

HEROIC LIVES
IN
UNIVERSAL RELIGION

*A MANUAL FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
IN JUNIOR GRADES*

For Pupils Eleven Years of Age

BY ^{ROSS}
ALBERT R. VAIL
AND
EMILY McCLELLAN VAIL



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EDITORS' PREFACE

THIS manual for teachers, with the accompanying textbook and notebook for pupils of the sixth grade in the church school, is the work for one year in the Beacon Course in Religious Education. The purpose of that course and the ideals which are shaping it have been fully stated in the books already published. It aims to provide progressive instruction in religion through all the years of childhood and youth. Its materials are chosen from the records of religious thought and life in the Bible and elsewhere, wherever they may be found. It seeks through such material, selected for its fitness for the pupil at the designated age, both to bring to childhood and youth its heritage from the past, and to develop and train the religious instincts and emotions of the pupils during the formative period of their lives.

In this book the material is biographical. It presents accounts of religious heroes in all lands and all times. The pupils, it is believed, may be led to admire these heralds of religion, and through that admiration be in some measure transformed into the same image. For true religion is contagious. It passes from heart to heart and from age to age. Accounts of the great souls who have endured as seeing him who is invisible cannot fail to arouse the same spirit in those who are brought closely into contact with them. To bring about such contact is the purpose of this book.

THE EDITORS.

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CHAPTER XXI

A SHINING LIGHT FROM PERSIA

WE have read how Mohammed and Zoroaster and other great teachers gave their wonderful messages to the people of the world and taught them how to please God. We have also read how, after a while, the people would forget what their prophet had said. Then they would make up teachings of their own, and, saying these were the prophets' words, they would follow their own way rather than God's way.

This is just what happened in Persia, that beautiful country where Zoroaster and Mohammed had given their holy laws. The priests, who were the teachers of the people, thought less and less about following Mohammed's true teachings, and more and more about gaining wealth and high positions for themselves. At last Persia and the other Mohammedan countries had become so forgetful of their prophet's words that it seemed well-nigh impossible to reform them.

One day, in the year 1844, a number of pilgrims from all over the Mohammedan world were gathered in Mecca to celebrate their yearly visit to the holy city. A hundred thousand of these pilgrims were assembled together in a certain part of the city.

Suddenly a young man, a merchant, whose name was Ali Mohammed, stood up in their midst and spoke to them. His heart was pure and full of love for all mankind. He told the listening people that their priests, or mullahs as they are called in the Mohammedan world, were teaching them things which were wrong and were leading them away from God instead

of near to Him. He said *he* would give them God's true messages once more. He would be the gate, the "Bab" they call it in Persian, through which they might return to God. He spoke with such power and authority that his words were not forgotten. As the pilgrims returned to their homes they spread the news of his proclamation throughout Persia. And soon thousands of people became his followers.

The priests, the mullahs, furious at what he proclaimed about them, made their plans to prevent the Bab, as he was now called, from teaching. The mullahs owned vast wealth in Persia. If the eyes of the people were opened, if they realized how wicked the mullahs had become, these mullahs might have to lose their wealth.

So, as soon as the opportunity came they arrested the Bab and carried him off to prison. Month after month he was kept captive, sometimes in one prison, sometimes in another. At last, after six years of imprisonment, he was fastened by ropes to a wall, and a regiment of soldiers, aiming their rifles at him, shot him. In this way, the Mohammedan priests thought, they would put an end to the teachings of the Bab.

On the twenty-third of May in 1844, the same year in which the Bab spoke to the pilgrims at Mecca, there was born in a Persian palace a little boy. The name which was given to him then was Abbas Effendi. When he grew to be a man he was called "Abdul Baha" which means "The Servant of God."

Abdul Baha's father, Baha'o'llah (Baha'-ool'-lah), was a noble prince. He was very wealthy and lived in a beautiful palace. He might have had a high place in the Persian government and so have spent his life in ease and luxury. But he did not care for these things. Instead of spending his money on himself he gave away so much to those who were poor or

in trouble that he was called "the father of the poor." His heart was pure and full of mercy. He spent his days and nights in teaching the people the ways of love and peace. He told them that what the Bab proclaimed was true and the Mohammedan world must be reformed.

When the rulers of Persia learned that Baha'o'llah was carrying on the teaching of the Bab they took away all his great estates and threw him into prison. He was put into a dungeon far under the ground, where no sunlight had ever entered. A heavy iron chain was fastened around his neck and with it he was chained to five other followers of the Bab. He was kept thus for four months. The chains were so heavy on his neck that he could not hold up his head and he could get but little sleep. But no word of complaint did he utter. He thought of the glorious presence of God which he saw even there in the dungeon. He composed hymns of praise, rejoicing that he might suffer in God's service. He taught these hymns to his fellow prisoners and they sang them there in the darkness.

In the meantime Baha'o'llah's family was in dire trouble. While the angry priests and rulers fastened him in the dungeon a mob hastened to his home. They drove his wife and his five small children out of their beautiful palace and took possession of everything.

Baha'o'llah's wife, now homeless, found a small house on a back street of the large city of Teheran where they lived. Here she found shelter for the coming four months. She and her children had nothing left of their large fortune but the clothes which they wore. When they were in need of food the mother cut the solid gold buttons off her children's dresses and with them bought supplies.

One day Abdul Baha, who was at that time eight

years old, went out into the street in the hope that he might find his father. Immediately he was surrounded by a mob of boys, large and small. There were nearly three hundred of them. They were all armed with sticks and stones and were determined to kill this little child of Baha'o'llah. Abdul Baha, the tiniest boy of all the crowd, when he found himself thus surrounded stood quiet still, straight as an arrow. Quietly he commanded the mob not to touch him. Evidently they were impressed by his utter fearlessness, for lo! not a stick or a stone was thrown. And little by little the boys slipped away, leaving Abdul Baha standing alone in the street.

At the end of four months Baha'o'llah was taken out of the dungeon. But the Mohammedan priests would not let him stay in Teheran, fearing that he might teach the people and win them to these new truths about religion. So he and his family were put upon horses and driven out of the city. The plan was to send them away, over the mountains and the deserts, to the city of Bagdad in Turkey.

It was in the winter time and the weather was bitterly cold. For three days and nights the little party rode, hurried along by their guards. They had no food and were scantily clothed. But God's Holy Spirit sustained them and their hearts were full of joy. "How glorious it is," they said to one another, "to suffer in the pathway of God. God's good soldier is happiest when the march is the hardest!"

After a month of such travelling they reached Bagdad, far away from the Persian empire. They found in this city an empty house. Here they lived in great poverty for twelve years.

Many of the people in Bagdad were very fierce and rough. But there were others who were gentler and more tolerant. When they discovered what a wise

and loving man had come among them they visited him in large numbers.

Baha'o'llah told them that all the people in the world are the children of one God, and that all the great prophets who have taught in different parts of the world have been messengers of the one God. They have taught the same things and have been strengthened to do their work by the same loving Father. Therefore all the religions of the world contain the same truths, and we must love them all. "Why," said Baha'o'llah, "the people of the world are like the leaves of one great tree, or the drops of one sea. The leaves of a tree do not quarrel with one another! The drops of a sea do not prefer themselves one to another! So let mankind live in peace and give up these ruinous wars."

Baha'o'llah himself was an example of the life he taught. One day he was praying alone in a tent just outside of Bagdad. As he sat there a fierce Moham-medan slipped silently into the tent. This man thought Baha'o'llah was a very wicked person who led people astray. Did not he say that the religion of Mohammed was not the only religion which was true? So the Moslem had come to kill Baha'o'llah.

He raised his javelin and took aim, preparing to throw it at the unprotected enemy. Then Baha'o'llah, for the first time looked at him. The noble teacher's face was pure and kind. He seemed full of love for his would-be-murderer. The man dropped his javelin to the ground.

He picked it up and again took aim. And again Baha'o'llah looked at him, his eyes overflowing with love. For the second time the javelin fell to the ground beside its owner.

The man picked it up once more. With an intense effort of his will he determined to delay no longer in

disposing of this harmful person before him. This time Baha'o'llah smiled at him.

Then the Moslem, his javelin cast away, threw himself at Baha'o'llah's feet. He could not withstand such wonderful love.

As the years went by Baha'o'llah's followers in Bagdad became so numerous that the Mohammedan priests grew jealous. The people loved him more than they did the priests. The priests knew that if this continued they would lose all their influence. So they persuaded the Sultan of Turkey to send Baha'o'llah and his family far away from Bagdad and from Persia to a place where no one knew him. So he was exiled to Adrianople in Europe. He surely could influence no one there, the priests reasoned.

From Adrianople Baha'o'llah wrote letters to his followers in Persia. In these letters he told them how Persia could be made into a glorious nation once more. He told them how God wished everyone, girls and boys, men and women, to have an equal education. He told how they must love the people of all religions alike; how Christians and Jews, Mohammedans and Buddhists are all God's children and God sees no difference between them. The people by thousands believed him and accepted the new teaching.

Seeing this, the Mohammedan priests persuaded the Sultan to exile Baha'o'llah and his family to the town of Acca in Syria. This town was a place where thieves and criminals were sent—and never heard of again. It was so unhealthy that nobody who went there had been known to live more than a few months. "Now," thought the Mohammedan priests, "we have disposed of this troublesome person."

When it became known where Baha'o'llah was to be sent, seventy people begged permission to go with him. To them no suffering was worthy of mention

beside that of being separated from their beloved teacher.

When Baha'o'llah and this party of seventy followers reached Acca, after a long sea voyage, they indeed found distressing conditions. Baha'o'llah was put into a tiny cell. It was so small he could neither lie down nor stand up. Here he was chained to the floor. The others were crowded together in a room where the mud was ankle deep on the floor. There were no chairs or beds in the room. Only a scanty supply of food was given them. But they were near Baha'o'llah, and his love and joy were so wonderful, his knowledge of God was so glorious, that they did not mind their sufferings.

Two years they were kept in this prison. Then the heart of the governor of Acca was touched, and he gave orders that they be transferred to better quarters. They were gentle and thoughtful toward one another; they were loving and courteous to their jailers. He could not see that they had done anything wrong.

So they were released from the barracks, as the prison was called, and given a house in the town. Here they lived for nine years. They were constantly watched by guards and in all that time Baha'o'llah never left the house. But it was a much better place than the barracks.

Baha'o'llah spent these days of prison life in writing letters and books which were radiant with the Holy Spirit. He sent them to Persia and they brought new life to many people.

Oftentimes, when men in far-away Persia read these letters they would be filled with a longing to see their author. They would start out on foot and walk all the hundreds of miles to Acca. It would take months to make the journey. When they reached Acca they

would stand on a hill overlooking the city and watch and watch in the hope that they might see their beloved teacher. Then Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha would go to the tiny window of Baha'o'llah's room and wave their handkerchiefs. After this sign of recognition these followers of Baha'o'llah would start home again, contented and happy.

As the new teachings spread throughout Persia the priests became more and more enraged. They determined to kill all the Bahais, as the followers of Baha'o'llah were called. So they started a great persecution and thousands of Bahais gave their lives for their belief in the teachings of Baha'o'llah.

At last the persecutions became so numerous that Baha'o'llah wrote a letter to the Shah of Persia pleading with him to stop this work of the Mohammedan priests. But who would take the letter! It would in all probability mean death to the messenger as he would have to go into the very midst of the priests.

Baha'o'llah called his friends together and asked for a volunteer. To the surprise of all a boy named Badi stepped forward and said *he* would go. Badi was about eighteen years old. He had always been a rather careless, thoughtless boy. Could he undertake such an errand, the others wondered?

Baha'o'llah took him into his room and talked to him. And as he talked the Holy Spirit in his heart entered the heart of Badi also. Badi's face became radiant. A divine courage welled up in his mind. He took the letter and started off on foot.

For weeks and weeks he tramped over the desert. And weeks and weeks he spent in crossing the mountains. But so happy was he at the thought of serving God that nothing could stop him. "He sped along with footsteps of entire devotion." At last he reached the capital of the Shah.

He put on a white robe and took his stand on a rock outside the palace gate. For three days he stood on the rock and waved his letter over his head. And the bright sunlight shone on his white suit and cap.

Now it so happened that on the third day the Shah went to his palace window and with his telescope scanned the surrounding country. He saw this white figure by the palace gate and sent a servant to know what was wanted. Thus Badi was brought to the presence of the Shah, and delivered into his hand the precious letter.

The Shah, when he learned from whom the letter had come, threw it upon the ground and gave orders that Badi be put to death. "The idea," he thought, "of that prisoner daring to argue with me, the king!"

For three days Badi, like little Blandina, endured much suffering at the hands of his captors. But the more they hurt him the more radiant his face became and the more joyous was his heart. On the third day God freed him from the hands of the cruel priests and his spirit flew to join his most glorious Lord.

After a number of years the jailers in Acca ceased to watch the Bahais so closely and they were allowed to live in a house outside the city walls. These fierce Turkish guards had learned to love and reverence Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha and their little party.

When the news spread abroad that Baha'o'llah was living in comparative freedom, people from all over the world came to see him. He must be a remarkable man, they reasoned, who can spread his teachings throughout Persia when he himself is a prisoner behind the walls of far-away Acca!

One of these visitors was a merchant who lived in Egypt. He had read some of Baha'o'llah's inspiring letters and wished to see him. "How glorious it would be," thought he, "to stand in the presence of

so holy a man." So he wrote a letter asking Baha'o'llah if he might come to Acca.

"When you owe no man anything," wrote the great teacher in reply, "you may come."

The merchant was amazed at these words. He was quite wealthy and had an important business. But he owed large sums of money to persons in different parts of the world. If he paid these debts he would not be nearly so rich.

Now, however, he learned that he could not enter the presence of Baha'o'llah, he could not hear him speak about God, unless these debts were paid. He wanted to see Baha'o'llah more than he wanted anything on earth. So he began to send his creditors the sums of money which he owed them. It took him five years to pay off all his debts. When the last was canceled the merchant had left just enough money to buy his ticket on the steamer to Acca. He could not pay for a berth on the ship. He must sleep on the deck.

As the ship glided away from the dock he stood leaning over the deck's railing thinking happily of the joy which was in store for him. All at once his shawl, his only protection from the cold night winds, slipped from his hands and fell into the water. But he cared not, for he was actually on his way to see Baha'o'llah!

When the day came for the ship to arrive at the dock in the seaport town of Haifa, Syria, Baha'o'llah, nine miles away in Acca, told a certain man of his household to make ready his horse and carriage. "I have a very noble guest coming today and I wish you to go and meet him," said Baha'o'llah.

The man drove to Haifa, found the ship at the dock, and stood all attention, watching for the foreign visitor. Baha'o'llah had said he was "very noble"; so the man looked for someone who would be grandly dressed

and who walked with a lordly air. Perhaps he would have medals strung all over his chest! Then the messenger would surely know him.

But no such person arrived. The messenger stayed till everyone had left the ship. The last person to walk up the dock was a shabby little man who had no baggage and who seemed to have not a single friend. This was our merchant.

So the messenger drove back to Acca and told Baha'o'llah that his visitor did not come.

"Ah," said Baha'o'llah, "your eyes are blind. You could not recognize my guest. I will send Abdul Baha. He makes no such mistakes."

Abdul Baha reached Haifa late in the afternoon. There was no one at the docks. He looked around, and at last discovered a forlorn little man sitting all alone on a bench.

When no one had met him at the ship, our merchant from Egypt decided in his disappointment that Baha'o'llah had forgotten him. Then he began to wonder if he had been foolish to give up all his wealth just to see this Baha'o'llah. Perhaps he was not such a wonderful person after all.

Abdul Baha hastened to his side, told him who he was, and joyfully welcomed him. Then he proposed that they drive to Acca.

"No," said the merchant, remembering the thoughts which had been in his mind when Abdul Baha found him. He could not go into the presence of Baha'o'llah until he had prayed to God to forgive him for his lack of faith.

The merchant had not a single penny, and he would not let Abdul Baha, who had almost as little, pay for his lodgings at the hotel in Haifa. So Abdul Baha sat down beside him on the bench. He wrapped his cloak about his new-found friend and put his arm

around him. And the two sat and prayed together all through the night.

In the morning they went to Acca. With a purified heart the merchant could enter the presence of Baha'o'llah and talk with him about God. And he could see the light of God which shone in the face of the holy teacher.

In 1892 the pure spirit of Baha'o'llah ascended into the glory of the heavenly world. For fifty years he had "faced his enemies like a mountain." For fifty years he had endured their persecutions with indomitable courage and unfailing love. And every year the light of his teachings shone brighter and brighter into the hearts of the people of Asia.

After his death his followers turned to Abdul Baha. In his perfected character they found the same majestic light of love and wisdom which had shone from the spirit of Baha'o'llah.

The people of Acca called Abdul Baha "the friend of the poor," and it was to him that the poor came with their troubles. Every Friday morning a crowd of men and women, bent and old, in "patched and tattered garments," appeared at his door. Some carried children in their arms; some walked on crutches. They were of many races. Soon the door would open and Abdul Baha with his vigorous step and kingly bearing would walk out into their midst. "Welcome, welcome," he would say, with a radiant smile. Then to each person he would give some food, or money, or a garment, according to their need. And with each gift there went a word of love and encouragement as he put his gentle hand on the shoulder of a bent old negro, perhaps, or caressed a sick child. After a short while they would all go away thinking in their hearts what a kind man is the Servant of God, the Friend of the Poor!

We wonder how it was that Abdul Baha who himself was so poor could give to those who were still poorer? It was by going without things himself. He gave his bed to someone who was ill and slept on the stone floor of his room. When a well-to-do friend discovered this and sent him a bed and mattress he soon gave that away also. "How could I sleep in luxury," he said, "when so many have nothing?" He went without his meals in order to have food for the hungry. Often he would say to his family: "You have had two meals today and there are many who have had none. Shall we not give away our evening meal to those whose need is greater than ours?" So with joyful hearts they would make the sacrifice.

Abdul Baha loves his enemies just as much as he loves his friends. There was a man living in Acca who hated him and wished to harm him. He thought Abdul Baha's teaching about all the religions being true was wrong. He was very poor and could not buy the food which he needed. Abdul Baha knew this and every day sent him a basket of food. When he was ill Abdul Baha sent him a physician. The man took the food and the physician's help, but still he hated Abdul Baha and tried to injure him; and when he met Abdul Baha on the street he held his cloak up in front of his face so he could not see him.

Day after day, for twenty-four years, Abdul Baha sent his food and his love to this man. And day after day the man hated and reviled him. But at last he could hold out no longer. He came to Abdul Baha, threw himself at his feet, and cried: "Forgive me, sir! For twenty-four years I have done evil to you. For twenty-four years you have done good to me. Now I know I have been in the wrong."

Even animals feel love like this. Abdul Baha was walking one day on the plains just outside the city

walls. High up in the sky a hawk was chasing a little bird. The poor little bird flew hither and thither seeking to escape, but there was no hiding place on that barren prairie. All at once it saw Abdul Baha. With lightning speed down it flew, straight into a fold of his coat. There it stayed, happy and safe from its enemy.

As the years went by the news of the love and wisdom of Abdul Baha reached many countries. Visitors from all over western Asia came to Acca to see him. Mohammedans from Persia, travelling on foot, braved the hot sun of the Arabian desert to reach Acca. Buddhists from far-away Burmah and Zoroastrians from Bombay, India; Jews from Russia and Christians from Europe and America met together in the prison city, drawn by their common longing to see this servant of God. And all these men, of different religions and races, sat down together in Abdul Baha's house and ate at his table as though they were brothers. Abdul Baha served the meals himself. He, the host, was the servant of all. As he passed the food he would tell them how glorious it is for the people of all nations to live together in love. The time has come, he would say, to put into practice Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

For a few years the rulers of Acca allowed him to see these visitors. But at last so many hundreds came that they grew suspicious. "Could it be that all these people came so far just to hear Abdul Baha tell of the love of God? No, men do not love God so much as that," they reasoned in their wicked hearts. They decided that Abdul Baha must be starting a political rebellion. And they shut him again close within the prison.

The Italian consul was much distressed at this new persecution. He planned to rescue Abdul Baha from

the cruel Turks. So he sent an Italian steamer to carry him to Europe. For three days the steamer waited off the harbor of Haifa, while the friends of Abdul Baha plead with him to escape.

"No," said Abdul Baha, "the Bab did not run away. Baha'o'llah did not run away. I shall not run away." So the ship was obliged to leave without him.

In 1908 there was a revolution in Turkey, and Abdul Baha was set free. He went into exile and prison a little boy of nine. He came out an old man of sixty-four. His hair was white, his face furrowed with the lines of many sorrows. But his step was full of vigor and his heart radiant with love.

In 1911 and 1912 he made a visit to Europe and America. Wherever he went he was invited to speak before large audiences. Universities, churches of many denominations, Jewish synagogues, societies whose members are striving to reform the world, all opened their doors to him. He also received many visitors, often a hundred and fifty a day. He rose at four o'clock in the morning and many times went without his meals in order to see them all. From sunrise until midnight he received his guests. One day, in London, he saw eighteen callers before his breakfast at half past seven. He talked with learned men about science, with statesmen about politics, with little children about their games. He loved everyone, tramps and thieves, rich and poor, high and low. He welcomed all with radiant kindness.

"Why do all the guests who visit you come away with shining faces?" someone asked him.

"I cannot tell you," he replied, "but in all those upon whom I look I see only the Face of our Heavenly Father."

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

ON CHAPTER XXI

THE most significant fact of the nineteenth century is the dawning of the vision of universal religion. Religion is the source of all good. Universal religion will, we trust, establish universal brotherhood and peace upon the earth and bring to birth the most glorious civilization of which humanity has ever dreamed.

This vision of the one religion arose simultaneously in different parts of the world. It was as though a wave of light swept over the earth. Seers in Europe, America, India, and Persia all saw the new illumination—some through a glass darkly, others face to face. But none beheld it more clearly than the great Bahai teachers of Persia. Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha not only saw the universal vision; they reflected its light in lives and words of singular purity and power.

Our discovery of the Bahai manifestation of universal truth was, in Europe and America, rather tardy. Count Gobineau, the French diplomat, and Prof. Browne of Cambridge University, England, were among the first Europeans to discover that a new light was shining in Persia. Prof. Browne has written a description of the presence of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha whom he visited at Acca in 1890. He says of Baha'o'llah; "The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow, while the deep

lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet black hair and beard . . . seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain." Of Abdul Baha he writes: "One more eloquent of speech, more ready of argument, more apt of illustration, more intimately acquainted with the sacred books of the Jews, the Christians, and the Mohammedans, could, I should think, scarcely be found even amongst the eloquent, ready, and subtle race to which he belongs. These qualities, combined with a bearing at once majestic and genial, made me cease to wonder at the influence and esteem which he enjoys even beyond the circle of his father's followers. About the greatness of this man and his power no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt."

Prof. Jowett of Oxford, Master of Balliol, the translator of Plato, studied the movement and was so impressed thereby that he said; "The Babite (Bahai) movement may not impossibly turn out to have the promise of the future." Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter quotes Prof. Edward Caird, Prof. Jowett's successor as Master of Balliol, as saying "he thought Babism (as the Bahai movement was then called) might prove the most important religious movement since the foundation of Christianity."¹ Prof. Carpenter himself gives a sketch of the Bahai movement in his recent book on *Comparative Religion* and asks, "Has Persia, in the midst of her miseries, given birth to a religion that will go round the world?"²

Most of us, however, knew little of the new awakening until Abdul Baha visited Europe and America in

¹ *Studies in Theology*, J. Estlin Carpenter and P. H. Wicksteed, London (1903), p. 254.

² Page 71.

1911 and 1912. His reception in these countries by the learned and the ignorant, by mystics and agnostics, by Jews and Christians, Socialists and social reformers, was a clear revelation of the brilliance of his mind and the universal quality of his spiritual genius.

President David Starr Jordan invited Abdul Baha to speak before the students and faculty of Leland Stanford University upon universal peace. Dr. Jordan introduced his visitor from the East as "one of the great religious teachers of the world, one of the natural successors of the old Hebrew prophets."

The *Christian Commonwealth* of London published his addresses at length, feeling it incumbent upon them, as the editor said, "to give full recognition to the work of this Eastern Sage."

Prof. T. K. Cheyne, the celebrated higher critic, welcomed Abdul Baha at Oxford and later wrote a book upon the value of the Bahai movement to the world. He said to Abdul Baha in a letter published in *The Star of the West*, January 19, 1914: "There was no need for me to be 'converted,' because I already lived by the truths which you are always insisting on. What I wanted, and what you gave, was the example of a life (yours was) devoted entirely to the Truth, and the sense of brotherly love, to which I may fitly add the extraordinary life of Baha'o'llah. Love is the secret of the universe, and in love I aspire to live. You help me constantly."

Prof. Armin Vambery, the renowned oriental scholar, invited Abdul Baha to Budapest to speak to a number of learned gatherings. After Abdul Baha's departure Prof. Vambery wrote him the following words of appreciation:

"The time of the meeting with your excellency and the memory of the benediction of your presence recurred to the memory of this servant and I am

longing for the time when I shall meet you again. Although I have travelled through many countries and cities of Islam, yet have I never met so lofty a character and so exalted a personage as your excellency. On this account, I am hoping that the ideals and accomplishments of your excellency may be crowned with success and yield results under all conditions; because behind these ideals and deeds I easily discern the eternal welfare and prosperity of the world of humanity. . . .

"I have seen the father of your excellency from afar. I have realized the self-sacrifice and noble courage of his son and I am lost in admiration."

The Bahai spirit and teachings may be found in the devotional masterpieces of Baha'o'llah in *The Divine Art of Living*, and in the *Paris and London Addresses*¹ of Abdul Baha. An article in the *Harvard Theological Review* for July, 1914, affords a short introduction to the whole movement.

Some of the central teachings of Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha will appear in the following quotations from their words:

"Close your eyes to racial differences and welcome all with the light of oneness. . . . This handful of dust, the world, is one home; let it be in unity." "Today in the world of humanity the most important matter is the question of universal peace, universal peace amongst the governments, universal peace amongst religions, universal peace amongst races." "These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the Most Great Peace shall come. . . . Is not this that which Christ foretold? . . . Let not man glory in this that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this that he loves his kind."

¹ These volumes may be had in inexpensive form from the Bahai Publishing Society, P. O. Box 233, Chicago.

A visitor asked Abdul Baha, "What are your objects?" Abdul Baha replied: "My objects are:

"The establishment of the cause of international arbitration.

"The promotion of the oneness of the world of humanity.

"The conformity of religion with science and reason.

"The elucidation of the essential oneness of the Divine Religions.

"The explanation of the continuity of prophetic revelation.

"The instruction of mankind in the knowledge of human brotherhood.

"The inculcation of the primordial oneness of all phenomena.

"The upraising of the standard of the solidarity of the human race.

"The spread of the precepts of spiritual civilization.

"The teaching of the synthesis of the heavenly philosophy.

"The readjustment of the economic relations between capital and labor so that each individual member of the world of humanity may enjoy the utmost welfare and prosperity.

"The organization of the arbitral court of justice in order that all nations of the world may thus remove all traces of enmity and hatred.

"The upbuilding of the principles of one auxiliary language."

When we think of these ideas arising in medieval Persia and being proclaimed from a Turkish prison we are surprised. But when we see them presented with such power as to win the devotion of thousands of people from the most backward and fanatical races of Asia; when we find that they transform ignorant and bitter fanatics into men and women wise and

loving; when we see twenty thousand of these people die as martyrs for their faith, their faces often radiant with joy, we are filled with wonder.

What is the power which makes ideas so high and pure command the devotion of the most decadent of peoples? Whence comes the power to raise these multitudes from spiritual death into life, to break down age-long religious barriers and unite antagonistic races into a vast spiritual brotherhood? It is the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit. "Ye shall receive power," Jesus says, "when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." The Bab, Baha'o'llah, and Abdul Baha turned the mirrors of their pure hearts to God. God's Holy Spirit was reflected therein, a light for the thousands who walked in the darkness of religious prejudice and strife and fear. Even prison walls could not prevent its shining.

In other words the Holy Spirit is contagious. Those who have it not can never transmit it. But those who have died to self and become alive in God can through its holy fire cleanse and illumine the lives of millions.

THE PRESENTATION TO CHILDREN

It would be well to read in class some of the stories in the chapter, i.e., the story of Badi, of the merchant, of the twenty-four years' enemy, of the little bird. Bring out the conquering power of love. It was Abdul Baha's unwavering love which made his enemies into his friends. The fire of pure love will sometimes melt even a heart of stone.

Show how it is possible to rise above unpleasant surroundings. Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha were happy in the dreadful prison because their spirits were in heaven. If we escape from the "prison of self" we can enter the heaven of God's presence while

our bodies are on earth. The prison of self is the prison of worry, fear, self-will. The door into heaven is love. When we enter that heaven we can teach others how to enter it also.

Show how Abdul Baha was able to scatter joy and love wherever he went because he passed "over all else save God with the swiftness of lightning." Whatsoever things are pure, lovely, of good report, on these things he fastened his mind. Life's ideal, he says, is: "To be silent concerning the faults of others, to pray for them, and help them—through kindness—to correct their faults. To look always at the good and not at the bad. If a man has ten good qualities and one bad one, we must look at the ten and forget the one. And if a man has ten bad qualities and one good one, we must look at the one and forget the ten." His ideal is "never to allow ourselves to speak one unkind word about another, even though that other be our enemy. . . . To be a cause of healing for every sick one; a comforter for every sorrowful one; a pleasant water for every thirsty one; a heavenly table for every hungry one; a guide for every seeker; a star to every horizon; a light for every lamp; a herald for every one yearning for the kingdom of God."

NOTEBOOK WORK

The story contains the needed information for the insertions and the map work. If the pupils do not remember the saying of Jesus required, have them look it up in Matthew 5: 44.