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Editor's Notes

"Is there need for any one to say that the sun is shining!
Its own appearance is sufficient."
'Abdu'l-Bahá.

HAIFA, PALESTINE
16-27 NOVEMBER 1919
George Orr Latimer
Boston, Mass.
1920

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if not I
check it against the original. That process catches the majority of errors. I

will do a thorough check soon when time is available.

Dedication

DEDICATED TO THE CENTRE OF THE COVENANT

by a group of pilgrims in memory of their gathering at His Table in

“The Kingdom of Good-Pleasure”

[Photograph of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá The Centre of the Covenant]

THE LIGHT OF THE NEW DAY

“O People! O People! The Sun of Reality has dawned from the horizon of the world, casting its effulgence upon the East and the West. He has instructed the world of humanity through heavenly teachings and has become the cause of human solidarity. The Teachings of His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh declare the oneness of the world of humanity cause religion to be the foundation of union and accord in the world; become conducive to good fellowship among the children of men; conform religion with science and reason; take away political prejudices and race prejudices; uphold the doctrine of perfect equality between men and women; espouse the cause of an international auxiliary language; foster the universalization of education; readjust and equalize in the most perfect manner the economic relations of the social structure; destroy totally the basis of hostility and ill-will from amongst mankind; constitute the five continents as one continent; suffer the various races of men to become as one race; rend asunder entirely the veils of superstitions; reveal in the assemblage of humanity the light of Truth; illumine the hearts with the rays of guidance; resurrect the spirits with the breaths of the Holy Spirit, and baptize the souls with the water of Life Eternal, the fire of the love of God and the outpouring of the Divine Spirit.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Foreword

“In case travel to the Holy Land may be accomplished in the utmost comfort and happiness, your visit will be the cause of the rejoicing of hearts.” This message from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the necessary urge to the yearning heart that united Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Randall, their daughter Margaret and Mr. Albert Vail in a pilgrimage to Haifa and Mount Carmel.

When thou shalt be released from military service thou hast permission to present thyself at the Holy Land”, were the welcomed words received in France, that joined Mr. George Latimer to this little party, a group of five, eager to attain the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy—“and it shall come to pass in the last

days that the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow unto it."

When one has attained to the longing of the heart and reaches the City of Destination, such emotions arise that he cannot record these impressions until looking back through the perspective of calmness. For twelve days we lingered at the Place of Desire, in quiet and meditation, inhaling the fragrances of that Holy Spot, the "Garden of God", and sharing the bestowals of Divine Favour that descended through the Word of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—that Word which establishes the ideal communion between hearts.

Wherein are set forth the fruits of that pilgrimage, His Utterances, not as instructions to us but as a Message to the world, in their continuity as they came to us like the successive waves of the Ocean of Celestial Wisdom.

A few of the luncheon talks were taken down in English by Mr. Latimer. The rest were all interpreted by Shoghi Effendi, the grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and transcribed in the original Persian by Dr. Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím of London. Each day they were translated into literal English. We owe an unending debt of gratitude to these two devoted souls, who by their tireless energy and servitude made it possible for us to share these precious Gems with the friends of God.

The photographs were taken by Miss Margaret Randall, Mr. Arthur Hathaway, Fugeta and Mr. Latimer. This book has been approved by the Bahá'í Executive Board.

Comparing this century to all previous ones, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has called it the Diamond Age. It is our hope that these rough chips, hewn from the Diamond of Divine Knowledge, without polishing, will shine and sparkle with such brilliancy that every soul will see, as we have, in them—the LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Introduction

During the six months following the arrival of our permission, the probability of making a journey to the Holy Land "in the utmost comfort and happiness" seemed almost an impossibility. Yet all things are possible with God for when one's heart is full of yearning to make this pilgrimage, the desire, if it is in accord with wisdom, is fulfilled.

In October fourth we left New York on the Steamer "Lapland", a little party of five, with our hearts turned toward the Light in the East. Our passage was without storm and we were able to tell many people the reason for our journey. During the afternoons there were several little groups gathered together at teatime. A number of progressive Japanese and a group of Chinese on an educational mission to Europe became interested in the principle of Universal Brotherhood as a power for uniting the East and West. The Sunday before

we arrived at Cherbourg the large salon was filled with souls eager to hear this Message.

We were in Paris for a few days during which time we had several meetings with the friends. Their hearts were yearning to join us on our pilgrimage. From here we went to Italy arriving at Naples a few days before sailing. There we found Fugeta, the young Japanese Bahá'í, who was on his way to serve in the Master's household. He had been waiting seven long years to be summoned for this service. There also we found Arthur Hathaway, an American friend, journeying to Haifa. Both had been waiting for some time for a boat to complete the trip. We took Fugeta with us leaving Mr. Hathaway with the hope of a passage within the week.

On November sixth we felt indeed that we were beginning our real journey when we boarded the little boat "Karlsbad" at Bari, which was to take us to Haifa. Again our passage was beautiful and in a few days we arrived at Alexandria, going immediately to Cairo.

The day following our arrival in Cairo early in the morning that wonderful soul, Mírzá Muḥammad Taqí, accompanied by Tofti Yazdí, whose face is alight with the love of service, came to our hotel and extended to us the greetings of all the friends of Cairo. He invited us to come to a meeting in the early evening at his home. Our hearts were filled with unspeakable joy over the anticipation of meeting our Oriental brothers. We promised to join them about six o'clock and they left us with Miss Hiscock, who upon learning of our arrival had come to call and greet us. Her work in Cairo and Alexandria among the young Egyptians has been very extensive and many have been attracted to the Cause through her sincere efforts. Planning to take tea with her in the early afternoon, we parted, feeling that sightseeing was dull indeed when one could experience the delight in meeting such blessed souls as these.

During the day we met Mrs. True and her daughter, Miss Edna True. They had just left the Master the night before, bringing with them the light and radiance of His Spirit, and we felt that our visit with Him had almost begun in Cairo. At five we all gathered for tea. Mrs. Stannard of London, who has done splendid work for the Cause in India, Miss Hiscock, the Trues, ten of us from all parts of the western world drawn together in this eastern city by the Divine Power. It was a wonderful hour—hearing of the work in the East and telling of the work in the West.

At six we drove to the home of Muḥammad Taqí. A large number of the friends had gathered awaiting our coming. The warmth of their welcome, the joy that shone in their faces and their humility made a lasting impression upon us. Delicious Persian tea was served immediately and although only a few could understand English, words were scarcely needed for the spirit of love and understanding, the real language of the heart, was so strong between us. Prayers were beautifully chanted in Persian and Arabic and greetings were exchanged. Each one of us said a few words but our hearts were too full for utterance.

They in turn spoke to us, but had no word been spoken the evening would have been rich in the silent language of the heart. When we left them we were deeply conscious that here in Cairo we had attended our first real Bahá'í Feast, and that we in America know little of the true meaning of humility and service as lived by our eastern brothers.

Again at Alexandria on our return we experienced the richness of love and devotion of our Oriental friends in a meeting at the home of Muḥammad Sa'íd Adham, an enkindled Egyptian believer. There were a number of Egyptian Bahá'ís, quite new in the Cause and wonderfully full of fire and enthusiasm, they being the spiritual children of the late glorious teacher, Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl. Here we met Dr. Zia and Zeenat Baghdádí on their way to meet the Master.

The next morning, shortly after sunrise, we left for Port Sa'íd. Many of the friends came to this early train to wish us a safe journey and once again to send their love to their beloved Master.

At Port Sa'íd we were greeted by Aḥmad Yazdí and we further realized that the hospitality and kindness of the Oriental believers is far beyond our western expression. Here we found another group of loving souls who came to offer us their love and service. We stayed in Port Sa'íd only a few hours, and here the guiding hand of 'Abdu'l-Bahá appeared in the chance meeting of Arthur Hathaway who had just arrived from Naples and was endeavouring without success to obtain passage to Haifa. We were able to overcome his difficulty and with him rejoined the "Karlsbad", our hearts already overflowing with the joy and love which our brothers had showered upon us.

On November sixteenth our journey ended. That morning in the mist of a glorious golden sunrise our little steamer dropped anchor in the blessed harbour of Haifa. The greatest peace ever experienced filled our hearts as we stood on the hurricane deck and realized that in this city the Light of the World was watching our approach. Through the hurry and confusion of landing, the babel of the noisy Arab boatmen taking us ashore in their tiny boats, the endless routine of customs, we felt ever that peace in our hearts.

Dr. Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím had been sent by the Master to welcome and assist us. The Master's carriage took us to the Western Pilgrim House, a beautiful vine-covered house directly across the street from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This was to be our home during our visit with the Master. The view was beautiful, with the blue bay of 'Akká stretching out before us and in the distance the "most great prison" city gleamed in the brilliant sunlight. Mount Carmel rose behind us in majestic beauty. As the carriage drove up to the gate, Margaret beheld the Master gazing from a window of a little turreted room just opposite. The impression filled our hearts that He was watching our arrival and had in his prayers assisted us through our difficulties on sea and land. He was "Waiting, patiently waiting".

At the Pilgrim House we found Dr. Esslemont of England, the only other western pilgrim. He was confined to his bed recovering from an illness contracted during

enforced quarantine. He is to be in Haifa three months gathering material for a book on the Cause which the Master has given him permission to write.

Almost immediately Shoghi, accompanied by Mírzá Faḍíl, one of the ablest Persian teachers, came to greet us and brought word that the Master would welcome us after we had rested from our journey. Here we were joined by Colonel and Mrs. Allison, an American physician and his wife. They were fellow travellers on board the “Karlsbad” and had become so interested in our pilgrimage that they deferred an intended trip through the Holy Land to come directly to Haifa to hear from the Master’s own lips His Message for mankind. They remained for some days sharing with us the jewels of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s wisdom at the evening meals. They went to Damascus, but soon returned, eager to be again in His Divine Presence. When they departed the benediction of the Master went with them and His Love will surround them during their entire journey.

For twelve blessed days we remained in Haifa, surrounded by the love and thoughtfulness of our Divine Host. He showered his bounties and blessings upon us, coming each day to be with us at luncheon, and we in turn going each night to his home for the evening meal. He also summoned each of us at different times to His Holy Presence, where all of our heart’s longings and desires were expressed and answered. During the day when we were not occupied with the translation of the Master’s wonderful talks, the pilgrims from all parts of the Orient came to visit with us, creating in our hearts, by their beautiful spirit of evanescence, a greater bond of unity and understanding. Every afternoon Mrs. Randall and Margaret had the great bounty of having tea with the ladies of the household. Stories of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá were related by the sister of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Often He came in and joined them. Such was our life for twelve wonderful days.

As our first meeting with the friends in Egypt prepared our hearts to receive the Light of the Divine Kingdom, so these days indelibly imprinted upon our hearts the glorious realization of the Power of the Centre of the Covenant.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

16—27 November 1919

THE WELCOME

For forty days we had been in the wilderness of travel, passing through the dead cities of modern glory and ancient, splendour, which history prizes with its crumbling monuments and vanished life. We had arrived at the “Mountain of God”, which Christ knew, Muḥammad knew, which all the prophets knew guarded the secret of God and for ages had watched for the advent of His Coming and the establishment of His Covenant.

Word came that the Master was coming to welcome us! As the moment so long anticipated approached, our hearts were overwhelmed with joy. We saw Him leave his house, his white turban glistening in the sunlight. He came up the steps majestically and with a radiant smile greeted us with the utmost love and tenderness. His solicitation for our every comfort and well-being brought the realization to our hearts that we were indeed in the home of the “Lord of Hosts”. After expressing to Him our great happiness for the privilege of this attainment, we conveyed to Him the love of the western friends and of those in Egypt.

He spoke for half an hour on the love that exists between the Persians and Americans, saying that it was not a political interest, but a true love that existed in their hearts. He said that all the Americans who had gone into Persia went without desire for personal gain, nor to interfere with politics—but with Persia’s interests at heart. He commented at length on the joy of our meeting. After enquiring about President Wilson, He said that his task had been too great for one man; that the Peace Table must seat delegates from every nation in the world and when that happens its decisions will be effective and permanent. Universal Peace will only be brought about by a Universal Court of Arbitration. Then He left us and we watched Him walk up the road, feeling that all our worldly cares had ended and that here indeed we were in the hands of the Divine Physician, the Healer of all the wounds of the world.

UNIVERSALITY

The First Afternoon 16 November 1919

At three o’clock Shoghi burst in at the door with the words: “The Master bids you come to see Him!” Colonel and Mrs. Allison, were with us and a Mr. Denham of England, a traveller whom we had met on the “Karlsbad” and told of the wonderful Master in Haifa and his universal Teachings. He was so interested he asked us if it would be possible for him to see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá while the steamer waited in the harbour. We told Shoghi Effendi and he arranged this interview.

Across the street we hurried in joyous expectation. We entered a garden, approached a large stone house, entered a hall, severely simple, and a salon, large, bright, carpeted with a beautiful Persian rug of rich crimson pattern. On the chairs were plain linen covers and a small table stood in the centre of the room which was beautiful, yet simple, without other ornamentation. As we took our seats a wondrous peace and content descended upon us. We were at home in the home of the Master.

Soon the Beloved entered the door. He had just been lunching with the Bishop of Haifa and apologized for delaying us. We could have waited forever in his home for He seems to fill the whole house with the light of His Presence. He centred all his love, his kingly courtesy that afternoon upon Mr. Denham, his English visitor. He was so gracious, so brilliant, his smile so loving that Mr. Denham’s

face simply shone in response.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Here is the Holy Land. It is a very good place. From all parts of the world people desire to come here. This Mount Carmel has a very good climate. It is picturesque and has an ideal setting. Here at Haifa they need a good number of physicians. Its well-known physician is a Jew. There is no popular physician here.”

Mr. Denham asked: “Should the fundamental truths of this Cause be taught to children in the schools?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “In childhood it is easy. Whatever a child learns during childhood, it will not forget. There is a proverb in Arabic that says: ‘Teaching a child is like carving upon stone. It can never be erased.’ A child is like a fresh branch. It is tender. In whatever way you wish you can train it. If you want to keep it straight it can be done. But when it grows up, if you want to straighten it, it cannot be done except through fire.”

Mr. Denham: “Should the truths of this Cause be taught in Bahá’í schools or in all the schools?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered: “It makes no difference what school we enter or where we send our children. There are schools in Persia in which there are children from all religions. Whatever is universal is heavenly and whatever is personal is satanic. Then everything ought to be universal. It is clear and evident among the Bahá’ís that whatever is universal is heavenly and whatever is personal is human.

“Although the Christians say that all the world is for the Christians, yet this is the Bounty of God for all the people. Enough of these superstitions! People are so antagonistic to one another and wish to defeat each other. Praise be to God the Century of Light has come! It became evident that these ignorant superstitions are the causes of destruction. Why should not the children attend schools other than their own, so long as He has created all as human beings? All are the sheep of God and He is the kind shepherd. This is the Divine Policy. He would not leave any sheep unattended and is kind to all. The Divine Policy must be followed and therefore universality should be the rule.”

Mr. Denham: “Should truth be spread verbally or by writing?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Both. Real teaching is by action. Action has effect. One act is better than a thousand words. Jesus Christ says ‘by their fruits’ (actions) and not by their words. What is the effect of words alone? The real thing is action.”

Mr. Denham: “We have a saying in England—‘Example is better than precept.’”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Certainly. Action has made man eloquent. There is no eloquent language better than action. As long as the sun is bright, is it necessary that it should say ‘I am bright?’ There is no need for that.”

Mr. Denham: “The Master must be very tired with so many interviews.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Man, when he associates with sanctified souls, his fatigue passes away. Sometimes if I sit with a person for five minutes I become tired, while at other times I may sit with others for two hours and not become fatigued.”

Mr. Denham: “The atmosphere here is very peaceful.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It is very good provided you come and stay here. Then you will see.”

Mr. Denham: “If everyone who desired to come, came here, there would be no room.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “There was a society in Persia where the members sat in silence. By gesture they could know what was to be said, as for example, by the gesture of the hand. Whoever wanted to join the society had to give an application. Once there was one who wanted to become a member, but the president wanted to make the members understand that he was not fit to be accepted. There was on the table a tumbler and a pitcher of water. He filled the tumbler with water. His object was to make the gathering understand without talking. The glass was filled to the brim and both the members and the candidate understood. Then he who had applied took out a small piece of paper from his pocket and placed it gently on the surface of the water and the tumbler did not overflow. They clapped. By this he meant that his presence amongst them was exactly like that piece of paper and they accepted him right away. And now you are like that delicate piece of paper. However full it may be here you will find room.”

Colonel Allison asked if the war would have any spiritual reaction in the United States and in the world.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Yes. In the first place, people were very negligent. Especially in Paris no one would mention the name of God. I used to speak about God to many people and they would ask me to take another topic. It had reached to such a state, but now they realize and are better than before. The hearts have become a little more tender.”

Colonel Allison: “Since the cessation of war the spiritual impulse seems to have abated.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Those whose sons have been killed, naturally, their hearts are affected. They would like some one to talk to them about God and the spirit. For instance, a father and mother having had a son who might have been killed, they would like to know whether the soul of their son is immortal. As soon as they hear that his soul is immortal, their hearts are consoled. There were Germans here, some of whom had lost their sons, and they would come to me and ask me to talk to them about spiritual things. ‘Give us proofs of the immortality of the soul.’ I would ask them: ‘What for?’ They would say: ‘If the spirit is immortal, then our hearts are really consoled.’

“This war has been instrumental in partly awakening mankind and it has exposed the virtues of Universal Peace. All people are desirous of having Universal Peace

because they have suffered from this universal war. They do not want another war like it. Gradually racial prejudice will be dispelled. There will come a day when the German will say to the Frenchman: 'I am a Frenchman.' And the Frenchman will say: 'I am a German.' If the Government should like to wage war the people would not agree to it. They would say: 'If ye leaders have any war go and fight it out. We will not go. Why should we go? What is the use? If there is any use, it is for you; but there is no result for poor people like us. Our sons and property are taken while ye are in palaces and pavilions, enjoying delicious food and drinking wine. If war is good, go yourselves and fight. Ye simply eat and enjoy yourselves.'

"Ultimately all men will say we have no quarrel. This war has brought about these sentiments; such as sentiments of Universal Peace; also the abolition of religious superstitions, patriotic superstitions and all these which have gradually gathered together—and caused the war. It will reach such a state that if any one is in any place, he will say this is my home, and you (Col. Allison) will say Syria is my home.

"All have understood that war is the destruction of the foundation of humanity. It has no benefit save loss."

Mr. Randall: "This war has made all the nations poor."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The loss in this war will be felt in the future. All these strikes in Europe and America are the results of the war. Had there been no war, there would have been no such strikes. In Egypt the strikes caused an increase of thirty per cent in wages.

"His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh fifty years ago mentioned the evils of this war and said these things would happen, and that the cure is Universal Peace and the establishment of Universal Arbitration and that all nations should be included to solve these disputes. If the letters which His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh sent to the rulers of the world had been put into action, this war would not have occurred. What is the result? France needs fifty years to recover and become as before, likewise Belgium, Roumania, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Servia and Turkey, even Persia. Although Persia did not fight, yet her loss was great."

In the midst of this wonderful interview, the whistle of Mr. Denham's boat blew to call the passengers aboard. 'Abdu'l-Bahá urged Mr. Denham to stay two or three days. When he replied that he must go, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "perhaps" he would come back to Haifa on his return from Damascus. He went away with the words: "The Master has the most magnetic personality I have ever known in the world."

THE ONENESS OF HUMANITY

The First Evening Meal 16 November 1919

A little after seven that ever memorable Sunday we were bidden to dine at the table of the Master's bounty. We gathered, nineteen of us, in the large dining room which opened from the salon and one by one He placed us at the long table. Mrs. Randall was placed at the head, Colonel and Mrs. Allison at her left and right. He himself took a lowly seat at the side of the table, with Margaret, her eyes shining like jewels, at his left and saintly Ibn Asdak, the only surviving member of the "five hands of the Cause" in Persia, at His right. On the opposite side He placed the American friends, Dr. Suliman Rifat, a Turkish doctor from Constantinople, Mírzá 'Azíz'u'lláh Khán Wargha, the son of the famous martyr, and Mírzá Moshen, one of His sons-in-law, while at the end were Shoghi Effendi and Dr. Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím, who took down the divine words in Persian. On his own side of the table were Mírzá Maḥmúd of Bombay, who travelled with Him in Europe and America, Mírzá Asadu'lláh Faḍil, the learned Mullá, now a most effective teacher in Persia, and Shaykh Farajullah, the fiery but peace-loving Kurd. Fugeta, the Japanese Bahá'í, who as 'Abdu'l-Bahá said was "all love and service", immediately received the great privilege of waiting on the table. With Koshro, the Hindu boy whose mother had dedicated him to the Master's service, Fugeta served the friends with the delicious dishes.

Each evening we dined at that table descended from heaven. When he was well, Dr. Esslemont of England sat opposite the Master. Here we were—Persian, Arab, Kurd, Turk, English, American, Hindu, Japanese, Muḥammadan, Christian, Jew and Buddhist, gathered at one heavenly table by the power of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. Our hearts were united by the most wondrous love, the Centre of the Covenant of love shining and speaking in our midst. Our cup was full with joy at the commemoration of this oneness of mankind, a lasting, universal brotherhood in the Kingdom of the Father.

The Master sat there before us, at times silent, but when He spoke every word vibrated with power. As He talked of world conditions, his irresistible logic, the splendour of his universal mind, were a continual astonishment. As He paused, told a humorous story, laughed about Fugeta, heaped more food on Margaret's plate, his great love set all our hearts in uproar.

It is not the Master's human personality, attractive as it may be, but the light, the truth of God shining through his selfless spirit that makes Him so wonderful and his words like the Water of Life.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "East and West are gathered here. Very good! Whatever gathering establishes love and union among human kind is Heavenly Bounty. We hope that this gathering will become larger and that everywhere such heavenly meals may be prepared and be the cause of love and unity amongst people; so that discord may be extinguished and union established, disunion be put aside and the banner of the Oneness of the World of Humanity be raised.

"Many meetings are held in the world such as the meetings of merchants, meetings for politics, meetings for geographical research, meetings for the North Pole, etc. But our meeting is for the love of the Oneness of Humanity. For six

thousand years the world of humanity has been blighted, even history tells us this, and no doubt it was so before that. Mankind has been the slave of nature and in the world of nature there is disturbance. In the world of nature there is antagonism to the world of man; in the world of nature there is self-seeking and, briefly, in the world of, nature there is great disturbance. Man is saved from the world of nature by the Light of God, otherwise there would be darkness upon darkness. All the prophets and seers have come that the world of humanity may be saved from the claws of nature and that they may transform the world of nature into a world of light.

[Photograph: “East and West are gathered here!”]

It is now six thousand years that the world of humanity has been in darkness. There has been struggle and fighting. There has been war and conflict, enmity and hatred. Now it is sufficient, and something must be done to abolish them. Praise be to God, the bounties of God are many. Now is the time that the Light of Reality should shine and darkness be dispelled. God willing, this world will become the world of God. It is long enough for the world of man to be in the animal world.

“His Holiness Christ gave his life so that the world of mankind should be saved from darkness. But what a pity mankind is still in darkness. His Holiness Christ tried so much. At the end very few were saved—the disciples and the followers of the disciples. Again the world of nature prevailed and that radiance of Christ was veiled and the material darkness became intense.

“Sixty years ago they introduced the potato into Persia. There was so much superstition that they used to say that whoever takes it becomes an infidel. No one would eat it except those who would take it with wine. There was so much prejudice. If any one would eat it occasionally they would say he has become an infidel. Now see what Bahá’u’lláh has done. We are all gathered around one table, filled with love.

“In America we had a good number of heavenly and spiritual gatherings. One night in Washington there was a gathering full of spirituality. It was so effective the Turkish Ambassador wept. This was a great gathering. We also had good gatherings in Europe, such as in London, Paris, Vienna, Budapest and Germany. They were all spiritual meetings.”

Mr. Randall mentioned that there were about seven hundred people at the Feast of the Ridván in New York this year at the Convention.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “In future you will see far greater gatherings.”

After a long pause during which another course was served ‘Abdu’l-Bahá began:

“President Wilson left his work unfinished in Europe. Now they have made a plan that the British, French and Italian Governments will complete the work without America, for instance, the treaty with Turkey. The Senate in America decided that they will not be obliged to enter the League of Nations, because he

could not establish the League of Nations. If President Wilson had established the International Court of Arbitration, it would be permanent. Now he entered this war so that real justice might become apparent. But the other nations did not take up the burden. For instance, he announced the freedom of the nations, that each nation should be independent. It did not bring any result. The result was that America gave some of her youth and wealth, but to no effect. Perhaps it was not necessary. Because if the Court of Arbitration was not organized, then the result of the purpose of the war would disappear. The rights of all would have been preserved. Now it has no result. This war was without result....

“The only result of the war that has appeared is that this place (Palestine) is freed. Because England has taken this place. Palestine was greatly ruined, but when England came it was released. Baghdád was freed. There will come a day when this country, especially Baghdád, will progress greatly. Mesopotamia will progress greatly. Especially good results will appear here, for the population could not better their own condition. It is necessary for her to be under the power of a strong nation. Nothing could be better for her than England.

Just as with Egypt. From the time that England came there it progressed very much. I know that fifty years ago the revenues there were eight million pounds, now they are thirty million. One feddan (about an acre) of ground was worth fifteen to twenty pounds; now it is worth five hundred pounds it has progressed so much. There were no high schools except schools for theology. There was only one school for religion in Alexandria. Now it has twenty-four schools. The revenues in cotton were thirteen million bales, now they are fifty million, for it has improved so much. If it had been under the old Government it would not have progressed at all. They cannot administer for themselves. It is necessary that they be under the protection of another power. England has revived them. India was in a very bad condition and the kings of India were great oppressors. England freed the people of India from the grip of their kings. Before England went to India, no one was safe with his life and property.

“If America accepts the Mandatory of Turkey it will be very good, because there is continual fighting between the Kurds and the Armenians. In Anatolia there is continual killing amongst them. If America accepts, it will cease.

“We pray that all these may pass away. God willing, the world of humanity will find rest; the existing competition between the powers may pass away. Thank God we are free from all these questions. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has emancipated us. With us, all are the same. All countries are one. We have no conflict with any one. Any government which is based on justice is appreciated. Whatever government it may be, as long as it is just, it is acceptable. Any country is our country. Wherever we go, that is our country. Bahá'u'lláh says: ‘The world is one home. There is no glory for one who loves his country, but for one who loves the world.’ We are free and apart from all these questions.”

GOVERNMENT

Luncheon 17 November 1919

After spending the morning translating the Master's talks of yesterday, we were most happily surprised by the announcement that He was coming to have lunch with us. We did not realize at this time that this bounty was to be ours each day. Luṭfu'lláh, who was continually helping us in every way, exemplifying with glowing radiance the Abhá spirit of love and service, spread the table, with Fugeta's help. Soon the Master arrived with a joyous smile and greeting, placing each of us at the table, nine in all, with Margaret next to Him.

Dr. Esslemont quoted from Bahá'u'lláh's Glad Tidings: "Although a republican government profits all the people of the world, yet the majesty of Kingship is one of the signs of God. We do not wish that the countries of the world should be deprived thereof.' Does this mean that a hereditary monarchy, such as England is preferable to a form of government whose head is elected for a period of years as in the United States?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Actual despotic government is undesirable. A republican form of government is good, but a constitutional monarchy is better, because it combines both kingship and republic. It is a form of government with a distinctive head."

Dr. Esslemont: "Is there any advantage in having a permanent ruler?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "In case we have no permanent ruler we shall have a republican form of government and having a republican government that form of government will lead to dissension and oppression during the election times. Then Justice will not prevail.

"I was in America when Wilson was elected. There was so much dispute between Taft and Roosevelt. One would say Wilson is good, and one would say Taft. This was the general conversation and there was constant dispute and conflict. The papers were in discord. In public gatherings, even in churches, there was distraction. Secretary Bryan and his wife came to me in 'Akká. He came a second time. When I went to America I wanted to meet him. He had no time. He was making speeches every day. In short, he had no time. Once every four years there is an election."

Dr. Esslemont: "If the king is unworthy does the parliament have power to remove him?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The parliament can remove him, certainly. In a constitutional monarchy the king has nothing to do. All the affairs are settled by the cabinet and the parliament of the nation."

Dr. Esslemont: "Will parliament appoint the Prime Minister?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "No, the King will appoint the Prime Minister, but he will be responsible to the parliament of the nation. He will be responsible before the members of the parliament and if he is at fault he will be dismissed. The

difference lies in this that when there is a distinctive head, a kingdom has a dignity of its own. For example, take France and England. In France there is no dignity attached to the Government, but in England there is more of it."

Mr. Latimer: "We always speak of the Kingdom of God and not the republic of God. Earthly things should be the counterpart of the spiritual world."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Well said. In London the Persian Ambassador came to me. He said there is some discussion between England and Persia about a certain matter. Sir Edward Grey has said the matter must be so. I came to Paris and the Turkish Ambassador came to me. He said that with regard to a certain matter the President of the Republic says so and so, but we left the matter pending. Very soon there will be a new election and perhaps there will be a President who will agree with our ideas. But of that matter in London the Ambassador said 'Impossible'. As long as Grey says, 'Do so,' it must be done. The President of the Republic will certainly be dismissed but Grey will remain. That is why He (Bahá'u'lláh) says a constitutional monarchy is better, because it combines a republican form of government and a monarchy."

Mr. Randall: "In such a case will there be any princes and nobles?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "He who serves (the government). No one can say that I must be respected because my father has been a general. A person who does not serve the nation will not have any distinction, although he may be respected. He will be respected because of the services of his father. So far as offices are concerned, he will be given no preference; but he who serves must have the mark of distinction. It could not be otherwise. Were it not so, no one would care to serve. For instance, Bismarck. What a great service he performed. He raised Germany. But after he had gone, they enjoyed no special distinction. Consider this, that Germany had seventy million population. One person made this Empire and raised it. This person was wise. But seventy million caused its downfall. One person was better than seventy million. One perfect man is better than one hundred million imperfect men."

Dr. Esslemont spoke of a Tablet in which it said only the Words of Bahá'u'lláh were to be read in the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. "Does this mean that the Words of the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá are not to be read?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "There is no harm in it. But the essential thing is the reading of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh. The Prayers of His Holiness the Báb are also good. If it becomes necessary to have an explanation of some topic that comes up, they may refer to the Words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

Dr. Esslemont: "Are not 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Words the same as those of Bahá'u'lláh?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Yes. Bahá'u'lláh in his explicit texts says: 'He ('Abdu'l-Bahá) is the Expounder.' I have no opinion of my own. Whatever is His Blessed Will I carry out."

Mr. Randall expressed the desire that for many months he had longed to be at the table of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and [noted that on] the night of our arrival ‘Abdu’l-Bahá broke bread for us.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Praise be to God, we are together in the utmost love. This table which is here is the same as the Lord’s Supper during the lifetime of Christ. Because the Lord’s Supper was a gathering for the promulgation of the Cause of God, so that it may attract mankind through love. I hope that these will be like that also.”

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

The Evening Meeting 17 November 1919

Each evening shortly after sunset the friends of the East and the West about Mount Carmel gathered in the Master’s salon. The Master spoke a few words of greeting, and one or two of the Persians heavenly melody chanted the prayers and Tablets. The Master sat silent as though lost in prayer, while the waves of peace flowing from Him seemed to fill the room. Then He gave a short address upon the early days of the Cause or about the divine principles of Bahá’u’lláh and the meeting ended. We rose refreshed as though bathed in a river of light.

We thought of the friends at home and longed to held such meetings in America, that the Centre of the Covenant might come in a spiritual aeroplane and abide in our midst. Later ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expressed our desire in a talk at dinner.

After the evening meeting those of us who were to dine with the Master waited and chatted with the friends, our joy singing in our hearts, until the dining-room door opened and we beheld the Beloved inviting us to take our seats at the table of unity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “We had at one time very great sufferings and persecutions. We were greatly harassed at ‘Akká. Praise be to God that you came here in the utmost joy and happiness. Mr. Mills came and wanted to see me. It was impossible to come near, because there were so many guards around us. He came several times and finally saw Me from a distance. Now you have come in the utmost freedom. Day and night you are here and we can be together. Some of the Bahá’ís of Persia have come here on foot. They could not enter ‘Akká. When it was understood they were Persians, they were not allowed to enter. They used to go to the plain from which they could see the room of the Blessed Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh). They would weep after looking from afar and then return home. One of the most sincere and loving friends came and gazed from afar. He wept a great deal. After weeping much he returned. On his return to Persia, he was recognized and was killed. He became a martyr. He was from Yazd. From his native town to ‘Akká was a two months journey. He came all the way on foot....

[Picture: The prison room of Bahá'u'lláh.]

“When you hear Persian music it will sound strange, but after you become accustomed to it you will enjoy it very much. Now if there were a Universal Language, how excellent it would be. We could talk with each other. How excellent it would be. Compare this with all the world, the greatest means for love is a Universal Language. It creates love amongst mankind. For the language of the Kingdom is one, it is the language of the hearts. Hearts create amity with each other. In the same way that the language of the Kingdom is one, so also should the human tongues be one. Then it will be perfect. Hidden and manifest, inner and outer, will become one.

“A Turk came here and one of the inhabitants told him, ‘You are the light of my eye.’ This he said in the utmost love. The Arabs use this expression to convey the utmost love. In Turkish it (ain) means a bear. So this man picked him up and threw him on the ground. One who knew the language came and said: ‘What are you doing?’ He replied, ‘This man calls me a bear.’ The other avowed, ‘By God, I say the light of my eye.’ But praise be to God, that despite the fact that Bahá'ís do not know one another's language, they understand with their hearts and become infinitely happy.

“What did you do with Mr. Remey?”

Mr. Latimer: “He was teaching in the New England states. Although he longs to be here yet he is happy in teaching there.”

‘Abdu'l-Bahá: “Mr. Remey is very good. He works very hard. He is very restless. He is continually travelling from city to city. He has not left a place unvisited. He has gone everywhere, even to India. I am going to send him to Persia so that he may be one day in the East and one day in the West.... His soul has a great future.

“There are some Bahá'ís in America who are very good souls. I know them all. They serve the world of humanity and they love all the world. They have no enmity. They sacrifice their lives for the world. But the tests which have been in the East have not yet been in America. For their property was pillaged; they were persecuted and abused; and in the end they were martyred. In Yazd on one day two hundred were killed and all their property was pillaged. Even the women and children were martyred. Some of them would even give sweets to their executioners so that their tongues might be sweetened. They did not take the offensive themselves, although each one of them was courageous enough to overcome ten persons. They had no fear. They never knew when they were in their homes, at what moment ten or twenty persons armed with swords would arrive. They had no fear.

“In the beginning of the Cause they used to defend themselves. One of them would overcome twenty or thirty. Then when they understood the Teachings, they no longer defended themselves.”

Dr. Esslemont: “Did the Báb instruct them to defend themselves or did they do it in ignorance?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “They did not know the Teachings. It was in the beginning of the Cause, and the Teachings were not spread and they were not aware of them. They used to defend themselves bravely. One hundred and ten were in the fortress of Ṭabarsí. They were fighting. Repeatedly they overcame. They were surrounded in the fortress by the army with its cannons and guns. They had nothing but swords, yet they always defeated the army. One night they attacked the army entrenched in a series of seven fortifications, each with troops and guns. The one hundred and ten came out and arrived at the first fortification, broke through and routed them. The soldiers of the first fortification fled to the second. The night was dark. They thought these were the enemy, and so they killed their own soldiers. They had no flares then to throw into the air by their guns. Each garrison would capitulate to the next one. They defeated all the seven garrisons. On that very night the Babu’l-Báb was martyred.

“They besieged the fortress of the Bábís so that for eighteen days they had no bread. After the eighteen days, during which they were without food and starving, the enemies came and made a covenant that they would not harm them. They took an oath to it: ‘We will leave you alone.’ They dropped their swords, came out and entered the camp of the enemy. For eight days they had eaten nothing. They were invited to eat. While they were eating ten regiments arrived and killed them with their spears. Such was their bravery. Now if a Bahá’í wishes to attack, he can overcome ten. He has no fear. But the Teachings forbid them to defend themselves. If they are attacked, they have no desire to defend themselves. This is why the people of Yazd killed two hundred of them. They offered no resistance.”

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The Evening Meal 17 November 1919

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “I remember the time we were in America. There were several of us travelling. Those were good days. They were all full of the commemoration of God. There were no mentionings save those of God. Especially in Chicago, there was a children’s meeting. I had them gathered. It was very good. They were very spiritual children. There was a little girl there. Jokingly I said to her: ‘I want you to marry this boy.’ She said: ‘I want an Eastern husband.’”

Mr. Latimer mentioned that he had received a letter from Miss Alma Knobloch telling of the commemoration of the children’s meeting in Esslingen, Germany.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Consider the power of God. Such a small woman! She is confirmed in service. She is greatly assisted. When a person compares her success with her physical body, a hundred people will not be so assisted as she—this woman is so short. That is why the confirmations of God are necessary.

“We were at ‘Akká when Kamál Páshá became Prime Minister. His brother became the Governor of ‘Akká. In Turkey the brother of the Prime Minister can do whatever he wishes. No one can object to him. One day he came with a carriage and we went out together. On the way I noticed he had a hunting outfit and he had four or five large hunting dogs. A gazelle was sighted. These dogs chased after it.

“One of the Bahá’ís had a small dog. An Arab Bahá’í. He also had come. These five dogs of the Governor did not catch anything. This little dog caught a large gazelle. The Governor became ashamed. When the dogs returned he began to beat them. He said: ‘What can I do, the Bahá’ís are assisted. These five large dogs of mine could catch nothing, but this little dog did.’ He dismounted and took the little dog in his arms and kissed it. He told the owner of the dog that he would not give the dog back to him.

“The idea is this, that Miss Knobloch has attracted the people. There is a large man, Mr. Herrigel, very large. She converted him.”

Colonel Allison asked about the present and future of Syria and Palestine.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Palestine, it is clear, will be for England, and Syria will remain in the hands of France. France will hold Syria, temporarily, but in the end it will come under English control. Now France will remain there temporarily. Syria will progress. Especially Palestine, in the same way as Egypt. Egypt has progressed very much under the English.

“If the Muḥammadans, Christians and Jews unite, there will be great progress. The Jews are unpopular now, but they will progress, and they will come here to reside. In the Books of the Prophets this promise has been given and in the Tablets of the Blessed Beauty for the Jews of Persia, He has written that the promises which have been given to you, ‘that you will be gathered together’, will be fulfilled. Forty years ago He wrote this. Many of the Jews of Persia have become Bahá’ís and blessed souls have entered the Cause.”

Question: “Will all the Jews return to Palestine?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Some of them will come, but not all. There are twenty-five million of them in the world. They cannot all be gathered in Palestine, for there is not room. There is room for one million more Jews. No more than that.”

Mr. Randall: “How long did Bahá’u’lláh reside in Haifa?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Several times He came here. He remained for a month or two.”

Mr. Randall: “Will not the economic problems be solved first in America and will the United States be able to lay a just foundation and be an example to the world?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Certainly. The economic question will have great importance in Europe and America. This question is impossible of solution except through the

Religion of God. Day by day it is settled, then it comes up again. It cannot be settled save by the Religion of God. Labour will not be satisfied in any way. In Egypt, for example, wages have been increased thirty per cent. Notwithstanding this they are not content. Where there is an agitation of the masses, it will not be quieted, until it reaches its climax. At last, things will come to such a state that they will say: 'The factories belong to us and the capitalists will get their share from us.' It will come to that. 'We will apportion the share they ought to receive, for instance, one-tenth.' They will take nine-tenths. Everything will become chaotic. At last it will reach such a state that the world of humanity will come to an absolute stand-still. Even the labourer will go hungry. Then absolutism will return, so that the Government may remedy it. For instance, if the workmen of a factory strike, it will be useless; the Government will become so powerful. Nothing save the Religion of God will solve it. Nothing save the Religion of God. This will include both; the capitalists and labourers will be freed.

"The solution begins with the village, and when the village is reconstructed, then the cities will be also. The idea is this, that in each village will be erected a store-house. In the language of Religion it is called the House of Finance. That is a universal store-house, which is commenced in the village. Its administration is through a committee of the wise ones of the community, and with the approval of that committee all the affairs are directed.

SEVEN REVENUES

"First, whatever contributions are necessary, they obtain from the bank at interest. For instance, they borrow from the bank at three per cent and loan to the public at four per cent. Any farmer who is in need of implements, they supply and give him all his necessities. When the crop is harvested, it will be the first income (of the store-house). The first revenue is this. But this revenue is not equally distributed. For instance, a person may have a crop of one thousand kilos and this is only sufficient for his wants and living. From him nothing will be taken because he needs it all. If something is taken from him, he will remain hungry. But again, there may be one whose needs require one thousand kilos and his income is two thousand kilos. From him one-tenth is taken. Again, one needs two thousand kilos, but his income is ten thousand kilos. From him two-tenths will be taken. He needs two thousand kilos. If two thousand are taken from him he still has six thousand remaining. One has fifty thousand kilos, from him one-third is taken. One may have ten thousand kilos expenses, but has one hundred thousand kilos income. One-half is taken. The greater the income, the greater is the ratio (of taxation).

"Second: It is also the same with the cattle. They take proportionately the revenue from the cattle. For example, if a man has two cows necessary for his wants, nothing is taken from him. The more he has, the more is taken from him.

This is the second revenue.

“The third revenue of the store-house comes from one who dies without heirs.

“The fourth revenue comes from mines. If a mine is found upon the land of a person, one-third of it belongs to him and the remainder to the store-house.

“The fifth revenue is hidden treasure. If a person finds a hidden treasure (in the earth) he takes half of it, and the other half goes to the store-house.

“The sixth revenue. If it (treasure) is found on the way, also half of it belongs to the store-house.

“The seventh revenue is voluntary contributions. Of their own free will and with the utmost willingness, the people will give.

“These are the seven revenues, but there are seven fixed expenditures.

SEVEN EXPENDITURES

“The first expenditure: The store-house ought to give one-tenth to the Government, to the public treasury for the public expenses.

“The second expenditure is for the poor. The poor who are in need, those who are exempt, not those who are idle. For instance, if a person’s crop is burned or he has a loss in his business, and for this reason has become poor; these poor people are to be taken care of.

“Third: The infirm, who come to want and cannot work.

“Fourth: The orphans. To them also help must be given.

“Fifth: The schools. The schools must be organized for the education of the children.

“Sixth: For the deaf and blind.

“Seventh: Public health. Whatever is necessary for the public health must be arranged. Swamps should be filled up, water should be brought in; whatever is necessary for the public health.

“If there is something left over (after these expenditures) it should be given to the Great House of Justice. And thus there will be no want in the village. The people will not remain hungry, they will not remain naked. All will be in the utmost welfare and comfort.

“Notwithstanding this, it does not mean that all are equal. It cannot be so. For this reason, the prominent ones, the rich and the poor, will all be at ease. The people of the world are like an army. It has a general, officers and privates. It cannot be possible for all to be privates or all to be officers. Each of these ranks is necessary. But all of them from the leaders to the lowest should know their

duty. It is quite clear that a general cannot live like a private. For instance, the president of a republic cannot live like a working man. It would not do. This is the aim, there must be both those who direct and those who carry out the plans.”

Mr. Randall: “Would it not be a good plan to establish a Bahá’í village in America to carry out these ideas on economics so that the people could see them in action and follow their example?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Certainly. If a village is so organized the states will adopt the plan, and there will be contentment. Both the rich and the poor will be happy.”

Dr. Esslemont: “Will the Persian Government allow these villages to be organized in Persia?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The Government will not allow it. In future it will. Now it will not consent to this. The authorities do not permit it.

“If it is carried out in one village, it will be adopted in other places. If this is carried out it will be very good, but now each one is thinking of his own interest. That is why there is so much conflict. This must not be. If this system becomes established, then justice will prevail and there will be no war. In America I said to the Socialists: ‘These plans which you have will lead to no results. Suppose you take the property of the rich, what will you do after one year? All of you will be in need and will die from starvation. But it cannot be so for neither you nor the rich will be at rest.’ This question of strikes can only be solved through the Religion of God. In Egypt the labourer gets an increase of thirty per cent. Next year they will want more. They will strike. Then it will be doubled. Again they will not be satisfied. Finally they will say they want to be partners. Then both the capitalists and the labourers come to a standstill and affairs will be topsy-turvy.”

THE CAPTIVITY OF NATURE

Luncheon 18 November 1919

Luncheon was always the midday of spiritual joy and warmth, for during that hour we seemed to be in the household of the Master’s thoughts and in the freedom of His Presence. We watched for his entrance through the gateway, frequently with flowers in his hands and his cheery welcome: “Good morning—how are you!?”

Today He seemed unusually happy and his wonderful eyes embraced us with their light. We told Him of our stay in Paris and of the friends there. Whenever the Cause is mentioned the Master seems to become its living centre, its radiant light. ‘Very good, very good. I want you to stop in Paris on your return. I want you to illumine Paris. The first thing to do is to gather the friends together

in Paris, and with these gathered, encourage them to start meetings. Every evening in Paris they should meet and discuss means for teaching the Cause.”

[Picture: The Group of Western Pilgrims.]

We also spoke of the Chinese and Japanese we had met on the steamer “Lapland” and of our talks with them. “Try to meet them again on your return,” He replied, “especially the Japanese newspaper correspondent, and encourage him to come here and visit me on his return to Japan.

“If a delegation of Bahá’ís should go to Japan they will do splendid work, because the Japanese think their own religion is out of date. Even the Mikado realized their religion was out of date, and so he invited representatives from the different religions to Tokyo; from the Moslems, Christians and the Jews. But he did not like what their representatives presented. He intended to select one of the existing religions and promulgate it, but he cared for none of them. I was living at that time in ‘Akká under very severe restrictions and it was impossible for me to send a Bahá’í there. He would have done splendid work. They have eight million gods (laughingly). Ask Fugeta, he knows. Although he left there when he was young he is well aware of the condition.

“The conversation of the Japanese on religious subjects attracts the masses of the people. For example, they worship the sun. They say that all the contingent beings are in need of the sun. Without the sun nothing can exist, neither in the animal world, the vegetable [n]or the mineral world. Their existence is entirely due to the heat and light of the sun. So they have to worship that great luminous body. This appeals to the mass of the people. While in reality the sun with all its glory is nothing but a captive to nature. It has no will power, no intelligence. It cannot deviate a hair’s breadth from nature. It cannot control its own movement. It cannot even help from giving forth its rays. It is just the same as the other planets. How numerous are the fish in the sea, the jewels and the corals also! They likewise are captive in the hands of nature.

“So all the contingent beings, except man, are captive to nature. Man, however, has a will and acts in accordance with its direction. He discovers the reality of all things, while the sun is unaware of its own presence. Now man interferes with the laws of nature. He wrests the sword from the hand of nature and then strikes it.

“Man is a human soul and like the other animals should act according to the laws of nature. He should always live on the earth, he has no wings, no membranes such as the fish have. But he becomes a bird and flies through the air. He becomes a fish and swims over the ocean. This is contrary to the laws of nature. So it is with all his other achievements. Man’s achievements prove he is not subject to nature. His reason gives him power over nature.

“Nature lacks reason, will power. It cannot discover its own secrets; it cannot foresee the future; it cannot remember the past; it cannot make heavenly discoveries; it cannot communicate with the East and the West in one minute; it

cannot imprison the voice in a machine, and so on. This proves that the soul of man is above nature. This sun, with all its light, is a captive, it has no will power, but the spirit of man is above the sun. What is light anyway? A phenomenon, and if light is a standard for greatness, the glow-worm and benzene are preferable to man.

“Man’s body is overcome by the power of animals, such as the lion, leopard, wolf, snake; but with his spirit it is different. Then he has the upper hand. He can imprison them. The African boa-constrictor can be controlled by man and he takes the wild leopard and tames it to be as meek as a lamb.

“So it is evident that man has a spirit which is above other beings. That power can discover the mysteries of nature, the earth and the heavens. It can be in the East and organize vast enterprises in the West. These prove that in man there is a power greater than nature.”

Turning to Margaret, who was busy trying to peel some dates, the Master said: “Dates are good for digestion and create heat,” calling her his daughter, saying, “She is frank, her heart is pure.” He gave her the name “Bahíyyih”, an Arabic name meaning “full of light”, saying it was the feminine of Bahá, the name of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s sister, known as the Greatest Holy Leaf.

PROPHECIES

The Evening Meal 18 November 1919

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The Blessed Beauty has gathered the East and West together. For this reason we are very happy. It is not in fun, but is a serious matter. It is beyond comprehension. From the beginning of time to the present day such an event has never happened, that the hearts of the East and West should be united. There should be no differences between them.”

Margaret Randall told of the establishment of a Bahá’í Junior Magazine and asked for a name for it. The Master was told who had charge of it, and His face lighted up with a beautiful smile as He said: “The name is The Magazine of the Children of the Kingdom. Who writes it? This (name) is suitable for it.

“The Bahá’í children are more learned than the former wise men. His honour Ibn Abhá had two children. They came here. In reality it was apparent they were born Bahá’ís. They used to sit in the meetings and chant the prayers of the Blessed Beauty in the utmost sweetness. The brother of Mírzá ‘Azíz’u’lláh Khán Wargha, Rúḥu’lláh, was twelve years old. He used to sit and talk with the greatest eloquence. He would explain with proofs and arguments. At the age of twelve he was martyred with his father. He did not flinch at all. He had no wavering and no fear. One day Rúḥu’lláh came to me and said: ‘I have done wrong. Before they come and complain of me, I have come to confess.’ I said: ‘What have you done?’ He said: ‘I gave a slap to a child.’ ‘Why did you slap

him?” He replied: ‘He came and bothered me so much I became vexed. From the excess of anger I struck him. No doubt he will come and complain. Before he comes I have come to tell you. Have him come and give me a slap so that it will be atoned.’

Mr. Randall asked if the Master would speak on the fulfilment of Bahá’u’lláh’s prophecies, the Báb and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in general.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “There are many, very many. Some of them are explained in the book, *Some Answered Questions*. Refer to it. For instance, in the Old Testament the time is recorded as forty-two months. Again in the Old Testament it says each day is one year. Forty-two months are twelve hundred sixty days. This is evident and clear. It says forty-two months and also in several places it says each day is equal to one year. This date is the time appointed for the Promised One. According to eastern reckoning in the year 1260, His Holiness the Báb appeared. This corresponds to the year 1844 of the Christian era. In that year in America a strange event happened. On that night certain people left the city and waited. Until morning they remained outside the city waiting for the appearance of the Promised One. This is known in New York. His honour Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl has reported this in his book. It is thus recorded in the Old Testament. After the destruction of the Temple seventy weeks were to elapse before the appearance of Christ, that is, the coming of the Messiah. Seventy weeks is equal to four hundred [and] ninety days. After one year from the foundation of the Temple four hundred [and] ninety years elapsed, then Christ appeared.

In the same book there are many concerning His Holiness Muḥammad and his Imáms. There are many prophecies. For instance it is recorded that at the year 60 (AD 1844) the Promised One will appear. It was fulfilled. In the same way the late Shaykh Aḥmad and also Siyyid Kázim of Rasht and also Siyyid Muḥammad Akhlate and also Muḥyi’d-Dín have prophesied it. Briefly there are many. In the Traveller’s Narrative it is mentioned that Siyyid Muḥammad is of those who gave many prophecies of the future.

“Ra and Ghayn are the two letters which both the Moslems and Jews use in reckoning. Each of these two has a numerical value. Ra is equal to two hundred and Ghayn is equal to ten hundred sixty. Add two hundred to ten hundred sixty and it becomes twelve hundred sixty. It is clear that the appearance of the Lord comes (at that time).

[Picture: ‘Akká, the “most great prison” city]

“There are many prophecies but we do not use them as proofs. We prove the appearance of the Blessed Beauty in other ways. For the sun is in no need of having others say that it exists. Is this not so? Is there need for any one to say the sun is shining? Its own appearance is sufficient. So the knowledge which appears from the Blessed Beauty is quite sufficient. He has written books. I will tell you about one of them briefly, concisely. From the beginning of the world until now, no one has established his cause while in chains. His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh was imprisoned by two kings and was guarded by soldiers

and forbidden to meet any one. Briefly, under these conditions He raised His Cause. While in prison He established His Cause. Nothing can be compared to it from the beginning of time until now.

“He has prophesied all the recent happenings. (Turning to the Allison) You come one day and I will show them to you. He wrote to Napoleon (the Third) twice, at a time when he was in the utmost power and glory; to William also, addressing him clearly He said that ‘Thou wilt fall from your station. Do not boast. Hast thou not seen what has become of Napoleon? The same will befall thee. I hear the lamentation from Berlin. Although Berlin is at present in the utmost glory, I hear her cries. I hear her crying and lamenting.’

“He addressed Ṭīhrán, when the Sháh, Náṣiri’d-Dín, was in the utmost glory. He said: ‘O land of Ṭīhrán, agitation will befall thee and affairs will be upset.’

“Then He addressed Constantinople when the Ottoman Empire was in the utmost glory. He said: ‘O thou city between the two seas. Thy reign is that of the oppressor. Soon it will reach such a state that lamentation of the mass and women and children will reach to heaven.’ What He has said about the Ottoman Empire has come to pass. He said: ‘This ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd is an owl, and an owl does not live in a house.’ He foretold the end of ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd. Bahá’u’lláh was in the prison of ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd. While He was in his prison at such a time He made great addresses.

“He was like a king addressing his servants. The imprisonment of the Blessed Beauty was not like that of others. There were many officials who came there. The Governor of ‘Akká had tried for five years to receive an audience in His Holy Presence. He did not grant it. Every one knew this. While in prison He was in the utmost glory but all were humble (before Him). ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd had issued a firman (order) that the Blessed Beauty be not allowed to leave his room. Soldiers were on guard. If I should have gone there, they would not let me enter. Nevertheless the tent of the Blessed Beauty was pitched on Mount Carmel. Throngs of Bahá’ís used to come outside the city of ‘Akká to visit.

There were always sixty or seventy of the Bahá’í pilgrims there. No one would dare to speak. If you also were there, you would have been astonished.

[Picture: ‘The Barracks.]

“The aide of the Governor of Yemen, ‘Azíz Páshá, was on the steamer and sent a message to me: ‘Come, I want to see you.’ I went. He asked me: ‘Whose pavilion is this? It is visible from afar. It has no equal.’ I said: ‘This was the pavilion of Bahá’u’lláh, the tent of Bahá’u’lláh. This was the imprisonment.’ He said: ‘Is this the imprisonment of Bahá’u’lláh!’

“When we first entered the barracks it was very difficult. All were imprisoned in the barracks. No one was allowed to come out. Even when I wanted to go to the baths they would not let me. Tablets were revealed at that time which are still preserved, telling the Bahá’ís not to grieve, ‘for ere long these doors will be open and My Tent will be pitched outside the walls.’ For two years it was very

difficult. After two years we left the barracks. In the ninth 'year the Blessed Beauty left the city. He remained all the time outside 'Akká. Every now and then He used to visit 'Akká.

"We were all ordered to be imprisoned forever. All of us were to be imprisoned eternally. When we came here (Haifa) the governor sent for me and said, 'It is a firman of the Sultán that you should not leave the barracks.' He ordered the firman to be brought to him and it was read. It was written, 'Everlasting imprisonment.' I said: 'This is a lie. It has no truth.' The governor was surprised, exclaiming: 'This is the firman of the Sultán!' I replied: 'I cannot remain forever in this world. 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd cannot remain forever either. I will not remain in the world so that I may be forever in prison. It is certain that a day will come when I shall die and I shall be freed from this prison. Therefore this is a lie.'"

Mr. Randall: "What date was referred to in the Book of Daniel: 'Blessed is he who comes to the thousand, three hundred and thirty and five days?'"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "This date is reckoned according to solar time. From the declaration of Muḥammad thirteen hundred thirty-five years will pass according to solar reckoning. There will be a very blessed Cause at that time, this is reckoning from the Hijrah. Three or four years before 1917 the Jews interpreted it to mean the year 1917. They reckoned it according to lunar time. Now this reckoning according to lunar time is thirteen hundred and five years. Three years ago they were expectant. They wrote everywhere that the Messiah will appear. The Rabbis of the Holy Land wrote everywhere. Even a Persian Jew came to me. He said: 'In the year 1335 the Messiah will appear. It is certain. All the Rabbis are agreed upon it.' I said: 'Your Promised One was Christ. He came nineteen hundred years ago.' He said: 'He has not come. He must come in 1917.' I said: 'If He does not come, what then?' He replied: 'Strike me one hundred times with a stick.' In the beginning of the year (1917) I sent for him. He said: 'Wait until the end of the year.' The end of the year came and I sent for him again. He did not come. I sent for him several times, but he did not come. His name was Ishmael. He was a physician here, an oculist. No matter what I did he remained away until the poor fellow died."

Dr. Esslemont: "What are we to expect at the end of 1335? What shall we see?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Thank God you are still young. Universal Peace will be established; the Oneness of the World of Humanity will be established. No war will remain. The Teachings of God will be promulgated. One language will be adopted and spread. Misunderstandings will pass away and it will be very good."

Mr. Randall: "Will the geography of the world be the same then as it is now?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "There will be changes. There are places which are conclusively proved to have once been the sea. This has been caused by the great cataclysms of the universe. For example, the Himalaya Mountains are about nine thousand

meters high. It is one of the highest mountain ranges. On the summit there are many crustacean remains of the sea. They are innumerable. For instance the skeleton of sponges. Alkali is found there. So much is there, that it is impossible for it to have been transported. This shows that this was once the bottom of the ocean. On the island of Source in the Mediterranean Sea there was a great earthquake. It began to boil over and became a large island. Then it solidified. First it was liquid, then it solidified. It became a green stone. Then it gradually crumbled. Therefore the geography of the earth will not remain in one condition.

“There was a very large lake in Persia. It was very large. It completely disappeared and became stone. In a thousand or two thousand years time, it may boil again. Therefore the geography would change. It is natural.”

Mr. Latimer: “Will this change be sudden or gradual?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It will be gradual. Even the geologists say that America and Asia were once joined together. Now they are separated. This was, not so at first. These changes are accidental. Asia was joined in the north to America. The geologists are agreed upon this. Then the separation came.”

Dr. Esslemont: “A man from Aberdeen travelled from Búshihr to Shíráz in two days by auto.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Now automobiles run there from Búshihr to Shíráz. This century is very great. Many of the mysteries of existence will become manifest. Great inventions will appear and great discoveries will be made.”

A MESSAGE TO AMERICA

Luncheon 19 November 1919

Today the Master said that although He was very tired, his great love for us made Him feel that He always wished to be with us. The Master had arisen at midnight and corrected Tablets for four hours. In spite of his fatigue, however, He joked continually with Bahíyyih and Fugeta, causing several outbursts of laughter in which He joined most heartily.

During the course of the meal, Mr. Randall told Him about Grace and Harlan Ober’s little son Ronald. The Master was greatly interested and upon Mr. Randall’s request said: “Give to him the name ‘Azíz’ meaning ‘dear.’ It is from the Arabic.” Mr. Hathaway then asked for a name for his daughter Dorothy, saying that she was very full of light. The Master said: “I will give her a name from the Persian, ‘Mahpareh’. This is made from two words, ‘mah’ meaning moon and ‘pareh’ meaning portion. The translation is ‘a portion of the moon’.”

Mr. Randall: “Will the Divine Tablets brought by Aḥmad Sohrab and presented at the Convention in New York last spring be preserved in the Mashriqu’l-

Adhkár or delivered to the different regions to which they are addressed? They are now in our possession in a safety deposit vault in New York City.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “For the present it is better to keep all the documents in the safety deposit vault in New York. Then later you may put all of them in the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár. Hang them on the walls, not in a safe.”

Mr. Latimer: “On our return the first question the friends will ask is, “When will the Master return to America?””

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “We will see what God wants. If America becomes illumined, its illumination, like a magnet, will draw me there. If America will become the America I want it to become, I will surely come and I will go to all parts, to every state.”

At this juncture we were served a Turkish dish, a delicious fritter dipped in honey, called “mouthful of the judge”. The Master then told the following story:

“The Turks are fond of eating. In this respect they are like the monks for they like to eat very much. The judges are very fond of this dish. Once upon a time two men had a quarrel over a piece of land. It was a dispute over the boundary line. One of them invited the judge to his home for dinner. Afterwards the judge departed and changed the boundary line, taking a piece of land from the other. When the other one found this out, he invited the judge to his house for dinner and served him this dish. When the judge had eaten this delicious dish he went back, and as he had given the former man ten metres, he now reversed the boundary line and gave to the second one twenty metres, because the former had only served him eggs. When he was asked by this man, ‘Why did you give me ten metres and then take twenty metres from me?’ the judge replied: ‘The first line was based upon the egg, but this one was based upon the mouthful of the judge.’ So this dish received its name.”

Dr. Esslemont spoke of the passage in the Mysterious Forces of Civilization where it says that if one of the states afterward broke any article of the International Tribunal all the nations would rise up and exterminate it.

“What is meant by this passage?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “By this passage is meant that all the governments should, combine to overthrow and change an unjust government; and not the extermination of the people.”

Mr. Latimer: “Did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá dictate or write the Mysterious Forces?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “I dictated it.”

Mr. Latimer then asked concerning the authorship and authenticity of the Traveller’s Narrative.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The one who wrote the Narrative (not the Notes) received most of his material from me.”

Dr. Esslemont referred to the passage in the Mysterious Forces where it says that men who serve the House of Justice should receive their recompense from their private income. "Does this mean they should not receive any salary?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "It means they should not be bribed. There is no objection to their receiving a salary. When this book was written there was a great deal of bribery in Persia."

For our dessert we had some pine-fruit which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told us was considered very delicious in Persia. He took one of them and broke it with his own hands and handed a portion to each of us in turn. He then left us. Our hearts were very much moved that we should be favoured with so much of his attention when the affairs of the Cause and of the world occupied so much of his time.

THE WAR

The Evening Meal 19 November 1919

Mr. Latimer asked if this last war was the war of Armageddon.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Yes. What could be greater than this war? In this war all the people of the world took part."

Mr. Vail asked if the prophecy in the next to the last chapter of Daniel, where it says the King of the North and the King of the South will fight, referred to this war.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Yes, it is so."...

Mr. Randall: "If the present League of Nations does not include all the nations of the world, would it not be better for America to remain out of it?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Certainly. She should enter when all the nations are represented. Then it would be the International Court of Arbitration."

Mr. Randall: "Does not the dream in the last chapter of Daniel of the three persons clothed in white linen who stood on each bank and one on the waters of the river refer to this Revelation?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Yes. I have explained this in the book *Some Answered Questions*. Refer to it. It will become clear.

"The Blessed Beauty has freed us from all these quarrels and calamities, and has made us to be at peace with all nations and peoples. He left no room for quarrels."

Mr. Latimer: "Was the Bábí, Áqá Muḥammad-‘Alí, who was martyred with the Báb, killed with the first volley or the second?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "With the first one he was killed. He was mutilated. But the body of His Holiness the Báb was not hit by the first discharge."

Then Mr. Latimer asked about the taking of the body of the Báb to Tīhrán.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It is just as it is written in the Traveller’s Narrative. Read it in the Traveller’s Narrative. It is the same. All the other accounts are without foundation. Sulaymán Khán, the martyr, brought His Blessed Body to Tīhrán.”

THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Luncheon 20 November 1919

‘Abdu’l-Bahá called Luṭfu’lláh to sit with us at table, making nine for lunch. When Dr. Esslemont presented a translated letter from one of the Stuttgart friends, the Master’s face beamed as He said: “I am going to send you to Germany. You will find the friends there very enkindled. If you spend but one day there you will be most happy.” When told of the smiling faces of the German children, how they sat quietly for hours at the meetings, while our young American Bahá’ís were very restless, He remarked: “Activity is always better than rest. It is much better for the body to be active. Fu’ad, Shoghi’s little cousin, is restless all the day.”

The Master was shown the photograph of the Boston Bahá’í Unity House and a description of the house and the plan of its activities outlined to Him. He looked at the picture some minutes, then said: “Good house, beautiful.” He liked its being several stories in height and said: “Good system.” His joy was manifest as his beautiful face lighted up. He asked to keep the photograph and as He walked alone to his house after lunch, we saw Him stop in the road and again look at the picture. Then putting it under his arm, He passed through the gateway.

Mr. Latimer asked if it was not the idea for the friends to open up their homes, once in every nineteen days, for the Feasts.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “A group should come together every nineteen days. It is not optional, it is incumbent on them. In every, city they, should do this. For example, in Boston there should be a Feast by a group of friends. The purpose of the Feast is this — to enkindle the spirit of love and friendship, and that the friends should gather once every nineteen days.”

Mr. Latimer: “Should the Feasts be held on the first day of each Bahá’í month?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “No, any day. The purpose is to call a gathering and that gathering should be in the utmost love and harmony. This will promote to a great extent the spirit of love and amity.”

[Picture: “His Gate.”]

Mrs. Randall: “Should there be singing of songs as well as chanting of prayers in the meetings?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Yes.”

At this point cabbage was served and the Master said this was quite a German dish.

Mr. Latimer spoke of the first French prisoners he saw brought into Germany. They were served sauerkraut, but would not eat it, and so they were served it again at the next meal.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The captive is not in a mood of eating. There is a bird with a very sweet voice and it is also delicious eating. When it is captured it no longer eats and soon dies of starvation. There is a nightingale of Hama. It is not found elsewhere. It is very small, but it has a very beautiful voice. It cannot be taken to another city, but always is found there. If it is taken away it dies. They tried several times to bring this bird to ‘Akká, but it always died. It was a captive.”

Dr. Esslemont asked several questions concerning the House of Justice. The substance of the Master’s reply was:

That these Houses of Justice will not be in every village but only in the large cities, not the small ones. Each large city will have one and only that one. The surrounding villages will be under the control of this House of Justice. The national House of Justice of a country will be considered as a branch of the world House of Justice. For example, one branch in England, one in France, and so on. After a year they will all gather and elect an International House of Justice. This International House of Justice is like the present League of Nations, with one difference. The League is not representative of all the nations of the world, while the House of Justice will be. There are three stages—the local, national, and international. In the city the mass of the people elect a delegation or a committee and this committee appoints or elects the members of the local House of Justice. The members of the local Houses of Justice convene at some given place and elect directly the members of the national House of Justice, either from their own members or from others. This national House of Justice directs the affairs of the country. Then the members of the various national Houses of Justice convene and elect in the same manner the members of the International House of Justice. A uniform rule applies to all of them.

The tie that binds the House of Justice to the store-houses in the villages is that if there is any balance left in the store-house, after all its expenses are paid, it goes to the House of Justice. The House of Justice regulates the taxes. For example, in Haifa the tax rate is one-tenth. This is too much. Somewhere else it may be two-tenths, but that is not sufficient because the soil in that place may be very fertile.

Those villages around the big cities are represented by the House of Justice of that city. The village is the unit. Its wise men are chosen to administer the affairs of the village. For example, there may be a farmer who has no animals, implements or seeds, and this committee will help him. There will be universal banks and the council will borrow money from them and loan it to the people.

For instance they will borrow at three per cent and loan to the people at four per cent. The one per cent is for the expenses; and thus the village will have the storehouse.

Mr. Latimer: "Are the general storehouse and the House of Finance the same?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Yes."

Mr. Latimer: "In Mrs. Parson's Tablet it says one-third of all the treasures found or in the earth are given to the store-house, while in his talk to us the other evening ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said one-half. What is the distinction?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said: "There may be other differences besides these. Even if one-third is given to the finder it is too much for one person. Suppose he finds gold then surely one-third is too much to give him; but if one discovers coal it is a different matter. One-third may be given to him, or one-fourth. These matters are all used as examples. When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says so many sheep, or cattle, or one-tenth or two-tenths of one's income, these are merely used as examples to show the theory. These matters are determined by the House of Justice and not by the House of Finance."

"THE CAUSE OF GOD"

The Evening Meeting 20 November 1919

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "In Persia every night there are several meetings in different places, held in the utmost supplication and submissiveness. The rulers of Persia, Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh and Muḥammad Sháh, thought they could uproot this Cause. Such was their imagination. Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh thought he could annihilate it, like Nero, the Roman Emperor. No matter how they strove to extinguish this Light, it became brighter. They all disappeared while the banner of God was hoisted.

"Some of the relatives of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh claimed to be believers. Among them are his daughter and granddaughters. His daughter wanted to come here, but I sent her a wire not to come. It is strange that they have experienced this many times.

"When Christ appeared, all the powers tried to uproot His Cause. The governor as well as the people. Twelve times they were massacred. Most of the Christians were killed. Notwithstanding this, it continued to spread. Many people were killed, many houses were destroyed, people were imprisoned, but in spite of all this it spread.

"In France, Louis strove much. He killed many. He deported many from his country.

Then he began to realize that he had failed to uproot the Cause of Christ. At last he began to realize that he should uplift it. Then he summoned his ministers

and consulted them. He said: 'I see that our future is very bad. The more I try to extinguish this Light the brighter it becomes. I think this Flag of Christ will bring down our flag. Therefore before our flag comes down, let us yield to it.' They laughed at this. They were not thinking of the future. They were the embodiment of prejudice. It will be a cause of destruction. He quitted them. Then he sent for a Christian who was influential and trustworthy. He said: 'I have repented. I want to be under the Banner of Christ. I want to become a Christian. What shall I do?' He replied: 'Empty one of these temples, throw out all the idols, remodel it, raise up a bell and proclaim that on Sunday you will go to church for the proclamation of the Cause of Christ.'

"On Sunday, with his robes and all his ministers and all his family, he drove in state to the church, with dignity and glory. He entered and took off his hat. He asked a Christian to pray. All of them prayed. Then he came out and proclaimed that his religion was the religion of Christ.

"Now they have experienced this. Notwithstanding this fact, they are obstinate. Ignorance caused them to oppose.

"So also in the time of Muḥammad, for thirteen years they killed, pillaged, destroyed houses. Then He left for Medina. All the tribes and sects were against Him, and they went to Medina to destroy Him. God sent discord among them so that they could not do this. Ultimately it was uplifted. It dominated all sects and races. All had become believers. Now again they have experienced this and have seen what the result would be.

"Again the Persians did the same thing. They shed so much blood and later Nāṣiri'd-Dīn Sháh regretted it, but he was killed.

"Moses came. He advised Pharaoh and all the people. They did not pay attention. After the lapse of some time they realized they were at fault. Later Christ came. He led them, advised them and was exceedingly kind to them. They said, 'It is not true.' After some time they found out they had been mistaken.

"Then His Holiness Muḥammad came. He guided them, supplicating and praying. He said: 'Consider the bygone nations. They finally regretted. You must not do the same.' They did not listen and at last they found they were mistaken.

"The same is true now. His Holiness the Báb said: 'Do not resist so much.' They did not listen.

"Then His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh came. He gave so much advice, wrote so many Tablets and guided so many. Still they said: 'It is not true.' Now some have already found they were mistaken. Had they not opposed, it would have been better.

"Now see what influence it has produced, and how the Cause of God has brought us together, we who have been scattered. Our feelings were different, our opinions different. We were in the utmost enmity with each other. Now it has

gathered us in the utmost love and friendship; in the utmost humility and submissiveness, like one family, better than a family. Never has such a love been aroused.”

“YE MUST BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN”

The Evening Meal 20 November 1919

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “I remember the meetings, gatherings and churches which we attended in America. All the Bahá’ís here are very happy about your coming here. They are very happy.”

Mr. Randall remarked it was one of our great joys to be here to meet them.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The condition of man is pure at two stages of his life. One at childhood and one at the attainment of greatest wisdom. At childhood his heart is very simple. On that account he is loved, but the purity is from his weakness of will. When he reaches to the utmost wisdom, then again he is pure. But then that is on account of his supreme will power. If he is educated, his morals progress toward the world of perfection. The child has no worries, cares for nothing, but this is due to his weakness. He does not seek honour, he does not seek wealth, and so on. This is due to the weakness of his will power. When he reaches the stage of utmost wisdom, again he will have no cares. He is free from limitations. This is due to excessive power, the Power of God; for he has tried it and experienced it and has seen the unimportance of worldly matters, the same as the child has. This is what Christ says: ‘Ye must become as little children.’ ”

During the course of the meal ‘Abdu’l-Bahá noticed that Bahíyyih was eating only sparingly of the delicious Persian rice, and He said: “Rice, you do not like it? Rice is good, eat it. Perhaps you will not like the next course.” Then a large dish of beans was brought. The Master saw that Bahíyyih did not eat and He began to laugh, saying: “I will tell you a funny story. Referring to Margaret, I said, ‘Eat some beans.’ She did not.

“When I was in Paris, a wealthy man invited me to a restaurant to have dinner. For his sake I went. For each person’s meal they charged one pound. We sat at table. On the bill of fare was a statement saying: ‘Do not eat the first courses. The last one is the best.’ This person was a Syrian. I began to eat, but he did not. I repeatedly urged him to eat, but he said: ‘No.’ At the end of the dinner they brought a course which we could not eat at all. The Syrian tasted it and then left it. He became very disappointed. He said: ‘I have eaten nothing. Bring me some food.’ The waiter said: ‘I cannot, it is against the rule.’ It was very hard for him. He remained hungry and it had cost him a pound. (Laughing heartily.)

“In the same way that we are gathered here in the utmost love and friendship,

I hope that, God willing, we will meet in the Kingdom of Abhá. The essential gathering is there. That gathering is everlasting. There is no separation therein. This is our hope.”

Mr. Latimer remarked that some doctors claim that the minerals of the fruits are next to the skin and that when we peel fruit we lose the best part of it.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “There is a substance in the skin of the fruit which aids digestion. For instance in the skin of the grape there is an element which helps in digesting the grape. Of course the skin is hard, the same as with this date.

“Ishmael invited me to a meal. He had one special table and a general one. At the special table five were seated. Ishmael, myself and three others. At first a bowl of chicken broth was brought. It had been left till it was cold. It was like jelly. He took a bowl and said: ‘You must eat it with a spoon, thus. I will eat it with a spoon.’ Then roasted meat was brought. It was very good. The broth also was very delicious. Then vegetables were brought; after the vegetables, jellies. After these they brought pilau. In reality it was very delicious. He said: ‘I have brought a French cook to whom I give a hundred pounds a month. These dishes were prepared by him.’”

At the end of a many-course dinner, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá apologized for the simplicity of his meals, saying that perhaps we were accustomed to and preferred such European dishes to the plain Persian food. We felt sure that He who knows the hearts realized that material food meant little to us at this time.

A MESSAGE TO THE JEWS

Luncheon 21 November 1919

Shortly after breakfast, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá suddenly appeared in the doorway. He had heard that Dr. Esslemont, having had a relapse, was confined to his bed, and in tender solicitude had come to see him. With words of cheer He left him, saying that as He had suffered a great deal at Haifa, the Doctor was receiving a similar bounty by suffering a little. Gladly would we all have been sick for the blessing of a similar visit.

When He returned for lunch, the Master was in radiant spirits, recounting to us several amazing stories bringing out the humility and greatness of Christ.

Mr. Latimer spoke of the attraction of a number of Rabbis to the Cause and that the Message had been given in a number of Synagogues, but apparently their interest had waned.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Its influence still remains and it will flame up. All of you, your major work is service and giving the Message.”

The Master gave a vivid reproduction of his talk to the Jews, in substance:

“In one of the American cities I was invited by the Jews to speak. As they had strong enmity, it was now the time to prove the validity of Christ. The Jewish Rabbi came to me and protested that I had spoken in churches, so why not speak in a Synagogue. I told him: ‘Maybe you will find my talk against your ideas. If so will you stamp and whistle?’ He assured me they would make no disturbance. I replied: ‘You may do whatever you like at the end of the service, but do not disturb me until I finish speaking.’

“Then I spoke extensively on their history. After preparing them in detail with their own history, I told them that Christ did not appear when they were in manifest glory. Had they followed Christ they would have become the beloved of all regions. But they did not follow Christ, except some of the members who were very poor. Some were fishermen. The Jews did not follow, but Christ established His Cause and the lowly ones became great, such as Peter, John, Paul and so on. See to what glory they have attained, and how they are worshipped. And, being Jews, they have glorified you. But you have denied them and brought shame upon yourselves. The fishermen did not act in this way. If you had followed in their footsteps you would have attained eternal glory.

“O ye Jews, ye believe that Christ was the enemy of Moses. That He has destroyed his edifice, abrogated his law and changed his regulations. If that is the case we shall leave Christ also, because Christ has admitted He is a man of God, a prophet of God, the Bible is a divine book and the Mosaic law is divine. For Him to believe He is a prophet and is divine and at the same time be his enemy, this cannot be so.

“We should investigate the truth. Refer to history. You have striven for eleven hundred years. Have you caused the name of Moses to reach Constantinople? If you mention the name there, they say they have never heard of it. The Bible had not reached Damascus. But Christ spread the Bible all over the world and had it translated two hundred times. Can you find a single home in America without a Bible? Who did this? Had Christ not come, the name of Moses would not have reached America. Christ has proven that the Jews are the chosen of God. Only Christ has proved that Daniel, Solomon, Moses, Jeremiah, etc., were all Prophets of God.

“Is this the conduct of an enemy or a friend? You must be just. Consider to what an extent Christ has promulgated the teachings of Moses. Ask the people in America who is Moses. They will say: ‘He is a man of God, the Torah is the book of God, his law is the divine law.’ Ask them: ‘Who is Aaron?’ They will answer: ‘A Prophet.’ So also with Solomon, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, all of these. Does this hurt Christ, this confession? No. And if you will say Christ is a Prophet of God there will be no more conflict. What harm can there be in it? For two thousand years you have been killed and dispersed only because of these two words. Had ye admitted Christ was a Prophet of God none of these things would have happened.

When I had finished one Jew got up in the audience and said: ‘Henceforth I am

no longer a Jew.”’

“THE CALL”

The Evening Meeting 21 November 1919

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “If I speak in Persian you do not understand. It matters not whether one speaks Persian or English. Hearts are attracted by the fragrances of God. I was just now saying there were several calls in the world. There is the call of war, there is the call of politics, there is the call of peace, there is the call of commercial interests, there is the call of the churches, there is the call of the Jews. There are innumerable calls. These calls have no effect. The call which pulsates in the heart of the world is Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá! This is the life of the arteries, it pulsates. There are other blood vessels which are inactive. This is the call which creates activity. This is the call which gives life.”

“THE BLESSED TREE”

The Evening Meal 21 November 1919

At supper, Fu’ad and Riaz, the two three-year-old grandchildren of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, were both seated at one end of the table. their faces shining with joy and happiness for this privilege. We learned that before dinner, the Greatest Holy Leaf had told Fu’ad that as he had been there all the day, it were better for him to go home for dinner. He quickly left the room, going direct to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and complained of this. He replied with loving kindness: “Of course you can stay with me for dinner.” Immediately Fu’ad returned triumphant to the rest of the family, saying: “Now you see the Master wants me to stay with Him.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said of Margaret: “Your daughter has a sincere heart, very sincere and pure. She should have a Bahá’í education so as to develop a heavenly character and become a proficient teacher. She will become eloquent and speak in large gatherings and I will supplicate the Blessed Beauty that He may confirm her, so that she will attract many souls and speak with great power. In her time the Blessed Tree will give forth fruits. Now it has given leaves, but in her time it will bear fruit.

“If the question of violation had not occurred, now the Blessed Tree would have borne fruit. It was near its blossoming, but this delayed it. If it had not been for violation, what would have been the condition of America! They have made the people indifferent. When the Cause was ablaze, it was as though water had been poured upon it. Just the same as in the time of Christ. It has retarded the progress of His Cause, as Arius did. One million and a half souls were his followers even the Emperor at Constantinople. Arius was very eloquent. He

proved the existence of something that did not exist. But the Ocean of Christ sent forth a wave and cast ashore Arius and all."

Mr. Randall remarked that he wished Bahá'í, his son, was at table with the Master's little grandson. He seemed to be so happy at the evening meal with us.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "God willing, a day will come when he will be at this table. In America on your return prepare Feasts in memory of these gatherings. They will be rejoiced. In the same way as we have done. First read the prayers and the Tablets of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. Give speeches. Then give a supper and at table have interesting talks. Then your talks will bring joy and happiness, also pleasure and contentment. The encouragement to activity must be so great as to bring happiness."

Mr. Randall: "We will go back and hold these Feasts just as the Master has said."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "I also supplicate to the Kingdom of Abhá and beg the utmost assistance and confirmation for you."

"BY THE WAY OF THE SEA"

A Day at ‘Akká 22 November 1919

‘Abdu’l-Bahá had said: "The first fair day you must all drive to ‘Akká. Let us hope it may be fair tomorrow."

"Some day ‘Akká and Haifa will be connected as one large city, with a long breakwater, sheltering harbour and docks, and a driveway through orange groves, skirting the sea. The ships of all nations will be seen here, commerce will thrive, and the Bay of ‘Akká will be the centre of the pilgrimage of the world; the sovereignty of world reverence.

[Picture: "By the way of the sea!"]

The dawn ushered in a jewel of days, matchless in the hands of the Maker of days. Bright and early Shoghi appeared and said: "You will go to ‘Akká today." After our hasty breakfast the Master came to us, looking radiantly happy. All was in readiness—two wagons, each drawn by three horses abreast and Esfandiari in attendance, the faithful and loving coachman of the Master, as shining as the Master's horses he has so devotedly lived with and groomed for a dozen years. The Master seated us all, including in the party Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím, Fugeta, Dr. Rifat and Shoghi Effendi. Then He said: "I send you on my behalf to the Holy Shrine." There is something so vibrant in his voice that it stirs the heart—perhaps the recalling echo of a forgotten past, or the first melody of an awakening future, maybe just the gladness of this day of Promise.

Along the hard road of the mountainside, past walled terraces and groves, through the narrow and winding streets of Haifa we passed out to the beach way—the way of the sea. It is a joy to ride through the spending waves, over the firm, rippling sand, passing caravans of camels and little donkeys bearing a man's load. One feels as though he had moved back centuries into the living history of Bible times, really breathing the atmosphere of the Holy Land. It was just so two thousand years ago, perhaps more, for 'Akká like the sea has no age; there is no record of its not being.

The brilliant sunshine moved over the slopes of Carmel in the morning blues, this Mountain of God, that like a sentinel has guarded the secrets of the land of prophets, and opposite, the white domes and minarets of 'Akká looked in the distance like the silhouette of a shining city of mystery, mentioned in Muḥammadan tradition as "Blessed is he who has seen the One who is in 'Akká." We had travelled five thousand miles and before us was the city of our desire, not because it was 'Akká, but because it was the fortress city of the "most great prison" of Bahá'u'lláh, the exiled home of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the scenes of the moving spirit of the new Gospel. History in time will eagerly search, as we did, every corner and nook for the speaking presence of the little band of seventy-two exiles imprisoned here in their warring for God.

The last of these steadfast companions of Bahá'u'lláh (except 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Greatest Holy Leaf), Áqá Ḥusayn, met us at the barrack walls and conducted us through the fortress which for two years was their prison home—as remote from the world as their nearness to Heaven. Through all the narrative of scenes and incidents shines forth the splendour of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Servant of God, his sacrifice and tender service, the patient suffering, the wise Master, and through it all the joyous companion, as for two years time measured the days by the twilight of a sun-forsaken place. Such humility, reverence and love, is seen only through the sight of a heavenly illumined heart.

In the "most great prison" cell overlooking the sea, with nineteen rafters and three large cross beams, Bahá'u'lláh was confined for two years. A stone cell without bed or chair, the hard stone floor its only resting place. Here dwelt the Manifestation of God, ignored by the world and persecuted by man—the repetition of history. But God's ways are not man's ways and the Kingdom of Love, the Glory of God, silently dawned, and its light was the sign of His Coming. Surely the Kingdom of Heaven cometh not by observation.

By a little barred window, Bahá'u'lláh used to stand and show himself to hundreds of pilgrims a mile away. These devoted followers, who left family and home in far-away Persia, crossed sand deserts on foot in the weltering sun with scanty food, for just one look of recognition, one hand wave of acknowledgement from "Him whom God would manifest".

[Picture: The prison window of Bahá'u'lláh.]

Denied His Presence they wept in joy to be even thus near the Blessed Beauty. They knew The Presence, these disciples of the Cause of World Unity, and that

the Most Great Peace will shine forth when the brooding veil is lifted.

But to continue on our way, we passed into another similar room in which thirteen members of the household lived, and adjoining, the room which the Purest Branch occupied, the brother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He died in this room, and Bahá’u’lláh granted his last request—that the doors of communication with the outside world should be opened. Truly the narrative of this exiled life is one of foot sores and chain marks, of prison life made tortuous with vermin and sickening food, and yet these very walls echoed with the chants of praise and glory to God.

Emerging again into the sunlight, we proceeded to the flowering Riḍván, a mile or so away, the garden of Bahá’u’lláh in later years. The Riḍván is a little Emerald Isle, and one crosses the small river that separates it and seems to run through it. The trees were brilliant with oranges and lemons, the tall date palms reared over all, with great clusters of ripe dates, striking red pomegranates appeared through the foliage, and although not in flower season, many beautiful flowers were still blooming. The seasons overlap here, and linger while winter passes by and spring hastens. In some corner it is always summer and fruit yielding. In the midst of the garden there are two giant mulberry trees beneath which Bahá’u’lláh loved to sit, and many of His Tablets were revealed here, Tablets that bring the breath of a new age—“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” saith the Lord.

Down the garden walk we reached the little house which Bahá’u’lláh occupied. One views with strange emotions the sacred room, furnished just as He left it; one can hardly realize that here one stands in the same plain room wherein dwelt the Temple of the Glory of God. The chair, the bed, tea urn and table, the most simple of needs for the Ruler of All Things; but in all this pilgrimage one finds no earthly treasure. The world in time will lavish its wealth to adorn the footprints of the Spirit. Returning to the centre of the garden, under the mulberry trees lunch had been spread—pilau and fruits of all kinds from the Riḍván. The Master had provided for every comfort and need. Truly He is a lordly host.

[Picture: The Feast in the Riḍván.]

One would like to linger in this beautiful garden and sink into the atmosphere of its peace, but it is only one of the abodes of Bahá’u’lláh and now we were to go to the Bahjí Palace, visiting by the way the little Bahá’í cemetery which marks the end of the pilgrimage upon earth of the visitors of exile. Cut in the white marble stone of the Purest Branch is inscribed, “O Thou Eternal One. Thou hast returned to Thy Lord.” Verily the mystery of origin and return is here recorded. We stood by the grave of the mother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, she of whom Isaiah spoke, “Thy Maker is thine husband”—the eye of the Prophet sees without the aid of time.

We approached the Bahjí Palace where Bahá’u’lláh lived at the close of his dwelling upon earth, and where He ascended in 1892. Through the opening of

an iron door, the entrance to the Palace, stood a little donkey with head and neck protruding out. He seemed all eyes and ears as evidently he watched our coming. It was an unusual host to welcome us, but we did not enter as the Bahjí is occupied. We strolled on to the house adjoining the Blessed Tomb, which is sometimes occupied by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; and there amid the flowers, tea was served and our thoughts were tranquillized for the realization of the day’s purpose: “I send you on my behalf to the Holy Shrine.”

If there is one supreme hour, like the central pearl in the necklace of time, it had now arrived, and yet one always fails to record a supreme moment—it evades words, and springs from somewhere deeper in the mystery of the heart, like a traveller in a strange land, who has not learned the language. Art and literature portray the light of the horizons, but the Centre, the Dayspring of its being, is approached in worship that eludes form.

In the raining silence of golden sunshine we entered the outer room of the Tomb of Bahá’u’lláh. Persian rugs of great beauty surround a central garden of choice plants and shrubs. One feels that this is not a tomb, but an enclosure of light, for the brilliant sun poured its joyous waves through the glass roof. It is the home of life and warmth, not of death, and unconsciously the love and praise of God springs from the heart. The air was sweet with the perfume of flowers that seem to know the Holy Presence. It is the communion place of the spirit and “His resting place shall be glorious”, as the Prophet Isaiah foresaw. In soft and sweetest cadence Shoghi Effendi chanted the Tablet of Visitation.

[Picture: The Tomb of Bahá’u’lláh.]

We knelt at the Holy Shrine, an enclosure at the side, plain and unadorned save for the beautiful rugs and lamps that mark the Tomb. Our hearts turned to the Heart of Him from which love is born and our prayers rest in the Hands of His Power.

Back by the way of the sea in the setting sun, we returned to Haifa to find the Master standing at our gateway to welcome us back:

“Have you had a happy day.”

INSIGHT

The Evening Meal 22 November 1919

We were all gathered as usual at the home of the Master, but the evening meal was delayed, we knew not why, past eight o’clock, and just before dinner in walked Colonel and Mrs. Allison, returned from Damascus. Soon the Master appeared in the doorway and with hands extended: “Welcome, very welcome, Colonel and Mrs. Allison.” Had the Master watched from afar their coming? How their faces lighted up. He seated them near Him and spoke to the Colonel about Damascus.

Colonel Allison told about the disturbance of the Syrians in Damascus.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “This is childish play. They did these things so that the English would not evacuate.... You did not pass the time badly today?” (referring to our trip to Bahjí).

Mrs. Randall: “The Master knows how our hearts feel, and it was one of the happiest days of our life.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Whatever is on the earth will be forgotten, but Bahá’u’lláh will never be forgotten. I ask God that these gatherings of ours also will not be forgotten.”

Mr. Vail said he had just received a letter from Mrs. True saying the friends in Egypt told her Bahá’u’lláh did not land at Alexandria.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It was on his way to ‘Akká. He Himself did not land but we all went ashore. Those who were taking care of us were quite sure we would not escape. We went and looked around.”

Mr. Randall: “When and where was the Hidden Words revealed and why was it called hidden?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “At first it was concealed. It was not circulated. It was revealed at Baghdád towards the end of our stay there. It was not given to any one. There were not more than two or three copies of it. It was at a time when all the enemies were attacking us. The Sháh of Persia was oppressing, and the Ottoman Government was also oppressing us. At such a time they were revealed.”

After the Master had asked what they had seen in Damascus, Colonel Allison told of the place where St. Paul had received his sight after he had become blind.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “What is recorded in the Bible is this, that Paul was in the wilderness. He heard a voice. The voice he heard was ‘Why are you persecuting me so much?’ Somewhere else it is recorded: ‘We were in the wilderness and I became awakened.’ Then he changed and acted in a manner opposite to his former actions. That is, he was blind and had no insight. It was here that he received his insight. This physical sight will in the end become blind, but when the inner sight is obtained, it will not become blind. The important is not physical sight, it is the insight, for the physical sight is not the cause of guidance, but it is the inner sight.”

Colonel Allison: “The Americans are doing good refugee work there.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The Americans do a lot of work indeed. Everywhere, even in Persia. It is right to do so.”

Mr. Latimer: “Will the Kitáb-i-Aqdas be amplified by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, before it is published in English?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “No. If some one asks for an explanation, it will be given. The explanations are clear in the Book of Aqdas. Except in a few places, it is very clear. It is quite easy for any one to understand it. It is not like the Qur’án. The Qur’án is High Arabic (very difficult). This is very clear. It has no complications. All of it is clear.”

Mr. Randall: “We have no complete translation of it in America.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Nothing has been translated well, for they have been translated by individuals. A person is needed who is well versed in Persian, Arabic and English. Then it will become good. A single individual cannot do it satisfactorily. Among those which are translated, the translation of the Íqán is not bad. It is fair to a certain extent. In future a committee will be formed. They will translate. The Bible is translated into Arabic, but it is not a good translation. The one translated by Van Dyck is better for he has done it with some others. It is better. But in reality it is not a good translation. If a person knows Hebrew, he will know how different it is. Now also the Writings of the Blessed Beauty cannot be translated. No matter how it is translated it cannot be like the original. The original is quite different. It is in the utmost eloquence and beauty. It is so marvelous that no one is able to produce the like. It is so eloquent, so complete. In Persian and Arabic it is extraordinary. All is written in a new style. No one has ever written in such a style. What difference there is between the many translations of the Bible and the original. In Persian the Writings (of Bahá’u’lláh) are in the utmost beauty but not the translations...

“For instance there is a text in the Bible that says, ‘I am the bread of heaven.’ In Persian this expression is very exquisite, but not in the translation. This is the word which Christ himself spoke. It is very exquisite, but when read in Arabic it is not so. Those words which come from the Blessed Lips have a different power. God willing, your children (turning to Mr. Randall) will learn Persian and they will understand how beautiful they are.

“If a person learns Persian now it will not be like Greek, French or Italian. From it great results will come. After ten or twenty years the European who knows Persian will become famous throughout the world, because of his translations. They will have great beauty.”

Mr. Randall: “We hope to get a better translation of the Súriy-i-Haykal.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It needs a translator like the one (Fitzgerald) who translated Omar Khayyám. If there be such a translator then let him translate it. This person has indeed translated Omar Khayyám well. It has become much better than the poems of Khayyám. Very much better. It cannot be compared to the poems of Khayyám. All of it is in praise of wine. But in reality this translator has elevated it. That is why it has become so famous in Europe. They think there is no poet equal to Omar Khayyám in Persia. But in Persia he has no importance. What a difference there is between him and Sa’dí (the didactic poet), and between him and Ḥáfiẓ (the lyric poet).”

Mr. Randall: "Will this committee on translation in America be appointed by the Master or should we use our own initiative?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "But they themselves ought to select them for translation. Those who know several languages, well versed in languages, literature and in science."

MEETINGS

Luncheon 23 November 1919

Today the Master came, carrying in his hand a handkerchief filled with jasmine blossoms, which are brought down each morning to Him from the garden of the Tomb of the Báb. He sprinkled these flowers on the table cloth and then seated us at the table.

Mr. Latimer asked whether the local Houses of Justice would be in each city or one in each state, whether the International House of Justice would be elected directly or indirectly, and whether ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would appoint the House of Justice.

[Picture: "With jasmine blossoms."]

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Each state, for instance New York, will have one House of Justice. The cities (of that state) will be under that House of Justice.

The nations will choose directly the International House of Justice and everything will be in its hands. For instance, Syria will have a House of justice. The people will elect it. Then this House of Justice of Syria [as a state under the Turkish Empire] will elect the House of Justice of Constantinople. Then Constantinople, London, Paris, Washington and so on will elect the International House of Justice."

The Master said He would not appoint the House of Justice. It would be constituted after Him.

Mr. Vail asked for any suggestions as to the meetings in Chicago.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Each one of the friends should try to guide one soul. Those who are worthy; not the persons who enter the Cause and bring degradation to it.... The people who are pure and sincere would not be the cause of degradation to it. But when a person enters the Cause and sees a gathering and tells lies, he has no faith. He is untrustworthy. This sort of people bring degradation to the Cause, but there are others who, when they become believers, are deeply attracted to it."

Mr. Vail: "Would it not be well to hold group meetings in the homes in Chicago?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Very well."

Mr. Randall: "Would this not apply to Boston and other places?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá.. "Yes. Every one should try to invite his own friends. At least he must make one Bahá’í each year."

Mr. Latimer: "Is it all right to have public, advertised meetings to which the public is invited?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "It is all right. They may come to the public meetings."

The greetings of several Jewish friends in America were presented and a delighted expression came over ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s face as He said: "See the Power of God, how He has united the Jew with you, such as Mírzá Luṭṭfu’lláh here. In London, also, there is Yohanna Dawud. He is very good. He was a Jew. He is very good."

Mr. Latimer: "I remember some years ago Yohanna Dawud coming to our meeting in Paris. He spoke almost like an orthodox Christian, quoting the New Testament continually."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: "Those of the Jews who become believers have much love for Christ. To the Jews we explain the reality of Christ. There was an English lady at ‘Akká. She was a missionary. She was very much against us. She was very prejudiced, that is, she had the utmost enmity. Whenever she would see a European or an American here she would commence to slander. She did this thinking perhaps she would convert them. One day there was a Jew with me, who had become a Bahá’í. We went to a shop. She was there also. Her colour flushed from excessive anger. I told her, ‘Dost thou know how much I love thee?’ She said: ‘No.’ I said: ‘As much as thou hatest me, just that much do I love thee. But if thou wishest to know how much that is, see how much hatred you have for me.’ When I said this she laughed. I said: ‘Thou hast no right to hate me for this man was a Jew and I made him believe in Christ and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost. I made him believe in the Heavenly Father. If you want to know, ask him.’"

"She asked him: ‘Were you a Jew?’ He said: ‘Yes.’ ‘Are you a Christian? Do you believe in Christ?’ ‘Yes.’ Then I said: ‘Ask him, what are your reasons? What proofs have you that Christ is the Spirit of God, the Word of God? I taught him these. Ask him.’ She asked. He began to give his proofs, first asking: ‘Do you want intellectual proofs or from the Book?’ He proved the reality of Christ from the Old Testament. Then she asked for intellectual proofs. He gave her those also. She looked up and said: ‘In the name of God, this is very good. He has a very good faith, but thou wilt not let him remain a Christian. You speak to him of Bahá’u’lláh. If you do not speak of Bahá’u’lláh it is very good, but you will not leave him alone. You will make him a Bahá’í also.’"

TEACHING

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said to Mr. Vail: “If people ask you about your conduct (as a Bahá’í teacher), say: ‘We do not oppose the religion of any one and we act in accordance with the Gospel. But we must also act in accordance with the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. They are—the Oneness of the World of Humanity, Independent Investigation of Truth, Abandonment of Prejudice, Universal Peace, etc. You must act in accordance with these Teachings.

“Spread the Message, but you must do it with wisdom. Do not speak at first so as to amaze and bewilder the people. Speak upon topics that are suitable to the mind of your hearers, topics that do not amaze. Emphasize the Teachings as I have done when I was in America. Say, the darkness of ignorance has made gloomy the horizon of the East. Religious prejudices from one side, the darkness of racial fanaticism from another, political prejudices from another side, ignorant prejudices from another side, self-attachment and personal interests and motives—all these have made the horizons of the East darker than night. At such a time the Dawn of Guidance, His Highness the Supreme, the Báb, appeared, His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh, like unto a sun, shone forth and all this darkness was converted into light. And these lights are nothing but the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. Enumerate them all. This is the introduction. Say that to any church, gathering or audience. No audience would object to that.

“Then, this is important, if you find any one interested go deep into the Movement with them.”

A GATHERING ON “THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD”

At the Tomb of the Báb 23 November 1919

Each Sunday afternoon the pilgrims gather at the Tomb of the Báb which stands on a magnificent eminence halfway up Mount Carmel. The first Sunday the Master did not attend the meeting. The second Sunday He drove up early with Mr. Randall to have a quiet interview before the meeting began. Others of us followed later on foot. Soon we overtook Mírzá Núrí’d-Dín, the gifted scribe who engraved so beautifully the Great Teaching Tablets. “‘Tis hard,” he said, “to climb the Mountain of God but very easy to come down.” It did seem hard, the rocks rose so abruptly one above the other. But when we thought of our Beloved just above us on the mountain, wings rose beneath our feet.

A fathomless stillness surrounds the Tomb of His Highness, the Supreme Báb, the “Gate” to the City of God, the New Jerusalem of Light. One would like to rest there forever on the terrace in front of the Tomb overlooking the sea, breathing deep the silence of the Kingdom. The view from that Holy Mountain, that “Vineyard of God” is ravishingly beautiful. The city of Haifa lies below, white stone houses with red-tiled roofs, planted amid walled gardens; the great

bay swings in a perfect semi — circle around to the north. ‘Akká, white, dazzlingly bright in the resplendent sunlight of that holy land, lies like a jewel on the blue sea. But the atmosphere, silent, luminous, like a living spirit, is the true garment of wonder. It is as though Elijah, Isaiah, the Christ, Muḥammad, the Blessed Beauty—the Feet of Him around Whom all names revolve”—had all left their foot-prints not only on the mountain soil of that “Garden of God”, but in the shining air and had diffused the fragrance of their holy garments over all its flowers and grass, and made even the dust reflective of a hidden and heart-subduing beauty.

[Picture: The Tomb of the Báb.]

As we turned and entered the great central room of the Tomb we saw engraved on the doorway the symbol of the Cause of God, two stars standing at each side of the Tree of Life. The Báb was the morning star of the Day of God on earth.

In one corner, sitting on the beautiful Persian rug that covers the floor and part of the wall, was the blessed Ḥaydar-‘Alí. How we had longed to meet him! With what wonder had we read of his years of service, his twelve years imprisonment in a dark, solitary cell, at Khartoum, his being carried in a bag head downward over the desert and singing for joy as they beat him. Now he was here before us! He embraced us with heavenly love and said. “How wonderful to be living in the day prayed for by all the prophets of God. They all wrote and dreamed of this day.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calls him “the angel of Mount Carmel”, adding, “He walks on earth but he lives in heaven.” Some one in our circle asked the “angel of Mount Carmel” what he was doing these days. He replied: “I am preparing a book on the writings of John. I am only an ant of God, but I am trying to do about as much as an ant can do.”

When the Master entered the room, now filled with friends, Persians, Arabs, Egyptians, Americans, joy swept our hearts. Ḥaydar-‘Alí, like an eager child in the presence of the Master, tried to rise but ‘Abdu’l-Bahá prevented him. The Master in his humility does not allow any one to bow before Him or show Him special deference. Soon after, Ḥaydar-‘Alí was ill and had to leave the room. As the friends lovingly helped him out, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said: “He is a blessed soul. From his youth he has had no thought but the service of the Kingdom.”

Presently we all rose and followed the silent steps of the Master out and around the terrace to the holy room where the body of the Blessed Báb lies in its age-long rest. The Master stood at the door and anointed our hands with rose-water as we entered, a symbol of the new reality, brought into the world by the Holy Spirit of the Báb. We lifted the rose water to our foreheads and then bowed with our Persian brothers just inside the Threshold. The atmosphere of that holy place was marvellous. The air was vibrant with a living presence. It pressed upon us, overwhelmed us with the Power of that Light which shone through the Báb as through a gate. At the same time a peace that passeth understanding broke over us.

One by one, silently, the Persians, those pure, wonderful servants of the God who

is Most Glorious, approached the inner room and dropped their heads on the shining Threshold, while Shoghi chanted impressively the Tablet of Visitation. Our hearts were aglow with the thought of the bounty of God. The very heavens seemed to open; and when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—that star that never sets, the Star of the Covenant—with sublime tenderness helped Ḥaydar-‘Alí down the centre of that room, supporting and leading him, and then with kingly majesty walked back again—the effect was indescribable.

After we left the Tomb we watched the majestic figure of the Master, with black flowing abbá, shining white turban and silver hair, finding his way down the winding stony path. The friends followed in silent love and wonder. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.”

ḤAYDAR-‘ALÍ

The Evening Meeting 23 November 1919

Mr. Randall remarked that we had never seen such an afternoon and such an evening.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It is rare, but the moonlight nights are more wonderful. The air is clear, the moon shines so perfectly that one does not care to sleep but rather to sit up and watch it. In London it is very peculiar. First there is the darkness of the clouds, then the fog and then the smoke. Day becomes night. All is darkness.”

Mr. Vail remarked that it was a great joy to meet Ḥaydar-‘Alí today.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “He is a blessed soul. He is very detached. During his life-time he has had no attachment to this world and did not care for the means of living. He was attached to nothing. He always used to travel from city to city teaching the Cause. He was much persecuted. He never wavered nor faltered. He was very kind to the poor and helped them very much. He never thought of himself. He was content with a very small means of existence. As much as I wanted to prepare comforts for him, he would not accept. We said: ‘Thou hast become old, thou art not strong. We will prepare means of comfort. We will get a maid to care for you. We will get a house so that in every way you may be in comfort.

He did not accept. He said: ‘Let me remain in a corner of the Pilgrim House.’ It is strange, he is quite old and feeble, but his intellect is very bright. Up to [the] year before last he was writing. Now on account of extreme age, his ears do not hear. The power of hearing has lessened, but his mind and intellect are keen. He has forgotten nothing. He remembers everything.”

Mr. Latimer said the editor of some of the papers in America is agitating the “Yellow Peril”.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Is he afraid of Fugeta? Is he very much afraid of Fugeta? (Laughing) The yellow race in future will develop. It will develop much. New China has just awakened.”

Mr. Latimer: “Will the method of teaching the Chinese and Japanese be different?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Naturally, it depends upon the degree of capacity there.”

THE FUTURE OF AEROPLANES

The Evening Meal 23 November 1919

Mr. Randall asked if ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would speak of the future of aeroplanes.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It will progress to such a degree that any one can travel with them. The danger will become less and less. It will be such that one wishing to travel, instead of going by carriage or automobile, he will take the aeroplane. God willing, it will be directed for good purposes. At present it is used for destructive purposes. We hoped the aeroplane would serve the world of humanity, but it has become the means of destruction for the world of humanity.”

UNIVERSAL PEACE

“All these recent inventions have become the cause of evil and loss. During this war all these inventions have become the cause of the destruction of mankind. For instance, the telegraph, aeroplane, railway, steamer, wireless, telephone, all of these. Our hope was that these would serve the world of humanity and that they would become the means of the progress of mankind, and the means of the reconstruction of the world. But what a great pity that they have been used for destruction. If there were no steamers, America would never have entered into the European affair, for it would take at least six months for her to cross the ocean. After this war we hope the world of humanity will become awakened and realize that there is no remedy save according to the Heavenly Teachings.

“If the tent of the Oneness of the World of Humanity is not pitched on this earth and Universal Peace is not established, there will be more wars. For this war has become a cause of hatred. For instance, the Germans will not forget, the Austrians will not forget, the Bulgarians will not forget, the Turks will not forget. If the banner of Universal Peace is not raised, this question of war will be more acute.

“On one side there will arise the tumult of the Socialists, from another side the storm of Bolshevism, from another the problems of labour, from another the antagonism of nations, from another religious hatred, and from another racial prejudices. It is clear what will happen. All of these are like dynamite. One

day they will explode, unless the banner of Universal Peace is raised according to the Divine Teachings and the Oneness of the World of Humanity proclaimed.

“According to the Divine Teachings, the banner of Universal Peace must be raised by the power of the Word of God. The Oneness of the World of Humanity must be established by the power of the Holy Spirit. No matter how the politicians strive, it will become worse. The power of man is helpless.”

Shakh Farajullah asked: “Is the banner of Universal Peace going to be raised after this war?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Not now. This period is like the false dawn. This peace is like the false dawn. We will see what the future brings. This has not taken place yet.

“We cannot abolish war by war, for it is like cleansing blood with blood. The Divine Teachings will accomplish it, however.

“The exigencies of the world of nature are essential to it. One of the exigencies of the world of nature is war. Another of the exigencies of the world of nature is treachery. See how they are warring! Now the world of nature has no will power. Man acts according to the requirements of nature. In the world of nature there is treachery and deceit. Consider what the cat does with the mouse, and the fox does with its prey. In the world of nature there is separation, there is the struggle for existence. These are the natural tendencies. This is irresistible.

“That which saves man from the world of nature is the Power of God. It is faith. It is the Fear of God and it will make man an angel; it transforms him. From all these conditions it frees him. It acts opposite to that of nature. It breaks the sovereignty of nature and without this (power) it is not possible.

“Man escapes from the apparent laws of the government because he is afraid of the law. That is, if a person strikes another this is punishable. Then there is a secret sin; that is, because of the fear of the law and punishment, he keeps it hidden. But from the secret and hidden sin, he will not be freed, save by the Power of the Kingdom. Then, fear of punishment will not withhold him (from committing hidden sins) but it is the Fear of God which does, for he realizes that God is aware of it. Therefore both from the hidden and apparent sins, he will be freed. He will become illumined, he will become spiritual, he will become heavenly.

“Otherwise man is rapacious. He is more terrorizing than any animal. For example, a wolf tears to pieces one sheep, but man kills a thousand persons in one day. Man kills a hundred thousand, and then boasts about it. For instance, if he kills one person, he is taken and put in prison and then killed. They say he is a murderer; but if he kills a hundred thousand they cry: ‘Bravo!’ If a person is walking in the street and some one steals his hat, they say: ‘He is a thief.’ If one steals his donkey in the wilderness, they say: ‘He is a highwayman.’ But when one pillages a whole country, they say: ‘He is a conqueror.’ Therefore

man becomes man only through the invisible powers, not through his apparent powers.

“When the Emperor of Russia called a meeting at the Hague, they asked me: ‘What do you think about it?’ I asked: ‘Under whose presidency is it? What do they discuss?’ ‘They discuss peace.’ Then I asked: ‘When they leave that meeting what do they do? One is a general, another is a colonel, another is a major, one is a politician, still another one is the inspecting officer. Do they not return to their professions? The general goes and prepares plans, the colonel drills his soldiers. It is just like all the innkeepers who gather together, concerning the selling of wine. They say it has a grave danger. We must do something to stop the selling of wine. But when they leave the meeting they return to their taverns. Their profession is wine selling. Do not think they are going to bring about peace; their profession is war.’ The Emperor of Russia was the generalissimo of war. He was the first one to declare war after this meeting, and he was the president. He was the president of the peace gathering, and then he was the first one to declare war.

“These nations of the world are like two cocks. These cocks fight with each other, they fight, fight, fight, until they are tired. Then they stop and make peace. After they have rested a while, they fight again. This is the real truth of the situation.”

Mr. Randall: “What will be the outcome in Russia?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The future is bad. The future will be great destruction. Nations should strive to extinguish this fire so that it would not spread to other countries. It will soon affect other countries. Soon it will affect them. For the mass of the people have a Bolshevik tendency. The mass of the people all desire to become equal with the rich, but law and order prevent them. Because the majority is with the masses, and they all desire equality with the rich, but, they are afraid of punishment. When no order prevails, it is certain they will think they are equal.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

Luncheon 24 November 1919

Today Dr. Esslemont asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to speak on the life of Bahá’u’lláh at Bahjí.

[Picture: Approaching the Bahjí Palace]

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Bahá’u’lláh lived in ‘Akká nine years. Two years were passed in the barracks and seven years in a house in the city. There was a mobilization at that time, toward the end of two years, and the barracks were needed for the soldiers. Then the local governor gave permission for them to be transferred to a house. When Bahá’u’lláh moved from the barracks he did not come out of

the house for seven years. During our stay in the barracks it was very difficult. No one was allowed to go to the baths. Every morning four of the friends accompanied by four gendarmes would go to the market to buy provisions.

When we left the barracks we were all sent to a caravansary in the city but Bahá'u'lláh went to a house with his family. All the time He was in one room, during the seven years, but it was not on account of strict regulations. In the next room adjoining, thirteen people were living. It was even smaller than this room. A woman guest came from Persia. There was no place for her. In the room where we slept there was a high trunk and she made this her bed. At midnight she tossed and fell down. We all woke up and laughed about it until morning.

“When things were very gloomy in the barracks Bahá'u'lláh revealed some Tablets which are still preserved, saying: ‘Do not grieve. These doors will be opened and I will leave the city and go to the country.’ This caused great happiness. This was a great source of consolation to the friends.

“After nine years had elapsed, Bahá'u'lláh said one day: ‘I have not gazed at verdure or a green leaf for a long time.’ Bahá'u'lláh was very fond of verdure. He used to say: ‘The country is the world of the soul and the city the world of the body.’ From this remark I gathered that He was indirectly referring to something.

“There was a certain Páshá Muḥammad Safouat in ‘Akká. He was in the utmost enmity toward us. He had a palace three miles from ‘Akká surrounded by gardens. It was a very lovely spot with running water. I went and called on this Páshá at his home. I told his Excellency, ‘You have left the palace empty and are living in ‘Akká He replied: ‘I am an invalid and cannot leave the city. It is lonely and there is no one to associate with me.’

“When Bahá'u'lláh made this remark, I knew that He was longing to leave the city and I knew that whatever I did I should succeed. So I said: ‘While you are not living there, it is empty. Give it to us.’ The Páshá became greatly astonished at this. I rented it from the Páshá at a very low rate, five pounds a year. It was very strange. I paid him for five years and made a contract. Then I sent some labourers to repair it. I built a bath and ordered a very large carriage to be prepared.

“One day I said I will go first myself. Alone I left the city on foot. The gendarmes were on guard. They did not object. Just like that I went out. They said nothing. The following day I went to Bahjí. No one said anything. Then one day I prepared a feast and invited all the officials of those districts. From morning until evening it lasted. Then I returned.

“One day I went to His Holy Presence and said: ‘The palace is ready and also the carriage to drive you there.’ At that time there was no carriage in ‘Akká or Haifa. He replied: ‘I will not go. I am a prisoner.’ Later on I requested again. Again He refused. I went so far as to beg Him a third time. He said: ‘No.’ I did

not dare to insist.

“There was a certain Muḥammadan Shaykh in ‘Akká who was very well known and influential. I called him and said: ‘This is the situation, but Bahá’u’lláh will not accept it from us.’ He loved Bahá’u’lláh, it was pure love. I said: ‘You are daring; you go to His Holy Presence and take hold of his hands and do not let go until He promises to leave the city.’ He was an Arab. He went and sat close to the knees of Bahá’u’lláh, took hold of his hands, kissed them and said: ‘My Lord, why do you not leave the city?’ He replied: ‘I am a prisoner.’ The Shaykh answered: ‘God forbid! Who has the power to make you a prisoner? You have kept yourself in prison. It was your own will to be imprisoned. Now I beseech you to come out and go to the palace. It is green. The trees are lovely. All the leaves are green, the oranges are like balls of fire.’ As often as the Blessed Beauty said, ‘I am a prisoner, it cannot be,’ the Shaykh took his blessed hands and kissed them. For one hour he did not cease. Then Bahá’u’lláh said, ‘Kheili Khoob’ (very good).

“The following day he rode in the carriage. I was also in His Holy Presence. We left the city. No one objected. We went to that green spot. I returned and left Bahá’u’lláh there. From that time on He was either there, in ‘Akká in Haifa, or at Bahjí.

“That palace is in ruins now. It was thirty-five years ago that the Páshá died. All his property was destroyed. I want to restore that palace. The Páshá’s property became wakf [property set-aside for religious purposes]. If it were not wakf I would buy it. That green spot is wakf.”

Dr. Esslemont: “Where were the Tablets to the kings revealed?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Partly in Adrianople; partly in ‘Akká

Dr. Esslemont: “Did any rulers reply besides Queen Victoria?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “No one.”

Dr. Esslemont: “What was Bahá’u’lláh’s mode of life at Bahjí?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Like the conduct of a prince. The Páshás used to come and desire to call but He would not meet

Dr. Esslemont remarked that the missionaries objected to his living in luxury compared to the humble way of Christ.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Of course the enemies will write whatever they wish. Majesty is very easy to be acquired by one, but the miracle is that being in prison, He still lived in the utmost majesty. Every prisoner is meek and oppressed, yet Bahá’u’lláh lived in the utmost majesty. Two despotic sovereigns, two powerful autocratic rulers imprisoned Him, yet He addressed them in exceedingly severe terms. Notwithstanding that He was in their prison, He was still in the utmost majesty. Such a thing has not been seen since the beginning of the world. It is a fact, known to all, that the Governor of the city, for five years, begged

admittance to His Holy Presence, but He would not grant it. He was under his orders and the Governor had received a firman to confine Him closely.”

Dr. Esslemont: “Was it not true that Bahá’u’lláh had to show forth all the attributes of God, how to be both poor and rich?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Yes. However, He lived very simply and economically regarding his own welfare. He had no return from his property at that time. His property was confined to half the village of Adasieh [near Tiberias]. It was in ruins and yielded no revenues. Now it is restored and we get some revenues. Bahá’u’lláh owned vast properties in Persia which were confiscated; also in Baghdád, but they were taken from Him toward the end of our stay. All were sacked and confiscated by the Turkish Government.”

“ABBÁS”

The Evening Meal 24 November 1919

Mr. Denham appeared at the Pilgrim House about sundown. We greeted him warmly. Drawn by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s word on that first Sunday, he had changed his route, cancelled an engagement in Jerusalem and had come to Haifa to see again the wonderful, Master. He went with us to the evening meeting where the Beloved gave a marvellous address on the glory of martyrdom, the splendour of Christ’s crucifixion, the way sacrifice of pure spirits in the path of God’s Cause sends the Word of God forward conquering and to conquer—a vivid portrayal of the early days of Christianity.

[Picture: “The plain of ‘Akká is the worshipping place of God.”]

Never had we seen the Master so absolutely radiant as at dinner this night, when He described His possible martyrdom—the longing of His heart. His first words were: “The plain of ‘Akká is the worshipping place of God.” When Mr. Denham said he would like to ask why the Cause of God grows more strong through persecutions and martyrdoms, which would have a tendency ordinarily to check it, the Master’s face lighted up, His eyes sparkled, His words blazed forth as He told us the following thrilling and graphic account:

“It affects the hearts. Conquering is not impressive. Humility makes impression. See what a conqueror David was. He conquered countries, he killed all his enemies, he overcame all, but when he is mentioned it has no effect. But the humility of Christ, see what an effect it has! Or John the Baptist, when they cut off his head, see what an effect it had! Consider what an effect these have. The Emperor of Germany was banished, Bonaparte was exiled and his enemies did away with him, but when one of the Bahá’ís of God is persecuted, his persecution is his elevation. His Holiness Christ was defeated. They crucified Him. The defeat was his utmost glory. It was quite the opposite. The things

that are the cause of glory in the world are considered shame in the Kingdom, and that which is humility in the world is glory in the Kingdom.

“A telegram came from Constantinople from ‘Adu’l-Ḥamíd. This was its contents: ‘Abbás, the Persian, two Europeans have come to him. They have brought dangerous papers against ‘Adu’l-Ḥamíd. He must give up those dangerous papers and he must say where those two persons are.’ I said: ‘I have not received such papers and such persons have not come to me.’ They said: ‘If he does not say where, then say two Americans have come before you.’

“‘As to the papers, such papers and such persons have not come to me. These papers are about politics. We do not interfere in the affairs of politics at all. We interfere in the affairs of the heart, in education and in morals.’ They said: ‘We have witnessed them.’ I replied: ‘Such papers have not come to me and such people have not come to me. But you want to condemn me. Whatever you want, say it. I will write it and I will sign it with my own hand without any trouble, for I have never defended myself. Say it. I will write and sign at the bottom of it. Then why do you take more trouble? You want answers with these questions to prove some fault. I, myself, confess, without trouble to you, for I have never defended myself.

“‘Nevertheless I am thankful because of this telegram. I am very thankful, for this telegram has joined me to such souls that I am rejoiced. For instance, Christ was not Christ Páshá, nor Mr. Christ, nor His Honour Christ, just simply Christ. I also am ‘Abbás. It was Moses, son of Emam, not Monsieur Moses, not Lord Moses, not Moses Páshá, not Moses Áqá. He was Moses. I also am ‘Abbás. It was Muḥammad, not Monsieur Muḥammad, not Mr. Muḥammad, just Muḥammad. I also am ‘Abbás. It was Abraham, Noah, Joseph, not Joseph Páshá. I also am just ‘Abbás. I am thankful, for God never created for me any humiliation. He has never created it. Therefore no one can humiliate me.’ What is the utmost humiliation? They may say, ‘Beat him, put him in prison, put him in chains.’ If such things happen to me it is glory for I have not committed anything that may be humiliation. This would happen because I am a Bahá’í. This is my glory.

“Humiliation would be this: ‘Take ‘Abbás. Beat him. Put chains on his neck. Bring him and hang him up, and have one regiment come and fire at him a thousand bullets.’ They shot a thousand bullets at my forerunner. This same declaration was made upon the cross. God willing, I will give the same also. There will be no greater glory than that for me. Therefore, whoever humiliates me, for the purpose of humiliation, for me that is glory. No glory is higher than this—that some day they shall hang me and fire at me a thousand bullets. Fire! Shoot! Why? They have made me walk in the footsteps of my forerunner. The object is this, in the Cause of God there is no humiliation.

“If His Holiness Christ had not been martyred, His Cause would not have become so famous. When they placed the crown of thorns on the head of Christ, and carried Him around the streets, His Holiness Christ used to see that all the

sovereigns of the world were bowing before Him. All the crowns bowed before his crown of thorns. His Holiness Christ used to foresee this. This humiliation was his greatest glory. He saw this crown to be the everlasting sovereignty.”

After some general conversation, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said: “When Jamál Páshá came to Jerusalem he made some remarks about me. He said: ‘I will go and conquer Egypt. I will drive England out of Egypt. I will conquer all the Suez Canal. Victorious I shall return. My first command will be this, that I will hang him ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the gate of ‘Akká.’ The German Consul was in that meeting. He was an acquaintance of mine. He came and told me that Jamál Páshá had said this. Then there was also a captain who was the commander of the 12th, by the name of Zals Bey. I said: ‘Let Jamál Páshá go and conquer Egypt. Then I will give myself up. Let him conquer Egypt, I am ready.’

“Jamál Páshá went. One day, in the morning, the German Consul came to me. He said: ‘Some strange thing has happened. Jamál Páshá attacked two days ago. Today a telegram has come from Beersheba.’ This is clear. As soon as the battle began he fled. He rode in his automobile and fled and he had come to Beersheba and sent the telegram from there. He would not say: ‘I am defeated.’ I said: ‘It must be so.’

“Two or three day’s later, the German Consul came and said: ‘He (Jamál Páshá) is defeated.’ Jamál Páshá returned here. He began to twist his moustaches and said: ‘This was a reconnoitering attack. I wanted to test the strength of the enemy.’ But I understood.”

THE INHERITANCE LAW

Luncheon 25 November 1919

At luncheon the Master was in a supremely humorous mood, joking repeatedly with Fugeta. Previously He had said that Fugeta was to return to Japan on a camel or an elephant, but today He decided to send him there in an aeroplane, smiling as He said: “When I ride in one, it will be a spiritual aeroplane.”

Mr. Latimer asked whether in the distribution of inheritance the method of the Báb or that of Bahá’u’lláh would be enforced.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The method of Bahá’u’lláh will be enforced and the House of Justice will not presume to change it. The purpose of Bahá’u’lláh’s arrangement is that man is not to be interfered with in the leaving of his property. Man may divide his wealth as he likes. Every one has to write a will and affix a seal thereto and no one need know about the arrangement he has made. After his death the will is opened and read and whatever he has decreed will be enforced. Man should have perfect freedom to decide as he wishes, in making his will. This is his own good pleasure. Man has a perfect right to do with his property as he sees fit and his wishes should be carried out.

“In case a person dies and leaves no will, then the law (method) of Bahá’u’lláh will be enforced. But man can bequeath all his property to one person. He is perfectly free to do as he wishes with his own property for he has been the one to acquire it.”

Dr. Esslemont: “In case all the property is left to one person, is there any provision for that person to divide the legacy or give something to the House of Justice?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “No. It is his will and the property becomes his. He may give a part to the House of Justice or to orphans, etc. He is permitted to do just as he likes, and that should be enforced.”

Mr. Latimer: “In the seven divisions of inheritance, teachers are mentioned, does this mean Bahá’í teachers or all teachers?”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It is not confined to Bahá’í teachers.”

Then Dr. Esslemont asked a question about entailed estates in England, explaining in detail how some property is set aside for some purpose and then increases very much in value, but cannot be touched and that these entailed estates are handed down from one person to another intact, to the eldest son. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá startled us all by answering this question, without waiting or giving Shoghi a chance to interpret one word of the question to Him. He said: “In accordance with Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings, a Bahá’í can give all his property to his eldest son. He may do just as he likes. As long as it is his own property he may do as he wishes. One’s property cannot be snatched by another. There is one difference, however; when a Bahá’í leaves all to his eldest son, the eldest son in turn may break the line and divide as he wants to—according to Bahá’u’lláh’s method, or as he wishes.”

Dr. Esslemont said that England was suffering from this system which was called the “Rule of the Dead Hand.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “A hard, fast rule will lead to chaos. People will say why should I work, I have enough, so I won’t work, and so on. This is not just. It will enchain the person. It will restrict him. You must give him absolute freedom in disposing of his property for he is the one who has acquired it. What if he does not love his eldest son? What then?”

Mr. Latimer: “In America, the state imposes an inheritance tax on estates according to the amount left.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “This is a political issue. It has nothing to do with a religious law. There is nothing to prevent the state from making an inheritance law. A Bahá’í does not interfere with it.”

AN AFTERNOON WITH THE HOUSEHOLD

In the afternoon during Mrs. Randall's visit with the ladies of the household, the Master came in for tea and she said to Him: "The friends, tell me that the Master said when in America—'What if 'Abdu'l-Bahá should come again in an aeroplane?' Will He do this?" He replied: "I am too busy here." She continued: "It would not take long," and He answered: "I will go to America in a spiritual aeroplane and it is much quicker than a material airship. There is no comparison."

[Picture: The Garden House.]

At this point little Fu'ad entered the room breathlessly and began speaking very fast and excitedly. It seemed that his pet donkey had a fever and he was asking 'Abdu'l-Bahá to pray for it. Earlier in the afternoon he had given two oranges to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Master now gave him one to eat. When he had finished, the other was given to him with the instruction: "Give this to the ladies." He firmly refused, saying the gardener had said that no one but 'Abdu'l-Bahá should eat the oranges, and no amount of persuasion could make him give it to the ladies—but he had already eaten one himself.

Mrs. Randall asked the Greatest Holy Leaf if she would relate some of the incidents of her early life with Bahá'u'lláh at 'Akká. She gave an interesting account of Bahá'u'lláh's first imprisonment at Tíhrán, of four months, the journey in mid-winter to Baghdád, and then of their final arrival at their last place of exile, 'Akká She said:

"When we were coming to the 'Akká Prison, we landed first at Haifa, seventy-two in number. We were kept in a little house here for a few hours and then put in sail boats and sailed across the bay to 'Akká. As there was no place to land we were placed in chairs, carried by two men, and taken ashore. Everybody had come to the shore to watch the arrival, because they were interested to see what kind of people these prisoners were. There was a line of soldiers from the shore to the barracks. First the women were taken up and locked in a room. Then the men were treated likewise. There was no furniture, only a few rugs, and we had no food except some fragments of bread. We became very hungry and upon hearing the cries of the children, the guards brought us some partly cooked rice. This we could not eat, but gave a little to the children to appease their hunger and quiet their cries. A small amount of bread was given to Bahá'u'lláh but He ate very little. Fortunately we were very tired and soon fell asleep. The next day the guards allowed one man to leave the barracks for one hour to buy a little food for us.

"In spite of all these conditions we were marvellously happy in the barracks. The second night we were there we got to laughing so hard that Bahá'u'lláh came to the door and told us to stop, for the guards might think we had gone crazy to be so happy in such a place."

MOUNT CARMEL THE LAND OF PROPHETS

The Evening Meeting 25 November 1919

Somewhat late we entered the evening meeting. Immediately ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent for Shoghi to translate to us the Tablet of Bahá’u’lláh, one of exquisite beauty and majesty, which had just been chanted. From time to time, He gave the interpretation and explanation of the verses, and we were thrilled by their clearness and directness. We were witnessing the fulfilment of Bahá’u’lláh’s Words: “He is the Expounder of the Book.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “The gathering of the friends is very good. In one month’s time it will be very fresh and green here. This wilderness is where Bahá’u’lláh has crossed. This is the place where the tent of the Blessed Beauty was pitched. Many of the Divine Teachings and Tablets were revealed here.

“This is the ground where all the prophets have trod. They dwelt here and gave the Glad tidings that a day will come when the tent of the Lord will be pitched upon this spot. His Holiness Christ always used to cross this Mount Carmel, Haifa and Nazareth. Therefore these cities and this mountain have a spiritual atmosphere. If man is in the mood of quiet and meditation, and passes through here and at the same time meditates, he will feel as though this mountain and this wilderness are speaking to him. Such will be his feeling. His Holiness Muḥammad came here also. He came here twice, once when he was eleven years old and once when he was twenty-eight. The cave of His Holiness Elijah is here. He used to stay there and had many pupils around him and was wont to teach them until they were educated.

BAHÁ’Í FEASTS

The Evening Meal 25 November 1919

At supper Mr. Randall asked the Master about a correct Bahá’í calendar of Feasts and anniversaries so that the East and West would conform in prayer and celebration.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied that this would be left for the House of justice to do, because of the complicated reckoning between lunar and solar time and that the East and the West might unite together on an accepted calendar.

Mr. Randall then asked if America might for the present adopt the Persian dates.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied: “Yes, if they want to. They must want to and take the initiative. It is not the request of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. These matters are left to the House of justice which will be established before this century is out.”

At the end of the meal, after He had talked a great deal about dates and the changing of lunar to solar time, intimating that there was a problem to be solved,

He arose and after going to his customary washstand to cleanse his hands, He turned and said:

“These meals have been very happy. They are the Lord’s Supper because the wish and purpose has been concerning the affairs of God.”

“THE CENTRE OF THE COVENANT”

Luncheon 26 November 1919

Insight into the wisdom and knowledge of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Centre of the Covenant comes to one in various ways. This morning we had been discussing the plans for another trip to ‘Akká and the Bahjí Palace. Some of us desired to go while others preferred to remain in Haifa, to be near the Master. As He came into the room He divined our thoughts, for He immediately said: “Each of you may do as you wish, go to ‘Akká or remain here,” continuing, “the plain of ‘Akká is full of spirituality. It is full of spirituality around the Tomb of Bahá’u’lláh.”

[Picture: “The Greatest Branch.”]

Mr. Latimer asked if all the Muḥammadan Ḥadīths concerning ‘Akká such as “Blessed is he who has passed a night in ‘Akká,” “Blessed is he who has seen the One in ‘Akká” and the ones quoted in the “Fils du Loup” Epistle were authentic or merely tradition. He replied: “Yes, they are all authentic.”

Mr. Randall asked that before we left if the Master would speak of the Covenant and what is meant by steadfastness.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It is mentioned in the Tablets of the Blessed Beauty. It is recorded in the Book of the Covenant and in the explicit texts of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Clearly He says, and in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas He writes, that ‘after Me turn your faces to the Branch who is branched from this Pre-existent Root. Ask from Him the meanings of the Writings and Tablets. He is the Expounder of the Book.’ In the Book of the Covenant, He says: ‘The meaning of those two blessed verses is the Greatest Branch and all must turn to Him.’ He, addressing the branches, the twigs, the relatives and the friends, says: ‘You must turn your faces to Him.’ Then in a Tablet to me in His own handwriting, He praises very much. I do not want to speak of it because He praises very highly. I do not want to (repeat it). It is written in his own blessed hand. In that Tablet He says: ‘O God, he who loves Him, love him; and whosoever hates Him, spurn him; make victorious whosoever serves Him and defeat whosoever denies Him.’

“He writes in the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd, calling it the Book of the Covenant, in all his Epistles and Prayers, in more than a thousand places, that ‘whoever violates My Covenant is an infidel; he who does this is to be avoided, whosoever he may be!’ ‘O God! degrade those who deny My Covenant, defeat them. O God! protect Thy friends from those who deny Thy Covenant.’ Then He laments for those who violate. There are more than a thousand places in all the Writings

and Tablets, even in the Hidden Words: ‘Remember the covenant ye entered into with Me upon the Mount of Paran, situated under the blessed shrine of Zamán. I took as witness to that covenant the Supreme Concourse and the dwellers in the city of Life. Now I find none steadfast in that covenant. Pride and disobedience have indeed effaced it from the minds to such a degree that not a trace of it has remained, and, although knowing this, I have endured it patiently and have not divulged it.’ ”

Mr. Randall: “We yearn to face only the Centre of the Covenant and be steadfast. We understand the outer plane or station but know little about the spiritual reality of the Centre of the Covenant.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “I understand this yearning. As to the difference of opinion of My Station, everything is false except what I say. The Blessed Beauty has left no room for any one to weaken (the Cause). He entered into this Covenant to preserve the Bahá’í Unity so that no one might say anything on his own behalf. He says: ‘Whenever there arises any difference, refer to the explicit texts of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Kitáb-i-Ahd.’ He has closed all the doors of interpretation to whosoever says he understands this to be so or that to be so. ‘Whatever He ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says is right.’ He has left no room for interpretation. He has called it ‘the Book of My Covenant’. It was the last Tablet. After this one no more Tablets were revealed....

“The importance is the unity of the friends. That is very important. Unity must be made very firm. Whoever has love for Bahá’u’lláh must give his life for the friends. Love for the friends is love for Bahá’u’lláh In this Cause there is no danger save the disharmony among the friends.

“Whenever disharmony and disagreement arise between two persons, it will ultimately lead to their both turning away from the Cause. The Náqidín are waiting for this, that when one becomes hurt they can influence him. Therefore you must preserve the Bahá’í Unity. Do not let any conflict arise between two friends. When there is a difference both will become grieved. There must be only love. You must never offend any soul. You must always have love. As soon as you see any dissatisfaction between souls, strive to create love between them. For the Kingdom of God does not accept differences.

Bahá’u’lláh says: ‘If two persons argue over a subject, both are wrong’, so that no disagreement should occur. No one should say, ‘My opinion is right.’ He says, ‘Both are wrong’, so that no differences should arise among the friends. You must strive for unanimous opinion. There must be love, love, love. God is love. The Blessed Beauty appeared for love. His purpose was not that differences should arise between two souls. See how in the utmost love we are seated here. Hearts are in the utmost love. You must all be the same in America. You must take the example from here.”

Mr. Randall said he thought that now America is beginning to grow a little spiritually.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It is so. This is my hope that day by day it may become more. The Blessed Beauty appeared with the rays of love. This is the cause of my happiness. I have no other pleasure save the unity of the friends.”

SEVERANCE

Many times during our interviews ‘Abdu’l-Bahá impressed upon us the need of love and its power to transform the heart of mankind. The real spirit of Bahá’í Unity will be the mirror to reflect this love to the world. To Mrs. Randall he gave the secret of its attainment in the following matchless gem:

“Severance from the world is the first sign of the Love of God. As long as man is much attached to this world he will be unaware of the Kingdom of God. As soon as he begins to be detached from this world the Spirit of the Kingdom, like unto a sun, will shine from the horizon of his heart.”

The Evening Meal 26 November 1919

The last supper. With the knowledge of our approaching departure and his closing words of the previous evening ringing in our ears—that these meals were the “Lord’s Supper” — our hearts were too full to speak. He also was silent, but in that silence we found the baptism of the spirit.

LOVE

Luncheon 27 November 1919

‘Abdu’l-Bahá came very early for luncheon and took us all into Dr. Esslemont’s room which was flooded with sunlight and faced toward the Tomb of the Báb. We all sat around in a circle realizing that for the last time He had come to be with us in the Pilgrim House. Once more our hearts were inexpressibly filled with joy and gratitude. He mentioned many of the friends in America asking us to convey his utmost love to them and then added: “They are very numerous, to all I send love.”

Mr. Vail spoke of the Friday evening meeting of the young people of Chicago in Mr. Scheffler’s studio and asked for some message for them.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Convey to the attendants in that Friday evening meeting my love and extend to them my longing. See what has happened to this world. There is tumult and darkness upon darkness. Perhaps you may be the cause that through you it will be illumined. It is a world of carnage, a world of bloodshed, rancour and hatred. God willing, you may convert this world into the world of the Kingdom, that it may become a divine world, that these gloomy clouds may pass away and the Sun of Truth shine with divine splendour This is

real service and anything besides that is all imagination, mirage, waves of the ocean, storms, and eventually it is lost.

“Upon ye be Bahá’u’l-Abhá!

“You must all do your best to increase love among the friends, that really and sincerely the friends may all love one another—so that faith in the kingdom may give forth good results, because life in this world depends upon love. The illumination of the world of man depends upon love; the splendour of God depends upon love; tranquillity of heart and soul both depend upon love. Anything besides that is personified imagination. If a friend arrives from another city or state, friends must show him the utmost love so that he may be pleased with coming to the city and meeting the friends.”

Mr. Vail said there are many people in America who are reading books of automatic writing purporting to convey messages from departed spirits and they believe that thereby they prove immortality of the soul and this gives consolation.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “What is the purport of it?”

Mr. Vail: “To prove immortality.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “They are right to a certain extent because it is possible to have spiritual communications and sensations. They think they are in direct communication with spirits. Tell them what you feel are spiritual sensations. The world of man has no communication with the vegetable or animal world. But there are sensations or spiritual emotions between the two. When man looks to the plain, meadow or mountain he does not speak with them, but there is a wave of spiritual communication between the two. The lower worlds are not able to communicate with man, but they have a sensibility.”

Mrs. Randall asked if in the future there would be new arts and possibly new colours.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Yes. New arts and other inventions that will perfect the existing ones. Everything will be renewed, in every department. This generation cannot be compared to the past.”

The Master spoke of Margaret being tired of rice and Dr. Esslemont of soup. Margaret replied: “I must confess I am a little bit.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “I know that without your telling me. You will not eat rice for a time.”

Dr. Esslemont said material food makes little difference when we have heavenly food.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “That is the essential. The Apostles of Christ here in the wilderness could not even get food for their Master. Christ said of John the Baptist that ‘his food was grass and herbs.’”

After a long pause He continued: “Christ was once eating grapes and He said: ‘I shall not eat these grapes any more until I shall eat again in the Kingdom of my Heavenly Father.’ I hope we may eat together in the Kingdom as we do now.”

THE FAREWELL

About 3:30 the Master sent for us. We knew it was the moment of parting. Our visit seemed like one day, not many days, and we could hardly realize that it had drawn to its close, like a setting sun. We stood in His Blessed Presence and every heart echoed the wish that we might never leave Him. The Master had spoken in spirit and now his tender, impressive words revealed his prayer for us and mankind: “Your steamer is waiting; it is best that you remain together and go direct to America. Turn to me always that I may be in your hearts for I love you very much and this is eternal. You are always in my heart, but I must also be in your hearts, then we are in oneness.

[Picture: “Turn to me always.”]

“Praise be to God that ye have come and attained this station, and have long tarried in this sacred surrounding. Ye have visited the Sacred Shrine and have reached this sanctified spot and have passed the nights and days with the utmost joy and fragrance. Praise be to God that all of our gatherings were divine and were in commemoration of God, and were conducive to perfect joy and gladness. My hope is that immediately after your arrival in America ye may convene such blessed and spiritual gatherings—gatherings that proclaim loudly the Love of God. Then I shall inhale the fragrances that emanate from those gatherings, and I shall in spirit hear the call of Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá, and shall listen to the sweet melody that will be raised from those gatherings.

“I am always with you and although I am far from you in body, yet in spirit I am ever near and present amidst you all. At heart I am attached to you and the connective waves of my sensations are never interrupted. I ever pray on your behalf and beg for you assistance and confirmation. May you all rest and abide under His sheltering protection.”

For one moment He held us each by the hand and his last words will ever be our ongoing: “You are under the protection of God.”

It was good to leave in the rain. Nature seemed to cry in this shower of Bounty. For twelve days we had been with the Light of the World. Without in the rain were waiting the concourse of the beloved friends to bid us “God Speed.” They surrounded us in these last moments of silence, and Ibn Asdak, who understands the language of God, with simple gesture, pointed above—“Yes, we would meet in the Kingdom.” It seemed like parting, but this may be the mystery of our coming—that we have not left the Kingdom.

[END]