

Home of Abdul Baha
Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria
June 2d 1915

Dear friends!

There lived in Acca a Christian by the name Elias Terch. In the beginning of this war he was suspected by the government as a revolutionary, arrested, deported to Damascus, tried by court martial and sentenced to two years of imprisonment. Because he was a bigotted Christian he thought it was his duty to be proverbially inimical against this Cause and refute its teaching both in writing and in speech whenever he found an opportunity. For example when the ^{Beloved} was travelling in America he would get hold of those newspapers which contained false and derogatory articles, keep them on a desk in his office and as the officials passed by called them in and translated for them those paragraphs which were prejudicial. "This is how Ali Effendi was received by the Westerners" he would hint significantly toward the end of his pernicious remarks. He carried his opposition so far as to write a bitter, antagonistic article against the Master which was published in the Arabic newspapers of New York. Because he had lived in Acca for many years he pretended to know the history of the Bahai revelation and thus colored with his own prejudices and misguided zeal the motives and actions of Abdul Baha. In his presence he was meek, submissive and attentive but behind him he howled, screamed and gnashed his teeth with impotent rage. His besetting sin was envy and jealousy. He could not endure to see the spirit of God in work. Like the Pharisee and Scribes who beheld Belzebub in Christ this man also could not witness the circle of the Master's spiritual influence becoming wider and wider. For years he continued his enmity and the Beloved persisted in showing him love, kindness and welcomed him in his home and paid him visits. Never did he by word or suggestion convey ^{to him} the idea that he was full aware of his hostilities and rancor; on the other hand, every time the man did something wrong or attributed a black calumny, Abdul Baha ^{made} toward him greater courtesy, sweeter gentleness and heavenlier treatment. When the news of his imprisonment was brought to his wife she felt

grieved and heart-broken. How could she support her children? To whom ^{should} she turn her face for consolation and assistance? To her relatives? In this hour of supreme trial, they have all forsaken her. To her priest? He himself is a dead weight, spiritually and physically on the community. Then let her ^{enter} into the dynamic presence of the "worship of sorrow" and the curtain of her ^{dark} pains will be lifted up letting the light of joy shine upon the surface of her heart. Thus on the afternoon of May 28th - the day of the departure of the Blessed Beauty - she came with another man - Demetri - and the Master received her with genuine affection. Listen, dear friend, how he speaks to the wife of the man who has been his "faithful enemy".

"Thou art welcome, my daughter! Be thou steadfast in this trial and shew forth longsuffering and patience. Life is a mirage and its joy and sorrow shall pass away. Persecutions and tribulations have ^{ever} been the lot of the great and noble-minded. This is not because they have committed any sin but because they have undertaken the illumination and guidance of mankind. Other people also suffer but it is rather the consequences of their own actions. His holiness ^{Christ} and his apostles were always surrounded with persecutions and ordeals but they accepted them with resignation and radiant quietness. They did not murmur nor did they complain. I have been myself in this prison town for forty years. You know a little of the governmental restrictions which hedged me from all sides and yet I was ever joyful and thankful. All those days of ordeals have now passed and they have left me stronger and more firm in the Love of God. Is it not the law of nature that the paradisaical season of spring be followed by summer and autumn and winter? We must be ever ready and willing to adapt ourselves to the requirements of each season. Now and then the tests of God encircle us all of a sudden. They are poured upon like a spring shower or darken in a minute the fair heaven of our hope with the black clouds of despair or attack the healthy constitution of our fortune with manifold diseases. We must wait and trust in the wisdom of the Lord and he shall remove all these hindrances one by one, from our path.

"I will pray for thy husband. He has been my friend and I will not forget him in my supplication. Rest thou assured. God will send him back to thee. Be not worried. Be serene. Be at peace. Engage thy time in the education of thy children according to the principles and life of Christ. Direct he does teach thee: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray ^{for them} which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.' [The poor woman began to weep and the Beloved continued] Be thou confident. God will protect thy husband. I give thee the good news that he will be safe." Here Demetri interposed, addressing the woman:-

"Consider how his holiness prays for thy husband, although as thou knewest too well he was very bitter against Him and ridiculed His teachings. I have the utmost trust in the prayers of His holiness. Look upon Him as one above the common standard of humanity. He communes with Our Father. Be thou very happy, because He has assured thee that thy husband will be freed, will come back to thee and will be confirmed and assisted." The Master replied: "Never did I entertain the least ill-feeling against him. I loved him and love him still as my son. He is a child of God and I am trying to be one and we are all brothers. We must love each other. Such is the desire of Our heavenly Father." The Master was not satisfied by giving her these spiritual advice but did send her a sum of money for the maintenance of herself and the children.

In this manner does Abdul Baha carry his spiritual conquests in the countries of the hearts and teach the distracted humanity the law of Love and Charity. Are we not going to imitate him and show by such perfectly selfless deeds that we are his followers?

Several times during the day I met him, now in his room, now in his garden, now in the street, each time redolent with the fragrance of the spirit and pregnant with the words of truth. In the evening his talk was very short. In his walk he had seen a cow entering the house of its owner and so he said: "Is it not significant that the cows know the house of their master but mankind have lost their way to the