

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ IN NEW YORK: THE CITY OF THE COVENANT



Revised and Enlarged Edition
Eliane Lacroix-Hopson

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PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

All 1912 photographs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are from Mrs. Asa Cochran's estate, courtesy of the Hopson/Samuel family. The picture on p. 50 was taken by renowned Gertrude Käsebier, on June 20, 1912.

Translation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's handwriting inscription:

"O Lord, this handmaiden is working in Thy service, make her victorious."

This comment was addressed to Mrs. Cochran, a New York Bahá'í who had traveled to India for the Faith.

Recent photographs by Michel G. Samuel.

Al Burley's photographs, in the 1987 edition of this book, were shot in 1972. Life, lands-cape and traffic have changed since then.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'I IN NEW YORK: THE CITY OF THE COVENANT

FOREWORD

Priceless eyewitness accounts, written records of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's addresses, and newspapers as well as magazine articles published in a number of volumes constitute a thorough chronicle of the Master's 1912 travels to and through the United States and Canada. The 1987 contribution to the existing body of work was in answer to the wish of the Spiritual Assembly of the City of New York that tablets addressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to this community which appeared in a 1932 book entitled *'Abdu'l-Bahá In New York*, long out of print, may be published in observance of the 75th Anniversary of His visit.

Authenticated by Shoghi Effendi's letter reprinted in this 1932 book, these tablets do not appear elsewhere, dates and circumstances surrounding their utterance are not known. They, and the historic events which took place in New York on June 19, 1912, are the basis of New York's distinguished title of "The City of the Covenant."

The meaning of this title is not generally understood. The present book, focusing on the chronology of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visits in the city and using some material as yet unpublished in this country, attempts to provide a practical frame of reference for study.

The Master did not "tour" the country, He deliberately chose New York as the hub of His travels as He pointed out: "I have always returned to New York, because I wished New York to advance greatly..." Consequently, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's stay in New York City was the longest in one place: 85 days out of 239 in the country. The length of this sojourn and the demanding schedule that He engaged in while in the city are further evidence of the attention the Master bestowed on this community.

'Abdu'l-Bahá found the New York of 1912 to be a place of tolerance by comparison with other racially segregated societies and planned the first Bahá'í interracial marriage to take place here. This was an event of great significance at the time, confirming the Master's statement that interracial marriages are "a service to humanity."

New York City welcomed 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Religious congregations, peace societies, and universities vied to invite Him. Bahá'ís and others alike, attracted by His love and wisdom, followed the Master from place to place.

The chronology of the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to New York and the United States is primarily based on two sources: The Diary of Mahmud of Zarkan * and The Diary of Juliet Thompson, from the 1947 version annotated by Miss Thompson.**

Mahmud was one of the Persian secretaries who accompanied 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His travels to the West.

Juliet Thompson, one of the early New York City Bahá'ís, was a renowned portrait painter. Her obituary, published in the New York Times, mentions that she “painted the portrait of President Woodrow Wilson and his Cabinet,” among other celebrities. In 1909 Miss Thompson spent two months in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s household in the Holy Land and was privileged to be called by Him “the sister” of His own daughter. In 1911, she was called to meet the Master in Switzerland and she was almost every day at His home in New York.

Juliet Thompson’s diary stands out as a phenomenon, unique in the history of religion. In this candid and vibrant testimony, we experience the vicissitudes of a passionate and sincere woman’s spiritual experience. Juliet as a painter and a writer brings to life in perceptive details the scenes surrounding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and succeeds in making us feel the reality of the extraordinary spiritual power of One Whom Bahá'u'lláh hailed as “The Mystery of God.”

Additional information is from *Portals to Freedom*, a memoir written by Howard Colby Ives. Reverend Ives was a Unitarian minister from New Jersey who had heard of the Bahá'í Faith at a time of spiritual searching. He had approached ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the first day of His arrival and was with Him as often as he could be, frequently following Him in His travels. He became a Bahá'í before the end of the Master’s sojourn in the United States and dedicated the rest of his life to service to the Faith. *Portals to Freedom* is a recollection of Howard Colby Ives’ traumatic experience with the Master, written in 1936 when he was ailing and almost blind.

Other sources are listed in the notes and in the Selected Bibliography.

This Revised and Enlarged Edition includes additional historical material from the 1987 Research Transcript which had been edited for budget reason at the time but is necessary to complete the chronicle of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry in The City of the Covenant.

* Typescript copy, Archives of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the City of New York.

** From the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kinney, courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Kinney.

INTRODUCTION

‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the eldest Son of Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. His claimed station was the “Servant of Bahá,” a Servant of His Father’s Cause, a divine revelation from God which initiated a new age in the evolution of humankind.

Bahá'u'lláh designated ‘Abdu’l-Bahá “The Center of His Covenant” and called Him “The Master,” a title which was also respectfully used by the followers of the Faith in the United States when referring to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Bahá'u'lláh and His family were dispossessed of their ancestral properties and exiled from Persia in 1853, when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was a child nine years old. They remained prisoners of the Ottoman Empire in Akka (Akko or Acre, in today Israel) until the Young Turks’ Rebellion of 1908 freed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His family from prison.

After a period of rest, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá decided to travel to the West to spread the message of Bahá'u'lláh. The Western Bahá'ís had been pleading with the Master to visit America.

An American Bahá'í, visiting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Palestine wrote excitedly to a friend in August 29, 1910: “I have a very big piece of news to tell you. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has left this Holy Spot for the first time in forty-two years and has gone to Egypt.” The day of His departure He had visited the pilgrims (other visitors) as usual; they did not suspect that it was a good-bye visit.

In 1911, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá made His first historic trip to Europe, then He returned to Egypt, in Ramleh, a suburb of Alexandria, until the spring of 1912. On March 25, the Master and His retinue boarded the S.S. Cedric in Alexandria, heading for the United States. The American Bahá'ís had sent thousands of dollars for His journey, urging Him to leave the Cedric in Italy and travel to England to sail on the maiden voyage of the Titanic. But the Master returned the money for charity and continued His voyage on the Cedric.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s entourage was an unusual mixture of Easterners and Westerners. The Master usually wore a long robe, white or light tan, a dark aba (overcoat) and a white turbaned headdress on His flowing, silky white hair. The Persians in His entourage wore Western clothing and the red fez. At Naples, a few Americans and an English believer, Miss Louisa Mathew, joined the traveling party for the rest of the trip.

At the table, “the intermingling and assembling together of the Easterners and the Westerners attracted the eyes,” wrote Mahmud. It also caused misunderstanding and distrust due to the war between Turkey and Italy at the time. However, during the voyage, the officers of the ship asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to address a public meeting which they arranged in the lounge. Among the large number of people attending were the consuls of Russia and Italy, who conversed regularly with the Master afterwards.

Twenty five years later, a woman who as a child had traveled on the Cedric told a Bahá'í that she had never forgotten her personal encounter with the Master. “A glance that burned” into her soul and frightened her, lest she had displeased Him, and the kindly smile which released her “from terror.” She recalled that everyone had remarked about “His majestic

bearing, His kingly walk, and above all the strange white light that followed Him everywhere."

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ IN THE CITY OF THE COVENANT

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S ARRIVAL, THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 1912

The momentous arrival of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in New York City occurred on the morning of April 11, 1912. On the tugboat that met the ship bringing 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His entourage to this country were newspaper reporters, among them Wendell Phillips Dodge of the New York City News Association. Mr. Dodge gives an account of the appearance and remarks of the Master:

"His face was light itself... He is a man of medium height, though at first sight he seemed to be taller... As he paced the deck, talking to reporters, he appeared alert and active in every movement, his head thrown back and splendidly poised upon his broad shoulders most of the time... When the ship was abreast the Statue of Liberty, standing erect and facing it, 'Abdu'l-Bahá held his arms wide apart in salutation and said, 'There is the New World's symbol of liberty and freedom. After being forty years a prisoner, I can tell you freedom is not a matter of place. It is a condition... When one is released from the prison of self, that is indeed a release.'... Going up the river, gazing in a look of bewildered amazement... at the downtown skyscrapers, the "Wise Man out of the East" remarked: "There are the minarets of the Western world's commerce and industry.' "

Dodge stated: " 'Abdu'l-Bahá comes on a mission of international peace, to attend the Peace Conference at Lake Mohonk and to address various peace meetings, educational societies, religious organizations, etc..."

Wendell Phillips Dodge's lengthy article was distributed around the world by the Associated Press and more than a dozen other newspaper accounts appeared in and around the city.

By the time the S.S. Cedric docked, a crowd of Bahá'ís had been waiting for hours, eager to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá. However, one of the American believers, Mr. Edward Kinney* was called forth to board the ship, and he returned with a message from the Master that He would meet the friends at the home of Mr. Kinney at four o'clock.

'Abdu'l-Bahá and His entourage were driven from the ship to the Hotel Ansonia, Broadway and 73rd Street, His headquarters for the next nine days of incredibly intense activities. After resting and having a cup of tea, He was taken to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Kinney, where hundreds of Bahá'ís had gathered. "Almost everyone was weeping just at the sight of Him." The Master addressed a warm welcome to all, then had a few words with each one.

*Mr. and Mrs. Edward and Carrie Kinney, their two children, Juliet Thompson and a friend had been on an eight-month pilgrimage in Akka in 1909 and had offered their home to the Master. "They spared neither time nor effort or money to have everything as well arranged for 'Abdu'l-Bahá as possible during His sojourn in New York City." Shoghi Effendi called Mr. and Mrs. Kinney "Pillars of the Faith in the City of the Covenant" and "Pillars of the Cause of God."

'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke a little English and it was often apparent that He understood it well. He addressed his audiences in the Persian language (Farsi), each sentence followed by a translation. His retinue of Persian friends were learned translators and secretaries. People commented that the translation did not seem necessary at times as they felt the meaning of His words through the power of "His flashing eyes," His gestures and His warm, smiling countenance.

The next day, April 12, set the pattern for all His days - that of a continuous flow of activities. In the mornings, people streamed in line at the Ansonia to meet Him, each one receiving a measure of His love. As recalled by Reverend Howard Colby Ives, the experience was dramatic: "Life has never been quite the same since."

In the afternoon, 'Abdu'l-Bahá traveled to Brooklyn, to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard MacNutt, where He addressed an audience in the hundreds. Back in Manhattan in the evening He spoke to hundreds of people in the studio of Miss Phillips. "The enormous room was packed," confirmed Juliet.

The following morning, as all mornings to come, was spent with an endless flow of visitors. Among the clergymen present was Reverend J.T. Bixby, a Unitarian minister who was writing an article on the Bahá'í Faith for the North American Review.

Rev. Bixby is described as self-important and verbose to the embarrassment of every- one present. At last, 'Abdu'l-Bahá led him to the door and laughing, took a large bunch of red roses and laid them in the arms of the surprised visitor, now humbly bowing, to everyone's mirth.

During the afternoon of this April 13, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed a large assembled group at the elegant home of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander and Marjorie Morten, celebrated patrons of the arts. The Master spoke of "the Season of Creation and the evolution of the Spiritual Springtime" when the translator experienced a blank... dead silence...'Abdu'l-Bahá, laughing, supplied the missing word: "Summer!" A ripple of delight went through the sophisticated audience which was captured by this moment of warm humanity.

THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION AND THE CONTROVERSY THAT FOLLOWED

The visit of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on Sunday, April 14, to the Church of the Ascension, Fifth Avenue and 10th Street, was an historic day of triumph for the Bahá’ís of New York City, and particularly for Juliet Thompson who was a parishioner of the church. The Church Rector, Dr. Percy Stickney Grant, a personal friend of Juliet, had been persistently hostile toward ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Faith, but in a change of mind had offered his church for the first official appearance of the Master in New York. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá accepted the offer above thirteen similar invitations.

Dr. Grant was a brilliant but opinionated Christian clergyman who, during ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s sojourn, was torn between conflicting allegiances. He was touched by the Master’s love and majesty, and deeply moved by the momentous sense of history conveyed by His personality and mission. For ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit he had spared neither publicity nor preparation. He had reached “perfection,” wrote Juliet, in the decoration and organization of the service: the summit of pomp and circumstance.

Dr. Grant opened the service with the reading of prophecies pointing to Bahá’u’lláh and of the 13th Chapter of Corinthians, instead of the traditional lesson for the day. ‘Abdu’l- Bahá was waiting in the vestry. Then, in the thunder of organ music and the triumphant singing of “Jesus Lives,” the Master entered the chancel in a kingly manner, Dr. Grant holding His hand, leading Him to the Bishop’s Chair. In front of a throng of two thousand, Dr. Grant introduced with the greatest respect and emotion the One he had previously fiercely denounced from his pulpit. He spoke from the chancel, then stepped aside as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replaced him in the same honored place.

We can imagine this unforgettable scene for those Bahá’ís present: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá standing in His white, flowing robes, surrounded by a lavish profusion of lights and calla lilies, His turbaned head haloed by the rays of the sun filtering through the colored windows, dominating all with simple, majestic dignity, His arms outstretched.

His vibrating, melodious voice started: “In his scriptural lesson this morning the revered Doctor read a verse from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, ‘For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.’ The light of truth has heretofore been seen dimly through variegated glasses, but now the splendors of divinity shall be visible through the translucent mirrors of pure hearts and spirits.” And the Master went on to extol the mission of Jesus and Bahá’u’lláh, establishing a divine civilization and world peace.

When He ended His address, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was asked by Dr. Grant to give the benediction. His face uplifted, His eyes closed, the palms of His hands in offering to God, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá chanted a prayer, the clergymen kneeling on each side of Him.

“...Too great to put into words, it was almost too great to bear...” wrote Juliet in exaltation. She was probably echoing the feelings of the Bahá’í friends on that day. After the service, the Master went to His car, while the neighborhood resounded with cries of

“Alláh'u'Abhá” from the believers. Mr. Grant's mother, a friend of the Bahá'ís, ran to the Master, crying for joy at His knees.

In the afternoon, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke at the Union Meeting of Advanced Thought Center at the Carnegie Lyceum (now Carnegie Hall.)

The following day witnessed a controversy, the result of the Master having been seated in the Bishop's Chair in the Church of the Ascension and addressing the congregation from the chancel: An Episcopalian Canon had been broken! Newspapers took sides and were not quieted until the Bishop himself went to the Ansonia to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá and thanked Him for honoring the Church with His visit. The Master replied with talk of “the injuriousness of dogmas and imitations.”

To Dr. Grant, He sent the message, “Say: I will not forget the services thou hast rendered yesterday. They are engraved in the book of My heart...Thousands of years hence, the mention of yesterday will be heard and it will become history that you were the founder of this work. I will never forget the love which was manifested yesterday.”

It was on the same day, April 15, according to the biographers of the renowned and celebrated Lebanese poet and painter, Kahlil Gibran, that a beautiful pencil portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was drawn by Mr. Gibran. This portrait was done as part of a series of drawings of well-known personalities and artists most respected by Gibran, including Auguste Rodin and Claude Debussy, among others. The series appeared in major exhibits in New York and Paris, and was acclaimed to be the best work of Gibran, who acknowledged drawing to be his favorite medium.

In “Juliet Remembers Gibran,” the Bahá'í writer Marzieh Gail, recalls a 1943 conversation with Juliet about Kahlil Gibran, who lived in a studio across the street from her home. They were close friends, and Gibran loved 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He was inspired to write “Jesus, the Son of Man” from his recollection of the Master. Gibran had asked Juliet to request the Master to sit for him. He was accorded one hour at 6:30 in the morning. Gibran's biographers place this event on April 15, the day of the sinking of the Titanic.* Writer Barbara Young, in “The Man from Lebanon,” mentions that this event took place in the studio of the artist. However, it is likely that at this early hour it was in the Master's suite at the Ansonia Hotel. (8)

News of the sinking of the luxury liner, the Titanic, on her maiden voyage, was announced in the newspapers April 16. After praying for the deceased, the friends offered thanks that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had not traveled on that ship. This day was filled with the usual flow of morning visitors, a public meeting in the afternoon at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Dodge, and in the evening, the Master addressed friends who had come from New Jersey to visit Him at the Ansonia.

Commenting to Mr. MacNutt upon the newspaper accounts of the sinking of the Titanic, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflected on the fact that material achievements of technology and wealth are in vain unless man builds a spiritual civilization in his own heart. “...I wish you to live in the world of the Spirit... beyond the gloomy mask of this mortal existence...” After a long

pause, the Master said: "I was asked to sail upon the Titanic, but my heart did not prompt Me to do so." **

* "Kahlil Gibran: His Life and World". K. Gibran had moved from Boston to New York as a protégé of arts patrons Marjorie and Alexander Morten, identified as Bahá'ís and active pacifists. A dozen references describe their activities in this book, more particularly on pp. 273, 387-8. The portrait of the Master is reproduced on p.288.

**Star of the West, Vol.3, p.210.

ABDU'L-BAHÁ COUNTERS RACIAL SEGREGATION

'Abdu'l-Bahá deplored the racial segregation prevalent in the United States and He "strongly urged the friends to associate with each other in the utmost joy and happiness." He called for such a gathering, and it took place Wednesday, April 17, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kinney, where Bahá'ís and their friends of both the black and white races met in unity. He prepared and served the meal Himself, speaking of the human family as "a garden of flowers of various hues." The Master was most happy and the spirit of the friends was high. It was felt that this was a landmark in the city. This memorable event was followed by a public address at the hotel.

While pouring out love to everyone, expounding on the Teachings of the Faith, and traveling from place to place in the city, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's humaneness was always apparent. He often showed His emotions, He laughed, He wept. During a talk at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall L. Emery, He was so anguished in His recollection of the sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh that the entire audience was moved to tears.

Friday, April 19 was a very busy day for the Master and the friends.

In the early afternoon, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been invited to attend a play at the Little Theater, "The Terrible Meek," depicting the Crucifixion of Christ, and the Master said to have wept along with the audience.

At 5 pm, at Earl Hall, Columbia University, professors, scholars, students and others heard Him speak on "religion, science and universal peace." He was invited to visit the various departments of the University, but He had to decline for lack of time. This was followed by a return to the Ansonia, where He was met, as usual, by a crowd of waiting people. Among them was Kate Carew, a reporter for The New York Tribune.

We have an excellent description of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a feature article Miss Carew wrote in which she depicted Him as being of "scarcely medium height, but so extraordinary in the dignity of his majestic carriage that he seemed of more than average height." She appeared not only totally bewildered by the diversity of the crowd but also impressed by the personality of the Master and His warm response to each visitor. 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited Miss Carew to accompany Him and a few others to His next engagement at the Bowery.

The unusual and moving event at the Bowery Mission was the confirmation of several weeks of Juliet's teaching and dedication. She had spoken about the Faith and the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the derelicts, and in turn, they invited the Master to speak to them. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had previously given \$500 to Juliet and to Mr. Edward Getsinger for them to change into two large bags of silver quarters. After a loving talk to about 400 men, the Master stood at the door waiting for them to file by. He looked ahead appraising each man, then pressed some coins into his hand. One of them, John Good, a former criminal who had reformed since Juliet befriended him, declared that the Master had justly appraised each man's need and had given accordingly.

Returning to the hotel by taxi, the Master was amused by the glittering of Broadway's electric signs, and was reminded that Baha'u'llah loved light, recommending that His household economize on everything except light.

At the Ansonia, the Master emptied the remaining coins into a maid's apron, who, upon learning of the Bowery event, promised that she would also give this money to the poor. She wanted to say goodbye to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, crying that she had been blessed to serve Him, and asked for prayers.

The Master had invited the friends for a late supper in His suite. Recalling the performance of "The Terrible Meek" which He had attended early in the day, He said the play depicting the Crucifixion of Christ, should have been more complete. The Master then, told of the life and suffering of Jesus, in so detailed and vivid terms, that He seemed to relive events of "remembered anguish." He also commented on the power of the theater which could influence human feelings in reviving an event which took place 2000 years ago.

Of the mornings at the hotel, Juliet Thompson wrote: "Oh, those mornings at the Ansonia in the Master's white sunny rooms, filled with spring flowers and roses! People poured in to see Him in droves, sometimes a hundred and fifty in one morning! Exhausted, He received the late arrivals in bed...I would watch them go into His bedroom and come out changed, as though they had had a bath of Life." Charles Rand Kennedy, author of "The Terrible Meek," was there one morning, and deeply moved said: "I was in the presence of God."

On April 20, 'Abdu'l-Bahá left for Washington as the first stop of a three-week tour of Bahá'í communities. In Washington, journalists wrote that 'Abdu'l-Bahá swept through the Capitol, the Supreme Court, and the Congress "saw fit to adjourn."

A number of Washington Bahá'ís belonged to the highest strata of society. Receptions organized for 'Abdu'l-Bahá included the elite of government, diplomatic and academic circles. The Master addressed a large interracial gathering at Howard University and expressed happiness, but He sternly commented to His entourage about the evidence of racial prejudice He had witnessed. He related that He had ordered interracial meetings. "The attendance was very large, the colored people predominating. At our second gathering this was reversed, but at the third meeting, We were unable to say which color predominated. These meetings were a great practical lesson upon the unity of colors and races in the Bahá'í Teachings."

THE MASTER RETURNS

Saturday, May 11, returning from a trip which included, on May 1st, the official laying of the cornerstone of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, 'Abdu'l-Bahá moved to a top floor apartment in the Hudson Apartment House. To those joyously gathered around Him, He said: "It is only three weeks that we have been away from the New York friends, yet so great has been the longing to see you that it seems three months."

On Sunday, though still tired, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to the Unity Church in Montclair, New Jersey. The minister, Dr. Edgard Wiers, had invited the Master and now introduced Him with great respect and emotion "as One of the Great Prophets, Chosen Ones of God."

'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke on the Oneness of God and Creation, and ended chanting a prayer. A deeply moved audience followed Him to the street, all eyes brimming with tears of joy.

After an afternoon shared with a group of friends, the Master returned to New York to address the International Peace Forum at the Grace Methodist Church. This was another triumph as the large attendance gave a standing ovation at the end of a major talk on the Bahá'í Teachings and history, and the establishment of the Most Great Peace.

On May 13th, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was to appear as the guest of honor at a meeting of the New York Peace Society held at the Hotel Astor. The Master was sick in bed with a high temperature, Juliet pleaded for Him to rest. "I work by the confirmation of the Holy Spirit. I do not work by hygienic laws. If I did, I would get nothing done," He laughed.

The peace meeting was an impressive gathering of two thousand people. On the dais was a group of leading personalities of the time: Rabbi Stephen Wise, president; Mr. Short (a friend of philanthropist Andrew Carnegie); Mrs. A. G. Spencer of the Ethical Society; Dr. Percy Grant; Professor William Jackson of Columbia University, and Mr. Topakyan, Persian Consul General. They all made introductory remarks. Mr. Topakyan said: "Our guest of honor has stood as a Prophet of enlightenment and peace for the Persian Empire, and a well-wisher of Persia may well honor Him...In closing, I am happy to say that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Glory of Persia today." This was not the only laudatory remark; they all vied to express their reverent admiration, recognizing the spiritual leadership of this "Great Figure from the East."

Though the Master was visibly tired and His voice was hoarse, He delivered a unique speech on the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh for the age and on the establishment of peace. The response of the audience was such that Mahmud was ecstatic: "Verily, no desire remained unfulfilled to us, the servants of the Covenant. We saw with our own eyes the victory and confirmation of the Kingdom of Abhá." After the meeting, the audience pressed to come near to the Master, "He shook hands with...everyone of those two thousand people!" wrote Juliet.

Later, back at the Hudson Apartments, a group of Japanese and Indian people were waiting for Him. The Master welcomed them and spoke on the civilization of India and the divine civilization.

THE LAKE MOHONK PEACE CONFERENCE

Juliet Thompson had previously introduced the Faith to Mr. Khan Bahadur Alláh-Bakhsh, the Governor of Lahore. On the morning of May 14th, this gentleman came to meet ‘Abdu'l-Bahá who, warmly, welcomed him. The Governor sent a letter to Juliet stating: “‘Abdu'l-Bahá is the Divine Light of today.”

On the same day, the Master traveled to Lake Mohonk, New York, for three days at the National Conference on Peace and International Arbitration.

In 1911, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá had exchanged correspondence with Mr. Albert Smiley, Founder and President of the Conference. As a result, He had been invited to be the featured speaker at the 18th Annual Conference and the Master had scheduled His visit to the United States to include this important event.

These Conferences were attended by prominent people of New York, Washington DC, and other cities and countries. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá spoke on the first day on “The Oneness of the Reality of Humankind.” Many in attendance were impressed and came on the platform to thank Him, some embracing Him with emotion.

The Master also gave two general addresses on the teachings of the Faith and many private talks. His main address and commentaries were featured in the Conference report and two of His speeches were published in New York newspapers.

On the last evening, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá had expressed regrets that He should have brought a Persian rug as a gift for Mr. Smiley. Dr. Zia Bagdadi took the challenge of going to the New York apartment to fetch the rug during the night, and to be back in time before the planned departure. After an epic trip by various cars and trains, Dr. Bagdadi arrived in the mailman's horse wagon when the Master was leaving, shaking hands with Mr. Smiley. Receiving the rug, this gentleman exclaimed that this rug was similar to one destroyed in a fire and his wife, still heart broken over the loss, will be very happy.

Although ‘Abdu'l-Bahá greatly enjoyed the beautiful scenery, and the comfortable and quiet setting of Lake Mohonk, He was glad to come back to New York. He loved the Riverside Park area. He had selected a secluded spot there where He liked to go daily and walk by Himself or “sleep on the grass” a few minutes to rest. “When I am alone, exhaustion is removed and I am relaxed,” He said. Sometimes, He allowed the friends to go with Him to this “hallowed spot,” “His Garden,” as the friends named the place and a recurring name in Juliet's and Mahmud's diaries.

ACTIVITIES CONTINUE UNABATED

On Sunday, May 19, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke at the Church of the Divine Paternity on Central Park West. The church’s Byzantine architecture seemed a natural frame for the Master who was often referred to as “the Patriarch of the East” because of His Eastern robes and headdress. The people attending were touched by the beauty of the scene as well as captivated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s address on progressive revelation and the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. Miss Thompson was astonished to see a man she knew as a staunch atheist who looked as captivated as the rest of the audience. This person went regularly to visit the Master at His home afterward.

In the afternoon, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went to Jersey City to speak at the Brotherhood Church where Dr. Howard Colby Ives was the unsalaried Pastor. Reverend Ives ended his introduction with these words: “My friends, the Kingdom of God is at hand, and I call upon you to recognize it! I call upon you to spread the news on every side!”

On Monday, at a Woman’s Suffrage meeting at the Metropolitan Temple, the Master’s topic was education and the rights of women. He brought in stories about some of the great women in history, including Mary Magdalene. A flow of emotion stirred some of the audience to tears.

The following day, Tuesday, May 21, “the fashionable world,” including artists and writers, met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at a reception given in His honor by Mrs. Tatum, a devoted Bahá’í and a socialite. In His address to the large group, He spoke of His years in prison and the contrast of being there in this friendly home, associating with such personalities. “Think of it. Two Kings* were dethroned in order that I might be freed. This is naught but pure destiny, and now, you here in America must work with me for the peace of the world and the oneness of mankind.”

Dr. Percy Grant was in the audience and the following day said to Mr. MacNutt: “As I listened, I realized profoundly that this was an historic moment; that before me sat One Who, imprisoned for the sake of humankind, had been freed by the Power of God alone through the dethroning of two kings.” Dr. Grant then extended an invitation for the Master to come back to the Church of the Ascension, to the People’s Forum on June 2.

* Sultan ‘Abdu’l-Hamid of Turkey and Shah Mussaffarid-Din of Persia.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent four days in Boston, then, returned to New York on May 26. After a brief rest at the home of the Kinneys, although still very tired, He proceeded to Mount Morris Baptist Church (now Mount Moriah) where He was scheduled to address the congregation. Juliet Thompson wrote: “This church suggests an old synagogue and the Master looked Christ-like to the friends.” This spiritual feeling is described by Mahmud:

“‘Abdu’l-Bahá was standing under the arch of the church and reclining exhausted against the pillar... That night all saw with their outward eyes the effect of the Holy Ghost. Let no one think that it is only word painting. Yes, the tongues and feelings of all present bear a

testimony to it. I write this because it is my duty to record it... all the non-Bahá'ís looked upon the Beauty of the Covenant as a Prophet."

As the landlord at the Hudson Apartments complained about the excessive number of visitors and that his staff could not cope with the extra labor and problems, the Master decided to rent a house. In the meantime, He stayed for a few days at the Kinney's home, then moved at the end of May to a house owned by Mr. Champney, 309 West 78th Street.

'Abdu'l-Bahá received a continuing flow of invitations from churches, educational organizations and other groups. In the evening of May 28, He was the main speaker at a peace forum held at the Metropolitan Temple. This was a major reception attended by leading personalities and more than a thousand people. The Master was introduced as "the representative of the International Peace Movement...promoting the unity of all nations as the need of this age..." Author Frederick Lynch made the welcoming address. He said to have followed the Master to several places, and expressed his feelings with emotion: "In Mohonk, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave the most remarkable address, expressing the highest principles of His teachings... How I welcome this great man whose presence has inspired and attracted the minds of Americans. He receives inspiration from the breaths of the Holy Spirit. His spirit is infinite, unlimited and eternal. I am happy... to be given the opportunity to express publicly my innermost testimony."

The Master spoke on the Oneness of God and unity of His Prophets as the source of the oneness of mankind and peace. Rabbi Silverman, previously hostile to the Faith, was visibly moved and responded to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words with high praise: "We have seen today the light with our own eyes... The spiritual lights have always shone from the East upon the West. The world is in need of these lights...The fountainhead of these lights has today spoken before us... His love and teachings have captivated the hearts of the Americans." "This change of mind is the greatest proof of the majesty and the power of the Covenant of God," commented Mahmud.

Two evenings later, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed an audience at the Theosophical Lodge on the evolution of the spirit through the realms of creation. Also He spoke at New York University on science and divine philosophy.

On Friday, May 31, the Master was welcomed by friends in Fanwood, New Jersey, where He gave talks at two places and at the Town Hall. He returned to New York the following day and met with the large number of people, both friends and seekers who were, as usual, waiting for Him.

ANOTHER UNIQUE EVENT AT THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

On the evening of Sunday, June 2, as previously invited by Dr. Grant, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the guest speaker at a People’s Forum at the Church of the Ascension. These meetings were less formal and the participants were invited to ask questions.

The Master gave a powerful talk on the requested topic: “What can the Orient bring to the Occident?” Juliet recalled that the previous year, Dr. Grant had preached on the same topic in negative terms toward the Faith. Now beautiful words were praising Christ and the Law of God, represented by the firmness of Peter and the Church as a collective center for humanity. In our time, this same collective center, it was pointed out, is the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and a civilization of peace.

Dr. Grant, visibly shaken, praised the Master and fielded questions from the large audience while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded warmly. Seated at the center of the chancel, He enjoyed the exchange. At ease, “He pushed back His turban and smiled as He answered, often very wittily.”

Mahmud marveled at witnessing the respectful audience, the sight of which “no written words can describe.” Afterward, the Master confided that arriving at the church, He hadn’t felt well enough to speak, “...but when I stood before this gathering I found the atmosphere of the church full of the Holy Spirit and a state of wonderful happiness and joy came upon Me.”

On going to the Master’s home the next morning, Juliet found Him in the street near “His Garden,” with a group of friends whom He was anointing with attar of rose. Then He welcomed a young man who turned out to be Walter Hampden, the actor playing the part of Jesus in a play. Mr. Hampden, afterward, came every day to visit.

Later on that day, upon having been invited, ‘Abdu’l- Bahá traveled to the estate of an unidentified U.S. Cabinet member, where He spent the night. A social gathering was held, attended by notables and national statesmen, who were respectfully attentive to the Master’s utterances. One gentleman inquired about the possibility of international war. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke of this event as likely: “Great ravages will take place in Europe. Great empires will crumble and will become petty states.”

The following day, before leaving the estate, the Master called the servants, and thanking them distributed a gift of money to each one of them. Back home, He found the many friends waiting for Him and spoke at length to them.

The Master’s whirlwind activities continued and the fifth of June saw Him in Brooklyn. He first attended a children’s affair sponsored by the Union League Club of Brooklyn. A luncheon was served for civic leaders and guests which included Admiral Peary, the explorer of the North Pole as featured speaker. He had met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Washington and expressing his admiration for Him, requested a talk. The Master spoke on education. Then, in the evening, He went and spoke at a meeting of the Women’s Union.

On June 8, although exhausted, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went to Philadelphia at the invitation of several churches. He came back to New York two days later, refreshed by the love of the friends and the enthusiastic response of the congregations He had visited in Pennsylvania.

PAINTING ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ’S PORTRAIT

‘Abdu’l-Bahá had expressed a desire for Juliet to paint His portrait and he requested that she come to His home on June 1st, at 7:30 in the morning, to begin work on it. She was given three sittings: the first one on that day, the final two about two weeks later.

“I went into a panic,” she confessed. The light and the location in the basement were poor, and “how could I paint the Face of God?” “I want you,” He said, “to paint my servitude to God.” “Oh, my Lord,” she cried, “only the Holy Spirit could paint Your servitude to God... Pray for me!” “I will pray,” answered the Master, “and as you are doing this only for the sake of God, you will be inspired.” “And then, an amazing thing happened. All fear went away from me. I painted in ecstasy, free as I have never been before.”

THE BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER AND OTHER LESSONS

On June 11, after morning prayers and tea, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to the assembled friends about the role of the future House of Justice which will ensure the continuity of the Faith. Later that day, He gave two talks at His home and received the usual stream of visitors. Juliet noticed how tired He looked, still talking to all: "It was pure sacrifice!"

That very night at the home of the Kinneys, there was a Board of Council* meeting. The Master came and "striding up and down like a king, He explained the meaning of Bahá'í Assemblies to the friends, inspiring them to become 'telegraphic stations...one of the wires attached to the souls, the other fixed in the Supreme Concourse.' "

During the next two days, June 12 and 13, Juliet went early in the morning to the beloved house to work on her painting. The flow of visitors made it a bewildering experience: "So wonderful...so humanly difficult...from room to room, one kind of light to another." She had one sitting on the 13th, and actually this was the third half-hour promised by the Master. Each time the "miraculous thing" happened and she worked "in rapture." The painting was practically finished, afterward whenever she tried to go back for more detail something always seemed to interfere.

*These "Boards of Council" were precursors of today's Local Spiritual Assemblies.

On the 14th, Juliet arrived early hoping to work, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá had left already. She stayed with one of the Persian friends who recalled memories of his father. Valiyú'lláh Khán was the son of Varqa Khán, a Bahá'í Martyr and renowned poet, very dear to Bahá'u'lláh. Varqa Khán had told his son that Bahá'u'lláh had explained to him the Station of the Master as "The Mystery of God," a Station although not of a "Manifestation of God" (a Divine Prophet), was of the same spiritual nature and power for a certain purpose in the Plan of God.

Varqa wrote poems to the Glory of the Master, Who would scold him for it. Varqa could not keep quiet and wrote:

"O Dawning-Point of the Beauty of God,
I know Thee!
Though Thou shroudest Thyself in a thousand veils,
I know Thee!" *

* J. Thompson's Diary, pp. 309-10.

Besides receiving daily morning visitors and friends, some with petitions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote tablets in answer to His voluminous mail. Though He would escape as much as He could to "His Garden," and He tried to limit individual requests for interviews to urgent matters, the Master found the daily process exhausting. Yet He did not cease speaking to the friends in groups on various aspects of "this Great Dispensation."

On the afternoon of June 15, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came down to the waiting crowd of friends. He told them that while resting, He had dreamt that he was speaking to them at the top of His voice. The sound of His own voice awakened Him with the word “distinction.” He explained the meaning of distinction in every kingdom of Creation. “I desire distinction for you. The Bahá’ís must be distinguished from others...but not of any worldly distinction. For you, I desire spiritual distinction.”

On June 16, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was invited to speak at the Fourth Unitarian Church, in Brooklyn, and the Pastor had posted on the church’s outdoor signboard:

“The Great Persian Prophet, His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,
will speak in this church at 11am on the 16th of June.”

The Persian friends were amazed that a Christian church would recognize the Master as a “Prophet.” The Pastor came to greet ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the door and led Him to the pulpit where He spoke.

At the end of the service, the congregation pressed around Him. The Minister asked the Master to speak to the children of Sunday School. They flocked to Him in earnest, and He called them “beautiful children of the Kingdom.” The prayer He revealed for them remains a favorite to this day: “O God... These children are the plants of Thine orchard, the flowers of Thy meadow, the roses of Thy garden...”

Lunch was served at Mr. and Mrs. Howard MacNutt’s home. That evening, at a meeting at the Central Congregational Church on Hancock Street in Brooklyn, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave one of His major addresses, speaking with the power of majesty on progressive revelation, with emphasis on Muhammad, and the station of Bahá’u’lláh and His proclamation to the kings and rulers of His time. The Pastor was so transported that he pleaded with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for another visit.

The next day, the newspaper, *The Brooklyn Eagle*, published the complete transcript of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s address with a description of the gathering.

The following morning, speaking of His day in Brooklyn, the Master said: “I established the Truth of Islam in the great churches in this day. What have the Moslems now to say to us?” Later, He encouraged the friends to visit the sick, and to travel to teach the Faith in foreign countries.

THE FILMING OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

During His stay at the Ansonia, a commercial movie company had requested to make a short film of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for its newsreels. The Master replied at once, “Khaili Khub” (Very good). Some of the friends were upset and explained to Him that this film would be scattered around the country and used in movie houses. He replied: “Besyar Khub” (Most good!)

Consequently, one day, He appeared at the entrance of the Ansonia for the making of a short film. “It was a wonderfully impressive sight, for as He approached the camera, he was exhorting Bahá’u’lláh to bless this means for the spreading of the Heavenly Cause throughout the world.”

The friends arranged for a longer film to be made at the home of Mr. and Mrs. MacNutt on June 18, and they also made a recording of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s voice chanting “Glad tidings! Glad Tidings!”

“Rejoice! Rejoice! The Sun of reality has dawned!
Rejoice! Rejoice! The New Jerusalem has descended from Heaven!
Rejoice! Rejoice! The Glory of Carmel has shone on the worlds!”

Although unskilled handling of the camera had ‘Abdu’l-Bahá going out of frame and back again, this is a precious legacy, the record of the Beloved Master in action. The film and recording have been duplicated and sent out to all countries where Bahá’ís resided at the time.

Seventy years later, the film has been incorporated into “The Quiet Revolution,” a 58 minutes major film on the Bahá’í Faith, a 1985 BBC production released on English national television and in New York City in January 1986.

At the end of this memorable day, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled 40 miles to visit a Jewish friend who was sick, returning home at night utterly exhausted.

THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT NAMES THE CITY OF THE COVENANT

June 19th was an historic day for the Bahá'ís of New York . On that day, 'Abdu'l-Bahá named their city the "City of the Covenant." Also, He spoke of the Tablet of the Branch* revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Andrianople, and proclaimed His own station as the "Center of the Covenant."

What a highly dramatic, almost terrifying moment in history! The Son of Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet of God for our time, suddenly lifting the veil of His humanity, appearing in the Glory of the Power of the Covenant, the Power of Creation! It happened with the swiftness and blinding energy of a bolt of lightning, transporting its two witnesses, Juliet Thompson and Lua Getsinger,** into a spiritual whirling of exaltation and fright.

Juliet had been called to work on His portrait on that day. She describes a sense of "peculiar power... in the Master's steps while coming down from His room... a fearful majesty... strange flashing of the eyes..." evoking an Old Testament Figure. Later as He was sitting for His portrait, Juliet recalled the following events:

"I had just begun to work, Lua in the room sitting on a couch nearby, when the Master smiled at me, then turning to Lua said in Persian: "This makes me sleepy. What shall I do?"

"Tell the Master, Lua, that if He would like to take a nap, I can work while He sleeps."

But I found that I could not. What I saw then was too sacred, too formidable. He sat still as a statue, His eyes closed, infinite peace on that chiseled face, a God-like calm and grandeur in His erect head.

Suddenly, with a great flash like lightning He opened His eyes, and the room seemed to rock like a ship in a storm with the power released. The Master was blazing! "The veils of glory," "the thousand veils" had shriveled away in the Flame and we were exposed to the Glory Itself!

Lua and I sat shaking and sobbing. Then He spoke to Lua. I caught the words, "Munádíy-i 'Ahd" (Herald of the Covenant).

Lua started forward, her hand to her breast. "Man?" (I?), she exclaimed.
"Call one of the Persians. You must understand this."

Never shall I forget that moment, the flashing eyes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the reverberations of His Voice, the Power that still rocked the room. God of lightning and thunder! I thought.

"I appoint you, Lua, the Herald of the Covenant. And I AM THE COVENANT, appointed by Bahá'u'lláh. And no one can refute His Word. This is the Testament of Bahá'u'lláh. You will find it in the Holy Book of Aqdas.
Go forth and proclaim:"

"This is THE COVENANT OF GOD in your midst."

*In the Bahá'í Writings, Bahá'u'lláh referred to Himself as a Tree, (The Tree of Life), His children as "Branches" and "Leaves". 'Abdu'l-Bahá is entitled "The Greatest Branch."

**Lua Getsinger was one of the first Bahá'í pilgrims to Akka in 1898. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had chosen her for her passionate and irresistible nature to be a "Banner" and inspired her to teach "day and night." Though sick, until her death in Cairo 18 years later at the age of 45, she never spared herself and was given the title of "Mother-teacher of the American Bahá'í Community" by Shoghi Effendi, besides the title of "Herald of the Covenant" given by the Master.

Bahá'í News April 1976.

A great joy had lifted Lua up. Her eyes were full of light. She looked like a winged angel. "Oh, recreate me," she cried, "that I may do this work for Thee!" By now I was sobbing uncontrollably.

"Don't cry, Juliet," He said. "This is no time for tears. Through tears you cannot see to paint."

I tried hard to hold back my tears and to work, but painting that day was at an end for me.

The Master smiled lovingly. "Juliet is one of my favorites because she speaks the truth. See how I love the truth, Juliet. You spoke one word of truth to me and see how I have praised it!"

I looked up to smile in answer and in gratitude, then I was overwhelmed again by that awful convulsive sobbing. At this the Master began to laugh and, as He laughed and laughed, the strangest thing happened. It was as if at each outburst He wrapped himself in more veils, so that now He looked completely human, without a trace left of His superhuman majesty. Never had I seen Him like this before and I never did afterward."

(At one time, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had explained that "laughter is spiritual relaxation." Now the Master very tenderly endeavored to make Lua and Juliet laugh.)

"Perhaps He had just found it necessary, after that mighty Declaration, to bring us down to earth again. He had revealed to us "The Apex of Immortality." He had lifted us to a height from which we could see it. Now He, our loving Shepherd, had carried us in His own arms back to our little valley and put us where we belonged."

In the afternoon of that day, He sent Lua down to the waiting people to "proclaim the Covenant," then a little later, He followed her and spoke on the Station of the Center of the Covenant, "but not as He had done to Lua and me."

In confirmation of His explanations, the Master had the Tablet of the Branch read to the friends so they could hear these mighty words of Bahá'u'lláh:

"Whosoever turns to Him hath surely turned to God and whosoever turneth away from Him hath turned away from my Beauty, denied My Proof and is of those who transgress."

On that same day a copy of the book, "The Brilliant Proof," written by Mírzá 'Abu'l Fadl was received. It was in answer to Reverend P. Easton's virulent criticism of the Faith in

London and his letter to America, warning people of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's dangerous influence. The Master was very pleased with the book and ordered its translation to be published in this country.

This Mighty Day ended like an ordinary day, with more visitors requesting an interview.

THE UNITY FEAST, JUNE 29

On June 20, ‘Abu’l-Bahá agreed to a photographic session at the renowned Gertrude Käsebier’s Studio. He approved and chose the proofs He liked.

While preparing for His departure the next day for a ten-day visit to Montclair, New Jersey, the Master announced to the friends that they would be joining Him there for a “Unity Feast,” and they would be His guests.

In New Jersey, He stayed at a rented house, going to the market every day and preparing the meals Himself for invited friends and visitors. In general during His travels, He would always supervise kitchen matters. For Himself, He required the least possible amount of food, but for His guests He provided lavishly.

Until June 29, when the Unity Feast was to take place, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke at various places every afternoon and every evening. On the 29th, He went to the home of Mr. Roy Wilhelm, in Englewood, for the Feast. On this day, the friends came from New York and the neighboring area.

The grounds of Mr. Wilhelm’s home were beautified by a pine grove, surrounded by lawns spread with flowers of every hue, and tables had been set up under the trees.

Seated on an armchair in the shade, the Master looked rested and loving. The friends surrounded Him on the lawns. He greeted every newcomer and asked two ladies to sit on either side of Him- Mrs. Krug, young and elegant, and a very old lady in shabby clothes. They both had the same radiant look, their love for the Master shining like a fire in their eyes raised toward Him.

He spoke to the friends: “This is a delightful gathering... This is a New Day and this hour is a New Hour... Such gatherings as this, have no equal or likeness in the world of mankind... This assembly has a name and a significance which will last forever. Hundreds of thousands of meetings shall be held to commemorate this occasion and the very words I speak to you today shall be repeated in them for ages to come...”*

At the end of the talk the meal was ready, but a sudden storm blew up, and big drops of rain splashed on the tables. The Master walked calmly in His ivory and white flowing robes, went out toward the road, took a chair which had been stranded there and sat down, His head toward the sky. The Persian friends who had followed Him were behind the chair. After a while, a strong rushing wind raced the dark clouds away and the sun shone again. The Master rose and returned to the grove, smiling at the children who rushed toward Him.

Lovingly, He went among the 250 guests with a vial of attar of rose, anointing each one of the friends while a Persian meal was served. Then He went into the house to meet with visiting ministers. After dark, some 60 people were lingering, unable to tear themselves away from this place of love, unity and beauty. The Master talked to them by the light of candles

held by the ladies seated on the lawn: “It was a resounding call to arise from the tomb of self in this Day of the Great Resurrection and to unite around Him to vivify the world.” He left them, disappearing into the night: “Peace be with you. I will pray for you.” His melodious voice chanted the last words echoing forever in their hearts.

On the following day, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the guest of Mr. Topakyan, the Persian Consul General in Morristown. The reception was attended by prominent people and members of the press. At night, the Master returned to New York.

*This event is commemorated every year at the same location, on the last Saturday of June.

NEW YORK CITY'S POTENTIAL

'Abdu'l-Bahá once said: "I desire to make manifest among the friends in America a new light, that they may become a new people, that a new foundation may be established and complete harmony realized, for the foundation of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is love." And one evening, answering the Persian friends' question, the Master confided that He was staying a long time in New York because "it is the meeting place of the East and the West. I desire to make it a Center of Signs. I stay here so the friends may advance in spirituality and gain precedence." This was an endless task for the Master in these days.

'Abdu'l-Bahá knew of New York City's potential for greatness. He was heartened by the love and vitality of the Bahá'í community but saddened by the display of lavish luxury. As He was invited to the Hotel Plaza, He chose to sit in one of the smallest rooms of the hotel. He told the Persian friends that whenever He encountered magnificent buildings He was reminded of the dark pit of Tíhrán, the desolate barracks of Akka and of the sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh.*

A major article on 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His teachings appeared in Hearst's Magazine. The Master commented that all activities and the response of the people and the press were "confirmation... through Bahá'u'lláh's Bounty and Favor... We are like flutes and all these tunes are from Him."

Mahmud wrote of the many newspapers articles in praise of the Master. The best were sent to the friends in Eastern countries to share with them, for them to realize how much Western society was impressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings and the inroads made by Bahá'í concepts in the minds of the people. Everywhere, poems and songs were written by many in honor of Him and His Faith.

The Mayor of New York, Honorable William S. Gaynor, had invited 'Abdu'l-Bahá to be with him, on July 4, on the parade reviewing stand. As this was not a religious event, the Master sent Persian friends to represent Him. They were respectfully welcomed and, in spite of the hot weather, Mahmud was quite impressed by the attention given them and by the pageantry of the event.

In the evening, the Master lovingly prepared a reception for Mrs. Thompson's (Juliet's mother) birthday at His home.

During one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's morning walks in His Garden, a group of people of Greek ancestry passing by were attracted to Him and began to ask questions. The Master talked to them about Greek philosophy and history. They were so captivated that they came back in the evening to join the Bahá'í friends and became frequent visitors afterward. One of the Greek seekers invited 'Abdu'l-Bahá to meet more of his friends in a park outside Manhattan. They went by subway and the Master mentioned that He preferred traveling by surface railway.

* From H.M. Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p.226.

Juliet relates that on July 8th, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expressed the desire to visit the American Museum of Natural History. The Master laughed at the size of a huge whale, saying that “...he could hold seventy Jonahs!” He was very interested in the Mexican exhibit, pointing out the relationship of glyphs with Persian and Egyptian art. Answering a question, He assured that in the distant past the continents of Asia and America had been connected before a great catastrophe.*

This was a very hot day, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá appeared very tired and sat on the grass outside the Museum as if waiting for someone. An old watchman came, the Master welcomed him warmly and started to explain to him, in simple terms, the relationship of the spiritual world to the material one: “When in a house you go upstairs, the lower floor is still under you.” The old man looked startled, then his whole face lighted up: “I see!”

A few days later Juliet, thinking that she should have invited the old man, went back to the Museum and inquired about him. No one knew of any old watchman...She wondered why ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wanted to visit a Museum of Natural History under the sun on a blistering July day? Had He instead, knowingly, visited a soul whose dread of death retained him to the lower floor?

*Hopi ancestral tradition relates a similar story and a similar theory is currently accepted by scientists. In many of His Writings and in some of His talks in Europe and America, ‘Abdu’l- Bahá often referred to scientific knowledge and concepts well ahead of His time, such as the feasibility of space travels. (Paris Talks, 1913)

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S ENCOUNTERS WITH CHILDREN

One evening Juliet and some of her friends were following 'Abdu'l-Bahá down the paths of His Garden when a band of screaming children rushed out from the bushes, laughing and throwing stones at the group. The Master swept at them at a distance, saying with sorrow: "The people of the world are blind." The children "melted back into the shadow as if they had never existed." Later the Master added, "they laughed at Me, yet My dress is the dress of Jesus, just the same that He wore."

On the very next day, Juliet and a friend followed 'Abdu'l-Bahá's party going to visit Mr. and Mrs. Harris in a tenement neighborhood. There was another group of children who almost spontaneously left their games and followed the Master like "a children crusade." Juliet was struck by the contrast with the strange incident the previous night. A little girl asked her: "Please, Ma'am, is He Christ?" While talking to the children, Juliet sent her friend to inform the Master, now at the Harris' home, of the incident. She came back with the Master's invitation for the children to join Him the following Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kinney.

Howard Colby Ives described a lovely scene he witnessed that Sunday at the Kinneys' home, which by now he was visiting on a regular basis. On this day, looking out the window, Reverend Ives was astonished to see a group of some thirty "noisy, not too well dressed... urchins, but spruce and clean, enter the house." He followed them upstairs where 'Abdu'l-Bahá greeted them, one by one, with smiles and laughter. The last one was a dark colored boy and when the Master saw him, His face lit up with a heavenly smile, and He exclaimed: "Here is a black rose!" Everyone present was impressed with a feeling of wonder, which increased when 'Abdu'l-Bahá, distributing a handful of chocolates to each child with a kind word, picked up a particularly dark chocolate and "without a word, but with a humorously piercing glance that swept the group, laid the chocolate against the black cheek. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's face was radiant... and that radiance seems to fill the room." The children looked with real wonder at the colored boy as if they had never seen him before. "As for the boy, himself... his eyes fastened with an adoring, blissful look upon the Master...For the moment he was transformed. The reality of his being had been brought to the surface and the angel he really was revealed."

FULL SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES CONTINUES

'Abdu'l-Bahá's activities from the middle of July until July 23rd, when He left for a sojourn in New Hampshire, included a morning visit to the home of Juliet Thompson where Kahlil Gibran had a private meeting with Him, and where He met some of the friends in Juliet's studio on the fourth floor. On that same day, Mahmud noted that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had met with Reverend Grant and that he was visiting Him "frequently showing great humility and reverence." In the evening, at His home, the Master gave a talk to a large audience.

"This was the day of victory," proclaims Mahmud on July 14th as a multitude waited for the Master at the All Souls Unitarian Church. 'Abdu'l-Bahá delivered a major address on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and in conclusion chanted a prayer. "A new spirit was engendered in every heart...Though the Master was discomforted by the hot weather, He stood on the dais while the people filed by to shake His hand with great humility."

The evening found 'Abdu'l-Bahá in New Jersey at the home of Roy Wilhelm in West Englewood, where a group of seekers had declared their faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

The hectic schedule and the sweltering weather were taking their toll. The Master was very tired, and on the 16th of July He went to Brooklyn to enjoy a relaxing time at the home of Mr. and Mrs. MacNutt. The following day he returned home, radiant from the renewed energy found in the love of the Brooklyn friends.

To a lady doctor inquiring about the causes of calamities and troubles in the world of Creation, the Master explained that there were two kinds of calamities. Some are the consequences of man's misconduct and ignorances; others are the results of the exigencies of the contingent world and the unfoldment of the divine law, such as changes, life and death, and are inevitable. As all events are interrelated, increased ills and calamities may ensue from man's actions.*

In the evening 'Abdu'l-Bahá was very happy as He chanted a prayer at the wedding of Harlan Ober and Grace Robarts, and He witnessed the marriage vows according to the laws of Bahá'u'lláh. The Master had asked Reverend Ives to perform the legal ceremony since Bahá'í marriage was not recognized at the time.

Juliet attended the wedding, going along with her colored maid who wished 'Abdu'l-Bahá would bless her little boy. After the ceremony, Juliet took the child to the Master Who simply, sat him on His knees, talking playfully with him. Little George was so impressed that back home he told the story excitedly to his step-father, and asked: "Is this the same Master that holds the moon in His hand and makes the sun shine?" **

*Again, this concept is now a scientific theory known as "the flight of the butterfly" explaining the interrelatedness of events. It is also part of other advanced theories.

**A 1947 footnote in Juliet's Diary recalls that in 1925 a handsome young man visited her. This was George, who came to tell her how the Master's blessing "had lived like a fountain in his heart" in spite of his sufferings along with his people. He had a vivid recollection of the Master's appearance at

Juliet's home, when he had thought he was seeing God. During the second World War, Juliet heard of George again: He was a medical doctor caring for the wounded in a London hospital.

On Sunday, July 21st, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been invited by the Consul General of Turkey to a reception at his home. The Master was introduced by Mr. Topakyan, the Consul General of Persia, to a distinguished audience of dignitaries. In the evening the Master met with a group of Armenians.

The next day, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had the joy of receiving the visit of a Bahá'í friend from France, the distinguished Orientalist Hippolyte Dreyfus.* Later, He had a lengthy meeting with Prince Muhammad-Ali Pasha, brother of the Khedive of Egypt. When back in Egypt, the Prince published an account of his travels, referring to his encounter with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in admiring terms.

In 1929, Martha Root, a renowned Bahá'í traveler, visited Prince Muhammad-Ali in his palace in Cairo. The Prince spoke at length of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as he recalled how proud he was to witness the high station and prestige of the Master in New York. He said "I loved and admired 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and I felt that He loved me as a good friend."**

Among the magazine articles then published, a Harper's major story on Bahá'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Bahá concluded in these words: "They live their religion as well as teach it. This is their power."

'Abdu'l-Bahá left on the morning of July 23 for New Hampshire and an historic sojourn at Green Acre, where Sarah Farmer and her father had established a center for educational exchange which was frequented by educators and scholars of international reputation, as well as spiritualists. The Master's appearance had a great impact. Later Miss Farmer willed the school and all her properties to the Faith. Green Acre is today the best known of Bahá'í educational institutions.

*Professor Dreyfus was the first French Bahá'í . He translated several books of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings which were published by the Presses Universitaires de France in 1902 , and are reprinted to this day. Mr. Dreyfus married distinguished Bahá'í Laura Barney, translator of "Some Answered Questions", a transcript of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's answers to the questions she asked during one of her visits to Akka.

***The Bahá'í World*, Vol. IV, p.431.

THE ONENESS OF HUMANITY

While in Dublin, New Hampshire, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá announced the forthcoming marriage of Mr. Louis Gregory, a Washington lawyer of black heritage, with Miss Louisa Mathew of London, a white lady. The wedding was planned for the 27th of September in New York City. Though the Master was in Denver, Colorado, on His way to California on that day, this union was His work and the ceremony was performed in the City of the Covenant, as He had expressly wished. The simple ceremony at a Church of England took place with nine persons present, including the minister and his wife, a friend of Jewish background, and representatives of the Bahá’í Spiritual Assemblies of New York, Philadelphia and Washington.

For years, a number of Bahá’í communities had been torn by misunderstanding over racial unity and the concept of interracial marriage implied in the teachings of Bahá’ u’lláh. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had invited an unsuspecting Miss Mathew to travel with Him on the Cedric to America, and during the voyage had gradually prepared her to understand His wishes. She had met Mr. Gregory the previous year in Egypt in the presence of the Master. They were both middle-aged, mature persons who respected and were fond of each other. They understood the desire of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to make an example of their union as a service to the Faith, and their profound love for the Master gave them the courage to confront the social prejudices prevalent at the time. Their marriage was a happy one, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá described it as “an introduction to the accomplishment of good fellowship between black and white.”

THE FINAL MONTH

‘Abdu’l-Bahá returned to New York on November 11, after a journey of about three months and three weeks, which had taken Him north to the Montreal area in Canada, across the United States, back and forth, including twenty-five days in California. Fortunately, Mr. Champney’s lovely house, so dear to the friends, was available for renting again. Mr. Champney and his relatives had become Bahá’ís by this time.

This was the last month of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s sojourn in America; 23 days remained before His departure, and His task was not yet done. In 1912, very few of the Bahá’í Writings had been translated into English; consequently, Bahá’ís at the time had little concrete basis to rely upon in the deepening of their Faith. One major accomplishment of the Master’s lengthy visit was the many opportunities He had to present the Bahá’í teachings with thorough explanations to various audiences. These utterances were trustfully recorded and carbon copies of the transcripts were already circulating among the friends.

As timely as the Bahá’í teachings were to the needs of mankind, Bahá’ís in those days lacked the perspective of history to appraise the true dimensions of the Faith, the unique phenomenon which the Bahá’í Revelation constitutes in the spiritual and social evolution of mankind and which is implied in the concept of “the Covenant of God.”

To insure the integrity of His Mission, Bahá’u’lláh had designated ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of His Covenant, the sole Interpreter of His Revelation. From the start of His ministry, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had been confronted by opponents justly known as “Covenant breakers.” In 1912, some of these misguided and confused individuals lived in Chicago and were disrupting the unity of the Bahá’ís. The concept of “unity” being inherent to the fundamental structure of the Bahá’í Faith, more was at stake in Covenant-breaking than the creation of a splinter group or sect.

The primary purpose of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey to America was to officially proclaim His Station as the Center of the Covenant, to rally the unity of the Bahá’í Community, and to establish the strong foundation of love and integrity upon which the future of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh would stand and progress.

With complete disregard for His frail physical condition, the Master gave most of His time in America to the friends, to their spiritual needs, to turn their weaknesses into springboards for future greatness, to weave a web of love connections between them. Answering their ceaseless inquiries, He patiently nurtured each one of them into the Faith. As Reverend Ives noted, “He sought the soul, the reality of everyone He met.” Much was accomplished in this direction, particularly in New York City. On July 16, Mahmud could observe: “His extended stay in New York brought wonderful results among the friends.”

On June 19, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had made the official Proclamation of His Station, as “The Center of the Covenant.” On that day, the Mystery of God revealed a glimpse of the awesome spiritual power implied in the statement of Bahá’u’lláh:

“ Whosoever turns to Him hath surely turned unto God... ”

During the three weeks ahead, the last act of this historic drama was to be unfolded. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá declined most official invitations and spent the rest of His sojourn perfecting His task of unity. He poured the infinite spiritual power of His divine love into the creative energy which will make the City of the Covenant the “Center of Signs” for centuries to come.

The pattern of these final days was that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent mornings at His home, then would go to the home of Carrie and Edward Kinney, followed by other visits. He gave only a few public talks. At intervals, He would escape to His Garden to relax and catch the November sun, still bright and warm in New York.

November 12th: The Birthday of Bahá'u'lláh. Some of the friends met at the home of Mrs. Krug who had weekly women’s meetings on Tuesdays. Juliet describes the Master’s invoking “Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá” with such force that “...it was as though He were calling Someone on the same plane with Him... and Who would certainly come” and she felt His presence!

Later, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá took Juliet to His Garden and instructed her in detail on how to be firm in the Covenant and help bring unity among the friends. “...You must love Me,” He said, “for the sake of God.” “You are all I shall ever know of God,” she cried. “I am the Servant of God,” He replied.

Shaken, on the way home Juliet was wondering “Could it be that I was not firm?” The following day, Juliet went early to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s house to thank Him for His mercy and patience with her. “I was asleep and You woke me.” The Master replied: “I pray that you may ever be awake. There are a few souls in America whom I have chosen to be teachers of this Cause... I wish you to have all the qualities of the teacher.”

Addressing a large number of Bahá’ís at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kinney, the Master exhorted them “...to strive for the emancipation of their souls from passion and desire... to be aware of selfish ones who would lead them astray from the Path of God.” At first, the Master was seated between the two large rooms. Then, He rose in a majestic and dignified manner, His beautiful face transfigured by a powerful emotion and invoking the sufferings and sacrifices of Bahá'u'lláh and the Martyrs, He spoke of firmness in the Covenant. The friends, their eyes brimming with tears, were galvanized.

On the evening of November 15, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was annoyed that some people would comment that they did not see the difference between Christianity and the Bahá’í Faith, or they did not understand the advent of this New Dispensation. En route to the house of Juliet, the Master said: “The time has come for Me to throw bombs!” To a crowd occupying the entire length of the house, He spoke powerfully on the greatness of this Cycle, the great Victories of Bahá'u'lláh over the Kings and Rulers of His time, and on the meaning of the Bahá’í Revelation for mankind.

Public appearances during this period included a talk at the Genealogical Hall, on the evolution of all forms of existence, of mankind and civilizations. “He ended this address

with the chanting of a prayer which drowned the hearts in a surging sea of ecstasy and rapture..." commented Mahmud.

THE LAST ORDEAL

On November 18, upon being invited, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited the J. Pierpont Morgan Library, where He wrote a few sentences in the guest book, praising the philanthropist and asking God’s blessings on his work. The event was reported in The New York Times, including the complete translation of the Master’s remark which Dr. Farid had written in the guest book.

In the afternoon, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kinney became the stage of a drama. “The Master put Howard MacNutt through a severe ordeal, an inevitable ordeal...” commented Juliet.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá had instructed Mr. MacNutt with the mission of going to Chicago to meet with the misguided individuals and clarify their status in the Faith. Mr. MacNutt failed to understand the danger of the forces of disunity at this time in the history of the Faith and had avoided the issue, trying to justify his action in a letter to a Persian friend. The result was a dark shadow cast over the community, which since his return was shaken by arguments and uncertainty. Now, Mr. MacNutt was to meet the Master.

In the little time left before His departure, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had to act swiftly. He called Mr. MacNutt in His room, on the second floor, and after a while He was heard to sternly ordering him to publicly recognize his mistake and retract his words at once! “Go down and tell the people: I was like Saul. Now I am Paul, for I see.” * Though reluctantly, Mr. MacNutt went down the stairs to the large assembly of believers and, “his back shrunken...” barely audible, went through his retraction. During this time...”the Master leaned over the stair rail, His head thrown far back, His eyes closed, in anguished prayer... This is like Christ in Gethsemane,” Juliet thought.

When Howard MacNutt went up toward His room, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ran forward to meet him. “Our Lord was all in white that night and as He ran arms wide open He looked like a great flying bird. He unfolded Howard in a close embrace... welcomed with ecstasy this broken man who, though bewildered, had obeyed Him.” The Master then called Mr. Kinney and others to His room and asked them to embrace Howard MacNutt, and from now on to work together teaching the Cause in perfect love and unity in the City of the Covenant.

“Obedience,” the Master once said, “Obedience, is the rod by which I measure the love of the friends.” The following night, someone gloated over Mr. MacNutt’s chastisement. The Master sighed: “I immersed Mr. MacNutt in the fountain of Job last night.”**

*Reference to Biblical Saul of Tarsus who became Jesus’ Apostle Paul after his vision on the Road to Damascus.

**J. Thompson’s Diary, pp. 369-72.

Howard MacNutt’s love and gratitude for the Master never failed after his ordeal. He went on as a dedicated teacher of his beloved Faith, until his and Mrs. Mary MacNutt’s untimely death in a car accident.

THE DAY OF THE COVENANT

On November 20, 'Abdu'l-Bahá made a last visit to the home of Juliet and Mrs. Thompson. After resting in one of Juliet's room, He visited every room of the house and said: "This house is blessed." These words echoed in the heart of Juliet and her mother for ever...

By spending Saturday, November 23, in Montclair, New Jersey, the Master missed the booking deadline for the S.S. Mauretania, to the delight of the friends. In the evening, the Day of the Covenant was celebrated with a great banquet at the Great Northern Hotel. The banquet room was magnificent; more than 300 Bahá'ís attended, some coming from the regions of Washington, Philadelphia and Boston. A few dignitaries such as Mr. Topakyan, were also invited. Before the food was served, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went among the guests, anointing everyone with attar of rose, a Persian custom to honor guests. The Master gave a short talk.

As the Great Northern Hotel manager had stubbornly and vehemently refused to allow black guests at the banquet, the friends organized a great interracial feast at the home of the Kinneys the following day. Many of the white ladies rose to serve the meal. The Master was very pleased and said: "Today you have shown the Commandments of the Blessed Beauty in your actions and have acted according to the teaching of the Supreme Pen."

On November 25, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was the honored guest at the annual luncheon of the Club Minerva at the Waldorf Astoria hotel. Mrs. Mary MacNutt was the President of this renowned women's club. The Master spoke on the virtues and rights of women. He next visited the home of Mrs. Asa Cochran, where He gave a talk on the abolition of prejudices and on acquiring perfection through spiritual power.

Later, Juliet was at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home waiting for the Master with Dr. Percy Grant, who had come for his farewell visit. The Master was happy to see Dr. Grant and apologized for keeping him waiting. He said, "I was captured by 300 women this afternoon. Is it not a dreadful thing?" They met in private in the Master's room. Dr. Farid, who was the interpreter, later told Juliet that Dr. Grant had expressed great concern for the safety of 'Abdu'l-Bahá who was going to a war area (Turkey and the Balkans) and had offered his services to help Him in any way he could, asking to be kept informed of His well-being.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was born on May 23rd, 1844, on the same night the Báb, Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, revealed His Mission. In the early days of the Faith in Akka, the Master told the Persian friends, that this day was not to be celebrated as His birthday. It was the Day of the Declaration of the Báb, exclusively associated with Him. But, as the friends begged for a day to be celebrated as His, He gave them November 26th, to be observed as the day of the appointment of the Centre of the Covenant. It was known as the great Festival, because 'Abdu'l-Bahá was the Greatest Branch. In the West, it became known as the Day of the Covenant.*

In this context, the scene witnessed by Juliet on this November 26, 1912, in New York, takes a special significance.

On this Day of the Covenant, Juliet went to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kinney to meet with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He was on the upper floor with the Persian friends, Mr. Montford Mill, Carrie Kinney and others. Dr. Bagdadi and Dr. Farid were working on the official translation of The Tablet of The Branch under the stern supervision of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The translation was submitted sentence by sentence to the Master until He was satisfied with the rendering. “I shall never forget... His sternness, His terrific majesty as he directed that translation.” Throughout the proceedings, Juliet was overwhelmed and reacted with uncontrollable crying, comforted by Mahmud and Valíyu’lláh Khán, who understood her feelings.

Future generations of Bahá’ís can only be grateful for Juliet Thompson’s great love for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and her sincerity, that He had praised. In her emotional testimony, we can see, unfolding within three days, the historical purpose of the Mystery of God in the City of the Covenant: June 19; November 18 and 26- events which can be remembered as the divine triptych which firmly established the continuity of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh. **

*From H.M. Balyuzi “‘Abdu’l-Bahá,” p.523.

**During a 1980 pilgrimage in Haifa, this writer asked Hand of the Cause Mr. Furitan, if he knew the purpose of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the City of the Covenant. Mr. Furitan explained that the Master had planned to build up the unity of the Bahá’ís in New York City to counter the destructive activities of the Covenant-breakers in Chicago. Mr. Furitan asserted: “Yes, and He stopped the Chicago Covenant-breakers from New York toward the end of His sojourn!”

Also, at the Bahá’í International Archives, inquiry was made about the status of Juliet Thompson’s diary. The friends were shown a package wrapped in brown paper and string with Shoghi Effendi’s hand writing: “ Diary of Juliet Thompson to be published in due time.” And we were told “Shoghi Effendi loved it!”

FAREWELL!...

During the last few days, the house of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was crowded with eager friends. The Master told them: “I always derive pleasure from our meetings. I shall always remember these days.” The friends came to look at His face, “to turn to the Dawning Place of the Divine Covenant... He was imparting joy to the sad, hope to the hopeless and a flame to the dormant while He guided strugglers to the right path.” At another time, the Master said, “...the purpose of the Holy Manifestations of God was not to found religions and churches, but to educate souls who will become teachers of mankind... The people of Bahá must endeavor day and night to enforce this divine purpose.”

On that Thanksgiving Day, November 28, the Master expressed love for Americans and hope in their destiny to evolve toward spirituality with the same energy now directed toward material achievements.

Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Emery had invited ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to move to their home for the last few days, but most of the large meetings were held at the Kinneys’ until the end. Some of the friends wanted to offer money to the Master and gifts of jewelry for His relatives. He asked them to give everything to the poor. As the friends insisted, He said that He accepted their gifts, but they should sell them for His sake and give the proceeds to the fund for the construction of the House of Worship in Wilmette.

Speaking of impending international war, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expressed the wish that America would lead the world to peace and world unity. “In the religion of Bahá’u’lláh this question of peace is a positive command and a religious obligation... It is a positive divine command and is, thus, certain to come to pass.”

At the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kinney on December 2, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá announced His departure. “These are the days of my farewell to you, for I am sailing on the 5th of the month. Wherever I went in this country I returned always to New York City.” The Master gave a beautiful exhortation ending with these words: “Be illumined, be spiritual, be divine, be glorious, be quickened of God, be a Bahá’í.”

This was not yet the end. In spite of all the final preparations, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continued to have meetings at the Kinneys’, mostly with Bahá’ís. However, ministers and rabbis still sought to reach Him for guidance until the last day. His final public appearance was made the evening before His departure, at the Theosophical Society, where He delivered an address on the eternity of creation, the evolution of the spirit, and the power of the Manifestation of God.

Juliet had asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for permission to stay “in some corner of His home” the entire day of December 4. She was allowed to do so although He was seeing many others. After everyone had left, the Master told Juliet that the proceeds of the sale of the photographs of His portrait that she had planned to send to the Temple fund were for her to keep. He was aware of Mrs. Thompson’s and Juliet’s dire financial situation since the death of her father. The portrait had been exhibited at the Church of the Ascension for several weeks, and now ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was taking it with Him.*

On Thursday, December 5th, Juliet had gone early in the morning to the Emery's (last home of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in New York). She was trying to fill her memory with the Master's every move and expressions. The Master took her hand telling her, "Remember, I am with you always. Bahá'u'lláh will be with you always." He had expressed often these thoughts to the friends.

Juliet and some of the friends drove to the pier with the Master and followed Him up to His cabin on the S.S. Celtic. Then they all went to the large first class lounge, packed with Bahá'ís from various parts of the country. Walking back and forth, a familiar action when speaking to the friends, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave them His last exhortation in the City of the Covenant, while all the friends were weeping quietly.

* The original portrait has been lost. Only a few of the 1912 photographs are kept in private and bahá'í archives. The illustration in this book is one of these 1912 prints, from the estate of Mrs. Asa Cochran, courtesy of the Hopson-Samuel family.

He reminded the friends that they were standing for the unity of all nations and for world peace while a war raged in the Balkans. Then He said, "As to you, your efforts must be lofty. Exert yourselves with heart and soul that perchance through your efforts the light of Universal Peace may shine and this darkness of estrangement and enmity may be dispelled from amongst men.

"You have no excuse to bring before God if you fail to live according to His command, for you are informed of that which constitutes the good pleasure of God... It is my hope that you may become successful in this high calling, so that like brilliant lamps you may cast light upon the world of humanity and quicken and stir the body of existence like unto a spirit of life.

"This is eternal glory. This is everlasting felicity. This is immortal life. This is heavenly attainment. This is being created in God's image and likeness. And unto this I call you, praying God to strengthen and bless you."

The passengers and officers of the Celtic were astonished at the scene: "Their surprise was beyond expression," noted Mahmud. "The Master was seated in a corner of the lounge, while the believers flocked around Him for the last minutes left." Juliet lamented, "...It was death to leave that ship. I stood on the pier with May Maxwell, tears blurred my sight. Through them, I could see the Master in the midst of the group of Persians waving a patient hand to us. It waved and waved, that beautiful hand, till the Figure was lost to sight."

From the ship, Mahmud could see the friends on the pier, "...the steamer moved out to sea, but as far as the eyes could see the multitude of the friends surged like a mighty host... The Beloved spoke about the power of the Greatest Name. 'Behold!' He said, 'By the power of the Cause of God a new spirit has been breathed into the hearts which has produced a change in the souls. Continuously the assistance of the Beauty of Abhá reached us and invariably the lights of victory shone from the Supreme Horizon. We received the

confirmations of the Kingdom of God and the assistance of the Invisible Sovereignty of the Beauty of Abhá which He promised clearly in the verse:

'We see you from the horizon of Abhá and with the hosts of the Supreme Concourse and the armies of the Angels of Nearness We assist those who rise to help the Cause.'"

IN CONCLUSION

We may take the time to reflect on the extraordinary events that took place in this country in 1912 as they were part of a greater pattern.

In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi, after relating the trials and sufferings of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá and the recovery of His freedom, wrote: “So momentous a change in the fortune of the Faith was the signal for such an outburst of activity on His part as to dumbfound His followers in East and West with admiration and wonder, and exercise an imperishable influence on the course of its future history. He Who, in His own words, had entered prison as a youth and left it as an old man, Who never in His life had faced a public audience, had attended no school, had never moved in Western circles and was unfamiliar with Western customs and language, had arisen not only to proclaim from pulpit and platform in some of the chief capitals of Europe and in the leading cities of the North American continent, the distinctive verities enshrined in His Father’s Faith, but to demonstrate as well the divine origin of the Prophets gone before Him and to disclose the nature of the tie binding them to that Faith.”

In this country, followed by throngs of Bahá’ís and anonymous people alike, and trailed by groups of astonished journalists and writers, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to the lowliest of society and to the loftiest socialites, to leaders of thought and representatives of governments. He addressed large audiences, praising Christ in synagogues, bringing Mohammad’s teachings to Christian churches and the unity of religion and science to universities, further proclaiming the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and His Mission of Peace to a world at the brink of world war. The Master nurtured the friends, one soul at a time, captivating new believers, confirming wavering ones, and made proud standard-bearers of the humblest, uniting all in the embracing shelter of His Divine Love.

Finally, The Mystery of God, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, unveiling the Spiritual Power of His Station as Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, endowed New York with the imperishable title of “City of the Covenant.”

The City of the Covenant 1987/1998

APPENDIX 1

THE SECOND BAHÁ'Í WORLD CONGRESS 23-26 November 1992

The 1992 World Congress was called by the Universal House of Justice to “celebrate the centenary of the inauguration of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, and to proclaim its aims and unifying power.” The World Congress was part of the Holy Year commemorating the centennial of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh and the site of the Congress was New York City, The City of the Covenant, as designated by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá. The event lasted four days ending on the Day of the Covenant.

United States President George Bush sent his greetings from the White House and the Honorable Mario M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, sent an official statement of welcome.

The Congress was officially opened by the Honorable David N. Dinkins, the (first black) Mayor of the City of New York, reading a Proclamation welcoming the international community of Bahá'ís, acknowledging the principles of the Faith, and evoking the Person of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá who “visited New York City in 1912, calling it ‘The City of the Covenant.’” In response, Mayor Dinkins was presented with a framed reproduction of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's Prayer for the City of New York:

*Bless Thou, O King of Kings, the City of New York!
Cause the friends there to be kind to one another. Purify their souls
and make their hearts to be free and detached. Illumine the world
of their consciousness. Exhilarate their spirits and bestow celestial
power and confirmation upon them. Establish there a heavenly realm,
so that the City of Bahá may prosper and New York be favored with
blessings from the Abhá Kingdom, that this region may become like
the all-highest Paradise, may develop into a vineyard of God and be
transformed into a heavenly orchard and a spiritual rose garden.*

‘Abdu'l-Bahá

The Congress, beautifully organized, and incredibly awe-inspiring, was unforgettable for the nearly 30,000 Bahá'ís who participated, mostly from the Hemisphere and from around the world, many wearing their traditional dress.

Among the events attended, friends involved with the production of this book, were particularly moved by the “‘Abdu'l-Bahá's Mission to America” theme pavilion. The visitors were greeted by a life-size portrait of the Master reproducing the 1912 photograph opening this book. Spread out over five imposing rooms, large cut out dioramas of 1912 New York and panels of various enlarged photographs brought to life the Bahá'í scenes evoked in these pages. The visit concluded in a quiet room with the recording of ‘Abdu'l- Bahá's voice.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s 1912 film was also part of the program.

MAJOR ADDRESSES

All material in the following sections is compiled from “ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in New York” a 1932 book now out of print.

Following is the exact text of the first address delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the Church of the Ascension, Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street on April 14, 1912, marking His first public address in the United States. A second address was delivered by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the Church of the Ascension on June 2, 1912 at the People Forum.

In his scriptural lesson this morning the revered Doctor read a verse from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."

The light of truth has heretofore been seen dimly through variegated glasses, but now the splendors of divinity shall be visible through the translucent mirrors of pure hearts and spirits. The light of truth is the divine teaching, heavenly instruction, merciful principles and spiritual civilization. Since my arrival in this country I find that material civilization has progressed greatly; that commerce has attained the utmost degree of expansion; arts, agriculture and all details of material civilization have reached the highest stage of perfection; but spiritual civilization has been left behind. Material civilization is like unto the lamp, while spiritual civilization is the light in that lamp. If the material and spiritual civilization become united, then we will have the light and the lamp together and the outcome will be perfect. For material civilization is like unto a beautiful body and spiritual civilization is like unto the spirit of life. If that wondrous spirit of life enters this beautiful body, the body will become a channel for the distribution and development of the perfections of humanity.

His Holiness Jesus Christ came to teach the people of the world this heavenly civilization and not material civilization. He breathed the breath of the Holy Spirit into the body of the world and established an illumined civilization. Among the principles of divine civilization he came to proclaim is the "Most Great Peace" of mankind. Among his principles of spiritual civilization is the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Among the principles of heavenly civilization he brought is the virtue of the human world. Among the principles of celestial civilization he announced is the improvement and betterment of human morals.

Today the world of humanity is in need of international unity and conciliation. To establish these great fundamental principles a propelling power is needed. It is self-evident that unity of the human world and the "Most Great Peace" cannot be accomplished through material means. They cannot be established through political power, for the political interests of nations are various and the policies of peoples are divergent and conflicting. They cannot be founded through racial or patriotic power, for these are human powers, selfish and weak. The very nature of racial differences and patriotic prejudices prevents the realization of this unity and agreement. Therefore it is evidenced that the promotion of the oneness of the

kingdom of humanity which is the essence of the teachings of all the manifestations of God is impossible except through the divine power and breaths of the Holy Spirit. Other powers are too weak and are incapable of accomplishing this.

For man, two wings are necessary. One wing is physical power and material civilization; the other is spiritual power and divine civilization. With one wing only, flight is impossible. Two wings are essential. Therefore no matter how much material civilization advances it cannot attain to perfection except through uplift of the spiritual civilization.

All the prophets have come to promote divine bestowals, to found the spiritual civilization and teach the principles of morality. Therefore we must strive with all our powers so that spiritual influences may gain the victory. For material forces have attacked mankind. The world of humanity is submerged in a sea of materialism. The rays of the Sun of Reality are seen but dimly and darkly through opaque glasses. The penetrative power of the divine bounty is not fully manifest.

In Persia, among the various religions and sects there were intense differences. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh appeared in that country and founded the spiritual civilization. He established affiliation among the various peoples, promoted the oneness of the human world and unfurled the banner of the "Most Great Peace." He wrote special epistles covering these facts to all the kings and rulers of nations. Sixty years ago he conveyed his message to the leaders of the political world and to high dignitaries of the spiritual world. Therefore spiritual civilization is progressing in the Orient and oneness of humanity and peace among the nations is being accomplished step by step. Now I find a strong movement for Universal Peace emanating from America. It is my hope that this standard of the oneness of the world of humanity may be upheld with the utmost solidity, so that the Orient and Occident may become perfectly reconciled, attain complete inter-communication, the hearts of the East and West become united and attracted, real union become unveiled, the light of guidance shine, divine effulgences be seen day by day so that the world of humanity may find complete tranquillity, the eternal happiness of man become evident and the hearts of the people of the world be as mirrors in which the rays of the Sun of Reality may be reflected. Consequently it is my request that you should strive so that the light of reality may shine and the everlasting felicity of the world of man become apparent.

I will pray for you so you may attain this everlasting happiness. When I arrived in this city I was made very happy for I perceived that the people here have capacity for divine bestowals and have worthiness for the civilization of heaven. I pray that you may attain to all merciful bounties.

Prayer:

0 Almighty! 0 God! 0 Thou compassionate One! This servant of thine has hastened to the regions of the west from the uttermost parts of the east that perchance these nostrils may be perfumed by the fragrances of thy bestowals; that the breeze of the rose-garden of guidance may blow over these cities; that the people may attain to the capacity of receiving thy favors; that the hearts may be rejoiced through thy glad-tidings; that the eyes may behold the light of reality; that the ears may hearken to the call of the kingdom. 0 Almighty! Illumine the hearts. 0 kind God! Make the souls the envy of the rose-garden and the meadow. 0 incomparable

beloved! Waft the fragrance of thy bounty. Radiate the lights of compassion so that the hearts may be cleansed and purified and that they may take a share and portion from thy confirmations. Verily this congregation is seeking thy path, searching for thy mystery, beholding thy face and desiring to be characterized with thine attributes.

0 Almighty! Confer Thy infinite bounties. Bestow Thy inexhaustible treasury so that these impotent ones may become powerful.

Verily thou art the kind! Thou art the generous! Thou art the omniscient, the omnipotent!

THE MOST GREAT PEACE

May 13, 1912, at Hotel Astor. Reception by New York Peace Society.

Today there is no greater glory for man than that of service in the cause of the "Most Great Peace." Peace is light whereas war is darkness. Peace is life; war is death. Peace is guidance; war is error. Peace is the foundation of God; war is a satanic institution. Peace is the illumination of the world of humanity; war is the destroyer of human foundations. When we consider outcomes in the world of existence we find that peace and fellowship are factors of upbuilding and betterment whereas war and strife are the causes of destruction and disintegration. All created things are expressions of the affinity and cohesion of elementary substances, and non-existence is the absence of their attraction and agreement. Various elements unite harmoniously in composition but when these elements become discordant, repelling each other, decomposition and non-existence result. Everything partakes of this nature and is subject to this principle, for the creative foundation in all its degrees and kingdom is an expression or outcome of love. Consider the restlessness and agitation of the human world today because of war. Peace is health and construction; war is disease and dissolution. When the banner of truth is raised, peace becomes the cause of the welfare and advancement of the human world. In all cycles and ages war has been a factor of derangement and discomfort whereas peace and brotherhood have brought security and consideration to human interests. This distinction is especially pronounced in the present world conditions, for warfare in former centuries had not attained the degree of savagery and destructiveness which now characterizes it. If two nations were at war in olden times, ten or twenty thousand would be sacrificed but in this century the destruction of one hundred thousand lives in a day is quite possible. So perfected has the science of killing become and so efficient the means and instruments of its accomplishment that a whole nation can be obliterated in a short time. Therefore comparison with the methods and results of ancient warfare is out of the question.

According to an intrinsic law, all phenomena of being attain to a summit and degree of consummation, after which a new order and condition is established. As the instruments and science of war have reached the degree of thoroughness and proficiency, it is hoped that the transformation of the human world is at hand and that in the coming centuries all the energies and inventions of man will be utilized in promoting the interest of peace and brotherhood. Therefore may this esteemed and worthy society for the establishment of international peace be confirmed in its sincere intentions and empowered by God. Then will it hasten the time when the banner of universal agreement will be raised and international

welfare will be proclaimed and consummated so that the darkness which now encompasses the world shall pass away.

Sixty years ago His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh was in Persia. Seventy years ago His Holiness the Báb appeared there. These two blessed souls devoted their lives to the foundation of international peace and love among mankind. They strove with heart and soul to establish the teachings by which divergent people might be brought together and no strife, rancor or hatred prevail. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, addressing all humanity, said that Adam the parent of mankind may be likened to the tree of nativity upon which you are the leaves and blossom. Inasmuch as your origin was one, you must now be united and agreed; you must consort with each other in joy and fragrance. He pronounced prejudice, whether religious, racial, patriotic, political, the destroyer of the body-politic. He said that man must recognize the oneness of humanity, for all in origin belong to the same household and all are servants of the same God. Therefore mankind must continue in the state of fellowship and love, emulating the institutions of God and turning away from satanic promptings, for the divine bestowals bring forth unity and agreement whereas satanic readings induce hatred and war.

This remarkable personage was able by these principles to establish a bond of unity among the differing sects and divergent people of Persia. Those who followed his teachings, no matter from what denomination or faction they came, were conjoined by the ties of love, until now they co-operate and live together in peace and agreement. They are real brothers and sisters. No distinctions of class are observed among them and complete harmony prevails. Daily this bond of affinity is strengthening and their spiritual fellowship continually develops. In order to insure the progress of mankind and to establish these principles His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh suffered every ordeal and difficulty. His Holiness the Báb became a martyr, and over twenty thousand men and women sacrificed their lives for their faith. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned and subjected to severe persecutions. Finally he was exiled from Persia to Mesopotamia; from Baghdad he was sent to Constantinople and Adrianople and from thence to the prison of 'Akká in Syria. Through all these ordeals he strove day and night to proclaim the oneness of humanity and promulgate the message of Universal Peace. From the prison of 'Akká he addressed the kings and rulers of the earth in lengthy letters summoning them to international agreement and explicitly stating that the standard of the "Most Great Peace" would surely be upraised in the world.

This has come to pass. The powers of earth cannot withstand the privileges and bestowals which God has ordained for this great and glorious century. It is a need and exigency of the time. Man can withstand anything except that which is divinely intended and indicated for the age and its requirements. Now, praise be to God! in all countries of the world, lovers of peace are to be found and these principles are being spread among mankind, especially in this country. Praise be to God! this thought is prevailing and souls are continually arising as defenders of the oneness of humanity, endeavoring to assist and establish international peace. Let this century be the sun of previous centuries the effulgences of which shall last forever, so that in times to come they shall glorify the twentieth century, saying the twentieth century was the century of light, the twentieth century was the century of life, the twentieth century was the century of international peace, the twentieth century was the century of divine bestowals and the twentieth century has left traces which shall last forever.

THE UNITY FEAST

Unity Feast, June 29, 1912, at West Englewood, New Jersey.

This is a delightful gathering; you have come here with sincere intentions and the purpose of all present is the attainment of the virtues of God. The motive is attraction to the divine Kingdom. Since the desire of all is unity and agreement it is certain that this meeting will be productive of great results. It will be the cause of attracting a new bounty, for we are turning to the Kingdom of Abhá seeking the infinite bestowals of the Lord. This is a new Day and this hour is a new Hour in which we have come together. Surely the Sun of Reality with its full effulgence will illumine us and the darkness of disagreements will disappear. The utmost love and unity will result, the favors of God will encompass us, the pathway of the Kingdom will be made easy. Like candles these souls will become ignited and made radiant through the lights of supreme guidance. Such gatherings as this have no equal or likeness in the world of mankind where people are drawn together by physical motives or in furtherance of material interests, for this meeting is a prototype of that inner and complete spiritual association in the eternal world of being.

True Bahá'í meetings are the mirrors of the Kingdom wherein images of the Supreme Concourse are reflected. In them the lights of the most great guidance are visible. They voice the summons of the heavenly Kingdom and echo the call of the angelic hosts to every listening ear. The efficacy of such meetings as these is permanent throughout the ages. This assembly has a name and significance which will last forever. Hundreds of thousands of meetings shall be held to commemorate this occasion and the very words I speak to you today shall be repeated in them for ages to come. Therefore be ye rejoiced for ye are sheltered beneath the providence of God. Be happy and joyous because the bestowals of God are intended for you and the life of the Holy Spirit is breathing upon you.

Rejoice, for the heavenly table is prepared for you.

Rejoice, for the angels of heaven are your assistants and helpers.

Rejoice, for the glance of the Blessed Beauty Bahá'u'lláh is directed upon you.

Rejoice, for Bahá'u'lláh is your protector.

Rejoice, for the glory everlasting is destined for you.

Rejoice, for the life eternal is awaiting you.

How many blessed souls have longed for this radiant century, their utmost hopes and desires centered upon the happiness and joy of one such day as this. Many the nights they passed sleepless and lamenting until the very morn in longing anticipation of this age, yearning to realize even an hour of this time. God has favored you in this century and has specialized you for the realization of its blessings. Therefore you must praise and thank God with heart and soul in appreciation of this great opportunity and the attainment of this infinite bestowal; that such doors have been opened before your faces, such abundance is pouring down from the cloud of mercy and that these refreshing breezes from the paradise of Abhá are resuscitating you. You must become of one heart, one spirit and one susceptibility. May you become as the waves of one sea, stars of the same heaven, fruits adorning the same tree, roses of one garden; in order that through you the oneness of humanity may establish its temple in the world of mankind, for you are the ones who are called to uplift the cause of unity among the nations of the earth.

First, you must become united and agreed among yourselves. You must be exceedingly kind and loving toward each other, willing to forfeit life in the pathway of another's happiness. You must be ready to sacrifice your possessions in another's behalf. The rich among you must show compassion toward the poor, and the well-to-do must look after those in distress. In Persia the friends offer their lives for each other, striving to assist and advance the interests and welfare of all the rest. They live in a perfect state of unity and agreement. Like the Persian friends you must be perfectly agreed and united to the extent and limit of sacrificing life. Your utmost desire must be to confer happiness upon each other. Each one must be the servant of the others, thoughtful of their comfort and welfare. In the path of God one must forget himself entirely. He must not consider his own pleasure but seek the pleasure of others. He must not desire glory nor gifts of bounty for himself but seek these gifts and blessings for his brothers and sisters. It is my hope that you may become like this; that you may attain to the supreme bestowal and be imbued with such spiritual qualities as to forget yourselves entirely and with heart and soul offer yourselves as sacrifices for the Blessed Perfection. You should have neither will nor desire of your own but seek everything for the beloved of God and live together in complete love and fellowship. May the favors of Bahá'u'lláh surround you from all directions. This is the greatest bestowal and supreme bounty. These are the infinite favors of God.

RELIGION & SCIENCE

Address of 'Abd'u'l-Bahá at Earl Hall, Columbia University, New York, Friday, April 19, 1912.

If an observing man looks around him in the world of creation, he will find that created things are divisible into three classes. First: created things of the mineral type; that is to say, matter or substance which has taken various forms and shapes. The second kind of created phenomena are the plants or vegetable kingdom. The vegetable possesses the virtues of the mineral plus the power or virtue of change; that is to say, the power of growth. Hence plant life is a step further and more specialized than the mineral. The third created object is the animal. The animal possesses the virtues of the mineral and the virtues of the vegetable, but above that, it is endowed with sensation. It has the sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. Therefore the animal is possessed of the virtues of the mineral, the vegetable and in addition is endowed with peculiar qualities of sensitiveness. But man who is the most specialized form of creation embodies all the virtues of the mineral, vegetable and animal, plus an ideal power which is not to be found in the others, which is absolutely absent in the others. This can be said to be the power of intellect. The outcome of this intellectual power is science, which is especially characteristic of man. This is the power of external investigation, the discoverer of the mysteries of outer phenomena. This scientific power comprehends all created objects. This power verily can discover the hidden and mysterious things of the earth. In man alone this is noticeable. The most noble virtue, the most praiseworthy accomplishment of man therefore is scientific attainment. Science may be likened to a mirror wherein are reflected the images of these mysteries of outer phenomena. Science is powerful enough to bring before us the ages of the past and link the past to the present. It is science which can bring forth and exhibit to us, as it were, in the arena of knowledge all that has been latent or hidden in the past. The philosophical conclusions of by-gone centuries, the wisdom of former sages, science can reproduce for us in the form of an epitome. Science can review for us the teachings of all the prophets and wise men. Science is therefore the discoverer of the past. Basing itself upon the premises of

the past and present, science can deduce conclusions as to what shall be in the future. Science is the governor of nature, - the governor of the mysteries of nature, - the one agency which can explore the institutions of nature. All created things are captives of nature. Science is the "breaker" as it were of the laws of nature. All created objects that we see are under natural law. They cannot trespass the laws of nature in one detail or particular. All the infinite starry worlds and planets are the subjects or captives of nature. All the belongings of this earth, all created things upon this globe are captives of nature. All minerals, vegetables and animals are captives of nature. But man through his scientific power can change this; can modify and change the laws of nature.

Consider for example, man, according to natural law, must dwell upon the earth. But breaking this law he can sail in vessels over the ocean, fly in the atmosphere in airships or advance through the depths of the sea in submarines. This is against the law of nature; this breaks the sovereignty of nature. According to nature's laws and methods all the science we have, all the inventions and discoveries we have should be hidden. According to nature they should not be open and known, they should be mysteries. But man through the power of science takes them out of the plane of the invisible and unknown, breaks the very laws of nature, draws them into the plane of the visible, exposes and explains them. For instance one of the mysteries of nature is electricity. According to nature this force, this energy should be latent and hidden, but man through his scientific power breaks the laws of nature, arrests it and even imprisons it for his use.

In short, man through this scientific power is the most noble of creation, the governor of nature. He takes the sword from nature's hand and uses it on nature's head. According to nature the night is to be dark and gloomy but man takes his sword of electricity, this electric sword, kills the darkness and dispels the gloom. Man is progressive, nature is not; man has memory, nature has not. Man is a sensitive being, nature is minus. Man is nobler than nature. There are certain powers in man which are absent in nature. If it be claimed that these powers which are present in man are from nature itself, that man is a part of nature, in response to this we will say that if nature is the whole and man is part of that whole, the question arises is it possible for a part to possess virtues which are absent in the whole? No, undoubtedly the part must be endowed with the same qualities and properties as the whole. For example, the hair is a part of this human anatomy. It cannot contain elements which are absent in other parts of the body, for in all cases the elements composing the body are the same. Therefore it becomes evident and manifest that man although in body a part of nature, nevertheless in spirit possesses a power which is beyond nature; because were he simply a part of nature he could possess only the things which nature possesses. God has conferred upon and added to man this distinctive power, this power of intellect, this power or faculty of knowledge; and its greatest virtue is scientific enlightenment.

Inasmuch as this is an endowment for the acquisition of knowledge it is therefore the most praiseworthy power of all, for by it and through its attainments the betterment of the human race is accomplished, the development of human virtues is made possible and the spirit and mysteries of God become manifest. Therefore I am very pleased with my visit to this place. Praise be to God, that this country abounds in such institutions of learning where all the sciences and arts may easily be acquired. Just as material and physical sciences may be acquired here and are constantly unfolding, I am hopeful that spiritual development also may keep pace with these outer advantages. As material knowledge is illuminating those

within the walls of this university so also may the light of the spirit, the inner and spiritual light of the real philosophy illuminate this institution. The most important principle of divine philosophy is the oneness of the world of humanity, the unity of mankind, the bond which will conjoin the East and the West, the tie of love which should bind the hearts of men.

Therefore it is our duty to put forth our greatest efforts and summon our energies from all directions in order that the bonds of unity and accord may be established among mankind. For six thousand years we have had bloodshed and strife. It is enough; it is sufficient. Now is the time to associate together in love and harmony. For six thousand years we have tried the sword and warfare; let mankind for a time at least live in peace. Review history and consider how much savagery, how much bloodshed and warfare the world has witnessed. It has been either religious warfare, political warfare or some clash of human interests. The world of humanity has not enjoyed peace even for a single day. Year by year the implements of warfare have been increased and perfected. Consider the past ages; when war took place only ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand at the most were killed, but now it is possible to kill one hundred thousand in a single day. Then warfare was carried on with the sword; today it is the smokeless gun. Formerly battleships consisted of sailing vessels; today there are dreadnoughts. Consider the increase and improvement in the implements of warfare. God has created us all human, and all countries of the earth are parts of the same globe. We are all servants of Him. He is kind and just to all. Why should we be unkind and unjust to each other? He provides for all. Why should we deprive one another? He protects and preserves all. Why should we kill our fellow-creatures? If this warfare and strife be for the sake of religion, religion has no part in it. All the Divine Manifestations have promulgated the Oneness of God and the unity of Mankind. They have taught that men should love and mutually help each other in order that they might progress. Now if this conception of religion be true, its essential principle is the oneness of humanity. The fundamental truth of the Manifestations is peace. If not they are false and will fail. But as a matter of fact this fundamental truth underlies all religion, all justice. The Divine purpose is that men should live in unity, concord and agreement and should love one another. Consider the virtues of the human world and realize that the oneness of humanity is the primary foundation of them all. Read the Gospel and the other Holy Books. You will find their fundamentals are one and the same. Therefore unity is the essential truth of Religion, and when so understood embraces all the virtues of the human world. Praise be to God, this knowledge has been spread, eyes have been opened and ears have become attentive. Therefore we must endeavor to promulgate and practice the Religion of God which has been founded by all the Prophets. And the Religion of God in short is absolute love and unity. I hope that at some future time I may elaborate upon this theme.

FIRST ADDRESS ON RACE UNITY

Talk Given by 'Abdul-Bahá at 780 West End Avenue, New York City (Home of Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Kinney), April 17, 1912.

In the Holy Books it is recorded that when the Sun of Truth dawns it will appear in the East and its Light will be reflected in the West. Already its dawning has taken place in the East and its signs are appearing in the West. Its illumination shall spread rapidly and widely in the Occident. That Sun of Truth has risen in Persia and its effulgence is now manifest here

in America. This is the greatest proof of its appearance in the horizon of the world, as recorded in the Heavenly Books. Praise be to God! that which is prophesied in the Holy Books has been fulfilled.

On Sunday last, at Carnegie Hall, the revered soul who introduced 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave voice to the statement that according to tradition demons would appear from the land of the sun-rising, but now we find angels appearing instead. At the time this statement was made a reply was not possible but today we will speak of it. The great Spiritual Lights have appeared only in the East. The Blessed Perfection Bahá'u'lláh appeared in the East. His Holiness Jesus Christ dawned on the horizon of the East. Moses, Aaron, Joseph and all the Israelite prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and others, appeared from the Orient. The Lights of Mohammed and the Báb shone from the East. The Eastern horizon has been flooded with the effulgence of these great lights, and only from the East have they risen to shine upon the West. Now, praise be to God! you are living in the dawn of a cycle when the Sun of Truth is again shining forth from the East, illumining all regions.

The world has become a new world. The darkness of night which has enveloped humanity is passing. A new day has dawned. Divine susceptibilities and heavenly capacities are developing in human souls under the training of the Sun of Truth. The capacities of souls are different. Their conditions are various. For example, certain minerals come from the stony regions of the earth. All are minerals; all are produced by the same sun, but one remains a stone while another develops the capacity of a glittering gem or jewel. From one plot of land tulips and hyacinths grow; from another, thorns and thistles. Each plot receives the bounty of the sunshine, but the capacity to receive it is not the same. Therefore it is requisite that we must develop capacity and Divine susceptibility in order that the merciful Bounty of the Sun of Truth intended for this age and time in which we are living, may reflect from us as light from pure crystals.

The Bounties of the Blessed Perfection are infinite. We must endeavor to increase our capacity daily, to strengthen and enlarge our capabilities for receiving them; become as perfect mirrors. The more polished and clean the mirror, the more effulgent is its reflection of the Lights of the Sun of Truth. Be like a well cultivated garden wherein the roses and variegated flowers of heaven are growing in fragrance and beauty. It is my hope that your hearts may become as ready ground, carefully tilled and prepared, upon which the Divine showers of the Bounties of the Blessed Perfection may descend and the zephyrs of this Divine springtime may blow with quickening breath. Then will the garden of your hearts bring forth its flowers of delightful fragrance to refresh the nostril of the Heavenly Gardener. Let your hearts reflect the glories of the Sun of Truth in their many colors to gladden the eye of the Divine Cultivator who has nourished them. Day by day become more closely attracted in order that the Love of God may illumine all those with whom you come in contact. Be as one spirit, one soul, leaves of one tree, flowers of one garden, waves of one ocean.

As difference in degree of capacity exists among human souls; as difference in capability is found, therefore individuals will differ one from another. But in reality this is a cause of unity and not of discord and enmity. If the flowers of a garden were all of one color, the effect would be monotonous to the eye; but if the colors are variegated, it is most pleasing and wonderful. The difference in adornment of color and capacity of reflection among the flowers gives the garden its beauty and charm. Therefore, although we are of different

individualities, different in ideas, and of various fragrances, let us strive like flowers of the same Divine garden to live together in harmony. Even though each soul has its own individual perfume and color, all are reflecting the same Light, all contributing fragrance to the same breeze which blows through the garden, all continuing to grow in complete harmony and accord. Become as waves of one sea; trees of one forest, growing in the utmost love, agreement and unity.

If you attain to such a capacity of love and unity, the Blessed Perfection will shower infinite graces of the Spiritual Kingdom upon you, guide, protect and preserve you under the shadow of His Word, increase your happiness in this world and uphold you through all difficulties. Therefore it is my hope that day by day you will become more and more effulgent in the horizon of Heaven, advance nearer and nearer toward the Kingdom of El-Abhá, attain greater and greater bounties of the Blessed Perfection. I am joyful, for I perceive the evidences of great love among you. I go to Chicago, and when I return I hope that love will have become infinite. Then will it be an eternal joy to me and the friends in the Orient.

THE TABLET OF THE BRANCH

This Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh, referring to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as His successor, was first translated into English under the Master's direction on the Day of the Covenant in New York City and published December 2, 1912- three days before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's departure from America.

This has been revealed in Adrianople for Mirza Ali Riza in order that he may be nourished by the Favors of God.

He is Eternal in His Abhá Horizon!

Verily the Cause of God hath come upon the Clouds of Utterances and the polytheists are in this day in great torment. Verily the hosts of revelation have descended with banners of inspiration from the Heaven of the Tablet in the name of God, the Powerful, the Mighty. At this time the monotheists all rejoice in the victory of God and His dominion and the deniers will then be in manifest perplexity.

0 ye people! Do ye flee from the mercy of God after it has encompassed the existent things created between the heavens and earth? Beware lest ye prefer your own selves before the mercy of God, and deprive not yourselves thereof. Verily whosoever turneth away therefrom will be in great loss. Verily mercy is like unto verses which have descended from the one heaven and from them the monotheists drink the choice wine of Life, whilst the polytheists drink the fiery water (Hameen); and when the verses of God are read unto them, the fire of hatred is enkindled within their breasts. Thus have they preferred their own selves before the mercy of God, and are of those who are heedless.

Enter, 0 people, beneath the shelter of the Word, then drink therefrom the choice wine of Inner Significances and Utterances; for therein is hidden the Kawther of the Glorious One-and it hath appeared from the horizon of the will of your Lord, the merciful, with wonderful lights.

Say: Verily the ocean of pre-existence hath branched forth from this most great ocean. Blessed therefore is he who abides upon its shores, and is of those who are established thereon. Verily this most sacred temple of Abhá the Branch of Holiness-hath branched forth from the Sadratul-Muntaha. Blessed is whosoever hath sought shelter beneath it and is of those who rest therein.

Say: Verily the Branch of Command hath sprung forth from this root which God hath firmly planted in the ground of the will, the limb of which has been elevated to a station which encompasses all existence. Therefore exalted be he for this Creation, the Lofty, the Blessed, the Inaccessible, the Mighty!

0 ye, people! draw nigh unto it (the Branch is referred to in this Tablet both as "It" and "His") and taste the fruits of its knowledge and wisdom on the part of the Mighty, the Knowing One. Whosoever will not taste thereof shall be deprived of the bounty, even though he has partaken of all that is in the earth - were ye of those who know.

Say: Verily a word hath gone forth from the Most Great Tablet and God hath adorned it with the mantle of Himself and made it sovereign over all on 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: 0 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 trust within you and His manifestation unto you and His appearance among the servants who are nigh. Thus have I been commanded to convey to you the message of God, your Creator; and I have delivered to you that of which I was commanded. Whereupon, thereunto testifieth God, then His angels, then His messengers, and then His holy servants.

Inhale the fragrances of the Ridván from His roses and be not of those who are deprived. Appreciate the bounty of God upon you and be not veiled therefrom - and verily we have sent Him forth in the temple of man. Thus praise ye the Lord, the Originator of whatsoever He willeth through His wise and inviolable command!

Verily, those who withhold themselves 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.

Hasten, 0 people, unto the Shelter of God, in order that He may protect you from the heat of the day whereon none shall find for himself any refuge or shelter except beneath the shelter of His Name, the clement, the forgiving. Clothe yourselves, 0 people, with the garment of assurance, in order that He may protect you from the darts of doubts and superstitions, and that ye may be of those who are assured in those days wherein none shall ever be assured and none shall be firmly established in the Cause except by severing himself from all that is possessed by the people and turning unto the holy and radiant outlook.

0 ye people! Do ye take unto yourselves the Jebt (an idol) as a helper other than God, and do ye seek the Taghoot (an idol) as a Lord besides your Lord the Almighty, the Omnipotent? Forsake, 0 people, their mention, then hold the Chalice of Life in the name of your Lord the Merciful. Verily by God, the existent world is quickened through a drop thereof, were ye of those who know.

Say: In that day there is no refuge for any one save the command of God, and no salvation for any soul but God. Verily this is the truth and there is naught after truth but manifest error.

Verily God hath made it incumbent upon every soul to deliver His Cause (the Message) according to his ability. Thus hath the command been recorded by the finger of might and power upon the Tablet of majesty and greatness.

Whosoever quickens one soul in this Cause is like unto one quickening all the servants and the Lord shall bring him forth in the Day of Resurrection into the Ridván of Oneness, adorned with the mantle of Himself, the Protector, the Mighty, the Generous. Thus will ye assist your Lord, and naught else save this shall ever be mentioned in this day before God your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.

As to thee, 0 servant: hearken unto the admonition given unto thee in the Tablet; then seek the grace of thy Lord at all times. Then spread the Tablet among those who believe in God and in His verses; so that they may follow that which is contained therein, and be of those who are praiseworthy.

Say: 0 people, cause no corruption in the earth and dispute not with men; for verily this is not worthy of those who have chosen in the shelter of their Lord a station which shall indeed remain secure.

If ye find one athirst, give him to drink from the Chalice of Kawtha and Tasneen; and if ye find one endowed with an attentive ear, read unto him the verses of God, the Mighty, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Unloose the tongue with excellent utterance, then admonish the people if ye find them advancing unto the sanctuary of God, otherwise abandon them unto themselves and forsake them in the abyss of hell. Beware lest ye scatter the pearls of Inner Significance before every barren, dumb one. Verily the blind are deprived of witnessing the Lights and are unable to distinguish between the stone and the holy, precious pearl.

Verily, wert thou to read the most mighty, wonderful verses to the stone for a thousand years, will it understand, or will they take any effect therein? No! by thy Lord the Merciful, the Clement! If thou readest all the verses of God unto the deaf, will he hear a single letter? No! Verily by the Beauty, the Mighty, the Ancient!

Thus have we delivered unto thee some of the jewels of Wisdom and Utterance, in order that thou mayest gaze unto the direction of thy Lord and be served from all the creatures. May the Spirit and Glory rest upon thee, and upon those who dwell upon the plain of holiness and who remain in the cause of their Lord in manifest steadfastness!

APPENDIX 2

The Ring, the Pin and the Photographs

In January 1976, Marie and I were working on a Bahá'í exhibit depicting Progressive Revelation to be installed in our neighborhood Public Library and we needed pictures of ancient temples. Chris Filstrup, a Bahá'í friend, was head of the Oriental Dept. of The New York Public Library and was to introduce us to the Ancient Photographs Dept.

The Oriental Dept. has in its collection unique original 19th cent. Bahá'í books, and on appointment day, January 2, Chris said to have just received some Bahá'í books he didn't have time to check yet. While he went with Marie to the photographs room, I looked at the books.

Three of them dated @ 1930 were not significant. But there was beautiful leather bound Arabic edition @1898. I opened it, snapshots and letters were inserted between pages. These pictures had informally caught 'Abdu'l-Bahá in various attitudes and walking in Haifa. The letters were dated 1909/1910, one of them seemed to contain something. I opened delicately and there was a rose, still fresh of colors, pink and green and faintly smelling. The letter said: "Dear Asa, I picked up this rose this morning in the garden of 'Abdu'l-Bahá after the Master inhaled its perfume." Hooo! I was ready to put the whole thing in my purse!... Chris said this was "personal property," the Library would keep the book but he had to send the rest to our National Archives in Wilmette. The book was a gift to Asa Cochran, New York 1910.

The name rang a bell. The first Bahá'í book given to me when I first met Bahá'ís in Tacoma, Wash., in 1962, was *Not Every Sea Hath Pearls* by Loulie Mathews. In the first chapter called "The Photograph," the author relates being a student of Asa Cochran in 1914, when one day she was told to wait in a small room sparsely furnished with chairs around the photograph of an old gentleman whose stare overpowered her soul.

The following month, our Spiritual Assembly asked us to check weekly on a Bahá'í exhibit celebrating the American Bicentennial installed by the National Spiritual Assembly in the rotunda of Penn Station. On the last Sunday, Michel, Marie's son, then 12 years old, was with us as we planned to visit an antique show on the second floor. Marie went to antique shows searching for old Bahá'í books and Michel was looking for old comics. This was a "bicentennial" show of not much interest to us.

Looking at the last exhibit of jewelry, Michel who was around the display case said: "Hey! There is a Bahá'í ring!" We could not see it and had to bend toward Michel's height to see a tiny gold ring with a brown stone: sure it was!... I asked for the price, crossing my fingers that I could afford it... The lady dealer said that this was a 200 years old ring. "It cannot be, this is a Bahá'í ring and the Faith started in 1844." "Are you Bahá'í? The stone may be Bahá'í, but the setting is older with that carving- one owl on each side, wings spread out toward the stone. The owl is an Indian symbol of wisdom in Washington State and this ring belonged to the Cochran family." We were stunned!

Mrs. Reiner, explained the mystery. The Cochranes were part of the American lore in Washington State where they made their fortune. They moved to New York circa 1896 and Mrs. Cochran traveled around the world with their two young daughters who gave concerts as "musical prodigies". They lost their fortune during the Depression. The younger daughter, Olea, had died penniless this past December. The City of New York auctioned her house and estate. Books went to the Main Public Library, where we found their Bahá'í books, and antique dealers bought the rest by lots.

Mrs. Reiner had bought boxes of letters bearing the name "Abd... Abd..." "'Abdu'l-Bahá?" "Yes." As a Jewish person, she had been interested to read some of these letters from the Holy Land and she had kept one box with photographs that she would be glad to give to us as Bahá'ís, we would only pay a nominal price for the frames. She sold me the ring "at a discount" and gave us her New Jersey address.

This was a very moving encounter. The photographs in that box were taken during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to New York in 1912. One of them, an original had the Master's signature and another was the work of renowned Gertrude Käsebier with a full sentence in Persian written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. There was also a radiant gold pin which Marie could buy. It was engraved with the Greatest Name and a Persian writing on the back. The box contained some letters, translations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's tablets. Three of them, dated 1909, were addressed to Mrs. Cochran asking her to travel to India for the Faith.

Our Bahá'í friends were all excited by this amazing treasure-trove. We learned the translation of the Master's handwriting on the photograph: "O Lord, this handmaiden is working in Thy service, make her victorious." This was probably addressed to Mrs. Cochran who had traveled for the Faith. The engraving on the back of the pin: "Khátam Awliya" means "Symbol of the Saints," and may be associated with the name "Olea".

When living in Los Angeles, in 1965, at a time of trial, after praying 'Abdu'l-Bahá for guidance, I had a dream in which a veiled Being, surrounded by light, was giving me this tiny brown ring. But, now we were not sure we should keep these precious objects.

We showed the whole treasure to Hand of the Cause Mr. Khádem, who was very moved. He raised the ring, the pin and the photographs to his brow, praying. He confirmed that the small brown stone was one of the cornelians 'Abdu'l-Bahá had engraved to His specifications to give to friends for their services to the Faith. The inscriptions on the pin were also from the Master. We were deeply grateful for these gifts from beyond the grave, but what shall we do now? Mr. Khádem assured us: "You found them, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wanted you to have them for some reason, they are yours to keep."

We thought that it was tragic we never learned of the plight of this family. Yet, our "finding" of these precious heirlooms may mean that these friends found peace and reward in the Abhá Kingdom.

The photograph commented upon in Mrs. Mathews' book was of Juliet Thompson's portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. We have it now, in its ebony frame, as shown in the picture of a makeshift altar as described in the book.

Since 1972, when I first read the typescript of Juliet Thompson's diaries, I was making researches and gathering material on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's 1912 visit to New York for teaching purpose. The finding of this treasure, confirmed my resolve to write a book. These 1912 photographs are now in this book, perhaps the reason we found them was for us to give them back to the community of the City of the Covenant.

Eliane Lacroix-Hopson, with her
daughter, Marie-Danielle Samuel,
and her grandson, Michel G. Samuel.