of Miss Alexander's group, but sad to say the group is suspended for a while. Miss Alexander was suddenly called to her home at Honolulu and we are all heart broken. I feel especially sad for those who were groping in the dark looking to her for light. Dr. Auger, who is still here, will do all he can to spread the work. A young Japan-

ese, Tokugiro Torii (a blind man), is to open a Bahai center in September, and an English center will be opened at Shiba Park early in the fall, so the seed scattered with such a lavish hand by Miss Alexander will not have been in vain. . . . I feel Miss Alexander's mantle has fallen upon me during her absence and it is my prayer that I may do a little to prove worthy.

With many greetings in His Greatest Name.

(Mrs.) E. Emma Erskine-Hahn.

News from Washington, D. C.

To the STAR OF THE WEST.

Following the report of the Boston Convention, as reported in the STAR OF THE WEST, a number of calls have reached Washington for help in establishing a Children's Sunday Class. Among the letters received are communications from London, from British Columbia and from Cleveland, Ohio, etc. Replies have been forwarded, with a prayer that they may be of some service. But the Cleveland request and answer was quickly followed by a personal demonstration, Sunday and Monday, September 23-24, of two of the many methods which we have tried in Washington. Praise God! I found the children and young people marvels of spiritual insight. Their quick responsiveness and

eagerness to learn more, their unwillingness to go home when the hour was ended, desiring more and more of the Words, were evident proof that the hour has struck for the training of children along spiritual lines, that they may be prepared to carry on the work of the Cause; that they may be taught to teach one another and learn to ask intelligent questions of one another; simply guided by an enthusiastic, loving teacher. This is the plan laid down by our beloved Abdul-Baha.

After two wonderful meetings with the children and young people of the Cleveland Assembly, I am convinced that it is the spirit of the children themselves that must determine the wisest method. We are still most willing to

(Continued on page 152)

STAR OF THE WEST

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Vol. VIII

Elm 1, 73 (October 16, 1917)

No. 12

The coming Convention of Teaching at Chicago, Nov. 12.

LETTER ISSUED BY THE HOUSE OF SPIRITUALITY

Dear Bahai Friends:—

As the day approaches for the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Baha'o'llah, there has awakened within the hearts of the believers a fervent desire to make the occasion not only a time of great rejoicing, but the beginning of greater service to the Bahai Cause, that the whole world may know of the mission of the Manifestation and the presence among us of the Center of the Covenant, Abdul-Baha.

It will be remembered, that the Teaching Tablets received in August, 1916, were a distinct call to service to the various sections of the United States and Canada. Friends arose in response to that call. The Message has been carried far—into every state in the Union and many new Assemblies have been created.

Notwithstanding the extent of the work already accomplished, we are deeply conscious of our failure to reach that high standard of effective service set for us by Abdul-Baha. And some of us are asking ourselves vital questions that must be answered before the truth of the Revelation of Baha'o'llah shall penetrate the heart of America:

How shall we respond to the emphatic call of Abdul-Baha?

How shall we spread broadcast over America this Message of Light and Life?

How shall we carry conviction of its essential truth into the millions of human hearts?

How, in this day of prodigious achievement, shall the Revelation of Baha-o'llah be presented, to fulfill the requirements of so tremendous a Message, in so tremendous an age?

How shall the work of teaching be carried forward into potential centers of innumerable Assemblies?

Briefly, how shall we spread the Message into every corner of America?

In contemplating the work before us, it has been thought by the members of the House of Spirituality, that more effective service can be rendered to the Cause, should the Bahais of the central states, our particular field of action, come together, into a closer union, of which every center shall be a working unit.

We believe the permanent work of spreading the great Cause is of supreme importance. And no more fitting memorial can there be to Baha'o'llah than the achievement of a strongly unified movement for its promotion.

So, looking toward this end, let representatives from every Assembly of the middle west meet in convention, in Chicago, during the coming celebration of the

birth of the Manifestation, prepared to consider ways and means for launching a vigorous campaign of teaching in our allotted territory.

We, in Chicago, would co-operate with you in this great service, and we are confident that this, our earnest desire, is reciprocated by you. Together we can accomplish what alone we cannot effect. . . .

Let this celebration not supersede in your minds and hearts the vastly important task of spreading the Cause.

If it is impossible for you to attend the celebration, make it possible to attend the Convention of Teaching. . . .

A call similar to this from the House of Spirituality of Chicago began the organization of the Mashrak-el-Azkar work.

Who knows what great results may develop from this, its second call?

Let us arise with enthusiasm to the service of Abdul-Baha.

Faithfully, in the service of the Center of the Covenant, Abdul-Baha,
 THE HOUSE OF SPIRITUALITY,
 Carl Scheffler, Secretary,

Corrections

To the STAR OF THE WEST.

Feeling assured that it is your intention to have all statements issuing from the STAR OF THE WEST conform to the reality, I beg leave to call your attention to a portion of the report of the Convention of the Bahai Temple Unity, held in Boston, on page 116, No. 9, Vol. VIII, it is stated, as follows:

“Mr. Frank E. Osborne read a complete Bahai calendar on which he has been working for the past four or five years. Abdul-Baha gave it his verbal sanction. It was referred to the executive board.”

As this is at least misleading it gives me pleasure to advise you as to the facts, that you may be able to correctly inform your readers. In the year 1911, this servant was commanded to “confer with those who are versed in astronomy and mathematics and make the calendar complete and perfect in accordance with the scientific, then print and publish it.”

The result of my effort in this direction was given to Abdul-Baha in June, 1912, in the shape of a Bahai calendar with dates of importance set forth and blended with the Gregorian calendar. On the fourth of July, 1912, he informed me that “the transference of dates from

the lunar year to that of the solar year made this a matter of great importance and that he would send it to Persia *for correction.*” And the calendar that was given to the convention was this one which Abdul-Baha received from Persia and handed to me December 4, 1912, with the statement, “Now your calendar is correct,” but it was not published because I was desirous of having this “word” over the signature of Abdul-Baha, and was in hopes that this might be brought about through the good offices of the executive committee of the Bahai Temple Unity.

The Persian manuscript which Abdul-Baha received with an English translation was delivered to that committee.

With Bahai greeting and a prayer for the continued success of the STAR, believe me

Your servant,
 F. E. Osborne.

To the STAR OF THE WEST.

My address on “The Religious Aspect of Esperanto” as delivered in New York on May 27th was very hastily and unexpectedly prepared and was given without any thought of its being published. The announcement of the address was

printed and distributed by those in charge of the meeting before I knew about the matter, and its publication in your journal was also a surprise to me. All this is of no importance except that the hasty preparation of the address, and its being printed without my having a chance to revise it somewhat, has been the cause of an error of statement which I would thank you very much to correct. My statements about the translators of the *Kasitaj Vortoj* were as I then understood the matter, but I am now trustworthily informed that no help was received in this special work from Teheran, and that our brother Lotfullah Hakim,

whose name appears on the title page jointly with that of Dr. Esslemont, is a medical student in London.

This work is destined to be one of the classics of Bahai Esperanto literature, and any reference to it should be quite correct. May I therefore ask you to publish in the STAR OF THE WEST that lines 6 to 8 of column two of page 82 should read:

“was done jointly by an English physician, a Persian medical student living in London, and”

Yours truly,

Rufus W. Powell.

The “Hidden Words” in Esperanto

Bahai Esperanto circles, and friends in general, will be much interested in the appearance of an attractive booklet entitled, *Kasitaj Vortoj de Baha'u'llah (el la Persa)*, which is just at hand, from the press of the British Esperanto Association. This is a translation of the Persian *Hidden Words*, directly from the original Persian manuscript into Esperanto, done jointly by Lotfullah Hakim, of Persia and London, and Dr. John E. Esslemont, Res. Med. Supt., The Home Sanatorium, West Southbourne, nr. Bournemouth, England.

It is said that this translation conveys a wonderfully clear presentation of the original Persian concepts, excelling in many respects the possibilities of English translations. The style has been approved enthusiastically by Col. John Pollen, the noted Orientalist, of England.

This volume is being handled by the Bahai Publishing Society, 4319 Lake Park Ave., Chicago, at 10c per copy for the paper-bound and 40c per copy for the leather-bound edition.

News from Washington, D. C.

(Continued from page 149)

share with others what we have tried. But the real help is of the Spirit and personal contact with the children. Therefore it is hoped that more calls may come for personal service, to which we shall endeavor to respond.

The friends of Cleveland are aflame with the fire of the love of God. I was literally in heaven while with them. Letters have been received since my return, of which the following quotation will indicate the spirit: “You recall in Abdul-Baha’s tablet to the Cleveland Assembly, he says that ‘ere long the doors of the everlasting glory will be opened

before your faces.’ I feel sure that this visit is one of the channels for this promise becoming fulfilled.”

The meeting in Akron, Ohio, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Brooker, was another heavenly feast. Mrs. Brooker has a class of children, on a week afternoon. It was not, however, my pleasure to meet them.

The Washington Assembly is actively engaged in the great work. Meetings are held regularly on Friday and Sunday nights, the latter in beautiful “Studio Hall.” Mr. Richard Mayer, of Boston, was a recent visiting speaker, and we

are planning to have Mr. James F. Morton, Jr. and Dr. Hilles Cole, of New York City, in the near future. Visiting friends who are available for addresses on Sunday nights are invited to communicate with Mr. Hannen, the Secretary of the Assembly, at P. O. Box 1319.

Mr. Louis G. Gregory is planning to leave for an extended teaching tour, having closed his home and given up his business for that purpose, and Rev. D. S.

Tate is also booked for an extended visit in the South, where he will teach the Cause in a very wide area.

It is contemplated that in the STAR OF THE WEST a compilation of teachings and instructions concerning the teaching of children will soon be published, this having been assembled by the Committee appointed for that purpose following the action of the Boston Convention.

Pauline A. Hannen.

A Communication to the Government at Washington

This letter was composed and compiled by Alfred E. Lunt, at the request of the executive board of the Bahai Temple Unity during its recent meeting in Green Acre, and sent to the officials at Washington, D. C.

August 30, 1917.

Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sirs:

It seems opportune and may prove of assistance to the Government in view of the existing state of world war in which our country is a participant, if we record at this time with the Department of State certain of the laws and precepts of Baha'o'llah and Abdul-Baha relative to the fundamental attitude and duty of the Bahais, at such a time as this, toward existing governments and especially the government of the United States. These laws and precepts are plain and unequivocal and require no elucidation by us, nor is it our purpose to attempt to interpret them or call attention to other than their plain meaning. We would respectfully emphasize only the peculiar and striking relevancy of these principles to the special circumstances surrounding this world war and to the aspirations of the nations concerning the establishment of an ultimate lasting peace.

1. One of the great laws of Baha'o'llah, the founder of the Bahai movement, is this:

“In every country or government where any of this (Bahai) community resides, they must behave toward that

government with faithfulness, trustfulness and truthfulness.” (See *Glad Tidings*, 5th.)

2. Abdul-Baha, the center and leader of the Bahai movement since the departure of Baha'o'llah in 1892, in a Tablet issued some years before the outbreak of the present war, said:

“My object in telling the American believers that they should not interfere in the affairs of the government is this: that they should not make any trouble and that they should not move against the opinion of the government; but obedience to the laws and the administration of the Commonwealth is necessary.

3. Speaking of certain Bahais, citizens of a foreign belligerent country which in 1914 was enforcing conscription laws, Abdul-Baha said “their duty is to obey their government.”

4. In the book entitled *Some Answered Questions*, published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London, 1908, at pages 309 and 310, Abdul-Baha re-capitulates the true principles underlying the words of Christ “Who-soever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left also.” He says:

“This was for the purpose of teaching men not to take personal revenge.

Christ did not mean that if a wolf should fall upon a flock of sheep and wish to destroy it that the wolf be encouraged to do so. No, if Christ had known that a wolf had entered the fold and was about to destroy the sheep, most certainly he would have prevented it. . . .

“The constitution of the communities depends upon justice, not upon forgiveness. Then what Christ meant by forgiveness and pardon is not that when nations attack you, burn your homes, plunder your goods, assault your wives, children and relatives, and violate your honor, you should be submissive in the presence of these tyrannical foes and allow them to perform all their cruelties and oppressions. No, the words of Christ refer to the conduct of two individuals toward each other: if one person assaults another the injured one should forgive him; but the communities must protect the rights of man. So, if someone assaults, injures, oppresses and wounds me, I will offer no resistance and I will forgive him, but if a person wishes to assault (one who was present) certainly I will prevent him. Although for the malefactor non-interference is apparently a kindness, it would be an oppression to”

Speaking of a similar situation to two American pilgrims in Acca, Syria, many years ago, Abdul-Baha said:

“(Under such circumstances) if I should fail to make an effort to protect you, I should be not only responsible for your injury, but also guilty of connivance with the enemy.”

5. Again in the book entitled *The Mysterious Forces of Civilization*, published some *forty years ago* in the Orient, Abdul-Baha said:

“War is sometimes the great foundation of peace and destroying is the cause of re-building. If, for example, a great sovereign should wage war

against a threatening foe or for the unification of the whole body of people and divided kingdom, he should urge the steed of resolution into the race-course of bravery and courage; in short, his war may be attuned to the melodies of peace; and then verily this fury is kindness itself and this oppression is the essence of justice itself and this war is the source of reconciliation.”

The foregoing extracts have clear application to questions arising under the present selective draft act, claims for exemption on the basis of belief, etc.

We deem this statement of interest to the Government because the great principle of Universal Peace is a fundamental principle of the Bahai movement. It may be invoked in the utmost good faith by conscientious objectors who are not informed of the detailed applications to the existing situation above quoted. On the general principle of Universal Peace, Baha'o'llah said in 1889 to Professor E. G. Brown of the University of Cambridge:

“We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment. That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease and differences of race be annulled;—what harm is there in this? Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come. Is not this that which Christ foretold? Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. These strifes and this bloodshed and discord *must*

cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family.

“Let not a man glory in this that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.”

And again he said in the *Words of Paradise*:

“O ye wise men among nations! Turn your eyes away from foreignness and gaze unto oneness, and hold fast unto the means which conduce to the tranquillity and security of the whole world. This span-wide world is but one native land and one locality. Abandon that glory which is the cause of discord, and turn unto that which promotes harmony. To the people of Baha glory is in knowledge, good deeds, good morals and wisdom—not in native land, or station. O people of the earth; appreciate the worth of this heavenly word, for it is like unto a ship for the sea of knowledge, and is as the sun to the universe of perception.”

But it is explicitly laid down that the realization of *Universal Peace can be attained only through certain conditions precedent*. On this point, quoting from the writings of Abdul-Baha, he says in *The Mysterious Forces of Civilization*:

“When keeping fast hold of the means of enforcing their views they, (the rulers and sovereignties of the world) shall establish a union of the the states of the world, and conclude a definite treaty and strict alliance between them *upon conditions not to be evaded*. When the whole race has been consulted through their representatives and invited to corroborate this treaty which verily would be a treaty of universal peace and would be accounted sacred by all the peoples of the earth, it would be the duty of the united powers of the world to see that this great treaty should be strengthened and should endure.

“In such a universal treaty, the lim-

its of the borders and boundaries of every state should be fixed, and the customs and laws of every government; all agreements and affairs of state and the arrangements between the various governments should be propounded and settled in due form; the size of the armaments of each government should likewise be definitely agreed upon, because if in the case of any state there were to be an increase in the preparation for war, it would be a cause of alarm to the other states. At any rate, the bases of this powerful alliance should be so fixed that, if one of the states afterwards broke any of the articles of it, the rest of the nations of the world would rise up, and destroy it. Yea, the whole human race would band its forces together to exterminate it.”

And again, from the writings of Baha' o'llah *over fifty years ago* it is recorded as follows:

“Originally mankind was one family, united and compact; later on the members of this happy family were divided and sub-divided through ignorance and prejudice. Now the time has come again for their final unification and universal peace will bring the long-wished for consummation.”

In 1914, Abdul-Baha, just prior to the outbreak of the present war, said:

“By a general agreement all the governments of the world *must disarm simultaneously*. It will not do if one lays down its arms and the other refuses to do so. The nations of the world must concur with each other concerning this supremely important subject; thus they may abandon together these deadly weapons of human slaughter. As long as one power increases its military or naval budget, another power will be forced into this crazed competition through its natural and supposed interests. Therefore, the question of disarmament must be put into practice by all the nations and

not only by one or two. . . . Once the Parliament of Man is established, and its constituent parts organized, the governments of the world, having entered into a covenant of eternal friendship, will have no need of keeping large standing armies and navies. A few battalions to preserve internal order, an international police to keep the highways of the seas clear, will be all that is necessary. Then these huge sums will be diverted to other more useful channels, pauperism will disappear, the victories of peace will be sung by poets and bards, knowledge will increase and improve every condition, and mankind will be rocked in the cradle of felicity and bliss. Then, whether a government is constitutional, republican, hereditary monarchy, or democratic, the rulers will devote their energies to the prosperity of their peoples, the enactment of just and sane laws, and the fostering of closer and more amicable relations with their neighbors. Thus the world of humanity may become a mirror in which are reflected all the virtues and attributes of the kingdom of God."

It is thus seen that the Universal Peace contemplated is synonymous with the well-being of *all humanity*, and the ultimate establishment of the essential spiritual and material relationship between and among all the nations of the globe in an eternal bond of unity, and that to secure this, *concerted action* is necessary. Questions, therefore, relating to the establishment of such a peace, and, on the other hand, questions of citizenship arising in any one of the belligerent nations, may be purely differentiated. One relates to an ultimate status toward which present conditions are inevitably tending, the other to an existing exigency prior to the establishment of that status. For each of these conditions we have quoted the necessary application from the foundation principles of the Bahai movement. And these principles are seen to be in

perfect harmony when applied to their proper and corresponding set of circumstances.

We find pleasure, therefore, in closing this statement with a steadfast and unwavering pledge of loyalty and fidelity to the government of the United States and to its laws. With all lovers of humanity, we yearn for the permanent establishment of a righteous peace and the deliverance of man from the slaying of his brother of whatever nation or race, for this is no other than the destruction of the divine edifice (i.e. The Temple of Man). But if it be necessary, that, in order thus to become soldiers in the great army of peace, we now enlist in our country's marching hosts through the wise behests of our government, then this also is our wish and our duty, and to this we subscribe our allegiance knowing that from this greatest of world conflagrations shall arise the Phoenix of the spiritual civilization, and that from this conflict shall emerge the tabernacle of the oneness of the world of humanity under whose protecting shade all mankind shall gather.

"May the shining star of eternal felicity and happiness of the world of humanity dawn with this utmost brilliancy from the horizon of international comity, and the luminous orb of international brotherhood of all races and tongues illumine that united gathering of humanity with the ineffable light of God throughout countless ages and cycles."

A copy of this original communication is sent to the Provost Marshal General, and will be further published in the Bahai publications of the country. We invite your attention to the booklet enclosed and to the announcement of the twelve Basic principles therein set forth.

Yours respectfully,
Bahai Temple Unity, by its Executive Board.

William H. Randall, President.

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

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No. 13

"This is the One whose meeting will be longed for by all those who dwell in the everlasting spiritual world, and who have taken a station for themselves in the tents of El-Abha!"—From Surat-ul-H'ykl.

The Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Baha'o'llah

Baha'o'llah was born in Teheran, Persia, on November 12, 1817 A. D.

EDITORIAL

One hundred years ago this twelfth of November there was born in the City of Teheran a world-teacher destined to bring the light of peace and oneness to all mankind. He was so radiant with the attributes of the divine world that the Bab, his brilliant precursor called him Baha'o'llah, the Glory of God. His immediate followers, watching his pure and flawless life, named him the Blessed Perfection.

In his deeds and teachings are manifest the splendors of the Sun of Reality, which is flooding the world with brighter and brighter radiance. The clouds of war and strife and materialism have for many obscured the glory of the rising Sun of Righteousness which brings healing on its wings. Yet, here and there, over the world, receptive thinkers and reformers are catching glimpses of this Sun of the new cycle. The movement toward scientific research, toward prohibition, woman's suffrage, universal education, the cry for democracy, for industrial justice, for world-federation, for a league to enforce abiding peace, for religious unity, for a spiritual renaissance are so many rays of this new light. Baha'o'llah some sixty years ago proclaimed them. In him and in his great interpreter, Abdul-Baha, are focused the Holy Spirit of the new day.

The STAR OF THE WEST would celebrate this hundredth anniversary of Baha'o'llah's birth by recording some of the incidents in his life. "Guidance hath ever been by words, but at this time it is by deeds." "Words must be followed by deeds," Baha'o'llah declared, "for true words are verified by action. One without the other will not satisfy the thirsty or open the doors of perception before the blind." Baha'o'llah's deeds and words are one. Through his books and through his life shine the brightness of the divine Kingdom.

The Dawning of a Great Light

A Compilation of Incidents from the Life of Baha'o'llah

GLAD tidings of the Kingdom of Abha! We announce to you glad tidings of great joy! Similar words were spoken almost two thousand years ago. Reflect and be not of the heedless. This is the great day of God. This is the day of universal peace, of universal brotherhood, of a universal language and of the union of all religions. This is the day wherein the prophecies of the

Holy Books of every tongue have been or are being fulfilled. This is the cycle of Baha'o'llah.

We announce to you Baha'o'llah, "He whom God shall manifest," the one who has broken the seals of both the creational and collective books.

(Words of the editor of a Minneapolis newspaper, as corrected by Abdul-Baha. Diary Letter of Mirza Sohrab, July 29, 1913.)

Baha'o'llah (whose given name was Hussein Ali), was the son of Mirza Abbas, renowned as Mirza-Bozork of Noor. The Nooris are one of the well-known families of Mazanderan. During the reigns of Kadjar, the present Persian dynasty, the members of this family have usually occupied the highest positions in the state, such as Prime Minister, Minister, Secretary and other civil and military dignities. Even at the present day most of them are in the Government.

(Abul Fazl: *The Bahai Proofs*, p. 51.)

Baha'o'llah, when he was six years old, had a dream in which he saw himself swimming in a mighty ocean which was so great that he marveled. His hair, which was long, was floating out on the waves and soon he discovered that to each separate hair a fish was attached by its mouth, that is, the fish was holding the hair in its mouth. There were large fish, small fish, white fish, black fish, in fact all kinds of fishes.

The impression he received was so vivid that he was awakened. When he told his father in the morning the father decided to have the meaning if possible. Being, as you know, a Grand Vizier, he applied to the Shah, asking permission to have the dream interpreted by the court interpreter of dreams. This was granted him. When the interpreter had heard the dream he stood amazed. He said, "This is a most wonderful dream, but I do not see how it can come true.

The ocean symbolizes the world; the fish are the people of the world who are to gain knowledge from this boy—knowledge of God. You must protect and keep him, for he will be very great, but it is not possible that he can fulfill entirely such a wonderful dream. How can the entire world receive knowledge of God from this boy? However, this is what I see in this dream. Protect him. Keep and guard him. He will be very great and will teach great and learned people as well as others."

(Words of Abdul-Baha's wife given by Mrs. H. E. Hoagg in a letter from Haifa, Syria, 1914.)

When I was a child and had not yet reached the age of maturity one of my brothers intended to marry in Teheran and according to the custom of that country for seven days and nights they were engaged in feasting and banqueting. The program for the last day of the entertainment for the guests was the play of *Sultan Salim*. The ministers, the grandees and officials of the city were there in a great throng, and I was sitting in one of the galleries of the building, observing the scenes. They raised a great tent in the middle of the court. Representations of human forms only a few inches in height would come out of the tent and cry: "The king is coming, arrange the seats in order." Then other figures came out, sweeping the ground while a number were sprinkling the streets with water. Then another figure was presented who was supposed to be the herald bidding the people be ready for review before His Majesty, the Sultan.

Then the ministers came, with hat and shawl, according to the Persian custom. Others were present with clubs while a number of others were garbed as chamberlains, aides-de-camp, ferrashes and executioners with instruments of punishment. All these lined up according to their station and class. At last the king appeared with sovereign power and

shining diadem upon his head and with splendor and glory walked slowly and majestically, and with perfect calmness, tranquillity and composure seated himself upon the throne. At that moment the noise of the guns and the music of the national anthem was raised and the smoke surrounded the tent and king. When the air was cleared it was seen that the king was on his throne and the ministers, the magistrates and secretaries had taken their places according to their rank. Immediately a thief, captured by the police, was brought before the king and a royal order was issued to behead him. Then the chief of the executioners took the captive and decapitated him and a red fluid which was like blood was seen by all the spectators. While the Sultan was consulting with some of his ministers the news was brought in that a certain person had become a rebel. The Sultan issued orders that several regiments of soldiers and artillerymen be sent to the scene to quell the disturbance. After a few minutes the thunderous noise of guns and artillery was heard behind the tent and we were told they were engaged in battle. I became astonished and bewildered at these affairs. Then the review ended and the curtain descended.

After twenty minutes a man came out from behind the tent with a box under his arm. I asked him, "What is this box? Where are the king and all the men?" He answered that all these great things and manifest objects, such as kings, princes and ministers, glory, majesty, power and sovereignty which we beheld were enclosed in this box.

I declare by the Lord who has created all things through his Word that from that day all the conditions of this world and its greatness have been like that play before my eyes. It has not nor will ever have the weight of a mustard seed. I wondered greatly that the people should glorify themselves in these affairs. Notwithstanding this, the people of insight will discern with the eye of certainty

the end of the glory of every great one before beholding it.

(Baha'o'llah in a letter to the Sultan of Turkey.)

Tonight I wish to tell you something of the Bahai history, the history of Baha'o'llah. The Blessed Perfection belonged to the royal family of Persia. From his earliest childhood he became distinguished among his relatives and friends. They remarked: "This child has extraordinary power of intellect, wisdom, and innate knowledge." He was superior to his age and class. All were astonished. Some remarked: "Such a precocious child will not survive for it has been proved that children who are too precocious do not live long."

Up to the age of maturity the Blessed Perfection, Baha'o'llah, had not consented to enter any school; he was not willing to be taught by any teacher. This fact is well known among all Persians of Teheran. Nevertheless, he solved the difficult problems of all who presented them to him. In whatever meetings, scientific gatherings, or meetings for theological discussions—wherever he was present—he always solved the abstruse problems presented to him.

Until the father of Baha'o'llah passed away the Blessed Perfection had not sought for any position or political situation. All were surprised at this, that notwithstanding his connection with the ministry, he would not accept any position. They remarked: "How is it that a young man so intelligent, so keen, so perceptive, so conscientious is not a candidate for positions of the lucrative type?" As a matter of fact every position was open to him and all the people of Persia are witnesses to this historic fact.

He was most generous to all the poor, he did not refuse anyone who asked of him. The doors of his house were open to all. He always had many guests. This generosity was conducive to great-

er astonishment from the fact that he did not seek position or prominence. In commenting on this they remarked that all his wealth and affluence would one day be given away for his expenses were unlimited and his income was becoming limited. As it was his principle that was being spent all were amazed at his conduct and were greatly astonished at his doings. Some remarked: "This person is connected with some other world, he has something sublime within him. It is not evident now, but a day will come when it will be manifest."

In short the Blessed Perfection was a refuge for every weak one, a shelter for every fearful one, kind to every indigent one, and most lenient to all the creatures. He became well known with regard to these qualities.

When His Holiness the Bab appeared Baha'o'llah declared that the Bab was true, and Baha'o'llah promulgated the Bab's cause. The Bab said and maintained that the greater manifestation would come after him and he called that appearance "Him whom God would manifest," stating that after the ninth year the reality of his mission would become apparent.

The Bab stated in his writings, "In the ninth year, you will meet the Promised One, you will attain to the meeting of that Promised One. In the ninth year you will attain to all good. In the ninth year you will attain to all glory. In the ninth year you will rapidly advance."

Between Baha'o'llah and the Bab there was communication privately and the Bab wrote a letter to Baha'o'llah in which the name "Baha" was incorporated three hundred and sixty times. Then the Bab was martyred, and in the ninth year, in the city of Baghdad, Baha'o'llah appeared and made known to a few that he was the one the Bab had foretold.

(Abdul-Baha from address in New York, April 18, 1912.)

The Bab had proclaimed the dawn of

the great light and the new cycle of reality on May 23, 1844. That same night Abbas Effendi (Abdul-Baha) was born. Baha'o'llah for eight years summoned the people of Persia to the new movement. He traveled to and fro. "He arose with mighty resolution, and engaged with the utmost constancy in systematizing the principles and consolidating the ethical canons" of the new spiritual society. "He displayed in assemblies, meetings, conferences, inns, mosques and colleges a mighty power of utterance and exposition. Whoever beheld his open brow or heard his vivid addresses perceived him with the eye of actual vision to be a patent demonstration of the new life and a pervading influence."

A great number both of rich and poor and many prominent doctors of theology were "filled with amazement and astonishment at the seething and waving of the ocean of his utterance" and were so attracted by the Holy Spirit shining through his spiritual persuasions that "they washed their hands of heart and life" and when the persecutions came "laid down their lives under the sword dancing (with joy)."

(Notes by compiler; quotations from *A Traveller's Narrative*, translated by Prof. E. G. Browne, Cambridge, England.)

"The ulama (or priests) of the state religion had constrained the Persian government to oppose and resist (the Bab) and had further issued decrees ordering the massacre, pillage, persecution and expulsion of his followers. In all the provinces they began to kill, to burn, to pillage the converts and even assault the women and children. Regardless of this, Baha'o'llah arose to proclaim the word of the Bab with the greatest firmness and energy. Not for one moment was he in concealment; he mixed openly with his enemies. . . . In many changes he endured the greatest misfortunes."

When, after the martyrdom of the Bab, a frenzied "Babi", mentally unbalanced by the sight of his beloved Master's suffering, attempted the life of the Shah, the persecutions became more intense.

The Mohammedan priests only too glad of any excuse to lay hands upon Baha'o'llah who knew nothing whatever of the poor misguided Babi's deed, straightway arrested him, had him bastinadoed, "put into chains and confined in an underground prison. His vast property and inheritance were pillaged and confiscated."

(Quotations from Abdul-Baha in *Some Answered Questions*, p. 33.)

The Blessed Beauty of El-Abha (Baha'o'llah)—may the divine souls of the existence be a ransom to his friends!—endured personally, all kinds of calamities and bore the most violent ordeals. There remained no torture which did not come to his holy body, and no suffering which did not descend upon his pure spirit. How many nights he could not take rest under the chains and heaviness of fetters and how many days he gave himself not a minute's repose because of the burden of fetters and chains!

From Neyaveran to Teheran that pure spirit, who was brought up on a bed of down, was forced to run, with bare head and bare feet, under chains and fetters, and, in a dark and narrow subterranean prison, he was placed with murderers, thieves, criminals, malefactors; at every moment a new torture was inflicted upon him and at every moment his martyrdom was expected by all.

After a long time, he was sent from the city of his residence to foreign countries. For many years in Baghdad at every moment a new arrow was darted toward his holy breast, and at every instant a sword was bent on his pure body. At no instant was there any hope for safety and security, and the enemies, with utmost dexterity, were attacking

the blessed soul from all sides, and he, alone, personally resisted them all.

(Abdul-Baha.)

His Holiness Baha'o'llah spent many days in the utmost poverty. During the term of his imprisonment in Teheran, his daily ration was one loaf of bread only. According to the opinion of some people it is impossible to imagine greater poverty than this!

(Abdul-Baha: Diary Letter of Mirza Sohrab, March 26, 1914.)

Baha'o'llah (writing in later years says) in one of his poems: "The mark of the chain is yet visible on my neck and the impress of the fetters can be seen around my ankles!"

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, March 1, 1914.)

When Baha'o'llah was imprisoned and chains were around his neck, Abdul-Baha, then eight years old, was with some of the believers in another place. The people finally captured him also. The boys of this place gathered together and began to beat him; about two or three hundred children surrounded him. They beat him severely on the head, cursed him and otherwise persecuted him.

(From Notes of Mrs. I. D. Brittingham, taken at Haifa, in 1901.)

Another incident:—"We found Abbas Effendi (Abdul-Baha) surrounded by a band of boys who had undertaken personally to molest him. He was standing in their midst as straight as an arrow—a little fellow, the youngest and smallest of the group—firmly but quietly *commanding* them not to lay their hands upon him, which, strange to say, they seemed unable to do."

(Words of the sister of Abdul-Baha: *Abbas Effendi*, p. 14.)

When I was a small boy in Teheran, I remember whenever two of the believers of God desired to meet each other they could not do it during the day time, so a time was set for the evening, between sunset and midnight. They were so persecuted that if they met each other in the bazaar, they would not show any sign of recognition. The meetings were held at midnight. One of the believers acted as a guard and watched the street so that they might not be seen by any strangers. The guard looked continually to the left and right, in order not to be detected by the night police. At that time, all the inhabitants of Persia thought that the fire of the cause was entirely extinguished, that all traces of internal growth were effaced. Every one who was known as a Bahai was arrested, thrown into prison, and then killed and their possessions pillaged and their houses destroyed. . . .

In reality those were days of self-sacrifice, days of great tests, days of matchless heroism, days of spirituality, days of complete severance, days of attraction and enkindlement, days of divine bliss and beatitude. The material conditions were made subservient to the spiritual laws. The believers were filled with the Spirit. Although they walked on the surface of the earth, yet they were living in the Supreme Concourse. It is impossible to find souls more attracted, more severed, more self-sacrificing than they were!

When Baha'o'llah was thrown into the dungeon, there were many other believers arrested and imprisoned at the same time. They were arranged in two rows, one opposite the other. Their feet were shackled, their hands manacled, their necks chained. The prison being an underground room, it was so pitch dark that they could not see each other's face. The Blessed Perfection was in the right row and in order to keep up their spirits, he taught them two verses, each line to be chanted in turn by the two rows during the evenings. Their loud,

clear voices, singing in unison, pierced through the impenetrable darkness of the jail and ascended to the very throne of the Almighty. The first row would sing: "He is my Guardian and the Guardian of all creatures!" and the opposite row would cry out: "Sufficient unto us is God, and to this we bear witness!" There was such exultation and serene happiness in the awful darkness of the jail that it was illumined with the Light of the Kingdom of Abha. . . .

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, June 22, 1914.)

In every dispensation a number of sanctified souls have become manifest who were self-sacrificing, severed from all else save God, forbearing sufferings and tribulations, accepting hardships and persecutions, welcoming tortures and death for the sake of truth. But in none of the past dispensations have there been such heroic and sublime instances of devotion and martyrdom as in this Bahai Cause! At the time when all the inhabitants of Teheran had arisen against this Cause and the Blessed Perfection (Baha'o'llah) was arrested and thrown into prison, I was a very young child. The jail wherein Baha'o'llah was imprisoned was a dark and gloomy cell underground, and had no aperture, no window save a small door. When the door was unlocked one had to descend many rickety steps before reaching the gloomy, stuffy ground floor. The name of the jailer was Aga Bozork, and he was an inhabitant of the city of Gazwin. As in the past he had received many favors, bounties and kindnesses from the beloved hands of Baha'o'llah, he came one day to our house and took me with him to see my father. Descending half the stairs of the cell, I peered through the darkness to try and see someone. Everything was pitch darkness. Suddenly I heard the wonderful, resonant voice of the Blessed Perfection: "Take this child away! Do not let him come in!" Obeying the words of Baha'o'llah,

the jailer took me out and said: "Sit down here and be patient. About noon the prisoners are taken out, and then you can see your father!" I sat there. A little after twelve o'clock they brought the prisoners out and among them I saw the Blessed Perfection. A thick heavy chain called *gare kahar*, the heaviest and thickest chain of the time, was placed about his holy feet, the end of which dragged along the ground. His neck was also chained with heavy fetters and his hands manacled. Mirza Mahmud—a most wonderful Bahai—was the fellow-prisoner of Baha'o'llah. They were chained together. A common, ordinary felt hat, the top of which was worn out and the fringe torn and soiled, was on his blessed head. I cannot describe to you the pain and anguish that attacked and tortured me by this sight of the Manifestation!

[The compiler wishes to state just here that anguish personified, the vibrations of which pierced every listener as a two-edged sword, marked Abdul-Baha's address as he told of this same event, while he was in San Francisco. Never shall it be forgotten by those who were blessed by listening to his voice, even if it was such a saddened occasion.]

In short, the fiendish cruelties of the authorities reached to such a height as to divide a large number of the believers among the various classes of the inhabitants of Teheran, so that these people might martyr them according to their own devilish desires. For example, a believer was given to the government clerks, another to the policemen, another to the infantry, another to the ulemas, another to the dervishes, another to the butchers—one to the members of each craft and profession—so that all of them might lend a hand in shedding the blood of these innocent Bahais. For instance, a believer was given to the cavalry. These ferocious beasts took him to Saleza Meydan and about one thousand of them riding on their horses, with drawn swords attacked him

from all sides. The body was actually cut into a thousand small pieces, and yet they did not give up. The sight of blood maddened them, and turned them into wild, dancing savages, thirsting for more blood. Finally the executioner called out to them: "O ye madmen! Stop! It is enough! Nothing is left of the body. I must take these small shreds and pieces and bury them. Do not add more to the horrors of my task!" At this juncture a restaurant keeper arrived on the scene and asked the executioner to let him have the remains of the "accursed Bahai," because he would burn them in his stove and by this act gain his entrance into Paradise. . . . Those were the days of miraculous deeds, matchless heroism, unsurpassable firmness and divine courage. Each one of the believers while walking upon the earth, was at the same time soaring toward the Supreme Concourse. They were the angels of the Kingdom of Abha and the spiritual heroes of the arena of unparalleled sacrifice.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, February 22, 1914.)

When Baha'o'llah was imprisoned in Teheran, the Russian ambassador went about twenty times to the Shah to plead in his behalf, saying: "This man has no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison him?" The Shah answered that Baha'o'llah must be punished because he had ordered an attack on his life. The Ambassador said: "That is not a reasonable supposition, for if he had ordered such an attempt he would have ordered a bullet put in the gun instead of merely powder and small shot." The Shah acknowledged this reasoning, but was determined to hold Baha'o'llah responsible so as to have a pretext for keeping him in prison.

Again and again the Russian ambassador went to talk with the Shah about the matter, and at last the Shah confessed that he was afraid of the influence of Baha'o'llah, and that if he should set

him free, it would create a great tumult among the people.

The Ambassador answered: "If then, you fear him so much, why keep him in Teheran; would it not be better to exile him to Baghdad?" This was accordingly done.

(*Daily Lessons*, p. 58.)

When the Blessed Perfection and his family were exiled from Persia, all along our way from Teheran to Baghdad we did not find a believer, only a handful of despondent friends were in Baghdad. All the people firmly believed that with the exile of Baha'o'llah the fire of this Cause would become extinct. Were they not wrong in their reckonings? How many houses were pillaged! How many people were exiled! How many were thrown into prison! How many thousands were killed! And yet they did not succeed in their fiendish work of extermination! For this Cause is constantly reinforced by the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse, and no army, no matter how invulnerable, can defeat the phalanxes of the Kingdom!

About thirty years ago, no one heard the name of the Bahai Cause in Eshkabad; but now the dome of the first Mashrak-el-Azkar, like a radiant jewel, glitters under the rays of the sun! . . . Praise be to God that it has become evident and known to all that the Bahais

are free from any intrigues and seditions. They confer life and not death! . . . The people of Persia looked on the Bahais as the enemies of their religion, possessions and life, and consequently they considered one of the holiest duties the extermination of this sect. Well do I remember when still a child and in Teheran, one day I entered the Mosque and saw a fanatical Mullah haranguing the crowd: "O people! If you love God, kill the Babis; if you wish the descent of the blessings of the Almighty, kill the Babis, and if you want to protect your hearts and possessions, your wives and families, kill the Babis!" So ingrained was the enmity of the Mohammedans against this wronged community. . . . On the other hand, Baha'o'llah compelled the Babis to non-resistance and taught them day and night to adorn themselves with the qualities of holiness and sanctity, and commanded them to be meek and holy. He said: "It is better for you to be killed than to kill!" He exhorted them to be faithful, to be kind toward all the nations, to deal sincerely with all the people, to characterize themselves with mercy, benevolence, clemency and charity and to exert themselves at all times to serve the world of humanity.

(Abdul-Baha: *Diary of Mirza Sohrab*, February 17, 1914.)

Exiled in Baghdad

NO one can ever imagine even faintly how we were surrounded from all sides by test and trials in the nascent stage of the Cause. When we were exiled from Persia, outwardly the means of happiness were completely lacking; we did not have even our daily necessities. Notwithstanding all this whenever I think of this time my heart is filled with exultation.

For eleven years we lived in Baghdad.

The heat of that place was very intense, yet we were most happy, because we were assisted in serving at the Holy Threshold. One cannot experience a greater amount of heat than in Baghdad; at that time the summers were unbearable. We were strangers and penniless, yet our joy was supreme. The trip from Teheran to Baghdad and the days spent in Baghdad in the presence of the Blessed Perfection are very vivid in my memory

and shall never be forgotten. Those days were overflowing with joy and fragrance.

(Abdul-Baha.)

Mirza Yahya or Subhi-Ezel, the younger half brother, whom Baha'o'llah in his love had taught most tenderly, became ambitious for prominence in the wonderful movement the Bab had started. He was encouraged by a temporary leadership which the Bab had entrusted to him. He lacked courage, however, and when the persecutions broke out fled in disguise to Baghdad, where he began to oppose the pure and glorious Baha'o'llah and claimed that he himself was the great teacher whom the Bab had foretold, "Him whom God should manifest." Other followers of the Bab also made similar claims. With these claims they evidently stirred up quite a commotion and Baha'o'llah, always a man of peace, withdrew for two years into the mountains and let them do the teaching. But the words of Abdul-Baha, which are quoted a few paragraphs below, show how powerless these claimants were to quicken the spirits and purify the lives of those to whom Baha'o'llah had brought the very water of life. When their failure to produce in their hearers the fruits of righteousness was apparent Baha'o'llah returned that through the radiance of his spirit he might bring them back from death into life.

Later when Baha'o'llah felt compelled to proclaim that God had called him to be the teacher of world-unity whom the Bab had announced, he enclosed in the envelope with his own proclamation a letter of Subhi-Ezel's. These he sent without a word of comment and let the readers judge from the comparative spiritual power of the two letters which had the sanction of God's Holy Spirit.

Almost everyone accepted Baha'o'llah. Subhi-Ezel thus defeated descended to intrigues and for many years carried on intrigues against his glorious brother. Some writers in the West failing to

probe the disguise of Subhi-Ezel's pretended goodness have tried to justify him. But the great higher critic, Prof. T. K. Cheyne, has proved beyond the shadow of a question the futility and emptiness of all Subhi-Ezel's claims. A few years ago Subhi-Ezel's own son seeing how Baha'o'llah had now proved his greatness and divine power by bringing multitudes of those divergent races and sects into a new life of brotherhood and love became a devoted follower of Baha'o'llah.

(Note by compiler.)

During the first years of our stay in Baghdad, Baha'o'llah suddenly departed for the mountains of Suleymanieh. At that time we did not know his whereabouts at all and so it happened that there was no one to teach the Cause or muster the scattered Bahai forces. The fire of search was almost extinguished and the interest of the public waned. There was no one to assuage the fear of the few or attract the hearts of the many. The voice of divine authority was hushed and the thunders and lightnings of spiritual revelations did not roll and flash across the heavenly track. Mirza Yahya, who claimed to be the vice-regent of the Bab, always fearing his own shadow, was concealing himself in a thousand hiding-places. Completely disguised and under the assumed name of Haji Ali, he traveled like a dervish between Baghdad and Balsorah. In order to hide his identity from the public he had hung on a string a few red and yellow Arabian slippers, which he sold to the people while walking through the streets and bazaars.

At this juncture, two young men from Meelan came to Baghdad. They were enkindled believers and they brought cheer and happiness to our despondent and sorrowing hearts. It was then a long time that we had had no news from the Blessed Perfection (Baha'o'llah). The fire of spirituality and activity was put out of every soul. The hearts were be-

wildered and the spirits drooped. No amount of exertion whatever could in the least stir to courage or self-sacrifice the spirits of the few remaining, fearful Bahais. At that time I was very young.

These two new believers from Meelan came and knocked at the door. I went and opened it. I observed that they were two young men from Meelan. Their faces were luminous, their eyes radiant. They were shining like unto two suns. I asked them to come in. . . . After awhile they asked about the Cause. I told them that the Cause was extinct, there was no Cause. They asked about Mirza Yahya. I told them he was concealed and no one knew his whereabouts. They asked about Baha'o'llah. I told them I did not know where he was. As soon as they heard this sad news they looked at each other and began to weep and weep. For nearly one hour they sat on the floor and wept bitter tears of regret and disappointment. I tried to console them but I could not succeed. My own heart was sad when I realized the chaotic condition of the Cause and the absence of any life. Then they arose from their seats; without any remarks they left the house. They did not leave any address and I never heard from them afterwards.

How different it is now! The banner of the Cause of Baha'o'llah is waving over all the regions. The power of the Most Great Name is felt by all the nations of the world. The glad tidings of the Kingdom are proclaimed to all the religions of the world. The potency of the Holy Spirit is moving the hearts of men, and the fearless teachers of the Cause are spreading the Gospel of salvation both in the East and in the West.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, February 3, 1914.)

Baha'o'llah departed to Sarkalu alone. Nobody knew just where he was, even we were not informed. Two years he passed at Sarkalu. Some of the time he passed in the mountains, some of the time

in grottoes, and some of the time in the city of Sarkalu. Although solitary and alone, nobody knowing him, yet all through Kurdistan he became well known. It was said, "This unknown person is a most remarkable person, is exceedingly learned, is possessed of a tremendous power, and has a colossal force." All Kurdistan was magnetized by his love. But Baha'o'llah was passing his time in poverty and even his robes and clothes were those of the poor; his food was that of the indigent. The signs of severance were manifest upon him as the sun at mid-day, and he was absolutely careless regarding his life.

(Abdul-Baha.)

Once I was in the presence of Baha'o'llah. He was reading some of the writings of the Master (Abdul-Baha). After reading every line he would praise it and express the highest commendation saying: "We have never taught the Master, yet he writes with such deep penetration and inspiration; but we are daily teaching his brothers, and they are copying the holy tablets all the time, but they cannot write correctly one letter."

(Words of Haji Mohammed, one of the early Oriental Bahais: Diary Letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, November 17, 1913.)

Although he (Abdul-Baha) had not studied in any school, yet, from his youth, fountains of knowledge flowed in his fluent explanations. The first trace which emanated from his holy being in the world of knowledge was the treatise he wrote in his early youth at Baghdad. This was a commentary upon the holy tradition: "I was an invisible Treasury; as I loved to be known therefore I created men to know Me." He wrote this commentary in answer to the request of one of the Pashas. The author (Abul-Fazl) was present at a meeting when some one asked Haji-Seyd-Jawad

Taba-Tabay of Kerbela concerning the life of Baha'o'llah. The great Seyd answered: "That holy being must be a shining light whose great son hath written such a treatise during his childhood."

(Mirza Abul Fazl: *Bahai Proofs*, p. 49-50.)

During these years Abbas Effendi was accustomed to frequent the mosques and argue with the doctors and learned men. They were astonished at his knowledge and acumen and he came to be known as the youthful sage. They would ask him, "Who is your teacher, where do you learn the things which you say?" His reply was that his father had taught him. Although he had never been a day in school, he was as proficient in all that was taught as well-educated young men, which was the cause of much remark among those who knew.

In appearance my brother was at this time a remarkably fine-looking youth. He was noted as one of the handsomest young men in Baghdad.

(Sister of Abdul-Baha: Quoted from *Abbas Effendi*, by Myron H. Phelps.)

Once when I lived in Baghdad I was invited to the home of a poor thorn-picker. In Baghdad the heat is even more intense than in Syria and it was a very hot day. But I walked twelve miles to the thorn-picker's hut. Then his wife made a little cake out of some meal for me, and burnt it in cooking it. Still that was the best reception I ever attended.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary record of Miss Juliet Thompson.)

When we were living in Baghdad according to the custom of that country we slept on the roof during the summer months. I always commenced sleeping on the roof one month earlier than any one else and stayed one month and a

half longer at the end of the season. The members of the family always insisted that I should come down because it was getting too cold; but I did not listen to them. I loved the perfect quietness, the mystic silence, the awe-inspiring, heavenly scene! Long after midnight I would get up, commune with God in spirit and watch the stars circling in their majestic spheres. There was such spirituality in that Eastern silence that whenever I think of it I feel myself transported to those divine nights of concentration and contemplation!

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, March 25, 1914.)

I was asleep upon my couch; the breaths of my Lord, the Merciful, passed over me and awakened me from my sleep and commanded me to proclaim between earth and heaven. This was not on my part but on His part, and to this bear witness the denizens of the realms of His power and His Kingdom and the dwellers of the cities of His glory and Himself the Truth.

The gales of the All-knowing, the All-glorious passed by me and taught me the knowledge of what hath been. . . . I have not studied these sciences which men possess nor have I entered the colleges.

This (Baha'o'llah) is a leaf which the breezes of the will of thy Lord the Mighty, the Extolled have stirred. Can it be still when the rushing winds blow? . . . Verily, I was not save as one dead in the presence of His command, the hand of thy Lord, the Merciful, turning me.

Thou knowest, O God, that in every action, I desire nothing save Thy affairs, and that in every utterance I seek naught but Thy celebration; neither doth my pen move except I desire therein Thy good pleasure and the setting forth of what Thou hast enjoined upon me by Thy authority.

(Continued on page 168)

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Kudrat 1, 73 (November 4, 1917)

No. 13

“The Cause of Baha’o’llah is the same as the Cause of Christ”

The Cause of Baha’o’llah is the same as the Cause of Christ. It is the same temple and the same foundation. Both of these are the spiritual spring and the seasons of the soul-refreshing awakening and the cause of the renovation of the life of mankind. The spring of this year is the same as the spring of last year. The origins and ends are the same. The sun of today is the sun of yesterday. In the coming of Christ the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Baha’o’llah have the same basic principles but are according to the stage of the maturity of the world and the requirements of this illumined age.

—ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS

The Hundreth Anniversary of the Birth of Baha’o’llah

(Continued from page 167)

Thou seest me, O God, confounded in Thine earth. If I tell what Thou hast enjoined on me, Thy creatures turn against me; if I forsake what Thou hast enjoined on me for Thy part, I should be far removed from the gardens of nearness to Thee. (Wherefore) I advance toward Thy good pleasure, turning aside from what the souls of Thy servants desire, accepting what is with Thee and forsaking what would remove me afar off from the retreats or nearness to Thee and the heights of Thy glory. For Thy love I flinch not from aught and

for Thy good pleasure I fear not all the afflictions of the world. This is but through Thy strength and Thy might, Thy grace and Thy favor, not because I am deserving thereof.

(From a letter to the Shah of Persia. Baha'o'llah's account of God's call ringing in his inmost consciousness bidding him arise and announce himself the one whom the Bab had foretold.)

During this time (the time of the Bab's banishment and imprisonment) Baha'o'llah was constantly engaged in the promulgation of the Cause of God; but without proclaiming himself or making known his station. Some, but few, among his friends, the early disciples, discovered that he was the one of whom the Bab spoke—"He whom God shall manifest." Although Baha'o'llah was of royal lineage, and not of the scholastic or learned, the people naturally looking for this Promised One among the divines, yet his marvelous discourses astonished the wise and learned and they who were pure in heart saw in him the fulfillment of their hopes.*

Baha'o'llah well prepared the people for the coming of the great event, namely, his declaration, which took place in the Garden of the Rizwan, outside the city of Baghdad. During twelve days he made his mission known to his disciples, and inasmuch as this great event occurred in the Garden of the Rizwan the greatest of Bahai feasts is called after that garden in commemorating the twelve days.

(*Flowers from the Rose Garden of Acca*, p. 26.)

*Baha'o'llah announced himself twice in Baghdad, once to a few in 1853, then to all his friends in 1863, in the garden of the Rizwan.

In Baghdad I was a child nine years old. There and then he (Baha'o'llah) announced to me the Word, and I believed him. As soon as he proclaimed to me the Word I threw myself at his holy feet and implored and supplicated him to accept this one drop of blood as a sacrifice in his pathway.

(Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, January 13, 1914.)

This is a blessed day (the ninth day of the Rizwan), a happy and joyous day. The beauty, the holiness and the significance of these days are not known now. This is the time of gladness, bliss and ecstasy for the believers of God because we have lived during the days of the Blessed Perfection and have experienced the great joy of these days. Their celebration by us is always shaded with a recollection, but for those who have not seen Baha'o'llah with their physical eyes these days will be celebrated with a genuine rejoicing and a most thorough preparation. The beauty, the sheer joy, the exhilaration of the golden Rizwan days are now brought back to my memory and in reviewing them I find each day a perfect gem of spiritual rapture.

During the nights of those days we could not sleep because we fancied in our minds the unparalleled joy of meeting Baha'o'llah in the morning, standing in his presence, receiving his graces, and listening to his words. It was on the ninth day that the Blessed Perfection leaving Baghdad stayed in the Garden of Hajib Pasha before starting for Constantinople. It is impossible to describe with words the beatific vibrations with which we were surrounded in those days. Although to all outward appearances the Blessed Perfection was in exile, yet he moved with such power and manifested such majesty! The list of visitors calling on him during these ten days looks rather like the roll call of an army. Those who had never seen him while he lived in Baghdad called. All the leaders of the

community, the officers of the army, and of the government paid a visit. Even the Governor, Najib Pasha, called and Baha'o'llah did not return these rather important calls. Were one to reflect for a moment he would realize that such

great events have never occurred in the history of the past dispensations!

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, April 30, 1914.)

Life in the Most Great Prison

THE government of Persia said: "As long as Baha'o'llah is in Persia the country will not be at peace. When Baha'o'llah is exiled from Persia the country will then find peace. He shall no longer be connected with this country; all communications with him shall be suspended." So the Shah of Persia endeavored until he succeeded in expelling the Blessed Perfection to Constantinople, and from Constantinople to Roumelia. Communication with him had to be in secret, but still the Cause spread, and they said: "Day by day his lamp becomes brighter, his potency becomes greater. The cause of this spreading is due to the populous cities to which he is sent. Therefore it is better to send him to a penal colony where he may be considered as a suspect, that the people may know he is in the prison of murderers and highway robbers; and in a bad climate he and his followers may perish." Therefore the King of Persia, Nasser-Ud-Din, Shah, endeavored until he succeeded in having him transported to the prison of Acca.

But the banishment of Baha'o'llah, the Blessed Perfection, instead of resulting in the extermination of the Cause in the country proved just the contrary; the Cause was spread more rapidly; the fame became more widely circulated; the teachings of the Blessed Perfection became more widely promulgated in Persia. Through the power of God he was able to hoist his banner. If at first it was a lamp, it became a flame. If it was a star, it became a mighty sun. The fame of the Cause of the Blessed Perfection went as far as the East and the West.

He paid no attention to the ministers and viziers. The Governor-in-Chief of Acca craved to be honored by admission to the presence of Baha'o'llah. For five years this one man, called Zia Pasha, asked Abdul-Baha if he would supplicate the Manifestation to permit him to make this visit, but the Manifestation never granted it. All the people of Acca know this. The Blessed Perfection was imprisoned, yet he had that power to refuse anything or to do anything he wished.

(Abdul-Baha.)

Whosoever reads the Book of H'ykl (*Surat-ul-H'ykl*) can observe the tremendous and colossal power of Baha'o'llah. He addressed the kings from the prison, each individually, summoning all to the oneness of humanity, and the most great peace, arraiging some, and predicting what would happen in their kingdoms, and these predictions have come to pass!

Some of the kings exhibited pride, one was the Ottoman king, Abdul Aziz Khan. When Baha'o'llah was a prisoner in his kingdom, he addressed him very critically, and literally did it come to pass.

Another was the French emperor. The Emperor of France did not send any reply, then a second epistle was sent to him. It was addressed to Napoleon the Third, saying, "I wrote you an epistle before, and I summoned you to a cause, but you heeded it not. You proclaimed once that you were a defender of the oppressed, but it becomes evident that you are not; rather, you magnify your own selfish desires and passions.

You advocate your own interests, and this pride of yours is supported by your empire and sovereignty. Because of your arrogance, God will shortly destroy your sovereignty and a revolution shall be set up in that kingdom, and the reins of government shall be taken from your hands, and in the utmost of debasement and degradation will you be cast, and now surely I see you in degradation. Soon it shall be manifested! The river Rhine will be the place of your humiliation and mourning, and the women will bemoan the loss of their sons." Such was the arraignment which was sent. It has been published and sent abroad.

Similar addresses were directed to other kings. And this he accomplished within a prison which was beyond human endurance, and all that he wrote or declared came to pass. It became evident and manifest, no one could hinder it. Some have not yet come to pass; they will occur later.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From address given in Washington, D. C., May 10, 1912.)

In spite of all difficulties Baha'o'llah was ever in an exalted state; his face shone continually. He had the presence of a king. One cannot imagine any one with more majesty. One would have said that he was enjoying the greatest comfort. He drew his strength from divine powers, which always triumph. Minds were exalted on beholding him, and Baha'o'llah never hid himself. He spoke courageously before all. "He is incomparable," declared the people, "but he is setting himself against Islam. Such an one is an honor to humanity," they said, "but a detriment to our religion; therefore we must declare ourselves against him." . . .

(Abdul-Baha.)

In his lifetime he was restless for activity. He did not pass one night restfully in his bed. He bore all his ordeals

and catastrophies in order that in the world of humanity a heavenly radiance might become apparent; in order that in the world of humanity the most great peace might become a reality; in order that certain souls might become manifest as the very angels of heaven; in order that heaven's morals might become apparent among men; in order that humanity, or individuals of humanity, might become educated; in order that the precious, priceless qualities of God in the human temple might be developed to the fullest capacity; in order that man might be the likeness of God, even as it has been stated in the Bible.

(Abdul-Baha: Extract from address given in New York City, April 18, 1912.)

It was in all probability the second month of the summer when one early morning the steamer anchored off the shore of Haifa. Altogether we were seventy-seven persons. After sunrise we landed at Haifa, and hardly three or four hours had passed before a large sailing boat was brought into commission by the authorities, in which they were going to carry us back to Acca. The baggage was taken on board, and immediately afterward all of us were taken off. It was about 4 p. m. when we reached Acca.

As we entered the place we found the inhabitants of Acca, without exception, sickly looking people of sallow, yellow complexion, a good many unable to walk and hence strewn on the narrow streets. Even the soldiers and officers, who possessed privileges, looked ill. In fact, a number of the soldiers, that is, those who were ordered to guard us, were very sick and I began treating them at once.

(Abdul-Baha.)

That night we were kept by the soldiers who guarded us entirely without food. Two sentries were placed at the door and we were forbidden to go to the market to buy anything. The moth-

ers not having eaten, had no milk for their babies; the young children were famishing and the bodily sufferings of all of us were very great. But we were so happy in spite of all our miseries, and Khanom (the speaker) especially laughed so much that the Blessed Perfection sent a messenger to us to say, "Do not laugh so much, or the soldiers will say, 'Listen to those foolish people enjoying themselves and laughing with nothing to eat.'"

The day following the governor sent us some rice, but it was very bad rice, unwashed, and full of stones. The children were very happy when they saw food, and crowded around the tables. But when it was cooked, it was so black and dirty it made them sick, and they could not eat it. Then the Manifestation came to us and said, "Do not cry; I have made some food for you." He gave each of the children one sugar-plum. When they had eaten these they all went to sleep, quite peacefully and contentedly.

The weather was extremely hot, the water was bad, the prison ration coarse black bread, so that in those days many of us felt sick, and it was not long afterward when everyone became ill, except Abdul-Baha and another believer, Agha Riza Chirazi, and these two nursed us through.

(Zea Khanom, daughter of Abdul-Baha.)

When we arrived in Acca it was found there were not enough rooms in the barracks to imprison us separately, so they put us all in two rooms with no furniture at all. The court of the barracks had a most gloomy aspect. There were three or four fig trees on the branches of which several ominous owls screeched all night. Every one got sick, and there were neither provisions nor medicine. At the entrance of the barracks there was a morgue. It was a horrible looking room, yet I lived there two years in the utmost happiness. Up to that period I had not had time to read the Koran from first to last, but then I had ample time and used to read this Holy Book with fervor and enthusiasm.

Going over the incidents and events of the lives of former Prophets, and finding how parallel they were with ours, I was consoled and encouraged. I would read for instance, the following verse:

"How thoughtless are the people! Whenever a Prophet is sent to them, they either ridicule him or persecute him." And then I would read this verse: "Verily, Our Host is victorious over them." I was very happy all the time, because I was a free man. Shut off in that room, my spirit travelled throughout the immensity of space.

The soul of man must be happy no matter where he is. One must attain to that condition of inward beatitude and peace—then outward circumstances will not alter his spiritual calmness and joyousness. No one can imagine a worse place than the barracks of Acca. The surroundings were filthy and dirty, the treatment of the officials was unbearable, and we were looked upon as the enemies of religion and corruptors of morals. The government had given an order that during our stay in Acca, no one must talk with us and we must not talk with each other.

(Abdul-Baha.)

When the Purest Branch (Baha'ollah's youngest son) fell from the roof and was killed, the believers were not allowed to bury him, but four soldiers came and took away the body, and the holy family did not know for two years whether it had been thrown into the sea or what the soldiers had done with it. Naturally his mother was terribly sad and grieved at his death under such sad circumstances, and this sorrow made her so ill that it caused a disease of the heart, so that for a long time she was not able to walk about, but was obliged to sit on the bed.

However, when the Blessed Perfection said to her, "For my sake has this come upon him, and he has borne for me a sorrow and a trouble that was coming to me," from that day no one ever saw the mother weeping and she was always quite happy and cheerful. This was be-

cause of her faith and the strength of her spirit.

(Zea Khanom, daughter of Abdul-Baha.)

(Notes of Miss E. J. Rosenberg, Haifa, February, March, 1901.)

In the first month two of us died, and we had no money to pay for the funeral expenses, so we sold the one remaining rug. This money was also pocketed by the officials, and the two bodies thrown together in a hole outside of the town.

In the beginning, no one was allowed to leave the barracks without being accompanied by two or four guards. But after six months or a year, when they saw that not a soul ever tried to escape they gave us greater freedom and the friends could go out in the bazaar to buy things, either followed by one soldier or none. . . .

(Sister of Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 5, 1914.)

Since that date consider how conditions have changed, and how every one of those who oppressed this party of exiles and endeavored with might and main to suppress the spread of this light has become lost in the abyss of despair and oblivion.

They are gone and we are still here, whereas, from the standpoint of the world and human reason, it should have been reversed. Everybody imagined that under the existing circumstances all this would end shortly and naught would be left of the Bahais. Is not this an evidence of divine protection and providence? We have longed for death in the path of God; we have been ready to welcome the cup of sacrifice and were thirsty for the chalice of martyrdom. The Lord willed that we stay and serve Him.

(Abdul-Baha: *Bahai Bulletin*—an early Bahai publication, p. 10.)

When two years had passed a regiment of soldiers was assigned to Acca. Of

course there was no other place for them to live except the barracks. Therefore they had no other alternative but to turn us out. All the time there was an inn in Acca which was inhabited by different people. This inn became the hospice for the pilgrims in after years.

I went to the inn-keeper and said: "As our number is large and there are several families in our party I desire to rent the inn as a whole, and if possible the present inmates may vacate and go elsewhere." He gave his consent to my suggestion. When after a few days I came back to draw up the papers and sign the documents I saw one of the rooms was still inhabited. "Who is this?" I asked. "He is the German consul," he answered. "He must leave the premises," I said, "otherwise I will not rent the place. It is impossible for an outsider to live here." The inn-keeper looked at me with ridicule and contempt. "Ha! Ha!" he laughed, "and they say you are a prisoner! Bah! You talk to me as though you were my lord and master. What do you think, Mr. Prisoner—do you expect to get an exclusive palace in this prison town? Not much! Not much! This man is a German consul; I cannot drive him out."

Finally the German consul left of his own accord and requested to come only two hours a day to attend to his official duties, to which proposition we assented cheerfully.

Then we began to repair the rooms. One of the rooms was left unrepaired, because our small fund was exhausted. The rooms then were assigned to various families and friends, and I chose the last one for myself. This room was so damp that moss had grown on the walls and ceiling, and when it rained there were several cracks in the ceiling which gave free and welcome entrance to the rain.

The floor consisted of humid earth, a breeder of fleas. I had a piece of mat and a long Persian fur coat. It was my seat by day and my coverlet by night. When I covered myself with it an army

of fleas hiding in the ambushade of the fur attacked me and tried their best to defeat me, but I defeated them by turning the coat and covering myself with the other side. For one hour I slept, then the wily, indomitable fleas found their way again to the inner side. Every night I had recourse to this maneuvering eight or ten times. Notwithstanding this I was far happier and more joyful at that time than now, sleeping on this fine bed!

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, July 17, 1913.)

When we were imprisoned in the military barracks of Acca there was a small primitive bath in which the Blessed Perfection took an occasional bath. When the time arrived for our departure from the barracks we rented a very small house in the town. It was a two-story house having two rooms on the lower and four rooms on the upper floor, but they were small indeed.

On the other hand, our party consisted of many people, and we wondered how all these souls could be accommodated in this small house. Finally thirteen of us agreed to live in one room. We lived and slept and worked in this one small room. We lived in this house for well-nigh twenty years. It so happened that although the house was small yet it contained some sort of a bath, and so the Blessed Perfection could use it as often as he wished.

At the end of twenty years we rented a much larger house, but it had no bath. We went to Baha'o'llah and asked permission to build one. The more I begged the stronger was his refusal. I said: "With only fifty pounds a little comfortable bath can be built." But he did not give his consent. Finally a month passed and I was quite worried. At last I went to an Arab friend and borrowed from him two-hundred and fifty pounds at two per cent.

This money I took to a merchant who was in former times a grain dealer, but

now out of work. I said to him: "We will enter into a partnership, I to furnish the capital, you the labor. With this fund you will deal four months in grain. After paying off all the expenses of rent, etc., and receiving your monthly salary, we will divide the net profit; one-third for you and two-thirds for me." We entered into this agreement and engaged in business. After four months we cleared our accounts. I paid the debt with its two per cent, the merchant received his one-third of the net profit, all the other expenses were defrayed, and eighty pounds left in the balance for me. With that sum then, I built a bath in the house which is kept intact to the present day.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, August 5, 1913.)

The house of Baha'o'llah (in Acca) was, in the beginning, two houses. At first the Blessed Perfection lived in one of them; after some years the other, fronting on the sea, was added to the first; and as they were built side by side, the partition was taken away. Thus from the older house, Baha'o'llah moved into the newer one, which has a most sublime, uninterrupted view of the sea, and took the room the veranda of which I see from my window. It is said that often in the mornings, and almost always in the afternoons, the Blessed Perfection used to walk on the veranda; the believers and pilgrims, knowing the custom, would come and walk in the neighborhood and if he desired to see any of them he would beckon to them with his blessed hands. It is now the room in the older house that Abdul-Baha is living in. Both houses are large, and although their architecture is not modern yet they are the best houses in Acca with regard to position, outward appearance and inside accommodations.

(Mirza Sohrab: Diary, December 9, 1913.)

For nine consecutive years the Blessed Perfection did not put his feet outside the gate of Acca. He was either imprisoned in the barracks or closely watched and guarded in the house. The day of his departure from the town to the plain of Acca was considered the most important in the Bahai cause. A prisoner he was, and according to the strict, royal firman of Abdul Aziz he was to be jailed in a cell alone, not even one of us was to be allowed to see or to talk to him, and to leave the town of Acca was a matter strictly forbidden. In brief, he was to be a life prisoner, with these deadly restrictions.

One day, while he was walking in the house, in the course of his conversation he said, "It is nine years since my eyes have beheld one blade of grass." He loved the green pastures, verdant plains, blossoming trees and flowering spots; especially the prairie of Acca which was wonderfully green and carpeted with wild flowers during the months of spring. For this reason he often remarked: "The city is the world of spirits!" Hearing these statements from the blessed lips of Baha'o'llah one day I took with me Nouri Bey, Hakki Bey and Mahmoud Effendi Toupjee—all three political prisoners and walked straight out of the gate into the plain of Acca. The strange part of this strange proceeding was that while the guards were stationed on both sides of the gate they did not as much as lift one finger to prevent us from going out, which was of course the most natural thing for them to do. On and on we walked, revelling in our newfound freedom, till we reached the present palace of Baha'o'llah (Bahajee). Here they had just laid out an orchard wherein they had planted new apricot and peach trees. The wind blowing through the branches stirred our hearts with a quick and new vibration. It was a most ideal scene. That day we walked and walked around the green country and then I

returned to town. Several days passed after this event, and then I gave a feast to the officials of the town under the pines near Bahajee. This broke the bonds of incarceration, and from that time I was allowed to go out and walk as my inclination led me.

There lived in Acca a man by the name of Mohammed Pasha Safvat, who was most inimical to the Cause. He had built a palace five or six miles outside the town. Many days I searched for a suitable house to rent for the Blessed Perfection, but I could find nothing else but the palace of this man. After much delay and postponement, through the confirmation of God I succeeded in renting this palace from him at £25 a year provided I might be allowed to repair the mansion with the rent of the first five years. Having papered and furnished all the rooms I ordered the carpenters to make for me a carriage with a cover which was done in due time. Having prepared everything and attended to every detail I went to the Blessed Perfection and said: "A good mansion is made ready for you outside of Acca. It is wonderfully situated and very charming. From one side the lovely mountains and undulating valleys are seen; from another side there are large orange and mandarine orchards; the oranges, like unto red lanterns, shine and glow through the green boughs; from another side, verdant gardens and prairies full of narcissis and tulips are seen; the Mediterranean glistens in the distance; a stream of cool water flows in the center; in brief, it is an ideal place. I supplicate you to leave the town and live there."

The Blessed Perfection answered: "I am a prisoner. The prisoners are not allowed to go beyond the town of Acca." I repeated my praises of the place and begged him to come out. But to no avail. Again he refused my request. I did not want to go on with this insistence so I chose silence and left the Blessed Perfection's presence.

I thought a good deal over this matter, trying to find a solution to this problem. Finally I decided to send for the Mofti, who loved Baha'o'llah and enjoyed freedom of conversation in his presence. When he arrived I told him something had come which none of us was able to cope with save him. He asked me what it was. I said: "We are all anxious that the Blessed Perfection should go out of town. I have begged him twice, the believers have also entreated, but all have been refused. This is thy work. After sunset go thou to the house, knock at the door, and if they ask thee what thou dost want, say, 'I have come to meet Baha'o'llah.' Thou must not leave his presence without his promise to go out."

As soon as he was given permission to enter the presence he went directly to him and threw himself at his holy feet, took hold of his blessed hands, and bluntly said: "My Lord, why dost thou not go out. The country is charming, the weather is delightful, the pastures are green, the water is cool and the palace is made ready." The Blessed Perfection said to him: "Mofti! I am a prisoner!" "O," he said, "You are not a prisoner. You are free. Everything depends upon your own will." Again Baha'o'llah objected, but the Mofti did not let his hands go and insisted and insisted till the much-expected promise was given. Coming out of the house the Mofti came to me and imparted to me the glad news. I was overjoyed, so much so that I kissed his lips many times. On the next day when I stood in the presence of the Blessed Perfection he smiled and said: "What a tenacious man you sent to me!" I said: "Now you have given your promise to the Mofti that you will go out, the carriage is ready at the door. . . ." I rode with him through the streets of Acca and beyond the gate. Then I alighted from the carriage and walked to the palace of Mazreah. The Blessed Perfection was most pleased with the place.

It was about the middle of February, and in that month and in March the whole country was bedecked with flowers. The plain of Acca was dancing with joy and the mountain, the valleys and gardens were intoxicated with the wine of happiness and were crying out, "O rapture! O bliss!" Those heavenly months and years were spent in the utmost rejoicing until it was found that the place was too small to accommodate the growing needs of the holy family. Then there was another palace belonging to Abboud and his family. This was the palace of Bahjee. Abboud and his children were sick and went into town. I wanted to rent this palace from him; he wished to present it to me and insisted upon it. Finally I rented it from him at £150 a year, and Baha'o'llah and the members of the holy family moved into it. From that time on he lived in Bahajee and Acca, alternately, till the day of his departure dawned upon us and threw us into the depths of despair and sorrow.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, March 23, 1914.)

Prof. Edward G. Browne of Cambridge University, England, whose specialty was Persian Literature and History, heard of the great spiritual awakening which was sweeping through Persia among a people that as he said "slumber in a sleep like unto that of death."

At last he was so much interested that he obtained a year's leave of absence and went to study at first-hand this remarkable spiritual renaissance. He visited "the fountain head" of the movement in Acca. He records his impression of Baha'o'llah as follows:

"Of the culminating event of this my journey some few words at least must be said. During the morning of the day after my installation at Bahje one of Baha's younger sons entered the room where I was sitting and beckoned to me to follow him. I did so, and was

conducted through passages and rooms at which I scarcely had time to glance to a spacious hall, paved, so far as I remember (for my mind was occupied with other thoughts) with a mosaic of marble. Before a curtain suspended from the wall of this great ante-chamber my conductor paused for a moment while I removed my shoes. Then, with a quick movement of the hand, he withdrew, and, as I passed, replaced the curtain; and I found myself in a large apartment along the upper end of which ran a low divan, while on the side opposite to the door were placed two or three chairs. Though I dimly suspected whither I was going, and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called 'taj' by dervishes (but of unusual height and make), 'round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I shall never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!"

(Prof. E. G. Browne: Quoted from *A Traveller's Narrative*.)

During the life of Baha'o'llah there lived in Acca an honorable gentleman from Europe. He had heard much about the praise of the Rizwan and expressed the wish to see the place. Permission being granted, he came there one day with his family. I prepared tea for

them and showed them the utmost hospitality. When they were going to leave in the evening, the gentleman left on the table a purse containing twelve pounds. Realizing what he had done, I ran back to him and forced the money into his hands. He urged me to accept it and I persisted in my refusal. Seeing how useless was his insistence, he took it back, alighted from his carriage, took off his hat and shook my hands. However, he went straight to the Blessed Perfection and said: "I wished to give a small present to your gardener, but he would not accept it; it seemed it was too little for him." When next I went to see him the Blessed Perfection addressed me: "Abdul Kasim! I have heard that thou didst not accept the present offered to thee by the European gentleman. Why didst thou not accept it?" "I? Never will I accept anything from anyone while I am serving the Lord of mankind." "Wilt thou accept something from me?" "Yes, with the greatest honor!" Then he showed me a small purse of Cashmere shawl and raising it up, he said: "This contains only one pound, but it is from me. Thou canst not realize how happy thou hast made me because thou didst manifest the wealth of the spirit. Those who are in *my* service must be independent of all else save me."

(Abdul Kasim, the gardener of the Rizwan: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, January 4, 1914.)

There are many kinds of roses, but this kind is the most fragrant. The extract of rose is taken from this. The Blessed Perfection always loved this species of roses. Large bowls containing the same decorated the table of his room all the time. The fragrance of this rose has a greatly refining effect upon the human constitution. Baha'o'llah liked perfumes very much, and he always used the attar of roses.

The physical susceptibilities of the Blessed Perfection were very great. His

sense of smell was very keen indeed, and also his eyesight, and up to the end of his life he read the finest type without the aid of glasses.

The holy divine Manifestations are even superior and distinguished in their physical powers from the rest of mankind! For example, even when the Blessed Perfection was not feeling well, his pulse would beat regularly like the pulse of a young man twenty years old. For the last three years of his life he hardly ate anything. The servants brought the tray before him; he would look at the various dishes, eat a few mouthfuls, and then it was immediately removed; yet the pulse was normal. At that time there was a Greek doctor who regularly called on the family whenever any of us was not feeling well. One day he was allowed to stand in the presence of Baha'o'llah. He looked into his face and his eyes, and asked permission to feel his pulse. After due examination, the doctor expressed his astonishment, and said that he had never seen a constitution so highly sensitive as that of Baha'o'llah.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, March 5, 1914.)

The greatest proof of the Blessed Perfection—may my life be a ransom to him!—consists in the fact that he was always manifest and evident under all conditions and circumstances. He was never concealed nor was he disguised for one day. In Persia, in Baghdad, in Constantinople, in Adrianople, and in the most great prison (Acca), Baha'o'llah ever withstood the persecutions of the enemies and kept his own ground in the face of all the world. He never attempted to protect or shield himself for one second. Before all nations and all religions he proclaimed his Cause and declared his teachings. The foes were resisting the spread of the Cause with the greatest hostility and his blessed breast was the target for an hundred thousand arrows.

Continually he was threatened with the darts and javelins of the adversaries. He cried out, "We have burned away the veil and the shroud and are enkindled with the fire of love. Like unto the candle we are set aglow and like unto the Beloved we are ever present in the gatherings of the lovers." It is well-nigh beyond belief that notwithstanding all these dangers the Blessed Perfection was protected. The condition was like that of a deer, although surrounded by a hundred thousand hounds attacking it from every side yet it is protected by an invisible power.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, March 7, 1914.)

In an Arabic poem, the Blessed Perfection said about the calamities and allegations heaped upon him: "In every moment they inflict upon me the wound of polytheism and at every second they aim at me the dart of infidelity. O Thou Divine Spirit! Descend and behold how my humiliation is greater than Thy glory."

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, June 21, 1914.)

All this diffusion of the fragrances of the Cause of God, throughout the Orient and the Occident, is mainly due to the successive exiles and imprisonments of the Blessed Perfection. If these events had not transpired the holy Cause would not have left the frontier of Persia, the prophecies of the prophets concerning the raising of the voice of the Lord of Hosts from the mountains and hills of the Holy Land would not have been fulfilled and the tent of the Lord of Lords would not have been pitched on its plains and meadows!

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, May 25, 1914.)

Indeed God's ways are most mysterious and unsearchable. What outward

relation exists between Shiraz, Teheran, Baghdad, Constantinople, Adrianople, Acca and Haifa? Yet God worked patiently step by step through these various cities according to his own definite eternal plan, so that the prophecies and predictions as foretold by the prophets might be fulfilled. The golden thread of promise runs through the Bible, and it was so destined that God in his own good time would cause its appearance. Not even a single word will be left meaningless or unfulfilled.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, February 14, 1914.)

From the beginning of the Cause or more definitely from the time that the Blessed Perfection was exiled from Teheran all the events in this movement, although their outward appearances for the time being were fraught with pain and sorrow, yet they were based upon the consummate wisdom of God.

On the eve of the departure from Persia the believers were in tears. It is evident that after those dreadful persecutions, sufferings, trials and martyrdoms it was most difficult for them to bear this last blow. They thought the voice would be hushed, the truth would die, the light would become extinct and the truth defeated. However, the spiritual wisdom of such an event became apparent afterwards. Eleven years' sojourn in Baghdad widened immensely the circle of influence of the Cause and carried its fame to the four corners of the earth.

Having received the firman of exile from Baghdad to Constantinople, when the friends heard this dire news they were deeply grieved. Through the intensity of anguish they were weeping uncontrollably. The wisdom of this event became likewise manifest later.

When the two despotic governments decided to exile us from Adrianople to Acca there was such a manifestation of sorrow and anxiety that neither word

nor pen can describe it adequately. The floodgate of unutterable grief was set loose. Thus you observe the ship of this Cause has weathered fearful storms, the like of which it is impossible for you to imagine. Now it has become apparent how these events constitute the unparalleled victories of the Cause although at the time of their happening many people thought they were crushing defeats.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, May 25, 1914.)

All the time of the sojourn of the Blessed Perfection—may the souls of all existence be a ransom to his forbearance!—in this mortal world, he was enduring the most painful afflictions. At last, in this greatest prison, his holy body was extremely weakened from the intense sufferings and his beautiful person became as weak as a web from these continual hardships. His main purpose in bearing this heavy burden and all these troubles which gave forth their waves like an ocean, in accepting chains and fetters and showing forth the greatest forbearance, was for the sake of harmony, concord and union among all the people of the world and for the establishment of the signs of the *real unity* among all nations, until the essential Unity (of God) might appear in the end in the existing realities, and the light of the saying: "Thou seest no difference among the creatures of God" might shine forth upon the whole world.

(Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet revealed about 1904 or 1905 for the Persian believers.)

Baha'o'llah departed to the everlasting world and ascended to the Supreme Horizon, May 28, 1892. On the day of his departure the inhabitants of Haifa, Acca and neighboring places, assembled in the presence of his eldest son, Abdul-Baha, the "Greatest Branch," and interred his remains,

with extraordinary respect, close to the mansion of Bahje, which is situated a short distance from Acca.

(Abul Fazl: *Bahai Proofs*, p. 69.)

O ye friends of God and assistants of Abdul-Baha:

When the Sun of Truth was concealed behind the cloud of glory, the orb of the universe disappeared from the dawning-place of the visible and shone forth in the invisible world, and conferred successive bounties upon the contingent world, then from the unseen realms, the bats began to move, opened their wings and flew around. They supposed they could interrupt the glorious bounties of that beautiful face, quench the shining rays of the Sun of Truth; extinguish the ignited fire and destroy the praiseworthy light; for they imagined that on account of the departure of His Highness the desired One, the divine foundations would be demolished and the blessed tree uprooted. Evil was that which they imagined and thou findest them in this day in manifest loss.

For, according to what was heard, the enemies in some of the lands, upon receiving the news of the most great disaster, held banquets. They rejoiced and made merry, celebrated festivals, burned incense, served sweets and flowers, lit many a candle, mixed honey and wine, played lutes and harps, spent that evening in cheerfulness and gladness until dawn, and sought delight and pleasure. But (they were) heedless that the bounty of that Sun has no end, the torrent of that rain is free from interruption, the radiance of that blessed Orb is continual, and that the dominion of the "Merciful One (who) is established upon the Throne" is permanent. Nay, rather, the human temple, like unto a cloud, prevents (people) from beholding the rays of the Sun. Therefore, it is said in the Gospel that when His Highness the Promised One comes, he shall be mounted on a cloud; but when that noble cloud is concealed, then shall the disk of the sun become manifest and

transmit intense rays throughout all regions.

Consequently, after the lapse of but a short time arose a tumult throughout the regions and the pillars of the world trembled. The East became full of cries of joy and the West full of clamor. The most luminous Sun of the beauty of Truth shone forth with the utmost ardor from the invisible zodiac, upon all regions. The veil of covering and concealment was removed and the fire of the love of God became ablaze within the hearts. The beloved of God were enkindled as candles and became well known among men like unto enraptured lovers. From every quarter a song and melody was heard and the call of "O our Lord, we have heard Thy voice." was raised in all regions. The Word of God was promoted and the fragrances of God diffused. The fame of the True One was universally spread. The call of "Am I not (your Lord)" reached the ears of the far and near. The Cause of the religion of God became loftier. All the nations became impressed, and the enemies of the Blessed Beauty (Baha'o'llah) were disappointed and in loss.

When they considered that the departure of His Highness the Desired One—may my life be a sacrifice to his beloved!—led to the exaltation of his blessed Cause, and the flame of the ignited fire increased and every assured believer stepped forward, therefore the shining of the brilliant light proved a manifest loss to the denying people. Moreover, the grace of His Highness the Almighty adorned the imperial throne of Persia with the accession of an equitable king and through the power of the Merciful One that perfect sovereign became compassionate toward this oppressed community. This was also a confirmation from His Highness the Powerful Lord.

(From Tablet by Abdul-Baha for Mirza Abul Fazl and Ishtear Ebn Kalanter. Translated June 4, 1903, Washington, D. C.)

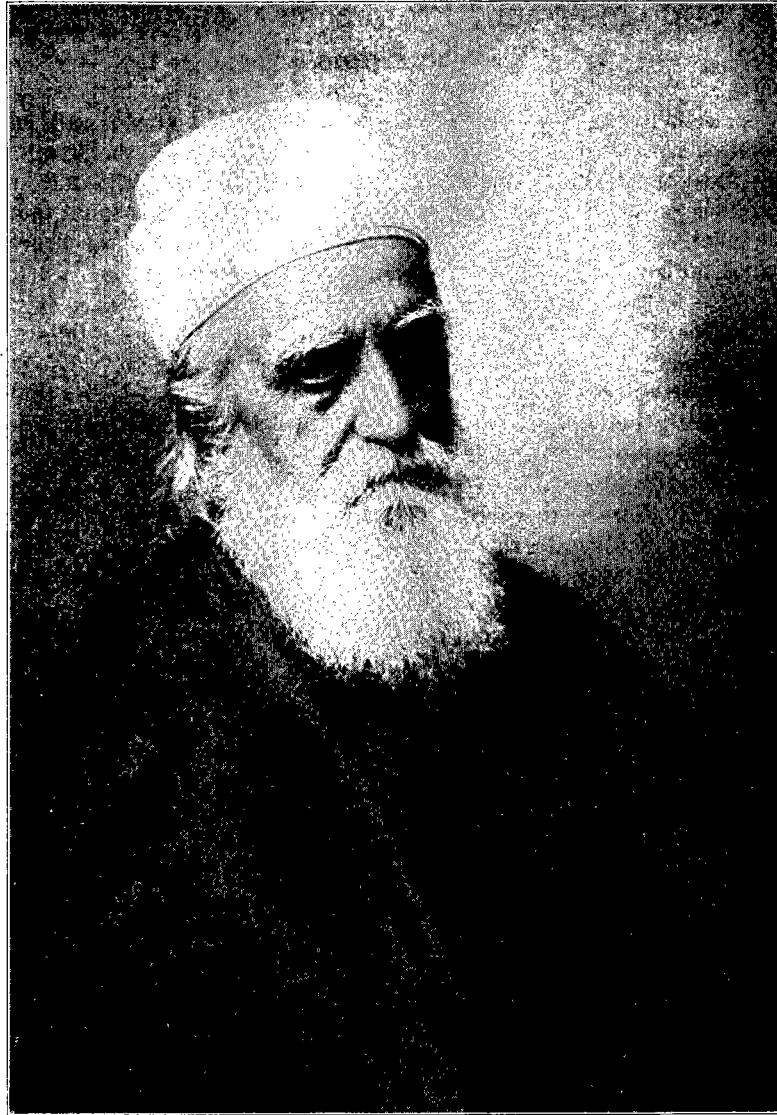
Old Testament Prophecies Concerning *The Branch*

Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.—(Zechariah 6:12, 13.)

Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant The BRANCH. . . . In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.—(Zechariah 3:8-10.)

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his resting place shall be glorious. . . . And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.—(Isaiah 11:1-12.)

In that day shall The BRANCH of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.—(Isaiah 4:2.)



THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT
THE GREATEST BRANCH
ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS

"When the ocean of My Presence hath disappeared and the Book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn your faces toward Him-Whom-God-hath-purposed, who hath branched from this Pre-Existent Root." — Words of BAHÁ'O'LLÁH.

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Kowl 1, 73 (November 23, 1917)

No. 14

The Center of the Covenant, The Greatest Branch: Abdul-Baha Abbas

[Following its usual custom this issue of the STAR OF THE WEST emphasizes the "Center of the Covenant" in the person and function of ABDUL-BAHA, inasmuch as the Twenty-sixth of November is the "Feast of the Appointment of the Center of the Covenant."—*The Editors*]

IN order to preserve the unity of the Cause and to spread the religion of God, Baha'o'llah has established this Covenant and Testament. Were it not for the power of the Covenant you would have witnessed the dispersion of the believers and the total disappearance of the Cause of God. When I say the Covenant, I mean the power and authority of Baha'o'llah given to me.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Diary Letter of Mirza Sohrab, to Miss Magee, Paris, May 10, 1913.)

When the ocean of My Presence hath disappeared and the Book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn your faces toward "Him-Whom-God-hath-purposed," who hath *branched* from this Pre-Existent Root.

When the Nightingale soareth from the grove of praise, and repaireth to the furthestmost concealed destination, refer ye that which you understand not from the Book, to The Branch extended from this firm Root.

(Words of Baha'o'llah: Quotations from *Kitab-El-Akdas*—the Most Holy Book.)

O my Branches! In this Existent Being the greatest strength and the most perfect power is hidden and concealed; look towards it and gaze in the direction

of its union and not at its seeming differences. *This is the Testament of God, that the Branches (Aghsan), Twigs (Afnan) and Relations (Muntessabeen) must each and every one look to the Greatest Branch (Ghusn Azam).* Reflect upon that which is revealed in my Book, the Akdas: "When the ocean of my presence hath disappeared and the book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn your faces towards him whom God hath purposed, who hath branched from this Pre-existent Root." *The aim of this blessed verse hath been the Greatest Branch.* We have likewise elucidated the command as a favor from before us; and I am the Generous, the All-dispenser!

Verily God hath ordained the station of the Greater Branch (Ghusn Akbar) after the station of the Greatest.* Verily he is the Ordainer, the Wise! We have surely chosen the Greater (Akbar) after the Greatest (Azam) as a command from the All-knowing, the Omniscient!

(Words of Baha'o'llah: Extract from *Kitab-El-Ak'd*—the Book of the Covenant.)

*Baha'o'llah said in this connection, that, "After the Truth there is naught but error." When any of the Branches sever themselves from the Tree, the station also becomes severed. They are then only fit for fire.—*Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi.*

Tablets Revealed by His Holiness Baha'ollah confirming the Center of His Covenant

In His Name who shines from the horizon of might!

Verily the Tongue of the Ancient gives glad tidings to those who are in the world concerning the appearance of the Greatest Name, and who takes His Covenant among the nations. Verily he is myself; the shining-place of my identity; the east of my Cause; the heaven of my bounty; the sea of my will; the lamp of my guidance; the path of my justice; the standard of my laws.

The one who has turned to him hath turned to my face and is illumined through the lights of my Beauty; has acknowledged my oneness and confessed my singleness.

The one who has denied him has been deprived of the salsabil of my love, of the kawther of my favor, the cup of my mercy, and of the wine through which the sincere ones have been attracted and the monotheists have taken flight in the air of my kindness, which no one hath known except the One whom I have taught the thing that has been revealed in my Hidden Tablet.

(Translated by Mirza Valiollah Khan Vargha, Teheran, Persia, December 11, 1913. Photographs of the original manuscript of this Tablet have been received in America.)

He is The Most Great, the El-Abha!

This is The Branch that hath extended from the bower of thy oneness and from the tree of thy unity. Thou beholdest him, O my God, gazing unto thee and holding fast to the rope of thy providence. Preserve him in the neighborhood of thy mercy!

Thou knowest, O my God, that verily, I have chosen him only because thou hast chosen him; I have elected him, only because thou hast elected him. Therefore, assist him by the hosts of thy heaven and earth. Help thou, O my God, whosoever may help him; choose

whosoever may choose him. Strengthen whosoever may advance toward him; and reject whosoever may deny him and desire him not!

O my Lord! Thou beholdest my pen moving and my limbs trembling in this moment of revelation. I beg of thee by my craving in thy love, and my yearning for the declaration of thy command, to ordain for him and his lovers that which thou hast ordained for thy messengers and the trusted ones of thy revelation.

Verily, thou art the Powerful, the Mighty!

O thou my Greatest Branch!

Thy letter was surely presented before this oppressed one, and I heard that which thou hast communed with God, the Lord of the worlds.

Verily, we have ordained thee the guardian of all the creatures, and a protection to all those in the heavens and earths, and a fortress to those who believe in God, the One, the Omniscient!

I beg of God to protect them by thee, to enrich them by thee; to nourish them by thee; and to reveal to thee that which is the dawning-point of riches to the people of creation, and the ocean of generosity to those in the world, and the rising-point of favor to all nations. Verily, he is the Powerful, the All-knowing and the Wise!

I beg of him to water the earth and all that is in it by thee, that there may spring up from it the flowers of wisdom and revelation and the hyacinths of science and knowledge. Verily, he is the friend to those who love him, and an assistant to those who commune with him.

There is no God but Him, the Mighty, and the Magnified!

(Tablet sent to Abdul-Baha when he was in Beirut, Syria.)

O thou my Greatest Branch!

El-Baha be upon thee, and upon whomsoever may serve thee; and woe unto those who contradict thee; blessed are those who love thee; and fire unto those who are thine enemies!

Praise be unto him who honored the land of Beirut, with the feet of him around whom all the names revolve. Therefore, all the (created) atoms have announced good tidings unto all the contingent beings, that the sun of the Beauty of the Greatest and Majestic Branch of God, the most weighty and well-made Mystery of God, hath arisen, dawned, appeared, gleamed and shone forth from the door of the prison (Acca) and its horizon, and advanced to the former place (Beirut). Therefore, the prison land is darkened, while the former is rejoiced.

Exalted! Exalted! is our Lord God, the creator of all things and the maker of heaven, by whose power the gate of the prison is opened, the opening of which fulfilled that which was formerly revealed in the tablets.

Verily he is the powerful to do that which he pleases; the kingdom of emanation is within his grasp. He is the Powerful, the Knowing, the Wise!

Blessed is the land which is honored with his footsteps! Blessed is the eye which is illuminated by his Beauty; the ear which is favored with hearing his voice; the heart which has tasted the sweetness of his love; the breast which is dilated by commemorating him; the pen which moves in praising him; and the tablet which bears his signs! I beg of God, the Exalted, the Most High, to cause us to attain his visit ere long.

Verily, He is the Hearer, the Powerful, the Answerer!

(Tablet sent to Abdul-Baha when he was in Beirut, Syria.)

Verily a Word hath gone forth in favor from the most great Tablet and God hath adorned it with the mantle of Himself and made it sovereign over all in the earth and a sign of His grandeur and omnipotence among the creatures;

in order that, through it, the people shall praise their Lord, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Wise; and that, through it, they shall glorify their creator and sanctify the self of God which standeth within all things. Verily this is naught but a revelation upon the part of the Wise, the Ancient One! Say: O people, praise ye God for its manifestation (The Branch), for verily it (The Branch) is the most great favor upon you and the most perfect blessing upon you; and through him every mouldering bone is quickened. Whosoever turns to him hath surely turned unto God and whosoever turneth away from him hath turned away from my Beauty, denied my proof and is of those who transgress. Verily, he is the remembrance of God amongst you and his appearance among the servants who are nigh. . . . Verily, those who withhold from the shelter of The Branch are indeed lost in the wilderness of perplexity—and are consumed by the heat of self-desire—and are of those who perish.

(Extract from the *Tablet of The Branch*.)

But the One (from among his sons) who will appear among them with innate knowledge, God will cause the verses of His power to flow from his tongue, and he is the One to whom God has assigned His Cause. Verily there is no God but Him, in whom is the creation and the command, and verily we are all performing His commands.

I beg of God to incline them to his obedience, and to nourish them with that whereby their mind is satisfied, and the minds of those who are facing the direction of God at every instant, and to overlook their oppression, and to ordain them of those who will inherit the heaven of paradise from before God, the Mighty, the Protector, the Self-subsistent!

(Words of Baha'o'llah: Extract from Tablet revealed for Haji Khaleel. Prayers, Tablets, Instructions and Miscellany gathered by American visitors, during the summer of 1900.)

Words of Abdul-Baha concerning the Covenant and His Station therein

But if any soul asks concerning the station of this servant the answer is—Abdul-Baha. If he inquires after the meaning of The Branch, the answer is—Abdul-Baha. If he desires to know the significance of the verse regarding The Branch, the answer is—Abdul-Baha. If he insists upon the explanation of the meaning of “The Branch extended from the Ancient Root,” the answer is—Abdul-Baha.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet revealed for Persian believers and throughout the world.)

I am, however, contented with what is inflicted upon me in thy path. Would that thy servants could be satisfied therewith, and that it would have sufficed them to do all these things unto myself. No! by thy Might! this shall never satisfy them. Nay, they will attack the countenance which thou hast raised (to be) in thy place, and whom thou hast established to be on the throne of thy sovereignty; whom thou hast concealed under the tents of thy glory, and under the canopy of thy sublimity, whom thou hast branched from the ocean of thy singleness and enkindled with the fire of thine eternity, whom thou hast elevated to the station which is never comprehended by anyone, and is never known by any soul, whom thou hast appointed a fortress unto thy servants, and a light unto the countries, whom thou hast ordained the people to have recourse unto as they have recourse unto thee, and to be submissive under his hands as their submission unto thee. Notwithstanding all this, they contradicted him.

(Words of Baha'o'llah: Extract from Tablet.)

Verily, know that the Letter (Tablet) of Abdul-Baha and his address is

a hidden mystery and concealed fact; no one is informed of its greatness and importance at these times. But in course of time and in future centuries it will dawn forth; the fragrances thereof will be diffused and the greatness, the importance thereof will be known. The truth I say unto thee, that each leaflet from Abdul-Baha will be a wide-spread book, nay, rather a glistening gem on the glorious crown. Know thou its value and hold great its station!

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Booklet: *Abdul-Baha*.)

The herald who proclaimed the written names is Abdul-Baha, who announces the names of those who deserve salvation and are firm in the Covenant of God.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 681, Vol. 3.)

This covenant is the Covenant of His Holiness Baha'o'llah. Now its importance is not known befittingly; but in the future it shall attain to such a degree of importance that if a king violates to the extent of one atom he shall be cut off immediately.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet to American believer; translated August 2, 1913.)

His Holiness Abraham—On him be Peace—made a covenant concerning His Holiness Moses and gave the glad tidings of his coming. His Holiness Moses made a covenant concerning the promised One, i. e., His Holiness Christ and announced the good news of his manifestation to the world. His Holiness Christ made a covenant concerning (the) Paraclete and gave the tidings of his coming. His Holiness the prophet Mohammed made a covenant concerning His Holiness The Bab and The Bab was the one promised by Mohammed, for Mohammed gave the

tidings of his coming. The Bab made a covenant concerning Baha'o'llah and gave the glad tidings of his coming, the One promised by His Holiness The Bab. Baha'o'llah made a covenant concerning a promised One who will become manifest after one thousand, or thousands of years. He likewise, with his Supreme Pen, entered into a great Covenant and Testament with all the Bahais whereby they were all commanded to follow the Center of the Covenant after his (Baha'o'llah's) departure, and turn not away, even to a hair's breadth, from obeying him.

In the Book of Akdas, he (Baha'o'llah) has given positive commands in two clear instances, and has explicitly appointed the interpreter of "The Book." Also in all the divine tablets, especially in the "Chapter of The Branch," all means the Servitude of Abdul-Baha, all that was needed to explain the Center of the Covenant and the Interpreter of the Book has been revealed from the Supreme Pen. Now as Abdul-Baha is the interpreter of The Book he says that the "Chapter of the Branch" means Abdul-Baha, that is, the Servitude of Abdul-Baha, and none other.

In short, one of the specific teachings of this cycle of His Holiness Baha'o'llah which has not been manifest during the former cycles, is that His Holiness Baha'o'llah left no opportunity for a difference (division). For in his blessed Day he made a Covenant and Testament with the traces of the Supreme Pen and explained the One to whom all should turn; and he explicitly pointed to the Interpreter of the Book, and thus closed all doors to interpretations. We must all offer thanks to God, for he gave us rest (peace) in this blessed cycle, and left no occasion for anyone to hesitate (doubt). All must therefore obey and be submissive, and wholly turn themselves to the One appointed by him, i. e., the Center of the Covenant.

But all explanations must alone be limited to what has been stated. Do you by no means exceed it; so that it may be

conducive to harmony, and remove differences.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: A Tablet revealed by Abdul-Baha for Charles Mason Remey about 1912.)

Today, the most important affair is firmness in the Covenant, because firmness in the Covenant wards off differences.

In former cycles no distinct covenant was made in writing by the Supreme Pen; no distinct personage was appointed to be the standard of differentiating falsehood from truth, so that whatsoever he said was to stand as truth and that which he repudiated was to be known as falsehood. At most, His Holiness Jesus Christ gave only an intimation, a symbol, and that was but an indication of the solidity of Peter's faith. When he mentioned his faith, His Holiness said, "Thou art Peter"—which means rock—"and upon this rock will I build my church." This was a sanction of Peter's faith; it was not indicative of his (Peter) being the expounder of the Book, but was a confirmation of Peter's faith.

But in this dispensation of the Blessed Beauty (Baha'o'llah) among its distinctions is that he did not leave people in perplexity. He entered into a Covenant and Testament with the people. He appointed a Center of the Covenant. He wrote with his own pen and revealed it in the *Kitab-el-Akdas*, the Book of Laws, and *Kitab-el-Ah'd*, the Book of the Covenant, appointing him (Abdul-Baha) the Expounder of the Book. You must ask him (Abdul-Baha) regarding the meanings of the texts of the verses. Whatsoever he says is correct. Outside of this, in numerous Tablets he (Baha'o'llah) has explicitly recorded it, with clear, sufficient, valid and forceful statements. In the *Tablet of The Branch* he explicitly states: Whatsoever The Branch says is right, or correct; and every person must obey The Branch with his life, with his heart, with his tongue. Without his will, not a word shall anyone

utter. This is an explicit text of the Blessed Beauty. So there is no excuse left for anybody. No soul shall, of himself, speak anything. Whatsoever his (Abdul-Baha's) tongue utters, whatsoever his pen records, that is correct; according to the explicit text of Baha'o'llah in the *Tablet of The Branch*.

His Holiness Abraham covenanted with regard to Moses. His Holiness Moses was the promised One of Abraham, and he, Moses, covenanted with regard to His Holiness Christ, saying that Christ was the promised One. His Holiness Christ covenanted with regard to His Holiness "The Paraclete," which means His Holiness Mohammed. His Holiness Mohammed covenanted as regards The Bab, whom he called "My promised One," His Holiness The Bab, in all his books, in all his epistles, explicitly covenanted with regard to the Blessed Beauty, Baha'o'llah, that Baha'o'llah was the promised One of His Holiness The Bab. His Holiness Baha'o'llah covenanted, not that I (Abdul-Baha) am the promised One, but that Abdul-Baha is the Expounder of the Book and the Center of His Covenant, and that the promised One of Baha'o'llah will appear after one thousand or thousands of years. This is the Covenant which Baha'o'llah made. If a person shall deviate, he is not acceptable at the Threshold of Baha'o'llah. In case of difference, Abdul-Baha must be consulted. They must revolve around his good pleasure. After Abdul-Baha, whenever the Universal House of Justice is organized, it will ward off differences.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 3, No. 14, p. 9.)

Every movement in this world has a center. For example, the power of gravitation has a center; and although there are many luminous centers of lights, yet there is a most great center, and that is the sun. Now, that you are independent of all the smaller centers, you must turn your face toward the Great Orb.

For example, this electric bulb is a center of light, but it only illumines the room; but the sun shines upon all the created phenomena without any distinction.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab*, October 30, 1913.)

After His Holiness Christ, there were many who appeared who were instrumental in creating factions, dissensions. It was not known which one was pursuing the right way. For example, there appeared one among them whose name was Nestor (?) who said that Christ was not a prophet of God.

Another division was created when the Catholics declared Jesus Christ to be the Son of God; they even pronounced him to be Divinity Himself. The Protestants claimed that Jesus Christ was possessed of two elements, a human element and a divine element. Thus another division was created. In short, the religion of Christ was divided and it was not known who was pursuing the right pathway, because there was no appointed Center to whom Christ referred, whose word was to be a gateway. If His Holiness Christ had taken a covenant with any soul, summoning all to cling to his word as correct, then it would have been evident as to what was veracity.

Because there was no appointed book, every one declared, saying: "We are the right pathway and the others are not." But the Blessed Perfection, Baha'o'llah, to ward off dissensions, so that no interested person should create any division or belief, appointed a Central Personage, declaring him to be the Expounder of the Book. That is, people do not generally understand the meanings of the Book, but he does understand. "He is the Expounder of my Book and the Center of my Testament." In the last two verses of the Book are revealed explicit instructions, declaring that "after me, you should turn your attention to a distinct personage and whatsoever he says is correct." And in the Book of the Cov-

enant, he said that by these two verses are meant such and such a person. In all his Tablets and Books he has praised the firm ones in the Covenant and he has anathematized those who are not firm in the Covenant, and in all his Tablets he said: "Verily, shun those who are shaken in the Covenant. Verily, God is the confirmer of the firm ones." In his prayers he has said: "O God! Render those who are firm in the Covenant as dear. Degrade those who are not firm in the Covenant, O God! Be the protector of him who protecteth him and confirm him who confirms the Center of the Covenant." Many are the utterances regarding the violators of the Covenant, so that in the blessed Cause there should be no dissensions. No one should say: "My opinion is this," or, "My thought is this." That they may know who is the Expounder and that whatsoever he says is correct. He has not left any room for dissensions—not at all. Of course it is certain that in the world there are those who are antagonistic; there are those who are followers of passion; there are those who follow their own thoughts; there are those who like to create dissension in the Cause. For example: Judas Iscariot was one of the disciples, but he betrayed Jesus Christ. Such things have happened in the past, but now the Blessed Beauty has explicitly declared: "This person is the Expounder of my Book and all must turn to him." And this is to ward off dissension. The purpose of the Blessed One is that no differences shall be created.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from a talk given in Chicago, October 31, 1912.)

If a soul shall utter a word without the sanction of the Covenant, he is not firm. Baha'o'llah appointed a Covenant to ward off dissensions: so that no one can have his own opinion,—so that the Center can be referred to. There were dissensions in the time of Christ because

there was no Center. This is the reality of the question. Whatever the Center of the Covenant says is correct. No one shall speak a word of himself. Baha'o'llah has called down the vengeance of God upon anyone who violates the Covenant. Beware! Beware! Lest ye be shaken: Remain firm even if the people of heaven try to shake you. Firmness in the Covenant is not mere words. The command is explicit. (Signed—Abdul-Baha Abbas.)

The point to which all eyes should turn is One. All eyes must turn their attention to the Center of the Covenant while the presence of the Covenant is among us. No other soul should have any existence. All others save the Center of the Covenant are equal. (Signed—Abdul-Baha Abbas.)

(Excerpts from some instructions given by Abdul-Baha to several friends in America, July, 1912. These excerpts received his personal signature.)

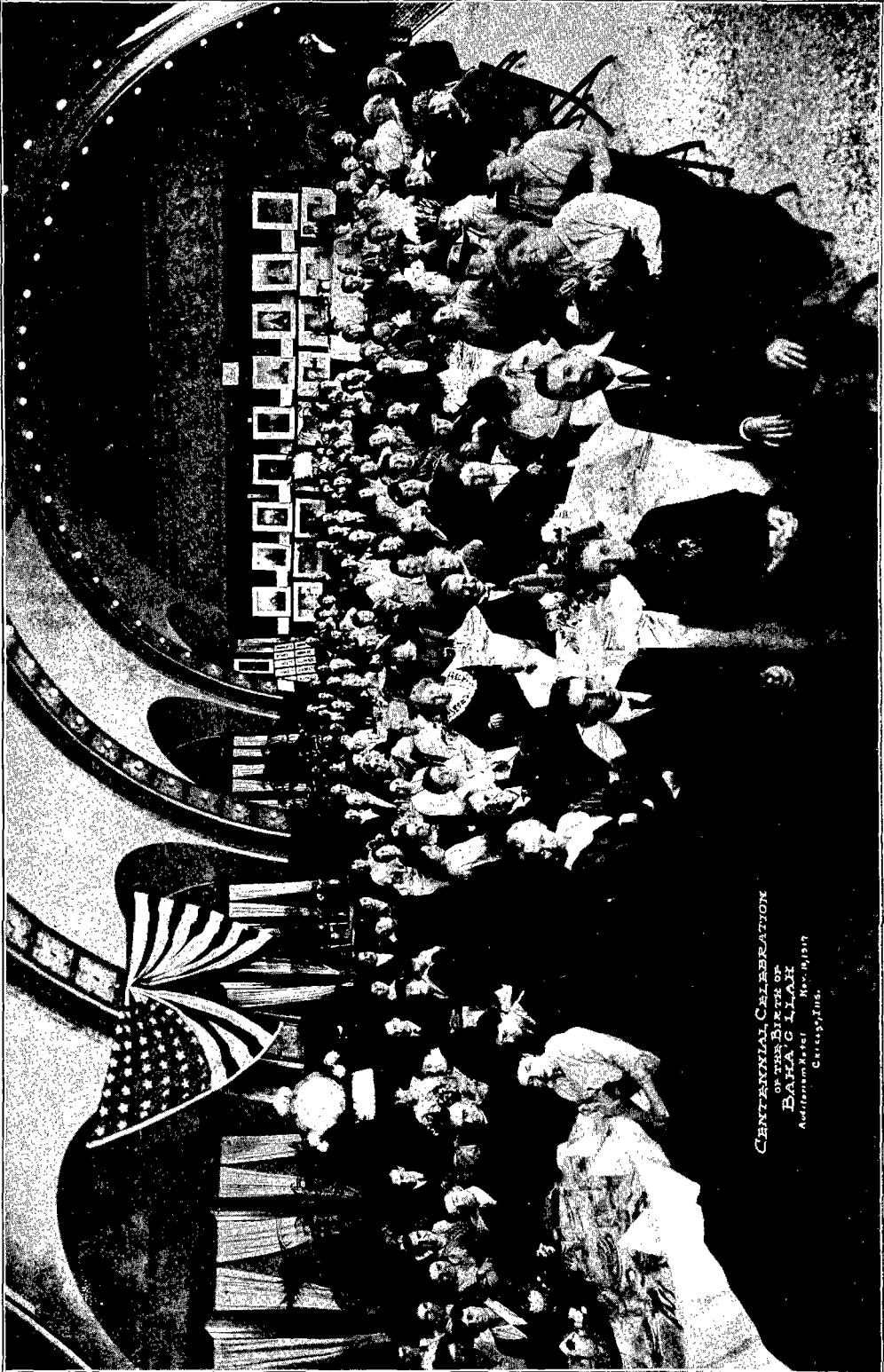
These great days are swiftly passing and once gone can never be recalled, so while the rays of the Sun of Truth are still shining and the Center of the Covenant of God is manifest, let us go forth to work, for after awhile the night will come and the way to the vineyard will not then be so easy to find.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *A Heavenly Vista*, p. 32.)

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: . . ." (Revelation 11:19).

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven," means also that by the diffusion of the divine teachings, the appearance of these heavenly mysteries, and the rising of the Sun of Reality, the doors of success and prosperity will be opened in all directions, and the signs of goodness and heavenly benedictions will be made plain.

(Continued on page 203)



CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
OF THE BIRTH OF
BARACK OBAMA
Auditorium Hotel, Nov. 19, 1917
Chicago, Ill.

Centennial Celebration of the Birth of Baha'o'llah

THE Centennial Festival in commemoration of the Birth of the Greatest Manifestation of God, Baha'o'llah, was celebrated by the Chicago Assembly and visiting friends from the central states and others, New York, Oregon and California being among those represented. The happiness of the assembled friends was evident. The meetings throughout the three days were full of spiritual joy and heavenly harmony.

The festival began Saturday evening, November 10th, with a banquet in the Auditorium hotel, where all meetings were held.

THE FESTIVAL

Mr. Charles H. Greenleaf of Chicago presided. He read the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom as revealed by Abdul-Baha, as follows:

"Do you know in what Day you are living? Do you realize in what Dispensation you are alive? Have you not read in the Holy Scriptures that at the consummation of the ages there shall appear a Day which is the Sun of all the past Days? This is the Day in which the Lord of Hosts has come down from Heaven on the Clouds of Glory! This is the Day in which all the inhabitants of all the world shall come under the Tent of the Word of God!"

"This is the Day whose real sovereign is His Highness the Almighty. This is the Day when the East and the West shall embrace each other like unto two lovers. This is the Day in which war and contention shall be forgotten. This is the Day in which nations and governments will enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This Century is the fulfillment of the Promised Century.

"This Day is the dawn of the appearances of the traces of the glorious visions of past prophets and sages. Now is the dawn: ere long the effulgent Sun shall rise and shall station itself in the merid-

ian of its majesty. Then ye shall observe the effects of the Sun. Then ye shall behold what heavenly illumination has become manifest. Then ye shall comprehend that these are the infinite Bestowals of God! Then ye shall see that this world has become another world. Then ye shall perceive that the teachings of God have universally spread. Rest ye assured that this darkness shall be dispelled and these impenetrable clouds which have darkened the horizon shall be scattered, and the Sun of Reality shall appear in full splendor. Its rays shall melt the icebergs of hatred and differences which have transformed the moving sea of humanity into hard frozen immensity. The vices of the world of nature shall be changed into praiseworthy attributes, and the lights of the excellences of the divine realm shall appear.

"The principles of His Holiness Baha'o'llah, like unto the spirit, shall penetrate the body of the world and the love of God, like unto an artery, shall beat through the five continents.

"The East shall become illumined, the West perfumed, and the children of men shall enter beneath the all-embracing canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity.

"In this Day the rest of the world are asleep. Praise be to God! that you are awake! They are all uninformed; but, praise be to God! you are informed of the mysteries of God. Thank ye God that in this arena ye have preceded others. I hope that each one of you may become a pillar in the palace of the oneness of the world of humanity. May each one of you become a luminous star of this heaven, thus lighting the path of those who are seeking the goal of human perfection."

Mr. Greenleaf said in part, "We begin tonight a series of meetings commemorating the greatest event in human history, for one hundred years ago One

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Kowl 1, 73 (November 23, 1917)

No. 14

“Be most careful about matters of politics. Do not mention it. Our Cause is not political.”

MANY years ago, Baha'o'llah declared that a time of test would come upon the world and that every nation, place and person would feel its fire.

The hour of test has come upon the Western world.

At such a time it is well for the Bahais to make clear to themselves, the distinctive characteristics of the teachings of Baha'o'llah—as interpreted by Abdul-Baha—and take cognizance of the fact that although he came to establish a new era in the world, he never interfered in political matters and was at all times obedient to the government, commanding his followers in every country to behave toward the government with faithfulness, trustfulness and truthfulness. (See STAR OF THE WEST, issue No. 9, page 113.)

It is also very important that the Bahais give close attention to the most great characteristic of the Revelation of Baha'o'llah namely, his teaching concerning the Center of the Covenant which is a specific teaching not given by any of the prophets of the past. By giv-

ing the teaching concerning the Center of the Covenant, He made provision against all kinds of differences, so that no man should be able to create a new sect. To guard against that state of thing, He entered into a Covenant with all the people of the world, indicating the Person or Interpreter of His teaching so that no one should be able to say that he explains a certain teaching in a certain way, and thus create a sect revolving around his individual understanding of a part of the teachings.

With both these ideas in mind:—first, that of non-interference in governmental matters or political affairs, and second, the giving forth of an interpretation of the teachings of Baha'o'llah other than Abdul-Baha's interpretation thereof,—we beg of the Bahais everywhere to assist the STAR OF THE WEST, and not to place the editors in an embarrassing position before the world by insisting that we publish articles on political questions. We refer to a communication drafted by the Bahai Temple Unity, under date of August 30, 1917, which was sent to the government at Washing-

ton, D. C., wherein it was stated that it would be printed in the Bahai publication—meaning the STAR OF THE WEST. It was printed in No. 12 issue. If it had not been published the government might ask, “Why did not the Bahais keep their word?”

That all may clearly understand the purpose or policy of the STAR OF THE WEST, we give herewith Abdul-Baha’s instructions to the editors* when he was in this country:

“Very welcome! Most welcome!

“Your services are acceptable. You have labored much. These labors are productive of great results. They are the cause of the good pleasure of God and will be the magnet for the favors or blessings of God. Therefore, be thankful because of your attainment to services.

“Your greatest aim and effort must be directed to the service of the Kingdom of God.

“The greatest service to the Kingdom of God is kindness to the servants of God.

“The greatest kindness to the friends of God, to the servants of God, is guidance or guiding them.

*Words of Abdul-Baha spoken to Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, Miss Gertrude Buikema and Mr. Albert R. Windust in his room at the Hotel Plaza, Chicago, May 1, 1912.

“Strive in your efforts, in your management, to become orderly, for this newspaper is now a link between the East and the West.

“Have no word in that publication which can be of displeasure to anyone.

“Attribute nothing to anyone.

“Let there be no displeasing statement; no debasing element regarding or concerning religions.

“*Be most careful about matters of politics. Do not mention it. Our Cause is not political.*”

We are happy to present herewith two remarkable tablets revealed by Abdul-Baha to the friends of God in Persia, translated by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, having been received in Chicago a few days before the Centennial Celebration of the birth of Baha’o’llah and read on that memorable occasion.

The tablet addressed to Janabe Ameen speaks of the good health of Abdul-Baha. It also records the name of the messenger who carried them from Syria to Persia, Hadji Ramazan.

The tablet in the form of a Commune, is Abdul-Baha’s view-point regarding the war, and we respectfully suggest to all that it be read to those who desire to know the Bahai attitude toward this world conflagration.

Both tablets are the latest word from Abdul-Baha:

The Latest Word from Abdul-Baha

TABLET TO JANABE AMEEN

O Janabe Ameen!

HE IS GOD!

Although the doors are closed, the ways and the roads are severed and the means of communication are lost, yet the ideal ties and inner communications still exist. Though the mirror and the lights are far apart, yet the uniting force of the rays and the outpouring of reflections are strong and continuous.

The friends of God must move and conduct themselves with the utmost uprightness and power, so that all that are in the world of existence may become amazed at their firmness and steadfastness, their dignity and might.

This servant day and night is thinking of the friends in the utmost joy and fragrance, supplicating to His Holiness, The Merciful, for unlimited confirmations, so that every drop may become like unto the ocean, full of waves, and every atom expand in the rays of the sun. This is not much to ask of the favor of God.

Convey the utmost longing to every one of the friends. Praise be to God!

through the assistance and the bounty of His Holiness, the Single, we are in perfect health on Mount Carmel, at the home of his honor, Agha Abbas Kuli. On account of the severance of communication, to inquire about the friends and convey news of the safety here, his honor, Hadji Ramazan is sent, because no one else is able to travel this road in these days.

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

TABLET TO THE PERSIAN BAHAIS

Commune to be read by the friends of God in Persia.

HE IS GOD!

Thou seest me, O my God, on this lofty mountain; the sublime and supreme threshold; the shelter of every great one and the refuge of all the glorious and noble.

Verily, the youths whose hearts were burning with the fire of the love of God in the past ages have taken shelter therein—the meeting place of the prophets, the refuge of his holiness Elijah, the shelter of Isaiah. The spirit of God, Jesus, the Christ—upon Him be greeting and praise!—passed over it, and in the Supreme Threshold, pressed by the feet of the Lord of Hosts.

O Lord, this is a mountain to which Thou hast given the name Carmel in the Torah. And thou hast attributed it to Thyself in the innermost heart of the tablets and scriptures.

O Lord, verily, I invoke Thee in this Supreme Threshold, under the wing of the gloomy nights; pray to Thee with throbbing heart and flowing tears, imploring Thee, supplicating between Thy hands and cry, O my Lord, verily, the fire of battles is raging in the valleys, hills and streams, and the fire of war is burning even under the seas and high in the air, in destruction and devastation. The earth is enveloped by its own fires and the seas are encompassed by its storms, thunderbolts and floods.

O Lord, the souls are stifling, the death rattle is in their throats, the earth quakes and has become so small that even the birds are frightened in their nests and the animals terrified in their lairs and caves.

We hear only the sighs of the maidens and the cries of the orphans, the moaning of the mothers, the tears of the fathers because of false reports. We see only tears flowing from every bereaved mother and the heart of every father, bereft of sons, burning. Towns are being devastated, people are perishing, the children are made orphans and the women are becoming widows. And this is only because of our heedlessness of Thy commemoration and our deprivation of Thy love. Verily, we have been occupied with ourselves. The intoxication of passion seized us; we have taken the road of heedlessness and blindness; have abandoned the path of guidance and have chosen the path of obstinacy and forgotten the commandments of the ancient scriptures. We have forsaken the exhortations in the preserved tablets and parchments—the great verses.

O my Lord! O my Lord! I confess and acknowledge the sins. Verily, every dark calamity and every hard ordeal has surrounded us by our own hands, in this transient world. O Lord, verily, the minds are astounded, the souls are repelled. And there remain only darkened faces, deaf ears, speechless tongues and hearts heedless of thy commemoration, filled with human passions and desires.

O Lord, Thou hast said in Thy manifest book and in thy great glad tidings, with explicit statement, “God does not change that which a people have, until

they change what is within themselves." "And when they forgot God, He made them forget themselves."

O my Lord, verily, the nations have gone too deep into the fields of battle and struggle. Nothing will check this sweeping torrent and this grinding war but Thy mercy, which has encompassed that which was and is.

O Lord, do not deal with us according to our offenses and forgive our sins and trespasses. Imperfections are the characteristic of everything possible of creation in the arena of Thy world. And to Thy forgiveness and pardon Thou hast accustomed every one in existence.

O my Lord, only favor and mercy to every sinner, who has fallen into the pit of degradation and wretchedness, is befitting to divinity and only by the imperfections of servitude will the perfections of divinity become manifest. O Lord, verily, the brilliant rays of the Sun of Reality are the removers of the utter darkness and the pure water cleanses the foulness and the sorrow of the world.

O my Lord, verily, the sins are bubbling foam and a full ocean is Thy mercy. Trespasses are bitter trees and Thy pardon is a fire whose flame is intense.

O my Lord, remove the veil, scatter this dense cloud on the horizon, extinguish these fires, subdue this flood, in order to stanch the bloodshed, as compassion to the widows and mercy to the orphans, that these hurricanes may cease, the thunderbolts be extinguished, the torrents quelled, the land become visible, the souls find composure, and the breasts be dilated. And we will thank Thee for Thy abundant favor, O Thou dear! O Thou forgiver!

O my Lord, verily, thou hast clearly stated in the tablets and scriptures, that, had the ordinances fallen on solid rock, rivers would have gushed forth and it had crumbled to pieces from fear of the Dear, the Powerful. But the hearts are harder than the rocks. And the souls are in heedlessness and pride. The people of heedlessness do not profit by the verses and exhortations.

O my Lord, verily, Thy exhortations are celebrated and have been spread broadcast, in the east and the west of the earth. Thou hast called all to love and harmony and to forsake discord in all regions, so that the east of the earth may embrace the west; the people of the desert may embrace the people of the city; their scattered members become reunited and the lost ones be gathered together; that the darkness of the earth may pass away and its lights shine forth. But the eyes and the inner sight have become blind, the ears deaf, the hearts hardened and the susceptibilities like rocks and stones. The minds and intellects are being confused. Souls have forgotten the explicit teachings of the Book, wherein Thou hast warned them of punishment. Thus they have **merited severe punishment** and deserved the sentence of torment.

O Lord, forgive our sins and stumbling. Make us not an example for the possessors of insight. Guide us to the straight path, so that we may awake from the slumber of passion and be saved from heedlessness and blindness. Deliver us, O Lord of Verses, from the abyss of passions and preserve us from errors.

O my Lord, verily, we have forgotten faithfulness and are reveling in unfaithfulness. With the people of oppression and vice we are associating. There is no deliverer for us save Thee. There is no answerer save Thee. There is no refuge save Thee. Verily, we have trusted in Thee and we lay our affairs in Thy hands. Deal with us according to Thy favor and pardon and punish us not

according to Thy justice and wrath. Verily, Thou art the compassionate. Verily, thou are the pardoner and, verily, thou art the forgiver.

O my Lord, verily, the people of righteousness and goodness and the communities of freedom in every country are turning to thee, at dusk and dawn supplicating between Thy hands during the wing of the night and in the dew of the morn, lamenting as a bereaved mother laments during the grievous nights, burning with the fire of sorrow, yearning and separation. They are longing for Thy meeting even with rending of soul, as they traverse the dunes and the hills and cross the valleys and the heights. But these wars that demolish mountains have interfered so that news has ceased and the doors are closed.

O Lord, comfort them in their loneliness; deliver them from their terror and guide them in their affairs.

O my Lord, Thou knowest my sighs, my cries and my anguish, the burning pain because of their separation; my great longing for their meeting, my yearning for their love, my desire for their remembrance and my anxiety to see them. Day and night their remembrance is my treasure and my roses. When night comes my heart loves the memory of their illumined faces. I yearn for them as the nightingale yearns for the beautiful meadows.

O my Lord, O my Lord, open the doors; prepare for us the means; render the path safe and pave the way so that the sincere ones may be reunited in the lofty meetings; the attracted ones gathered together in Thy commemoration in the great assemblies, to speak among the people of Thy bestowals, taste of the honeycomb of Thy meeting. Then the breezes of acceptance will reach them and they will be swayed thereby as if intoxicated by wine.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Dear, the Giver and, verily, Thou art the Generous, the Compassionate, the Chosen One.

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Centennial Celebration of the Birth of Baha'o'llah

(Continued from page 191)

was born who is the hope and dream of all past centuries and ages, Baha'o'llah. If Abdul-Baha were here he would see radiant faces, expressing the Reality to which he is always appealing. If we bring ourselves into harmony with the Reality, there is sure to follow great confirmation and blessing."

Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi spoke on the Mission of Baha'o'llah. "I greet you in the greatest name, Baha'o'llah. At a time of indescribable hatred and animosity among various nations and races the Light of Baha'o'llah arose in the Orient. If now you attend the gatherings of these various peoples, you will find them in the utmost harmony, joy and fragrance. Baha'o'llah broke the chains of superstition and error, proved the unity and singleness of Truth, and re-

moved the chains of imitation. He also removed pride and the feeling of superiority of one nation over another. Another chain he removed was that of prejudice. The most bitter prejudice among Orientals is religious. He proved that the foundation of all religions is one. He also removed racial prejudice, showing the races that their colors are like the different colors of birds and flowers. And so with national prejudice. He proved that the earth is one home. In like manner, he freed the women from oppression and proved the harmony between science, religion and reason. He freed the world from the fetters of misunderstandings and raised the banner of the oneness of humanity from his great prison. These fundamental principles were revealed about

sixty years ago. The kings did not heed his admonitions. Let us take heed and not suffer through disobedience. Had the kings heeded his warnings and protected their subjects, these great calamities of war would not have occurred. Do not teach the youth the prejudices of past ages. Baha'o'llah has revealed the means of harmony and happiness for the whole world. In but a short time his teachings have spread throughout the world. The Divine Manifestation is the only one who can change the hearts of men and accomplish this marvelous work. Man, in order to know and have peace, must fill his heart with love. Love is the creator of peace. Let us conquer ourselves. The Bab said, 'A man can conquer the East and the West, but cannot conquer himself.' Let us be brave and give the message. We follow the Master who is brave and unconquerable."

A commune, the latest writing received in America from the pen of Abdul-Baha, was read. Dr. Bagdadi explained how it reached America. Abdul-Baha selected a small, weak Arab, Hadji Ramazan, who is nearly blind, and who was without money or transportation to carry this holy tablet from the Holy Land to Persia. He walked from Haifa to the capital of Persia. It took him two months to reach there. He rested ten days and then started back. From Persia it came to America by mail. Thus an humble, weak instrument, through the Power of God, can accomplish a great work.

The Holy Word is found elsewhere in this issue (see page 194.)

Mr. Albert R. Windust spoke, his subject being, "The Birth of the New Era." He quoted the Words of Baha'o'llah from the *Surat'ul H'ykl*:

"The fecundation of Bounty has been wafted over all things in this day and everything has generated and brought forth its own kind; but verily the majority of the people have turned away from it. The trees bring forth the beau-

tiful fruit; the seas the brilliant pearls; man knowledge and science; the universe, the transfiguration of the Merciful; and the earth, that which no one comprehendeth save the True One, the knower of secrets and unseen things."

Mr. Windust said, "In the writings of Baha'o'llah the word 'Bounty' is unusual and significant. Bounty is from above upon every plane of existence. The bounty of the animal plane descends to the vegetable. The bounty of the divine plane descends to man. If man attains to any knowledge or science it is from the divine bounty. Man of himself cannot lift himself up. The 'fecundation of bounty' has raised up a new era. During the past four hundred years—since the time Columbus demonstrated that the world was round—wonderful discoveries have occurred. The divine bounty flowed into minds and exploration developed, science unfolded, literature expanded, art—especially the art of music—became manifest to welcome the birth of the new era. The student of musical history speaks of one hundred years ago as the golden age of music. At that time Baha'o'llah was born, and then the bounty of God, of Divinity, descended into the hearts of men. What a wonderful period of preparation preceded his earthly advent! Consider also the period between 1817 and 1844—what a time of religious excitement it was! The 'gales of the All-Glorious' were passing over, when on May 23d, 1844, the Bab declared his mission, Abdul-Baha was born, and the first telegraph message to pass in the twinkling of an eye between men at a distance, read, 'What hath God wrought!' The prophet Nahum (2:3, 4) declared that 'in the day of his preparation, the fir trees shall be terribly shaken'—the fir forests of Europe and America were depleted in the nineteenth century, to build the towns, railroads, streets, telegraph lines, etc.—and 'chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broadways, they shall seem like torches, they shall run

like the lightnings.' What a picture of steam railways and electric cars! There seems a coincidence in that the World's Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago—it should have been in 1892, but could not be made ready until 1893—because it marks not only the year of the departure of Baha'o'llah and signified the results of his appearance, in that for the first time in history all nations met in one place to lay at the feet of one another the fruits of their arts and sciences in peace; but because on the arch of the peristyle—that architectural creation comprising the eastern side of the grand court of honor—crowning it, so to speak, as one looked toward the east, were these words, in letters of gold: 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.' Shortly after that the Message of the Appearance of Baha'o'llah was received in Chicago, and from here it spread throughout America, even to Europe. Such were some of the remarkable coincidences at the birth of the new era.

"Baha'o'llah fulfilled all the prophecies of all the Holy Books. He was the one of whom Isaiah spoke: 'For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.' The new era is the Era of The Almighty. If this statement of mine seems startling, permit me to read what one of our Oriental Bahais says of the birth of the new era:

"Look at the twenty-third chapter of Deuteronomy, second verse, "And he said: The Lord came from Sinai—and rose up from Seir unto them—he shined forth from Mount Paran—and he came with ten thousand of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them." This means four appearances of God; the first refers to the time when He appeared to Moses in Mount Sinai; the second, to Christ in the name of the Son; the third, to Mohammed from Mount Paran; and the fourth in Baha'o'llah, when He, God, The Almighty, came with

ten thousand of His saints. Read the fourteenth verse of the epistle of Jude: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints."

"Then know, O people, that upon the day when God, The Almighty—in the form of man, known as Baha'o'llah—declared himself (April 21, 1863, in the Garden of El-Rizwan in Bagdad) and uttered to the inhabitants of the contingent world, to the mountains, hill-tops, trees, grass, shrubs, flowers, weeds, stones, sands, seas, winds, waves, and every atom comprising the earth, and all the ethers comprising the air: "I am God and there is no God but me"—the old heaven and the old earth passed away and were no more, and from that moment all things became new and that which was, was not! That day marked the era of a new creation, a new people, a new heaven, and a new earth! And the secret Word—the Word of Mystery mentioned first by Adam, then by the Prophets, Messengers, Christ, and later by Mohammed, then by The Bab—that Word became flesh and dwelt among men. Its Power and Glory flashed from heaven and earth when Baha'o'llah stood up and declared: "I am God and there is no God but Me, the Ancient, the Everlasting, the Creator of all things, the Almighty, the Potent!" Then know, O people, at that time the earth trembled and did quake, the heavens rolled together as a scroll, and in less than the twinkling of an eye all things passed away and God alone existed! Then from the Shining Mouth of the Living Word went forth the command, "*Be!*"—and in another twinkling, a new creation was!"

"It is the Day of God."

The friends who assisted with musical numbers, including Mrs. Carl Scheffler, contralto, Miss Marie Herzog, pianist, Mr. Charles Weeks, baritone, and Zeenat Khanum, chanting, lent to the program a pleasing variety and gave spiritual joy to the assembled friends.

CINEMATOGRAPH EXHIBITION

Sunday morning at nine o'clock, November 11th, the friends and many seekers assembled at Castle Theatre, where, through the courtesy of the STAR OF THE WEST, they were entertained by a cinematograph exhibition, "Abdul-Baha in America." Mr. Albert R. Windust in well-chosen words explained the scenes to the large audience, many persons being visibly affected by the impressive incidents. Not only were the dignity and majesty of Abdul-Baha, the Center of the Covenant of God, seen to advantage, but his sweet humility of spirit and his universal love for all elements of humanity. Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi also gave a brief address in which he explained some stereoscopic scenes of the Holy Land and other oriental cities, which added to the interest of the program. "The dress worn by Abdul-Baha, in the pictures as represented, is of the same style as that worn by Jesus Christ nineteen centuries ago." There was great joy, especially among sincere hearts who had never seen Abdul-Baha in person.

PUBLIC MEETING

The subject of the Sunday afternoon meeting, held at the Auditorium Hotel, was Baha'o'llah's contribution to world civilization. Mr. Albert R. Windust presided and the attendance was large. Mr. Albert H. Hall of Minneapolis spoke with eloquence and enthusiasm on the irresistible movement toward world federation and world peace. He showed that all the forces in the universe are striving to bring about world democracy and that even the great war is preparing the way for a lasting peace. He mentioned many of the nations, explaining their relations to each other and their work for world democracy.

Mrs. Claudia Stuart Coles of Washington, D. C., spoke of the emancipation of women and universal suffrage. She was well fortified with the Holy Utterances and proved the station of women

with spiritual illumination. She had an array of facts, historical and otherwise, which carried conviction. She gratefully acknowledged the bounty of Baha'o'llah which made men and women equal. She believed that the ideal freedom would come to women through spiritual and educational unfoldment; through evolution rather than revolution. Her tribute to Kurrat-ul-Aine was eloquent and beautiful.

Mr. Louis G. Gregory of Washington, D. C., brought forward the new educational system of Baha'o'llah. He said in part, "The Sun of Truth sheds its rays upon all the contingent beings. Those who stand at the head and front of modern educational reform owe their ideals to the universal spirit, Baha'o'llah. The education of the child begins at its conception in the holy bond of wedlock. Wonderful prayers are revealed in this dispensation for its growth and progress. Games are introduced and play is used as a means of acquiring knowledge. Children learn much more quickly from each other than from their elders. So a uniform curriculum for the education of all the children of the world will tend to abolish prejudices. The education of Baha'o'llah "does not begin and end in mere words." It is at once the most ideal and the most practical. It promotes the highest efficiency. The compulsory education of both sexes and of all classes also promotes the spirit of true freedom. Baha'o'llah, through the Center of His Covenant, is the educator of the reality of man."

Miss Helen E. Peterson, contralto, Miss Ruth Breyspraak, violinist, and Miss Marie Herzog, accompanist, charmed the audience on this occasion with musical numbers.

MEETING OF COMMEMORATION

Monday morning, November 12th, many of the friends, like birds of paradise, soared to the Temple grounds and sang the praises of the Blessed Beauty, through whose bounty the friends were

gathered from the East and the West. This meeting of commemoration was concluded at the Auditorium Hotel, Dr. Pauline Barton-Peake presiding. Mr. Bernard M. Jacobsen of Kenosha spoke of the history of Baha'o'llah and showed forth the wonderful power of the Cause which has spread so widely in such a short period of time. Mrs. Annie L. Parmerton pleased the ears and hearts

all difficulties and become eternally happy. This meeting was followed by THE CONVENTION OF TEACHING

Mrs. Emogene Hoagg of San Francisco presided. Mr. Carl Scheffler, Secretary, of the House of Spirituality, Chicago, read the call to convention by the House of Spirituality. The Chairman then read the great Tablet of Teaching,

1817	Baha'o'llah	1917
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CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
of the birth of

Baha'o'llah

Auditorium Hotel, ninth floor
from November the tenth to the twelfth inclusive
Nineteen Hundred Seventeen

PROGRAM

CENTENNIAL FESTIVAL

Saturday evening at six o'clock
Banquet Hall, ninth floor, Auditorium Hotel

Chairman
MR. CHARLES GREENLEAF, Chicago

Reading: "The Glad Tidings of the Kingdom"

Speakers

DR. ZIA M. BAGDADI, Chicago
"The Mission of Baha'o'llah"

MR. ALBERT R. WINDUST, Chicago
"The Birth of the New Era"

MISS AGNES ALEXANDER, Honolulu
"The Message from Japan"

MRS. CARL SCHEFFLER, Contralto
MISS MARIE HERZOG, Pianist
MR. CHARLES WEEKS, Baritone
ZINAT KHANOM, Chanting

Page One of Centennial Celebration Program

CINEMATOGRAPH EXHIBITION
Courtesy of the Star of the West
"Abdul-Baha in America"
Sunday morning, at nine o'clock
Castle Theatre, State and Madison Streets

BAHA'O'LLAH'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD
CIVILIZATION

Sunday afternoon, at half after three o'clock
Auditorium Hotel, ninth floor

Chairman
MR. ALBERT R. WINDUST, Chicago

Speakers
MR. ALBERT H. HALL, Minneapolis
"The Irresistible Movement Toward World Federation and
World Peace"

MRS. CLAUDIA S. COLES, Washington, D. C.
"The Emancipation of Woman and Universal Suffrage"

MR. LOUIS G. GREGORY, Washington, D. C.
"The New Educational System of Baha'o'llah"

MISS HELEN E. PETERSON, Contralto
MISS RUTH BREYTSPRAAK, Violinist
MISS MARIE HERZOG, Accompanist

MEETING OF COMMEMORATION

Monday morning, at half after ten o'clock
on Temple Grounds at Wilmette, weather permitting, otherwise
at Auditorium Hotel, ninth floor

Chairman
DR. PAULINE BARTON-PEEKE, Cleveland

Speakers
MR. BERNARD JACOBSON, Kenosha
MRS. ANNIE L. PARMERTON, Cincinnati
MR. T. W. FLEMING, Cleveland

Page Two of Centennial Celebration Program

with the Words of Baha'o'llah, which she read most impressively. She also spoke with an attracted heart.

Mr. Thomas W. Fleming of Cleveland, Ohio, eloquently spoke of the power that comes in living the life. The only remedy for the chronic diseases of the world is the principles of Baha'o'llah. He read some of these teachings and dwelt upon their greatness and exaltation. He declared that those who knew these utterances and understood their majestic source would have a power to overcome

revealed by Abdul-Baha to the Central States. Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi said in part, "This is a beautiful meeting, the first convention for teaching. The names of those who have attended this glorious gathering will be recorded in the history of this great Cause. The results of your answer to this call will soon become manifest. The first call sent from Chicago accomplished the Mashrak-el-Azkar work. Now we have met to consult in regard to teaching. May our consultation be like that of the disciples of Christ,

whose love, faith, courage and self-sacrifice bore eternal fruits. Abdul-Baha has given to you the same mantle the disciples of Christ wore by revealing for you this wonderful Tablet.

“The teacher must become as a skillful physician, adapting the remedy to the disease. If you give the teachings always in one way, the result may be like that of the mullah who prescribed the

to the proper method of treatment for low fever. Exit physician, jotting down as an important item, ‘Cabbage soup will cure low fevers.’ Next he was summoned to the house of an upholsterer and found him very ill with apparently the same symptoms. At once he prescribed ‘plenty of cabbage soup.’ On returning next day to see how rapidly his patient was recovering, he was astonished

CONVENTION OF TEACHING
 Monday afternoon, at half after two o'clock
 Auditorium Hotel, ninth floor

Chairman
 MRS EMOGENE HOAGG, San Francisco

MR CARL SCHEFFLER, Secretary, Chicago

The Call to Convention by the House of Spirituality

Reading by the Chairman of Teaching Tablet Revealed by
 Abdul-Baha to the Central States

Address
 DR. ZIA M. BAGDADI, Chicago

Teaching Plans Suggested by Chicago Assembly
 MISS MARY LESCH, Chicago
 MR ALBERT R. WINDUST, Chicago

Discussion
 MRS T C RICE-WRAY, Detroit
 MR CHARLES MASON REMEY, Washington, D C
 MR LOUIS GREGORY, Washington, D C
 DR PAULINE BARTON-PEERKE, Cleveland
 MRS. ANNIE L. PARMERTON, Cincinnati

MRS E H PRATT Soprano

THE MASHRAK-EL-AZKAR IN AMERICA
 Monday evening, at eight o'clock
 Auditorium Hotel, ninth floor

Chairman
 DR. WILLIAM F SLATER, Chicago

Speakers
 MR. ALBERT H. HALL, Minneapolis
 "The Mashrak-el-Azkar—the Evident Sign of the
 New Civilization"
 MR. CHARLES MASON REMEY, Washington, D C
 "The Birth of the New Architecture"
 MRS CORINNE TRUE, Chicago
 "The Development of the Mashrak-el-Azkar in America"

SAMUEL M DOLNICK, Violinist
 ALBERT R. WINDUST, Tenor

Page Three of Centennial Celebration Program

House of Spirituality

CARL SCHEFFLER, Secretary
 GEORGE LESCH, Treasurer
 DR. ZIA M. BAGDADI
 MISS MARY LESCH

MRS. CORINNE TRUE
 ALBERT R. WINDUST
 DR. WILLIAM F SLATER
 JAMES HANBY
 CHARLES H. GREENLEAF

Chairmen of Committees

Reception, MRS. WILLIAM F. SLATER
 Publicity, JEAN MASSON
 Program, MRS. CORINNE TRUE
 House, JAMES HANBY

Music, MISS LILLIAN JAMES
 Bahai Publishing Society, MARY LESCH
 Teaching, DR. ZIA M. BAGDADI
 Sick, DR. WILLIAM F. SLATER
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Editors Star of the West

ALBERT R. WINDUST GERTRUDE BUKEMA DR. ZIA M. BAGDADI

Mashrak-el-Azkar Treasurer
 JOSEPHINE NELSON

Page Four of Centennial Celebration Program

same medicine for every disease. He called on a tailor who was ill with intermittent fever. After feeling his pulse, and looking wise, he left his directions and went his way. He returned next day and found the tailor well enough to be around. ‘Praise be to God!’ he exclaimed, ‘I see you followed my directions.’ ‘No,’ rejoined the tailor, ‘I did not.’ ‘Then what did you do?’ ‘Why nothing in particular, except that I drank a bowl of cabbage soup.’ The mullah at once reached his opinion as

to learn that the man was dead. ‘Twas the will of God,’ he exclaimed. Then he departed, jotting down this astonishing medical discovery, in his book of knowledge: ‘Cabbage soup will cure low fever in a tailor, but will kill an upholsterer.’ Therefore, give the glorious message with wisdom.

“The second point is, teach with the spirit of humility, sincerity, love, and attraction.

“Third, teach only in accordance with the words revealed by Baha’ollah and

Abdul-Baha and be free from everything else. Baha'o'llah says: 'Verily we shall assist every one who rises to serve the cause by an army of the Supreme Course and a contingent of the near angels.'

"Fourth, we should fearlessly teach that the only relief from the present war calamities is turning to the Greatest Name and by accepting the teachings of Baha'o'llah. Otherwise all nations who refuse to do this are in the greatest danger. We practice no sedition nor corruption, but proclaim the Glad Tidings of Abha and the might of His Covenant. We are commanded not to interfere with or even speak one word on the subject of politics.

"Fifth, it is the duty of all to teach. Arise with all strength and those who cannot go should help to send others. The foundation of all teaching is firmness in the Covenant."

Miss Mary Lesch said, "Seventeen years ago there was not one line of the teachings in print in America. Now the Bahai Publishing Society has many books that have been translated and published. Thus the teacher should inform himself of the teachings and go forth well equipped for service."

Mr. Windust said, "The hour has struck. From now on those who serve in the Cause must be firm in the Covenant. They must also be well known as such. . . . This is especially true of those who would teach." He then presented a plan for teaching throughout the Central States.

Mesdames Annie L. Parmerton and T. C. Rice-Wray, Messrs. Charles Mason Remey, Thomas W. Fleming, Louis G. Gregory, Dr. Pauline Barton-Peake, Dr. H. S. Harper and Mr. Fred Mortensen, took part in the discussion. Their collective thoughts centered around the qualifications of the teachers, sincerity, severance, attraction, sanctity.

THE MASHRAK-EL-AZKAR.

This was the theme of the Monday

evening meeting over which Dr. William F. Slater of Chicago presided.

The first speaker was Mr. Albert H. Hall of Minneapolis who spoke of the Mashrak-el-Azkar as the evident sign of the new civilization.

Mr. Charles Mason Remey of Washington, D. C., spoke of the birth of the new architecture. He said, "One of the greatest signs of a civilization is its architecture which reaches its most complete form in a temple, the outward symbol of spiritual things." He illustrated by many beautiful drawings nine different civilizations, showing how each in turn, as the Roman Classic, the Byzantine, the Arabian Moorish, the Persian, the Indian, the Romanesque, the Gothic, the Renaissance and the Modern has contributed to the world's treasures in architecture. These beautiful drawings suggested to the happy friends how wonderfully beautiful the completed Mashrak-el-Azkar will appear. Certainly such a building will be unique and will attract the attention of the whole world. But these of course were only suggestions. The speaker declared that the new divine civilization would produce a new type of architecture which would be more beautiful and perfect than all the others. The spiritual outpouring of the Day of Peace will create a new and wonderful design for the Mashrak-el-Azkar in America. The friends were charmed by this simple, earnest presentation, in which the speaker lost himself in his love for the beauty of holiness.

Mrs. Corinne True, the last speaker was happy in her presentation of the development of the Mashrak-el-Azkar in America. She said in part, "In this day the Sun of Spiritual Truth has again arisen in the Orient, and its radiance is seen in the Occident as well. Baha'o'llah has said that the human family was once one, dwelling together in the greatest state of harmony. Then differences crept in and racial and religious bias appeared until discord and hatred were found among the children of men. The great

purpose of the Bahai movement is to restore the foundation of human solidarity. The Mashrak-el-Azkar is the outward sign of the inward spiritual Reality which brings to pass this glorious work. Those who join with sincerity in the building of this unique and wonderful edifice share the bounty of God and are under His protection."

The following was reported as the state of the building fund to date:

Certificate of deposit and cash in hand.....	\$88,282.42
Cash, reported in Boston....	5,000.00
Pledges	40,000.00
Total	\$133,282.42

Madame Josephine Cowles De Lagnel of Washington, D. C., made a donation of an heirloom to the Mashrak-el-Azkar—a watch of great value because of its unique design and workmanship. It was given in memory of her husband, Colonel Julius De Lagnel, in whose family it had been for over one hundred years. An interpretation of its symbolism was given by Mrs. Annie L. Parmerton.

Miss Alpha Bratton, vocal soloist, ac-

companied by Mr. Taylor, pianist, Mr. Samuel M. Dolnick, violinist, and Mr. Albert R. Windust, tenor, contributed to the happiness of the friends. The meetings ended in the singing of the Benediction.

The banquet room where the meetings were held were profusely decorated with variegated flowers. The Greatest Name, "Ya-Baha-El-Abha," in Persian letters, adorned the walls. Numerous beautiful drawings, suggestions of the Mashrak-el-Azkar, met the eyes. The efforts of the House of Spirituality and the Chicago Assembly to arrange for the comfort and happiness of all, the love of those present for each other, the mingling of the various elements of humanity, the eloquent addresses and spiritual songs, were all signs of the confirmations which descend from the Throne of Majesty to those who are firm in the Covenant. The effect of such gatherings is far-reaching, as the hearts are attracted by the fire of divine love. This Festival of Commemoration was an occasion of historic value in the growth of the divine Cause. The friends left for their homes with longing and grateful hearts.

Louis G. Gregory.

The Center of the Covenant, The Greatest Branch:

Abdul-Baha Abbas

(Continued from page 189)

"And there was seen in his temple the ark of His Testament." That is to say, the Book of His Testament will appear in His Jerusalem, the Epistle of the Covenant will be established, and the meaning of the Testament and of the Covenant will become evident. The renown of God will overspread the East and West, and the proclamation of the cause of God will fill the world. . . .

"And there were lightnings and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake and great hail," means that after

the appearance of the Book of the Testament there will be a great storm, and the lightnings of the anger and the wrath of God will flash, the noise of the thunder of the violation of the Covenant will resound, the earthquake of doubts will take place, the hail of torments will beat upon the violators of the Covenant, and even those who profess belief will fall into trials and temptations.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Some Answered Questions, pp. 70, 71.)

VOICE RECORDS OF ABDUL-BAHA may be obtained from Mrs. Howard MacNutt, 935 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, N. Y., at 85 cents each, including packing and shipment via parcel post. These are disc records and can be used on various makes of phonographs.

The City of God

A Compilation of Utterances of Baha'o'llah

IN this day a great banquet is celebrated in the Supreme Concourse for all that was promised in the Divine Books has appeared. This is the day of the most great rejoicing. All must direct themselves to the court of Nearness (to God) with the utmost joy, happiness, exultation and gladness, and deliver themselves from the fire of remoteness.

The way of freedom is opened; hasten thereto: and the fountain of knowledge is welling up; drink thereof. . . . Truly I say that which will diminish ignorance and increase wisdom is pleasing to the Creator. Say: O people, walk in the shadow of justice and uprightness and enter the pavilion of unity.

It is hoped that in this morn when the world is illumined by the Sun of Knowledge we may seek the good pleasure of the Friend (the Heavenly Father) and drink from the sea of recognition.

O friends! Sleep with your face turned to the Friend and rest in bed in the thought of the Beloved One. From flowers inhale the Fragrance of the Loved One, and in every fire see the light of the face of the Desired One. . . . Then exert thyself in love with thy soul, and enter the abode of the Beloved One with thy heart. Abandon grief for the world to its people and give no heed to the limited days of this worldly life.

(Pass over all else save God with the swiftness of lightning.) Thus mayst thou cast off the old garment of this world, be seated on the immortal, everlasting throne, be clad in a divine raiment, drink the wine of love from the cup of the Beloved One, become ablaze with the light of love and sew the robe of love! This is that matter which shall never change. Know thou, therefore, that in every age and dispensation all divine ordinances are changed and transformed according to the requirement of the time, except the law of love which always flows and is never overtaken by change. This is of the wonderful mysteries which God hath mentioned for His servants! Verily He is the Merciful, the Compassionate!

In this day the City of God hath appeared and is seen in full adornment. This is the city wherein the God of all is become manifest. . . . Take the rod of resignation in the name of God and guide the erring people with entire severance to the great city of God, that perchance the wanderers may attain to the real native land and the blind may receive discerning sight. Verily, He is powerful to do that which He willeth. All things are in the prayer of His power. Verily he is the Powerful, the Mighty.

A Question Answered

From a Tablet by Abdul-Baha to Ella G. Cooper, San Francisco. Translated and mailed from Haifa, Syria, March 19, 1916.

Question: In the copies of the talk given by Abdul-Baha to the Society of Friends in London, there seems to be a discrepancy in the time in the opening line. In some it reads, "About six thousand years ago," in others "six hundred years," and in others "sixty years." If the Society referred to signifies the Bahai

Movement, would not sixty years be the correct number?

Answer: This talk opens with the words, "About six hundred years ago." This Society was founded in the city of Hamadan six hundred years ago and has nothing to do with this movement. It is almost disbanded, but under different names and forms one may come across them in Persia. They were called the Society of Sokoutyyoun, that is, the "Silent Ones."

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Massa'ul 1, 73 (December 12, 1917)

No. 15

"Concerning the Station of this Servant, the answer is: 'Abdul-Baha' "

Before Baha'o'llah's ascension into the City of Eternal Light he wrote a glorious Tablet called "The Book of the Covenant." In this he appointed his eldest son, whom he loved to call the Master, to be the Center of this Covenant. This son in his pure selflessness and evanescence renounced the title of Master, laid aside his given name and took the name of Servant, that is, Abdul-Baha, the Servant of Baha'. There is nothing about Abdul-Baha more wonderful than his servitude. To those whose spiritual eyes God has opened, his presence is glorious in its majesty, his face brilliant with love, his words luminous with wisdom and beauty, his whole being vibrant with the vital force of the Holy Spirit. Yet he seems as unconscious of his powers as though he did not know of his own existence.

Because the Servant of Baha' is selfless he is able to reflect the truth, the love, the unity of the new era. For this reason was he chosen to be the Center of the new order, the new Covenant. In that Covenant God makes an agreement with men which is that if men will follow His will, His law, His divine love as revealed in the Manifestation of His Holy Spirit in this age "the world of war shall become the world of peace, the world of darkness, the world of light, all the nations of the world as one nation, all races as one race, the earth, heaven, and the world of satan the world of angels;" and mankind shall then enter the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundations of the world. But the Center of this new Covenant, this new world-order is Abdul-Baha. In him and his words are focused in life-imparting glory the light of the new City of God.

—*The Compiler.*

THE MASTER

MY FATHER!" said Valiolah Khan, the son of the glorious Persian martyr, "was much with Baha'o'llah. One night Baha'o'llah, as he strode back and forth in his room, said to him: 'At stated periods souls are sent to earth by the Creator with what we call the Power of the Great Ether (Holy Spirit). And those who possess this power can do anything; they have all power. . . . Jesus Christ had this power. The people thought him a poor young man whom they had crucified but he possessed the power of the

Holy Spirit; therefore he could not remain underground. This ethereal power arose and quickened the world. And now look to the Master,' said Baha'o'llah, 'for this power is his.'

"Baha'o'llah," added Valiolah Khan, "taught my father much about the Master. The Master, you know, is one of the titles of Abdul-Baha, and the Greatest Branch is another. Baha'o'llah, the Blessed Perfection, revealed the station of Abdul-Baha to my father; and my father wrote many poems to the Master, though the Master would chide him and

say, 'You must not write such things to me.' But the heart of my father could not keep quiet. Once he wrote: 'O Dawning-place of the Beauty of God, I know thee.

Though thou wrappest thyself in ten thousand veils I know thee.

Though thou shouldst wear the tatters of a beggar still would I know thee.'"

We spoke of having read so many tablets in which we were told that Abdul-Baha should be known only by the name of "Abdul-Baha." Monaver Khanum, the daughter of Abdul-Baha, said that Baha'o'llah called him "Master." And every prophet, after proclaiming his mission, adopts a name. Moses spoke of himself as the Interlocutor; Christ of himself as the Son of God; and Abdul-Baha calls himself the Servant of God.

(*Flowers from the Rose Garden of Acca*, p. 8.)

During the lifetime of the Blessed Perfection, the Master, one day, was going to Tyre. He wanted to take me with him; so he sent me to Bahajee [the house of Baha'o'llah] to fulfill some errand. When I reached there the Blessed Perfection sent for me. "Where are you going?" he asked.

"The Master is going to take me to Tyre," I answered.

"Very well; always listen to the Mas-

ter. Whatever the Master speaks, I speak; and whatever I speak, the Master speaks. . . ."

Whenever the Master came from Acca to Bahajee, Baha'o'llah would see him from his window and then call aloud to his sons and secretaries: "The Master is coming! The Master is coming! Everyone must hurry downstairs and out in the field to welcome him."

(Words of Abul Kasim: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, December 15, 1913. Abul Kasim is the gardener of the Rizwan, the wonderful garden just outside of Acca.)

At another time the Blessed Perfection instructed the gardener, Abul Kasim, to attend to some business for him, he and the Master both being in the Rizwan. The Master, meeting Abul Kasim just afterward, instructed him to go to Acca and bring them some food for supper.

The gardener sought Baha'o'llah and asked that he might tell him of the Master's command. Baha'o'llah said in reply to Abul Kasim: "That is well. You must go. You must do everything that the Master says. Everything the Master says is just the same as if I said it. He is me, and I am he. There is no difference between my commands and the commands of the Master."

(Notes of Mrs. I. D. Brittingham, September, 1901.)

THE GREATEST BRANCH

Kitab-el-Akdas was revealed by Baha'o'llah, the Manifestation, soon after his arrival at Acca, and is the greatest Book. . . . The statutes and laws were given in the *Kitab-el-Akdas*. In this Book is mentioned everything that is necessary for us, and in two places he says: "After the Sun of Truth sets, we must turn our faces unto 'Him-whom-God-hath-chosen,' who is branched from the Ancient Root;" and in another place: "Anything you do not under-

stand from the Book, must be submitted to the great chosen One." Nothing whatever is mentioned in the Book concerning any other one save the Greatest Branch, and if you read from the beginning to the end, you cannot find anything that refers to any other person save him. Although it was known to all the believers that the Greatest Branch was Abdul-Baha, at the time of the Manifestation if any one pronounced the word "Agha" (Lord or Master), and

meant by it any one of the branches besides Abdul-Baha, Baha'o'llah would say: "There is only one 'Agha' and he is Abbas Effendi [given name of Abdul-Baha]" and the Manifestation would point to him at every important question.

The Manifestation wrote the *Kitab-cl-Ah'd* two years before his departure, in which he said: The One-whom-God-hath-chosen is the Greatest Branch, and he commanded the branches, the twigs and kinsmen to turn their faces unto Him-whom-God-hath-chosen. "Agh-san" means the branches of the Manifestation; "Afnan" means the branches of The Bab. He said: "We have chosen El-Akbar after El-Azam (El-Akbar-Mohammed-Ali)," but he does not command us to obey him or to turn our faces unto him and there is nothing in the *Kitab-el-Akdas* which refers to Mohammed-Ali, and this word "We have chosen" does not give Mohammed-Ali any importance or high station to enable him to be our commander or master.

We must not be astonished that such a choice was given by the Manifestation, because the same thing took place at the time of Christ, for instead of choosing two branches, he chose twelve, and it is impossible for us to say that Christ did not know which one of those branches would betray him. Neither can we say: Why did the Manifestation, knowing all things, choose Mohammed-Ali after Abdul-Baha? Because Christ also chose his twelve, and commanded obedience to them, saying: "He who gives them a glass of water, will have a great reward in the Kingdom." So if the same thing occurred in the past, you must not be astonished at what takes place in the present, for the two are similar. But the only proof which will make us understand this question, is this, that God, according to His law, will never pronounce any judgment or condemn anybody before one shows his disobedience and commits the crime for which he is to be judged; because, if

God would pass judgment upon all, though some are good and some bad, before the good or bad actions are exercised by us, there would be no necessity whatever for laws, statutes or ordinances, and because God does not judge anybody before good or bad actions are produced. He chooses some to be his people, and then he waits for their actions to prove whether they are good or bad. As Christ chose his disciples and said to them: "I am the the vine, and you are clean through the Word which I have spoken, but every branch which does not bring forth good fruit, will be cut off;" so also, the Manifestation chose the branches and declared they would be the best of people if they continued to be under the shadow of the Tree. In several tablets, he said: "Any one of the branches who departs from the shadow of the Tree, will be cut off." Besides there is a special tablet which was revealed by the Manifestation to Mohammed-Ali, in which he says: "Shouldst thou deviate from the right path for an instant, thou shalt be cut off."

(Words of Mirza Abul Fazl: From notes of Mrs. Sara Herron at Acca, in 1900.)

If one of my sons should exceed beyond the ordinances of God, by God, my eye shall not turn to him at all, and to this bear witness all the just and informed. (p. 34)

(Words of Baha'o'llah: Prayers, Instructions, Tablets and Miscellany gathered by American visitors to Acca in 1900.)

Fear not if this Branch be severed from the material earth and cast aside its leaves, for this Branch will grow after it is cut from the earth and will ascend until it shelters the universe; its foliage will reach to the Supreme Apex and bear fruit imparting fragrance to the world.

(Abdul-Baha: From booklet, *Abdul-Baha*.)

STAR OF THE WEST

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Honorary Member—MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Massa'ul 1, 73 (December 12, 1917)

No. 15

“The people are vociferously discussing this Manifestation and all nations are investigating”

(This Tablet, revealed by Abdul-Baha for the Persian Bahais some years ago,
was translated by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, Chicago, November 29, 1917.)

HE IS GOD!

O ye beloved and ideal friends of God!

The divine voice from the invisible Kingdom of Abha is reaching those
who are asleep in the valley of unconsciousness with the call:—

O ye heedless, awake!

O ye drunken, be sober!

O ye dead, arise!

O ye wilted, be revived and full of vigor!

O ye dumb, speak!

O ye silent, cry out!

The voice is the melody of the Covenant, and the effulgences are from
the Light of the bountiful bestowals of the horizons. It is the breeze of the
meadows of singleness that is blowing and the effusion of the fragrances of the
rose gardens that are wafting; it is the candle of the favor of the Ancient
Beauty (Baha'o'llah) that is lighted in every assembly; it is the outpouring
of the clouds of mercy that is bestowing freshness to every garden and lawn;
it is the verse of oneness that is uttered in the glorious Book, and the tablets
of the unique Lord of the Kingdom are unfolding the mysteries of “they are
clothed by the new creation”; incline your ears in order that ye may hear the
melody of joy, and open your eyes to see the lights.

The favor of the Truth is abundant and His ancient bestowal is uninter-
rupted. His cycle is all light. His century fulfills all the signs. Be not hope-
less neither disappointed. It is the day of hope and the century of the Glorious
God. It is the first resurrection and the dispensation of the Beauty of Abha!—
May my soul be a ransom to His Blessed Threshold.

In every horizon His light is brilliant and in every region His bounty is
manifest. His great fame has filled the east and the west. The song of His
divinity has encompassed the south and the north, and caused a tumult among
the pillars of the world, making the hearts of the sons of Adam to quake.

The people are vociferously discussing this Manifestation and all nations are investigating. The flame of this burning fire in all regions has reached the zenith of heaven, and the call of, "Verily, the evident Light is manifest!" has ascended from the earth to the inhabitants of the Supreme Kingdom. All are exuberant with joy and intoxicated with the wine of love!

Ye, who are dwelling in the native land of His Holiness (Baha'o'llah) and are in the place where the Blessed Tree hath grown: Why should ye sit quietly as in a corner? Ye must be so aflame that the heat of your fire may enkindle the adjacent districts; the fragrances of the rose-garden of your hearts may perfume the nostrils of the Supreme Concourse; the flood of bestowal may pour from those hills and mountains to all regions, and the rivers of knowledge may flow from that city to all the valleys and the desert.

Hasten ye to prosperity!

Hasten ye to success!

Hasten ye to the great favor!

Hasten ye to evident light!

Hasten ye to the glorious attainment!

Hasten ye to the abundant share!

El-Baha be upon ye!

O my Beloved, God! These are thy servants who have heard thy voice, responded to thy word and accepted thy call. They believed in thee; became assured in thy verses; acknowledged thy proofs; listened to thy evidences; walked in thy path and followed thy guidance; became informed of thy mysteries; comprehended the symbols of thy Book, the signs of thy Scriptures and the glad tidings of thy epistles and tablets; grasped the hem of thy garment and were held by the radiance of thy grandeur; their feet became firm in thy Covenant and their hearts strong in thy Testament.

O my Lord! Ignite the fire of attraction in their hearts; let the birds of knowledge soar in the rose-gardens of their breasts and sing in the meadows of their souls, songs of love with the most wonderful melodies and harmonies; make them strong verses, unfurled ensigns and perfect words; elevate thy Cause by them; raise thy banners, spread thy signs, assist thy Word and support thy friends by them; make them to utter in thy praise and inspire them to arise in thy good-pleasure; illumine their faces in the Kingdom of thy holiness, and complete their joy by confirming them in assisting thy Cause!

O my Lord! We are weak, strengthen us in spreading the fragrances of thy sanctity; we are poor, enrich us from the treasury of thy singleness; we are naked, clothe us from thy generous bounty; we are sinners, pardon our transgressions by thy favor, generosity and forgiveness.

Verily, thou are the Confirmer, the Helper, the Beloved, the Mighty, the Omnipotent!

El-Baha be upon those who are firm and steadfast!

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

"Concerning the Station of this Servant, the answer is: 'Abdul-Baha'"

(Continued from page 207)

THE SERVANT

Now listen unto what I say for it is to Abdul-Baha in all he wishes and says, the foundation of success and the basis Verily this is possessing strong faith. of righteousness among the people of Therefore, know that I have sacrificed the world, that you may be obedient un- my soul, spirit, life, mention, honor, at-

tributes, my comfort and my name in the path of God and I have chosen no dignity or possession save the obedience of Baha' and no name or title save "Abdul-Baha" (servant of Baha'). Therefore be content with this and follow in my words and wishes, because in so doing the blessed trees of life springing up in the paradise of God will become green and verdant.

If you desire to speak in praise, praise the Beauty of El-Abha; if you desire to commend, commend the name of your Supreme Lord; for if you exalt the Tree you also exalt the Branch. If you mention the sea you are also mentioning its gulf and bays. Therefore mention the "Beauty of Abha" by this sweet command among the people, for in my command is contained his command, my attributes are embodied in his attributes. If, therefore, you commend a man you commend all related to him. This is that upon which all the believers will unite and harmonize. Therefore let nothing arise to cause separation among the chosen ones.

(Abdul-Baha.)

I ask one favor of all the friends of God: It is the wish of my soul that they may all praise me only in my utter servitude to the Holy Threshold, without any interpretation and not to commend Abdul-Baha with any other than the words and explanations which have proceeded from the very pen of this servant; that they may depart by no means therefrom, but confine themselves to that same measure.

Verily, my qualification, praise, rank, name, title, being, substance, reality and renown is "Abdul-Baha," and I have no grade except this.

The friends of God shall certainly agree with the request made by this servant with the utmost lowliness and humility. They shall thus rejoice this afflicted heart and bestow new life upon

this weak body, so that by hearing this mighty glad tidings and obtaining this divine gift Abdul-Baha may rejoice and find divine gladness and exultation.

(Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to Mirza Ali Kuli Khan and Mirza Abul Fazl; translated by Mirza Khan, June 4, 1903.)

I am a servant and this station I have chosen for myself.

(Abdul-Baha.)

I am serving God. I am the servant of God. I give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, the power of speech to the mute and knowledge to the ignorant. I raise the dead, I deliver those who are in darkness and guide them into the realm of light. I make the poor rich and the weak powerful. I satisfy the hungry ones with the bread of life and allay the thirsty ones with the pure water of immortality. This is my work.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, June 30, 1914.)

Servitude to all the human race is my perpetual religion. Through the bounty and favor of the Blessed Perfection, Abdul-Baha is the ensign of the Most Great Peace, which is waving from the Supreme Apex; and through the gift of the Greatest Name, he is the lamp of universal salvation, which is shining with the light of the love of God. The herald of the Kingdom is he, so that he may awaken the people of the East and of the West. The voice of friendship, uprightness, truth and reconciliation is he, so as to cause acceleration throughout all regions. . . . Through the appearance of the Blessed Perfection the theories are abrogated and the facts established. The time of superficiality is gone by and the cycle of reality has appeared. One must become the incarnation of servitude, the personification

of love, the embodiment of spirituality, and the mirror of mercy. . . . The quintessence of truth is this: We must all become united and harmonized in order to illumine this gloomy world; to abolish the foundations of hostility and animosity from among mankind; to perfume the inhabitants of the universe with the holy fragrances of the nature and disposition of the Beauty of Abha; to enlighten the people of the East and West with the light of guidance; to hoist the tent of the love of God and suffer each and all to enter under its protection; to bestow comfort and tranquillity upon every one under the shade of the Divine Tree; to astonish the enemy by the manifestation of the utmost love. . . . to reach the ears of the inhabitants of the Kingdom with the outcry—“Verily the earth is illumined by the lights of its Lord.” This is reality! This is guidance! This is service! This is the consummation of the perfection of the realm of humanity.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet revealed for New York Board of Council, translated January 1, 1907.)

. . . I am the servant of Baha'o'llah and nothing more; Abdul-Baha is the sum of all perfections. They must not attempt to surpass that name, “Abdul-Baha.” All must say to others that he claims for himself to be Abdul-Baha and the believers must call him by his name as he wishes. This is the only name he has appointed for himself.

(Abdul-Baha: From notes of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Hannen, Haifa, 1909.)

Know thou that all the promises of Abdul-Baha are true and his instructions are inspirations of the Holy Spirit and received as suggestions from Baha'o'llah.

(Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to Mrs. Lua Getsinger.)

Concerning my power: it is one bestowal of the bestowals of His Holiness Baha'o'llah. It is my confirmer. It is the light of my guidance. It is the fire of my love. Save it I have nothing. Beside it I know nothing. Except it I wish for nothing.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, May 26, 1914.)

Although Abdul-Baha considers himself as a drop, yet this drop is connected with the Most Great Sea. Although he looks upon himself as an atom, yet this atom is related to the world-illuminating Sun. As is said: “The originator of all these voices is the King himself” or in other words: “It is through his assistance.”

(Abdul-Baha.)

The Blessed Perfection has explicitly promised me with his own tongue that he will assist me. “Rest thou assured,” he said, “my confirmations shall reach thee.” This has ever been the cause of my consolation. Whenever these words are remembered my wound is healed and all the tempests are calmed.

(Abdul-Baha: Diary of Mirza Sohrab, January 10, 1914.)

As to the critical period (1901): Know thou, that verily, Abdul-Baha dominates every critical period through the confirmation of Baha', nor is he dominated by any critical period. And as a proof of this Abdul-Baha has withstood all critical periods and great dangers since his earliest childhood to the present day through the assistance of the Supreme Lord. . . .

My assistance is the assistance of the Blessed Perfection. If all the world should gather together against me I would still possess this and all the world could not take it from me. I have a weapon to fight with forever and ever. With it I am always victorious. It is a

sword which can never be dulled, a magazine which will always be full.

(Abdul-Baha: From booklet, *Abdul-Baha*.)

If any soul asks concerning the station of this servant, the answer is Abdul-Baha. If he inquires after the meaning of The Branch, the answer is Abdul-Baha. If he desires to know the significance of the verse regarding The Branch, the answer is Abdul-Baha. If he insists upon the explanation of the meaning of "The Branch extended from the Ancient Root," the answer is Abdul-Baha.

In brief, the friends must be satisfied with the word of Abdul-Baha. Outside of this word, "Abdul-Baha," no other word, not even the word, Branch, should they refer to in their writings and their speeches. By no means whatsoever should they exceed this word, neither ought they to harbor any discussion and question. However, if any other soul declares another word than this, he will make this servant a target for the arrows of opposition and will become the cause of my grief. For the utmost desire and the ultimate hope of Abdul-Baha is to be a sincere servant at the Holy Threshold. This gift is enough for this servant throughout the worlds.

(Abdul-Baha: Extract from a Tablet revealed for Persian believers, about 1906.)

At the time of the end God shall manifest himself to all mankind with all the attributes of divinity and majesty, but very few shall advance toward him and the rest shall exclaim in horror: "We take refuge in God! O what blasphemy!" Then again he will appear a second time manifesting all the qualities of servitude and the people will flock around him and believe in him and praise and laud his uncreated virtues.

(A tradition of Mohammed, related by

Bokhari, who is celebrated for his accuracy, and wisdom. From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, January 19, 1914.)

My name should be confined to "Abdul-Baha" in all writings. This is the collective name which will gather all the people and it is the strong fortress and protection of the Cause of God. The beloved ones must limit themselves to this. However you may mention me as the light of the love of God, the flame of the guidance of God and the banner of peace and harmony. I trust in God that you may ever be confirmed through the Holy Spirit. . . .

You must know this, that the principle of the divine foundation is love, unison, oneness and the purity of intention. When love is attained, the mystery of truth will then become manifest. No one should adhere to different titles; one title (or station) is enough, and it is, "Abdul-Baha." All must agree to this word, until the difference of opinion be removed from their midst. But that which is essential to the acknowledgment of this word (i. e., Abdul-Baha) is attraction to the love of God, service to the Cause of God, diffusing the Word of God, severance from all else save God, affinity, union and oneness, humility, meekness, nothingness and servitude to the beloved of God. If one does not become characterized with these attributes he has not acknowledged the title (or station) of Abdul-Baha. Because Abdul-Baha is the banner of the love of God, the lamp of the knowledge of God, the herald of the kingdom of God, the commander of the hosts of peace and reconciliation, and the orb of union and harmony among all the nations of the world. Consequently, every one in whose heart the love of Abdul-Baha has irradiated must act in this manner. And when persons walk and move in this path all differences shall be removed.

(Abdul-Baha: From booklet, *Abdul-Baha*.)

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Sharaf 1, 73 (December 31, 1917)

No. 16

"If the world should combine to overthrow the Covenant, it could not succeed"

FOR years God has been preparing you for this day, in order that you may be illumined like a candle for the dark night, that you may direct the people and establish them in the divine Covenant and Testament. And if, like pure gold, you should be melted in the fire of calamity, you will be purged by that fire of calamity but you will be content.

The time was fully ripe for your coming and for the testing of man, because the great basis of the divine Cause is firmly fixed upon the pillar of the Covenant and Testament and the skies of the divine religions are brilliant and illumined by the stars of the Covenant. God be my refuge! If this pillar is to be opposed by a low fellow (Anoud) there will remain no supports for the divine Tabernacle and for the lesser tents, and there will be no candle lighted for the divine Assembly. The well-built house will be razed to the foundation, it will become like a useless tomb, the commands will be delayed and the waves of the sea of favor will be retarded. The sea of assurance will be cut off, the Breath of Life will cease to blow, the sails of the life-boat will be destroyed, the bright dawn will become dark evening, the dawning-point of desire will be covered under the clouds of regrets; all these troubles will become useless and all these sheddings of blood will be fruitless; the pure blood of the martyrs will become defiled and the remembrance of

the blessed Bab [the Forerunner], whose breast became the target for a hundred thousand arrows, will disappear from among men, and his influence will become non-existent. The whole fifty years of the troubles of the Blessed Perfection (Baha'o'llah), the looting and plundering, the imprisoning and beating; the false accusing and injuring; the wandering and homelessness; the threatening by dagger and sword; the shackles and chains will become forgotten and without result. It will become the source of joking and quarrelling among the enemies, the source of their gaiety and rejoicing.

Then, whatever mountain or plain you traverse, cry aloud: *This cycle is the Cycle of Alast!** And this Covenant is the Ancient Covenant, the Illuminator of the horizons. The armies of the Kingdom are the protectors of this foundation. The sun of righteousness is radiant stability and this becomes the shining lamp of the assembly of unity. It is the Strong Rope and the illumination of the Giver of Light. It is Arva (untranslatable) and the fruit of the Toobah tree is in the concealed tablet and is recorded in the Book and the decreed Leaf. It is the Testament and the

* Alast was used to signify the night that the Koran was revealed to Mohammed and he received the message: "Am I not thy God?" to which he replied affirmatively.—*Translator.*

Covenant and it is mentioned in all the tablets and in all the early Books and in the later tablets. It is the governor of the era of Shadad and the balance of the day of reckoning. It is the life-boat and the refuge of the future. It is the holy fragrance of His Holiness, the Creator, and the Breaths of Life of the garden of the Creator. It is the strong fortress; therefore it is a sure shelter for all created beings, and in brief, it is the sum of all the sacred writings, ancient and modern!

How happy is the man who lays hold upon God; trusts in him, remains firm and inwardly becomes confirmed in the love of God and takes refuge under his banner!

(Words of Abdul-Baha: A tablet revealed for a believer in Teheran, sent to America by Dr. Moody.)

The radiance of servitude shining from the Candle of the Testament has illumined all horizons in spite of the people of discord, and the renown of the grandeur of the Blessed Perfection hath caused such an outcry throughout the world that it hath made the limbs of all nations quiver.

All the religions of the world have the loud cry of "Woe unto us!" on their lips, and the cry of "Woe to our Faith!" which is raised by the ignorant, is heard in the east and west. The power of the blessed Cause has such effulgence that it has become apparent to all peoples; and all the nations and creeds have acknowledged and confessed the greatness of the Cause of God. Had it not been for the injuries inflicted by the party of conceit (the nakazeen), the world of existence would have been in this day an exalted garden. But the people of conceit, being heedless of this cup mixed with kafur (a fountain intended to be drunk by the true and firm believers), have imagined that they can upset the standard of the Testament, and that they can disappoint the de-

livered nations. They have poured forth seditious rumors on the lips and tongues of all people, and they have made calumniating statements, hoping by this means to mingle the contents of the pre-existent cup of the Testament with the bitterness of violation. Far, far be it from them to do this!

Jesus Christ—May my soul be a sacrifice to him—had only a few followers in the time of his departure. Then after his departure all the kings of the world, philosophers of all nations, learned men of all races, and wise men of all creeds, arose to suppress and degrade his cause; but finally, all the standards hoisted by those numerous nations were upset, and the banner of Jesus Christ was fluttering on the loftiest mountain.

Now, praise be unto God, that hundreds of thousands of souls have assembled under the standard of the Covenant through the assistance of the Blessed Perfection. I declare by the Educator of the visible and invisible, it will evidently be witnessed that the descendants of the violators will think their descent as a disgrace and will disown their fathers and forefathers, just as Akrama, the son of Abudjahl,* kept clear of his father, and Kaled, the son of Valid, left his father. As these darkened people (nakazeen) have imagined that the power of the divine Testament is but a power of man, and that the edifice of the Covenant is as one of the baseless foundations of the material world, they are plotting to destroy this divine edifice with all intrigues and machinations.

Praise be to God, that the power of Nero, the great Roman emperor, proved impotent to withstand the cause of Christ—while these weak souls are plot-

* Abudjahl was the uncle of Mohammed and his greatest enemy. His name was Abul-Hakam (the father of wisdom); but for his envy and opposition, the prophet named him, Abudjahl (the father of ignorance.) —*Dr. Bagdadi.*

ting to resist the power of the Covenant of God! "Wherefore, take example from them, O ye who have eyes!"

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Portion of Tablet revealed for one of the Persian believers. Translated about 1903.)

The confirmation of the Kingdom of Abha shall descend uninterruptedly upon those souls who are firm in the Covenant. Thou hast well observed that every firm one is assisted and aided and every violator is degraded and humiliated and lost. It is very astonishing that people are not admonished. They have observed how Mohammed-Ali, on account of the violation of the Covenant, descended to the lowest degree of humiliation and yet they do not become mindful. They have seen how others through disobedience to the Testament have fallen into a well of degradation, and yet they are not awakened.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 4, No. 14, p. 240.)

Abdul-Baha said that he had seen the faces of the American believers and he was very glad—for their faces were radiant with the light of the Covenant of God, for the faces of those who violated the Covenant of God would appear veiled in darkness.

The Covenant of God is like the sun—the brilliance and light of the Covenant radiates and shines forth from the faces of those who are firm in it. He said: "I pray to the Blessed Perfection that he will so turn their faces to the Covenant, that all America may be enlightened by the brightness of their light." . . . The radiance of this Sun (the Covenant) has been felt from here to America, and notwithstanding all this, the violators desire to quench the light of the Covenant of God. They wish to extinguish this light, but they do not

know that the light of God's Covenant is kindled and comes from the presence of God, and though it were surrounded by all the winds of the earth, they could not prevail to blow it out.

The existent contingent world was shaken by the Covenant of God, and yet they wish to remove it by their most weak power. It is as if a handful of earth should endeavor to stop the waves of the ocean. It is like a mote trying to stop the rays of the sun from reaching the earth.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Prayers, Tablets, Instructions and Miscellany, gathered by some American visitors to Abdul-Baha in 1900.)

From the graces of His Holiness Baha' o'llah I beg for you firmness and steadfastness. Today whosoever is a herald of the Covenant is confirmed and assisted. In these days a number of souls, whose deeds are known in America as clear as the sun, have arisen in enmity against the Center of the Covenant. Theirs is the vain imagination that they can extinguish the light of the Candle of the Covenant. Vain indeed is their thought. The Candle of the Covenant is like unto the Morning Star which never sets.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, October 19, 1914.)

Thy letter was received. It was an indication that (thou art) firm and steadfast in the Covenant and Testament, and art holding fast to the "Strong Rope." Today firmness in the Covenant is the means of the promotion of the Word of God and conducive to the effect of the word of man. Any explanation which does not accord with the Covenant will have no effect whatever. Therefore, whosoever heralds the Covenant of God, unquestionably he is confirmed. This has been tried a thousand times. Any soul

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*
(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Sharaf 1, 73 (December 31, 1917)

No. 16

“This is what we inform ye in the days of tests”

Through his honor, Dr. Bagdadi, to the friends of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful, Muskegon, Michigan.—Upon ye be Baha’o’llah-El-Abha!

HE IS GOD!

O ye who are attracted to the Kingdom of Abha!

Verily, I have read your letter, which indicates illumined consciences and hearts filled with the love of God. Blessed are ye, for ye have attained to a Bounty which was the desire of the greatest holy men in past centuries and which is befitting for those who are like unto ye.

Verily, I ask God to make ye the signs of guidance among mankind and to bestow upon ye stability and uprightness.

Perhaps papers of doubts will come to ye from souls who have emerged from the Kingdom of God. Care ye not therein. Arise with a firm foot in the Covenant, in order that the people of hypocrisy becomes hopeless, even if they should come with the greatest intrigues, evil suggestions and discords.

This is what we inform ye in the days of tests.

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

(Translated by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, Chicago, November 19, 1914.)

“If the world should combine to overthrow the Covenant, it could not succeed”

(Continued from page 215)

who violates the Covenant and Testament in the least degree, immediately he is cut off; even in this material world he will become afflicted with remorse and regret. Consequently, as much as you are able, call the people to the Covenant

and make the souls firm and steadfast.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet translated March 29, 1913.)

If the world should combine to overthrow the Covenant, it could not suc-

ceed. Abdul-Baha loves all no matter how they turn away from him. Whether they love or hate him, go or come, he never changes in his love for them. The Blessed Perfection has left nothing undone. What he ordained can never be set aside.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Ten Days in the Light of Acca*, p. 8.)

O my Lord! O my Lord! Intoxicate them with the wine of knowledge; sweeten their tastes with the delicacies of prayer in the early morn and eve; gather them together in one congregation; confer upon them a shelter; protect them in the cave of thy Covenant and thy Testament; shield them from the doubts of the violators and the evil suggestions of the waverers; make them mines of knowledge, wisdom and assurance; cause their feet to be firm and steadfast in the straight pathway and grant unto them prosperity in whatever country they call the people to thy Name! Verily, thou art the Lord of the Cause, and thou are powerful to do whatsoever thou desirest!

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, July 18, 1913.)

Give my salutations and praise to that assembly who are firm in the Covenant of God, and say:

O ye whom God hath chosen from among those who are called (know ye that many are called but few chosen); upon whom he caused the evident light to descend; whom he guided into the right path and to whom he gave the glad tidings of the great success—ye must be sincere and faithful, ye must follow the ordinances which refer to the Covenant of God, which is the solid edifice.

O ye beloved of God, know that steadfastness and firmness in this new and wonderful Covenant is indeed the spirit that quickens the hearts which are over-

flowing with the love of the glorious Lord. Verily, it is the power which penetrates into the hearts of the people of the world! Your Lord has assuredly promised His servants who are firm and steadfast, to render them victorious at all times, to exalt their word, propagate their power, diffuse their light, strengthen their hearts, elevate their banners, assist their hosts, brighten their stars, increase the abundance of the showers of mercy upon them, and enable the brave lions (teachers) to conquer.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet revealed for an American Bahai, July, 1900.)

There are many heralds in this world. Here is a herald who summons the people to the love and defense of his country, calling out at the top of his voice: "O my country, O my beloved country!" There is a herald who blows the bugle of new nationalism. Here is another herald who calls the people to politics, in order that he may wield great powers of state. There is another person who is a herald of literature and science. Here you find a soul who is the herald of the commercial interests and its expansion. And there is still another herald who sounds the trumpet of war and militarism. But praise be to God, that you are the heralds of the Kingdom of God. All these contending voices which are raised in the world today will ere long be silenced and hushed, but the call of the Kingdom of God will gain volume and impetus day by day. The popularity of these worldly heralds may last for a year or two, but the fame of the souls who are the heralds of the Kingdom, is eternal for they are sounding the trumpet of celestial, universal peace. Their voices will ring throughout the future centuries and will be immortal and age-abiding. Thank ye God, that ye are the heralds of the Kingdom of Abha, the heralds of the Covenant of the Almighty.

All other voices will be repressed, but this harmonic song of the Kingdom of Peace and Truth is eternal and everlasting.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 5, No. 14, p. 216.)

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the Covenant of God and His Testament is the lamp with world-illuminating rays, and from the Supreme Concurrence it enlightens the horizons of the earth and heaven. Whoever stations himself in front of this divine Light, his face will become illumined with the Manifest Glory, his speech will become effective in the hearts and spirits and God shall reinforce him with power which permeates through the realities of things.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, July 18, 1913.)

The Covenant has such a sway that it astonishes the minds. In every region the sign of the power of the Covenant is apparent and manifest. For instance, in Persia the fire of revolution blazed in such wise that all communities, government and nation became afflicted with the most severe trials; but the power of the Covenant protected the Bahai friends to such a degree that in this turbulent storm no dust fell upon them, except in one locality, which became the cause of the spreading of the religion of God and the diffusion of the Word of God. Now all the parties in Persia are wondering how the people of Baha' were guarded and protected.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 6, No. 14, p. 108.)

The Covenant is an Orb which shines and gleams forth unto the universe. Verily, its lights will dispel darkness, its sea will cast out the froth of suspicion upon the shores of perdition. Verily, naught in the world can resist the power of the Kingdom. Should all mankind

assemble, could they prevent the sun from giving its light, the winds from their blowing, the clouds from their showers, the mountains from their firmness or the stars from their beaming? No! by the Lord, the Clement. Everything (in the world) is subject to corruption, but the Covenant of thy Lord shall continue to pervade all regions.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 6, No. 14, p. 107.)

Know thou this of a certainty that today the title of the most great bestowal is firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant of the Almighty, but the magnet for the attraction of the graces of His Highness the Merciful is to teach and guide mankind.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, October 12, 1913.)

If you could realize what an effect your letter produced, undoubtedly you would feel assured that the heart of Abdul-Baha has the utmost attachment to you, and day and night he is supplicating toward the Kingdom of Abha and begs for you confirmation, for you are firm in the Covenant and are the heralds of the Testament.

Today the greatest of all affairs is firmness in the Covenant. This Covenant is the Covenant of God, and this Testament is the Testament of the Lord of Hosts. If you consider that any soul shows the slightest weakness in the Covenant, undoubtedly counsel him and guide him so that he may become firm.

Today no soul has any station or enjoys any title except the soul who is firm in the Covenant and steadfast in the Testament, who entirely forgets himself and is released from the world.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Portion of a Tablet revealed by him in response to a letter asking him to visit the Northwest. It was signed by about ninety Bahais of Spokane, Seattle and Portland.)

This (Covenant) is the Ark of Noah, its moving power is the fire of the love of God and its captain is Baha'o'llah.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, December 6, 1912.)

Thy detailed letter . . . was duly received. Its contents produced joy and happiness, for it indicated the manifestation of the power of the Cause of God in that country, and the worthy services rendered by the firm ones in the Covenant and Testament.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet, translated March 5, 1914.)

Firmness in the Covenant contains an odor like unto the fragrance of the musk which perfumes the nostrils, while violation of the Covenant has a stench which nauseates the nostrils. Therefore, when one inhales with a spiritual power unquestionably he will distinguish between the two smells.

The world of violation is like unto a rootless tree, ere long it will entirely die. The world of the Covenant is like unto the Blessed Tree which is growing beside the river of the Water of Life in the utmost delicacy and beauty, and day by day it is developing and adding to its verdancy. Ere long no trace will be left of the world of violation. No one will ever abandon His Holiness Baha'o'llah and his incontrovertible texts and no one will ever follow the superstitions of the nakazeen [the violators]. For in his irrefutable utterances and blessed writing he has most emphatically commanded all the nakazeen to obey (the Center of the Covenant). All the nakazeen whom you observe know this fact but self-interest having crept in they are following violation. . . . This century will pass and in the next century there will remain not one nakazeen.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Portion of Tablet, translated September 30, 1913.)

Thy letter was received and its contents imparted the utmost of happiness because it was an indication of thy firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant. Today whoever is firm in the Covenant shall become ignited like unto a candle in the assemblage of the world and the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abha shall encircle him from all directions. Thank thou God that both thyself and thy revered husband are confirmed in the firmness of the Testament and from every standpoint thou art serving the Kingdom of God.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Portion of Tablet revealed for a Los Angeles believer, translated July 16, 1913.)

Today the highest of all the degrees are the degrees of firmness and steadfastness in faith and certainty. This firmness and steadfastness will be conducive to the descent of divine assistance and confirmation.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, July 24, 1914.)

Thy letter was received. Its perusal indicated thy faith and firmness in the Covenant and Testament. . . . Therefore, exercise the utmost love and kindness toward each other to the utmost degree, and love each other heartily and strive in the assistance of each other and take a firm hold on the divine Testament and the Covenant. Because the spirit of this age is the Covenant and the Testament of God. It is like the pulsating artery in the body of the world. Speak in your meetings and assemblages about the Testament and the Covenant, and invite every one to firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant. Know ye this: that if any person is the least doubtful about the Covenant, he is immediately cut off—although he may be the greatest among men. The harmful results of such an event will appear

in the future; therefore, give your utmost attention to this question. Consider that the words of Mirza Ali Akbar [a Bahai teacher] were so effective because he is firm in the Covenant.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet translated July 4, 1913.)

You have written that "We all pray that we and all the friends everywhere be favored with the Will of the Center of the Covenant, which is by itself, the good of the whole world, the eternal glory and life (for humanity)." This statement plainly shows that, thank God, you are firm in the Covenant. Today whosoever is firm in the Covenant is helped by the hosts of angels, and favored with the Spirit of God. Wherever he may be, he will shine forth like unto a bright star. This has been experienced by some. But, if he hesitates, although he may make great noises, yet he is in evident loss in the end.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet, received September 7, 1914, by a London Bahai.)

As to thee, O thou who art confessing the oneness of God! arise with all thy power to keep firm in the Testament of God, and firmly believe that, verily, all troops are defeated save those of the Testament and all banners are reversed, save those of the Covenant of God, which will wave over all horizons and will overshadow the hosts of spirit, love and peace, while agitated by the breeze of the favor of God. Be thou of this great host and among the vanguard of this great and powerful army. (P. 108.)

"Leave them to amuse themselves with their own vain discourses," and turn thou to the light of the Testament, and rejoice at the bounty of the effulgence, and seek shelter under the shadow of the standard of the Covenant. Thou wilt

soon find it fluttering on the highest summits of glory, surrounded by the valiant hosts of the angels of heaven and assisted by spiritual armies of great number that proceed from the Supreme Concourse. (P. 72.)

Be ye assured with the greatest assurance that, verily, God will help those who are firm in His Covenant in every matter, through His confirmation and favor, the lights of which will shine forth unto the east of the earth, as well as the west thereof. He will make them the signs of guidance among the creation and as shining and glittering stars from all horizons. (P. 83.)

Soon the lights will glisten and the Sun of Truth will shine with a burning ray in that country. At that time the maid-servants who are firm and constant will rejoice; while every doubtful soul who wavers will regret. Woe unto him! woe unto him! in that day wherein the beloved will attain joy by the surrounding Kingdom of thy Lord, the Precious, the Beneficent. Verily, the end is for them who are ushered into the tent of the Covenant of thy merciful Lord. (P. 96.)

Be well watered with the abundant rain falling from the clouds of the Testament of God. (P. 131.)

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*: Pages indicated, Volume 1.)

Therefore, roll up thy sleeves to serve the Covenant, make the hearts firm in the Covenant of the beloved Lord, create harmony and agreement among the believers. . . . Verily, I send thee good news of the confirmation which thou shalt receive . . . if thou wilt arise with all thy power to assist the Testament of God and to serve the Covenant of God.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*: Vol. 1, p. 161.)

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Sultan 1, 73 (January 19, 1918)

No. 17

"Today the penetrative power in the heart of the world is the power of the Covenant"

JESUS CHRIST said only a few words to Peter, telling him that upon that rock he would build his church. He left no written instruction or will, and yet because it was the Word of God, it took root, and millions have obeyed it. And now, when the Covenant has been written and established, how can any one be foolish enough to imagine that they can resist it? No, the ensign of the Covenant has reached to the supreme heights, and its authority will be spread over all the earth.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Prayers, Instructions, Miscellany gathered by American visitors to Acca in 1900.)

Moses said that after him should come Joshua. The Christ said, addressing Peter "Thou art the rock and I will build my temple upon this rock." Jesus spoke this to Peter by word of mouth. The Blessed Perfection* did not appoint his successor by statement of tongue, but in the *Kitab-el-Ah'd* (Book of the Covenant), he wrote it with his own hand, commanding therein that all the branches and relations should look toward the Center of the Covenant. Also in the *Kitab-el-Akdas* revealed thirty years before his ascension, it is mentioned in two places. During these thirty years these commands of the Blessed Perfection were known and clearly understood by all. Again in a tablet he refers specifically

*Baha'o'llah.

to this, naming one who would violate his commands.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Ten Days in the Light of Acca*, p. 62.)

Real obedience and real sacrifice are identical—absolute readiness to follow and perform whatever you are called upon to do in the Cause of God. When you really love God you will be willing to sacrifice everything and submit yourself entirely to his will. Consecrate yourself wholly to him. His will is everything, his service paramount. If they were to burn me, kill or torture me—no matter what affliction might descend upon me, I would welcome it as one welcomes pleasure. These are precious moments in Acca; so precious we wish that they might never end. . . . After your return (to America) the believers will be in a much stronger and better condition. But this cannot be unless they see and know the will and desire of God. I have no wish but his will. His will is Abdul-Baha. If each human creature had his own will and way, spiritual development would be impossible. The soldiers in an army are under the will and control of one commander; therefore they are united and can press on to victory. If each soldier carried out his own inclination and desire there would be just that many different intentions and nothing would be accomplished.

One thousand soldiers under the control of a commander can overthrow and defeat any number of disorganized troops. Without a directing will all would be conquered and defeated.

Be sure, therefore, that if the believers are not united in the will of God they will not be assisted. This is especially necessary because all of them are under the tent of the Covenant in this revelation. There is strength only in unity. Under one tent there is union and harmony. The Covenant of God in this day of manifestation is a lifeboat and ark of salvation. All true followers of the Blessed Perfection are sheltered and protected in this ark. Whoever leaves it, trusting in his own will and strength, will drown and be destroyed. For the Blessed Perfection left no possibility for discord, disagreement and dissension. The Covenant is like the sea and the believers as the fishes in the sea. If a fish leaves the water it cannot live. There is nothing to equal, nothing so effective as the Covenant of God to bring about and continue unity. Christ said to Peter "Thou art my rock upon which I will build my church." Therefore, all the disciples followed Peter and there was no dissension among them. The Blessed Perfection wrote a Testament or Covenant with his own pen so that no one who obeys it will deny or disobey God. The point is expressed very clearly in the Covenant be revealed. Therefore there can be no possibility, no position of disobedience. He knew that Mohammed-Ali would disobey the Covenant. By violating the Covenant he has become a fallen branch. The Covenant was also written by Mohammed-Ali's own hand from dictation of the Blessed Perfection who knew he would disobey. What cause of union could be greater than the Covenant God has revealed through his Manifestation, Baha'o'llah? After the departure of Baha'o'llah the beautiful blossoms upon the Tree of Life were destroyed by Mohammed-Ali and must

now be grown again by the love of Abdul-Baha. The work and mission of Abdul-Baha are very great. No one could express the grief which followed the turning away from the Covenant by Mohammed-Ali. We should be thankful that the Blessed Perfection, foreseeing this action, ordained a Center of the Covenant through which by allegiance and love we may protect and preserve the Cause of God.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Ten Days in the Light of Acca*, p. 48.)

Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined; but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

(Words of Jesus: St. Luke 22:21, 22.)

Verily, I say unto you, That one of you shall betray me. . . . He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. . . . Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

(Words of Jesus: St. John 13:21-27.)

Thy letter was received. According to the clear text of the Book of Akdas and the explicit contents of the Book of the Covenant, Abdul-Baha is the interpreter of all the works and books of the Blessed Perfection, and not only of the Book of Akdas. This question is clear and evident to those who are informed of the writings and tablets (of Baha'o'llah). Were this not the case, every one would have given an interpretation according to his own inclination and considered his interpretation preferable to the interpretation of others—this would naturally lead to great differences. If some one interprets one verse of the verses of God, and his interpretation is

not approved by Abdul-Baha, it is not authoritative.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 5, No. 9, p. 137.)

Praise be to God, that you have a blessed Assembly surnamed by the name of the Center of the Covenant! This is an evidence of your utmost firmness and steadfastness and a proof of your faith and assurance in the Blessed Perfection.

For this divine Covenant is an institution of the Lord. The Blessed Perfection, in all the tablets, books, epistles and supplications, has begged confirmation for and praised and commended those who are firm in this Covenant and Testament, and has asked the wrath of God and woe and desolation unto the violators.

For firmness in the Covenant will preserve the unity of the religion of God and the foundation of the religion of God will not be shaken.

According to the clear text of the *Kitab-el-Akdas* and other tablets, the Center of the Covenant is the remover of all difficulties, for he is the interpreter of the Book. Not one soul has the right to say one word of his own account, or to explain anything or to elucidate the text of the Book, whether in public or private. . . .

Convey the rare greetings of Abdul-Baha to all those who are firm in the Covenant. If all the believers and maid-servants of the Merciful do proclaim their firmness in the Covenant, such steadfastness in the Covenant, like unto a magnet, will draw Abdul-Baha to those regions.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Portion of Tablet revealed for San Francisco Bahai Assembly, during 1912.)

With the utmost resolution and con-

stancy call the souls to the Kingdom of Abha and invite them to firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant and Testament. Read to them the translation of the *Tablet of the Branch* and speak with gentleness, moderation and loving-kindness, saying: "We have no other aim save the protection of the fortified fortress of the Cause of God. We must guard this fortified fortress from the attack of the thoughtless ones. Hence we must all turn our faces to the appointed Center in order that the Bahai unity be preserved; otherwise in one year the Bahais would be divided into a thousand sects. We entertain no other object except the safety of the Cause of God."

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 5, No. 12, p. 233.)

Abdul-Baha is the interpreter of the aims, intents, and purposes of the words of the Blessed Perfection, and is the interpreter of his own written words, and none can say that this or that is the intention conveyed therein save Abdul-Baha. The spirit of unity exists in the divine words, and one who interprets them in such wise as to create division and discord is indeed one who errs.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 6, No. 6, p. 44.)

If any soul wishes to say a word, they should ask him: "Is this a word of your own or from the Center of the Covenant? If you have a certificate from the Center of the Covenant, show it. Where is the letter from him? Where is his signature?" If he can produce it, they will accept it. If he has not that in his hand, they say: "We cannot accept this because this is from you and returns to you. From the Blessed Perfection we have no commands to obey you, and the Blessed Perfection has revealed a Book

STAR OF THE WEST

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

Vol. VIII

Sultan 1, 73 (January 19, 1918)

No. 17

Prayer

(Translated by Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, Chicago. This supplication was revealed at a time when in some parts of Persia the believers were awaking to an understanding of the importance of the Covenant.)

PRAISE be unto thee, O God, and glory be unto thee, O my Lord, for thou hast sent from among thy servants those whose consciences became clear; whose countenances were beautified; who flourished outwardly; became inwardly purified; whose faces became illumined; whose stars shone; whose hearts rejoiced; whose sorrows vanished; whose breasts dilated—when they heard the call of the Covenant.

They witnessed the signs of harmony; saw the light of dawn and responded to the Orb of the Horizons. Their faces radiated with the light of bounties and their tongues delighted in the mention of the Lord of great bestowals. They spoke with praise; were illumined with the light of guidance and became ignited with the blazing fire of the Tree of Sinai. They became firm in the Ancient Covenant; walked in the straight path; took hold of the mighty rope; turned to the manifest horizon and followed in the steps of the greatly refined. They gathered in the assembly of glory, in thy name, the Merciful, the Compassionate. They consulted concerning the mighty Testament; agreed upon the right decision and were confirmed with a new spirit. Their breasts were dilated through the reading of the mighty Covenant. They wrote the evident book which speaks of firmness and indicates steadfastness. They held fast to the strong and unbreakable support and grasped the hem of the Garment of Grandeur.

O Lord, illumine their faces in the Kingdom of Abha; incline their ears to the voice of commendation from the Supreme Concourse; make them great signs of thee; ordain for them the best of this world and the world to come; elevate their stations to the sublime canopy. Give them a truthful tongue among the people of the world and usher them into the paradise of thy meeting after they ascend to the Supreme Companion.

Verily, thou art the Omnipotent in whatsoever thou desirest and verily thou art the Pure Almighty.

—ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

“From all parts of the world, tribes of Jews are
coming to the Holy Land”

WHEN the Sun of Reality shone forth from the horizon of sanctity it flooded the world with the rays of the oneness of thoughts, the oneness of opinions, the oneness of ideals and the oneness of truth so that mankind, in doctrines and articles of belief, might converge toward one common center; differences, contention and discord be entirely effaced from the world of humanity and the unique light which hath branched forth from the Sun of Reality might illumine all the hearts.

Abdul-Baha is the Center of the Covenant of God, the Branch which is subservient to the Tree. The essential object is the Tree, the foundation is the Tree and the universal reality is the Tree.

(Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to the American believers; translated by Mirza Sohrab, April 19, 1914.)

One of the great events which is to occur in the day of the manifestation of that incomparable Branch, is the hoisting of the standard of God among all nations; meaning that all the nations and tribes will come under the shadow of this divine Banner, which is no other than the lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. The antagonism of faiths and religions, the hostility of races and peoples, and the patriotic differences, will be eradicated from among them. All will become one religion, one faith, one race, and one single people, and will dwell in one native land, which is the terrestrial globe. Universal peace and concord will be realized between all the nations. The incomparable Branch will gather together all Israel—signifying also that in this cycle the Jewish people who are scattered to the east and west, south and north, will

be assembled together in the Holy Land.

Now see: these events did not take place in the Christian cycle, for the nations did not come under the one standard which is the divine Branch. But in this cycle of the Lord of Hosts all the nations and peoples will enter under the shadow of this flag. In the same way, Israel, scattered all over the world, was not reassembled in the Holy Land in the Christian cycle; but in the beginning of the cycle of Baha’ollah this divine promise, as is clearly stated in all the books of the prophets, has begun to be manifest. You can see that from all parts of the world tribes of Jews are coming to the Holy Land; they live in villages and lands which they make their own, and day by day they are increasing to such an extent that all Palestine will become their home.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 75.)

Know ye of a certainty that the question of the gathering of the descendants of Abraham in Jerusalem is an inviolable fact; for that time of the fulfillment of all the promises which the Lord of Hosts gave them through the prophets of the people in the Taurat (Bible) hath dawned and the divine will is predestined to fulfill all the prophecies. Now day by day the signs thereof become apparent, its arguments obvious, its proof evident and its path visible.

From all parts and corners of the world the descendants of His Highness, the noble Friend (Abraham) are arriving in the Holy Land and are engaged in the cultivation and development of towns and villages. However, the divine standard is the ensign of the Covenant. It is the manifest assistor of the

children of Israel and the cause of their gathering and unending glory. This promise is already fulfilled in part and ere long will be fulfilled completely.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: To the sons of Agha Joseph, the Israelite of Hamadan; translated July 26, 1907.)

Mr. referred to a meeting (in Persia) when a Jew, a Christian, a Zoroastrian and a Mohammedan were present and remaining for the night, shared the same bed. Abdul-Baha said: "Consider what the power of the Covenant has done. It was an absolute impossibility for a Zoroastrian to unite with a Jew, a Seyed, and a Mullah and for these to unite with a Christian was an impossibility; but the power of the Covenant has even so gathered them that they are accounted as one spirit. Although the bodies are numerous, the spirit is one."

(From the notes of Kinney-Beede-Thompson visit to Acca, 1909.)

And he said: It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. . . . Thus saith the Lord: In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a Covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves, They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

(Isaiah 49: 6-9.)

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall

bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. . . . He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he hath set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. . . . I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a Covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them. . . . I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. . . . Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled; who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he.

(Isaiah 42-43: 1-9; 6-10.)

Regarding the rainbow,—this rainbow is the Covenant of God and the Testament of the Merciful One. The lights of the Kingdom and the heavenly illumination emanated from this rainbow. This rainbow is the sign of the removal of the wrath of God from all the people and the sign of prosperity, tranquillity, universal peace, the oneness of humanity, and the unity of the world of man.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From a Tablet translated about 1907.)

**“Today the penetrative power in the heart of the world
is the power of the Covenant”**

(Continued from page 223)

of the Covenant in which he has covenanted with us to obey a certain Center of the Covenant. He has not covenanted with us to obey you. Therefore this statement of yours is rejected. You will have to advance a proof. We are commanded to turn to one Center. We do not obey various centers. The Blessed Perfection has taken a Covenant with us and we are holding to this Covenant and Testament. We do not listen to such nonsense.”

Perhaps people will arise who may speak words of their own and we are not commanded to obey them. This is not like the past dispensation, for His Holiness Christ did not appoint a Center; he did not say, “Obey the Center.” Jesus said to his disciples: “But whom say ye that I am?” And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the Word of God.” And His Holiness wished to make firm the faith of Peter, and he said, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church”—which means that this faith of his was the correct faith. It was a sanction of the faith of Peter. He did not say that all should turn to him. He did not say, “He is the appointed Center of my Covenant.” He did not say, “He is the Branch extended from my Ancient Root.” He did not say, “O God! Render as dear all who serve Peter. O God! degrade anyone who is not obedient to him. O God! Verily shun him who is a violator of the Covenant. O God! Thou knowest that I love every one who is steadfast in the Covenant.” In all Baha’o’llah’s Books and Epistles this has been revealed. Therefore, the Bahai dispensation is distinguished. No one can cause any differences. After Christ there were various sects, there were various denominations, each one claiming to be the right one, and none of them had any written

document from Christ—no proof from him. Therefore each claimed to be the right one, but Baha’o’llah, with his own pen, has written a Covenant and Testament in which he declares himself covenanting that the one who is the Center of the Covenant is the one to be turned to. Therefore you must thank God that Baha’o’llah has made the pathway straight. Everything he has illustrated and every door he has opened for you. There is no occasion for any hesitation on the part of any soul. The purpose of the Covenant was simply to ward off differences, so no one can say, “My opinion is the valid one.” Any opinion expressed by the Center of the Covenant is correct, and there is no way for disobedience for anyone.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*, Vol. 5, No. 13, p. 231.)

Thou hast written regarding the love and unity of the believers and their firmness in the Covenant. This is through the confirmation of the Kingdom of Abha which has attracted those souls and made them steadfast in the Covenant. Today the penetrative power in the heart of the world is the power of the Covenant. The more firm the believers are, the more they are confirmed.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet to American believers; translated by Mirza Sohrab, July 16, 1913.)

Firmness in the Covenant means obedience, so that no one may say this is my opinion. Nay, rather he must obey that which proceeds from the pen and tongue of the Covenant. I am Abdul-Baha. The crown of my head is the servitude of Baha’o’llah and the service of his believers.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet; translated March 4, 1913.)

As thou hast realized thy own shortcomings, rest thou assured that thou art firm in the Covenant and Testament, and in the love of the True One art steadfast and growing.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Extract from Tablet revealed for an American believer; translated November 1, 1909.)

This is the first step in the path of God, but the distance of the way is great. I hope that thou mayest traverse that distance and reach the house of the object. That pathway is that of severance from the world-tie, reliance upon God, baptism through spirit and fire; namely, to attain the spirit of the knowledge of God, and conflagration with the fire of the love of God; trustworthiness, faithfulness and firmness in the Covenant, steadfastness in the cause of God, and service to the kingdom of peace which shall soon establish its tent in the center of the world.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: Tablet revealed for an American believer; received October 8, 1906.)

O thou daughter of the Kingdom! If thou desirest divine confirmation and assistance, so that the heavenly Cohorts may grant thee victory, remain thou firm and steadfast in the cause of God and be thou constant in the Covenant and Testament—thus like unto a solid structure thou mayest become established and unshakable throughout all eternity. Whenever a great object adheres to its own center, great results and signs will become apparent.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, July 13, 1914.)

But the sincere servant of Baha'o'llah who is firm in the Covenant and steadfast in the Testament while surrounded

by the most great sea of tests, threatened by the surging, rocking waves of persecutions and encircled by the whirlwinds of calumnies and backbitings, will blossom like unto a rose and break into joyous song and sweet melodies like unto the nightingale.

(Words of Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, July 28, 1913.)

The words of love and unity have been more dwelt upon in the writings of Baha'o'llah than by any other prophet. In the Book of the Covenant it is noted most especially. In this tablet he says: "O people of the world! I hope you will hold to the principles which will uphold your station." The station of man is great if he be true to himself and live up to it. If the friends live up to the teachings of the two pages of the Covenant, it will be sufficient.

(Words of wife of Abdul-Baha: *Flowers from Rose Garden of Acca*, p. 31.)

O God! Assist me with the hosts of the Supreme Concourse and make me firm and steadfast in the Covenant and Testament. I am weak in the Covenant and the Testament, confer upon me strength; I am poor, bestow upon me wealth from the treasury of the Kingdom; I am ignorant, open before my face the doors of knowledge; I am dead, breathe into me the breath of life; I am dumb, grant me an eloquent tongue so that with a fluent expression I may raise the call of thy Kingdom and guide all to the firmness of thy Covenant. Thou art the Generous, the Giver, and the Mighty!

(Prayer revealed by Abdul-Baha: From notes of an American pilgrim to Abdul-Baha while in Dublin, N. H., July 1912.)

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Mulk 1, 73 (February 7, 1918)

No. 18

The Divine Art of Living

A COMPILATION BY MRS. MARY M. RABB

(Chapter I appeared in issue No. 16; Chapter II in No. 18, Vol. VII—Chapter III appeared in issue No. 2; Chapter IV in No. 4; Chapter V in No. 6; Chapter VI in No. 8; first portion of Chapter VII in No. 10, continued in No. 11, Vol. VIII.)

CHAPTER VIII

Spiritual Healing

HEALING comes from God. If the heavenly benediction be upon us while we are being healed then only can we be truly healed. All depends upon God. Medicine is merely an outward form or means by which we obtain heavenly healing. Without the heavenly benediction it is worth nothing. If man looks at the nature of the world around him he will see that all created beings are dependent upon something; i. e., man is dependent for his life upon the air which he breathes, likewise the animals which are upon the earth, and each created being is dependent for its life upon some material circumstances. Man, therefore, and all creatures are prisoners of nature. The sun must follow its law; the earth must follow its law of motion, and so also the sea. But by the spiritual power of God which, through his bounty, he has bestowed upon man alone, man is enabled to transcend the laws of nature in many and wonderful ways. It is the law of nature that man should walk upon the earth; but he transcends this law, for he sojourns upon the water and also flies like the bird through the air.

Through the wonderful spiritual power which God gives to man he is enabled to reach the Kingdom. But behold! man

is not grateful and is careless of the great mercy which God has shown him.

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 2, No. 16, p. 4.)

O maid-servant of God, there are two kinds of disease, spiritual and physical. Physical diseases are cured by medicine and the essence of shrubs and plants. Diseases which are caused by the emotions of the mind are cured by the power of the spirit of man. But the power of the divine spirit dominates all the bodily ailments and those of the mind. When the spirit of man is confirmed and assisted by the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, then it will show its effect in every condition in the world of existence.

As to mental healing,—it also has an effect because some reflections are produced between the hearts by the power of concentration. From this power of concentration impressions are produced and healing or relief is realized from these impressions.

(Abdul-Baha.)

Between material things and spiritual things there is a connection. The more healthful his body the greater will be

the power of the spirit of man; the power of the intellect, the power of the memory, the power of reflection will then be greater.

(Abdul-Baha: *Table Talks at Acca*; p. 5.)

I hope thou wilt become as a rising light and obtain spiritual health; and spiritual health is conducive to physical health.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*; p. 305.)

Disease is of two kinds, material and spiritual. For instance, a cut on the hand—if you pray for the cut to be healed, and do not stop its bleeding, you will not do much good; this needs a material remedy.

Sometimes, if the nervous system is paralyzed through fear, a spiritual remedy is necessary. Madness, incurable otherwise, can be cured through prayer. . . . It often happens that sorrow makes one ill. That illness can be cured by spiritual means.

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 2, No. 19, p. 7.)

O seeker for the truth! There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first way is through the use of medical remedies. The second consists in praying to God and in turning to him. Both means should be used and practiced. Illness caused by physical accident should be treated with medical remedies. Those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus an illness caused by affliction, fear, nervous impressions, will be healed by spiritual rather than by physical treatment. Hence, both kinds of remedies should be considered. Moreover, they are not contradictory and you should accept the physical remedies as coming from the mercy and favor of God who has revealed and made manifest medical

knowledge so that his servants may profit by this kind of treatment also. You should give equal attention to spiritual treatments for they produce marvelous effects. Now, if you wish to know the divine remedy which will heal man from all sickness and will give him the health of the divine Kingdom know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Guard them sacredly.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 587.)

O maid-servant of God! The prayers which were written for the purpose of healing are both for the spiritual and material healing. Therefore chant them for the spiritual and material healing. If healing is best for the patient surely it will be granted. For some who are sick, healing for them would only be the cause of other ills. Thus it is that wisdom does not decree the answer to some prayers.

O maid-servant of God! The power of the Holy Spirit heals both material and spiritual ills.

(Abdul-Baha: *Daily Lessons*; p. 95.)

It is not the body which feels pain or trouble, but the soul. If we have a pain in our arm the defect is in the body yet it is the soul which feels the pain and is troubled, not the body, though the body is the cause of that trouble.

(Abdul-Baha.)

My spiritual health is always perfect. I enjoy an eternal health of the spirit. I hope all of the people of the world will win this celestial gift. Pray that the spiritual health of mankind may be improved daily, for there are many doctors who attend to the physical ailments of the people, but there are very few divine physicians. It is in this connection that Christ said: "Do not be afraid of those people who have control over your body, but have fear of those who may control your spirit." Let your spirit be free so that it may soar toward the heights

of sanctity. Let your spirit unfold the white wings of progress. Often physical sickness draws man nearer unto his Maker, suffers his heart to be made empty of all worldly desires until it becomes tender and sympathetic toward all sufferers and compassionate to all creatures. Although physical diseases cause man to suffer temporarily, yet they do not touch his spirit. Nay, rather, they contribute toward the divine purpose; that is, spiritual susceptibilities will be created in his heart.

(Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, October 27, 1913.)

O thou who art conscious! At last thou didst learn of salvation and didst find the straight way. Now remain firm that thou mayest attain confirmation and victory.

The powers of the sympathetic nerve are neither entirely physical nor spiritual, but are between the two (systems). The nerve is connected with both. Its phenomena will be perfect when its spiritual and physical relations are normal.

When the material world and the divine world are well co-related, when the hearts become heavenly and the aspirations grow pure and divine, perfect connection will take place. Then will its power produce a perfect manifestation. Physical and spiritual diseases will then receive absolute healing.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 309. An answer to the question of a physician regarding the sympathetic nervous system.)

Christ healed by the power of his word, because the word of the Messiah was the Holy Spirit purified from all else.

The words of many speakers are mixed with the lusts of their souls and their worldly appetites; therefore they will have neither authority nor success.

Jesus said: "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." He did not use prayers or mental suggestion. He used spiritual

authority in the command which was the power of the Holy Spirit manifest in him. Therefore his word was obeyed because it was creative.

(Abdul-Baha.)

As to the fact that man must entirely forget himself, by this is meant that he should arise in the mystery of sacrifice and that is the disappearance of mortal sentiments and the extinction of blamable morals which constitute the temporal gloom, and not that the physical health should be changed into weakness and debility.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 244.)

Looking after one's health is done with two intentions. Man may take good care of his body for the purpose of satisfying his personal wishes. Or, he may look after his health with the good intention of serving humanity and of living long enough to perform his duty toward mankind. The latter is most commendable.

A teacher should sleep at night with the thought that the next day he may be refreshed in order to do his duty more fully in relation to teaching his pupils. Therefore, Mrs. . . . must take good care of her health. Just look at Mr. . . . 's very good health—see how much work he can do, how much work he can stand! Whatever work is referred to him, he can discharge it fully. But remember that the essential health is spiritual health, for by means of spiritual health eternal life is obtained; whereas, through physical health only temporal results are achieved.

(Abdul-Baha: *A Heavenly Feast*, p. 11.)

If the health and well-being of the body be expended in the path of the Kingdom, this is very acceptable and praiseworthy; if it is expended for the benefit of the human world in general—even though it be for their material ben-

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

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Mulk 1, 73 (February 7, 1918)

No. 18

effit and be a means of doing good—that is also acceptable. But if the health and welfare of man be spent in sensual desires, in a life on the animal plane and in devilish pursuits—then disease is better than such health; nay, death itself is preferable to such a life. If thou art desirous of health, wish thou health for serving the Kingdom, I hope that thou mayest attain a perfect insight, an inflexible resolution, complete health and spiritual and physical strength in order that thou mayest drink from the fountain of eternal life and be assisted by the spirit of divine confirmation.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 207.)

O thou who art supplicating unto God! I read thy precious letter and am informed of its contents, which show that thou art ill in body and weak, and indicates thine affection toward thy daughter who is in the age of youth.

I beseech God to ordain prosperity unto thee in this world, to confer favor upon thee in his supreme Kingdom, and to heal thee from the illness which has befallen thee for some hidden reason which no one knows save God. Verily, the will of God engages occasionally in some matter for which mankind is unable to find out the reason. The causes and reasons shall appear. Trust in God

and confide in him, and resign thyself to the will of God. Verily, thy God is affectionate, compassionate and merciful. He will look at thee with the glances of the eye of mercifulness, will guard thee with the eye of bounty, and will cause his mercy to descend upon thee.

(Abdul-Baha.)

I hope, as you have received physical health, you will receive your spiritual health. As the body will be cured of physical diseases, in the same way the spirit will be cured of all spiritual diseases. A cure of physical disease is very easy, but the cure of spiritual disease is very difficult. If one has fever and you give him medicine, the fever will vanish; but if the spirit is afflicted with the disease of ignorance, it is difficult to remove that disease. For example, if the spiritual health is afflicted with the love of the world, spiritual medicine must be given. These medicines are the advices and commands of God, which will have effect upon it.

(Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to Mme. L'Astre, Acca, January 1905.)

For these thy prevailing diseases are not on account of sins, but they are to make thee detest this world and know

that there is no rest and composure in this temporal life.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 185.)

O thou who art attracted to God! May God uphold thee. . . . ; he who is filled with the love of Baha,' and forgets all things, the Holy Spirit will be heard from his lips and the spirit of life will fill his heart, the lights of the sign will shine forth from his face, words will issue from his mouth in strands of pearls, and all sickness and disease will be healed by the laying on of the hands.

(Abdul-Baha.)

A friend interested in healing quoted the words of Baha'o'llah, "If one is sick, let him go to the greatest physician."

Abdul-Baha said: "There is but one power which heals,—that is God. The state or condition through which heal-

ing takes place is the condition of the heart. By some this state is reached through pills, powders, and physicians. By others through hygiene, fasting, and prayer. By others through direct perception."

On another occasion Abdul-Baha said, with regard to the same subject, "All that we see around us is the work of mind. It is mind in the herb and in the mineral that acts on the human body, and changes its condition."

(*Abdul-Baha in London*, p. 96.)

Turning the face toward God brings healing to the body, the mind and the soul. When this advancement toward God has become complete, one is able to overcome passion and desire, one becomes protected from sin and transgression and is delivered from heedlessness. This will bestow eternal life and will grant the imperishable gift.

(Abdul-Baha.)

"The healer of all thy troubles is the remembrance of Me; forget it not."

(Baha'o'llah: *Hidden Words* from the Persian, p. 36.)

PRAYERS FOR SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL HEALING.

O my God, thy name is my healing, thy remembrance is my remedy. Thy nearness is my hope, and thy love is my companion. Thy mercy is my need and my aid in this world and in the worlds to come. Verily, thou art the Giver, the All-knowing and the Wise!

(Baha'o'llah.)

O thou kind God! To me thou art kinder than myself, and thy love is more abundant and more ancient. Whenever I am reminded of thy bestowals I am made happy and hopeful. If I have been agitated I obtain ease of heart and soul. If I am sick, I gain eternal health. If I am disloyal, I become loyal. If I have been

hopeless, I become hopeful. O thou Lord of the Kingdom! Cause thou the rejoicing of my heart; empower my weak spirit and strengthen my exhausted nerves. Illumine thou my eyes: suffer my ears to become hearing, so that I may hearken to the music of the Kingdom and attain to the joy and happiness everlasting. Verily, thou art the Generous, the Giver, and the Kind!

(Abdul-Baha.)

Is there any remover of difficulties save God? Say: No!—Praise be to God!—He is God! All are his servants and all are standing by his command.

(The Bab.)

CHAPTER IX.

Tests

TODAY, O Lord, deliver us from all temptations, tests and evil suggestions of those who have turned their faces from thee: Then, O thou merciful God, confirm us through thine invisible hosts, and reinforce us through thy heavenly angels.

O Lord! We are weak, poor, submissive and humble: Strengthen us, enrich us and uplift us above all earthly conditions. O thou God! As thou hast illumined our hearts with the light of knowing thee, make us firm in thy blessed Covenant. Verily, thou art the Clement, the Forgiver!

(Baha'o'llah: *Hidden Words*; p. 70.)

I am not impatient of calamities in God's way, nor of afflictions for his love and at his good pleasure. God hath made affliction as a morning shower to this green pasture and as a match for his lamp whereby earth and heaven are illumined.

(Baha'o'llah: *Tablet to* (Nassar-ud-Din) *Shah of Persia*.)

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

(*Job* 5:17, 18.)

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

(*Revelation* 3:19.)

“O son of man! If calamity befall thee not in My path, how wilt thou tread in the way of those who are content in My will? If affliction overtake thee not in thy longing to meet Me, how canst thou attain the light of the love of My Beauty.” (v. 51.)

“O son of man! My calamity is My providence. In appearance it is fire and vengeance; in reality it is light and mercy. Therefore approach it, that thou mayest become an eternal light and an immortal spirit. This is My command; know thou it.” (v. 52.)

“O son of humanity! Rejoice not if fortune smile upon thee, and if humiliation overtake thee, mourn not because of it, for, in their time, they both shall cease and be no more.” (v. 53.)

“O son of existence! If thou encounter poverty, grieve not; for, in time, the King of riches will descend to thee. Fear not humiliation, for glory shall be thy portion.” (v. 54.)

“O son of existence! Be not engrossed with this world, for with fire We test the gold, and with gold We try the servants.” (v. 56.)

(Baha'o'llah: *Hidden Words* from the Arabic, pp. 15-17.)

The more one is severed from the world, from desires, from human affairs and conditions, the more impervious does one become to the tests of God. Tests are a means by which a soul is measured as to its fitness, and proven out by its own acts. God knows its fitness beforehand, and also its unpreparedness, but man, with an ego, would not believe himself unfit unless proof were given him. Consequently his susceptibility to evil is proven to him when he falls into the tests, and the tests are continued until the soul realizes its own unfitness, then remorse and regret tend to root out the weakness. The same test comes again in greater degree, until it is shown that a former weakness has become a strength, and the power to overcome evil has been established.

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 6, No. 6, p. 43.)

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasures; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

(*Hebrews 12:5-13.*)

Thou hast questioned concerning ordeals and difficulties and catastrophies: "Are these from God or the result of man's (own) evil deeds?"

Know thou that ordeals are of two kinds: One kind is for trial (to test the soul), and the other is punishment for actions. ("As a man soweth so shall he also reap.") That which is for testing is educational and developmental and that which is the punishment of deeds is severe **retribution**.

The father and the teacher sometimes humor the children and then again discipline them. This discipline is for educational purposes and is indeed to give them true happiness; it is absolute kindness and true providence. Although in appearance it is wrath yet in reality it is kindness. Although outwardly it is an ordeal yet inwardly it is purifying water.

Verily, in both cases we must supplicate and implore and commune to the

divine Threshold in order to be patient in ordeals.

(Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to Portland, Oregon, believer; translated July 27, 1909.)

Our light affliction, which is for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

(*II Cor. 4:17.*)

O ye friends of God! The joy and happiness of the people of faithfulness consist in serving the Threshold of the Most High and turning their faces to the Kingdom of Abha. The hope of the lovers is self-sacrificing and the yearning of the longing ones is self-effacement and evanescence. For love is an irresistible power and an inextinguishable conflagration and the mirror of the love of God is the great martyrdom. Therefore, the sanctified souls and the Manifestations of God yearned for self-abnegation and attainment to the city of martyrdom. They gave up their lives, experienced exile and banishment, endured persecution and dire calamities, became subject to imprisonment and bondage and the targets of the arrows of oppression and objects of the sword of malice. They did not complain; neither did they become disheartened. They drank the cup of martyrdom from the hand of the Cup-bearer of Providence and tasted with the greatest joy the sweetness of annihilation. They found not a moment of rest. They sought not an instant of tranquillity. They withstood the persecution of the enemies and became the centers of the derision and scoffing of the people of envy. They sacrificed their homes and property and became homeless and wanderers. They experienced not one hour of safety nor a day of repose of mind and body. This

is the proof of the sincere lover and this is the evidence of the faithful friend. If it were not so every stranger would become a friend and the deprived one would become the confidant of the mysteries, the remote one would become the near one and the outcast would become the beloved. Consequently the most great wisdom has ordained that the fire of tests shall rage and the rushing torrent of ordeals sweep tumultuously from the mountain of revelation, so that the untruthful may become distinguished from the truthful, the unrighteous be known from the righteous, the worshipper of self be separated from the worshipper of God, the good fruit be set apart from the evil fruit, the signs of light be manifest and the gloom of darkness be dispelled, the nightingale of trustworthiness sing the melody of love and the raven of oppression croak the discordant notes of error, the fertile soil become green and verdant and the barren ground produce its thorns and thistles, the ones attracted to the breath of Abha become firm and the followers of passion and desire turn away. This is the wisdom of trials and this is the cause of ordeals.

(Abdul-Baha: *Bahai News*; No. 3, pp. 2, 3.)

Thy detailed letter was received. Its perusal produced the utmost happiness for it revealed the fact that thou hast attained to the knowledge of the reality of tests; namely, that tests endured in the path of God are conducive to confirmation, nay, rather, they are heavenly powers and the bounties of the realm of Might. But to the weak believers tests are trials and examination, for, on account of the weakness of their faith and assurance they fall into difficulties and vicissitudes. However, to those souls who are firm and steadfast, tests are the greatest favors.

Consider thou that at the time of an examination in sciences and arts, the dull

and lazy pupil finds himself in calamity. But to the intelligent and sagacious student, examination in learning produces honor and infinite happiness. Alloyed gold subjected to the fire portrays its baseness. While the intensity of the flame enhances the beauty of the (pure) gold. Therefore, tests to the weak souls are calamity and to the veiled ones the cause of their disgrace and humiliation.

The point is this, that in the path of Truth every difficulty is made plain and every trial is a matchless bounty.

Therefore, the believers of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful must not relax during trials, and no disaster must deter their service in the Cause of God.

(Abdul-Baha: *Daily Lessons*; pp. 85, 86.)

That soul is alone who is negligent of God. But if he knows God, although he may live in an interminable desert without water and vegetation yet he is not alone,—God is with him. The sky of this terrestrial globe is always obscure and misty and covered with black, inky clouds. Now the thunder rolls and anon the lightning flashes. Now the hail falls and again the snow descends. Now there is a wild hurricane and then a tempestuous torrent rushing down from the mountain side. Therefore, do not think for one moment that these trials and ordeals are confined to thee. In reality all the people are surrounded with sufferings so that they may not attach their hearts to the world, but will seek for composure and rest in the divine world and beg for the bestowal of the Kingdom. Consequently be thou glad from the bottom of thy heart and be rejoiced through the divine glad tidings.

(Abdul-Baha: From *Diary of Mirza Sohrab*, July 20, 1914.)

(Chapter IX to be continued.)

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. VIII

Ola 1, 73 (March 2, 1918)

No. 19

"This is the conduct and manners of the people of Baha'."

Words of Abdul-Baha: Compiled from the *Tablets of Abdul-Baha*,
pages indicated.

O YE sanctified souls! It is the time of firmness and steadfastness and the period of arising in the service of the Word of God, for the Blessed City (Acca) is environed from all directions with the tempestuous waves of tests and trials and the sweeping hurricanes of persecutions and hardships are blowing and roaring high. The joy and happiness of the heart of Abdul-Baha depends upon the stability and constancy of the believers. For they must live and act in accord with the divine advices and exhortations and show forth to each other the power of the perfection of love with infinite accord and unity, so that they may become the embodiment of one existence, the waves of one sea, the myrtles of one rose-garden, the rays of one sun, the stars of one horizon, the fruits of one tree and the birds of one meadow.

Likewise, they must treat with and behave toward all the governments, nations, communities, kings and subjects with the utmost sincerity, trustworthiness, straightforwardness, love and kindness. Even they must make hopeful a bloodthirsty enemy, show sympathy with the utmost faithfulness and honor to the perfidious unjust, know the ill-wisher as the well-wisher and torment not the sinner with reproaches. Should they become the targets of a thousand arrows of persecution, they must challenge it with

love and friendship and treat every one with purity of purpose and kindness.

O ye friends of God! Show ye an endeavor that all the nations and communities of the world, even the enemies, put their trust, assurance and hope in you; that if a person falls into errors for a hundred-thousand times he may yet turn his face to you, hopeful that you will forgive his sins; for he must not become hopeless, neither grieved nor despondent. This is the conduct and the manners of the people of Baha'. This is the foundation of the most high pathway! Ye should conform your conduct and manners with the advices of Abdul-Baha. (pp. 435, 436.)

If any one of you enters a city he must become the center of attraction because of the sincerity, faithfulness, love, honesty, fidelity, truthfulness and loving-kindness of his disposition and nature toward all the inhabitants of the world, that the people of the city may all cry out: "This person is unquestionably a Bahai; for his manners, his behavior, his conduct, his morals, his nature and his disposition are of the attributes of the Bahais." Until you do attain to this station, you have not fulfilled the Covenant and the Testament of God. For according to the irrefutable texts, he has taken from us a firm covenant that we may live and act in accord with

the divine exhortations, commands and lordly teachings. (p. 42.)

Arise with every power to assist the Covenant of God and serve in his vineyard. Be confident that a confirmation will be granted unto you and a success on his part is given unto you. Verily, he shall support you by the angels of his holiness and reinforce you with the breaths of the spirit that ye may enter the Ark of Safety, set forth the evident signs, impart the spirit of life, declare the essence of his commands and precepts, guide the sheep who are straying from the fold in all directions, and give the blessings. Ye have to use every

effort in your power and strive earnestly and wisely in this new century. By God, verily the Lord of Hosts is your support, the angels of heaven your assistance, the Holy Spirit your companion and the Center of the Covenant your helper. Be not idle, but active and fear not. . . . Ye are now in a great station and noble rank and ye shall find yourselves in evident success and prosperity, the like of which the eye of existence never saw in former ages. El-Baha and salutations be upon every one who is firm in the Covenant, free from dissension, sanctified from deceits and steadfast in the path. (p. 162.)

Habits of Prayer in the Orient

From Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, October 3, 1913.

HERE in the East everybody arises very early so that between five and six o'clock we are all out of our beds with the words, "Allah-o-Abha," on our lips, greeting each other. There are four customs that have impressed me deeply and are significant signs of the religious nature of these people.

First: Their uniform early rising. Although in the West it is taught, "Early to bed and early to rise," it is seldom practiced.

Second: No sooner do they open their eyes than the holy name of God is upon

their lips, thanking him for all his past graces and future bestowals.

Third: Their quiet, solitary prayer and concentration lasting from ten to thirty minutes according to the religious spirit of the individual.

Fourth: As soon as they have finished their individual prayer and before taking their breakfast they assemble in the reception room and pray to God, read communions or chant tablets. They will then, refreshed by the spiritual food, gather around the table to partake of the material breakfast.

The Divine Art of Living

A COMPILATION BY MRS. MARY M. RABB

(Chapter I appeared in issue No. 16; Chapter II in No. 18, Vol. VII—Chapter III appeared in issue No. 2; Chapter IV in No. 4; Chapter V in No. 6; Chapter VI in No. 8; first portion of Chapter VII in No. 10, continued in No. 11; Chapter VIII in No. 18; first portion of Chapter IX in No. 18, Vol. VIII.)

CHAPTER IX—Continued

Tests

AS TO trials (tests in the path of God), verily, they are necessary. Hast thou not heard and read how there appeared trials from God in the day of Jesus, and thereafter, and how the whirlwind of tests became severe? Even the

glorious Peter was not rescued from the flame of trials, and wavered. Then he repented and mourned the mourning of a bereaved one and his lamentations raised unto the Supreme Concurrence. Is it, then, possible to be saved from the trials of

God? No, verily. There is a great wisdom therein of which no one is aware save the wise and knowing. Were it not for tests, genuine gold could not be distinguished from the counterfeit. Were it not for tests, the courageous could not be known from the coward. Were it not for tests, the people of faithfulness could not be known from those of selfishness. Were it not for tests, the intellects and faculties of the scholars in the great colleges would not be developed. Were it not for tests, the sparkling gems could not be known from worthless pebbles. Were it not for tests, the fisherman could not be distinguished from Annas and Caiaphas who were amid glory (worldly dignity).

Were it not for tests the face of Mary, the Magdalene, would not glisten with the light of firmness and certainty unto all the horizons. These are some of the mysteries of tests which we have unfolded unto thee that thou mayest become cognizant of the mysteries of God in every cycle. Verily, I pray God to illumine the faces as pure gold in the fire of tests.

(Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to an American believer, December 23, 1902.)

Verily, I read thy latest letter, and my great love welled forth unto thee on account of its wonderful contents. Verily, it showed thy firmness in the Cause of God and that thou wilt resist great tests in the future. . . .

As to thee, make firm the footsteps of the believers of God on this right path, and say, verily, the test has a great power and when its storms wax fierce they uproot everything, even large and well-rooted trees and they wreck great ships on the ocean.

But whosoever among the maid-servants of God firmly resists a great test, her face shall gleam and her brow shall glitter in the Supreme Concourse. This is what we inform thee, so that when the test appears thou mayest be heedful thereof, and mayst remind the maid-

servants of God that the tests have also occurred in former dispensations, even at the time of Christ.

Christ said, "Fast, so that you may not fall into temptation." Verily, tests withheld a great apostle (Judas) from the mercy of God and made him take part in the shedding of the blood of Jesus. Tests made Peter, the apostle, deny Jesus Christ. Tests made the brothers of Jesus deny him. Many a just, faithful and assured soul did not endure the power of tests but turned backward, until they reached the lowest of the low.

(Abdul-Baha: *Daily Lessons*; pp.97, 98.)

Be thou resolute and steadfast. When the tree is firmly rooted it will bear fruit, therefore it is not permitted to be agitated by any test. Be thou not disheartened! Be thou not discouraged! The trials of God are many, but if man remains firm and steadfast the test itself is a stepping-stone for the progress of humanity.

(Abdul-Baha.)

The rain does not stop. I have been intending every day to go up the mountain, but I have been detained on account of the rain. This is the rainy season. If the rain does not pour down, if the wind does not blow, if the storm and tempest do not rage, the soul-refreshing springtime will not appear. If the clouds do not weep the meadows will not laugh. The hurricane and tornado, the cyclone and the blast are the harbingers of the spring.

Likewise, were there no tests and trials, no hardships and afflictions the attraction of the hearts could not be realized, the spiritual fragrances could not be obtained, nor could merciful happiness be acquired and the beauties of the celestial springtime would not have been disclosed.

(Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, January 10, 1914.)

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TABLET FROM ABDUL-BAHA.

O thou Star of the West!

HE IS GOD!

Be thou happy! Be thou happy! Shouldst thou continue to remain firm and eternal, ere long, thou shalt become the Star of the East and shalt spread in every country and clime. Thou art the first paper of the Bahais which is organized in the country of America. Although for the present thy subscribers are limited, thy form is small and thy voice weak, yet shouldst thou stand unshakable, become the object of the attention of the friends and the center of the generosity of the leaders of the faith who are firm in the Covenant, in the future thy subscribers will become hosts after hosts like unto the waves of the sea; thy volume will increase, thy arena will become vast and spacious and thy voice and fame will be raised and become world-wide—and at last thou shalt become the first paper of the world of humanity. Yet all these depend upon *firmness, firmness, firmness!*
(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS.

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If thy daily living become difficult, soon thy Lord will bestow upon thee that which shall satisfy thee. Be patient in the time of affliction and trial, endure every difficulty and hardship with a dilated heart, attracted spirit and eloquent tongue in remembrance of the Merciful. Verily, this is the life of satisfaction, of spiritual existence, heavenly repose, divine benediction and of the celestial table. Soon thy Lord will extenuate thy straightened circumstances even in this world.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*; p. 98.)

Thou hast manifested joy at the freedom of Abdul-Baha. This happiness came from thy great love. There is no doubt that the friends have become joyful on account of the liberation of Abdul-Baha. But I was thankful for this prison in the path of God and the lack of liberty was very pleasing to me, for those days were passed in the path of the love of God with the utmost difficulty and trials, bearing fruits and results. Unless one accept suffering, undergo trials and endure vicissitudes he will reap no reward nor will he attain success and prosperity. Therefore, thou must likewise endure great tests so that the infinite divine outpourings may encircle thee and that thou mayest be assisted in spreading the fragrances of God. Behold the apostles of His Highness, Christ! They

accepted all trials and persecutions and received all kinds of oppression and trouble until they became assisted by great bestowals and confirmed in the guidance of the people.

(Abdul-Baha: From a Tablet.)

My happiness was complete in those dark days of imprisonment and vicissitude. I was happier than now, because I had no will of my own. I was perfectly resigned. The life of this world is only a few days. Whether happy or unhappy, in freedom or in bonds, healthy or ill, in comfort or in poverty,—they will pass away. The one who is established on the throne and the one sitting on the mat—both will cease to exist here.

(Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, April 1, 1914.)

It is difficult for the weak ones to endure the tests but for souls like you, it is very easy. It is my hope that during the time of tests thou mayest remain in the utmost firmness and steadfastness, so that like unto a lamp thou mayest be protected within the glass, and be not extinguished by the blowing of winds.

(Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to an American believer; translated August 4, 1911.)

The higher our station is, the nearer we are to God and the more severe do our tests become; when we have received great blessings, we are apt to become self-confident and think that we are secure from falling, and then is our danger great.

(Abdul-Baha: Notes of Miss E. J. Rosenberg, Acca, 1901.)

Rest assured in the protection of God. He will preserve his own children under all circumstances. Be ye not afraid nor be ye agitated. He holds the scepter of power in his hand, and like unto a hen he gathereth his chickens under his wings. "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the sun. A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to keep silent and a time to speak." Now, friends, this is the time of assurance and faith and not fear and dread.

(Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, June 5, 1914.)

These people who called on us today were in a state of fright. They are expecting daily the bombardment of Haifa by the foreign warships. As soon as they see a little moving speck in the horizon of the sea, they look through their glasses, anxiously scanning to see whether these are the expected cruisers. Their hearts are in a state of anxiety. They are terror-stricken. They have no peace of mind. This is one of the signs of absence of faith. It is stated in the Koran: "They imagine every cry raised is an enemy unto them." For example, when a thief enters a house, the least noise causes his flight. He trembles and quakes.

But the hearts of the people of faith are assured. If they are surrounded by a thousand enemies they stand firm on their ground. The greatest divine bounty is a confident heart. When the heart

is confident, all the trials of the world will be as child's play. Should they throw him into prison, should they cast him into a black well, should they heap upon him all manner of afflictions, still his heart is content, peaceful and assured.

(Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, October 18, 1914.)

To enter the Kingdom is easy, but to remain firm and constant is difficult. The planting of trees is easy but their cultivation and training to strengthen their roots and to make them firm is difficult. Now, as thou art a firm tree, thou shalt certainly grow and send out branches, leaves and blossoms and bear fruits. These branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits are the souls who may be guided, through the providence of God, by thee.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 105.)

Man must seek to gain the acceptance of God and not that of the different classes of men. If one is praised and chosen by God, the accusation of all the creatures will cause no loss to him; and if a man is not accepted at the Threshold of God the praise and admiration of all men will be of no use to him.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*; p. 158.)

Thou hast written concerning the tests that have come upon thee. To the sincere ones, tests are as a gift from God, the Exalted, for a heroic person hasteneth, with the utmost joy and gladness, to the tests of a violent battlefield, but the coward is afraid and trembles and utters moaning and lamentation. Likewise, an expert student prepareth and memorizeth his lessons and exercises with the utmost effort, and in the day of examination he appeareth with infinite joy before the master. Likewise the pure gold shineth radiantly in the fire of test.

Consequently, it is made clear that for holy souls, trials are as the gift of God, the Exalted; but for weak souls they are an unexpected calamity. This test is just as thou hast written: it removeth the rust of egotism from the mirror of the heart until the Sun of Truth may shine therein. For, no veil is greater than egotism and no matter how thin that covering may be, yet it will finally veil man entirely and prevent him from receiving a portion of the eternal bounty.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*; p. 722.)

Be not sorrowful on account of the affliction of Abdul-Baha, for calamity is a light whereby his face glistens among the Supreme Concourse; affliction is healing to his breast, joy to his heart, happiness to his soul; nay, rather, a most honored garment upon his temple, best gown upon his body, and dearest crown on his head. This is his utmost desire.

(Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to Johnstown Bahai Assembly; translated June 24, 1902.)

Ye have expressed words of solicitude and anxiety over the troubles and persecutions which have fallen upon this imprisoned one. Do not be at all sad, be ye not affected. Do not worry, for incarceration to this prisoner is a feast of bliss and a perpetual paradise. Persecutions and adversities are the merciful gifts. If these persecutions and sufferings did not exist in the path of God, how could Abdul-Baha obtain happiness and peace? Through the appearance of tests, my heart is consoled, and through the experiencing of dire afflictions my soul is calmed.

(Abdul-Baha: From Tablet to Oakland Assembly; translated July 17, 1908.)

Haji Kamaledin was one of God's own servants, severed from aught else

save him, enkindled, trusting in God and free from every tie. Before accepting this Cause, he was much respected and honored in Narag. When he embraced this Cause, they pursued him with such dogged perseverance and enmity that he was finally obliged to leave his native land and come to Bagdad. Having arrived, he found himself in most difficult circumstances, and in great need of his daily bread. Being a man of letters, he had never essayed any work; but putting aside his pride, he opened—with a small capital given to him—a little grocery shop at the entrance to the curious boat-shaped bridge of the Euphrates, where multitudes of people cross and recross daily. Not for one moment did he think of his noble connections nor brood over his former position of leisure, ease and worldly honor. He never bothered his mind over what his many countrymen might think who passed yearly by his store to visit the Holy Shrine of the Imams in Najaf and Karbala; nay, rather, he sat there serene and with the happiness of the Kingdom and the joy of heaven in his heart. The spiritual station of that household will become evident in the future. Whenever he would hear that the Blessed Perfection had gone to Kazemain, although the distance was several miles and the weather hot, he would immediately shut his store and start for that town afoot. Although at that time one could hire a donkey for five cents yet he could not very well afford this lavish expenditure. Nevertheless you never saw him cross or bad-tempered. He was a source of delight and happiness to all. Such souls are the bright gems in the crown of existence.

(Abdul-Baha: From Diary of Mirza Sohrab, June 21, 1914.)

Grieve not at the divine trials. Be not troubled because of hardships and ordeals; turn unto God, bowing in hum-

bleness and praying to him, while bearing every ordeal, contented under all conditions and thankful in every difficulty. Verily, thy Lord loveth his maid-servants who are patient, believing and firm. He draws them nigh to him through these ordeals and trials.

Be not sorrowful on account of the departure of thy good son. He hath indeed departed from this narrow and gloomy world which is darkened by unlimited sorrow, unto the Kingdom which is spacious, illumined, joyous and beautiful. God delivered him from this dark well and promoted him unto the Supreme Height! He gave him wings whereby he soared to the heaven of happiness. Verily, this is the great mercy from him who is precious and forgiving.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*; page 51.)

We are living in a day when so many people rely wholly or solely upon matter. They imagine that the size of a great ship, that the perfection of the machinery or the skill of a captain will ensure the safety of a vessel. These things (referring to the recent sinking of the magnificent steamship, the *Titanic*, through the collision with an iceberg) take place sometimes that men may know that there is a Protector and that is God. If God protects man, if it be his will, a little ship sometimes escapes death, but if he shall rely solely on a ship, though it be the greatest, biggest ship, though it may be well built, though the captain be the best captain, yet in a danger such as was present on the ocean it may not survive or escape, so that the people of the world may know that they must turn to the One who is the Protector. So that souls may rely upon the preservation of God and that they may know that he is the real Keeper. These events do sometimes occur for such reasons as those stated. They take place in order that man's faith may increase. . . .

But let no one imagine that these

words should lead men to think that they must not be thorough in their undertakings. God has endowed man with intelligence, so that he may use his intelligence. Therefore, he must supply himself with all that science can offer. He must be most deliberate and most careful. He must be ever thorough in his undertakings. He must build a thing well, build the best ship that his ingenuity can lead him to, and employ the most skilled captain, but with all that let him rely upon God. Let him consider God as the One Keeper.

(Abdul-Baha: *Star of the West*; Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 15.)

"I have heard thy cries and am conscious of thy tears. Remember at all times and in all places that God is faithful and do not doubt this. Be patient even though great calamities may come upon thee. Yet fear not! Be firm in the path of thy Lord; as a mountain unmoved, unchanging in thy steadfastness."

These words were written by Baha'ollah to Mirza Haider Ali to strengthen him during great persecutions. In his early days Mirza Haider Ali traveled from city to city in Persia proclaiming with great wisdom and love the glad tidings of the new and divine day which was dawning upon the earth. But the fanatical religious leaders to whom the vision of universal brotherhood and peace was too bright to be endured soon persecuted him with terrible bitterness. At one time he was beaten and driven through the streets of a city by a wild and howling mob. During this experience he cried out, "This is my triumphal procession." Again he was transported from one prison to another in a very cruel fashion. His hands and feet were tied and he was put in a bag, head downward, and flung across the back of a donkey. Another Bahai was put in a bag on the donkey's other side. The head of each of the prisoners dragged

on the sand as the donkey was driven the long journey over the desert. Mirza Haider Ali sang gaily as they went along. The guard whipped him unmercifully, saying, "Now, will you sing?" Mirza Haider Ali replied, "I will sing more gladly than ever because you have given me the pleasure of enduring something for the sake of God."

For twelve years Mirza Haider Ali was a prisoner in Khartoum, Egypt. The dungeon-room in which he was confined had a tiny window through which the sun shone but one hour a day. For one precious hour every day Mirza Haider Ali read with glowing heart the Tablets of Baha'o'llah. The rest of the day he was in the twilight. But he concentrated his spirit upon the glory of God so perfectly that each day he grew more saintly.

When, in later years, he was asked by Miss Stevens why the Bahais all looked so happy (she was thinking especially of the radiant joy in his face), he replied, "Sometimes we have surface troubles, but that cannot touch our happiness. The hearts of those who belong to the Kingdom are like the sea. When the wind is rough it troubles the surface of the water; but two meters down there is perfect calmness."

(*Fortnightly Review*, June 1911.)

Mrs. Lua Getsinger was one day in Acca. A western woman was there also and she was telling Abdul-Baha all about her troubles. This was a strange thing to do for usually people when they enter the presence of Abdul-Baha are so filled with the contagion of his radiant love that they think only of their blessings. Abdul-Baha with great kindness listened for a half hour to the western woman's troubles; they were really not very big troubles. At last he arose, and said he had another engagement and must be going. "But there," he said, pointing out of the window, "goes a man whom I will bring in to

see you. His name is Mirza Haider Ali. We call him the 'Angel of Mount Carmel.' He walks on earth but he lives in heaven. He has had many troubles and he will tell you about them." Abdul-Baha went out, but quickly returned with Mirza Haider Ali whom he presented to the woman, and then departed.

The "Angel of Mount Carmel" with great humility and sweetness of manner began to talk with the woman of the luminous century in which we live and the divine age that is to be. She listened for a while, impatiently, and at last broke in with, "But Abdul-Baha said you would tell me about your troubles." Mirza Haider Ali looked up in amazement.

"Troubles?" he replied, "why madam, I never had any troubles. I don't know what troubles are."

O ye beloved of God! When the winds blow severely, rains fall fiercely, the lightning flashes, the thunder roars, the bolts descend and storms of trial become severe, grieve not; for after this storm, verily, the divine spring will arrive, the hills and fields will become verdant, the expanses of grain will joyfully wave, the earth will become covered with blossoms, the trees will be clothed with green garments and adorned with blossoms and fruits. Thus blessings become manifest in all countries. These favors are results of those storms and hurricanes.

The discerning man rejoiceth at the day of trials, his breast becometh dilated at the time of severe storms, his eyes become brightened when seeing the showers of rain and gusts of wind whereby trees are uprooted; because he foreseeth the result and the end,—the leaves, blossoms and fruits; while the ignorant person becometh troubled when he seeth a storm, is saddened when it raineth severely, is terrified by the thunder and trembleth at the surging of the waves which storm the shore.

(*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, p. 13.)