

**AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE NORTH AMERICAN
SPEAKING TOUR OF 'ABDU'L-BAHA AND A
RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF HIS ADDRESSES**

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Introduction

In 1912, 'Abdu'l-Baha, the Persian-born speaker, author, religious leader and Knight of the British Empire, came to America on a nine-month speaking tour. Contemporary publications referred to him variously as "a servant of humanity", "a master of things spiritual", "a prophet and teacher", "the distinguished Persian scholar", "leader of the Baha'i World Faith", and "an eminent philosopher." Elbert Hubbard wrote:

This man comes to the Western world on a distinct mission The message he brings is the unification of the East and the West in the bonds of brotherly love, mutual aid, reciprocity and an understanding which means peace on earth¹

And David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University, wrote, "Abdul Baha will surely unite East and West: for he treads the mystic path with practical feet."²

Audiences from New York to San Francisco heard him speak. Within a nine-month period, he delivered more than one hundred and eighty addresses. Educators, clergymen, scientists, and humanitarians shared the platform with him.

In a survey of the literature within the field of public address it was discovered that no previous rhetorical study has been made of that speaking tour of 'Abdu'-Baha.

¹ Elbert Hubbard, "A Modern Prophet", *Hearst's Magazine*, 22:49, July, 1912.

² *Baha'i World*, Vol. XII, (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1956), p. 646.

1. Statement of the purpose

In their volume *Speech Criticism*, Thonssen and Baird describe the process of rhetorical investigation as

... a comparative study in which standards of judgment deriving from the social interaction of a speech situation are applied to public addresses to determine the immediate or delayed effect of the speeches upon specific audiences, and, ultimately, on society.¹

It was the purpose of this investigation of this speaking to

(1) to recreate the historic setting in which the addresses took place; (2) to analyse the content of the addresses and the method of presentation; and (3) to estimate the nature and extent of the influence of these addresses.

2. Explanation of terms

The transliteration of Persian terms. An explanation is needed to clarify the spelling of particular terms found in this staff. 'Abdu'l-Baha's birthplace was Persia, and many of the words referring to his background and teachings are Persian or Arabic in origin. Prior to 1923, no uniform system of transliteration was used in the publications concerning 'Abdu'l-Baha when Persian and Arabic words appeared in written English. A Persian-English translator explained:

Transliteration means putting the letters of one alphabet into another alphabet. There are sounds in Arabic and Persian which have no English equivalents. For this reason letters and combinations have to be made up to represent these sounds Persian and Arabic

¹ Lester Thonssen and Albert Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism: the development of standards for rhetorical appraisal*, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 16.

pronunciation varies throughout the Middle East. In the early days, Orientalists added to the confusion by transliterating Persian and Arabic to suit themselves. A German might spell Shah "Schah" while a Frenchman spelled it "Chah".¹

This inconsistency in transliteration resulted in the same words being reproduced in English-language publications in many different ways during the period of 1912. Examples would be such varieties as "Acca" and "Akka"; "Moslem" and "Muslin"; and "Baha Ullah" and "Baha'o'llah". Such a variety will appear in the quotations used in this study.

To eliminate such confusion, the International Oriental Congress devised a uniform spelling, adopted by the Baha'i Publishing Trust for their publications in 1923. Since that date, most other sources have followed the same standards. In all instances, except in direct quotations from older sources, the system devised by the International Oriental Congress and published in *Baha'i Glossary* will be used in this writing.

References to 'Abdu'l-Baha. Along with the difficulties caused by transliteration, writers varied in their terms of reference to the subject of this study. He was principally known by his title, *'Abdu'l-Baha*, which is translated as "the Servant of Baha", or "the Servant of the Glory of God". For clarification, examples of similar titles were those held by Gautama, *The Buddha*, or Jesus, *The Christ*, by which they came to be known.

'Abdu'l-Baha's given name was "Abbas", and some publications used this term. Frequently it was coupled with the Turkish title "Effendi", a title of respect, and at times the title of his knighthood was applied.

¹ Marzieh Gail, *Baha'i Glossary* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1957), p. 1.

The following is a sample of the variety of terminology found in the publications: Sir Abbas Effendi, AbdulBaha, 'Abdul-Baha Effendi, Abdul Baha Abbas, The Baha, The Effendi, Dr Baha, Abbas Effendi, and Abdul. Except in quoted passages where it is otherwise written, the name '*Abdu'l-Baha*', transliterated in this manner, will be used in this investigation.

3. Sources of information

The sources from which material has been obtained include (1) books, (2) magazines, (3) newspapers, and (4) interviews.

A variety of books contained information on 'Abdu'l-Baha's speaking tour. Material concerning historical background, biographical information and expositions on his teachings was most frequently found.

Magazines featured three kinds of material: descriptive articles, interviews, and editorials. The descriptive articles gave extensive biographical coverage to 'Abdu'l-Baha's life, his basic concepts, and the reasons for the American tour. Editorials commented on issues such as 'Abdu'l-Baha's importance, the influence and validity of his teachings, and the attitude of the western worlds toward him. During interviews, reporters asked series of questions concerning life in the East, 'Abdu'l-Baha's personal life, the basis and application of his principles, and his opinion on current issues and events.

Newspapers included announcements of meetings, reports on the addresses, summaries of his words, feature biographical articles, "human interest" stories, and editorials.

Several people who accompanied 'Abdu'l-Baha wrote accounts of the meetings which later appeared in pamphlets, booklets, and magazines. These constituted some of the more thorough eye-witness accounts. Great consistency was found between the "public" and "personal" sources of materials.

Several people who are still living in this country attended the meetings, and material has been obtained through interviews to supplement the written sources.

Through interviews and correspondence contact was made with some of the organizations to which 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke, and hotels where he stayed, for any information their old records could provide.

Stenographers attended each public meeting and took down the addresses as they were delivered. One hundred and forty of these presentations were compiled in chronological order and published under the title, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*. Research indicated that all investigations published which dealt with the American tour or which quoted from the addresses have used that source for their reference. All of the addresses analyzed in this study are found in *Promulgation of Universal Peace*.

4. Significance of the study

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to depict a representative period in the life of a speaker of international prominence; to analyze for the first time, using all available sources of information, the content and method of presentation employed by this speaker; to investigate the importance of 'Abdu'l-Baha as one of the few persons to come from

the Orient to speak extensively to American audiences; and to find the observable effects made by these presentations.

5. Organization of the study

The study is divided into seven chapters, dealing, respectively, with the introduction of the study, 'Abdu'l-Baha's background, the setting and the analysis of the Chicago speeches, his delivery, a synopsis of the entire tour, the effects of the addresses, and a summary.

In order to obtain as full an understanding as possible of the speeches subjected to criticism, the speaker's background will be analyzed in terms of his national background, his religious background, his family heritage, his childhood and education, his exile and imprisonment, his activities as his father's aide, his written works, his wartime activities and knighthood, and his roles as teacher, religious leader and world figure. Chapter Two will be devoted to this objective.

While this study is intended to cover the entire American tour, it is beyond the scope of such an investigation to analyse in detail one hundred and forty or more addresses. To carry out the purposes of the study, a representative sample of eleven addresses was selected for specific analysis and a general survey made of the remaining speeches and the circumstances of the tour.

The eleven addresses which were selected for detailed analysis were delivered during a six-day visit to Chicago. Chapter Three will

contain sections dealing with the criteria for the analysis, the premises of the speaker's thinking, and the analysis of eleven addresses listed in chronological order and examined in relation to the audiences, the physical setting in which they were delivered, the premises of thinking and the specific criteria.

The speaker's delivery will be examined in Chapter Four in sections dealing with the method of speech preparation, the mode of delivery, his physical appearance, his movement and gesture, and his voice.

Having dealt with a detailed analysis of a representative selection of the speaker's addresses in the third chapter, a synopsis of the entire tour will be made in Chapter Five. The day-by-day coverage of the nine-month period will include brief descriptions of environment and audience, will describe the newspaper and magazine reports, and include a short summary of each extant address.

Chapter Six will deal with the results and effects of the speaking tour with sections on 'Abdu'l-Baha's purposes, audiences responses, newspaper and magazine commentary, and the nature of the long range effects.

In Chapter Seven, a summation of the entire study will be offered.

6. Summary

In the present chapter, the attempt has been made (1) to introduce the background of the study; (2) to state its purpose; (3) to explain the terms involved in it; (4) to describe the

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significance of the study; (5) and to indicate the way in which the remainder
of the study will be organized.

2

The background of the speaker

In the actual speaking situation, the speaker draws upon the resources of his own background that have contributed to the development of his personality, ideas, and objectives. Thonssen and Baird pointed out, in *Speech Criticism*, that:

... the relationship between cogency of thought and personal resources is sufficiently close to interest the critic. The preparation and background that the speaker brings to the process of logical invention figures strongly in the determination of argumentative soundness and integrity.¹

It is therefore necessary to know the salient features of the past in order to evaluate and comprehend the speaking situation. The above-mentioned authors go on to state: "Recent studies rest on sound precedent, therefore, in stressing the importance of the orator's background for a full understanding of the speeches subjected to criticism."² They concluded with the idea that

... the critic will be in a better position to understand an orator's arguments if he knows the practical experience upon which the thinking rests. ... Such data facilitate the study of sources from which the speaker's arguments issue, and in general, throw light upon the developmental course of the orator's reasoning ... when considered with the several other points of judgment, they make possible a readier and more penetrating critique of logical materials.³

¹ Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 335.

² idem, p. 336.

³ idem, pp. 336-337.

This chapter, therefore, will deal with the life and background of the subject. The attempt will be made to single out for observation those aspects of his life which will contribute most directly to the clarification and analysis of the material contained in the remainder of this study. In attempting to fulfill this purpose, the following categories have been selected for research: (1) the relevant national and religious background; (2) the subject's family heritage; (3) his childhood; (4) his education; (5) his exile; (6) his imprisonment; (7) his activities as his father's aide; (8) his written works; (9) his wartime activities; (10) his position as a knight of the British Crown; (11) as a teacher; (12) as a religious leader; (13) and as a world figure. These subjects will be dealt with in turn. The attempt will be made to clarify briefly the significant aspects of each.

1. National setting

'Abdu'l-Baha's birthplace was Tihran, Persia, on the evening of May 23, 1844. Persia at that time was characterized by general cultural stagnation and apathy. The political, religious, and economic areas of life were said to have functioned on the basis of bribes and personal favoritism.¹ A simple summary of these conditions will suffice here:

All observers agree in representing Persia as a feeble and backward nation divided against itself by corrupt practices

¹ For detailed explanations of these conditions, see Lord Curson's *Persia and the Persian Question*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1892), and Comte de Gobineau's *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale* (Paris: Les Editions G. Cres et Cie., 1928).

and ferocious bigotries. Inefficiency and wretchedness, the fruit of moral decay, filled the land. ... A pall of immobility lay over all things, and a general paralysis of mind made any development impossible.¹

In this setting appeared a man referred to as a “religious reformer” by some observers and as “a Manifestation of God” by his followers. His extensive program of moral and ethical reconstruction was met with hostility by factions which made their gains from the perpetuation of existing conditions. He called himself “the Bab”, translated as “the Gate”, and taught that he was the precursor or gateway to a “Manifestation” who would soon appear to establish the “Kingdom of God” on earth. His six years of teaching are summarized as follows:

After his first proclamation of his “mission” on May 23, 1814 the majority of the Shaykhis accepted the Bab, becoming known as Babis; and soon the fame of the young prophet began to spread like wildfire throughout the land. ... The fire of His eloquence, the wonder of His rapid and inspired writings, His extraordinary wisdom and knowledge, His courage and zeal as a reformer, aroused the greatest enthusiasm among His followers, but excited a corresponding degree of alarm and enmity among the orthodox Muslims. The Shi’ih doctors vehemently denounced Him, and persuaded the Governor of Fars ... to undertake the suppression of the new heresy. Then commenced for the Bab a long series of imprisonments, deportations, examinations before tribunals, scourgings and indignities which ended only with His Martyrdom in 1850.²

It was with this religious movement that the family of ‘Abdu’l-Baha was to be intimately involved and which was to influence the rest

¹ Shoghi Effendi (ed.), *The Dawn-Breakers* (New York: Baha’i Publishing Committee, 1932), p. xxiv.

² J. E. Esslemont, *Baha’u’llah and the New Era* (Wilmette: Baha’i Publishing Trust, 1950), pp. 19–20.

2. Family heritage

'Abdu'l-Baha was born into an extremely wealthy family. He was descended from the ancient Sassanid kings of Persia, and his grandfather was a Minister in the court of the Shah.² His father was offered this same governmental position but refused it. 'Abdu'l-Baha's father became a strong advocate of the Bab, and in 1863 proclaimed himself to be the "One foretold by the Bab" and the "Promised One of all religions". The scope of moral and ethical reform which he pronounced was seen as a threat by government and religious officials; he taught that each man must seek for himself through "independent investigation", and the clergy interpreted this as a challenge to their position and income. He was banished from Persia and most of the family wealth was confiscated. In exile in nearby countries, his influence grew until the "believers" numbered in the millions. He addressed tablets to the leaders of government and religion in the major European and Near Eastern countries, calling upon them to follow his teachings for "universal peace". His influence grew to the point that a Cambridge scholar and leading English authority on Persian history could write in 1891, after an interview, "No need to ask in whose presence I stood,

¹ For detailed studies of the history of the Bab and the Babi Faith, see Effendi, *loc. cit.*; Gobineau, *loc. cit.*; and William Sears' *Release the Sun* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1960).

² John Ferraby, *All Things Made New* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1958), p. 203.

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!"¹

These events bear directly on the life of 'Abdu'l-Baha, for he accompanied his family into exile at the age of nine, and was not released from imprisonment until 1908, fifty-five years later. When he did obtain freedom, it was as the director of a new religious system.²

3. Childhood

During the years of 'Abdu'l-Baha's childhood, the Persian government and the Muslim clergy were attempting to stamp out the new religion. To carry out these aims, homes of the followers were sacked and burned, and twenty thousand of them were murdered. An Austrian officer then living in Persia wrote back to a European friend this account of events which the child, 'Abdu'l-Baha, in his eighth and ninth years, viewed daily:

Follow me, my friend, you who lay claim to a heart and European ethics, follow me to the unhappy ones [the followers of the Bab] who, with gouged-out eyes, must eat ... their own amputated ears; or whose teeth are torn out with inhuman violence by the hand of the executioner; or whose bare skulls are simply crushed by blows from a hammer; or where the bazaar is illuminated with unhappy victims, because on right and left the people dig deep holes in their breasts and shoulders, and insert burning wicks in the wounds. I saw some dragged in chains through the bazaar, preceded by a military band, in whom these wicks had burned so

¹ Marcus Bach, "Baha'i: A Second Look", *The Christian Century*, 74:449, April 10, 1957.

² For a more detailed study of the life of 'Abdu'l-Baha's father, Baha'u'llah, see Ferraby, *op. cit.*, and Shoghi Effendi's *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1950).

deep that now the fat flickered convulsively in the wound like a newly extinguished lamp. ... They will skin the soles of the Babis' feet, soak the wounds in boiling oil, shoe the foot like the hoof of a horse, and compel the victim to run.¹

The brief selections of quotations used in this chapter are chosen specifically because of the effect of these events on 'Abdu'l-Baha as a speaker. These persecutions affected the family directly, for within a twenty-four hour period, "a mob sacked their house, and the family were stripped of their possessions and left in destitution."² 'Abdu'l-Baha's sister related that, after their father had been imprisoned,

... we heard each day the cries of the mob as a new victim was tortured or executed, not knowing but that it might be my father. ... My mother thought it unsafe to leave him ('Abdu'l-Baha) at home, knowing his fearless disposition, and that when he went into the street ... he would be beset and tormented by the boys. So she took him with her, leaving me at home with my younger brother. I spent the long days in constant terror, cowering in the dark and afraid to unlock the door lest men should rush in and kill us.³

One last scene will suffice in this synopsis of the childhood of 'Abdu'l-Baha. It describes a scene in which he viewed his father's suffering.

He was eight years of age when His father, to whom even then He was devotedly attached, was thrown into the dungeon in Tihiran. ... One day He was allowed to enter the prison yard to see His beloved father ... (who) was terribly altered, so ill He could hardly walk,

¹ E. G. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918, pp. 269–270.

² Esslemont, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

³ Myron Phelps, *Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), pp. 14–15.

His hair and beard unkempt, His neck galled and swollen from the pressure of a heavy steel collar, His body bent by the weight of His chains, and the sight made a never-to-be-forgotten impression on the mind of the sensitive boy.¹

'Abdu'l-Baha was soon to leave the environment of these persecutions when the exile began in 1852.

4. The exile

The family, including 'Abdu'l-Baha, was exiled three times between 1853 and 1868. In each location, the influence of 'Abdu'l-Baha's father grew so widely that the clergy, again fearing their position, agitated for further exile. When he was nine years old, the family was exiled from Tihran, Persia, to Baghdad, Iraq. The conditions under which they journeyed are significant later in the study. 'Abdu'l-Baha's sister spoke of the journey as follows:

We set out for Baghdad with a military escort. It was bitterly cold, and the route lay over mountains. The journey lasted a month. My father was very ill. The chains had left his neck galled, raw, and much swollen. My mother, who was pregnant, was unaccustomed to hardships. ... We were all insufficiently clothed, and suffered keenly from exposure. My brother ('Abdu'l-Baha) in particular was very thinly clad. Riding upon a horse, his feet, ankles, hands, and wrists were much exposed to the cold, which was so severe that they became frost-bitten and swollen and caused him great pain. The effects of this experience he feels to this day on being chilled²

The family was allowed to remain in Baghdad until 1863, when 'Abdu'l-Baha was nineteen years old. They were transferred to Constantinople for four months, and then sent to Adrianople, where they remained

¹ Esslemont, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

² Phelps, *loc. cit.*

16 Historical study of the North American speaking tour of 'Abdu'l-Baha until 1868, when he was twenty-four years old.¹

5. Education

During the entire period thus far described, 'Abdu'l-Baha received no formal education. His father, also unschooled according to the custom for Persian nobility, was his only teacher. These factors are mentioned in the following excerpt from a study of his life:

During these years Abbas Effendi was accustomed to frequent the mosques and argue with the doctors and learned men. They were astonished at his knowledge and acumen, and he came to be known as the youthful sage. They would ask him, "Who is your teacher—where do you learn the things which you say?" His reply was that his father had taught him. Although he had never been a day in school, he was as proficient in all that was taught as well-educated men, which was the cause of such remark among those who knew him.²

An English reporter who investigated his background wrote in the *Fortnightly Review*:

And this versatility, this capacity to reason and form suggestive theories on any subject, is the more amazing when one reflects that Abbas Effendi has had no schooling at all. He was nine years old when he was exiled with his father to Baghdad, and during his forty-two years of close imprisonment in Akka there was little opportunity for study, cut off as the prisoners were from relations with the world of culture and science.³

6. The imprisonment

Fifteen years of exile in Iraq and Turkey was ended only by strict imprisonment in Syria. To understand the complexities of the events

¹ For a detailed outline of this period, see "Historical Data Gleaned from Nabil's Narrative, Vol. 2", *The Baha'i World*, Vol. V (New York: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1936), pp. 365-368.

² Phelps, *loc. cit.*

³ E. S. Stevens, "Abbas Effendi: His Personality, Work and Followers", *Fortnightly Review*, 95:1074, June, 1911.

leading to this and subsequent suppressions would entail a detailed study of Near Eastern history of the last century. In brief, the fame and esteem of 'Abdu'l-Baha's father grew to such proportions that hostile government and religious authorities agitated for his complete disposal, by 1868. And, as one historian wrote, "a persecution, varying in the degree of its severity, began once more to break out in various countries," where the "adherents of the Faith were either imprisoned, vilified, penalised, tortured or put to death."¹

The penal colony of Acca, Syria, was chosen as the place of imprisonment. 'Abdu'l-Baha's father, however, even in that location, continued to grow in influence, until his death in 1892.

7. Activities as His Father's aide

From the time of his youth, as has been pointed out, 'Abdu'l-Baha had served to aid his father in every way possible. Even in his teens, it was written, 'Abdu'l-Baha

... became his father's closest companion. ... Although a mere youth, He already showed astonishing sagacity and discrimination, and undertook the task of interviewing all the numerous visitors who came to see his father. If he found they were genuine truthseekers, He admitted them to his father's presence, but otherwise He did not permit them to trouble Baha'u'llah. On many occasions He helped ... in answering the questions and solving the difficulties of these visitors.²

During these years in Acca, 'Abdu'l-Baha served in all sorts of capacities in dealing with the government officials, jailors, townspeople,

¹ Effendi, *God Passes By*, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

² Esslemont, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

18 Historical study of the North American speaking tour of 'Abdu'l-Baha and in later years, the visitors who were allowed to come.

This closeness of relationship was important when considering the material which 'Abdu'l-Baha was later to expound in his talks. He continually emphasized that he was a spokesman for his father's teachings and not for himself. By the time of his father's death, 'Abdu'l-Baha was forty-eight years old. His father designated 'Abdu'l-Baha as the authorized interpreter of his writings and leader of the millions of adherents which by that time had spread as far as Europe and North America.¹

8. As an author

The publications of 'Abdu'l-Baha fall into three main categories: (1) volumes written in book form; (2) collections of tablets or letters to groups and individuals; and (3) transcripts of oral talks. Of these, the most notable are *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, a historical-sociological study of Persia; *A Traveller's Narrative*, a history of the Babi Faith; *The Will and Testament*, a document which sets the basis of administrative organization of the Baha'i World Faith; the *Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas*, in three volumes, in which a wide range of subjects are discussed; *The Baha'i Peace Program*, including letters to Dr Auguste Forel and The Hague; *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, a directive of world-wide activities for several decades; and *Some Answered Questions*, which discussed a variety of metaphysical, philosophical, and religious

¹ For a more detailed explanation of these matters, see Effendi, *God Passes By*, *op. cit.*

questions.

9. Wartime activities

'Abdu'l-Baha's activities during the First World War were especially important because of the further world recognition which resulted from them. The wartime period has been summarized as follows:

During the war 'Abdu'l-Baha had a busy time in ministering to the material and spiritual wants of the people about him. He personally organized extensive agricultural operations near Tiberias, thus securing a great supply of wheat, by means of which famine was averted ... for hundreds of the poor of all regions in Haifa and Akka, whose wants He liberally supplied.¹

Another commentator added:

Nothing and no one but the Master ('Abdu'l-Baha) stood between them and certain death from hunger.

He also instituted a dispensary at Abu-Sinan, and engaged a doctor ...

'Abdu'l-Baha did not neglect the education of the children. He arranged schools where they were taught by some of the most gifted of the Baha'i friends.²

The Turkish forces which occupied Haifa planned to kill 'Abdu'l-Baha when they evacuated the territory.³ The Foreign Office of the British Government in London instructed General Allenby, the head of the Allied Forces, to insure 'Abdu'l-Baha's safety when they invaded Haifa. Allenby later cabled London, "Have to-day taken Palestine. Notify the

¹ Esslemont, *op. cit.*, pp. 79–80.

² Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1940), p. 190.

³ Ferraby, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

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world that 'Abdu'l-Baha is safe."¹ The *New York World* observed, "When Gen. Allenby swept up the coast from Egypt, he went for counsel first to Abdul Baha."² Another author reported the following:

From the beginning of the British occupation, large numbers of soldiers and Government officials of all ranks, even the highest, sought interviews with 'Abdu'l-Baha³

10. A Knight of the British Empire

Following the wartime period, 'Abdu'l-Baha received recognition from the British government for averting famine in western Syria and for his efforts in the interests of peace conciliation. Because of those activities, "a knighthood of the British Empire was conferred on 'Abdu'l-Baha, the ceremony taking place in the garden of the Military Governor of Haifa on the 27th day of April, 1920."⁴ It is reported that he never made use of the title.⁵

11. As a teacher

The stream of people who came to visit 'Abdu'l-Baha in Haifa was continuous. They studied with him during personal interviews and informal talks. Reporters were sent from Europe and America to remain for

¹ Blomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

² *The [New York] World*, December 1, 1921, p. 1.

³ Esslemont, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁴ *idem*, pp. 80–81.

⁵ Ferraby, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

days or weeks to write comprehensive reports of his teaching and activities. Those who had no concept of his beliefs came out of interest or curiosity. Many books, diaries, magazine articles, and pamphlets of the period record "a visit with 'Abdu'l-Baha".

It was in this capacity as a "teacher of universal principles" that many government officials, religious leaders, educators, and those with personal interests came to know him.

An example of the kind of group that traveled to Haifa to a study with 'Abdu'l-Baha was the party of fifteen encouraged by Mrs Phoebe Hearst, mother of William Randolph Hearst, to make the journey in 1898. She gathered people in America, France and Egypt to go with her.¹ Her reaction to the visit was similar to other recorded responses:

Those three days were the most memorable days of my life ... He is the most wonderful Being I have ever met or ever expect to meet in this world²

By the time of his death, his fame as a teacher of universal principles had won admirers in all parts of the world, from all backgrounds. The response after his death demonstrated something of this universal appeal. Winston Churchill telegraphed his condolence from England; wires were received from officials in Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, locations where the family had been the subject of intense persecutions. The description of the funeral cortege was even more illuminating as to those who had held him in high personal regard. Accompanying the coffin to the mausoleum

¹ Effendi, *God Passes By*, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-258.

² *idem*, p. 258.

were “the chiefs of the Muslim community”; a “number of Christian priests, Latin, Greek and Anglican”; “the British High Commissioner”; “the Governor of Jerusalem”; “the Governor of Phoenicia”; and those were followed by:

... officials of the government, counsels of various countries resident in Haifa, notables of Palestine, Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Druze, Egyptians, Greeks, Turks, Arabs, Kurds, Europeans and Americans, men, women and children.¹

“As to the funeral itself ...” recorded one author, “no less than ten thousand people participated representing every class, religion and race”²

12. As a religious leader

While numbers of people viewed 'Abdu'l-Baha as a significant personality and teacher, it is also necessary to describe the position he held as the leader of a new religious system, for it was chiefly in this “position” that he was known during the tour in the United States.

His father had designated to his followers the light in which 'Abdu'l-Baha was to be regarded. This statement of one of the well-known English adherents of the religion will suffice for explanation:

'Abdu'l-Baha has been endowed with a contingent infallibility that is beyond the understanding of man. All His words, His actions, His judgements and His interpretations are infallibly right, but only because Baha'u'llah [his father] has willed it so. 'Abdu'l-Baha revealed nothing new; He had not the direct intercourse with God of a Divine Manifestation; nevertheless, His every act reflected the Light of God and His every word bore

¹ Effendi, *op. cit.*, pp. 312-313.

² *idem*, p. 312.

witness to His superhuman knowledge.¹

13. As a world figure

The last category to be considered is that of the subject as a “world figure”. His reputation was a composite of all the other factors listed in the previous sections. As can be imagined, the opinion which the public had of him tended to be diverse. This will be discussed further in the section concerning his relationship to his audience. It is important here, however, to set the foundation for that later analysis.

When ‘Abdu’l-Baha arrived in this country, he was known variously as a prisoner, an exile, an author, a teacher of universal principles, the leader of the Baha’i World Faith, a Persian reformer, and a humanitarian. These attitudes and his prominence were reflected in the periodical articles of the time. In 1911 and 1912, before his actual arrival, the leading journals speculated on his coming, described his background, conjectured on his teachings, and generally agreed on his over-all importance. A reporter in *Everybody’s* magazine offered a summary that might be considered typical:

I have shown you now, as best I am able, what manner of man is this Abbas Effendi who is variously held to be impostor, priest, and prophet. ... No one knows; that the future alone can tell. That he is a good man and sincere, there can be no doubt. That the faith which he holds and the creed which he preaches might be followed with benefit by us all, there is no gainsaying. ... He preaches a clean and wholesome creed, and though you may question the divine origin of his mission, there is no denying that he is a

¹ Ferraby, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

sincere, courageous man, a figure whose increasing influence is already world-wide in its significance.¹

14. Prelude to the western tour

From 1868 until 1908, 'Abdu'l-Baha had been incarcerated in the prison city of Acca and its environs. During his confinement his obvious unavailability precluded any invitations or suggestions of a western speaking tour. The work he found necessary to do in the locality occupied him for two years after his release. In August of 1910, with a word to no one except the two friends he wished to accompany him, 'Abdu'l-Baha left quietly for a tour of Egypt, departing from Acca and Haifa for the first time in forty-two years.

After his departure for Egypt, however, frequent requests were made. As early as April, 1911, 'Abdu'l-Baha mentioned in a letter: "Now the friends ... in America have written innumerable letters and all of them are pleading that Abdul-Baha make a trip to that country. Their supplications and entreaties are insistent."² A letter from the Persian-American Education Society in the same year recorded: "During the past few months, he ['Abdu'l-Baha] has received many invitations from the prominent Peace Societies and National Organizations to address them while in America, and he has accepted the invitations"³

¹ E. S. Stevens, "Light in the Lantern", *Everybody's*, 25:786, December, 1911.

² *Star of the West*, 2:4, p. 6, May 17, 1911.

³ *Star of the West*, 2:16, p. 10, December 31, 1911.

After a winter of ill health in Egypt in 1910, he embarked for Europe in the autumn of 1911, toured through the major countries, and returned to Egypt for the winter. In March of 1912, he began the trip to the United States.

The financing of the trip was met by 'Abdu'l-Baha's personal funds. It was stated that:

Under all circumstances Abdul Baha refused to accept money for himself or the cause he represented. ... The sum of eighteen thousand dollars was subscribed toward the expense of his journey. He was notified of this action and a part of the money forwarded to him by cable. He cabled in answer that the funds contributed by his friends could not be accepted, returned the money and instructed them to give their offering to the poor.¹

Until the time of his actual departure, it was not known specifically when he would arrive. The following notification provided the first definite knowledge of his arrival.

A report that Abdul-Baha and suite sailed from Alexandria, Egypt, March 25th on the White Star Line S. S. "Cedric", due to arrive in New York City, April 10th, has been confirmed.²

The material concerning his arrival will be found in Chapter Four.

15. Summary

This chapter has attempted to stress "the importance of the orator's background for a full understanding of the speeches subjected to criticism", as mentioned by Thonssen and Baird in the introductory section. Material has been included which will aid in the understanding of the subject's background, family heritage, childhood, education, exile, imprisonment, and

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Chicago: Executive Board of Baha'i Temple Unity, 1922), p. ii.

² *Star of the West*, 3:2, p. 8, April 9, 1912.

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his roles as teacher and religious leader.

3

Analysis of the Chicago addresses

In Chapter One, the outline of the study was introduced. In the second chapter, the background of 'Abdu'l-Baha's life was discussed. In this chapter, the settings of the Chicago addresses will be reconstructed and eleven speeches will be analyzed in detail.

In order to carry out these objectives, this chapter has been divided into several sections, which deal with (1) the selection of the Chicago speeches; (2) the necessity of reconstructing the setting; (3) an explanation of the criteria used in the analysis; (4) 'Abdu'l-Baha's premises of thinking; and (5) an analysis of the eleven addresses in chronological order, including those delivered (a) at Hull House; (b) at the NAACP conference; (c) at a public meeting of the Baha'i convention; (d) at the dedication of the grounds for the house of worship; (e) to the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs; (f) at an afternoon reception; (g) at the Hotel Plaza; (h) to the Theosophical Society at Northwestern University; (i) to the "Children's Meeting"; (j) to the Plymouth Congregational Church; and (k) to the All-Souls Church.

1. The selection of the Chicago addresses

There was great repetition in the subject matter and method of presentation, the nature of the audiences and in newspaper responses

to the addresses throughout the country. By studying the specific aspects of a representative portion of the tour, the understanding thus gained can be applied to the circumstances and addresses of the remaining parts of the tour.

The addresses delivered in Chicago between the dates of April 30 and May 5 were considered representative of the kinds of addresses and audience situations throughout the country. The variety is shown in the listing of addresses contained in the preceding section of this chapter.

In preparation for this particular part of the study, (1) all of the Chicago newspapers published during the period of 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit were secured from the Chicago library files; (2) permission was obtained to study out-of-print materials kept at the private library of the Baha'i Publishing Trust in Wilmette; (3) contact was made with individuals still living in Chicago who attended some of the meetings; (4) copies of the addresses were secured and studied thoroughly; (5) some of the sites associated with the addresses were visited; (6) all of the published writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha in English were obtained and studied; (7) and information was gathered by letter and interview from the old records of organizations to which he spoke.

As explained in Chapter One, the addresses used in this analysis are found in the first volume of *Promulgation of Universal Peace*. Since this work has been out of print for a number of years and since the existing copies are generally found in private

collections unavailable to most readers, copies of the eleven addresses delivered in Chicago are included in the appendix of this study. They are placed in the order of their analysis.

Since extensive quotations will be used for illustrative purposes throughout this chapter and since the addresses are readily available within this same study, no footnotes will be used when quoting from the material contained within the addresses under analysis.

2. Necessity of reconstructing the speech setting

In *Speech Criticism*, it is noted that:

Since every judgment of a public speech contains a historical constituent, the critic is peculiarly concerned with determining the nature of the setting in which the speaker operated Responsibility of critical appraisal depends heavily upon the critic's ability to effect faithful reconstructions of social settings long since dissolved.¹

This chapter will include material which will help to clarify the historical and social circumstances closely connected with the address. Yet a total reconstruction is impossible, since records are, at best, a partial reflection of an entire event, and records of any event are seldom thorough. Speaking of this problem, Thonssen and Baird pointed out:

Much as he might desire it, the critic is unable to accumulate the totality of data which would result in complete and wholly faithful reproduction of a past event. However, he does the best he can with the available evidence, emphasizing those facts which are peculiarly significant to the study

¹ Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 312.

He assembles discrete data, establishes their interrelations, and thus rebuilds, under the limitations imposed by the nature of his investigation, the pattern in which the speechmaking occurred.¹

One of the objectives of this chapter will be to "establish the interrelations" and to "rebuild the pattern in which the speech-making occurred" as fully as possible from all of the available material.

3. Criteria of analysis

Beginning with section five of this chapter, 'Abdu'l-Baha's Chicago addresses will be examined in detail. Before getting to the addresses themselves it will be necessary to point out the elements of invention, disposition, style, and General Semantics which will be included in the discussion.

Disposition. Although many sources were studied in detail, most of the references for the criteria used from the traditional areas of speech criticism used in this study were taken from the book *Speech Criticism* by Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird. It was considered that their wording most adequately summarized the standards compiled from many sources.

The form and interrelation of the parts of each of 'Abdu'l-Baha's Chicago addresses will be considered. This aspect of analysis is traditionally known as the area of "disposition". As described in *Speech Criticism*, the critic "considers the speech from the point of

¹ idem, p. 327.

view of its basic construction, as an assembly of many parts bound together in an orderly and balanced whole"¹ The form of each of 'Abdu'l-Baha's addresses will be discussed in chronological order.

Invention. The term invention is generally used to include the areas of logical, emotional, and ethical proof.

Logical proof includes several factors to be considered. One of the basic building blocks of speaking is evidence.

Evidence includes:

... the testimony of individuals, personal experiences, tables of statistics, illustrative examples, or any so-called "factual" items which induce in the mind of the hearer or reader a state of belief—a tendency to affirm the existence of the fact or proposition to which the evidence attaches and in support of which it is introduced.²

Closely connected with evidence in the process of analysis are the factors of exposition and argument. Thonssen and Baird point out that "the distinction between them is not absolute; indeed, the two are complementary in the sense that argument depends heavily upon expository detail."³ The form of the reasoning is important to analysis, because:

... the process of reasoning or argument serves as the cohesive force; through the relationships it establishes,

¹ idem, p. 393.

² idem, p. 341.

³ idem, p. 344.

the mind is led from the recognition of discernible facts to a conclusion.¹

The processes of inductive and deductive reasoning will be considered as they are used in the addresses. Induction involves movement from particulars to a general conclusion, while deduction follows a reasoning pattern proceeding from a general truth to a particular conclusion.

The area of emotional, or pathetic, proof is concerned with appeals to the basic motivations of the audience. Thonssen and Baird wrote that "pathetic proof includes all those materials and devices calculated to put the audience in a frame of mind suitable for the reception of the speaker's ideas."² It is primarily concerned with the idea of audience adaptation since

... for the speaker, the audience is the most important element in the situation and ... if he is to be effective, the speaker must adjust both himself and his ideas to it Therefore speakers adapt what they have to say to the peculiar audience conditions facing them.³

The analysis of emotional proof is closely tied to the condition that "men are excited to belief or action by different motives at different times."⁴ Since, "it obviously is impossible to enumerate all the motivating agents", the various motivations will be considered within the context of each individual address.⁵

¹ *ibid.*

² *idem*, p. 358.

³ *idem*, p. 360.

⁴ *idem*, p. 366.

⁵ *ibid.*

Considering the elements of ethical proof, Aristotle wrote that they "reside in the character of the speaker."¹ The two aspects of character include opinion held by the audience before the speaking situation and also any aspects which during the course of the address would tend to display or call attention to the character of the qualifications of the speaker. The public image of 'Abdu'l-Baha's character is shown in quotations throughout the study, while in the analysis, itself, only those factors occurring in the speech will be considered.

Style. In analyzing the elements of style, the following factors from *Speech Criticism* will be considered:

... the speaker's having (1) an idea worth presenting, (2) an unmistakably clear conception of the idea, (3) a desire to communicate it, (4) a willingness to adapt it to a particular set of circumstances, and (5) a mastery of language adequate to express the idea in words.²

General semantic criteria. Closely interwoven with and overlapping the preceding concepts are those of General Semantic analysis. These criteria aid in the analysis of the speaker's orientation toward himself, his subject, and his environment.

All of the studies concerning the application of General Semantic principles to the area of speech criticism were investigated. Fourteen tangential studies referred in a general way to this area. Three studies applied directly. The most recent of these was prepared

¹ Lane Cooper, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle* (New York: Appleton, Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932), p. 8.

² Thonssen and Baird, *op. cit.*, p. 430.

by Raymond W. McLaughlin.¹ His comprehensive summary of the literature chronicles every relevant study made; from all of the preceding work, he developed the most thorough and usable system of General Semantic criteria for use in public address. An adaptation of his major criteria, based on the formulations of Alfred Korzybski and others, will be used in this study. A description of these criteria follows.

Two major classifications are included: (1) those factors which tend to show maladjustment or misconception in the relationship between words and the things to which they refer, and (2) those factors which tend to show adjustment and awareness of this relationship.

In the first category are included the sub-categories of (1) "allness" terms; (2) superlative terms; (3) two-valued terms; (4) "is" of identification; and (5) "is" of predication. The second category included (1) comparative terms; (2) quantifying terms; (3) conditional terms; (4) consciousness-of-projection terms; and (5) partially quantifying terms. Each of these ten areas will now be discussed.

"Allness" terms tend to misrepresent facts. They include terms of an all-inclusive and universal nature such as all, always, every, none, entire, and total. These terms tend "to lead people either to deny facts altogether, or to go to the other extreme of evaluation

¹ Raymond McLaughlin, "A General Semantic Comparison of the Speaking of Oral Roberts and Harry Emerson Fosdick" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, The University of Denver, Denver, 1958).

"The two speakers under consideration are Harry Emerson Fosdick, former pastor of the Riverside Church of New York City and for many years a leading voice for the liberal wing of American Christianity, and Oral Roberts, contemporary fundamentalist mass evangelist and 'faith healer' whose preaching is heard currently by thousands of people in tent and auditorium meetings, on radio and television." p. 143.

Raymond W. McLaughlin, "Intentional-Extensional Language as a Measure of Semantic Orientation," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 1940, pp. 143-151.

and to embrace universalities.”¹ Examples would be such statements as “All children are rude”, or “Science is always opposed to religion”.

Superlative terms express extreme degrees of quality, such as highest, most, best, worst, only, and least. McLaughlin stated:

Rigid, dogmatic and absolutistic views and attitudes indicated some kind of misevaluation whenever they crept in because they misrepresented living processes which were undergoing continuous change.²

Examples would include such statements as “Sociology is the only field with real value”, or “It was the worst movie ever made”.

Two-valued terms get their name from the fact that they offer an “either - or” choice and allow no middle condition. Since most conditions are a part of a continuum, this kind of language tends to indicate maladjustment. It implies that the two values exhaust the possibilities, as “they are either for him or against him”.

The “is” of identification suggests a false relationship between two objects. To say “man *is* an animal” tends to leave out the complexity of the human being, just as do statements such as “man *is* a machine”, or “man *is* a soul”, unless some qualification and explanation is added. Korzybski felt such language was “structurally unjustified and dangerous”, for it tended to reduce “infinite-valued” facts of experience to a single value.³

¹ idem, p. 157.

² idem, p. 162.

³ idem, p. 173.

Closely allied with the foregoing is the "is" of predication. This attaches a characteristic too closely to an object. Instead, such characteristics exist in the mind of the observer. The "is" of predication does not acknowledge this, as in such phrases as "men are treacherous", "roses are beautiful", or "high school students are ignorant".¹ A speaker may demonstrate his awareness of this difficulty by the use of such phrases as, "it seems to me", or "from my point of view", or "considering the preceding facts I conclude that."

The first of the areas showing awareness of language-fact adjustment are comparative terms. These express degrees of comparison such as more, less, lower, similar, major, and like. It has been suggested that

... the either-or fallacy in language structure was avoidable by talking in terms of degrees of more or less. Thus, instead of conceiving of all men as either short or tall, we ought to think in terms of their being tallest, more tall, less tall and shortest.²

Quantifying terms include any precise numerical terms of references such as "eighty" and "first". One author suggested that

... quantifying terms tended to lend exactness to language ... lacking in vague statements. Thus the term "casualties were heavy" produced a different affect upon a listener than the statement "of ten thousand troops, five hundred were killed and twelve hundred injured during the attack."³

Conditional terms are qualifying elements which show that there is room for exceptions or deviations, hence stressing the

¹ idem, p. 179.

² idem, p. 187-188.

³ idem, p. 190.

element of uncertainty. Terms of this nature include such words as *almost*, *about*, *except*, *if*, *nevertheless*, *perhaps*, and *practically*. The form of conditional language suggests that "If you will do this and that under these conditions with this kind of material, these things are *very* likely to occur."¹

"Consciousness-of-projection" terms are well defined by their name. They include words or statements that show a speaker's awareness of projecting his personal viewpoint and include terms such as *seems*, *appears*, *apparently*, *suggests*, *as I see it*, etc. He thus demonstrates his ability to discern his own interpretation of events.

Partially quantifying terms loosely point out amounts; they are neither as precise as quantifying terminology nor as total as "allness" terminology. While they may tend to communicate indefiniteness, they offer enough modification to show the speaker's awareness of a variety of possibilities. These terms include such words as *many*, *much*, *few*, *lots*, *little*, *hundreds*, *multitudes*, *some*, *several*, etc.

Summary. In this section the elements of invention, disposition, style, and General Semantic criteria to be used in the speech analysis have been discussed. Before beginning with the specific analyses of the speeches, it will be necessary to study the premises of thinking on which the speaking was based.

¹ idem, p. 194.

4. Premises of thinking

Introduction. Like every speaker, 'Abdu'l-Baha could cover only a limited amount of information in a single presentation. And, like every speaker, what he said in a specific instance grew out of a much larger pattern of his concepts. "The critic," wrote Thonssen and Baird,

searching always for the source of the speaker's reasonings as well as for the reasons themselves, tries to appraise the personal resources of the orator and tries to get at the root of the man's thinking.¹

The interest in these "roots" is apparent, for they determine the character of the specific material used in the speech. "The importance of such discoveries to the critic need scarcely be mentioned," continued the aforementioned authors:

With them, he is able the more accurately and deeply to probe the thinking of an orator—to push back beyond the commonplace and superficial manifestations of the orator's thought to the basic ideas which not only permeated, but determined, the line of argument used in a given case.²

Yet the speeches alone will not yield this material clearly enough, for in searching out these premises, it is found that:

... their isolation can be effected only through a thoughtful study of the historical pattern in which the speeches are set. ... The accuracy with which the fundamental tenets of a man's reasoning are uncovered will depend upon penetrating insight into the orator himself, his training, social conditioning, and relation to and attitude toward the complex problems of his time.³

¹ Thonssen and Baird, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

² *ibid.*

³ *idem*, p. 377.

In order that the ideas expressed in the addresses of 'Abdu'l-Baha may be understood, this section will attempt to describe the basic source of 'Abdu'l-Baha's premises, and to outline the pattern of his thinking in relation to the historic setting and the social issues of the time.

The source of all of 'Abdu'l-Baha's premises of thinking were his father's teachings. At no time did 'Abdu'l-Baha claim any originality of thinking for himself. He stated many times that he was not the "originator" of the teachings he spoke of, but that he was the "channel" for conveying them to the public. 'Abdu'l-Baha pointed out numerous times that his "position" in life was designated by his name, that is, Abdul (the servant) Baha (of "Baha", referring to Baha'u'llah).

In ascertaining whether or not 'Abdu'l-Baha's premises of thinking were totally derived from the basis of his father's teaching, all of the published works of Baha'u'llah were studied and the basic thoughts outlined. Then the material in more than one hundred and forty of 'Abdu'l-Baha's American addresses was surveyed for their major ideas. It was concluded from such an examination that all of the subject matter dealt with by 'Abdu'l-Baha while in America had its basis in the fundamental system of teachings expounded by his father, Baha'u'llah.

While any detailed analysis of Baha'u'llah's teachings, for its own sake is beyond the scope of the present investigation, it

will be necessary to chart the basic system of beliefs of Baha'u'llah in order to understand as fully as possible the premises on which 'Abdu'l-Baha based the ideas and evidence found in his addresses. Baha'u'llah's ideas on (1) the concept of God; (2) the concept of "Manifestation"; (3) the duality of social and spiritual teachings; and (4) specific social teachings will be discussed in this section.

The concept of God. The general premise that "God" exists was important to the remainder of the system. He was conceived of as being beyond the scope of human understanding. Baha'u'llah wrote:

To every discerning and illuminated heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the Divine Being is immensely exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress. Far be it from His glory that human tongue should adequately recount His praise, or that human heart comprehend His fathomless mystery. He is, and hath ever been, veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence, and will remain in His Reality everlastingly hidden from the sight of man.¹

He deemed it impossible for humans to attain to any kind of direct knowledge of this "infinite Being", and stated:

Exalted, immeasurably exalted, art Thou above the strivings of mortal man to unravel Thy mystery, to describe Thy glory, or even to hint at the nature of Thine Essence.²

This premise was vital to the next concept. It followed that if this God was "unknowable", then some kind of "channel" would have to

¹ Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1939), pp. 46-47.

² idem, pp. 3-4.

exist through which some kind of information could be imparted. This was where the idea of “manifestation” had its place.

The concept of Manifestation. The only things, said Baha’u’llah, that man could know of God were His attributes, such as love, justice, mercy, etc. He spoke of several hundred of these attributes. Certain men, he claimed, were used by God as “channels” of these attributes to mankind; they “manifested” His “names and signs” to man. Baha’u’llah described the Manifestations as “the recipients and revealers of all the unchangeable attributes and names of God. They are the mirrors that truly and faithfully reflect the light of God.”¹

They were supposed to do two things: first, live perfectly according to the standards of the attributes, and second, leave teachings to show how mankind could develop these same standards. He concluded that:

It hath been made indubitably clear that in the kingdom of earth and heaven there must needs be manifested a Being, an Essence Who shall act as a Manifestation and Vehicle for the transmission of the grace of the Divinity Itself, the Sovereign Lord of all. Through the Teachings of this Day Star of Truth every man will advance and develop until he attaineth the station at which he can manifest all the potential forces with which his inmost true self hath been endowed. It is for this very purpose that in every age and dispensation the prophets of God and His chosen Ones have appeared amongst men, and have evinced such power as is born of God and such might as only the Eternal can reveal.²

The concept of Progressive Revelation. Baha’u’llah claimed that these teachers appeared every few hundred years and taught mankind

¹ Baha’u’llah, *The Kitab-i-Iqan* (Wilmette: Baha’i Publishing Committee, 1931), p. 142.

² *Gleanings, op. cit.*, pp. 67–68.

an increasingly greater amount about the nature and application of these attributes. They were all co-equal, he claimed, saying that

These attributes of God are not ... vouchsafed specially unto certain Prophets, and withheld from others. Nay, all the Prophets of God His holy and chosen Messengers are, without exception, the bearers of His names, and the embodiments of His attributes. They only differ in the intensity of their revelation¹

This difference in "intensity" was explained as being determined by the capacity of the hearers. "It is clear ... that any apparent variation in the intensity of their light," he pointed out, "is not inherent in the light itself, but should rather be attributed to the varying receptivity of an ever-changing world."² He concluded that since they "are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God ... They, therefore, are regarded as one soul and the same person."³ He included such men as Krishna, Zoroaster, Buddha, Moses, Christ, Mohammed, and others. He likened them to "divine school teachers", each one raising mankind to a higher "grade" of development. Their overall purpose was the same, namely

... as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its people, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity.⁴

While this was his outline, in essence, his numerous books include detailed explanations, as he saw them, of the relationships of prophecies, historic dispensations, and sociological and religious history.

¹ idem, p. 48.

² idem, p. 79.

³ idem, p. 50.

⁴ idem, p. 80.

He claimed to be the newest of these manifestations who had once again revealed the ancient teachings, showing how they should be applied to the difficulties of the present-day world.

The concept of spiritual and social teachings. From the system as it has been thus far described, it can be seen that each manifestation was supposed to teach two things: (1) the same basic principles taught by all the others; and (2) something new that would help advance civilization a step further. Baha'u'llah explained this by saying that the "spiritual" teachings were always the same, that is, the concept of the attributes, including justice, love, etc. But the "social teachings" were different in each new dispensation depending upon the exigencies of the times. The "social teachings" were the specific application of the "spiritual teachings". When Christ, therefore, made statements such as "You have heard it said of old. ... But I say unto you ...", he was indicating that, in effect, "when Moses taught the desert tribes, justice was applied in that way; now we live in a different cultural pattern, and so justice must be applied in another way, to fit the new situation."

The disagreement between followers of religions, Baha'u'llah claimed, was caused by a failure to see the distinction between these two kinds of teachings.

In order for a person to realize the "Truth" about God, His manifestations, the spiritual teachings, or the social teachings, Baha'u'llah said that one had to "cleanse his spiritual eye and ear" so that his "inner" perception, his insight, was more keen. To do this he outlined necessary conditions that the "seeker" should fulfill. Among these requisites he

included the following:

... when a true seeker determines to take the step of search in the path leading to the knowledge of the Ancient of Days, he must, before all else, cleanse and purify his heart ... from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge, and the allusions of the embodiments of satanic fancy. ... That seeker must at all times put his trust in God ... He must never seek to exalt himself above any one, must wash away from the tablet of his heart every trace of pride and vainglory, must cling unto patience and resignation ... and refrain from idle talk. That seeker should also regard backbiting as grievous error ... He should be content with little and be freed from all inordinate desire. ... He should succor the dispossessed, and never withhold his favor from the destitute ... He should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for himself, nor promise that which he doth not fulfill¹

When these conditions were fulfilled, he said, a person was in a position to seek for himself rather than to imitate the beliefs of other people. He stressed the need for “independent investigation of truth” most strongly.

His general teachings concerning the “spiritual attributes”, the unchanging part of religion, included such material as the following:

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer of the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. ... Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive.²

The development of these personal conditions he considered to be

¹ *Kitab-i-Iqan, op. cit.*, pp. 193-194.

² *Baha'i World Faith* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1943), p. 136.

essential to the carrying out of the social teachings.

Baha'u'llah's social teachings. Baha'u'llah's teachings were referred to as "less of an organization" than they were the "spirit of the age". He praised anyone who was carrying out plans "for the good of humanity", and who followed the "true teachings" of any of the manifestations. He pointed out that by knowing the newest "revelation they would have the most direct access to the "healing medicines" necessary for the "sicknesses" of the particular age.

'Abdu'l-Baha stated in one address that:

All the divine principles announced by the tongue of the prophets of the past are to be found in the words of Baha'u'llah, but in addition to these, He has revealed certain new teachings which are not found in any of the sacred books of former times.¹

Baha'u'llah wrote of such matters as the equality of opportunity for men and women, the true agreement of science and religion, the method of systematic elimination of prejudices, the development of a universal language, provisions for universal education, the raising of an international tribunal for the world, the development of universal peace, the application of a "spiritual solution" to the economic problem, the realization that the foundation of all religions was the same, and the idea of the complete "oneness of mankind".

In order to "serve humanity" more effectively, Baha'u'llah instructed those who followed his teachings to build houses of worship where people of all religious backgrounds might come together. Around this edifice in each city he wished humanitarian institutions to be

¹ idem, pp. 245-246.

built for the care of the aged, the crippled, and orphans, a hospital, a university, a hospice for travelers, and an administrative headquarters.

In carrying out these teachings, Baha'u'llah stressed that adherents should teach by the example of their own personal conduct. They were forbidden to proselytize except to make the teachings publicly available and to answer any questions that might be asked.

From this basic system of belief, many corollaries were forth-coming but such details are beyond the scope of this study.

Summary. In this short description of Baha'u'llah's teachings, "existence" was regarded in three parts: (1) the "world of God", the unknowable; (2) the "station of the Manifestations", as "channels" for the knowledge of God's attributes; and (3) the "world of creation". Creation was referred to as four ascending "kingdoms"—the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the human kingdom.

It can be seen from this brief resume that Baha'u'llah's system included interpretations and explanations of matters of history, sociology, psychology, religion, government, ethics and morals. The pattern was extensive enough so that virtually anything could be viewed in relation to it. This scope is particularly important in considering 'Abdu'l-Baha's addresses, for there was virtually nothing on which he did not speak in relation to this system.

Thus far this chapter has served to explain the criteria and to summarize the basic premises from which 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke. The remainder of this chapter will deal with the analysis of the addresses

delivered in Chicago.

5. Hull House

The first Chicago mention of 'Abdu'l-Baha's arrival in America appeared in the *Chicago Record-Herald* on April 14, 1912. Included with his photograph was mention of his arrival in New York, his background and teachings.¹

On Monday, April 29, the *Daily News* published an article stating that 'Abdu'l-Baha, en route to Chicago, was missing: "Where is Abdul-Baha?" the article asked, and reported that the Chicago Baha'is, part of "40,000,000 followers in the world, asked each other this question and failed to find an answer"² No other source, however, made mention of this supposed "disappearance". It was interesting to note, nonetheless, that this was the "introductory" article to the Chicago public of 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit.

He arrived on the evening of the 29th. As was customary, he wished his arrivals to be unpublicized and unattended. Many went anyway and accompanied him to his rooms in the Plaza Hotel, near Lincoln Park. En-route and at the hotel he spoke to individual friends who accompanied him.³

¹ *Chicago Record-Herald*, April 14, 1912, Section 8, p. 17.

² *Chicago Daily News*, April 19, 1912, p. 2.

³ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, "'Abdu'l-Baha in America", *Star of the West*, 19:4, p. 111, July, 1928.

Early on Tuesday morning, April 30, reporters from the Chicago papers came to interview him at the Plaza Hotel. The first article to appear was printed in the *Daily News* later that day. Following the headlines, "BAHA IS PEACE HERALD", the article reported that "Abdul Baha Abbas ... to-day spoke of newspaper reporters and universal brotherhood and peace in his first Chicago interview."¹ It offered background, physical descriptions, quotations, and announcements of meetings. The other papers included such headlines as "WORLD HARMONY IS AIM OF ABDUL-BAHA", and "PROPHET ABDUL BAHA HERE: CHICAGOANS HONOR PERSIAN". These articles contained information similar to the above. A sample of quotations of 'Abdu'l-Baha's words, in response to interview questions, included the following:

"Women should be trained so that they may become intellectual and religious equals of men; they should be their political equals as well," he declared.

"The press is a wonderful thing. A reporter should be a purveyor of truth ... an amazing influence in the spread of thought," he declared. "Journalists wield the greatest of modern influences. Therefore the press should be a synonym of integrity; its veracity should never be questioned."

"If religion disagrees with science then it becomes mere superstition, and if religion creates discord then irreligion becomes preferable."²

'Abdu'l-Baha presented his first address in Chicago at the Hull House at the invitation of Jane Addams, after the newspaper

¹ *Chicago Daily News*, April 30, 1912, p. 3.

² *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, May 1, 1912, p. 3.

interviews, on May 30. It was recorded that

... it was on a warm, spring-like day, April thirtieth, 1912, that Hull House in Chicago was all astir. For 'Abdu'l-Baha a great and holy Personage from Palestine was expected. This important visit was planned by Jane Addams, "Mother of Hull House", or "Chicago's Most Useful Citizen", as the people of Chicago lovingly call her.¹

Hull House was located on Halstead Street, described as "that bit of cross-section, seemingly, of all the markets, bazaars, cafes and wayside churches of all the races, nationalities and creeds of the world."²

Describing the event in an interview later, Jane Addams ... spoke of inviting 'Abdu'l-Baha to visit Hull House ... to speak in Bowen Hall, and although the hall seats 750 people, it was far too small to hold the crowds that poured in. ... Hull House was all astir. So was Halstead Street.³

At the meeting, "Miss Addams herself, acting as chairman, welcomed 'Abdu'l-Baha and graciously presented Him to the audience."⁴

The audience consisted of the local inhabitants of Halstead Street as well as those who came from other sections of town to hear the speaker. One commentator spoke of it as "a real Inter-racial Amity meeting, for the large audience was composed of white and colored people."⁵ Another summarized the audience as containing "the rich

¹ Ruth J. Moffett, "'Abdu'l-Baha's Historic Meeting with Jane Addams", *Baha'i World*, 6:680, 1936.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

50 Historical study of the North American speaking tour of 'Abdu'l-Baha and poor, the educated and ignorant, the managers of business and the industrial slaves."¹

In the address, 'Abdu'l-Baha saved his key idea until the conclusion. His main idea was that the various races of humanity must learn to live together without discord or disagreement. His main line of argument dealt with the idea that there were likenesses and differences between the races but that the former outweighed the latter. If humanity concentrated on those likenesses, he pointed out, unity could be achieved.

He introduced his speech with a basic premise that all things may be classified according to likenesses or according to differences:

When we view the world of creation, we find that all living things may be classified under two aspects of existence: First, they possess bodies composed of material substance common to all This is their point of agreement ... Secondly, they vary and differ from each other in degree and function ... This is their point of distinction and differentiation.

He supported this with two examples, comparing vegetables and animals, and man and animals:

For instance, the vegetable and animal are alike in the fact that their bodies are composed of the same material elements; but widely different in their kingdoms and powers. Man is like the animal in physical structure but otherwise immeasurably separated and superior.

Having made this brief introduction to set up the basic premise on which his reasoning would be based, he moved quickly to the application of this principle to the different groups of mankind. He made

¹ Moffett, *loc. cit.*

the transition easily, saying, "If the points of contact which are the common properties of humanity overcome the peculiar points of distinction, unity is assured." In order to add emphasis to his point, he immediately restated it in the negative: "On the other hand if the points of differentiation overcome the points of agreement, disunion and weakness result."

Having arrived at this first main sub-point in the body of the address, which was to support his key idea at the end of the speech, he began to mass material in support of his contention. He was going to use inductive reasoning, building from a series of particulars to a general conclusion. The particulars he was accumulating dealt with examples of likenesses and differences between the races, especially between the white and colored in the United States.

His first area of similarities dealt with physical factors:

In the material or physical plane of being, both are constituted alike and exist under the same law of growth and bodily development. Furthermore both live and move in the plane of the senses and are endowed with human intelligence.

Adding further to his material for inductive reasoning, he turned to national similarities. Altogether, he listed five major items: patriotism, equal rights to citizenship, language, blessings of the same civilization, and religion.

He compared these several area of similarity to the single area of difference—color. He concluded his reasoning pattern with the statement, "numerous points of partnership and agreement exist between the two races; whereas the one point of distinction is that of

color;" and be asked the question, "Shall this, the least of all distinctions be allowed to separate you as races and individuals?"

Having reached the conclusion of this argument, he once more made use of repetition to reinforce the point he had just made:

In physical bodies, in the law of growth, sense endowment, intelligence, patriotism, language, citizenship, civilization and religion you are one and the same. A single point of distinction exists; that of racial color.

At this point, he introduced two standards of judgment to strengthen the point that the one distinction of color should not cause division. First of all, he called upon "divine authority" pointing out that God would not be pleased with such a distinction, and second he indicated that the standards of human reason could not accept such a condition: "God is not pleased with, neither should any reasonable or intelligent man be willing to recognize inequality in the races because of this distinction."

His second major supporting point in the body of the address concerned the means of overcoming such prejudicial thinking. He suggested that man's power alone was not enough to accomplish the elimination of prejudice, even by "reasonable" methods. He offered no proof to support his contention that such a superior power was needed, but stated it as a "simple fact". He said:

But there is need of a superior power to overcome human prejudices; a power which nothing in the world of mankind can withstand and which will overshadow the effect of all other forces at work in human conditions. That irresistible power is the love of God.

At this point he introduced his one mention of Baha'u'llah, indicating that the concept of "the oneness of humanity" was one of his basic proclamations.

Without dwelling on the foregoing statement, he quickly entered his visualization step, reinforcing his previous reasons with an appeal to the audience motivations for peace and security. His basic stylistic tool was an extended simile which compared the variety of colors in the human races to a beautiful flower garden of multi-colored blossoms. In his comparison he stated:

If you enter a garden, you will see yellow, white, blue, red flowers in profusion and beauty; each radiant within itself and although different from the others, lending its own charm to them. Racial difference in the human kingdom is similar. If all the flowers in a garden were of the same color, the effect would be monotonous and wearying to the eye.

Having pictured in this way the conditions which he hoped they could achieve, he concluded in one sentence, incorporating in it both a summation of the talk as well as the principle thought: "Let all associate then in this great human garden even as flowers grow and blend together side by side without discord or disagreement among them."

'Abdu'l-Baha's basic organization included (1) a brief introduction, (2) a statement of the first supporting idea, (3) a series of statements building up inductively to a conclusion, (4) a statement of the second major supporting idea, unsupported by evidence or reasoning, (5) a visualization step, and (6) a short conclusion.

Two sections stand out in the analysis of the General Semantic criteria. First, 'Abdu'l-Baha made use of "allness" terms for emphasis. While not specifically accurate, they served as a stylistic device for stressing his point. He said, for example, that "all have equal rights to citizenship", in the United States. Technically, it was the very denial of rights which constituted one of the obvious functions of "prejudice". Yet he chose to emphasize the sameness of potential opportunity by saying "all". He likewise stated that "all follow the same religion". In his general usage, 'Abdu'l-Baha always used the word "religion" to refer to the broad categories of "Christianity" or "Islam" or "Buddhism". He carefully differentiated this from "sects and divisions" which grew up within "religions". Hence, he was consistent with his usual terminology, for most Americans would be considered "Christian", even though they identified themselves with various sub-groupings. Thus his "all follow the same religion", as a generality was true and served to emphasize the point he was making.

His opening remarks concerning the degrees of similarities and differences showed his awareness of comparative terminology. Rather than making an unqualified statement such as "man is an animal", he demonstrated the ability to use conditional terms by the use of such qualifications as "Man is like the animal *in physical structure.*"

The audience which 'Abdu'l-Baha faced at Hull House was diverse in the extreme, as has been shown in a previous description. Chicago had been under particular racial stress before his arrival to the point of an attempted lynching on the elevated train during the day. The

poor people from the immediate neighborhood represented a variety of foreign-language backgrounds who understood English only in its more simple forms. During its twenty-three years of existence Hull House had provided many lectures on race relations; still the people saw the strife increasing in the neighborhood and city.

Faced with such an audience, 'Abdu'l-Baha made no mention of specific difficulties, drew no detailed examples, nor offered any complex solutions. He went instead to what he believed were the principles upon which the attitudes causing the difficulties were based. His reasoning was of the most basic kind, phrased in simple language; in effect, we must have racial unity because God would be pleased and because it is "reasonable". We have everything to achieve, the powerful love of God can accomplish it. He appended to this the mention that this has been accomplished elsewhere in connection with Baha'u'llah's teachings. He also ended simply, with the analogy of the multi-hued flowers.

By the use of such simple language and examples, he tended to increase the possibility of communicating his thoughts to the entire audience, even those with poor language facility or little education.

It is possible to see throughout the address the relation of the material to the premises of thinking discussed earlier in the chapter. The "oneness of mankind" was one of the foremost of Baha'u'llah's teachings. 'Abdu'l-Baha made only passing reference to the relationship of the principle to Baha'u'llah's teachings, however. The other points included within the address—the four kingdoms of

creation, the elimination of prejudice, the need for “God’s love” to eliminate prejudice—were likewise related to that basic system. When the talk had been completed, it was reported that:

... after the meeting, 'Abdu'l-Baha noticed many children and unemployed laborers crowding and pushing each other to gain a glimpse of Him. He stood in their most, and into each hand He dropped a quarter or half dollar.¹

Another source reported that he “went out into the dingy crowded street”, and there he “mingled with the little children and the under-privileged poor, and gave them freely from a bagful of coins, with many kindly words of encouragement. ...”²

6. NAACP Conference

From Hull House, 'Abdu'l-Baha traveled to Handel Hall, where the NAACP convention was in progress. Here he delivered his second Chicago address. The delegates were assembled for the fourth Annual Convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The group had its inception in 1909. In the three years before 1912, the organization had dealt with the problem of clarifying their goals, had acquired information concerning matters of segregation throughout the United States, and had initiated a new publication, the *Crisis*, as a news channel to its members. By April of 1912, when the fourth annual convention was held in Chicago, the emphasis was turned to

¹ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *loc. cit.*

² Moffett, *op. cit.*, p. 683.

gaining widespread publicity for the growing organization. Speakers of public note were invited. In a history of the organization it was indicated that the meeting was “a great success as far as giving rise to widespread publicity was concerned for there were many outstanding persons present.”¹ ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s name headed the list of “well-known speakers of that time” who addressed the convention.²

One of the presiding officers at the conference was Jane Addams. ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s address was presented in the late afternoon. There is no record of the exact number of people in Handel Hall for the presentation, but the reports suggest that the attendance was in the hundreds.

In this address, ‘Abdu’l-Baha once again waited until the end of the speech to state his main point: the only criterion for estimating people should be their attributes or character.

In his introduction, he accomplished two things: he established with the biblical quotation “God said let us make man in our own image”, the first premise of his reasoning, and he defined his terms in a way that provided the structure for the remainder of the talk. The “image of God,” he said, referred to the “divine attributes” which were reflected by the human being.

¹ Robert L. Jack, *History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (Boston: Meador Publishing Company, 1943), p. 11.

² *ibid.*

Entering the body of his address, 'Abdu'l-Baha went on to summarize the four degrees of existence and the main attribute of each: the mineral with cohesion; the vegetable with cohesion and growth; the animal with cohesion, growth, and senses; and man with all these, plus the potential of developing all the "attributes of God".

He stated his next contention: that man is a microcosm of the macrocosm of the universe. He drew the analogy of the seed having the latent attributes of a tree and mankind having the latent virtues of perfection.

At that point, he returned to the main theme, and said, "Let us now discover more specifically how he is the image and likeness of God and what is the standard or criterion by which he can be measured and estimated."

He began to draw the distinction between the physical standards of wealth, fame, and color on the one hand, and the divine virtues and intelligence on the other. The heart of the argument took the form of three rhetorical questions. He asked, for example, "If a man possesses wealth can we call him an image and likeness of God? Can we apply the test of racial color and say that man of a certain hue ... is the true image of his creator?" He reasoned that since this did not constitute part of being in the image of God, it was "accidental in nature".

Having drawn the distinction between the physical attributes and the spiritual attributes, he concluded that the latter was the only constituent that made man in the image of God and therefore must

be man's only standard of judgment.

This talk was held in the afternoon, after the Hull House address. The NAACP conventioners gathered at Handel Hall had been attending meetings and listening to talks all day long. And it was just before supper time. At best, it may be supposed that the audience was tired physically.

In the annual reports for the association, events that came before the convention for consideration included such occurrences as sixty-three Negro lynchings in one year, property discriminations in various states, and job denials. This material was fraught with discouraging factors. The members were familiar with the detailed legal proceedings that were in progress.¹

'Abdu'l-Baha was faced with a tired audience, gathered for the purpose of combating prejudice, and familiar with the details and frustrations of efforts being made. In meeting this situation he delivered a talk from a quarter to a third of an hour in length. He avoided detailed material and proceeded directly to his concept of the basis of discrimination—a concentration on physical attributes rather than a concentration on character or divine attributes. He attached his words, in the opening sentence, to a quotation from the Bible, probably familiar to the entire audience. He offered three encouraging thoughts—that man has great potential (a microcosm of the universe); that he was in the image and likeness of God; and that

¹ For details, see *NAACP 3rd Annual Report*, January, 1913.

concentration on spiritual attributes will eliminate prejudice. In the final statement he juxtaposed the two extremes, one which he had magnified to universal, God-endowed, conditions, and the other which he referred to as "accidental, of no importance," saying:

God has endowed man with such favor that he is called the image of God, this is truly a supreme perfection of attainment, a divine station which is not to be sacrificed by the mere accident of color.

In this way, his leading argument became the main emotional appeal, deriving its impact from the exalted "station" which he suggested inherently belonged to each person and which can be manifested in growth just as the seed grows into a tree.

At first glance, the address seemed to lack a strong informative, persuasive, or stimulative basis. Its information was highly abstract, the audience probably readily accepted the persuasive argument already, and no direct action was offered toward which they might be stimulated. However, the purpose becomes clear then referring back to 'Abdu'l-Baha's basic premise. This fundamental teaching of man's "true nature" as a reflection of divine attributes was to him a major part of the solution of all human problems.

This definition of man suggested that there must be a source of attributes and a means of developing them; it also suggested that if the members of mankind, and at this moment the members of the audience, could see each other in this new kind of way, prejudice would automatically cease, since it could not exist in the area of "divine attributes". Thus, it might be said that 'Abdu'l-Baha's purposes were

primarily informative and persuasive. The immediate benefit would be a new concept of viewing other people; the long-range benefits included the possible development of insight into the various adjuncts which were suggested by this outlook.

7. Public meeting of the Convention of the Baha'i Temple Unity

On Tuesday night, a third address was presented. The meeting was held in Drill Hall of the Masonic Temple. The meeting was referred to in different accounts as "the Chicago assembly of his followers", "the Baha'is of Chicago", "the Unity Temple convention", and "the Baha'i Temple Unity convention". It may be inferred from reports that a large number of people attending closely identified with 'Abdu'l-Baha's precepts; yet, at the same time it was a meeting to which the public had been invited.

An observer reported that "more than 2000 people were gathered together in the great and spacious Drill Hall."¹ He went on to note that "although all were not Baha'is, yet the whole audience involuntarily rose the moment 'Abdu'l-Baha entered the Hall."²

'Abdu'l-Baha spoke on the significance of houses of worship throughout history. It should be noted that as early as 1903, the

¹ Mahmud, "The Journey of 'Abdu'l-Baha to America", *Story Supplement to God Passes By* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1948), p. 58. See similar, *Mahmud's Diary*, p. 71.

² *ibid.*

Chicago Baha'is had secured permission from 'Abdu'l-Baha to proceed with plans on the construction of a house of worship near Chicago. In the intervening period, land had been purchased, with a permanent national organization, known as the Baha'i Temple Unity, incorporated as a religious corporation, holding the title. Contributions had been arriving from numerous locations in Europe, the Near East, and Latin America as well as from areas in this country. More than twenty thousand dollars had thus far been raised prior to 'Abdu'l-Baha's arrival.¹ On the afternoon of the day of the Drill Hall meeting, the *Chicago Herald-Record* reported the committee met and agreed to secure additional funds: "the trustees pledged themselves to raise the needed \$9,000."²

It had likewise been anticipated for some time that 'Abdu'l-Baha would dedicate the grounds of the proposed edifice while he was in Chicago. Hence the focus of the Tuesday night meeting was on the idea of the house of worship. This was the first time most of the gathering had heard any words directly from 'Abdu'l-Baha on the undertaking.

In this address, 'Abdu'l-Baha had three major ideas which served as a framework for a basically informative speech. First, he stated that the admonition to build places of worship was found in the holy books of various religions; second, that the "real temple is the Word

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1950), p. 262.

² *Chicago Herald-Record*, May 1, p. 3.

of God; and third, that the outer temple, or building, is but a symbol of the inner temple, or the Word of God. The remainder of the address included exposition on the purpose of the Word of God, inferring throughout that the physical temple must be a symbol of all the “spiritual” factors.

In his description of the purpose of the outer temple, he stated, “The purpose of houses of worship is simply that of unity; places of meeting where various peoples, different races and souls of every capacity may come together in order that love and agreement should be manifest between them.” In gathering there, people would be reminded of the invisible, unifying force of the Word of God. The “Word of God”, as he used the term, referred to the manifestations. He believed that they were the “word incarnate” who came to show the way to unity, peace, and love. He suggested at some length that a new time was at hand when unity would be possible. He stated:

For thousands of years the human race has been at war. It is enough. Now let mankind ... consort in amity and peace We must now realize that we are the servants of one God, that we turn to one beneficent father, live under one divine law. ...

He used about a fifth of the total speech to point out the need for divine guidance in human affairs. His reasoning followed this simple form: (1) God is omniscient and omnipotent by definition; (2) if we do not follow his dictates, we think our plans are better than His; (3) therefore we demonstrate our belief that God is more ignorant than we, which is untenable in the light of the major premise. This, of course, was built on the unspoken assumption that God made His

plans known. In 'Abdu'l-Baha's mind, this was possible through the words of the manifestations. In this age, he believed, this referred to Baha'u'llah; hence, the plan of God was accessible. Most of this was not mentioned directly in the speech but inferred. Since this meeting was made up in large part of people who understood his system, these premises could be generally understood without being stated.

The emotional appeal was likewise subtle but universal. It inferred that every human benefit might be attained, including the cessation of war, the development of peace, love, kindness and all their attendant bounties.

His key idea was restated at three intervals. He stated it last before going into his concluding remarks, "The outer edifice is a symbol of the inner," and emphasized it by adding, "May the people be admonished thereby."

His conclusion contained two sections. The first was in the form of a series of statements saying, in effect, may these things be understood and attained:

I pray in your behalf that your hearts may be enlightened with the light of the love of God that your minds may develop daily; that your spirits may become aglow with the fire and illumination of his glad-tidings, until these divine foundations may become established throughout the human world.

He ended with a prayer, requesting God to aid the assemblage in its endeavors.

One of 'Abdu'l-Baha's main purposes for speaking in this country was to help the Baha'is realize the change that needed to be made in their "inner lives" if they were to be true followers of the teachings

of Baha'u'llah. He was aware that their backgrounds were materialistically oriented. He often commented that he hoped the Americans might become as advanced in spiritual degrees as it had become in material degrees. In his emphasis that the spirit and not the form of religion must be stressed, he wished the people building the house of worship to be mindful of the "true nature" of their task. Should they concentrate on building a beautiful structure just for the sake of prestige or outward appearance, he felt it would be of no consequence, an "empty form" without life.

Most of the two thousand people attending the meeting that Tuesday night had never seen him before. It might have been presumed that he would offer them greetings, speak of his trip thus far, and offer them commendation for their nine years of efforts in planning the house of worship and in pledging \$9000 that same afternoon. Instead, he by-passed that and went to what he felt was the heart of the issue of their endeavors. If they failed to realize the point he was making, he felt all their efforts would be in vain. Thus he plunged directly to the point:

Among the institutes of the holy books is that of the foundation of places of worship ... the real temple is the very Word of God; for to it all humanity must turn and it is the center of unity for all mankind.

This is typical of numerous references he made during the tour when he turned the thinking about "outer things" to the idea of their "inner significance". When someone had been excited about obtaining his photograph, 'Abdu'l-Baha suggested that the real excitement would come if the person became able to see the nature of the spiritual attributes within mankind.

Likewise, a simple thing like rain became in his words an outer symbol of the boundless "rain of mercy" from God to mankind.

Considering the General Semantic criteria, 'Abdu'l-Baha used a whole series of "allness" statements which allowed for little variation or degree. However, these references pertained to God, which 'Abdu'l-Baha felt was "absolute" in His attributes and not relative, as was man. Thus he stated "God is just and kind to all. He considers all as his servants. He excludes none and his judgments are correct and true." Being the very heart of the scheme of things as he understood it, these matters were assumed by definition, with no proof being offered. On the other hand, showing his idea of degrees of conditions in mankind in receiving these "absolute bounties", 'Abdu'l-Baha included a series of descriptions and ways of meeting the situation:

Some are mere children; with the utmost love we must educate them to make them wise. Others are sick and ailing; we must tenderly treat them until they recover. Some have unworthy morals; we must train them toward the standard of true morality.

The informative aspects in this speech were direct; the stimulative aspects were indirect. Presumably, with an understanding of this information, the gathering would be "stimulated" to act and direct their activities in different ways. He was not stimulating them to build a house of worship so much as he was urging them to look first to the Word of God, educate themselves in these principles, and then to let the house of worship be an outer symbol of their own inner development and the potential development available to all mankind.

In his closing prayer, 'Abdu'l-Baha was most direct in his differentiation of the physical and spiritual aspects and referred directly to

America:

Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees ... O God! This American nation is worthy of thy favors and is deserving of thy mercy. Make it precious and near to thee through thy bounty and bestowal.

8. Dedication of the grounds for the House of Worship

On May 1, the site of the house of worship, referred to by the Baha'is with the Persian word *Mashriqu'l-Adhkar*, translated as "the Dawning-place of the Praises or Remembrances of God", was dedicated.¹ The location was in the village of Wilmette, on Linden Avenue, near Northwestern University. The people gathered [at] noon for the ceremony. The weather report showed that it was "unsettled" with "probably occasional showers and cool".

For the ceremony,

A marquee tent, capable of holding about 500 persons, had been erected on the plateau which occupies the so southeastern portion of the grounds; and a special entry way for Abdul-Baha's carriage had been prepared about the middle of the eastern side of the tract.²

"Inside the tent seats for about 300 had been arranged in three concentric circles, with a broad open space in the center."³ The further clarification was added that "the inner space was reached by nine equidistant aisles or entrances, separating the seats. ..."⁴

¹ Marzieh Gail, *Baha'i Glossary* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1957), p. 31.

² *Star of the West*, 3:4, p. 5, May 17, 1912.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *Star of the West*, 3:4, p. 6, May 17, 1912.

Shortly before one o'clock, 'Abdu'l-Baha arrived in a carriage. Instead of driving up to the impressive entranceway that had been prepared for him on the east side, he had the vehicle drive around to the north side and walked in. One observer remarked at the "majesty and simplicity of his mien as he briskly advanced on foot toward the tent," with "a far spread line of the friends forming an escort just behind him."¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha advanced to the inner open space and delivered his address to the audience surrounding him. The seats were all filled and numbers of people filled the walk-way behind the seats.

The *Daily News* noted that during his speech, 'Abdu'l-Baha noticed ... one of those in the crowd shiver. "I'm afraid you are cold," he said.

"We're not!" called back several members of the crowd.

"Then you are denizens of Chicago," smiled the Persian leader.²

'Abdu'l-Baha introduced this talk with three factors: (1) the power that gathered the people together; (2) the weather; and (3) the praise of God.

He went directly into the body of the address concerning the importance of the houses of worship, especially this one. In this informative speech, he indicated that there would be many such buildings in "Asia, Europe, Africa, and Australia" in the future. This one was

¹ idem, p. 5.

² *Chicago Daily News*, May 1, 1912, p. 2.

important because it was the first one here. One was already under construction in Turkistan, and he began an extensive comparison of the two. He mentioned several things about the Turkistan house of worship, indicating that all the Baha'is contributed to its erection; the Afnan (a relative) gave his all to it; and that it represented combined effort. In its construction it was "almost completed, centrally located, and beautiful in construction.

Pointing to larger vistas, he reminded the group that the house of worship was only the first of several buildings to be erected. Next must be built a hospital, a school for orphans, a home for cripples, a hospice and a large dispensary. He concluded with the simple reference: "God willing, when it is fully completed it will be a paradise. I hope the Mashreq 'Ul-Azkar in Chicago will be like this."

The audience of several hundred gathered in the tent for this occasion were exposed to raw weather. Possibly two hundred were standing. Many had been there for an hour before the talk, and the earth-turning ceremony with representatives of sixteen nations was yet to take place. The circumstances seemed to call for a short address, and 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke for not more than fifteen minutes.

The motivational appeals contained in this talk were subtle but effective for this particular audience. It can be presumed that those attending were directly interested in the erection of the house of worship and identified themselves with the teachings of Baha'u'llah. Such a group would be interested foremost in the service to humanity as this was the focal point of their belief. Thus the description of

what had been done in Turkistan and the visualization of the various institutions for the service to the community which would accompany the house of worship could stir the feelings of the hearers. This was the visualization of their goals and the suggestion that they could be attained right here.

Likewise, in the diverse audience, comprised of at least sixteen nationalities, the chief factor bringing them together was their common purpose of service to humanity as exemplified in the building erection. Thus 'Abdu'l-Baha's words dealt with the one subject appropriate to the occasion and of interest to his general audience.

His only reference directly to this audience came when he observed one of his hearers shiver and commented on their being cold.

An observer wrote that after the conclusion of the address, "the scene of the historic occasion was transferred from the tent to the open," a spot described as a "great amphitheatre afforded by the panorama of woods, fields and the expanse of water"¹

A golden trowel was presented to 'Abdu'l-Baha so that an excavation might be made. He put it back in its leather case and called for more usable implements and an axe and shovel were brought. With these, he excavated a place for the stone. The remainder of the ceremony was described as follows:

No programme made in advance was followed, but under the immediate inspiration this initial labor was thus made typical

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:4, p. 6, May 17, 1912.

of united and harmonious volunteer service by every nation and kindred and tongue, the name of each being announced by Dr Fareed as some native son or daughter in turn took hold of axe or shovel. Persia, Syria, Egypt, India, Japan, South Africa, England, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Jews of the world, the North American Indians were among the races and countries thus successively represented, and finally Abdul-Baba did the closing work and consigned the stone to its excavation, on behalf of all the people of the world.¹

These descriptions offer some idea of the composition of the audience. It was composed of those of diverse backgrounds affiliated in some degree with the building of the proposed structure. Newspaper reporters were likewise present.

The group sang a composition known as the "Benediction", and the crowd formed two lines from the tent to the waiting carriage 'Abdu'l-Baha walked between them, got into the carriage and returned to Chicago. While some small groups walked through the grounds, many returned to the tent and "devoted the remainder of the afternoon to speaking and suggesting plans for future work."²

9. Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs

On May 2, two meetings were held in the La Salle Hotel. At the first, 'Abdu'l-Baha had been asked to speak by the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs. The *Chicago Record-Herald* announced the meeting with an article headed "BAHA WILL TALK ON SUFFRAGE: To Give

¹ idem, pp. 6-7.

² *Star of the West*, 3:5, p. 6, June 5, 1912.

Views to Women at Hotel La Salle Today.”¹ It began with the statements:

Chicago suffragists will learn a Persian's views on the women's suffrage question today.

Abdul Baha, prophet of universal peace and brotherhood and leader of the Bahai movement, will address a group of suffragists at the Hotel La Salle this afternoon.²

The article went on to summarize the dedication of the grounds for the house of worship the day before and to announce two Sunday meetings.

The meeting was held in the large ballroom of the hotel. The audience was made up of “more than 1,000 men and women ... representing all sections of Chicago and many down-state cities,” according to the Chicago *Inter-Ocean*.³ The audience consisted largely of the representatives of the numerous women's clubs throughout the state. Accounts listed such organizations as the Peace Society, Business Women's League, the club of Social Economics, and the Chicago Woman's Club.

The *Inter-Ocean* continued its coverage of the event by reporting that:

Abdul Baha, dressed in his native garb, was greeted with enthusiasm when he entered the large hall.

After reviewing conditions which prevail in European countries and what had been done to remedy them, he asked for entire cooperation of all good citizens in making Chicago a better city.⁴

'Abdu'l-Baha faced one thousand people, most of them women associated with clubs and organizations throughout the state. In 1912,

¹ *Chicago Record-Herald*, May 2, 1912, p. 5.

² *ibid.*

³ *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, May 3, 1912, p. 3.

⁴ *ibid.*

one of the big issues of the American scene which captured continuous newspaper space was the cause of woman suffrage. 'Abdu'l-Baha was invited to speak before many such groups during his tour.

His talk was simple in its construction. He began with an introduction using an analogy from nature, reviewed the conditions of the past, spoke of the present efforts and progress for equality of women, and concluded with suggestions as to what would come.

His opening analogy spoke of the potential hidden within all living things; through the effect of the rays of the sun, this potential was released and developed. He suggested that this was the century in which the "Sun of Truth, the Word of God" had appeared and "revealed itself to all humankind". The heat and light of this revelation was bringing out the potentialities of humanity. One of these hidden capabilities was the capacity of womanhood.

Having sketched in a relatively few sentences the broad framework of his beliefs, he proceeded to review the conditions of women in the past. First, he pointed out the subordinate position they currently held, especially in Asia and Africa. He supported this statement with several examples.

After a brief restatement of his introductory thought, he mentioned that there have been many notable women in the past, despite the difficult conditions. He singled out Kurratu'l-Ayn, a Persian poetess of the 19th century, and spoke at length of her brilliance in science and art and her fearlessness in withstanding the Shah of Persia, himself.

In one sentence, he again restated the introductory thoughts and proceeded to describe the cause of past inequality. Because of past prejudices, women were not given equal opportunities for development, especially in education. He pointed out with an example that even this was not always a detriment. In not being exposed to the "school of military tactics," she was not "trained in the military science of slaughter."

He then approached the task of describing the "true" situation. He began by considering the "kingdoms of existence below man" and used a series of examples with plants and animals to show that there was little male-female distinction, and if there was, it was often in favour of the female.

He arrived then at the kingdom of man, and quoted the biblical statement of the day before, "Let us make men in our image, after our likeness." He spoke of word derivations, indicating that in Persian and Arabic and Hebrew, there are two distinct words for "man", one referring to collective humanity and the other to the male sex. The "image of God" referred to both men and women. He added that "to accept and observe a distinction which God has not intended in creation, is ignorance and superstition," thus completing a partially expressed syllogism based on the unspoken assumption that it was superstition to deny God's intention.

To develop a true situation of equality, equal opportunities of education and training must be made available. He spent several

sentences urging that this training of women be done with much encouragement, inspiring “her with hope and ambition”.

His conclusion took the form of a summary, in which he lightly covered all the main areas of the address. In his next to last sentence he attached this to the broader scope of human well-being, raising it to universal importance, saying, “Until these two members are equal in strength, the oneness of humanity cannot be established and the happiness and felicity of mankind will not be a reality.”

The main evidence in this address were examples drawn from nature and history. His biblical reference used as evidence of equality would be effective with any who accepted its authority. Definition formed a part of his evidence in the description of the Hebrew, Persian, and Arabic forms of the word “man”.

Emotionally, he was addressing a group that was eager to hear any word of encouragement on the equality of women. This audience represented the leading women from the leading clubs of the entire state of Illinois. If they were typical of such women of the period, they were working hard for equal recognition in many areas. ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s words, then, served to stimulate their own convictions.

The audience was already persuaded of his contentions; they were already active in the field; he informed them of little of which they were not generally aware. His main function was to raise their thinking to a world-wide level based on universal principles. If they had been thinking of personal benefits previously or even of national progress

they now had their vistas expanded. During the address, he attached the idea of women's progress to (1) the Word of God in this new century; (2) the Bible story of creation; (3) all the kingdoms of existence; (4) the will of God; (5) the establishment of the oneness of humanity; and (6) the happiness and felicity of mankind.

In an even more direct way, he pointed out the world-wide significance of this movement, speaking of its progress in all of the "continents". He, himself, dressed as he was in Persian garb, represented "the East" in a sense, where women had been notably under subjugation. That these thoughts could come from him, was in itself a significant note of "change". So notable was this factor that the newspaper accounts made specific mention that

The preaching of this advanced doctrine by a product of Persian civilization was considered remarkable by the members of the ... Federation of Women's Clubs¹

All of these factors produced a definite response for the newspaper further reported that

... coming from a Mohammedan nation in which women are held in as great subjection as in any part of the civilized world, Abdul Baha ... succeeded in awakening Chicago club women to a new zeal for securing equal political rights²

While he based his words on the general system of premises of Baha'u'llah's teachings, it will be noted that he made no mention of Baha'u'llah's name nor did he make specific reference to his teachings. His whole emphasis was on the principle of equality and this he

¹ *Chicago Examiner*, May 5, 1912, p. 3.

² *ibid.*

attached in a few sentences scattered throughout the talk to the total system from which it gained, for him, its importance.

10. Afternoon reception

On the same afternoon, following the address to the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, 'Abdu'l-Baha addressed the gathering again, at a reception held in his honor at the same hotel. The *Chicago Examiner* reported that "more than 1,000 men and women were present, representing all sections of Chicago and neighboring cities," and pointed out that "the reception was one of several social affairs in honor of Abdul Baha"¹ It is most probable that the thousand people present at the second function were much the same assemblage who attended the previous meeting.

This reception was sponsored by the Baha'i women of the northern Illinois area. They wished to honor 'Abdu'l-Baha and so invited the leaders of the organization from the Federation to join them in the celebration.

One of the Baha'i women served as chairman and officiated while fourteen guest speakers in turn delivered addresses to the thousand people in the audience. They spoke on matters of a general humanitarian nature, in accordance with many of the basic principles expounded by 'Abdu'l-Baha.

It was recorded that "Mrs Fannie G. Lesch, president of the Bahai Women's Assembly, presided".² The newspaper lists the additional speakers

¹ *Chicago Examiner*, May 7, 1912, p. 2.

² *ibid.*

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Among the many speakers were Mrs Minnie Starr Grainger, president Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs; Mrs Gertrude Blackwelder, Illinois Woman's Clubs; Mrs F. A. Dow, Arche Club; Mrs Callie P. Coon, Illinois Woman's Clubs; Mrs George Colby, Kilo Association; Mrs Ester Falkenstein, Falkenstein settlement; Mrs D. Harry Hammer, Chicago Women's Club; Mrs Celeste Parker Wooly, Social Economics; Mrs Catherine Abbott, Business Woman's League; Mrs Addis Andre; Mrs Helen Beals, Peace Society; Mrs P. Kochersperger, Theosophist Society; Mrs Francis Squire Potter and Professor Henry Greener.¹

Along with the other speakers, 'Abdu'l-Baha addressed the group. He began at once with the contention that "When we look upon the kingdoms of creation below man we find three forms or planes of existence which await education and development." This was followed by specific examples showing how plants needed cultivation for growth and how animals needed training.

This progression led to the education needed in the human realm. To show the need of such education, he contrasted, through example, the savage and civilized areas of the world.

He seemed to be asking, what were the effects of such education? The answer was that "it makes the ignorant wise, the tyrant merciful, the blind seeing, the deaf attentive, even the imbecile intelligent."

His summation of this section was to point out that these notable effects were produced by an ordinary teacher. In contrast, he went on, think what education the manifestations can provide. "Praise be to God," he stated, "your teacher and instructor is Baha'u'llah The lights of his education are radiating even as the sun."

¹ *ibid.*

He reached his conclusions with two principle points: first, that this spiritual education could unify people and second, that we should be extremely grateful for this bounty.

Perhaps the most notable feature of this address was the direct reference to Baha'u'llah and his place in the world, as seen by 'Abdu'l-Baha. This was the first time he had spoken so directly. The audience situation explained this. The reception was being sponsored by the Baha'i women of the northern Illinois area. They had organized it specifically as a meeting of Baha'is and it was so announced and known by those in attendance. The hundreds of others who attended, much the same group who had attended the preceding meeting, were well aware of 'Abdu'l-Baha's position in connection with the followers of his father's teachings. Therefore in this setting, 'Abdu'l-Baha was addressing the women who held the reception—the Baha'is themselves. The others who were attending were hearers, too, but more in the role of on-lookers who were sharing a festive gathering of a specific group. The setting put 'Abdu'l-Baha in a different "role" than he had been in just a few minutes before at the Federation meeting. There he was a speaker, invited to talk on the concept of equality of women from his own point of view to a group interested in the subject. Here, at this gathering, 'Abdu'l-Baha, himself, was the focal point of attention. The situation was reversed. The Baha'i women had invited the leaders of the women's clubs to come and commemorate the visit of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

In honor of the guest, several of the leading club leaders had been asked to speak. These speakers were aware of 'Abdu'l-Baha's principles

for human welfare; a newspaper made the statement that "at the reception ... in honor of Abdul Baha ... the themes of the many speakers were along the lines of uplift for humanity." Fourteen speakers presented talks. All of them were females and represented leading organizations in Illinois, except for a lone male, professor Henry Greener.

In view of the time already taken up, and the nature of the "humanitarian" nature of the talks already presented, 'Abdu'l-Baha was confronted with an audience of one thousand people gathered in his honor who had already heard him speak earlier in the afternoon.

As was consistent with him on such occasions throughout the country, he made little reference to himself. Instead, he took the opportunity to talk of two principles he believed in. First, the need for universal education, and second, the brief mention that Baha'u'llah was the "world educator". In a sense, this might be considered a kind of continuation of the preceding talk. In that address he had begun with reference to a "new age" and proceeded to the particular theme of "woman's education in the new age". Here he broadened the concept of education to world-wide proportions and finished with the idea of the "divine educator" of mankind.

The emotional appeals to the general audience rested in the motivation to attain a more peaceful, ideal environment in which the "ignorant becomes wise", "the tyrant merciful", etc. The appeals to the Baha'is included the reaffirmation of the position of Baha'u'llah on the world scene:

Praise be to God! that you have been brought under the education of this one who is the very Sun of Reality and who is shining resplendently upon all humankind endowing all with a life that is everlasting. Praise be to God a thousand times!

Thus he concluded.

In considering the General Semantic aspects, he used several conditional terms, pointing out a cause and effect relationship. In such a way he mentioned the “wild and fruitless tree” which “may be made fruitful and prolific by grafting”, or the “animals” which “advance unmistakably” after undergoing “training”.

He made the first personal reference to be found in the Chicago speeches. He mentioned it in connection with “Baha’u’llah’s educational benefits,” wherein “I, a Persian, have come to this meeting of revered souls upon the American continent and am standing here expounding to you in the greatest love.”

11. At the Hotel Plaza

Most of the meetings at which ‘Abdu’l-Baha spoke were for specific occasions with an audience assembled to hear a particular address. However, another sort of meeting was held which was more informal in nature. These meetings were held in his hotel. He addressed those who came of their own curiosity or interest to hear him. Every day he spoke to such groups at unscheduled times.

In order to describe the nature of the audiences which gathered for these occasions, it will be helpful to sketch briefly the daily activities undertaken by ‘Abdu’l-Baha during his stay in Chicago.

The exact time of his arising each morning is not specifically recorded, but general indications from several sources indicate that he usually got up about four o’clock in the morning for prayers and meditation.

It is recorded that frequently visitors would come in those early hours of the morning to talk with him. One observer wrote that it was his "custom to receive the visitors by twos or by threes, or individually, during the early hours of the morning."¹

Records show that about nine o'clock he would briefly visit acquaintances staying in the same location. Then, one writer said, "In a few minutes He would go to His room, where He would resume the chanting of prayers and dictating of Tablets in reply to the vast number of letters which incessantly arrived."² Since many people sought him out wherever he visited, the management of the hotel offered him facilities for his visitors. The hotel, located across the street from Lincoln Park, had an especially large room off of the main foyer called the Large Parlor. The hotel manager put this room at the disposal of 'Abdu'l-Baha during his entire stay in Chicago.

The room, which still exists, was described by personnel of the manager's office as holding one hundred and fifty people. Members of the audience described it as always being "full" or "crowded" when 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke. The people who came were there for some personal reason. They did not come by invitation nor was there publicity mentioning him "receiving" anyone. Yet scores of people called up for interviews and hundreds simply came when they could.

In these gatherings, the setting was less formal than the other public meetings. In making the presentations, 'Abdu'l-Baha would sometimes

¹ Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1941), p. 158.

² *ibid.*

sit, but most of the time he would pace back and forth in front of the room or stand and speak from various positions.

By 10:00 o'clock in the morning, the Large Parlor was always filled with visitors, waiting for 'Abdu'l-Baha to come and address them. Following the address, the private interviews continued. It was reported that this morning period was the hour when He would receive those who had asked for appointments for private audiences. Careful timetables were made and strictly adhered to, for very numerous were these applicants¹

Something more of the composition of these audiences and of the general nature of the visitors can be seen in the following written description. It shows a fairly keen observation of their vocational and economic backgrounds:

... these guests, these visitors! ... our ears are filled with the sound of their footsteps ... Every day, all day long, a constant stream. An interminable procession!

Ministers and missionaries, Oriental scholars and occult students, practical men of affairs and mystics, Anglican-Catholics and Nonconformists, Theosophists and Hindus, Christian Scientists and doctors of medicine, Muslims, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians. There also called: politicians, Salvation Army soldiers, and other workers for human good, women suffragists, journalists, writers, poets, and healers, dressmakers and great ladies, artists and artisans, poor workless people and prosperous merchants, members of the dramatic and musical world, these all came²

It has been noted that the Plaza Hotel was next to the Lincoln Park, where numerous walkways were laid in landscaped areas of trees, ponds, and lawns and where a sizeable zoo existed. Between afternoon and evening

¹ idem, p. 159.

² idem, p. 150.

activities, 'Abdu'l-Baha frequently walked in the park area. Often some of the people who were conferring with him at the time in the hotel would accompany him on these walks. There are records of the numerous conversations he held while walking along the paths, the interest he took in the animals of the zoo, and of the informal gatherings which he addressed on the lawns and benches of the park.¹

By the night of Thursday, May 2, 'Abdu'l-Baha had delivered four addresses. Yet the Large Parlor in the Hotel Plaza was still filled with visitors standing and sitting, waiting to hear another talk. He proceeded to speak for almost an hour on some of the basic aspects of his father's concepts.

His introduction dealt with the four kingdoms of creation—mineral, vegetable, animal, human—and the universe. He pointed out the universal law to which the whole order was subjected. The question then arose as to what was the cause of the order. He gave what he believed to be the "materialist's" answer first, saying that "all existing things are captives of nature", including man and that "nature rules and governs creation". He expanded on this by describing some of the phenomena in nature and showing how the materialists would interpret them according to their view.

At that point, 'Abdu'l-Baha set out to offer reasoned proof that man is duo in his nature and that part of him was controlled by nature and part was not. To do this, he began with several questions which asked, in

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:4, pp. 27-28, May 17, 1912.

effect, can a part possess properties not found in the whole. He asked:

Is it conceivable that a drop should be imbued with qualities of which the ocean is completely deprived? ... Could there be a phenomenon of combustion or illumination which the great luminary the sun itself did not manifest? Is it possible for a stone to possess inherent properties of which the aggregate mineral kingdom is minus?

Without offering answers to these rhetorical questions which he assumed must be answered in the negative, he arrived at the parallel question on the human level.

First he pointed out that man has volition, intellect, and memory. These, he said, were absent in nature. He illustrated this with the examples that the sun could not control its light; the spark could not voluntarily furnish illumination; nor could water separate itself from the property of "wetness". He summarized: "all the properties of nature are inherent and obedient, not volitional; therefore it is philosophically predicated that nature is minus volition and innate perception."

Returning to the question, can a part possess properties not found in the whole, he concluded that man (the part) in his intellectual, instinctual, and conscious components was not a part of nature, for nature (the whole) lacked these attributes.

After this build-up of reasoning, 'Abdu'l-Baha drew the conclusion he was seeking:

It is evident therefore that man is dual in aspect; as an animal he is subject to nature, but in his spiritual or conscious being he transcends the world of material existence. His spiritual powers being nobler and higher, possess virtue of which nature intrinsically has no evidence.

The argument was consistent, for in his system, the spiritual qualities or soul of man reflected the attributes of God; therefore in this respect, the

attributes were present in the Whole.

At this point in the talk, 'Abdu'l-Baha repeated the entire reasoning pattern he had just covered, using different illustrations.

After finishing the reasoning a second time, he returned to the original question of the materialists and cited a specific instance. In conversing with a "famous philosopher of the naturalistic school in Alexandria", he said, the philosopher, after considerable argument, concluded that there was no difference between himself and a donkey. 'Abdu'l-Baha quoted his own reply as:

No, I consider you quite different and distinct; I call you a man and the donkey but an animal. I perceive that you are highly intelligent whereas the donkey is not. I know that you are well versed in philosophy and I also know that the donkey is entirely deficient in it; therefore I am not willing to accept your statement.

Having reinforced the presumption that man is more than an animal, he carried his reasoning a step further. Up to this point he had not mentioned God. He was leading up to this now. Pointing to a woman in the audience who was taking notes, he said, "What has been written presupposes and proves the existence of a writer," and expanded on that statement. Then quickly he drew the parallel and asked, "Is it possible that it [the infinite universe] could have been created without a creator?" on the heels of this came five more questions followed by a series of statements which form a complex interrelationship of premises and conclusions. Briefly, they include the premises that man (the creature) has virtues, intelligence, and volition. The creator of him must have than to a higher degree than his creation. He stated:

If the creative cause of man be simply on the same level with man, then man himself should be able to create whereas we know very well

that we cannot create even our own likeness. Therefore the creator of man must be endowed with superlative intelligence and power in all points that creation involves and implies. We are weak; he is mighty; because were he not mighty he could not have created us

Having offered further contrasts of this sort, 'Abdu'l-Baha led to a further supposition: "Among the proofs of the existence of a divine power is this; that things are often known by their opposites. Were it not for darkness light could not be sensed." And he listed many other opposite conditions.

From this point, he drew his conclusion, which was to point out what some of the attributes of God must be, in view of the opposite condition present in man. He included such things as might, knowledge, and wealth, restating twice in slightly different ways each sentence he used. He concluded simply: "That source is God from whom all these bounties emanate."

This talk represented the most involved application of reasoning that 'Abdu'l-Baha used in his Chicago talks. Both inductive and deductive reasoning were present. His involved, overlapping syllogistic reasoning becomes much clearer when viewed from his basic concept of the entire system. Basically he was saying, (1) there are elements in man which are not found in nature; (2) a part cannot have attributes of which the whole is completely void; (3) therefore man is not wholly subject to nature. A second series included this system: (1) The fact that there is a creation is obvious; (2) a creation presupposes a creator; (3) hence, a creator exists. His third system included: (1) Man is limited in his virtues; (2) his creator is much greater in all things than his creation (or things are often known by their opposites); (3) hence, the creator has

all the attributes and virtues to a superlative degree.

It should be noted that when 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke of "attributes" he meant only the positive ones, such as strength, knowledge, and justice. He explained many times elsewhere that such words as "weakness, ignorance, and injustice" do not refer to realities in themselves; they are words representing the absence of an attribute. Thus, weakness is the absence of strength; ignorance is the absence of knowledge, etc.

The question of the validity of 'Abdu'l-Baha's reasoning must rest upon the matter of whether or not his premises are acceptable. The validity of his reasoning that "a creation proves the existence of a creator" is acceptable if one believes that existing phenomena are actually created. That is, the very word derivation includes the concept of a "creator". If, however, our surroundings are called "existence", no inference is made as to "cause", only to the state of "being".

As to the supposition that "things are often known by their opposites", the psychology of perception has shown this to be a valid statement. The word "often" vitiates the certainty necessary to sound syllogistic reasoning. However, it suggests a degree of probability. The corollary premise that a creator is greater than his creation goes back to the definitions of "creator", "greater", and "creation". The reasoning maintains internal consistency, for if 'Abdu'l-Baha's terms are accepted, the conclusion he arrives at is valid.

In the third syllogism, the statement that "a part cannot contain attributes of which the whole is completely void", is an axiomatic statement. The validity of this syllogism would depend on the definition of

the “elements” which man is supposed to possess which are not found in nature. ‘Abdu’l-Baha furnished this specifically, including volition, intellect, and memory. If these elements are defined, say, as complicated aspects of conditioned reflex, then the reasoning would topple, for qualities of conditioned reflex can be found extensively in the animal world. If, however, one accepts ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s definition that they are separate entities in themselves, then the reasoning holds together consistently.

In each case, the reasoning depends on the acceptance of ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s definition of terms.

Besides the reasoning areas, this talk contained rhetorical questions, specific illustrations and examples. Obvious emotional appeals and ethical appeals are almost totally lacking.

Considering the General Semantic criteria, it will be noted that ‘Abdu’l-Baha referred in superlative terms to the “absolute order and perfection of creation”. Comparative terminology and qualifying terms are woven throughout the parts that dispel the idea that man is “either” an animal “or” a soul. Instead, he pointed out, there are elements in his nature which suggest that both areas have some degree of effect.

12. Theosophical Society

On Saturday evening, May 4, ‘Abdu’l-Baha spoke to the Theosophical Society. The group held their meeting in University Hall, a building of lecture rooms at Northwestern University in Evanston. The specific number in attendance at this meeting was not recorded, but in reply to a letter

requesting information on this location, it was reported that University Hall still stands and that its lecture rooms hold on the average of one hundred and twenty-five people.

The group of Theosophists were an organized body who sought speakers on philosophical, religious and scientific subjects. Their desire was for information into the nature of "existence". While they believed that the system of creation, as they understood it, was true, they were ever looking for a fuller understanding of the details of that system. One Theosophist wrote:

It has three aspects, determined by the different ways in which the human being acquires knowledge—through the study of concrete facts, by the study of the relationship of the individual consciousness to its source, and through the use of reasoning faculties in constructing a logical explanation of life and its purpose.¹

Such was the "predisposition to listening" of the group to which 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke.

The talk to the Theosophical Society was one of the lengthiest presented in Chicago. His subject included the relationship of existence, death and change.

After a brief acknowledgement of his pleasure of speaking to them, 'Abdu'l-Baha approached the definition of "existence and non-existence". He began by giving the common ideas of each, by which existence was considered as "being" and non-existence as "annihilation". He then discussed changes of elements from one state to another. His example was drawn from the composition and decomposition of minerals. He spoke of changes of

¹ L. W. Rogers, *Elemental Theosophy* (Wheaton: Theosophical Press, 1929), p. 9.

groupings of elements through the progressive kingdoms of the mineral, vegetable, animal and human.

With these definitions set, he redefined death. "Non-existence, therefore is an expression applied to change of form, but this transformation can never be rightly considered annihilation, for the elements of composition are ever present and existent." Death, he concluded, was only a term applied to a "change or transference from one degree or condition to another"; it is a "relative term implying change".

Reinforcing his discussion with a restatement of the whole process, using different illustrations, he picked up a rose and said, "This rose in my hand will become disintegrated and its symmetry destroyed, but the elements of its composition remain changeless ... they are simply transferred from one state to another."

Having established this manner of thinking, he approached man's attitude toward this condition of death or "change". Death and annihilation are generally feared, he said. "But," he added, "the death he shrinks from is imaginary and absolutely unreal; it is only human imagination."

"Things" are non-existent, so to speak, in relation to organizations of a higher order. For example, "dust in relation to living forms of human beings is a non-existent but in its own sphere it is existent." Thus, even non-existence was relative to one's viewpoint or own condition.

He led next to the thought that fear of death is a factor in human degradation. Man should turn his mind away from such thoughts and concentrate his attention on the "bounties of God" which are "never ceasing, continuous".

Having built up the pattern of progressive change, on the physical area where concrete examples were possible, 'Abdu'l-Baha now reasoned from the known to the unknown and spoke of the next "development" as the "spiritual" one. In this spiritual condition, humans gain the "heavenly attributes" and see with the "eye of inner vision" the endless favors of God. In dying to this world, we are "born into the spiritual world". To illustrate this abstruse point, he offered several analogies. The foremost was this:

In the matrix of the mother we were the recipients of endowments and blessings of God, yet these were as nothing compared to the powers and graces bestowed upon us after birth into this human world. Like-wise if we are born from the matrix of this physical and phenomenal environment into the freedom and loftiness of the life and vision spiritual, we shall consider this mortal existence and its blessings as worthless by comparison.

To reinforce this concept of the spiritual world, 'Abdu'l-Baha went immediately into a visualization of the spiritual world. Since it was a world beyond our imaginations in words, he used descriptive elements such as "in that realm there is neither separation nor disintegration which characterize the world of material existence."

His conclusion was a strong appeal to the listeners to use every faculty they possessed to develop their attributes; this will help open their "spiritual eyes and ears" with which they can perceive the spiritual world.

He stated:

We must strive with energies of heart, soul and mind to develop and manifest the perfections and virtues latent within the realities of the phenomenal world, for the human reality may be compared to a seed. ... Through education ... these virtues deposited by the loving God will become apparent in the human reality even as the unfoldment of the tree from within germinating seed.

The comparison to the seed was part of an extended analogy woven throughout the entire last section. In final conclusion, he offered a prayer that God might aid them to accomplish these things.

The basis of 'Abdu'l-Baha's reasoning in this address was analogy. He drew extensive comparisons of patterns as people can see them, concerning change, and then extended them to the non-observable "realms of the spiritual".

Semantically, he made extensive reference to "degrees and states" of existence and non-existence, and spoke of their relativity to each other and in terms of the observer. His "is" of identification linking "non-existence" with "an expression applied to change of form" was a valid one by definition. Again, his "allness" and superlative terms were related to his concept of "infinite" aspects of his system. He said, for example, that "life is everlasting"; "the atom is never annihilated nor relegated to non-existence"; and "man is everlasting, ever-living". Partially quantifying terms are used occasionally, as "some define existence as ..." and "certain elements have formed. ..."

'Abdu'l-Baha's short introductory remarks included the first use of direct audience reference at the beginning of the speech thus far seen in Chicago. He spoke of his personal feelings, saying, "I am very happy in being present at this meeting." And he spoke of audience: "I see before me the faces of those who are endowed with capacity to know and who desire to investigate truth."

The selection of the subject was an appropriate one for this particular group. The Theosophists were much concerned with the aspects of existence and the grades thereof.

In dealing further with audience adaptation, it will be necessary to describe two basic attitudes of 'Abdu'l-Baha. The first idea which he explained in many writings was that of finding all areas of agreement possible in all situations. The world, he pointed out, was filled with people and groups looking at each other's differences; establish the bonds of unity wherever possible, he admonished many times. Secondly, let people find truth for themselves. Make conditions as easy as possible, he said; develop conditions of affinity and accord. In this setting, he felt, people could best find "new truth" for themselves.

These attitudes determined in large part the presentation made to the Theosophists. Between their basic tenets and Baha'u'llah's system were many fundamental similarities. There were also basic differences. 'Abdu'l-Baha chose to stress the points of unity and only suggest the development of other areas of investigation.

For example, the "three great truths" of Theosophy included (1) "God exists, and He is good ... is undying and eternally beneficent." (2) "Man is immortal, and his future is one whose glory and splendour have no limit." (3) "A Divine law of absolute justice rules the world, so that each man is in truth his own judge"¹ Corollaries to these "truths" include ideas that it is man's duty to try to understand the "scheme of things". Especially, it was considered that "man was a soul", and that "death is a matter of far less importance than is usually supposed, since it is by no means the end of life but merely the passage from one state of it to another."²

¹ C. W. Leadbeater, *An Outline of Theosophy*. (London: The Theosophical Publishing House, 3rd rd. 1916), pp. 15-16.

² idem, pp. 17-18.

'Abdu'l-Baha, in essence, spoke of principles already accepted by the Theosophists, approaching them from slightly different angles. Here he was establishing "bridges of unity" by upholding the chief beliefs of his hearers throughout the first half of his address.

However, one of the greatest points of difference between the Theosophical tenets and 'Abdu'l-Baha's beliefs lay in the concept of reincarnation. The Theosophists conceived man as a soul which re-entered body after body in this world, until in a state of perfection it was released from the cycle. One Theosophist described it thus:

He comes to earth, takes a body which there is prepared for him He passes away to the other side of death to learn by the lessons of pain the errors he has made ... and so on, and on, and on¹

'Abdu'l-Baha's system had no concept of reincarnation. Yet his beliefs did not allow him to disparage or contradict their thoughts. Instead, he talked in the second half of his address about "birth into spiritual perception" where the reality of truth becomes apparent. In other words, if they would strive with their "hearts and minds and souls" to study the concept of the attributes and to practice them, they would see the true relationship of things for themselves. Thus he was urging them to take steps that would lead them to a new understanding for themselves. He suggested that by taking certain steps for gaining "enlightenment" their own "spiritual insight" would develop.

This was a direct parallel though much more briefly and indirectly stated, to his father's response to the "seeker" mentioned in the first part

¹ Annie Besant, *Popular Lectures on Theosophy* (Chicago: The Rajput Press, 1910), p. 31.

of this chapter. After enumerating over thirty conditions of behaviour such as kindness, truthfulness, sincerity, etc., to be developed in the "true seeker", Baha'u'llah wrote that only then would it be possible for the "seeker" to gain "such new life" that "he will find himself endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind."¹ With this new perception and insight, he "will contemplate the manifest signs of the universe, and will penetrate the hidden mysteries of the soul," and will discover "in all things the mysteries of divine Revelation"² 'Abdu'l-Baha's pattern of seeking and results which he suggested were a reflection of his father's instructions.

The whole approach was consistent with 'Abdu'l-Baha's belief stated in other addresses that a person "should be encouraged" in whatever condition of belief he might presently be, and urged to develop further by exerting his own efforts.

13. Children's meeting

The first meeting on Sunday morning was referred to as the "Children's Meeting". When 'Abdu'l-Baha stayed in any location long enough to have a series of meetings, he frequently held one especially for the children. These were usually the offspring of those fairly closely identified with his teachings who felt it worthwhile to make the effort to bring their children to a special gathering. It took place in the Large Parlor of the

¹ Baha'u'llah, *The Kitab-i-Iqan* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1931), p. 196.

² *ibid.*

Plaza Hotel. It was recorded that “although many lived considerable distances and found it necessary to arise as early as five o’clock, yet promptly at the appointed hour of eight,” they were ready to greet him.¹

The room was filled as the children “gathered in a circle in the middle of the beautiful parlor of the Plaza, the parents and friends making another circle behind them.”² Everyone arose when he entered. As he was being seated, the children, without instrument accompaniment, sang a song entitled, “Softly His Voice is Calling Now”. Before the address began, to the children and the adults, he greeted each child personally. An eyes-witness recorded the scene in the following words:

He called each child to him in turn, took them in his lap ... kissing the little ones, pressing the hands and embracing the older ones, all with such infinite love and tenderness shining in his eyes and thrilling in the tones of his voice, that when he whispered in English in their ears to tell him their names, they answered as joyfully and freely as they would a beloved father. To each child he gave a little different touch ... There was no suggestion of haste and a hush fell upon the group—a quiet, vibrant, eloquent silence—making many to feel that it was just such a picture Jesus must have made³

Immediately before the talk, it was mentioned that

... the children’s joy and his own happiness seemed to culminate when one dear little tot ran to him and fairly threw herself into his arms. When he let her go she stood for a second and then suddenly laughed aloud with perfect joy, which found its instant echo in a ripple around the whole circle.⁴

After delivering the talk to the children and addressing words to the adults, ‘Abdu’l Baha took a bouquet of flowers from the center of the

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:7, p. 6, July 13, 1912.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

table, and divided it among the children. Then he walked slowly around the circle, saying something to each one. Following this, the whole group went out into Lincoln Park, where groups informally conversed for a time.

His short address included three parts. First he spoke of their "position" as children. Then he described the attainments he hoped they would achieve. And finally he spoke of the position of "spiritual children".

He began with references to the words of Christ and of Baha'u'llah, saying:

You are the children of whom His Holiness Christ has said "Of such is the kingdom of God"; and according to the words of Baha'u'llah you are the very lamps or candles of the world of humanity for your hearts are exceedingly pure and your spirits most sensitive.

He went on with descriptive sentences, referring to them as "near the source", "uncontaminated", and as "lambs of the heavenly shepherd".

He spoke of the things he hoped they would attain, mentioning such matters as all the virtues of humanity, advancement in material and spiritual degrees; learning in sciences, arts, and crafts; strength to aid the progress of civilization; ability to manifest divine bestowals; requirements necessary to show the oneness of humanity; and he urged them to work for love and unity of mankind.

In conclusion, he suggested his own relationship to them, stating, "You are all my children, my spiritual children." He went on to describe:

Spiritual children are dearer than physical children for it is possible for physical children to turn away from the spirit of God, but you are spiritual children and there you are most beloved.

After a few more remarks in conclusion, he directed his attention to the adults present and spoke to them briefly about their present position

and necessity for development. The remarks were similar to those directed to the children. He began with the analogy of the sun which shines on all things. Only the polished surfaces, he said, reflected its light. Thus the necessity of “polishing ourselves” so that we might similarly reflect the “light of God”. He described this as requiring great effort.

He spoke of their present condition as believers in God, turning to do His service with good intentions and purposes to serve humanity. In answering the idea of what must be done now, ‘Abdu’l-Baha directed the listeners to exert their powers, to be in perfect unity, never to be angry, to look toward spiritual attributes and not toward physical aspects of the world, and to love people for God’s sake. This last could be accomplished he said, by not looking at shortcomings, but by concentrating only on virtues in others.

Looking toward the future, he hoped that people in Chicago would achieve greater unity, thus aiding the unity throughout the country, thus enabling them all to show love to all people, and hence to be an example to all mankind.

In this gathering, besides the children, ‘Abdu’l-Baha was addressing those closest in identification with his father’s teachings. He used almost no reasoning patterns nor evidence. His statements were in the form of directions. The inference was that “we know our objectives, so here is what we must do and here is the direction we take.” The needs were inherently established by the nature of the group; he was able to go directly to the step of satisfying those needs without any preliminaries.

His remarks to the children were likewise expository; he told them of their “station” and revealed his hopes for them. He did not try to

prove or support his statements. In this kind of gathering, he was regarded in a position of "authority" by the adults. They knew that Baha'u'llah, whose teachings they were trying to follow, had said explicitly to turn to 'Abdu'l-Baha for directions. Hence a readiness to listen to whatever he had to say; his "position" was sufficient "authority" in matters such as these.

14. Plymouth Congregational Church

At eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, 'Abdu'l-Baha went to the Plymouth Congregational Church at 935 East 50th Street. There he delivered an address to the church congregation at their morning services. The people who attended the church came from an area of an above average economic bracket. Records at the Chicago offices of the Congregational Conference showed a membership, in 1912, of three hundred and eighty-six, pastored by the Reverend Joseph Milbourne.

In this Sunday morning address to a church congregation, 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke of progressive revelation of God's word through a series of manifestations. Almost the entire presentation was built around the analogy of the physical sun in relation to the spiritual Sun (God).

He began with an introduction that mentioned the conditions of the audience, describing them as a group assembled to commemorate God, "whose members have no thought or intention save his good-pleasure and the unbiased investigation of reality."

He began at once to draw the analogy of the physical sun by speaking of the pervasive influence of the sun on our whole creation. This material was mainly descriptive in substance.

He followed this with an equal quantity of material dealing with the “spiritual Sun”, introducing it with, “Likewise in the spiritual realm of intelligence and idealism there must be a center of illumination, and that center is the everlasting, ever-shining Sun, the Word of God.” In this descriptive section, he showed how this “Sun” influenced thoughts, morals, educated souls, enlightened hearts, gave the message of the kingdom of God, regenerated the ethical world, brought the light of religion, and promoted the growth of human existence.

Having set up a familiar analogical relationship, he proceeded to a new part of the relationship not so familiar to the audience. He described the way in which the sun, between the extremes of winter and summer, rose from different points on the horizon. The points of rising differed widely, he said, but the sun was ever the same sun. He made the comparison, saying:

Souls who focus their vision upon the Sun of Reality will be the recipients-of light no matter from what point it rises, but those who are fettered by adoration of the dawning-point are deprived when it appears in a different station upon the spiritual horizon.

He left this aspect of the analogy without further emphasis and moved into another aspect of the solar cycle—the four seasons. Here he did not separate his material on the physical and spiritual parts of the analogy. Rather he spoke of them both together. Religion, as the year, he said, had four seasons: springtime, when the thoughts and ideals gain new life and virtues have fresh power; summer, which brings fullness and fruitage; autumn, which brings withering winds that chill the soul; and winter, when only faint traces of the sun can be seen. The cycle begins

102 Historical study of the North American speaking tour of 'Abdu'l-Baha again in the spring and again the "summons of God is heard".

Having drawn the general picture of the similarities, he became specific concerning the condition of the world. He said:

For a long time the religious world had been weakened and materialism had advanced; the spiritual forces of life were waning, moralities were becoming degraded, composure and peace had vanished from souls and satanic qualities were dominating hearts; strife and hatred over-shadowed humanity, bloodshed and violence prevailed. God was neglected; the Sun of Reality seemed to have gone completely ... and so the season of winter fell upon mankind.

At this point, he announced simply that "a new springtime dawned, the lights of God shone forth, the effulgent Sun of Reality returned and became manifest ... a new spirit of life breathed into the body of the world and continuous advancement became apparent."

He quickly left his specific point and went into material leading to the conclusion. He described how all the manifestations of God have "proclaimed and promulgated the same reality", for the "foundations of the heavenly religions are one reality". He required only two sentences to suggest that disagreement among the religions had been caused by the "mists and clouds of imitations". We must dispel these imitations so we can see the Sun, he stated.

He concluded with a description of how conditions will remain if we do not dispel these imitations, including wars, catastrophes, enmity, and hatred. But if we see the truth of the Sun of Reality, then a heavenly civilization can be founded; then:

... all the inhabitants of the world will be united, the religions will be one, sects and denominations will reconcile, all nationalities will flow together in the recognition of one fatherhood and all degrees of humankind gather in the shelter of the same tabernacle, under the same banner.

He completed his presentation with an extensive prayer for assistance from God in these matters.

Considering the General Semantic criteria, 'Abdu'l-Baha used several examples of "allness" statements in this address. In speaking of the effects of the physical sun, he said that, without it, there would be "no growth of vegetation and no forms of created life on earth". This would be a generally valid "allness" statement. He used statements similar to those previously discussed in the realm of Divinity, when he said, "Reality is not divisible". His predictions of the unity of "all the inhabitants ... all nationalities ... all degrees of humankind," are based on this same assumption of the superlativeness or absoluteness of Divine power.

He used a whole series of conditional references, first showing that all forms of life are conditioned by the effects of the sun. He spoke of the various stages of religious development, the degrees of fruition and disintegration. And his most obvious conditional factor concerned the establishment of world peace as being conditional upon the recognition of the unity of the manifestations.

In this address, a similar approach can be seen as in the talk to the Theosophists in that 'Abdu'l-Baha first built up the most obvious points of unity between his beliefs and those of the Congregationalists, and then suggested that by independent investigation, even a greater reality would become apparent.

Even though the creeds of individual Congregational churches varied, they followed the same basic concepts. Their basic concept, that "We believe in God, the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness, and love,"

'Abdu'l-Baha built on early in the talk, expounding on the pervading influence of the light (God) on all created things.¹ In the second place, they believed in Christ as the "Word of God", a phrase which 'Abdu'l-Baha used in the first part of his talk, speaking of it as "the center of illumination".

He introduced his new material by suggesting the idea of several dawning-points of the Sun rather than a single one; and by suggesting the seasonal changes of religion, in which the springtime of religion came not once but many times. The Congregationalists believed that "Jesus Christ is the supreme manifestation of God."² 'Abdu'l-Baha was suggesting that there were many manifestations of God, all of whom taught the same basic religion. He led up to his climax with many inferences which were drawn from the analogies, until he finally stated that "All the holy manifestations of God have proclaimed and promulgated the same reality." Yet even here, he named no specific manifestation, not even Christ. He was content to speak of the overall pattern and let the hearer draw his own conclusion and investigate for himself.

The belief which might be brought about by such a talk would depend in large part upon the acceptance by the listener of the basic analogy. One who was wrapped up in the relationship could go on to draw many conclusions for himself. However, if it was felt that the allusions were contrived or "bent" to fit the purposes of the speaker, little "proof" would

¹ Frederick L. Langley, *The Congregational Churches* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1925), p. 61.

² idem, p. 62.

be conveyed.

The address was informative in that it introduced the listeners to a new concept of the system of religious history, as 'Abdu'l-Baha saw it, and it attempted to stimulate them, through the motivation of gaining the rewards of peace and unity, to investigate the system for themselves to see if it might not be correct.

15. All-Souls Church

On Sunday afternoon, after the morning meeting at the Plymouth Congregational church, 'Abdu'l-Baha presented a second address to a church congregation.

Chicago had established a center for religious education which had been named the Lincoln Center. Various denominations and groups made use of the building, which is still in use, and is located at 700 East Oakwood. A Unitarian congregation which used the Lincoln Center in 1912 called themselves the All-Souls Church. It was this group to which 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke on Sunday afternoon.

The congregation was made up of people of an average to lower than average income bracket. The audience which 'Abdu'l-Baha faced were arranged in the seven hundred seats of the large balcony and main floor of the center.

'Abdu'l-Baha used as the subject of this address the dualistic nature of the teachings of the manifestations.

He used an expository introduction which centered on the idea that the basic purpose of religion was to unify people. This was a basic tenet

with which his audience could agree and served to establish rapport. It also served the function of introducing a premise which would be used later on in the address. He began:

The divine religions were founded for the purpose of unifying humanity and establishing Universal Peace. Any movement which brings about peace and agreement in human society is truly a divine movement At all times and in all ages of the world, religion has been a factor in cementing together the hearts of men and in uniting various and divergent creeds. It is the peace element in religion that blends mankind and makes for unity.

In order to support these expository statements, 'Abdu'l-Baha brought out two examples of situations in which religion had served to unify people. He first used the example of Jesus, saying, "Consider how His Holiness Jesus Christ united the divergent peoples, sects and denominations of the early days." This choice of example aided the building of rapport since it was one in which a Christian congregation would be in general agreement. His second example was parallel, but went to the less familiar. He spoke of how Baha'u'llah's influence was accomplishing the same thing in Persia. This suggested parallel between the efforts of Christ and Baha'u'llah provided an easy transition from the familiar to the unfamiliar while still maintaining the audience's positive attitude. He drew his example by saying:

In Persia His Holiness Baha'u'llah was able to unite people of varying thought, creed and denomination. The inhabitants of that country were Christians, Mohammedans [Muslims], Jews, Zoroastrians and a great variety of subdivided forms and beliefs together with racial distinctions such as Semitic, Arabic, Persian, Turk, etc., but through the power and efficacy of religion, Baha'u'llah united these differing peoples and caused them to consort together in perfect agreement.

Having set the background with this extended introduction, setting up the purpose of religion to be unity, and linking the efforts of Christ

and Baha'u'llah, he arrived at his main thought. He explained, "The cause of this fellowship and unity lies in the fact that the divine law has two distinct aspects or functions." This was not the place for evidence to support the contention; first he had to explain the nature of these two aspects and functions.

He clarified the first aspect by definition, saying that it concerned "the ethical development and spiritual progress of mankind, the awakening of potential human susceptibilities These ordinances are changeless essential, eternal." He quickly contrasted the second aspect by definition as being "subject to change and transformation in accordance with the time, place and conditions." Having defined the two areas, he clarified them further with two examples, one general, one specific. The first explained that "The essential ordinances of religion were the same during the time of Abraham, the day of Moses and the cycle of Jesuits; but he explains that "the accidental or material laws were abrogated and superseded according to the exigency and requirement of each succeeding age." His second, or specific, example, showed how Jesus changed the social laws of Moses to meet the requirements of changed social conditions.

After introducing these thoughts which were probably in some degree new to the audience, he returned to the more familiar area he had used in the introduction: "The central purpose of the divine religions is the establishment of peace and unity among mankind." He expanded on this with exposition and short examples.

Having dealt with the familiar, he edged the new material again, this time by use of the stylistic device of simile. His comparison showed

how the world was like a human organism. He extended the comparison, saying:

When these members lack coordination and harmony we have the reverse which in the human organism is disease, dissolution, death. Similarly, in the body-politic of humanity, dissension, discord and warfare are always destructive and inevitably fatal.

With this analogy well established, 'Abdu'l-Baha returned to the concept of two aspects of religious teaching, centering his attention first of all of the underlying similarities. His complex reasoning pattern followed the line of thinking that (1) coordination of elements in the human body brings health and well-being to the body; (2) similarly, unity of elements in society brings health or peace to the body-politic; (3) if we look at the outer forms of religion differences will result; (4) if we look at their underlying unity, peace may be established. In his own words, he stated:

Inasmuch as the essential reality of the religions is one and their seeming variance and plurality is adherence to forms and imitations which have arisen, it is evident that these causes of difference and divergence must be abandoned in order that the underlying reality may unite mankind in its enlightenment and upbuilding.

To reinforce his statements on the oneness of religion and humanity, he included a section in which he appealed to the audience's reason by means of a series of rhetorical questions. Supposedly, the "reasonable" response would serve to support the belief that the underlying unity of the spiritual basis of religion. The language structure was such that emotional appeals were comingled with the rational. The motivations of peace, brotherhood, unity were all suggested or stated within this section. Some of his material included the questions:

Why should dissension exist among them? The surface of the earth is one nativity and that nativity was provided for all. God has not

set these boundaries and race limitations. Why should imaginary barriers which God has not originally destined, be made a cause of contention? God has created and provided for all ... Now that his light is shining universally why should we cast ourselves into darkness? As his table is spread for all his children why should we deprive each other of its sustenance? His effulgence is shining upon all; why should we seek to live among the shadows?¹

His conclusion was a single affirmative statement summing up the essence of the entire address: "Let us live under the protection of God, attaining eternal happiness in this world and life everlasting in the world to come."

He concluded the address with a supplication to God for the establishment of the unity of humanity.

The audience of seven hundred was made up primarily of the All-Souls Unitarian congregation. The Unitarian congregations had long been known for not only diversity of individual belief, but for a general religious basis of "benefiting humanity". To this group, 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke of the ultimate establishment of world peace and unity. With this as the main motivational attraction, he reasoned that sects and denominations arose from the material teachings of religion; unity came from the fundamental teachings of religion; therefore people must find and use the fundamentals of religion. Where, he asked, do we find these essentials; in the pure teachings of every prophet. Can it be historically shown that the fundamentals brought unity; yes, said 'Abdu'l-Baha, and briefly mentioned examples of Abraham and Moses, pausing to describe at length the unity Christ had established. He ended with the example of the effect of Baha'u'llah's fundamental teachings in uniting the diverse groups of Persia. Thus through a description of a historic cycle, he suggested, without specifically saying so, that the cycle was being repeated with the fundamental

¹ *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 99.

This address was almost entirely informative in nature. He dealt with the description of the two aspects of "divine teaching" and its effects. Although he inferred that independent investigation should take place he did not refer directly to the audience or any action which they should perform. Even the closing prayer dealt with the entire human race. He said there, in effect, let the nations agree and unite; let peace be established. 'Abdu'l-Baha used a series of interwoven "allness" statements and the "is" of predication and identification in connection with the section of the address on the "divine religions" and their purpose. He stated, for example, "Their reality is one, therefore their accomplishment is one and universal There is but one light of the material sun ... Similarly, in the spiritual world there is one divine reality" All of these references were consistent with his absolute concept of divinity. If 'Abdu'l-Baha were using this kind of terminology in relation to observable, human phenomena, it would have to be concluded that he was poorly oriented to his environment and a poor observer of the degree and grades of existence. However, it will be noted that in all of the above reference, there were none which could be refuted through observation or sense perception.

When Korzybski formulated the basic aspects of General Semantics, he wished to prepare a series of tools which might be used in aiding man to gain "sanity", or symbolic adjustment to the "realities" in the outside world. Since in the phenomenal world, observable functions operate in terms of degrees, the set of tools fulfills its functions. But 'Abdu'l-Baha, in these instances in which he referred to the divinity and to the

nature of the manifestations, was not talking about observable phenomena. He was dealing with conditions beyond sense experience, and hence, in a sense, beyond the tools for adjusting the symbols derived from sense perception.

To refer to 'Abdu'l-Baha's own words, he stated in another part of the address, "The underlying foundation of the religions is one; there is no intrinsic difference between them." This sentence may serve as 'Abdu'l-Baha's own explanation of his use of absolute statements in relation to God, religion, and the manifestations. He used the word "intrinsic", which refers to the essence of a thing. According to 'Abdu'l-Baha, the essence of that which pertains to God is eternal unchanging, not subject, as he said elsewhere, "to the changes and chances of the world". It was this "essence" which was unchanging that 'Abdu'l-Baha believed the "inner eye" the "eye of insight" could see, when a person developed adequate spiritual qualities. In fact, had 'Abdu'l-Baha spoken in terms of General Semantic terminology, he would readily have agreed that conditional statements were necessary in "the world of matter", if one was to be "sanely" oriented. However, he probably would say that it was just as necessary to be oriented to the divinity in terms of "absolutes" in order to be "sanely" oriented towards the "unseen reality".

His viewpoint becomes clearer when reference is made back to Baha'u'llah's system. Baha'u'llah was very definite in his assertions that degrees of difference and infinite variation characterized the conditions experienced through sense reception. But he believed that underneath the differences were underlying realities which could be perceived with the

"inner eye". In man's spiritual advancement, he said, the "plane of limitation" was passed and man would then see "the Manifestations of Oneness". "In this station he pierceth the veils of plurality, fleeth from the worlds of the flesh, and ascendeth into the heaven of singleness," he wrote. To further clarify the use of the General Semantic criteria in relation to 'Abdu'l-Baha's words, this quotation of his father shows even more clearly the dualistic outlook they maintained. At the end of a treatise on "spiritual development," he wrote:

These statements are made in the sphere of that which is relative, because of the limitations of men. Otherwise, those personages who in a single step have passed over the world of the relative and the limited, and dwelt on the fair plane of the Absolute, and pitched their tent in the worlds of authority and command—have burned away these relativities with a single spark

In the light of these quotations, it is possible to see the reason 'Abdu'l-Baha maintained his use of "allness" terms, the "is" of identification and predication, and superlative terms in relation to the "super-sensory" aspects of his material.

It will be noted, on the other hand, the consistent use which 'Abdu'l-Baha made of terminology which reflected degrees of difference when speaking of observable phenomena. One of the prime examples also appeared in this address. He stated:

The second function ... deals with material conditions, the laws of human intercourse and social regulation. These are subject to Change and transformation in accordance with the time, place and conditions ... the accidental or material laws were abrogated and superseded according to the exigency and requirement of each succeeding age.¹

This material might serve to indicate further that the idea of "relativeness" was a functional and necessary part of the teachings which 'Abdu'l-Baha expounded. Without this consistent regard for relativity, the foundation of his idea of "progressive revelation" would be baseless, and the

¹ *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 97.

entire system untenable. This, in turn, would make it difficult for him to look at his church audiences as having a valid place in the system of religions; his attitude might well have become absolutistic if he saw his religion as the “only way”. As it was, the concept of degree and relativity allowed him to see each audience as having aspects of the total “Truth” which he felt all were seeking.

16. Summary

In the preceding sections the criteria of analysis have been enumerated, the premises of thinking outlined, and the fifteen Chicago addressee presented by ‘Abdu’l-Baha have been analyzed.

The speech analysis has shown that, in general, ‘Abdu’l-Baha tended to keep his addresses relatively short. None of the Chicago addresses lasted longer than an hour, and the shortest presentation was fifteen minutes in length.

Considering the elements of invention, these speeches have revealed the use of several different kinds of evidence. ‘Abdu’l-Baha made references to current world situations, historical examples from Persian, Europe and ancient Rome and Palestine. On several occasions he made use of hypothetical examples, extending them, at times, to great lengths. The instances of the use of quotations are not numerous, but examples were found; most frequently, paraphrased quotations were used rather than the exact wording. The use of analogy was extensive, forming as it did a part of almost every speech. Most of these analogies were drawn from ordinary phenomena, especially elements of nature, such as plant growth, sunrises,

and the seasons. Historic parallels were frequently inferred, especially in connection with the repetition of patterns of religious development. Definition served a very important function, and the analysis has shown how 'Abdu'l-Baha sometimes went to great lengths to redefine concepts, as notably, the ideas of death and change.

Reasoning formed an important part of almost every address, both inductive and deductive. It has been shown how 'Abdu'l-Baha would amass material, as for example, concerned the similarities of the races, and draw conclusions from such material. However, deductive reasoning was most frequently used. 'Abdu'l-Baha often began with basic assumptions concerning the nature of Divinity or creation and reasoned to specific conclusions.

'Abdu'l-Baha showed a large degree of audience adaptation, considering his emotional appeals, especially in the choice of supporting material. It has been shown how in many circumstances the first portion of his address focused on the points of unity which his own beliefs had with those of his audience. With a group educationally oriented as were the Theosophists, he used extended and complex reasoning patterns. This was true also in some of the Plaza Hotel addresses. However, in situations where the audience represented a lower educational level, as at Hull House, the reasoning was minimized in favor of simple analogies.

The appeals were shown to be consistently "universal" in scope. The ideals of universal peace, brotherhood, human unity, progress, and service to mankind were held up as attainable goals.

In only three instances in Chicago did 'Abdu'l-Baha make direct references to himself. His references were a basis for ethical proof in

those instances, for they tended to present him as an authority or as having selfless motives in the given situation. Any other ethical appeals came from the audience's previous knowledge and individual application rather than from the speech content itself.

For the most part, 'Abdu'l-Baha's addresses contained only the two components considered essential by Aristotle—statements and support of them. It has been seen that references to the audience, in eleven addresses, occupied a total of two sentences. Reference to the specific situation was equally sparse. It has been noted that in almost every speech, the introduction led within a few short sentences to the subject of the presentation. Conclusions were equally brief, usually being a summary or emphatic statement of the main idea. The bodies contained a series of basic assertions, followed by evidence and reasoning. Examples consistently dealt with the specific material under consideration. It was shown that the statement of the key idea was placed at either the beginning or the ending of the speech. This was usually determined by the nature of the reasoning, whether it was inductive or deductive in nature; that is, whether his premise or his concluding observation was the key idea.

Concerning style, five major items were listed for investigation, including (1) whether or not the idea was worth presenting; (2) whether the speaker had a clear conception of the idea; (3) whether he desired to communicate it; (4) whether he was able to adapt it to the circumstances; and (5) whether the language conveyed it adequately. Each of these will be summarized.

Whether or not the ideas were worth presenting depends for the most part on the listener's or critic's standards. The ideas and ideals of

world brotherhood and universal peace and the related materials are certainly significant since they are generally regarded as components of social advent. The ideas of progressive revelation and its corollaries would be judged as worthwhile not from the truth or falsity of such claims, but from their benefit in stimulating thought and informing the audiences of the beliefs of several million religionists.

That 'Abdu'l-Baha had a desire to communicate his ideas, there can be little doubt. That fact that he made so extensive a tour in spite of unsteady health and age demonstrated this. His enthusiasm during the addresses, which will be shown more clearly in the next chapter, also tended to convey this impression.

The clarity of his conception of his ideas has been shown through the consistency of interrelated thoughts expressed throughout all eleven speeches, and within the other addresses delivered in this country.

The adaptation to circumstances has already been mentioned. The language seemed to convey adequately the ideas presented. Where confusion might occur, as with some of the less familiar ideas, extensive definition and analogous relationships were used.

A certain consistency in the use of material, as analyzed in terms of General Semantic criteria, was seen in these speeches. Examples of "allness" and superlative terminology were found, as were instances of the "is" of identification and the "is" of predication. They were consistently identified with same aspect of the Deity which was viewed in "absolute" not relative terms. Examples were likewise shown of comparative terms, conditional and partially quantifying references. These were used consistently, showing an awareness of the relativity of elements in the

environment. He used such terminology to describe “degrees of conditions” in relation to education, history, insight, consultation, prejudice, and various social conditions.

It will be noted that in the examination of the speeches there was no use of either the “consciousness-of-projection” terms nor of quantifying terms. This meant that the assertions made by ‘Abdu’l-Baha were never prefaced by such phrases as “As I see it ...” or “From my point of view ...”. The nearest approximation to this kind of usage came through inferences that this was his understanding of the system of creation, but these were at no time direct. This condition is a further indication of his belief in the “absolute” nature of his premises, which he never qualified. The absence of quantifying terms indicates that he never made references to specific numbers or quantities. On several occasions he partially quantified, with words such as “some” or “several”; but nowhere, except in the hypothetical illustration concerning the “ten children” did he use a specific number. The greatest part of his material dealt with principles of an abstract nature; the illustrations were not of a nature to include numbers. It will be recalled how many of his references were to nature, and patterns of natural phenomena which did not lend themselves to exact quantifying.

In summing up the observations based on the General Semantic criteria, it is apparent that ‘Abdu’l-Baha was absolutistically oriented in matters concerning the nature of God and His attributes but viewed all created phenomena in terms of degrees and stages.

In comparing the relationship between the material in the addresses and the fundamental parts of his father’s system, it becomes obvious that

their connection was direct. There was no subject covered in these fifteen addresses which did not fit in some way into Baha'u'llah's construct. Most often 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke of only one or two aspects of it within a given talk; frequently in an introductory or concluding summary he would sketch the whole pattern into which the specific aspect fitted.

The materials covered in these addresses were typical of the content and method of presentation of all of the addresses examined, which were made during the American tour. While in considering all one hundred and sixty addresses, there is a wider range of supporting materials, a greater range of reasoning factors, and a wider scope of all the criteria dealt with, the analysis of the Chicago speeches offers a comprehensive insight into the content and arrangement of the addresses made during the entire tour.

4

‘Abdu’l-Baha’s delivery

In Book Three of *The Rhetoric*, Aristotle stated, “A third question would touch the art of correct delivery; for success in delivery is of the utmost importance to the effect of a speech.”¹ In this chapter, the elements involved in ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s delivery will be analyzed, based on the five aspects of delivery discussed by Thonssen and Baird. The five components of delivery to be investigated include: (1) the method of speech preparation; (2) the mode of presentation; (3) the physical appearance of the speaker; (4) the bodily action during delivery; and (5) the use of voice.²

1. Method of speech preparation

As Thonssen and Baird point out:

Fuller appreciation of a speaker and his speeches results from acquiring insight into the way he went about preparing his talks. The problem has its roots in the orator’s early training, his home life ... and a host of other factors.³

In this connection, several important areas in ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s early training and background will be discussed.

Oral tradition of Persia. First, it must be remembered that ‘Abdu’l-Baha received no formal instruction during his “freedom” before

¹ Lane Cooper, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1971, p. 182.

² Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1948), p. 435.

³ idem, p. 436.

the age of nine, and that during the fifteen years of exile and forty years of imprisonment, he was separated from the usual sources of education. His sister is quoted as saying: "My mother sometimes gave lessons to my brother Abbas; at other times Mirza Musa (His uncle) would teach Him, and on some occasions He would be taught by His father."¹ Most references point out that he spent most of his time in the service of his father. Over a period of forty-eight years he heard his father's answers to questions on every conceivable subject to the constant stream of people who sought his presence or to the numerous tablets which were continually received.

Since 'Abdu'l-Baha could speak and read Persian, Arabic, and Turkish, it might be assumed that he had access to various books in these languages, especially during the relatively peaceful years in Baghdad or the latter years in Acca. In the volumes of material which have been investigated for this study, however, no mention was found of any particular books which he read.

What could be ascertained with a great degree of certainty is that most of his education came in the form of oral discourse. There were several common outlets for this kind of communication. First, the method of instruction in Persia at the time was through private instructors. A small number of pupils "sat at the feet" of the scholar and listened to his discourse or took part in oral discussion. People came to Baha'u'llah for this kind of instruction; it will be recalled from Chapter Two that

¹ Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1941), pp. 68-69.

such large numbers of people came to Baghdad for instruction that 'Abdu'l-Baha tried to separate the "sincere" from the curiosity seekers before admitting them to his father's presence.

Second, several amanuenses served Baha'u'llah as he dictated tablets in response to letters of inquiry on questions of every kind. 'Abdu'l-Baha was exposed to this kind of oral output for years. In fact, it was customary for a person writing a tablet, himself, to chant the words aloud as he wrote, and those in his presence might listen.

Third, in sharing information, the written word was read aloud to a group. Printing had not yet been developed during those years for the difficult Arabic script; books and tablets were precious and rare. Hence, the only means of sharing books with numbers of people was through oral chanting.

Another factor to consider was the extensiveness with which these three forms of overlapping oral communication were carried on. It is difficult for the Western reader to understand fully conditions in the Persian society whose principal means of sharing information was face-to-face verbalization and whose concept of time was much less rushed. Two short examples will illustrate the extent of this kind of communication. The Persian historian, Nabil, described a group of Baha'u'llah's associates in these words:

Many a night ... would Mirza Aqa Jan gather them together in his room, close the door, light numerous camphorated candles, and chant aloud to them the newly revealed odes and Tablets in his possession. Wholly oblivious of this contingent world, completely immersed in the realms of the spirit, forgetful of the necessity for food, sleep or

drink, they would suddenly discover that night had become day, and that the sun was approaching its zenith.¹

A second instance took place in the Garden of Ridvan in Baghdad, when for twelve days and nights Baha'u'llah and a large following camped there. It was recorded that even at the "hour of midnight" he would "pace up and down the moonlit, flower-bordered avenues" chanting. And "every day," Nabil continued, "from morn till eventide, I would see Him ceaselessly engaged in conversing with the stream of visitors who kept flowing in from Baghdad."²

It can be seen in the preceding material that oral discourse was prevalent in 'Abdu'l-Baha's environment. This was the most important method of communication.

Preparation for oral delivery. Considering his background of verbal communication, it is not surprising to find extensive references to 'Abdu'l-Baha's use of the same methods already described.

Prior to 1912, "table-talks" or informal lectures were 'Abdu'l-Baha's principal means of exposition. Notes of visitors to Haifa were filled with phrases such as "During the days Abdul-Baha had but little time to himself. Visitors, tourists and officials came and went constantly."³ Speaking of the talks at meals, one traveler wrote, "This meal's experience was repeated daily, sometimes twice, at noon and

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1950), pp. 152–153.

² idem, p. 153.

³ Thornton Chase, *In Galilee* (Boston: George Orr Latimer, 1920), p. 38.

evening.”¹ Or again:

From our room window we often saw him walking in the garden meeting people, and when he could get away for a few minutes from other cares, he would come up to our room and talk with us.”²

Many books, pamphlets, and diaries record the extent of the oral communication.³

'Abdu'l-Baha likewise maintained an extensive correspondence with individuals and groups around the world. This was carried on through hours of oral dictation to amanuenses every day. Showing the extent of this kind of correspondence, four years before his arrival in the United States, his compiled letters, to people in this country, filled an entire volume. Even then, it was recorded in the introduction that “Only a portion of the Tablets now on file ... are contained in this volume. Other volumes will be issued as soon as possible.”⁴ Considering the number of letters sent elsewhere in the world, the output must have been great.

It has been shown in the foregoing material that not only was 'Abdu'l-Baha accustomed to an environment where extensive oral discourse was common, but that he himself was accustomed to an extensive verbal output every day in the form of informal talks and dictation of tablets.

¹ idem, p. 33.

² ibid.

³ For detailed examples, see Blomfield, *op. cit.*; Chase, *op. cit.*; and Laura Clifford Barney, *Some Answered Questions* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1930).

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets of Abdul-Baha Abbas*, Vol. 1 (New York: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1930), p. vi.

His addresses in this country were approached in the same way as his informal talks and tablet dictation; they received the same kind of "preparation". That is, he went into the speaking situation and answered the questions or dealt with the issues that seemed most important at the moment. There is no evidence in any of the material examined for this study to suggest any immediate preparation of material before a presentation.

In the broadest sense, and also in the specific sense, his whole lifetime became the preparation for the responses to the stimulus of the moment. His major materials included (1) his own wide range of experience; (2) his knowledge of history; (3) the teachings and ideas of his father; (4) a keen observation of circumstances in his immediate surroundings.

To show the parallel between his conversations and his public speaking, an excerpt from the notes of an American visitor to Haifa in 1907 will be cited. This observer, after speaking of numerous individual episodes, summarized:

Each conversation started with some simple reference to a natural thing, the weather, food, a stone, tree, water, the prison, a garden or a bird, our coming, or some little act of service and this base would be woven into a parable and teaching of wisdom and simplicity, showing the oneness of all Spiritual Truth, and adapting it always to *the life*, both of the individual and of mankind. All of his words are directed toward *helping men to live*. Unless questions of metaphysics, dogmas and doctrines be introduced, he seldom mentions them. He speaks easily, clearly, in brief phrases Whatever the lesson may be it always culminates in some teaching of unity. ...¹

¹ Chase, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

It can be noticed how similar is the structure described in this passage to the Chicago talks which have been analyzed.

Introduction to public speaking. Even with the extensive amounts of verbal communication customary in the environment to which 'Abdu'l-Baha was familiar, public addresses were absent, in the sense of a formalized audience-speaker relationship. The only presentations of that sort were the sermons delivered in the mosques on the Muslim's Sabbath. There was no record of 'Abdu'l-Baha being given that opportunity for delivery.

Thus one writer concluded:

At His release in 1906, He had been a prisoner just forty years. He had never addressed a public audience and was unfamiliar both with Western customs and with Western languages.¹

He arrived in London, England, in September, 1911, and there delivered his first public address, at the age of sixty-seven.

From the first, his preparation followed the pattern used in all the years of informal talks and dictation of tablets. It will be shown in the following section how these background factors influenced his mode of presentation.

2. Mode of presentation

In the introduction to this area of mode of presentation in *Speech Criticism*, it is written:

There are probably as many methods of delivery as there are public speakers. Each orator has his own way of going about the business of

¹ John Ferraby, *All Things Made New* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p. 232.

delivering a talk. Whatever the method, the critic will want to discover it. In general, the critic should find out whether the speech is delivered from memory, from manuscript, or, and, if the latter, whether the man spoke with or without notes.¹

It reasonably follows, considering the material in the preceding section, that 'Abdu'l-Baha used no written manuscript or notes of any kind. His mode was that of extempore speaking, which Quintilian mentioned as

... the richest fruit of all our study, and the most ample recompense for the extent of our labour ... *the faculty of speaking extempore*. ... There arise innumerable occasions where it is absolutely necessary to speak on the instant²

'Abdu'l-Baha often mentioned the specific topic clearly in the introduction. For instance, he often began, "Tonight I want to speak with you about Baha'u'llah." Occasionally there are indications in notes or introductions of the particular reason for pursuing a certain topic in a talk. Just before one address, an Indian speaking with 'Abdu'l-Baha said, "My aim in life is to transmit as far as in me lies the message of Krishna to the world."³ 'Abdu'l-Baha's first words of the talk were "The Message of Krishna is the message of love"⁴ In general, however, there were very few indications as to how the particular topic was chosen. That it usually pertained to the interests and concerns of the audience, was all

¹ Thonssen and Baird, *op. cit.*, p. 437.

² *idem*, p. 95.

³ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, 9th ed., (London: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1954), p. 35.

⁴ *idem*, p. 35.

that can be said.

3. Physical appearance of the speaker

The physical appearance was a factor commented on by almost every reporter. His physical appearance was striking enough to bring frequent comment; the Persian garments which he wore were "unusual" to Western eyes.

Thornton Chase, in a general description, wrote:

He had the stride and freedom of a king—or shepherd. My impression of him was that of a lion, a kingly, masterful Man of the most sweet and generous disposition ... I found in Abdul-Baha a man, strong, powerful, without a thought as to any act, as free and unstilted as a father with his family or a boy with playmates. Yet each movement, his walk, his greeting, his sitting down and rising up were eloquent of power, full of dignity, freedom and ability.¹

'Abdu'l-Baha was a few inches over five feet tall. Writers continually made comments such as, "Although of medium height he is commanding in appearance and I can never think of him as less than six feet tall."²

Another commentator wrote of him as:

... a man of medium height, strongly and solidly built, weight about one hundred and seventy pounds, alert and active in every movement, the head thrown back and splendidly poised upon the shoulders³

A third observer spoke of him as having a "gracious figure ... of such perfect symmetry, and so full of dignity and grace, that the first impression was that of considerable height."⁴

¹ Chase, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

² *idem*, p. 28.

³ "Pilgrimage to Akka", *World Order*, 11:89, June, 1945.

⁴ Blomfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 149–150.

He always wore the same style of clothes; they varied only in color. Usually he wore a light-colored or white robe as the basic garment, which covered the entire body to the ankles. Over this he wore the Persian *aba*, or outer robe. This outer cloak covered most of the under-robe but hung open in the front. Descriptions mention his wearing either a cream-colored or a black *aba*. One author spoke of his "cream-colored *aba*" that "fell in graceful folds to His feet."¹

On all occasions, he wore on his head a low-crowned *taj* or *fez*, with a fine-linen turban of white wound around the base of the *taj*.

His long white hair fell almost to his shoulders and he had a mustache and short beard: "His hair and short beard were of that snowy whiteness which had once been black."²

Of his facial features, one author offered this description:

His bright, fair face, light brown in complexion, was framed in silvery white beard and moustache ... His nose was large, straight and strong. The mouth was rather full and very gentle. Deep under the broad forehead, and shaded by white, thick eyebrows, shone the wondrous eyes, large, prominent, brilliant, penetrating and kind. Around the dark pupil and brown iris is that wonderful blue circle which sometimes makes the eyes look a perfect blue. ... In repose the face expressed a dignity, intelligence and nobility which none would dare to disrespect. Conscious power and authority were there enthroned. ... His smile charmed and attracted friends to him.³

In order to convey a clearer concept of his looks, a photograph was secured and a reproduction made for inclusion in this study, which is found on the following page.

¹ Howard Colby Ives, *Portals to Freedom* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1953), p. 96.

² Blomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

³ Chase, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

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His "commanding appearance", was spoken of frequently in newspaper accounts. It was mentioned that even in a crowded room, one was aware of his presence; even though engaged in other activities, one had a continual consciousness of his movements, voice, and gestures.

The next question that arises is how were these physical qualities used in the actual speaking situation.

4. Description of physical delivery

Process of translation. Since 'Abdu'l-Baha presented all of his talks in Persian, a translator rendered his words into English. The translator who accompanied 'Abdu'l-Baha during the entire tour was his nephew, Dr Ameen Fareed, a native Persian, living in Chicago. Dr Fareed was a graduate of the University of Illinois and Johns Hopkins University and spoke both Persian and English with great fluency.

When 'Abdu'l-Baha stood before an audience, Dr Fareed stood with him, at his aide, and slightly behind. As 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke, his words were translated sentence by sentence. The flow was thus continuous: a Persian sentence, an English sentence, etc. In this way, the inflexion and gesture of 'Abdu'l-Baha were still in the minds of the audience as the English words were heard. One newspaper pointed out that:

In connection with these discourses, the wonderful skill and felicitous expression of the translator, Dr Ameen Ullah Fareed, should not go unrecognized. To his ready learning is indebted the ability to fully appreciate the beauties of the discourses.¹

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:13, p. 14, November 4, 1912.

Another paper stated that "Even through an interpreter he ('Abdu'l-Baha) is an elegant speaker."¹ Still another reporter commented that "Then they crowded to hear the Ba-ha, who spoke to them in Persian," which was "translated by his captivating voice into exquisite English by Dr Fareed sic"² A further description mentioned that "The famous Persian spoke in his native tongue, but his words repeated in English by a clear-voiced interpreter held his auditors in rapt attention."³

Reports generally indicate that the smoothness of the duo-language presentation made the audience soon forget the technicalities of the translating; even the presence of the translator on the platform was overlooked in many reports.

There are numerous references on the part of observers to their feeling of understanding the meaning of 'Abdu'l-Baha's words even before the translation took place. One member of the audience wrote:

He spoke in Persian, the interpreter translating fluently but beautifully ... One listened entranced and understood inwardly even before the interpreter opened his mouth. It was as though the English skimmed the surface: the voice, the eyes, the smile of 'Abdu'l-Baha taught the heart to probe the depths.⁴

Some speak of their surprise at their own understanding of the Persian:

In spite of the fact that the language was Persian, and so, of course, unfamiliar to me, the impression I received was that of understanding.

¹ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 6, 1912, p. 9.

² *Denver Post*, September 26, 1912, p. 7.

³ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 10, 1912, p. 6.

⁴ Ives, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

So vivid was this that the interpreter's translation came as a shock.¹

A story which might be suspected of definite exaggeration by its contents was nonetheless recorded by a Unitarian minister who was very careful of accuracy; he wrote of a man who

... attended a meeting at which 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke. ... When the interpreter took up the passage in English. ... Why does that man interrupt?" he whispered. Then again 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke, and again the visitor was lost in attention. Again the interpreter translated as the speaker paused ... indignation was aroused. "Why do they let that man interrupt? He should be put out."

"He is the official interpreter," one sitting beside his explained. "He translates the Persian into English."

"Was He speaking in Persian? ... Why anyone could understand that."²

Gestures. Considering 'Abdu'l-Baha's gestures, it was reported that he had a basic movement on which a variety of gestures were built. He was described as using upward-moving gestures with the palm of the hand turned up. He used variations of this gesture freely with either one or both hands. One observer stated that he never used a "downward stroke of the hand" and "never an upraised warning finger", but "always the encouraging upward swing of hands."³ Again, it was mentioned: "His hands gesturing rhythmically with an upward, inspiring significance which I have seen in no other speaker."⁴

¹ idem, p. 43.

² idem, p. 98.

³ idem, p. 127.

⁴ idem, p. 91.

The eyes. The eyes of 'Abdu'l-Baha were often singled out for comment. References spoke of him seeming to contact each member of the audience with them. Others spoke of them as "a living flame", and "glowing with an inner light".¹ It was further said that "His blue eyes are frank, lively and humorous."² They seem to "look into you instead of at you", with "an expression that is alert, intelligent, and serene."³

General vigor. These references are closely associated with mention of his general muscular tone. He was described as having great amounts of energy which were carefully controlled with the appearance of relaxation. Elbert Hubbard wrote that he "listens with much appreciation and sympathy", and speaks "distinctly and most impressively", concluding that "He knows what he is saying. His heart is full and his emotions are brimming, although kept well under control."⁴

Stance and movement. During the large public presentations he stood before the audience with Dr Fareed at his side, as previously described. In the most informal settings, such as the hotel parlor or in individual homes, he frequently paced as he spoke, even before large audiences. At such times, Dr Fareed would stand at one end of the area where he paced, and translate from there. He was described as having

¹ idem, pp. 90–91.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, "America and World Peace", *Independent*, 73:606, September 12, 1912.

³ E. S. Stevens, "Light in the Lantern", *Everybody's*, 25:779, December, 1911.

⁴ E. Hubbard, "Modern Prophet", *Hearst's Monthly*, 22:50, July, 1912.

“a walk that is dignified without being conscious; a carriage that is peculiarly commanding.”¹

When he closed meetings with a prayer, he would stand quietly, his hands at waist level, with palms upward and eyes closed.

5. Use of the voice

Another major factor to consider in delivery is that of the speaker's voice. 'Abdu'l-Baha made one voice recording when he was in America in 1912. It was an R.C.A. recording made at the Bell laboratories, cut as a series of wax cylinders. It was possible to secure a tape recording made from the original cylinders.

On this recording, 'Abdu'l-Baha was reciting material from the writings of his father. Even though the old disks are now in very poor technical condition and the original recording methods limit the frequency range, it was possible to hear the variety of pitch which he used as well as the controlled variations of vocal force. The general pitch lies in a middle baritone-tenor range. The articulation is distinct, and the rate is even and unhurried, with a variety of rate being used.

The vocal quality has the “flat” sound characteristic of early recordings and little of the “richness” of tone mentioned in written reports. Even so, the resonance of the vowel sounds is especially apparent.

The written reports of his voice mention it “filling the room” appropriately wherever he spoke, yet it was not “loud”. Said one observer,

¹ Stevens, *loc. cit.*

it was “never loud but of such a penetrating quality that the walls of the room seemed to vibrate”¹ Again, “the measured cadences of His voice filled the room.”²

The written descriptions of the vocal quality are general and leave much to the imagination of the reader. A Persian companion referred to 'Abdu'l-Baha addressing a group with “a voice sweeter than honey”³ An American observer also described it as “honey-like”.⁴ Other references included such adjectives as “mellifluous”, and “like a resonant bell of finest timbre”; and finally the sentence: “That beautifully resonant voice rang through the room, accenting with an emphasis I had never before heard”⁵

In retrospect, the written descriptions indicate that the emotional impact and subtleties of connotative meaning were given with 'Abdu'l-Baha's voice while the translator provided the denotative meanings.

6. Summary

Before offering the summary itself, a reference should be made to 'Abdu'l-Baha's own ideas on delivery. There was only a single instance—at

¹ Ives, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

² *idem*, p. 147.

³ Mahmud, “The Journey of 'Abdu'l-Baha to America”, Story Supplement to “God Passes By” (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1948), p. 64. See also *Mahmud's Diary*, p. 151.

⁴ Ives, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁵ *idem*, pp. 98, 127, 84.

the International Peace Society Conference at Lake Mohonk, New York—when an occurrence took place that called forth his comment on these matters. It was an insight into his own thoughts on the subject. One of 'Abdu'l-Baha's companions, in his diary, chronicled the short event in these words:

The members and speakers who attended this conference were from all parts of the world, most of them did well in presenting their papers. But one of the speakers was very much excited, he kept pounding and hammering the table with his fists, kicking the chair with his feet, shouting and screaming at the top of his voice. Later, 'Abdu'l-Baha remarked, "There are times when a speaker should raise his voice in order to emphasize his point. There are times when he should speak low, and at times he should smile. Gestures must harmonize with the character of words."¹

The best method of summary for this particular chapter is to quote two descriptions of 'Abdu'l-Baha's delivery. The first refers to a large public gathering as seen by a reporter for the *Independent*:

He is an aged man now, with a long white beard and a saintly face, worn but peaceful. His bearing is simple but dignified, unembarrassed by unaccustomed surroundings, giving his message ... to a strange audience in a foreign land with the same earnestness and naturalness as though he were addressing his disciples in Acre. ... Standing upon the floor or walking to and fro, he speaks quietly in Persian, which, sentence by sentence, is translated, tho at times his expressive features and gestures make the services of an interpreter superfluous. He wears a small white turban and a black robe over a white girdled garment. He greets the audience by touching his forehead repeatedly with the palm of the right hand and closes ... with a half-chanted prayer, standing and holding his hands upward and open²

The second description was made by a Christian minister in a more informal setting:

¹ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, "'Abdu'l-Baha in America", *Star of the West*, 19:6, p. 181, September, 1928.

² "Persian Prophet", *Independent*, 73:159, July 18, 1912.

At one of the meetings at the home of the friends ... the large double rooms were filled. a lane had been left open stretching the full length of both rooms, and as the Master spoke, He strode up and down the rooms while the interpreter stood near me translating fluently ... 'Abdu'l-Baha came striding towards us with the indescribably grace and majesty, His hands gesturing rhythmically with an upward, inspiring significance which I have seen in no other speaker, and His eyes glowing with an inner light illumining every feature ...

His flowing aba, His creamlike fez, His silvery hair and beard, all set Him apart from the Westerners, to whom He spake. But His smile which seemed to embrace us with an overflowing comradeship; His eyes which flashed about the room as if seeking out each individual; His gestures which combined such authority and humility; such wisdom and humor, all conveyed to me ... a true human brotherhood¹

These descriptions have brought together and summarized the elements which have been discussed separately throughout the chapter.

¹ Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91, 86, 87.

5

Survey of the entire speaking tour

In reviewing the preceding chapters of this study, it will be recalled that Chapter Two offered the background information necessary for the understanding of 'Abdu'l-Baha in relation to the American speaking tour. Chapter Three focused on the environment and setting of the series of speeches delivered by 'Abdu'l-Baha in Chicago between the dates of April 30 and May 5, and dealt with the outline of Baha'u'llah's system of teachings which served as a pattern of the premises of thinking for the addresses; after the specific criteria were discussed, each of the fifteen addresses delivered in Chicago was analyzed. Chapter Four offered a specific analysis of 'Abu'l-Baha's delivery.

The specific areas thus far covered in the study, along with the materials on results and conclusions contained in Chapters Seven and Eight, could constitute the complete rhetorical study. However, this speaking tour has never been studied in its entirety, nor has the body of information concerning it been arranged in a systematic form. It was felt, therefore, that one of the functions of the present study should be the survey of the entire American tour. Information included in such a synopsis would provide not only a basis for future investigations, but would furnish a basis for the understanding of the extent and nature of the entire tour and would prepare a foundation for an evaluation of the whole series of addresses.

When a recurrence of similar events takes place, it is possible to transfer insight gained from the study of the details of one event to an

outline of the related circumstances. Such is the case here. After studying in detail the Chicago addresses, it will be possible to transfer the understanding thus gained to the survey of similar events recurring throughout the whole tour. In view of this consideration, the information contained in the first five chapters serve not only as an analysis in itself, but also furnishes the detail necessary for the understanding of the entire tour.

In summary, the contents of this chapter will provide: (1) the necessary material for the analysis of the results of the entire tour; (2) a synopsis of the full scope of activities of which the Chicago addresses are a representative sample; and (3) a comprehensive compilation of source material as a foundation for further study.

To carry out these aims, information concerning the entire tour was gathered from newspaper, books, periodical publications, and interviews from all parts of the country. A card index was prepared, including a documentation of information available concerning each day of the tour. Copies of more than one hundred and forty addresses were studied to discover the principal nature of their content.

The present chapter presents a synopsis of this material arranged in chronological order with extensive documentation of source information. Material has been included which will aid in the understanding of the tour as a whole, of the type, content, and scope of the addresses, and of the nature of the audiences and speech settings.

1. New York and vicinity: April 11 to April 19

'Abdu'l-Baha arrived in New York on April 11, 1912, on the White Star ship, *Cedric*. The ship was boarded at quarantine by reporters who interviewed 'Abdu'l-Baha as the ship sailed to the dock. 'Abdu'l-Baha requested the hundreds of people who had gathered awaiting his arrival to leave before he disembarked.¹ After further interviews with reporters, he went to the Hotel Ansonia. In the afternoon, he made his first appearance at the home of Edward B. Kinney, at 780 West End Avenue in New York. One observer wrote simply, "It was so crowded that many had to stand for want of room."² At this occasion, 'Abdu'l-Baha greeted the gathering and briefly spoke of the trip from Egypt.³

One eye-witness of the first meeting, a person who had read of him in magazines and heard people speak of him, recorded this description:

I did make an effort to get at least a glimpse of Him at a gathering specially arranged for Him at the home of Baha'i friends. A glimpse was all I succeeded in getting. The press of eager friends and curious ones was so great that it was difficult even to get inside the doors. I have only the memory of an impressive silence most unusual at such functions. In all that crowded mass of folk, so wedged together that tea drinking was almost an impossibility, though the attempt was made, there was little or no speech. A whispered

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:3, p. 5, April 28, 1912; Juliet Thompson, *'Abdu'l-Baha's First Days in America* (East Aurora, New York: The Roycrofters, 1928), p. 5.

² Mahmud, "The Journey of 'Abdu'l-Baha to America", *Story Supplement to "God Passes By"* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1948), p. 52.

³ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Chicago: Executive Board of Bahai Temple Unity, 1922), pp. 1-2; *Star of the West*, 3:10, p. 4-6, September 8, 1912.

word; a remark implying awe or love, was all. I strove to get where I could at least see Him. All but impossible. At last I managed to press forward where I could peep over a shoulder and so got my first glimpse of 'Abdu'l-Baha. He was seated. A cream colored fez upon His head from under which white hair flowed almost to His shoulders. His robe, what little I could see of it, was oriental, almost white The impressive thing, and what I have never forgotten, was an indefinable aspect of majesty combined with an exquisite courtesy.¹

The newspaper articles which appeared in various papers across the nation that day were chiefly based on an Associated Press release based on the interviews made before the ship docked. The release, which dealt principally with quotations from the interview, began with these two paragraphs:

Abdul-Baha, the eminent Persian philosopher and leader of the Bahai movement for the unification of religions and the establishment of universal peace, arrived April 11th on the steamship *Cedric* from Alexandria, Egypt. It is his first visit to America, and except for a brief visit to Paris and London last summer and fall, it is the first time in forty years that he has gone beyond the fortification of the "prison city" of Acre, Syria, to which place he and his father, BAHĀ'U'LLĀH, the founder of the Bahai movement, were banished by the Turkish government a half century ago.

He comes on a mission of international peace, to attend and address the Peace conference at Lake Mohonk the latter part of this month, and to address various peace meetings, educational societies, religious organizations, etc.²

On Friday, April 12, people began arriving for the almost continuous succession of private interviews and receptions which took place daily wherever he was located throughout the nine-month stay in the United States. As one participant wrote, "Before nine o'clock in the morning I was there

¹ Howard Colby Ives, *Portals to Freedom* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1953), pp. 28–29.

² *Star of the West*, 3:3, p. 3, April 28, 1912.

Already the large reception room was well filled."¹ During the day he visited the homes of friends, and spoke in the afternoon at the residence of Howard MacNutt, at 935 Eastern Parkway. He summarized Baha'u'llah's whole system and pointed out the audience's relation to it.² At 8:00 p.m. he addressed a gathering in a studio at 39 West 67th Street, discussing the present conditions of the world and urging the listeners to act promptly to alleviate the difficulties, pointing out the efforts they can undertake.³ More than a thousand people attended these two meetings.⁴

Saturday morning, April 13, was occupied with interviews, especially with certain clergymen of New York.⁵ At 3:00 p.m. he addressed a gathering at the residence of Alexander Morten, at 141 East 21st Street. Here he spoke of the relationship among God, the manifestations and humanity and the significance of Baha'u'llah.⁶ It was recorded that "because of the immense crowd He spoke standing on the stairway."⁷

On Sunday morning, April 14, he made his first major public appearance at the invitation of Dr Percy Stickney Grant at the Church of the

¹ Ives, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-5.

³ *idem*, pp. 5-7; *Star of the West*, 3:8, pp. 3-4, August 1, 1912.

⁴ *New York Herald*, April 13, 1912, p. 6.

⁵ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, "'Abdu'l-Baha in America", *Star of the West*, 19:2, p. 54, April, 1928; Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-49; *Star of the West*, 3:8, pp. 5-8, August 1, 1912.

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-9; *Star of the West*, 3:8, pp. 4-5, August 1, 1912.

⁷ Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7; Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

Ascension. He spoke of the nature of material and spiritual education in relationship to Christ and Baha'u'llah.¹ The Rev. Grant introduced him, saying, in part, "It is to be our privilege this morning to hear one who has come out of the East, a new and great herald of good-will, one bearing a message of love to all mankind."² The *New York Herald* reported that "Announcement that Abdul Baha would make an address, drew so great a throng to the church that every seat was filled and many sat on the steps of the chancel."³ In the afternoon he spoke at the Carnegie Lyceum, at the Union Meeting of Advanced Thought Centers. His talk there concerned the need for effort to develop the attributes that can enable people to serve mankind.⁴

On the morning of April 15, Monday, private interviews were held with visitors, including the Secretary of the New York Peace Society, and Hudson Maxim, a noted inventor.⁵ In the afternoon, 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke at the residence of Mountfort Mills, 327 West End Avenue, concerning the physical and spiritual duality of man.⁶

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–11; *Star of the West*, 4:1, pp. 7–8, March 21, 1913.

² *New York Times*, April 15, 1912, p. 9.

³ *New York Herald*, April 15, 1912, p. 6.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–14; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 5–6, September 8, 1912; 19:2, p. 55, May 1927.

⁵ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 55; *Star of the West*, 3:7, p. 5, April 15, 1912.

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–16; *Star of the West*, 3:7, pp. 4–5, July 13, 1912.

On Tuesday, April 16, he made two presentations. The afternoon presentation took place in the residence of Arthur P. Dodge, and consisted mainly of a question and answer period.¹ The evening meeting was held at the Hotel Ansonia, and dealt with the concept of world unification and application of Baha'u'llah's principles to this need.²

On Wednesday, April 17, 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke twice, the first occasion being at the Kinney's, where he spoke of the great need a person must exert for self-development and the manner of accomplishing this.³ In the evening address at the Hotel Ansonia, he dealt with the four criteria of judgment, explaining and showing the failings of each and defining the nature of promptings of the Holy Spirit.⁴ He prepared dinner himself that evening and served a number of friends.⁵

The two Thursday addresses took place at the home of Marshall L. Emery, at 273 West 90th Street. The first presentation was a history of the Baha' Faith.⁶ The second talk was not recorded.⁷

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 7-9, September 8, 1912.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-18; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 6-7, September 8, 1912.

³ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 9-10, September 8, 1912.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 10-11, September 8, 1912.

⁵ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-26.

⁷ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

At 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 19, he appeared on the platform at Earl Hall, Columbia University, before an audience of students and faculty. He spoke of the physical and spiritual elements of man, and urged the development of the spiritual.¹ That night he spoke before four hundred people in the Bowery Mission concerning the true significance of poverty and the nature of spiritual development.² That same night he departed by train for Washington, D.C.

2. Washington, D.C.: April 20 to April 27

The Washington newspapers heralded his arrival and interviewed him soon after his arrival. On that same afternoon of April 20, a reception was held in his honor at Raucher's.³ In the evening 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke at a meeting of the Persian-American Educational Society in the Public Library Hall concerning the means of developing unity of the East and West.⁴ The following material appeared in a report in the Washington Evening Star:

Abdul Baha, leader of the Bahai movement, who reached Washington yesterday afternoon and who plans a week's visit to the National Capital as a part of his tour of the United States, made the principal address at the closing session last night of the second annual

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-30; *Star of the West*, 3:8, pp. 8-10, August 1, 1912.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31; *Star of the West*, 3:7, pp. 11-12, July 13, 1912.

³ *Washington Evening Star*, April 20, 1912.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34; *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 8-9, April 28, 1912.

conference of the Persian-American Educational Society. The meeting was held in the lecture hall of the Public Library, and every seat and all available standing room was occupied by an audience eager to hear the distinguished Persian.

When he entered the hall, Abdul Baha was greeted by the audience—all Bahais and their friends and guests rising. And after he had spoken and when he was seated on the platform, hundreds pressed around him, seeking to grasp his hand.¹

On Sunday, April 21, a lengthy feature article appeared in the *New York Times* concerning 'Abdu'l-Baha and the speaking tour. After a long section of background and quotations from an interview concerning basic principles on which he was speaking, the reporter concluded:

The strangeness of it all, the manner of speaking, the curious language, the unfamiliar dress might well have made the listener awkward and ill at ease; but one does not feel awkward with Abdul Baha. The reporter had wondered just how to address him, but that seemed a foolish matter now ...

It had been for one so busy a long interview, and the reporter rose In a minute the door had closed ... the interpreter was beside her. "Is he not a kind man?" he asked, all his face aglow with affection ... "He is the kindest man in the world"

An American ... came up. His fashion of putting his devotion was somewhat in contrast to the Oriental way ... "For that man," he said, "I'd jump head first from a fifteenth-story window."

So it is with everybody who has come in contact with Abdul Baha In Acre he is loved by rich and poor, by Mohammedan and Christian, by men of all races. He takes literally the Scriptural injunction to give his goods to the poor, for he has rarely more than the clothes he wears ... A faith that is lived must grow, and Bahatism spreads in India, in Africa, in Persia, in England and France, and in the United States.²

At 11:15 a.m. on that Sunday, he spoke to two hundred people in Studio Hall. He discussed the idea of the power of the revelation of

¹ *Washington Evening Star*, April 21, 1912.

² *New York Times*, April 21, 1912, Part 5, p. 4.

Baha'u'llah.¹ At 4:00 p.m. he addressed the congregation of the Universalist Church, speaking of the oneness of all religions, the physical-spiritual nature of man, the concept of the manifestations, and the need for independent investigation of truth.² Dr John Van Schaick said in his introduction of the speaker, "I have the honor of welcoming you to Washington. We feel that we are honored by the presence of one who has so faithfully served God and humanity We stand today humbly seeking the Spirit of Truth"³ It was reported that there was "a vast gathering at Universalist Church ... Here more than 1,000 persons were gathered. More than an hour before the time announced the entire lower floor of the Church was filled."⁴

On Monday, April 22, a reception was held at the home of Arthur J. Parsons, 1700 18th Street, N.W., at which 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke of the nature and growth of the Baha'i World Faith. Speaking of this and similar receptions, it was written:

Receptions were held at the home of Mrs Parsons every afternoon at about 5:00 o'clock, from Monday to Friday, inclusive. The large parlor, seating 150, was crowded each afternoon, and the interest grew as the week advanced. Many persons prominent in social, official and diplomatic circles were present, besides numbers of well, known men and women of literary and scientific attainments.⁵

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-36, *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 9-10, April 28, 1912.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-40.

³ *Star of the West*, 3:3, p. 10, April 21, 1912.

⁴ Joseph H. Hannen, "Abdul Baha in Washington", *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 6-8, April 21, 1912; *Washington Evening Star*, April 21, 1912.

⁵ Hannen, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

On Tuesday morning, April 23, 'Abdu'l-Baha addressed an audience at Howard University concerning the means of attaining racial unification.¹ The *Washington Evening Star* wrote, "At Howard University an audience of 1,000 persons crowded Rankin Chapel"² It was also reported that "the address was received with breathless attention by the vast audience, and was followed by a positive ovation and a recall."³ In the afternoon reception at the Parsons, 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke on the implications of the recent *Titanic* disaster.⁴ That night he appeared before the Bethel Literary and Historical Society, and it was reported that "again the audience taxed the capacity of the edifice in which the meeting was held."⁵ His address dealt with the nature of science and the intellect and the concept of the oneness of humanity.⁶

On Wednesday, April 24, two hundred people gathered in the afternoon in Studio Hall to hear 'Abdu'l-Baha speak at a "Children's Meeting" on the nature and education of children.⁷ At 5:00 p.m. he addressed the group at the Parson's home, describing the nature of the religions cycle

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-43; *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 14-15, April 28, 1912.

² *Washington Evening Star*, April 24, 1912.

³ Hannen, *loc. cit.*

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46; *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 15-16, April 28, 1912.

⁵ Hannen, *loc. cit.*

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-49; *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 16-18, April 28, 1912.

⁷ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-51; *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 19-20, April 28, 1912.

and Baha'u'llah's position in it.¹ Later that night, at 9:00 p.m., 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke at the home of Arthur J. Dyer, 1937 13th Street, N.W., on the subject of the nature of existence and non-existence, life and death.² Following this, 'Abdu'l-Baha addressed a gathering of scientists at the home of Alexander Graham Bell, whom the inventor had personally invited, and remained there as guest for the night.³

The Theosophical Society heard 'Abdu'l-Baha speak at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 25. He dwelt on the subject of the "spirit" or principal attribute of each level of existence.⁴ During the day he addressed the Esperantists, discussing the aspects of universal language.⁵ In the evening, he delivered two addresses to "a large number of statesmen and Government officials at a banquet held in His honor at the home of Zia Pasha, the Ambassador of Turkey."⁶ At the close of the meeting, Theodore Roosevelt called and requested a private audience and it was reported the two of them had a "wonderful visit".⁷

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-53; *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 20-21, April 28, 1912.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54; *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 21-22, April 28, 1912.

³ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90; Mahmud, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55. See also See similar, *Mahmud's Diary*, pp. 58-59.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-57; *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 22-23, April 28, 1912.

⁵ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58; *Star of the West*, 3:3, pp. 23-24, April 28, 1912.

⁶ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 90; Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁷ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *loc. cit.*

On Friday, April 26, he appeared at the All Soul's Unitarian Church attended by President Taft.¹ A reception was held in the afternoon, and that evening 'Abdu'l-Baha shared the platform in the D.A.R. Memorial Continental Hall with Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, and A. C. Monohan of the United States Bureau of Education.²

On Saturday morning, April 27, the national magazine *Survey* was issued with an extensive article on 'Abdu'l-Baha and his speaking. The article included material on his background and principles and concluded with the words:

Scientists and men of affairs who have met him marvel at his wisdom and common-sense knowledge of world conditions, questioning how he can meet them on their own level when he has been a political prisoner for forty years.³

'Abdu'l-Baha spent the morning meeting with government officials.⁴ At an evening reception in his honor, 'Abdu'l-Baha met with "three hundred statesmen, Senators, and scholars", including Admiral Peary.

On Sunday, he took the train for Chicago.

3. Chicago: April 30 to May 5

This third major grouping of addresses has already been covered in Chapters Three, Four, and Five. Therefore there will be no need at this

¹ Hannen, *loc. cit.*; Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

² *Washington Evening Star*, April 27, 1912.

³ I. Karle, "Leader of the Baha'i Movement", *Survey*, 28:178-179, April 27, 1912.

⁴ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.

point to include any further information or to repeat the listing of the fifteen addresses delivered in that area.

4. Return trip to New York: May 6 to May 10

The Cleveland newspapers included articles announcing 'Abdu'l-Baha's arrival on May 6. They included extensive history and explanation of basic principles.¹ After press interviews at the station, and a trip to his rooms in the Hotel Euclid, he addressed a group at the Sanatorium of Dr C. M. Swingle. His talk concerned the need for a balance of material and spiritual aspects of civilization.² Approximately four hundred people heard him speak that evening at the hotel on current world progress and development.³ Along with lengthy quotations from the talk, the newspapers dwelt at length on an after-meeting gathering at which 'Abdu'l-Baha voiced his approval of intermarriage of the races. After extensive comment on this matter, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported, "That Abdul Baha's approval of marriages between whites and negroes is but a natural part of his movement for a universal religion was indicated by extracts from a stenographic report"⁴ Among other things, they quoted him as saying, "Humanity will be bound together as one. The various religions shall be united and the various races shall be known as one kind."⁵

¹ *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 6, p. 5; *Cleveland News*, May 6, p. 4.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-100.

³ *idem*, p. 100; *Cleveland News*, May 7, p. 2.

⁴ *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 7, 1912, p. 1.

⁵ *ibid.*

On Tuesday morning, May 7, he departed from Cleveland at 8:00 a.m., and arrived in Pittsburgh at noon. He spoke that night to a public gathering in the Hotel Schenley, giving a short summary of the history of Baha'u'llah and an exposition on six of his major teachings for the development of a spiritual civilization.¹ Following that he addressed a gathering of medical doctors and educators.²

'Abdu'l-Baha traveled to Washington, D.C., on May 8. On Friday, May 10, he addressed "a Woman's Meeting, and later visited a settlement house, a welfare organization for young Children", in Washington.³

5. New York and vicinity: May 11 to May 20

On May 11, 'Abdu'l-Baha returned to New York City and presented a talk at 227 Riverside Drive, in which he emphasized the aspect of racial unity, and summarized the responses of the trip thus far. In part, he said:

It is only three weeks that we have been away from the New York friends ... We have had no rest by day or night since we left you; either traveling, moving about or speaking; yet it was all so pleasantly done and we have been most happy ... All the friends in America are very good. All the people we have met here are kind and pleasant. They are polite and not antagonistic although somewhat inquisitive The questions asked us have been opportune and to the point.⁴

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–106; *Star of the West*, 3:6, pp. 2–4, June 24, 1912.

² Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 60, Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, 140–141.

³ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *loc. cit.*

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

He traveled to Montclair, New Jersey, on the morning of May 12, and spoke at the Unity Church on the concept of the oneness of God and the oneness of the manifestations.¹ Returning that evening to New York City, he addressed the International Peace Forum; he offered a historic survey of religion and war and described the present position of the United States in the plans for world peace.² He was introduced by Dr V. A. Hunsberger, first vice-president of the International Peace Forum, who said, in part:

Tonight we are especially favored—that this man so distinguished, this man who stands for conscience in a personified way, for the loftiest kind of courage that has enabled him to move in line with his convictions, is here with us ... His Holiness Abdul-Baha Abbas, the great peace leader of the eastern world.³

On Monday, May 13, he conducted personal interviews throughout the morning, and spoke to about two thousand people at the New York Peace Society at the Astor Hotel in the afternoon, on the causes and abolishment of war.⁴ Of the event, the *New York Times* wrote:

A large crowd which filled the east ballroom of the Aster accepted the invitation ... of the New York Peace Society yesterday afternoon to meet and hear ... Abdul Baha

When Abdul Baha, in his flowing robes, rose to speak everybody stood until he bade them be seated.⁵

¹ *idem*, pp. 109–112; *Star of the West*, 3:7, pp. 12–14, July 13, 1912.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 112–118.

³ *Star of the West*, 3:9, p. 12, August 20, 1912.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–121.

⁵ *New York Times*, May 14, p. 6.

'Abdu'l-Baha traveled to Lake Mohonk, New York, on May 14, to address the Peace Conference being held there.¹ He remained there until May 17, when he again returned to New York City.

By Sunday, May 19, there was such a number of visitors coming to his suite in the Hudson Building that the manager objected and 'Abdu'l-Baha moved.² During the morning he addressed a congregation at the Church of the Divine Paternity. Dr Frank Oliver Hall said in his introduction, after summarizing the history of the Baha'i World Faith:

Somehow this teaching has the power to bring together men of all classes, and they meet upon one platform It has no ritual It lays down love as the greatest thing in the world. It says that religion is not many, but religion is one This Movement aims at the spiritual unification of mankind The order claims all bibles for its own; it proclaims the equality of all men and all women; it teaches the Universal Fatherhood, a universal philosophy.

I take very great satisfaction in welcoming here to the pulpit of the Divine Paternity, one who has had a wide hearing the world over for these Universal fundamental Truths.³

'Abdu'l-Baha spoke specifically on the concept of progressive revelation of the manifestations and four basic tenets of Baha'u'llah's plan for world peace.⁴

That afternoon he traveled to Jersey City and spoke in the Brotherhood Church, discussing the nature of the spiritual brotherhood of mankind.⁵

¹ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

² *idem*, p. 182.

³ *Star of the West*, 3:9, pp. 9–10, August 20, 1912.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 122–125.

⁵ *idem*, pp. 125–128.

Along with an extensive summary of 'Abdu'l-Baha's background, the minister said, in introducing him,

Now we have with us tonight a representative of the Orient ... a man who comes to us with a great and wonderful message ... Wherever he has gone he has brought the great leveler of the Spirit of God. He has in truth come here to teach us the lesson of humanity¹

And after the close of the address, the minister stated:

When Abraham Lincoln was asked why it was he did not belong to a church, he said, "When some church will write over its door simply this sentence, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy strength and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul." We have been trying to build that kind of church for one hundred years. Abdul-Baha is trying to build that church all over the world. Amen! more power to his voice!²

The following day, May 20, he addressed a women's suffrage meeting in the Metropolitan Temple, speaking on the equality of men and women, sketching the historical progress of women, and offering some outstanding examples.³ Mrs Penfield, who introduced him, mentioned, in part, the following:

I have the great honor tonight to present to you one of the most distinguished advocates of both Women's Suffrage and Universal Peace ... Abdul Baha

I suppose most of you are familiar with the history of this distinguished man; a man who was for forty years a prisoner in the Fortress of Akka I cannot use better language than that of one of his followers when I describe Abdul-Baha in these words: "Abdul-Baha wishes to be known as 'The Servant of Humanity.' He seeks no higher station than this, yet when one understands [what] all this means, one realizes the combination of humanity and exaltation which it implies."⁴

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:9, pp. 5-6, August 20, 1912.

² *idem*, p. 6.

³ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-132; *Star of the West*, 3:8, pp. 15-20, August 1, 1912.

⁴ *Star of the West*, 3:8, pp. 15, 18, August 1, 1912.

On May 21, 'Abdu'l-Baha had a "children's day" at which "all the Baha'i children of New York and some of their little friends had a lively visit ... before He left for Boston."¹

6. Massachusetts: May 22 to May 25

'Abdu'l-Baha arrived in Boston on May 22 and registered at the Charles Hotel. In the evening he spoke before the national Unitarian conference. The *Boston Herald* reported that "As the Lt. Governor Luce prepared to introduce him ... the whole audience of 1,500 people rose to welcome and applaud the Persian guest."² He spoke on the need for independent investigation of religious reality. The *Boston Daily Advertiser* mentioned, along with a summary of the speech, that he "made a deep impression on his hearers and was very cordially received by the large gathering."³ The *Boston Post* added, "Attired in the flowing robes of his native land ... he made a great impression on his listeners, many of whom were clergymen from all over the United States and Canada ..."⁴ The *Boston Daily Globe* summarized:

The 71st Annual Unitarian Festival took place last evening in Tremont Temple, about 700 men and women attending the banquet and hundreds more coming into the balconies at the close of the dinner to hear the speaking. The attendance was larger than for several years past. It was accounted for, in part, by the promise of the presence of 'Abdu'l-Baha Effendi, the famous leader of liberal religion in Persia.⁵

¹ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

² *Boston Herald*, May 23, 1912, p. 5.

³ *The Boston Daily Advertiser*, May 23, 1912, p. 2.

⁴ *The Boston Post*, May 23, 1912, p. 4.

⁵ *The Boston Daily Globe*, May 23, p. 15.

On Thursday, May 23, 'Abdu'l-Baha lunched at the Syrian and Greek Relief Society in Boston.¹ After a drive of fifty miles to Worcester, Massachusetts, he spoke at the university to an audience of "more than one thousand persons, consisting of professors, scholars, and others"² Later in the evening he went to Cambridge where "in commemoration of the Declaration of the Bab ... a feast was given under the auspices of the Boston Baha'i Assembly About 100 friends from Boston and other leading cities of the country were present," reported the *Boston Herald*.³ Here 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke on the life and purpose of the Bab.⁴

On Friday afternoon, May 24, reporters from the *Boston Traveler* interviewed 'Abdu'l-Baha.⁵ In the later afternoon, he addressed the Free Religion's Association in Ford Hall on the concepts of the progress of the present century and the effects of divine love.⁶

Of a Saturday meeting, the *Boston Herald* wrote, "a large and reverent audience gathered at Huntington Chambers last night to hear and see 'Abdu'l-Baha."⁷ He spoke on the oneness of religion and the need of progressive revelation.⁸

¹ Diya'u'llah Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

² Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

³ *The Boston Herald*, May 26, 1912, p. 5.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-134.

⁵ *Boston Traveler*, May 24, 1912, p. 5.

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-138.

⁷ *Boston Herald*, May 26, 1912, p. 5.

⁸ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-141.

On Sunday, May 26, after visiting a Syrian assembly in Boston in the morning, he left for New York City.¹

7. New York City and vicinity: May 26 to June 8

After his return Sunday night, 'Abdu'l-Baha appeared at the Mount Morris Baptist Church in New York.² He spoke of the concept of "nearness to God", and the need for volition in developing attributes.

Tuesday, May 28, was the occasion for an address during the afternoon "to an audience which filled the Metropolitan Temple in Seventh Avenue, near Fourteenth Street, to the doors," reported the *New York Times*.³ The President of the International Peace Forum offered a lengthy introduction, saying, in part:

I have been exceedingly interested in the visit of Abdul-Baha to this country. I have had the pleasure of hearing him and meeting him several times ... I had the pleasure next of seeing him at Lake Mohonk and hearing the most remarkable address I have ever listened to. The address of the evening was full of this one thing, the unity of mankind

Now I welcome this great man today because he stands for all these things. He has come to this country modestly. His modesty has impressed the country greatly I am glad to say Abdul-Baha will speak.⁴

On May 29, he addressed a gathering at 780 West End Avenue concerning

¹ Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-145; *Star of the West*, 3:8, pp. 20-22, August 1, 1912.fs

³ *New York Times*, May 29, 1912, p. 10.

⁴ *Star of the West*, 3:7, p. 15, July 13, 1912.

the “iconoclastic” aspect of the “manifestations” and the nature of their oneness.¹

The following day he spoke to a public meeting at the Theosophical Society. His address concerned the use of knowledge, volition and action for developing attributes.²

Traveling to Fanwood, New Jersey, he appeared before a gathering in the Town Hall on Friday, May 31, and explained the purpose of the manifestations.³

During the month of June, two national magazines included lengthy feature articles on ‘Abdu’l-Baha and the journey—*The American Review of Reviews* and *Current Literature*.⁴ As several quotations from these two sources appear elsewhere in this study, none will be given here.

On Sunday, June 2, he addressed the congregation at the Church of the Ascension, speaking on the meaning of a church, the oneness of the prophets, followed by a question and answer period.⁵

Dr Grant introduced his guest, in part, with these words:

Abdul-Baha is doing what we all pray to have done, simplifying the intellectual side of religion, intensifying the spiritual side of

¹ ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 148–150; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 13–14, September 8, 1912.

² ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 151–155; *Star of the West*, 4:3, pp. 55–58, April 28, 1913.

³ ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 155–157; *Star of the West*, 5:11, pp. 169–170, September 27, 1914.

⁴ “Will Bahaism Unite All Religious Faiths”, *The American Review of Reviews*, 45:748–750, June, 1912; “The Universal Gospel that Abdul Baha Brings Us”, *Current Literature*, 52:676–678, June, 1912.

⁵ ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 157–165; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 24–29, September 8, 1912 and 5:16, pp. 246–248, December 31, 1914.

religion and getting to work in the practical cause of bringing men together by showing them directly the loveliness of personal effort

Abdul-Baha comes embodying these great principles, bidding men live at peace with each other, to love each other ... I assure him that we shall listen to every word that comes from his lips as proceeding from a soul which has lived nearly three score years and ten with the very central spiritual light of unity and has walked with God.¹

A government official invited 'Abdu'l-Baha, on June 3, to a location where "for one day and night the statesmen and notables of America" could meet him.²

He traveled to Brooklyn on June 5 where he delivered an address to the Unity Club, at the request of Admiral Peary. It was reported that "the gathering was composed of great leaders, statesmen and generals of the United States."³

After an address to a group at 309 West 78th Street, where he spoke on the manifestations in their roles as divine physicians to an ailing world, 'Abdu'l-Baha departed for Philadelphia.⁴

8. Philadelphia: June 9 to June 10

When 'Abdu'l-Baha arrived in Philadelphia at 6:00 p.m., June 8, he went to the Hotel Rittenhouse, where reporters waited to interview him.⁵

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 24–29, September 8, 1912.

² Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

³ *bid.*

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, p. 166; *Star of the West*, 3:10, p. 14, September 8, 1912.

⁵ *The Philadelphia Press*, June 10, 1912; *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, June 10, p. 11.

On Sunday morning, June 9, there was a continuous stream of visitors until an 11:00 address at the Spring Garden Unitarian Church, where he spoke of the nature of God and the manifestations.¹ In the afternoon there were further newspaper interviews, and a talk at the Hotel Rittenhouse, in which he talked of the unity of the races.² That evening he spoke to a congregation of 2,500 in the Baptist Temple, talking of the nature of materialism and spirituality in man and progressive revelation.³

At 9:30 a.m. on Monday, he addressed a group of fifty people at the home of Jesse Revell. Until his train left at 3:00 p.m., for New York, he conducted interviews at the Revell's and at the Rittenhouse.⁴

9. New York City and vicinity: June 10 to July 20

On Tuesday, June 11, 'Abdu'l-Baha made four presentations, three at 309 West 78th Street and one at 780 West End Avenue. The first three dealt with the physical and spiritual nature of man, the need to exercise volition in developing attributes, and the purpose of creation.⁵ The fourth dealt with an appeal to take action in carrying out character development.⁶

The following day he presented another talk at 309 West 78th Street,

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-171.

² *Star of the West*, 5:6, pp. 87-90, June 24, 1914.

³ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-177; *Star of the West*, 5:7, pp. 102-106, July 13, 1914.

⁴ *Star of the West*, 5:6, pp. 83-90, June 24, 1914.

⁵ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-182; *Star of the West*, 4:6, pp. 99-101, June 24, 1913 and 4:2, pp. 40-41, April 9, 1913.

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

as he did again on June 15. The first concerned the thankfulness we should have for God's bounties and the second covered the "nature of distinction" in the various kingdoms of creation.¹

On Sunday, June 16, he appeared at the Fourth Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, speaking on the nature of true unity.² Later, he discussed the need for effort in attaining growth spiritually at the MacNutt home.³

A third talk, concerning the oneness of the manifestations, was delivered at the Central Congregational Church in Brooklyn.⁴

On Monday, June 17, he was requested to appear in a motion picture sequence. That same day, he addressed a group at 309 West 78th Street, speaking of the manifestations as the divine physicians for the world's ills.⁵ On the following day and on June 20 he made presentations in the same location, speaking of the need for spiritual development and the concept of social and spiritual unity, respectively.⁶

Montclair, New Jersey, was the scene of an address on June 23, when he discussed the prophecies of Baha'u'llah.⁷ Much of Tuesday, June 25,

¹ idem, pp. 182-185; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 15-17, September 8, 1912.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-189; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 30-32, September 8, 1912.

³ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-192; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 17-18, September 8, 1912.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-198; *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 19-23, September 8, 1912.

⁵ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-200; *Star of the West*, 4:6, pp. 101-102, June 24, 1913.

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-204; *Star of the West*, 4:5, pp. 86-87, June 5, 1913 and 3:10, pp. 23-24, September 8, 1912.

⁷ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-208.

was taken up with interviews and conferences in Montclair.¹ ‘Abdu’l-Baha left Montclair on the morning of June 29 for Englewood, New Jersey.²

During the day he spoke out-of-doors in a pine grove in Englewood to three hundred people who had gathered for a “Unity Feast” celebrated by the Baha’is. He spoke of the characteristics which Baha’is should strive to achieve.³ “In the evening a meeting was held on the lawn of the Wilhelm home, Abdul-Baha speaking from the veranda to some one hundred and fifty Englewood guests”⁴ Sunday morning he left “to fill an engagement in another part of New Jersey.”⁵

Back in New York City, it is recorded that ‘Abdul-Baha spoke at 309 West 78th Street twice on July 1, twice on July 5, and once on July 6. The subjects, respectively, concerned the characteristics that Baha’is must achieve, the eternal nature of creation, the nature of man, and the preparation for spiritual growth.⁶

During the month of July, articles appeared in several major periodicals, including *Hearst’s Magazine*, *The Independent*, and *Harper’s Weekly*.⁷

¹ *New York Times*, June 30, Section 1, p. 6.

² Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

³ ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 208–212.

⁴ *Star of the West*, 3:8, p. 18, August 1, 1912.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 211–220.

⁷ Elbert Hubbard, “A Modern Prophet”, *Hearst’s Magazine*, 22:49–51, July 1912; “The Persian Prophet”, *The Independent*, 73:159–160, July 18, 1912; Charles Johnson, “A Ray from the East”, *Harper’s Weekly*, 59:9, July 20, 1912.

On Sunday, July 14, he spoke at the All-Souls Unitarian Church in New York, regarding the oneness of humanity.¹ He appeared the following day before an audience at 830 Park Avenue.²

'Abdu'l-Baha presided at a marriage ceremony on Wednesday, July 17.³ On the following Friday, he was requested to have studio photographs taken.⁴ And Andrew Carnegie requested an interview, which was granted.⁵

10. New England area: July 23 to September 1

Arriving in Boston, 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke at the Hotel Victoria on Tuesday, July 23 on the economic teachings of Baha'u'llah and the Baha'is attitude toward politics.⁶ The following day, he addressed the Theosophical Society at the Kensington Hotel, speaking of the proof and qualities of the spirit of man.⁷ The next day he appeared at the Hotel Victoria, and spoke on the need and manner of developing spiritual qualities.⁸

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 223–230; *Star of the West*, 3:11, pp. 12–16, September 27, 1912.

² 'Abdu'l Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 230–232; *Star of the West*, 4:6, pp. 103–104, June 24, 1913.

³ Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–98; *Star of the West*, 3:12, pp. 14–15, October 16, 1912.

⁴ Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 233–234; *Star of the West*, 4:7, p. 122, July 13, 1913.

⁷ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 234–238; *Star of the West*, 4:7, pp. 115–117, July 13, 1913.

⁸ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

From Boston, he traveled to Dublin, New Hampshire, where, at the Dublin Inn, he was available for interviews and conferences for several days.¹ On the morning of July 31, he journeyed to Henderson's School, about five miles from Dublin, and spoke at an assembly.²

On Monday, August 5, he addressed a gathering at the Dublin Inn, speaking on the explanation of scriptural terminology.³ He mentioned, in brief:

The holy books have their special terminologies which must be known and understood. Physicians have their own peculiar terms; architects, philosophers have their characteristic expressions; poets have their phrases, and scientists their nomenclature. In the scripture we read that Zion is dancing. It is evident that this has other than literal interpretation There are terms and expressions on usage in every language which cannot be taken literally⁴

On August 6, he spoke at the Parson's residence, addressing the group on the relationship between Christ and Baha'u'llah.⁵ He appeared in the pulpit of the Unitarian Church in Dublin on Sunday, August 11.⁶

From August 16 until August 23, 'Abdu'l-Baha resided and lectured in Eliot, Maine. The eminent humanitarian, Sarah Farmer, had Green Acre school there, for progressive adult education in the study of "progressive subjects, the sciences, arts, religion, all universal in scope, open to

¹ Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 66; *Star of the West*, 3:11, pp. 3-6, September 27, 1912.

² Mahmud, *loc. cit.*

³ Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁵ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-246; *Star of the West*, 3:18, pp. 6-7, 10, February 7, 1913.

⁶ Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-128.

all races and creeds.”¹ More than five hundred were in attendance to study with 'Abdu'l-Baha. Although there were numerous presentations, only five were recorded during this period. In these, 'Abdu'l-Baha dealt with the nature and kinds of proof, the clarification of the differences and similarities between the physical and spiritual faculties, the concepts of attributes, manifestations and development of spiritual insight, the oneness of humanity, and the historical retrospect of Baha'u'llah and his teachings.²

At 1:00 p.m. on the afternoon of August 23, 'Abdu'l-Baha arrived at Malden, Massachusetts.³

On Sunday, August 25, he spoke in Boston at the New Thought Forum, describing the nature of the “second birth” as related to Christianity.⁴ The *Boston Evening Transcript* issued the following report:

'Abdu'l-Baha, the Persian scholar who spoke many times in the spring during his visit to Boston, has returned for a brief stay

Sunday evening he spoke before the New Thought Forum and ... addressed an audience which thronged the hall, in the characteristically calm and serene manner about the spiritual forces of life⁵

The Franklin Square House in Boston was the scene of his lecture on August 26, when he spoke on the equality of men and women.⁶ On the following day, he

¹ Bahiyyih Ford and Harry Ford, “Sarah Jane Farmer”, *World Order Magazine*, 12:106, July, 1946.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-264.

³ Mahmud, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 270-274.

⁵ *Boston Evening Transcript*, August 26, 1912, p. 4.

⁶ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-278.

addressed the Metaphysical Club in Boston, opening his address with these words:

Upon the faces of those present I behold the expression of thoughtfulness and wisdom, therefore, I shall discourse upon a subject involving one of the divine questions, a question of religion and metaphysical importance, namely the progressive and perpetual motion of elemental atoms throughout the various degrees of phenomena and the kingdoms of existence. It will be demonstrated and become evident that the origin and outcome of phenomena are identical and that there is an essential oneness in all existing things.¹

The evening of Wednesday, August 28, was the occasion of a wedding in Cambridge, at which 'Abdu'l-Baha assisted.²

On Thursday evening, August 29, 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke at the home of Madame Morey on the subject of the oneness of the manifestations.³ The *Boston Evening Transcript* reported that "the Persian scholar and leader was a guest of honor at a reception given ... at her residence in Malden by Madame Beale Morey There were nearly a hundred guests present"⁴

11. Journey in the west: September 1 to November 6

'Abdu'l-Baha arrived in Montreal, Canada, on Sunday, September 1, was met by reporters and spoke at the Church of the Messiah on the relationship of God, the manifestations and man, including an explanation of

¹ idem, p. 278.

² *Boston Herald*, August 29, 1912, p. 5; *Boston Evening Transcript*, August 29, 1912, p. 4.

³ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-290.

⁴ *Boston Evening Transcript*, August 31, 1912, p. 2.

several of the social teachings of Baha'u'llah.¹ During the same day, he delivered two addresses in the home of the well-known Canadian architect, William Sutherland Maxwell, describing the proofs of the immortality of the soul and differentiating the physical and spiritual aspects of man.² On the following day, he again addressed a gathering in the Maxwell's home, speaking of the interrelationship of God, manifestations and humanity.³ During the next few days there were great numbers of interviews and conferences with individuals and small groups. The next recorded meeting was held on September 5, when he spoke on eleven major principles of Baha'u'llah's teachings before the St. James Methodist Church.⁴

The departure from Montreal took place at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, September 9. He went to Buffalo, New York, where there are records of newspaper interviews and a trip to Niagara Falls.⁵

On Friday, September 13, the *Chicago Record-Herald* reported, "Abdul Baha ... arrived in Chicago last night from Buffalo, N.Y., and will hold a series of meetings here before proceeding to the Pacific coast."⁶ After interviews during the morning of September 15, 'Abdu'l-Baha travelled to Kenosha, Wisconsin.⁷ The Chicago Inter-Ocean stated that in the evening,

1 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-296.

2 *idem*, pp. 296-302.

3 *idem*, pp. 302-306.

4 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-313.

5 Mahmud, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

6 *Chicago Record-Herald*, September 13, 1912, p. 7.

7 Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

“more than 100 men, women and children ... gathered at ... 5338 Kenmore Avenue to hear the lecture delivered by Abdul Baha”¹ On the following day, he addressed another audience at the same location on the nature of the forces of unity.²

The *Minneapolis Tribune*, on Thursday, September 19, reported, “Abdul-Baha ... one of the most distinguished religious figures of the Orient, arrived in Minneapolis from Chicago last night, and will be the guest of Minneapolis for the next few days.”³

On Thursday, September 19, ‘Abdu’l-Baha received visitors in the Plaza Hotel during the morning, and spoke at the Commercial Club at their luncheon.⁴ That night he spoke at the Jewish Reform Temple to an audience of four hundred people.⁵ The *Minneapolis Journal* reported:

... he was the guest late today of Mrs H. D. Herrick, 1413 Harmon Place Mrs Herrick’s entertainment was so planned and timed that opportunity might be given the University people and others, who might not otherwise be able to hear the distinguished Persian.⁶

On Friday, September 20, he traveled to St. Paul, and spoke at the home of Dr Clement Woolson, 870 Laurel Avenue, on the physical and spiri-

¹ Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, September [14], 1912, p. 3.

² ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 314–318.

³ *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 19, 1912.

⁴ *Minneapolis Journal*, September 19, 1912; *Minneapolis Tribune*, September 20, 1912.

⁵ *Minneapolis Journal*, September 20, 1912.

⁶ *ibid.*

tual natures of man.¹ He returned to Minneapolis for a meeting at 2030 Queen Avenue South, where he described the need for both a material and a spiritual education.² Sometime during this period, he drove to Lincoln, Nebraska, to the home of William Jennings Bryan, to repay a visit the Bryan's had made to Acca to see 'Abdu'l-Baha some time previously.³

'Abdu'l-Baha arrived in Denver, Colorado, at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 21, and at 8:00 p.m. he addressed a group in the residence of Mrs Roberts. He spoke of the present world conditions and the spiritual unity developed in some areas by means of Baha'u'llah's teachings.⁴

On the evening of Wednesday, September 25, he addressed a congregation at the Divine Science Church, speaking of the various kinds of prejudice and the distinction between the spiritual and social teachings of the manifestations.⁵ The Denver Post reported that "The Divine Science Church on Perry street was packed to the doors, the throng overflowing to the sidewalks"⁶ Numerous articles and feature stories appeared in the Denver papers during his stay; one article commenced:

A man of God has come to town.

With the arrival yesterday of Abdul Ba-ha Abbas, a quicker spirit of tolerance, of brotherly love, of sincerer charity, of all the virtues

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-327.

² *idem*, pp. 319-322.

³ *Star of the West*, 5:8, pp. 119-122, August 1, 1914.

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 328-331.

⁵ *idem*, pp. 331-336.

⁶ *Denver Post*, September 26, 1912, p. 1.

which lift man above the beast was given wing and must, before his departure have its effect upon every man and woman who comes within the radius of this wise man of the East

Abdul Baha entered the city without any of the glitter or pomp which is the attribute of nobility. He came ... with a reputation for sanity and holiness which makes of the most hardened cynic a respectful spectator.¹

On September 26, 'Abdu'l-Baha delivered an address at the Shirley Hotel.²

After stopping at Salt Lake City, he arrived in San Francisco on Thursday, October 3.³ After newspaper interviews, he addressed a gathering at the residence of Mrs Helen S. Goodall in Oakland, California.⁴ On Saturday, October 5, he spoke at "the regular Assembly meeting held ... in the Lick building, Montgomery street"⁵

On Sunday, he addressed a morning meeting at the First Unitarian Church in San Francisco and the First Congregational Church of Oakland in the evening.⁶

Monday included "interviews, talks in the parlor, and in the evening an address before the Japanese Y.M.C.A. of Oakland, in the Japanese Independent Church. His address dealt with the fundamental nature of religion and the need of progressive revelation."⁷

¹ *Denver Post*, September 25, 1912, p. 3.

² *Denver Post*, September 26, 1912, p. 7.

³ Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

⁴ *Star of the West*, 4:11, pp. 190-192, September 27, 1912.

⁵ Frances Orr Allen, "Abdul-Baha in San Francisco, California", *Star of the West*, 3:12, pp. 9-10, October 16, 1912; *Star of the West*, 3:13, pp. 11-13, November 4, 1912.

⁶ *bid.*

⁷ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-342.

On September 3, he addressed a gathering at Stanford University regarding the exalted position of science and the "intrinsic oneness of all phenomena".¹

Dr David Starr Jordan, president of the university, made the introduction:

It is our portion to have with us, through the courtesy of our Persian friends, one of the great religious teachers of the world, one of the natural successors of the old Hebrew prophets

I have now the great pleas, and the great honor also, of presenting to you Abdul Baha.²

The *Palo Altan* published an entire issue to include three major addresses in the vicinity, and background information and editorial comment. It described the campus meeting, in part, as follows:

A crowded Assembly Hall, holding nearly two thousand people, awaited with eager expectancy the appearance ... of Abdul Baha, Abbas Effendi, the world leader of the Bahai movement. The venerable prophet, with his long gray beard and Persian cloak and turban, gave a true impression of the reincarnation of the Far Eastern prophet of old

Abdul Baha is revolutionizing the religion of Asia, bringing Mohammedans, Jews and Christians together ... He already has a vast host of followers and has aroused great interest by his present tour of America and England.³

During the remainder of the day, he was the guest of Dr Jordan. In the evening, he addressed the Unitarian Church in Palo Alto.⁴

'Abdu'l-Baha returned to San Francisco early in the morning on October 9. Later in the day, he went to Berkeley where "he had been

¹ idem, pp. 342-349.

² *Palo Altan*, November 1, 1912, p. 2.

³ idem, p. 1.

⁴ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

invited by ... the Mayor of Berkley, to be the guest of the city, and gave an evening presentation at the High School Auditorium before a large and representative gathering.”¹

On Thursday, October 10, he addressed the Open Forum in San Francisco, and spoke on the basis and effects of philosophy and the difference between the philosophy of the Occident and the Orient.² Its conclusion contained a representative kind of humor sometimes found in the addresses:

The mind itself, reason itself is an ideal reality and not tangible. Notwithstanding this, some of the sagacious men declare ... all that is not tangible is imagination and nonsense.

Strange indeed that after twenty years training in colleges and universities man should reach such a station wherein he will deny the existence ... of that which is not perceptible to the senses Have you ever stopped to think that the animal already has graduated from such a university? Have you ever realized that the cow without hard labor and study is already a philosopher of the superlative degree in the school of nature. The cow denies everything that is not tangible, saying “I can see! I can eat! therefore I believe only in that is tangible!”

Then why should we go to the colleges? Let us go to the cow.³

The Theosophical Society of San Francisco heard him speak on October 11.⁴

On Saturday morning, October 12, ‘Abdu’l-Baha spoke before two thousand people at the Jewish Temple Emanu-El, where his address concerned

¹ idem, p. 11.

² ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 309–355.

³ idem, p. 355.

⁴ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

an analysis of religious history from the time of Abraham, and proofs indicating that Christ was the Messiah.¹ He drove from there to a "Children's Day" meeting.²

The following day, at 3:30 p.m., he addressed a gathering in the reading room of the blind in San Francisco.³ Much of Monday was spent at Mrs Phoebe Hearst's estate outside San Francisco.⁴ She had visited him in Acca before the turn of the century.

On Wednesday, October 16, he addressed a "Baha'i Feast" of one hundred and ten people in the Oakland home of Mrs Goodall.⁵ October 18 and 19 were occupied with a trip to Los Angeles. There he visited the grave of Thornton Chase, the first American to become a Baha'i, and 'Abdu'l-Baha addressed a gathering in Los Angeles concerning Mr Chase. He presented an informal talk on the same subject on his return to San Francisco on Saturday.⁶ On Tuesday he presented a "farewell address" to a gathering in Oakland. Wednesday and Thursday were "filled with the usual interviews and talks."⁷ It was also recorded that sometime during this period he addressed the Atheist's Club.⁸

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 355-365.

² Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

³ *idem*, p. 12.

⁴ Mahmud, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁵ *Star of the West*, 4:12, pp. 203-204, October 16, 1913.

⁶ *Star of the West*, 4:13, pp. 225-226, November 4, 1913.

⁷ Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁸ *Star of the West*, 5:3, p. 42, April 28, 1912.

Early Friday morning, October 25, 'Abdu'l-Baha left for Sacramento, where he spoke in the evening in the Assembly Hall of the Hotel as he did again on the following day. The first talk concerned the parallel aspects of the spread of Christianity and the Baha'i Faith and the second dealt with the requirements and methods of developing universal peace.¹

He arrived back in Chicago, after a cross-country train trip, on October 31. He spoke at the Hotel Plaza that same day, covering the history and causes of schisms in Christianity and the safeguards present in the "new dispensation".² The next day, November 1, he made an address at the Chicago Athletic Association, and spoke to a congregation at 5338 Kenmore Avenue. His talk dealt with his "station" as the "Center of Baha'u'llah's Covenant".³ On Saturday, November 2, a reception was held and a speech given at the Frederick Douglas Center.⁴ On Sunday, November 3, he addressed the Pilgrim Congregational Church, in the morning, and at 11:00 p.m. he addressed the Plymouth Congregational Church.⁵

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-374.

² *Chicago Examiner*, November 1, 1912, p. 13; 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-377.

³ *idem*, pp. 377-381; *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, November 2, 1912, p. 10.

⁴ *Chicago Examiner*, November 1, 1912, p. 13.

⁵ *Chicago Record-Herald*, November 4, 1912, p. 9.

He traveled to Cincinnati and spoke to three hundred people at the Grand Hotel concerning international peace and the position of the United States.¹ Following the address, a banquet was held in his honor.

12. Washington, D.C.: November 6 to November 16

On Wednesday, November 6, the *Washington Evening Star* reported, "Abdul Baha ... arrived in Washington from Cincinnati at 8:45 o'clock this morning."² He spoke that evening at the Universalist Church of Our Father giving a synopsis of the interrelationship of God, the manifestations, and humanity, covering also the spiritual and social aspects of the teachings of the manifestations.³

The following day, two addresses were delivered at 1700 Eighteenth Street, N.W. The first dealt with a description of specific books written by Baha'u'llah with extensive quotations, and the second concerned the need for and the source of spiritual education.⁴ On November 8, he spoke at the Jewish Eighth Street Temple, talking about the oneness of the prophets with extensive emphasis on Moses.⁵

¹ *Cincinnati Enquirer*, November 5, 1912, p. 14; 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 382-383.fs

² *Washington Evening Star*, November 6, 1912.

³ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-391; *Star of the West*, 5:13, pp. 195-199, November 4, 1914.fs

⁴ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 391-396.

⁵ *idem*, pp. 307-405.

Three meetings were held on Saturday, November 9, the first two at the Parson's home and the third at a banquet at Rauscher's. In the first address, 'Abdu'l-Baha described a conversation that had taken place with a Rabbi after the synagogue address, mentioning specific questions the Rabbi had asked and the answers that had been given.¹ The second presentation included a discussion of the immortality of the soul and the animal-spiritual duality of man.² The banquet speech offered encouragement for spiritual growth and urged the listeners to exert efforts for international peace.³

The first address of Sunday, November 10, was held at the Parson's and dealt with the understanding of the concept of God.⁴ The second meeting, at 1252 Eighth Street, N.W., concerned principally the unity of the races, and was notable for the inclusion of a story from 'Abdu'l-Baha's own childhood.⁵ The third, at 1901 Eighteenth Street, N.W., was directed to the Baha'is particularly, pointing out from historical examples how the followers of new religious systems have met with persecution and ridicule; he told them to expect this and described the spiritual development necessary for meeting such situations.⁶

¹ idem, pp. 405-409.

² idem, pp. 410-413.

³ idem, pp. 413-416.

⁴ idem, pp. 416-420; *Star of the West*, 5:19, pp. 291-293, March 2, 1915.

⁵ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 420-423.

⁶ idem, pp. 423-425.

13. New York City and vicinity: November 15 to December 5

'Abdu'l-Baha arrived back in New York City on Saturday, November 15, and spoke at the residence of Juliet Thompson, a Washington artist, concerning the distinctive characteristics of the Baha'i Faith as compared to any other organization.¹ The following evening he addressed a gathering at 305 West 78th Street, speaking on the process of developing spiritual groups.²

On November 17, he appeared before a large audience in Genealogical Hall and talked of progressive revelation and the systems and cycles of religion.³

On the following night he spoke of the history and distortion of the teachings of the manifestations in the past and the relation of unity and love, to a gathering at 575 Riverside Drive.⁴

Six hundred people attended a banquet at the Great Northern Hotel, to which 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke of aspects of service to the world of humanity and the development of attributes.⁵ It was held on November 23.

On November 29, he appeared again at 780 West End Avenue and

¹ idem, pp. 426–432; Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–148.

² 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

³ idem, pp. 433–437.

⁴ idem, pp. 437–442.

⁵ idem, pp. 442–444; Ives, *op. cit.*, pp. 149–151.

talked on the mystery of sacrifice.¹ At the same location, on December 2, two presentations were made concerning service to humanity and an enumeration and explanation of the new teachings of Baha'u'llah.² On the following day, two lectures were given in the same location and a third at 830 Park Avenue. They dwelt on the need to develop one's self before trying to help other people; the method of studying the scriptures; and exhortations on personal development for public service.³

On December 4, 'Abdu'l-Baha addressed the Theosophical Society on the symbolic significance of words in the scriptures and the concept of the manifestations as educators of mankind.⁴

More than one hundred people gathered on board the ship, *Celtic*, on December 5, in a large salon room to hear 'Abdu'l-Baha's last talk. After speaking of the qualities and attributes which he wished his listeners to develop, he concluded:

You must therefore look toward each other and then toward mankind with the utmost love and kindness ... so that the east and west may embrace each other in love and deal with one another in sympathy and affection. Until man reaches this high station, the world of humanity shall not find rest, and eternal felicity shall not be attained But if man lives up to these divine commandments, this world of earth shall be transformed into the world of heaven and this material sphere shall be converted into a paradise of glory. 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

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *op. cit.*, pp. 444-448.

² *idem*, pp. 448-453.

³ *idem*, pp. 453-457.

⁴ *idem*, pp. 458-464.

spirit of life. This is eternal glory. This is everlasting felicity. This is immortal life. This is heavenly attainment. This is being created in the image and likeness of God. And unto this I call you, praying to God to strengthen and bless you.¹

14. Summary

During the time that 'Abdu'l-Baha was in North America, from April 11, 1912, until December 5, 1912, he delivered one hundred and eighty-five addresses of which record has been found in this investigation; there are indications that there were others of which no record was kept.

Considering the nature of the audiences to which 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke, five of the presentations were made to educational institutions; six to specific Baha'i observances; thirty-nine to churches and synagogues; thirty-five to particular societies or organizations; thirty-five in large public lectures; and sixty-five to less formal gatherings in locations such as private homes.

He spoke in twelve states plus the District of Columbia, and Montreal, Canada. He presented addresses in the following thirty-two cities: in California, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oakland, Palo Alto, Sacramento, and San Francisco; in Colorado, Denver; in Illinois, Chicago, Evanston, and Wilmette; in Maine, Eliot; in Minnesota, Minneapolis and St. Paul; in Massachusetts, Boston, Cambridge, Malden, and Worcester; in New Jersey, Fanwood, Jersey City, Montclair, and West Englewood; in New Hampshire, Dublin; in New York, Brooklyn, Lake Mohonk,

¹ idem, p. 467.

and New York City; in Ohio, Cincinnati and Cleveland; in Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh; in Utah, Salt Lake City; in Canada, Montreal; and Washington, D.C.

His most frequently used subjects included: the nature of God, the concept of manifestations, the physical and spiritual nature of man, the nature of proof, religious cycles, progressive revelation, the need for personal effort, the development of positive attributes, the life of Baha'u'llah and his teachings, including international peace, the equality of men and women, universal education, the oneness of mankind, universal language, and the agreement of science and religion.

The addresses were generally informative in nature, dealing with the explanation and clarification of the above concepts. There were persuasive aspects in talks on the proof of God and man's soul. For the most part, the persuasive elements concerned the idea that people should not follow imitations but seek for "truth" themselves. This was closely coupled with the stimulative aspects, for he urged people to take action and seek by exerting their own effort. He likewise had stimulative factors in his material urging people to actively aid the development of world peace.

6

Results of the speaking tour

Having surveyed the entire speaking tour and having analysed specific addresses, the results of the tour and the effectiveness of the addresses will be examined in this chapter.

In discussion the standards for measuring effectiveness, Thonssen and Baird point out that “it would not be accurate to assert, or even imply, that authorities are agreed on the standard by which effectiveness of oratory is determined.”¹ The reasons for this difference of opinion lie in the complex nature and wide variety of purposes and conditions of speaking. They added, however, that critics were in general agreement that “effectiveness of oratory” must be “regarded in the light of what people do as a result of hearing the speech.”² Even so, they noted that “it is not a simple task to trace the influence of a speaker’s words upon the public mind. Influences operating upon the people at a given moment may be manifold and complexly interrelated.”³

Yet even in this complexity, certain fundamental measures of effectiveness were apparent. For example, “the effectiveness of a

¹ Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1948), p. 449.

² *ibid.*

³ *idem*, p. 448.

of a speech may be judged by the character of the immediate, surface response.”¹ The long-range effects may also be investigated, as with the question Thonssen and Baird asked, “Over a period of years, did a particular speech or series of speeches exercise a discernible and significant influence upon the course of events?”²

In summing up their discussion of these factors of effectiveness and measurement of results, they concluded:

A speech is effective, therefore, if it achieves an end or response consistent with the speaker’s purpose—provided that the purpose is, in turn, consistent with the dictates of responsible judgment and solicitous regard for the positive good of an enlightened society.³

With these considerations in mind, the analysis of ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s speaking will be evaluated (1) by discussing the purposes of his speaking tour; (2) by investigating the records for indications of responses to the speaking tour; and (3) by looking for indications of effects during the forty-eight years since his visit.

1. Purposes of the speaking tour

First, a survey of the material will be made to see what the stated purposes of the tour were. Wendell Phillips Dodge wrote: “He comes on a mission of international peace.”⁴ The *New York Times* quoted

¹ idem, p. 455.

² idem, p. 458.

³ idem, p. 461.

⁴ *Star of the West*, 3:3, p. 3, April 28, 1912.

him as saying that he was ready to speak "wherever an audience can be found to welcome peace and promote the realization of the brotherhood of man."¹ The *New York Herald* said his purpose was "the bringing about of universal peace and a single religion among all men."² The *New York World* quoted him as saying, "I am an advocate of universal peace and human solidarity, because it is the one fundamental tenet of the Bahai faith that all nations and all religions shall become united"³

Dr Percy Stickney Grant said, "He comes with a plan of construction and of reconstruction"⁴ The *Washington Evening Star* quoted him in these words: "The great object of my life is to promote the oneness of the kingdom of humanity and international peace"⁵ An observer quoted him as saying, "I am here to unify the religions of the world, to talk in the interest of universal peace."⁶ To a reporter of the *San Francisco Examiner*, he reportedly said, "I have come to America to promote the ideal of Universal Peace and the solidarity of the human race."⁷

¹ *New York Times*, April 12, p. 9.

² *New York Herald*, April 12, p. 8.

³ [New York] *World*, April 12, p. 6.

⁴ *Star of the West*, 3:3, p. 5, April 28, 1912.

⁵ *Washington Evening Star*, April 20, 1912.

⁶ *Star of the West*, 19:2, p. 52, May, 1928.

⁷ *Star of the West*, 4:12, p. 207, October 16, 1913.

All of these quotations adduced to an overall purpose of unification—the unification of race, religion, and nationality—and the eventual establishment of international peace. It may be surmised, after a perusal of his entire life, that these purposes were a motivating factor in all of his activities.

Such broad purposes must, of necessity, have subsidiary objectives, if they are to be carried out. 'Abdu'l-Baha had two major subsidiary purposes which had their origin and motivation in the broad, over-riding purpose of the unification of mankind. Each of the two subsidiary purposes concerned a particular part of his audiences: first, the general public, and second, the Baha'is.

To the general public, he expounded on the basic and distinguishing principles of his father's faith, which he believed constituted the bed-rock of God's latest "revelation" to mankind. He wished both to inform them of the principles and to urge them to investigate, independently, their source.

To the Baha'is, who already acknowledged belief in the overall system of Baha'u'llah, he stressed the need for profound personal development of attributes such as love, justice, and trustworthiness and urged them to channel their efforts into undertakings for human well-being. The nature of this attitude is shown in his farewell address to the Baha'is:

This is my last meeting with you I have repeatedly summoned you to the cause of the unity of the world of humanity ... Therefore you must manifest the greatest kindness and love toward the nations of the world, setting aside fanaticism, abandoning religious, national and racial prejudice

Your eyes are illumined, your ears are quickened with hearing. You must therefore look toward each other and then toward mankind with the utmost love and kindness. 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. You have heard his commandments and precepts.¹

In view of the difference of purpose in regard to the general public and the Baha'is, the results will be investigated in two sections; the first dealing with the response of the general public, the second with the response of the Baha'is.

2. Public response to the speaking tour

Immediate response. Records of the addresses revealed that audiences generally rose when 'Abdu'l-Baha entered the room or lecture hall. Numerous newspaper accounts quoted in Chapters Four and Six showed this initial reaction. There were few references to the audience attitude during the presentations themselves. Those that exist all repeat much the same thing: "The venerable prophet was followed with close attention by the large audience of men and women present," as a reporter in Palo Alto wrote.² Another observer noted, "The address was received with breathless attention."³

The location of the meeting influenced the demonstrativeness of the response to the addresses. Many of the presentations were made in

¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Vol. II (Chicago: Executive Board of Baha'i Temple Unity, 1922), pp. 464-466.

² *The Palo Alto*, November 1, 1912, p. 1.

³ *Star of the West*, 3:3, p. 7, April 28, 1912.

churches and synagogues where clapping or other overt responses were out of order. In one of the few direct references to this aspect of the talks, one reporter spoke of "... the deep silence which followed Abdul-Baha's stirring address."¹ In contrast, in public locations not connected with areas of worship, the records indicated the presence of applause, as in the reference to an address which "was followed by a positive ovation and a recall."² Again, mention was made of "a positive ovation and the clapping of hands."³

There were indications that members of the audience came up to him after the meeting to talk and shake hands, as in the description, "When he came out of the church all the people gathered around ... in a circle and shook hands with Him."⁴ Further descriptions mention situations such as this: "On his coming out to leave, the people followed ... it looked like the surging of a great army."⁵ And "they lined His way and stood reverently when He passed between their two lines."⁶ Special circumstances called forth varied responses, as when, in the New York Bowery, "At the end of this meeting, Abdul-Baha stood at the bowery entrance to the Mission hall, shaking hands with

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:17, p. 9, January 19, 1913.

² *Star of the West*, 3:3, p. 7, April 28, 1912.

³ Mahmud, "The Journey of 'Abdu'l-Baha to America", *Story Supplement to "God Passes By"* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1948, p. 53.

⁴ *idem*, p. 60.

⁵ *idem*, p. 54.

⁶ *ibid.*

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from four to five hundred men and women and placing within each palm a piece of silver."¹

In some instances, articles recorded the immediate verbal reaction of chairmen when they closed 'Abdu'l-Baha's meetings with a brief response. For example, after 'Abdu'l-Baha's address at Stanford University, David Starr Jordan said:

We are all under very great obligation to Abdul Baha for this illuminating expression of the brotherhood of man and the value of international peace. I think we can best show our appreciation by simply a rising vote of thanks.²

Dr Grant closed 'Abdu'l-Baha's meeting in the Church of the Ascension with these words:

Let us wish that we here tonight may become great factors in bringing about this spiritual and human unity, which is the object of Abdul-Baha's life and mission, and all of which is thoroughly in accord with the teachings and principles of religion.³

A Unitarian minister concluded a meeting by saying:

When Abraham Lincoln was asked why it was he did not belong to a church, he said, "When some church will write over its door simply this sentence, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy strength and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul." We have been trying to build that kind of church for one hundred years. Abdu'l-Baha is trying to build at church all over the world. Amen! more power to his voice!⁴

Questions from the audience after an address furnished another kind of response to 'Abdu'l-Baha's speaking. On several occasions those who heard him had the opportunity of requesting information.

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:7, p. 12, July 13, 1912.

² *Palo Altan*, November 1, 1912, p. 4.

³ *Star of the West*, 3:10, p. 29, September 8, 1912.

⁴ *Star of the West*, 3:9, p. 12, August 20, 1912.

There were reports of such questions having been asked as the following: "What is the status of women in the Orient?" "What relation do you sustain to the founder of your creed—are you his successor in the same manner as the Pope of Rome?" "Is it not a fact that Universal Peace cannot be accomplished until there is political democracy in all the countries of the world?" "What is your belief about reincarnation?" "What is the attitude of your creed toward the family?" "What is the relation of Bahaim to the ancient Zoroastrian religion?" "Is peace a greater word than love?" "Will you state the tenets of your faith?" "Are not all Christians Bahais; is there any difference?" "Do Bahai women go without veils in the East?"¹

Arousal of controversy. Following the immediate audience responses, there are situations of controversy which arose from 'Abdu'l-Baha's presentations. The contention came principally from people affiliated with religious groups. The first retort came immediately after 'Abdu'l-Baha's first address to a church congregation. Dr Percy Stickney Grant, pastor of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in New York invited him to deliver the sermon on Sunday morning, April 15. The *New York Herald* reported the situation as follows:

Some of the congregation of the Church of the Ascension and members of other Episcopal churches expressed astonishment that a religious leader not professing Christianity should have been in-

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:10, pp. 27–29, September 8, 1912 and 3:18, pp. 6–10, February 7, 1913.

vited to preach and permitted to offer prayer within the chancel at a regular Episcopal service.

The Rev. Dr Percy Stickney Grant, rector of the Church of the Ascension, has conducted an open forum in the church on Sunday evenings, at which laymen of all denominations have made addresses ...

These meetings seem to have given no offence, but when the leader of an Oriental cult was invited to take the leading part in the regular Sunday morning service there was outspoken criticism, and it was intimated the matter would be called officially to the attention of Bishop Greer, through the Committee of the Diocese of New York.

It was said that Canon Nineteen of the Episcopal Church forbids any one not episcopally ordained from preaching in an Episcopal pulpit without the consent of the bishop. There is no provision against a non-ordained person offering prayer within the chancel, it was said, because no such contingency was anticipated.¹

There was no further specific mention, in the reports, of action taken on this matter. However, Dr Grant later referred to "a little slighting of this guest of ours." The occasion was at the reception in the Hotel Astor held in 'Abdu'l-Baha's behalf by the New York Peace Society. Dr Grant was one of the speakers, and used the occasion to speak of "misunderstandings that arise". The main part of his speech dealing with this matter was reported as follows:

There are misunderstandings that easily arise under circumstances such as now exist, the coming of a Prophet with a Great Message from one part of the world to another. And one cause of misunderstanding is to be found in the hard and fast names that we choose to give each other,—designations from which it is hard to escape,—crude and half voicing the heart into words that bind with fatal constructions the minds and sympathies of those who hold them The tag would hide the spirit.

Our guest from the East comes to us with a message that is a familiar message to our ears; the message of "Peace on earth and good-will to men". Is there a community or a religion that should more easily comprehend or welcome such a message than our own? And if we fail to

¹ *New York Herald*, April 15, 1912, p. 6.

understand it, are we not being bound by some tag that really does not mean what the word may signify? That is to say, we must get down below our discussion of Christian, Hebrew, Ethical Culture, whatever the discussion may be, to the spirit of life and of brotherhood. There we find we are all akin, there we find the fellowship of the great spirit of Abdul-Baha. ...

Therefore for the churches, I believe that we today can welcome in a representative way and in a vital way Abdul-Baha.¹

Soon after this response by Dr Grant, 'Abdu'l-Baha left New York for a few days to speak elsewhere. On his return, Dr Grant invited him to speak again in his church. This time, however, the occasion was the evening service, held at 8:00 p.m., rather than the morning service. The newspapers made no further mention of the controversy. Dr Grant, in his introduction of the speaker did not refer to the matter but said:

... we all welcome him here again to the Church of the Ascension and I assure him that we shall listen to every word that comes from his lips as proceeding from a soul which has lived nearly three score years and ten with the very central light of unity and has walked with God.²

This was not the only report of controversy which arose concerning addresses in churches. When 'Abdu'l-Baha arrived in Washington, D.C., Dr John Van Schaick, pastor of the Universalist Church, asked him to address an afternoon meeting in his church at 14:00 p.m. In his introduction of the speaker, Dr Van Schaick mentioned the following situation:

After arrangements for this meeting had been made, I received a letter warning me that I should be false to my belief if I held it. That letter quoted Jesus as saying, "All that ever came before Me

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:8, pp. 12-13, August 1, 1912.

² *Star of the West*, 3:10, p. 25, September 8, 1912.

are thieves and robbers." I do not believe that Jesus ever said it. It is not consistent with what we know of the breadth of His nature. But some of His followers say that all other Leaders are thieves and robbers. Against such narrowness this Church has always stood. We stand today humbly seeking the Spirit of Truth, and we gather here today because we believe that you are one of those who do not count their lives dear unto themselves, but seek only to serve God.¹

Such criticism of 'Abdu'l-Baha's appearances in churches was not only local in scope. The *Churchman*, a religious publication circulated in New York, voiced its objections. The magazine *Current Literature* reprinted excerpts from the *Churchman's* article for a national audience. It stated:

Bahaism is a reforming Mohammedan sect. It seeks to infuse into the religion of Islam, or perhaps more accurately to develop in Islam, a higher morality and a more mystic theology than the current beliefs and teachings of that religion now encourage. Its purpose is, no doubt, laudable; and it excites the sympathy of those who see in all the great ethnic religions glimpses of that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

But Bahaism is not Christianity; and Abdul-Baha does not profess to be a Christian. What right, then, has he to preach in a Christian Church?²

Variety of commentaries. Along with the objections raised concerning 'Abdu'l-Baha's speaking in churches, a variety of other responses also appeared. Those ministers who invited him to speak in their churches showed favorable responses to his words. On May 12, 'Abdu'l-Baha had been invited to speak at the Unity Church in Montclair, New Jersey, at the morning service. In his introduction, the Rev. Edgar S. Wiers stated the

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:3, p. 10, April 28, 1912.

² "The Universal Gospel that Abdul Baha Brings Us", *Current Literature*, 52:678, June, 1912.

following concerning the teachings 'Abdu'l-Baha discussed:

Never have we found aught in it but good; never has there been one false note; never one thing of self-seeking. Wherever it has gone, it has shattered the chains of prejudice and ignorance We have its leader here this morning. To stand in the presence of the prophets of old is great, but to stand in the presence of prophets of our own generation is far greater. One of the succession of men who has brought forward this religion—Abdul-Baha—will speak to us now¹

The material that formed the speech content of 'Abdu'l-Baha was subjected to criticism by a publication entitled the *Advance*. This Chicago publication objected to the breadth of his teachings:

Bahatism may be summed up in the word that "nothing matters". All religions are equally true or equally false, as you may choose to put it. It seems to have but one article in its creed and that is "universal tolerance". As a civil creed that is sound. As an ethical creed that is rotten.²

The same factors of breadth were regarded positively by the *Review of Reviews* comments:

The absolute catholicity of the doctrine goes far toward explaining its ready acceptance by adherents of every known creed. It meddles with no religious beliefs, laws or observances, but insists on the unity underlying all. While its ultimate aim is the spiritual unification of all mankind, it is not in any way subversive of the ancient creeds.³

Other commentators voiced mixed opinions about the significance of 'Abdu'l-Baha's addresses. One editorialist expressed this view:

It is not for us to accept Abdul Baha's messages literally. In the world of economics, we in America are infinitely beyond anything

¹ *Star of the West*, 3:7, p. 13, July 13, 1912.

² *Current Literature*, loc. cit.

³ "Will Bahatism Unite all Religious Faiths", *The American Review of Reviews*, 45:719, June, 1912.

that can come to us from the Orient. But the divine fire of this man's spirituality is bound to illuminate the dark corners of our imaginations and will open up to us a spiritual realm which we would do well to go in and possess. So here is health and happiness and long life to Abdul Baha, the servant of God. We cannot but echo back to him the love, the good will, and the high and holy faith which he brings to us.¹

An editorial also appeared in *The Independent* which reacted to "the visit of Abdul Baha to this country" as "an interesting event", and expressed varied feelings about the nature of the teachings he was expounding and their effects on their adherents. Along with extensive description of 'Abdu'l-Baha's delivery and quotations of his words, it stated that the religion of 'Abdu'l-Baha

... is not to be classed with the freak or fake religions which arise among us or are brought to us from abroad. Perhaps there are among its American disciples some of the class who take up Bahaism because bridge is going out. If so we may at least congratulate them on the change. Bahaism has proved its vitality, its reality, not only by inspiring its adherents to suffer martyrdom by the thousands ... but still more by inspiring them to live together in peace and harmony²

The editorial concludes:

Such in essence is the Bahai doctrine, tho stripped of poetic imagery and illustration that grows in a Persian garden. A strange offshoot from Mohammedanism in these latter says—this religion of universal peace, mutual toleration and equal rights. Tho its lessons may be most needed in Islam, yet they are far from being superfluous to Christianity.³

A writer for *Harper's Weekly* was explicit in stating his evaluation of 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit and the content of his addresses. After

¹ Elbert Hubbard, "A Modern Prophet", *Hearst's Magazine*, 22:51, July, 1912.

² "The Persian Prophet", *The Independent*, 73:159, July 15, 1912.

³ idem, p. 160.

quoting extensively from 'Abdu'l-Baha, the writer stated:

It must have become quite clear long ago to readers that we have here exactly the same words, as have made the material of religious urging and teaching for hundreds of years. Paul said, at Athens, before the sixtieth year of our era, exactly what Abbas Effendi repeats, in Chicago, at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Does it follow, then, because these two Persian teachers 'Abdu'l-Baha and Baha'u'llah are repeating, in slightly varied phrase, the world-old and age-worn truths that their mission is the less real and valuable? By no means. The very fact that these men of strange race and alien tongue come to us and tell us, out of the depth of their hearts, what we have heard from the beginning, does much to bring the sense of unity that is the very center of their thought. It is a great and compelling thing to find a deeply religious man not of one's own faith and civilization. Such a one cannot fail to deepen our sense of religion. And these men have this in addition, that, holding the universal truths, they have honestly and in the face of dire persecution striven to carry them out. They live their religion, as well as teach it. This is their power.¹

Evidences of effects after 1912. Tracing public response resulting from the speaking tour is difficult, after the period of 1912. There is virtually no way to discover changes in the individual attitudes of members of the audiences. Written sources provide the only available indications. Three years after his departure from this country, an editorial appeared in the New York American concerning the American tour. It spoke mainly of his influence on his surroundings when he was here. Most of the comment was general; the only specific reference to effects were the following words:

When he went to Washington and swept through the Capitol, even the Supreme Court of the United States saw fit to adjourn; the House the same; and the Senate, for a while, at least, forgot matters of investigation.

¹ Charles Johnson, "A Ray from the East", *Harper's Weekly*, 59:9, July 20, 1912.

When Abdul Baha went to the White House one might have thought that he was going with the intent to take possession of it.¹

All other articles encountered dealt with the speaking tour in relation to some other event of current note or appeared in an article concerning the Baha'i World Faith. When 'Abdu'l-Baha died, in 1921, a front-page article in the *New York World* recalled "Never before Abdul Baha did the leader of an Oriental religious movement visit the United States"² The remainder of the article summarized his life and teachings.

Throughout the years, as the house of worship in Wilmette, for which he laid the foundation stone, was built, numerous articles concerning the structure made mention of his visit in 1912, and of the stone-laying ceremony covered in Chapter Three. For example, *Time* magazine, in a descriptive article on the architecture and history of the building in 1943 included the following:

Permission to erect a Baha'i house of Worship "in the center of the Western world" was received from Abdul-Baha ... in 1902 ... by 1912 the Temple's site had been bought, and blessed by Abdu'l-Baha himself. Cried he: "Now praise be to God that Chicago and its environs, from the beginning of the diffusion of the Fragrances of God, have been a strong heart."³

Some articles in special interest magazines have used the speaking tour as a bridge to material on the history of the Baha'i Faith. For instance, an article in *The Negro History Bulletin*, in 1959, began:

¹ *New York American*, March 1, 1915, p. 16.

² *New York World*, December 1, 1921, p. 1.

³ "Nine-sided Nonesuch", *Time*, 41:36, May 24, 1943.

In 1912 a great spiritual figure came to the shores of our American continent. He traveled from coast to coast, addressing His great and profound Message to vast assemblages in churches, synagogues, colleges and various societies ...¹

The articles which appear in the various denominational publications concerning the history of the Baha'i movement comment in some way on the American tour. For example, in an article in 1959 in the *Lutheran Youth* magazine the brief mention was made:

Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'u'llah's eldest son, was appointed as the Interpreter of his teachings and Exemplar of the Faith. Under his leadership Baha'i spread to Europe and America. In 1912 he laid the cornerstone for the temple in Wilmette, Ill., which is the center of the Baha'i faith in the United States.²

3. The Baha'is response to the speaking tour

The Baha'is evaluation of the tour. 'Abdu'l-Baha had come to stimulate the Baha'is to activity. His addresses were considered to be, by that group, the foundation of efforts that came afterward. It may be assumed that the speaking tour had an effect, at least indirectly, on all of the activities of the organization since 1912. It will, therefore, be necessary to examine the growth of the movement with which 'Abdu'l-Baha was connected in order to investigate as fully as possible the results of the speaking tour.

The group [the Bahá'ís] evaluated 'Abdu'l-Baha's addresses as having significant influence on its development and on society in general. In a book con-

¹ Etta Woodlen, "What is the Baha'i World Faith", *The Negro History Bulletin*, 23:13, October, 1959.

² "Baha'i, the World's Largest Merger", *Lutheran Youth*, 47:11, August 16, 1959.

cerning the history of the organization, the effects of the speaking tour were summarized as follows, by 'Abdu'l-Baha's grandson:

A most significant scene in a century-old drama had been enacted Seeds of undreamt-of potentialities had ... been sown in some of the fertile fields of the Western world. Never in the entire range of religious history had any Figure of comparable stature arisen to perform a labor of such magnitude and imperishable worth. Forces were unleashed through these fateful journeys which even now, at a distance of well-nigh thirty-five years, we are unable to measure or comprehend.¹

Individual efforts. One of 'Abdu'l-Baha's purposes was to activate the members of his faith in the application of their humanitarian principles. References were found in various publications, which may be considered objective in the sense that they have no connection with the movement, which tended to indicate that this purpose of 'Abdu'l-Baha was fulfilled to some degree. Indications of personal applications of 'Abdu'l-Baha's teachings, such as the "oneness of mankind", was suggested by a commentary in the *Washington Bee*:

Its white devotees, even in this prejudice-ridden community, refuse to draw the color line. The informal meetings, held frequently in the fashionable mansions of the cultured society in Sheridan Circle, Dupont Circle, Connecticut and Massachusetts avenues, have been open to Negroes on terms of absolute equality.²

The undertaking of certain charitable activities, in conjunction with 'Abdu'l-Baha's directives, was indicated in this report from the *Chicago Herald-Record*:

The religion of Abbas Effendi ... has been gaining force in Chicago for several years. Mrs Marshall Roe, well known for her work as a volunteer probation officer and as the originator of the tag day idea

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette: Baha'i Publishing Company, 1950), p. 294.

² *Washington Bee*, April 27, 1912, p. 1.

for the children's charities, is one of the original members of the Bahai faith in Chicago. Mrs Roe's charity work in behalf of the neglected children is part of her conception of Bahaism.¹

Another source, the national magazine, *Survey*, published an article which tended to suggest that numbers of Baha'is were putting forth some degree of efforts in humanitarian undertakings:

Its adherents ... join in all humanitarian, hygienic and economic reforms; emphasize education and the equality of the sexes

Wherever a Bahai center has been formed, there has been a new spirit and a new impetus to progress

Bahais do not label as theirs the schools and hospitals they establish. But they are back of or within every progressive movement. They are responsible for the Persian-American Society, the Orient-Occident Unity Society ... American men and women are quietly going out into Bahai centers, carrying education and the message of freedom. Their influence goes far because they become one with their surroundings and have no missionary label. The Baha'i movement is a leavening movement ... Bahais by thousands, unlabelled, are pushing the various peace organizations of different countries.²

Group application of 'Abdu'l-Baha's directives. Along with urging individual effort, 'Abdu'l-Baha stressed group effort. The tour was half of a two-part program he developed in connection with the American Baha'is. The second half came in the form of written directives in 1917. He had hoped to prepare them in 1912 to ready themselves to carry out these instructions. The instructions in 1917 consisted of an extensive plan for locating members in all parts of the world, to make themselves available to inform people of Baha'u'llah's system.

¹ *The Chicago Herald-Record*, January 7, 1912, section 5, p. 3.

² I. Earle, "Leader of the Baha'i Movement", *Survey*, 28:179, April 27, 1912.

From their point of view, development, such as the increase in number of Baha'i centers, or new translations, were a direct continuation of the effect of 'Abdu'l-Baha's addresses on the group. While the other causal factors for the activities of the organization were complex, it may be considered that indirectly, at least, the effects of the speaking tour were interwoven in the complex causes of such activities. For this reason, a few points in the main developmental aspects of the Baha'i World Faith since 1912 will be briefly examined.

Four areas of activities will be considered: the development of centers; the number of countries in which they are located, the translations of literature, and the construction of buildings, especially houses of worship.

It may be assumed from reports that the number of Baha'i centers in the United States in 1912 numbered not more than two hundred; an annual report issued in June, 1960, by the national Baha'i administrative body, stated that there were currently fifteen hundred and seventy centers in this country.¹ An estimated four hundred centers, located in fewer than twenty countries or territories existed in the world in 1912; the 1960 report stated a current number of five thousand eight hundred centers located in two hundred and fifty-six territories.² Literature concerning the movement in 1912 existed primarily in English, Persian, and Arabic; the report stated that the literature now existed

¹ "Message to the Annual Baha'i Conventions", *Baha'i News*, 351:2, June, 1960.

² *ibid.*

in two hundred and sixty-eight languages.¹ In 1912, one house of worship was under construction in Turkestan and the Wilmette building was being planned; it was reported that the two buildings were completed, a shrine to the Bab and an archives building were completed in Haifa, and three houses of worship were under construction in Europe, Australia, and Africa, in June, 1960.²

These figures would suggest that an increase of group activity has taken place since 1912, which may in some degree, be considered a result of 'Abdu'l-Baha's addresses to the group members.

4. Summary

The purpose of 'Abdu'l-Baha's speaking tour in America was to inform people of his father's teachings. Aspects of this included (1) reaching the public with this information and (2) activating the Baha'is to practice Baha'u'llah's teachings more fully.

Immediate responses included attentiveness, silence, applause, audience questions, and comments of chairmen. Criticism was aroused, especially against his speaking from pulpits. A variety of attitudes toward his ideas, including both interest and hostility, were expressed by other speakers and contemporary writers. Later articles generally mentioned the tour in connection with some other event such as the construction of the house of worship.

¹ *ibid.*

² *ibid.*

Articles indicated that adherents of his religion tended to aid humanitarian undertakings individually. Collective efforts were shown by general growth of the movement, which may be traced in part to the effect of the addresses.

From the information contained in this chapter, it may be concluded that audience response and editorial comment reflected a public response, both positive and negative, toward 'Abdu'l-Baha's speaking tour. The increase of activity of those connected with his religious system probably reflects some degree of stimulus gained from his addresses. To the degree that information was thus conveyed to the public regarding his father's system and to the degree that people were moved to increased activity, the immediate purposes of the speaking tour were fulfilled. It may be assumed that these efforts aided in some degree 'Abdu'l-Baha's long-range purposes of developing brotherhood and international peace.

7

Summary and conclusions

In the preceding six chapters of this study, the nature, scope and significance of the North American speaking tour of 'Abdu'l-Baha in 1912 has been portrayed, and the purposes, content, organization, and adaptation of his communication to his audiences analyzed.

1. Summary of the study

To carry out the purposes of the study, six chapters were used. The first introduced the purpose, significance, and organization of the investigation and clarified the terminology.

The second chapter analyzed the speaker's background in light of his religious background, national background, family heritage, childhood and education, exile and imprisonment, as an author, knight, teacher, religious leader, and world figure.

Chapter Three included the criteria for analysis, an outline of the basic system from which 'Abdu'l-Baha's ideas were drawn, and an analysis of addresses in relation to the criteria, the audiences, and the social setting.

The fourth chapter dealt with the factors connected with the speaker's delivery, including his method of speech preparation, his mode of delivery, his physical appearance, movement, and voice.

Chapter Five provided the first historical survey of the entire nine-month speaking tour, including brief summaries of extant addresses,

204 Historical study of the North American speaking tour of 'Abdu'l-Baha descriptions of audiences, and selections from newspaper and magazine coverage.

The sixth chapter was concerned with the purposes of the speaking tour as related to the response of audiences and commentators, both immediately and over a period of time.

2. Conclusions

In commenting on the aims of a speaker, Thonssen and Baird said that to be "effective", his purposes must be "consistent with the dictates of responsible judgment and solicitous regard for the positive good of an enlightened society."¹ 'Abdu'l-Baha's goals of building world peace and brotherhood were consistent with the best interests of mankind as a whole. He continually urged his listeners to work for a broader scope of human unity.

The basis of his thinking came from a pattern he sometimes referred to as "progressive revelation". This system presupposed certain conditions about a Supreme Being and a succession of men who "manifested" His teachings to mankind. A judgment of the soundness of his system of beliefs was beyond the purpose of this study. For the purposes of his speaking, however, it can be said that this system provided the basis for the ideals of universal peace, universal education, the agreement of science and religion, and other humanitarian principles. Insofar as his beliefs furthered such ends, they could be judged beneficial.

¹ Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1918), p. 461.

Several other characteristics influenced his content and manner of delivery: first, that he must urge his audiences to investigate “reality” for themselves; second, that the most positive aspects of every person’s beliefs must be looked for and encouraged; third, that personal beliefs should be presented with moderation to inform people of them but persuasion should come from their own investigation; and fourth, that a person’s beliefs should primarily be shown in their actions and secondarily in words. These attitudes helped to gain for him a generally favorable response from his audience.

While to the general public, the passing of time lessened the interest in ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s North American tour, the Baha’is report a continual increase of interest. For instance, it was reported that plans were underway in the United States and in Iran to publish new editions of ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s addresses in both Persian and English. As the fiftieth anniversary of the tour approaches, a suggestion has been made in the group that the full story of the trip be published.

The actual effects that ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s speaking to had on furthering the interests of world peace was too complex a question to answer; but to those who know of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, he will probably be remembered for, among other things, his encouragement of human understanding and for his wishes, as expressed in his last words before leaving North America: “It is my hope that you may become successful in this high calling And unto this I call you, praying God to strengthen and bless you.”¹

¹ ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Vol. II (Chicago: Baha’i Publishing Committee, 1925), p. 467.

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Washington Bee, April 27, 1912.

Washington Evening Star, April 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, November 2, 1912.

Appendix
Texts of the Chicago addresses

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I. HULL HOUSE: APRIL 30¹

pp. 214–216. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 67–68.

II. FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE N.A.A.C.P.: APRIL 30

pp. 217–219. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 69–70.

III. PUBLIC MEETING CONCLUDING CONVENTION OF BAHAI TEMPLE
UNITY: APRIL 30

pp. 220–223. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 65–67.

IV. DEDICATION OF GROUNDS FOR HOUSE OF WORSHIP: MAY 1

pp. 224–225. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 71–72.

V. ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS: MAY 2

pp. 226–231. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 74–77.

VI. AFTERNOON RECEPTION: MAY 2

pp. 232–233. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 77–78.

VII. AT HOTEL PLAZA: MAY 2

pp. 234–239. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 79–83.

VIII. THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY: MAY 4

pp. 240–247. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 87–91.

IX. CHILDREN'S MEETING: MAY 5

pp. 248–250. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 91–93.

X. PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH: MAY 5

pp. 251–255. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 93–96.

XI. ALL SOULS CHURCH, LINCOLN CENTRE: MAY 5

pp. 256–261. See *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 77–100.

¹ Page numbers shown are for the dissertation, followed by source reference. The quoted text has not been included because revised text is readily available in *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, 2nd edn. 1982.