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INTRODUCTION

WHY this great unrest — wars and the rumors of wars, changing of dynasties, earthquakes, cataclysms? The people cry "Peace, peace; when there is no peace!"

Are not these the outer sign that man has lost the inner truth? Students in every

land who have stepped out of the stream of humanity remind us of the holy books of history — all of which foretell the coming of a great Messiah or world teacher. Once again the wheel has turned and brought man face to face with truth.

Truth is the handmaid of the prophet. Can there be a handmaid without the prophet?

A movement comes from the East which claims to be the divine instrument for bringing unity into the world. For this reason, if for no other, it deserves attention. Its claims are too

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vital and important to be overlooked. The wonderful lives of its founders command

interest. The courageous lives of its followers and their uncompromising sacrifice for this cause form a chapter that has no parallel in history.

During the last century three great seers or supermen have appeared in Persia — the Bab, BAHA'O'LLAH, and Abdul Bahá.

The Bab was born in Shiraz, in the month of October, 1819. At the age of twenty-

four he heralded the advent of a universal teacher whom God would manifest, and through whom the unity of the nations would be established. The Bab (door or gate) effected a reformation of Islam, opening the way for a broader movement — for always with earnestness and zeal he cried of one who was to come after him to illumine not only Islam, but the whole world. The young reformer made his declaration in 1844 at Shiraz and afterward at Mecca, where one hundred thousand people had congregated.

His teachings met with instant opposition on the part of the orthodox religionists

of the day. After two years he was imprisoned and held a prisoner until 1850 when he was shot in the public square of Tabriz.

But physical torture and death were ineffectual to stop the on-sweep of the reformation inaugurated by the Bab. When, some years later BAHÁ'O'LLAH arose as the one who was expected, thousands accepted him and at once came under his banner. BAHÁ'O'LLAH was not personally

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related to the Bab, nor had he ever seen him, though he became one of the first disciples of the Bab's teachings.

Dreadful persecutions ensued and more than twenty thousand martyrs joyfully gave up property and life rather than renounce the faith which they recognized as divine truth. At such variance were his teachings with the creed-bound world about him that BAHÁ'O'LLAH, with his family and followers, was banished to Bagdad, to Constantinople, to Adrianople and finally to the penal colony of Acca in Syria.

Few people of the western world were fortunate enough to see BAHÁ'O'LLAH, who was born in Teheran November 12, 1817. One who had journeyed afar, and who was finally ushered into his presence, described him thus: "The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow... No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!"

One of his followers in describing his power declares: "His proclamation was made with the certainty of immediate knowledge and a divine understanding of the needs of humanity for 'this gloomy and disastrous age!' Brilliant, spontaneous, mighty — he was like a conscious sun bursting on a dark, dead world. Verily, in the future these laws will be used 'for the healing of the nations.'"

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The prison officials of Acca ultimately granted him the liberty of the fortified city and he pitched his tent upon the Mount of Carmel in the land of Sharon, the very spot where, according to the ancient prophecies, the Glory of God would be

manifested in the latter days. The name of BAHÁ'O'LLAH means the Glory of God,

Bahá

— Glory, and

Allah

— God.

It will be noted that the divine teachers of all ages in their efforts to direct man's attention to God have assumed a spiritual title symbolic of their teachings.

BAHA'O'LLAH unsealed the holy books and revealed laws through which mankind can attain to a high state of spiritual civilization. These new laws will go into effect after the great readjustment, when wars, cataclysms, famine, labor troubles, etc., have done their work of equalization!

From the prison of Acca, BAHÁ'O'LLAH issued proclamations to the crowned heads of Europe and to the Pope, exhorting them to cease from their injustice and oppression and hasten to the tent of unity and consultation — that the reality of each matter might become disclosed. These epistles (copies of which are to be found in the British Museum) were dispatched by personal messengers, volunteers from his little band of exiles.

His commands, like a resonant call upraised from a land of oppression to the confused and sorrowful world — stern, irrefutable, immutable — stand out against the bloody background of Europe. Those who are following this call

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declare that the soundless voice will be heard throughout the ages, for they believe the words to be creative, and affirm that, notwithstanding his banishment and incarceration, BAHÁ'O'LLAH has been enabled to impress every nation on earth with a glory and universality of thought that promises the loosening of the shackles which have held mankind in the political, ecclesiastical and financial slavery of the times.

When a great force is liberated by the entrance of a divine being into the world arena, it must of necessity express itself through the vehicle of a human temple, and the objective expression of this force manifests itself in thoughts of different grades and degrees according to the capacity of the people. The master-teachers are the expounders of divine common sense which is the pathway to a knowledge of universal law, the result of which will be a harmonious humanity.

Man confines his consciousness to this material plane. This new force will liberate him and he will become conscious of many planes and of the ultimate oneness of them all.

Tolstoi in one of his books says that we spend our lives attempting to unravel the mystery of life, but adds, "There is a Persian, a Turkish prisoner, who knows the secret." Tolstoi was one of those who was in communication with BAHÁ'OLLAH. With him he held that a life uncompromisingly sacrificed to the ideals is the life of the superman.

BAHÁ'OLLAH continually urges man to free

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himself from the superstitions and traditions of the past and become an investigator of reality, for it will then be seen that God has revealed his light

many times in order to illumine mankind in the path of evolution, in various countries and through many different prophets, masters and sages.

Life must hold as its primary foundation the opportunity of a knowledge of the divine law. The great ones come, primarily, to remind man of this law which remains the same in all ages — immutable, unchangeable, eternal, and which deals with man attaining immortality. The mundane laws, those governing human conduct and regulating the Sabbath, divorce, capital punishment, etc., vary with

each age according to the capacity of the people. "These diversities are established out of regard for the times, seasons, ages and epochs."

Before his ascension from the prison of Acca in 1892, BAHÁ'OLLAH, commanded his followers to look to his eldest son, Abbas Effendi, whose spiritual title is

Abdul Bahá (Servant of God), as the expounder of his teachings and the one through

whom the new kingdom on earth would eventually be established. The mantle of glory descended upon this beloved son in order that the divine decrees might be fulfilled. BAHÁ'OLLAH was the great lawgiver. Abdul Bahá is the law establisher,

as he was the first to live these laws. He was born in the city of Teheran, Persia,

May 23, 1844.

A year after the departure of BAHÁ'OLLAH

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mention was made of this cause at the Chicago World's Fair, in 1893, by Dr. Harvy

Harris Jessup, President of the American College of Beirut, Syria, who sent a paper to be read before the congress of religions. This address was read during the afternoon session of the thirteenth day of the congress, September 23, 1893.

Dr. Jessup closed his address thus: —

"In the place of Behjé, or Delight, just outside the fortress of Acca, on the Syrian Coast, there died, a few months since, a famous Persian sage named BAHÁ'O'LLAH — the Glory of God.

"Three years ago he was visited by a Cambridge scholar to whom he uttered sentiments so noble, so Christ-like that we repeat them as our closing words — 'We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations — that all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that all bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease and differences of race be annulled — and so shall it be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the most great peace shall come. Is not this that which Christ foretold? Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.'"

Interest was enkindled in America and as there was no English literature on the subject at that time, a party was formed to journey to the Syrian city to get information of BAHÁ'O'LLAH at first

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hand from his son. They brought back graphic accounts from the prison philosopher. Meetings were held and a correspondence was begun with Abdul Bahá.

Soon from all parts of the world people journeyed to Acca. They wrote accounts of their visits and these, with the letters or tablets from Abdul Bahá, were widely distributed. The city of Acca became a center of pilgrimage. Around the board of Abdul Bahá gathered all races and creeds — it was the only place on earth where Christian, Moslem, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists and Hindus met and ate together in perfect harmony and understanding.

The above are mere facts of history, but present history without the setting of the background of time has no perspective to our clay-laden eyes. We are ever looking

for some miracle, some proof — for the Christ life as viewed from the outside seems so simple; yet could there be anything more dramatically miraculous than this to establish peace in the hearts in the midst of a warring world? This kind of peace BAHÁ'O'LLAH calls the "most great peace." To establish this kingdom in the hearts — verily, it is the unrealized dream of the planet!

After his liberation, in 1908, at the earnest solicitation of friends, Abdul Bahá made an extensive tour of Europe and America, bringing the message of the new creational day from shore to shore; speaking in churches of every denomination, in the synagogues, before many

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clubs, societies, universities and congresses. So swiftly has this cause spread that it has encircled the globe within a few years.

In America will be reared a material symbol standing for unity between the races, unity between the classes and equality between the sexes. In Chicago an imposing temple is to be erected by the voluntary contributions from all the people of the earth. Every race, creed and color will be represented.

The temple wherein each may worship God in his own way is to be surrounded by such accessories as a hospital, pilgrim-house, school for orphans and university for the study of higher sciences.

The people of universal mind recognize in this plan the symbol of assurance that we are at the beginning of the golden age that prophets and poets have depicted in song and fable. The people who have come in contact with this spirit of the age hold that the time has come when the highest concepts of man are to be realized and become part and parcel of every nation's fabric. With glowing faces these people tell of future ideals based on justice. They speak of international laws as yet untranslated into our language which are to govern the world after wars have ceased.

A new chapter in the life of the planet has been opened. Humanity has attained its

maturity, and the race consciousness has awakened to the fact that it must put away the childish things which seemed necessary in the day of the

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"survival of the fittest." This day "wherein the feet of the people deviate" is to be followed by a glorious to-morrow; for — "This is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of unity of the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes.

"The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between the nations and by the will of God the most great peace shall come; the world will be seen as a new world and all men will live as brothers."

The hour has struck — soon the vibration will be felt on this material plane; for as Abdul Bahá so beautifully puts it — "Does not the dawn of a new day arouse the sleeping ones from their couches of negligence and awaken all those who are not dead?"

Speaking of the temple of the future, Abdul Bahá says — "Every country has a hundred thousand gigantic temples, but what results have they yielded? The important point is this — from a temple of worship must go forth not only the spiritual but the material needs. Verily, the founding of this temple will mark the inception of the Kingdom of God on earth. It is the evident standard waving in the center of the great continent of America.

"The doors will be open to all sects — no

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differentiation; and by God's help this temple will prove to be to the body of human society what the soul is to the body of man. For when these colleges for the study of higher science, the hospital, the orphanage and the hospice are built, its doors will be opened to all nations, races and religions, with no line of demarkation and its charities will be dispensed without regard to race or color. Its gates will be flung wide to mankind; prejudice toward none, love for all. The central building

will be dedicated to prayer and worship and thus for the first time religion will become harmonized with science and science will be the handmaid of religion — both showering their spiritual gifts on all humanity. In this way the people will be lifted out of the quagmires of slothfulness and bigotry."

All of which would seem to verify the prediction of the great world thinkers of our time, one of whom says: "Abdul Bahá will surely unite the East and West, for he treads the mystic way with practical feet."

It was while Abdul Bahá was in Paris that a group composed of different sects awaited an audience to argue their various faiths. Suddenly this divine teacher of men swept into the room and pointing out of the window, exclaimed: The sun of truth rises in each season from a different point of the horizon — to-day it is here, yesterday it was there, and to-morrow it will appear from another direction. Why do you keep your eyes eternally fixed on the same point? Why

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do you call yourselves Christians, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Bahá'ís? You must learn to distinguish the sun of truth from whichever point of the horizon it is shining! People think religion is confined in an edifice, to be worshipped at an altar. In reality it is an attitude toward divinity which is reflected through life.

"This movement eludes organization — it is the realization of a new spirit. The foundation of that spirit is the love of God; and its method the love and service of mankind. Many who have never heard of this revelation teach its laws and spiritual truths. These people are performing what BAHÁ'O'LLAH hath commanded though they never heard of him. The power of BAHÁ'O'LLAH'S words is compelling — therefore you must know and love them. For instance, in the spring season trees burst forth into verdure though they are not conscious of the sunshine, of the falling rain or the gentle breeze — nevertheless, the power of nature urges them on to yield forth their fruits."

Soon after his release as a prisoner of the Turkish Government, Abdul Bahá journeyed from the little fortified town of Acca to Egypt and thence to London.

While in London he gave the following interview to the writer. It was published in one of the leading journals, under date of September 23, 1911.

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THE WORLD'S GREATEST PRISONER

Some Experiences of Abdul Bahá's Forty Years'

Imprisoned in a Turkish Fortress

In an apartment in Cadogan Gardens sits a Persian sage, Abdul Bahá, whose recent advent in London marks the latest link between the East and the West.

The teachings of Abdul Bahá have already brought about a community of thought between the Orient and the Occident. Upon the basis of mutual help and friendship the people have joined hands with an earnestness and brotherly love contrary to the theories of certain cynical poets and philosophers.

In his reception room one found a constantly augmented group representing many languages and nationalities. There were turbaned people from the East, a member of the English House of Lords, smartly dressed women from the continent, two tramps, who, having read of Abdul Bahá in the papers, sought his presence; and arch-deacon of the Church of England, and several Americans.

Abdul Bahá entered. With one impulse we arose, paying unconscious homage to the majesty of the station of servitude. Surely there can be no greater station than this! Instantly one felt an intangible something that stamped him as one apart. Try as one would it could not be defined.

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All that was tangible was the dome-like head with its patriarchal beard and eyes that suggested eternity. After greeting us he waved us to our seats and inquired if there were any questions we would like to ask. When informed that my editor had sent me to ascertain if he would speak of his prison life, Abdul Bahá began at once to tell his story in a simple, impersonal way:

"At nine years of age, I was banished with my father, BAHA'O'LLAH, on his journey of exile to Baghdad, Arabia; seventy of his followers accompanying us. This decree of exile after persistent persecution was intended to effectively stamp out of Persia what the authorities considered a dangerous movement. BAHA'O'LLAH, his family and followers were driven from place to place.

"When I was about twenty-five years old, we were moved from Constantinople to Adrianople and from there we went with a guard of soldiers to the fortified city of Acca where we were imprisoned and closely guarded.

"There was no communication whatever with the outside world. Each loaf of bread was cut open by the guard to see that it contained no message. All who believed in the universal precepts of BAHÁ'O'LLAH, children, men and women, were imprisoned with us. At one time there were one hundred and fifty of us together in two rooms and no one was allowed to leave the place except four people who went to the bazaar to market each morning under guard.

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"Acca was a fever-ridden town in Palestine. It was said that a bird attempting to fly over it would drop dead. The food was poor and insufficient, the water was drawn from a fever-infected well and the climate and conditions were such that even the natives of the town fell ill. Many soldiers succumbed and eight out of ten of our guard died. During the intense heat of that first summer, malaria, typhoid and dysentery attacked the prisoners, so that all the men, women and children were sick at one time. There were no doctors, no medicine, no proper food and no medical treatment of any kind. I used to make broth for the people and as I had much practice, I made good broth," said Abdul Bahá, laughingly.

At this point one of the Persians explained to me that it was on account of Abdul Bahá's untiring patience, resource and endurance that he was termed "The Master of Acca." I felt a mastership in his complete severance from time and place and from all that even a Turkish prison could inflict. "The Master" continued:

"After two years of the strictest confinement, permission was granted me to find a house, so that we could live outside the prison walls but still within the fortifications. Many believers came from Persia to join us, but were not allowed to do so. Nine years passed. Sometimes we were better off and sometimes very much worse. It depended on the governor, who, if he happened to be a kind and lenient ruler, would grant us permission to leave the fortification and would

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allow the people free access to visit the house; but when the governor was more rigorous, extra guards were placed around us and often pilgrims who had come from afar were turned away."

Again my Persian friend, who, during these troublous time was a member of Abdul Bahá's household, explained that the Turkish Government could not credit the

fact

that the interest of the English and American visitors was spiritual and not political. Finally, pilgrims were refused permission to see him and the whole trip

from America would be rewarded merely by a glimpse of Abdul Bahá from his prison window. The government suspected that the tomb of the Bab, an imposing building on Mount Carmel, was a fortification erected with the aid of American money and that it was being armed and garrisoned secretly. Suspicion grew with each new arrival, resulting in extra spies and guards.

Abdul Bahá continued: "One year before Abdul Hamid was dethroned, he sent an extremely overbearing, treacherous and insulting committee of investigation.

The

chairman was one of the governor's staff, Arif Bey, and with him were three army

commanders of varying rank.

"Immediately upon his arrival, Arif Bey proceeded to try and get proof strong enough to denounce me to the Sultan and warrant sending me to Fezan, or throwing

me into the sea. Fezan is a caravan station on the boundary of Tripoli, where there

are no houses and no water. It is a month's journey by camel route from Acca.

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"The committee, after denouncing me in their report, sent word that they wanted to see me, but I declined. I assured them that I had no desire to meet them.

This

infuriated them and when they sent for me again I sent this word back: 'I know your purpose. You wish to incriminate me. Very well, write in your report just what you like; send me a copy with instructions as to what you want me to write,

and I will seal it myself and give it to you.'

"A ship came into port reputed to be the one that was to take me to Fezan or drop

me into the sea. The people used to stand on the wall of the city and look at this

ship; but Arif Bey, rising in supreme wrath, declared that he would return to Constantinople and bring back an order from the Sultan to have me hanged at the gate of Acca.

"About this time another ship appeared in the harbor, an Italian vessel sent by order of the Italian consul. On it I was to escape by night. The friends implored me

to go, but I sent this message to the captain: 'The Bab did not run away; BAHÁ'O'LLAH did not run away; I shall not run away' — so the ship sailed away after waiting three days and three nights.

"It was while the Sultan's committee of investigation was homeward bound that the first historic shell was dropped into Abdul Hamid's camp and the first gun of freedom was fired into the home of despotism. That was God's gun," said Abdul Bahá, with one of his wonderful smiles.

"When the committee reached Constantinople

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they had more urgent things to think of. The capital was in a state of uproar and rebellion and the committee, as members of the government staff, were delegated to investigate the insurrection. Meanwhile the people established a constitutional government and Abdul Hamid was deposed.

"With the advent of the Young Turk's supremacy, realized through the Society of Union and Progress, in 1898, all the political and religious prisoners of the Ottoman Empire were freed. Events took the chains from my neck and placed them about Hamid's. Abdul baha came out of prison and Abdul Hamid went in!"

"What became of the committee?" was asked.

"Arif Bey," answered Abdul Bahá, "was shot with three bullets; the general was exiled; the next in rank died suddenly and the third ran away to Cairo where he sought and received help from some of the friends there."

"We are glad that you are free," I said.

Again the wondrous smile. "Freedom is not a matter of place. It is a condition. I

was thankful for the prison and the lack of liberty was very pleasing to me, for those days were passed in the path of service under the utmost difficulties and trials, bearing fruits and results.

"Unless one accepts dire vicissitudes he will not attain. To me prison is freedom; troubles rest me; incarceration is an open court; death is life and to be despised is honor. Therefore, I was happy all that time in prison. When one

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is released from the prison of self, that is indeed freedom, for self is the greater prison. When this release takes place, one can never be imprisoned. They used to put my feet in stocks so," and he put out his feet before him to illustrate and laughed as though it were a joke he enjoyed.

"I would say to the guard 'You cannot imprison me, for here I have light and air and bread and water. There will come a time when my body will be in the ground and I shall have neither light nor air nor food nor water, but even then I shall not be imprisoned.' The afflictions which come to humanity sometimes tend to center the consciousness upon the limitations. This is a veritable prison. Release comes by making of the will a door through which the confirmations of the spirit come."

This sounded so like the old theology that the modern within me rebelled doubting if the discipline really compensated for the effort.

"What do you mean by the confirmations of the spirit?" I asked.

"The confirmations of the spirit are all those powers and gifts with which some are born and which men sometimes call genius, but for which others have to strive with infinite pains. They come to that man or woman who accepts his life with radiant acquiescence."

Radiant acquiescence — that was the quality with which we suddenly seemed inspired as Abdul Bahá bade us good-bye.

It was a remarkable experience, hearing one

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who had passed along the prison path for forty years declare, "There is no prison save the prison of self"; and it drove conviction to the heart as this white-robed messenger from the East pointed the way out; not by renunciation, but by radiant acquiescence — the shining pathway out of the "greater prison of self."

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PRINCIPLES OF BAHÁ'O'LLAH

AS EXPOUNDED BY ABDUL BAHÁ

The sun of reality has risen from the eastern horizon. Its light and heat are being felt in all regions.

Just as the rays of the phenomenal sun are infinite, likewise the rays of the sun of reality are infinite. The following summary contains but a few of the rays which

may be likened unto great principles shining into the consciousness of man.

1. The first is the independent investigation of reality.
2. The second is the banishment of all prejudice.
3. The third is the oneness of the world of humanity.
4. The fourth is the oneness of the foundation of all religions.
5. The fifth is the unity of science and religion.
6. The sixth is the universal auxiliary language.
7. The seventh is universal education.
8. The eighth is the equality of the sexes.
9. The ninth is the parliament of man.
10. The tenth is universal peace.

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1. INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF REALITY

Discover for yourselves the reality of things, and strive to assimilate the methods

by which noble-mindedness and glory are attained among the nations and people of the world.

No man should follow blindly his ancestors and forefathers. Nay, each must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears and investigate independently in order that he may find the truth. The religion of forefathers and ancestors is based upon blind imitation. Man should investigate reality.

2. ABANDONMENT OF ALL PREJUDICE

O people, make firm the girdle of endeavor, that perchance religious prejudice may be annulled. For love of God and his servants engage in this great and mighty matter. Religious hatred and rancor is a world-consuming fire, and the quenching thereof most arduous, unless the hand of divine might give men deliverance from this unfruitful calamity.

Beware of prejudice; light is good in whatsoever lamp it is burning. A rose is beautiful in whatever garden it may bloom. A star has the same radiance if it shines from the east or the west.

All the prophets of God have come to unite the children of men and not to disperse them; to put in action the law of love and not enmity.

We must banish prejudice. Religious, patriotic, racial prejudices must disappear,
for they are the destroyers of human society.

We must become the cause of the unity of the human race.

3. THE ONENESS OF THE WORLD OF HUMANITY

White doves and gray doves associate with each other in perfect friendship.

Man

draws imaginary lines on the planet and says, "This is a Frenchman, a Mussulman,

an Italian!" Upon these differences wars are waged. Men are fighting for the possession of the earth. They fight for that which becomes their graves, their cemeteries, their tombs.

In reality all are members of one human family — children of one Heavenly Father. Humanity may be likened

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unto the vari-colored flowers of one garden. There is unity in diversity.

Each sets

off and enhances the other's beauty.

4. THE FOUNDATION OF ALL RELIGIONS IS ONE

The foundation underlying all the divine precepts is one reality. It must needs be

reality and reality is one. Therefore the foundation of the divine religions is one.

But we can see that certain forms and ceremonies have crept in. They are heretical, they are accidental, because they differ, hence they cause differences

among religions. If we set aside all superstitions and seek the reality of the foundation we shall all agree, because religion is one and not multiple.

5. RELIGION MUST BE IN ACCORD WITH SCIENCE AND REASON

Religion must agree with science, so that science shall sustain religion and religion explain science. The two must be brought together, indissolubly, in reality. Down to the present day it has been customary for man to accept blindly

what was called religion, even though it were not in accord with human reason.

6. A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

A universal language shall be adopted and taught in the schools and academies of

the world. A committee appointed by national bodies shall select a suitable language to be used as a means of international communication.

Every one will need but two languages, his national tongue and the universal language. All will acquire the international language.

7. UNIVERSAL EDUCATION

Partaking of knowledge and education is one of the requisites of religion. The education of each child is obligatory. If there are no parents, the community must

look after the child. It is suggested that the childless educate a child.

It is incumbent on every one to engage in some occupation, such as arts, trades, and the like. We have made

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this — your occupation — identical with the worship of God, the true one. Reflect, O people, upon the mercy of God, and upon his favors, then thank him in mornings and evenings.

8. EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

This is peculiar to the teachings of BAHÁ'O'LLÁH. Former religious systems placed men above women. Daughters and sons must follow the same form of study and acquire a uniform education. One course of education promotes unity among mankind.

9. AN INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL

The true civilization will raise its banner when some noble kings of high ambitions, the bright suns of the world of humanitarian enthusiasm, shall, for the good and happiness of all the human race, step forth with firm resolution and keen mind and hold a conference on the question of universal peace; when keeping fast hold of the means of enforcing their views they shall establish a union of the states of the world, and conclude a definite treaty and strict alliance between them upon conditions not to be evaded. When the whole human race has been consulted through their representatives and invited to corroborate this treaty which verily will be accounted sacred by all the peoples of the earth, it will be the duty of the united powers of the world to see that this great treaty shall endure.

A reflection of this parliament of man will be established in each community and called the "house of justice." Its members will be chosen for their attribute of justice, and all matters pertaining to the community interests will be brought

here for consultation.

10. UNIVERSAL PEACE

All men and nations shall make peace. There shall be universal peace amongst governments, universal peace amongst religions, universal peace amongst races, universal peace amongst the denizens of all regions. Today in the world of humanity the most important matter is the question of universal peace.

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PRELUDE

THE following words of Abdul Bahá were uttered after his American sojourn on the occasion of his second visit to Europe, in 1913, when he stopped for some months on his way to the Orient.

During his stay in Paris Abdul Bahá gave five public addresses (see Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8).

Each morning a group assembled at his apartment, 30 rue St. Didier, where he spoke informally; sometimes answering questions, or, on request, explaining points touched on in public addresses. In this way, although there are seeming repetitions, many abstruse subjects are elucidated in these informal conferences, which are to be found in the first few chapters of the book. (See chapters 1, 2 and 3.)

On these occasions Abdul Bahá would sometimes sit by the window over-looking Paris and anon the majestic white-robed figure would pace the room as he discoursed.

Every Friday evening he addressed an assemblage at M. and Mme. Dreyfus-Barney's, 15 rue Greuze and every Monday afternoon he visited a group at the studio of Mr. Scott (an American artist), in the Latin quarter, 17 rue Boissonade.

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His time in Paris was completely occupied. In the afternoons and evenings one found him surrounded by French savants and lovers of truth who sought an audience with this master of wisdom. Of a sudden he would sweep majestically forth, and should an attendant make as though to follow, he would wave him aside — "I walk alone!" Many an hour did this man of mystery wander the streets of

Paris dispelling the fogs of ignorance.

After Abdul Bahá had returned to Egypt, the writer visited him at Ramleh. Speaking of America one day, he said, "I have great hopes for the American people, but alas! as yet they do not understand the teachings of BAHÁ'O'LLAH.

"One of the veils is literal interpretation. To penetrate the inner significances a mighty effort is needed."

When one in reading substitutes the symbolic or spiritual title of the great ones, the human temple fades and only reality remains.

The spirit of faith, the beloved, the spiritual ego, the friend, the adored one, the desired one, the rays of the sun of truth, the flame of reality, the radiations of the celestial world, the lord, the nightingale, etc., are all synonyms of the one reality of man.

"This," says Abdul Bahá, "has been the mission of all the divine messengers — to make man conscious of his eternal part.

"By God, who is the only God and there is no God but he, this servant swears the masters did not come that man should adore them or worship

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them or acknowledge their prophethood. Nay, rather, the masters of all time have suffered for none other than this — that fleshly veils might be rent asunder and reality become manifest.

"Once again the dove of eternity hath descended from the rizwan

* of

nearness to sing the long-forgotten melody in this gloomy and disastrous age.

O,

when will one arise and while listening to this song don the garment of selflessness and hasten to the precinct of the friend!"

*Rizwan — a Persian word which means garden or paradise and symbolizes a heavenly condition.

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chapter 1

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