

academics, tramps, journalists, all were received with the same heartfelt love by `Abdu'l-Bahá.

In addition to the talks He gave in this house, He gave several public talks to large numbers of people. He was invited first to the City Temple, in Holborn, where He was the guest speaker of the Reverend R.J. Campbell. During His address to the congregation on the 10th September, `Abdu'l-Bahá said:

“The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and of the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between nations... There is one God; mankind is one; the foundations of religion are one.”

After the address, He wrote some lines in the pulpit Bible, describing the Bible as “the noble Gospel.... The mystery of the Kingdom... the sign of the guidance of God.” Although this Bible was destroyed during World War II, a facsimile copy of `Abdu'l-Bahá's written remarks remains.

He spoke again at St. John's, Westminster, on the 17th September, and His words were reproduced in the “Christian Commonwealth” periodical. While talking about the station of Christ in relation to God He said:

“If we claim that the sun is seen in the mirror, we do not mean that the sun itself has descended from the holy heights of his heaven and entered into the mirror! This is impossible. The Divine Nature is seen in the Manifestations [Messengers of God] ... and its Light and Splendour are visible in extreme glory.”

A building in Tavistock Place, London, now known as the Mary Ward Centre, was the venue for over 400 people who came to hear `Abdu'l-Bahá's third public address.

He talked about the mission of His Father, Bahá'u'lláh:

“His mission was to change ignorant fanaticism into universal love, to establish in the minds of His followers the basis of the unity of humanity and to bring about in practice the equality of mankind...”

`Abdu'l-Bahá also visited the Lord Mayor and commented on the freedom and equality before the law which was enjoyed by the British people.

His last

public talk was at the Theosophical Society, at the personal request of Mrs Besant, and included a systematic presentation of some basic principles of Bahá'u'lláh's religion.

Among these He included the necessity of the search for truth; the equality of men and women; the need to abolish prejudice; the need for universal equality; and the establishment of true peace.

`Abdu'l-Bahá was also able to visit Bristol, where He stayed at the Clifton Guest House from 23rd to 25th September. At a reception held for Him there, He explained how religion is renewed from age to age, and how Bahá'u'lláh had come to renew Christ's message and Christ's example of love to all humanity.

Other

small meetings were held in the homes of Bahá'ís in and around London and on one occasion He was able to visit Richmond Park. While staying in the village of Byfleet, He was taken to watch a biplane flying at the nearby Brooklands airfield and enjoyed a picnic there.

In an

interview given by `Abdu'l-Bahá to the "Weekly Budget" on 23rd September, 1911, He was asked about His experiences in prison:

"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... To me prison is freedom, troubles rest me, death is life, and to be despised is honour. Therefore, I was happy all that time in prison. When one is released from the prison of self, that is indeed release, for that is the greater prison."

Having

made a great impact on the Bahá'ís, their friends, and the public at large, `Abdu'l-Bahá left for Paris on 3rd October, 1911.

The

Second Visit

`Abdu'l-Bahá returned to the Middle East and rested there for a while before setting out again, in March 1912, for an even longer trip, across North America and back through Europe. He arrived in Liverpool on December 13th, 1912, and began again His pattern of receiving visitors and giving talks.

Visits

by `Abdu'l-Bahá include the talk He gave on Christmas Day to several hundred inmates of a Salvation Army hostel. `Abdu'l-Bahá paid for every one of them to receive further care. On a trip to Manchester College, Oxford, His address discussed the relationship between science and religion. When speaking to a meeting of the Suffragette movement, He talked about the Iranian poetess Táhirih, who, together with Bahá'u'lláh, had ensured that the followers of the new religion understood properly the role destined for women. Táhirih was put to death because of her beliefs.

Edinburgh
and Later Travels

From 6th to 10th January, 1913, `Abdu'l-Bahá was in Edinburgh, where He stayed at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Whyte. He was driven along the Royal Mile and shown many of the important sights. His first public talk was given to a packed meeting of the Esperanto Society, where He spoke about the need for the world to choose one language to be used for communication between people of all countries. His second was at Rainy Hall, Edinburgh University, in which He introduced many of the major principles of the Bahá'í Faith. The Scottish newspapers covered `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit most sympathetically, and some of the talks were reprinted in full. After a further public talk, to the Theosophical Society, `Abdu'l-Bahá returned to London.

`Abdu'l-Bahá again visited Bristol, where he gave a talk to nearly a hundred people. Again he stayed at the Clifton Guest House. One other notable visit was to the mosque at Woking. The numbers of people, of various religions, who attended was so great that `Abdu'l-Bahá had to speak in the courtyard in front of the building, instead of inside it!

`Abdu'l-Bahá left Britain on 21st January, 1913, and proceeded to visit France, Germany, Hungary and Austria before returning home. One of the subjects on which He frequently spoke was the high level of armaments held in Europe, and the need to make great efforts to avoid war. Unfortunately His words were not heeded and the First World War followed. Indeed, it was that very war which prevented Him from making further visits abroad.

`Abdu'l-Bahá organised food supplies for the poor during that war, and even fed the British army when it arrived in the Haifa area of Palestine. For these services He was knighted by the British government in 1920. He died, exhausted from His efforts, in 1921, but the memory of His shining example of love and kindness lives on.

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