

**Louis Gregory Monologue**  
**Bicentenary of the Birth of Baha'u'llah <sup>1</sup>**

Washington, D.C.

October 22, 2017

*[LG pauses, a smile grows on his lips, as he looks up and begins laughing to himself in recollection of a warm memory]*

I can picture my grandmother on the porch of the old homeplace in Charleston, South Carolina. Oh, how she made me laugh. If the walls of caste are ever to be shattered, she said, laughter will be no small power in such a change.

I grew up in the south during that turbulent era of pain and promise that was the Reconstruction. Our people were hopeful for the potential that a renewed push for civil liberties, equality, and justice would afford us.

Despite challenges and obstacles, I followed a path that allowed me the unique opportunity to receive a degree in 1896 from Fisk University, from which I made my way here to Washington, to study law at Howard University.

As a lawyer in Washington, my contemporaries and I were keenly preoccupied with the problems of race relations. Though we tried so hard, solutions seemed far away.

I had been seeking, but not finding, truth. I had given up on religion too, until a friend urged me to attend a Baha'i meeting at the home of the Hannens. Slowly but

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<sup>1</sup> See [bahai-library.com/various\\_monologues\\_bicentenary\\_howard](http://bahai-library.com/various_monologues_bicentenary_howard)

surely the Teachings of Baha'u'llah on the Oneness of Humanity captured my imagination, challenged my mind, and touched my very soul.

*[pause for transition]*

When I met 'Abdu'l-Baha in 1912, He raised my vision even higher. 'Abdu'l-Baha was able to make all places and hearts fruitful. Through His living example and encouragement, the teachings of Baha'u'llah became even more clear to me, and gently stripped away all traces of anger and resentment from my heart.

'Abdu'l-Baha wished for me to become “the means whereby the white and colored people shall close their eyes to racial differences and behold the reality of the oneness of humanity...”

I took His words to heart and obeyed them as a command. I left my profession as a lawyer and became a racial amity worker.

You can well imagine that the task before me was arduous and sometimes disheartening. But whenever in doubt, I was strengthened and uplifted by Abdu'l-Baha – who showed me the true power of transformation latent in the majestic Revelation of Baha'u'llah.

*[pause for transition]*

On one occasion while Abdu'l-Baha was in Washington, a formal luncheon was planned in His honor at the Persian embassy on 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Alexander Perry – the north pole explorer – and Alexander Graham Bell, were just two of the prominent people in attendance. However, there were no colored guests.

I had a meeting with 'Abdu'l-Baha earlier, and prepared to leave quietly from the embassy so as not to disturb the arriving luncheon guests.

As I turned to leave, an attendant called me to return, saying that ‘Abdu’l-Baha had specifically asked for my presence again. *[look of surprise]*

*[walk a few steps]*

Place cards had been set out next to all the plates in order to seat people according to strict Washington protocol. ‘Abdu’l-Baha gathered up all the cards. He shuffled them and then redistributed them around the table.

*[laughs]*

He then took me by the hand and led me to the head of the table, to the place of honor.

*[contemplative look and smile]*

With one light and loving gesture, ‘Abdu’l-Baha pointed out the foolishness of racial prejudice and segregation.