



example: In the spiritual world there is the light of guidance, in the outer world there is the lamp, its symbol. In the divine world there is love, symbolized in the material world by magnetism. So there are four seasons in the perishable, outer world-spring, which brings the vegetables, refreshes the animals, and promises fruits; summer, which charges the trees with fruits; then follows, the autumn, after which comes the winter, when the trees are bare and empty. Such is the condition of the spiritual world, which has its four seasons-spring, summer, autumn, and winter.

When Jesus Christ appeared, it was the last days of the winter time, when the people, who are the trees of the divine garden, were deprived of their fruits; that is, of their divine

[page 5]

characteristics and divine moralities. As nature needs a springtime to revive the trees, so the spiritual nature needs a springtime to fill the garden with flowers and fruits. It was through the manifestation of Jesus Christ that this spiritual springtime began. Summer followed with its fruits and, later, autumn came. Winter followed and the trees were naked; that is, the people were without their divine qualities. So again, it became necessary that a new springtime should come.

Today, people know of Jesus Christ His name, His name without His realities or His qualities. Knowing only the name of the Lamp, they repeat it constantly, utterly unaware of the use of the lamp, and that it should give light.

In olden times there was a hero, a valorous man, whose history is always being told in the public-houses and in the coffee-rooms of Egypt. People who are in the habit of gathering in these places repeat the history of this hero, telling how courageous he was. While they were spending their time in this way, praising their old hero, the English took their country in ten moments.

STRAY THOUGHTS AT THE DINNER TABLE.

TRANQUILITY. - When the spirit is tranquil the body is at ease.

LIGHT. - It does not matter for the light

[page 6]

whether the crystal is pure or not, but it is better that both be pure, the light and the crystal. The crystal may become broken, but the light will still exist.

TEACHING. - All teaching and knowledge are enclosed in the soul of man, because his soul encompasses everything. To study means to try to bring them to light. For instance: The flowers, fruits, and leaves are contained in the seed; and with the heat, light, and soil, the fruits are manifested. The figure is contained in the mirror, but the mirror of itself has not the power to reflect it. Polishing is necessary in order to give out a perfect reflection. Even on this wall there exists the possibility of a reflection, but it needs polishing

to bring out the reflection. So study is polishing.

There are many people in Persia who are illiterate, but who are able to guide wise and learned men. Knowledge and sciences are like water gathered from pools and cisterns for the irrigation of the soil; the confirmations of God are like rainfalls and showers. Why should one gather water from pools when the pure water is obtainable? Unless one's mind be concentrated on the Cause, one can not receive assistance from God.

#### BEGINNINGS OF BELIEF.

The first entrance into light and into belief is extremely difficult. The spiritual birth is

[page 7]

troublesome and painful in the same degree as is the physical birth. In reality, the two births are alike. In the beginning it is very difficult to enter into the kingdom, but after being there a short time existence becomes delightful; just as the babe, after he has been brought into the world and has begun to receive the blessings and pleasures of his material life, is happy to have been born. Looking back at his previous condition, the child realizes how dark and gloomy was the world from which he came when he was brought into the luminous world. This is also the condition of the one who has received the spiritual light, who has entered into the spiritual world and been convinced. Looking backward, he sees in what a gloomy world he formerly existed, and he realizes into what a brilliant world he has been brought.

When a spiritual birth has taken place, the condition of the newly born in the spirit is like that of the babe newly born from the womb. The child is very easily attracted to an object, and he very quickly becomes attached to it; nevertheless, he rejects it readily, and hates easily what he had at first liked. Judas Iscariot, like a child, easily accepted the cause of Christ; but he also rejected it easily, in the same way that the child's attention is readily drawn to an object and lightly diverted from it. Moreover, a child readily becomes attached to nonsensical, worldly things; in the same way Judas Iscariot was cheated with

[page 8]

the world. When, on the contrary, man reaches his maturity, his love is deepened and made firm. Peter was one who reached his maturity; really firm in his love he was not cheated by the world.

It is in this way that believers who have entered this Cause must perfect themselves and try to reach their maturity. Otherwise, with only a slight temptation they fail, they waver, they become separated from the Cause. The only means of reaching this station of maturity are to fulfil the commandments and to try to obtain divine qualities and spiritual moralities.

The BLESSED PERFECTION likened man to a candlestick or a lamp; and belief, with the confirmation of God, to the light within that lamp. The lamp should have a

shining light. It was in this sense that Christ said that the tree should be known by its fruits. We can judge the believers by their deeds.

(Turning to us Abdul-Baha said:)

So we hope that on your return you will be radiant and shining with the light of the Kingdom. You must be surrounded by such a light that all may perceive it; you must be so filled with the light that every one will bear record to your brilliancy. The Sweet odor of these fragrant blossoms (indicating the narcissus blossoms on the table) cannot be concealed. If some people have colds and can not smell the Sweet perfumes of the flowers, there are always others who can appreciate them.

[page 9]

#### PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD.

There is no real pleasure in the world and no real happiness. All the earthly pleasures and material enjoyments are but alleviations of pains and an appeasement of troubles. For instance: A man feels hunger and is in trouble; food can appease this trouble, and he thinks and calls this taking away of his hunger a pleasure. Or, again, one suffers with thirst, and a drink of pure water relieves his sufferings; this relief he calls a pleasure, but, in truth, it is not a pleasure at all. Or a man, having labored all the day long, feels very weary and tired; a little repose removes his weariness, and this seems to him a pleasure. Yet, in truth, none of these enjoyments are real ones, because to him who is not hungry or thirsty food and water can give no pleasure; he who is not tired can derive no pleasure from sleep; he who has slept enough would never like to sleep again, and the sleep would be to him a trouble instead of a pleasure.

As we see, there is no pleasure in the fore-mentioned things. So one morsel of bread can satisfy a man and give as much satisfaction as the most varied foods; when one would sleep, a single, simple room can give benefit equal to that of the most gorgeous palace. Being sure then, that there is no real pleasure in the material world, we must seek for the spiritual happiness which is everlasting.

[page 10]

Love is a spiritual happiness; it is not an alleviating pleasure, and man can never hate it. Knowledge is a spiritual pleasure, and man is never satisfied with it. Faithfulness and fidelity are divine and spiritual enjoyments; one who tastes these pleasures can never have too much of them nor become disgusted with them.

(Today Abdul-Baha said many things about the pleasure of being detached from the world. Among them He said:) I wish for the happiness and prosperity of the believers even in this material world, but they must not be attracted by it or attached to it. Extreme wealth or utter poverty should be equal to them.

#### MERCY OF THE DIVINE BOUNTY.

Through the bounty and favor of God think nothing difficult or impossible. God is so bountiful that He brings fire out from the stone; inflammable matter jets out from the interior of the earth; out of the black dust of the soil He produces beautiful flowers; from the bottom of the ocean He brings pearls and corals. When the light of His favor is shed upon us the darkness is fled.

#### THE DIFFERENT KINGDOMS.

All things were created for man, and man for God. Man is distinguished from all other creations. This is a special problem. There are

[page 11]

three general classes of creations-mineral, vegetable, and animal. Nothing is outside of these three classes. The mineral is a solid body. Its only power is that it has form; its only virtues are in having this body. The vegetable is distinguished from the mineral because in addition to the virtues contained in the mineral, it has also the power of growth. Then comes the animal kingdom, which possesses the virtues of the other two kingdoms, and in addition to them has the faculty of sensation. So it is evident that the animal kingdom is excellent above the other two. Man, who is in part animal, possesses all the virtues of the mineral, because he has a body; he possesses the added faculty of the vegetable, growth; he has the virtue of the animal kingdom, sensation; and, above all, he possesses reflective and mental power, by which he understands the reality of things. Perceiving and reflecting upon visible things, he realizes the reality of unknown things. When a man gazes at the earth he sees it as if it were level, but by his perception he finds that it is a globe. This power of perception can never be found in the animal kingdom; but man by this power can prove that the sun is a center and that the globe and other bodies revolve around it. This power of judgment, possessed only by man, proves his excellence; for the virtues and faculties of other things and substances are created in man, and, above all, he is given virtues with which the

[page 12]

other kingdoms are not endowed. Every thing is for man.

We speak now in examples, as Christ spoke in parables. The world is like a tree: the mineral kingdom is like the root; the vegetable kingdom is like the branches; the animal kingdom is like the blossoms; and man is like unto the fruit of that tree. The tree is but for its fruit. If the gardener did not expect fruit, he would never plant trees; in the same way every thing is for man.

There are two sides to man. One is divine, the other worldly: one is luminous, the other dark; one is angelic, the other diabolic. Man is equal to the animals in all sensuous conditions, for all animal characteristics exist in him.

Likewise, divine and satanic qualities are contained in man: knowledge and ignorance; guidance and error; truth and falsehood; generosity and avarice; inclination towards God and tendency towards Satan; chastity and purity,

corruption and vileness; valor and timidity; economy and avidity; good and evil; all are contained in man.

If the angelic side becomes more powerful and the divine power and brightness surround man, then the second birth takes place and eternal life is found at this point. Man becomes then the noblest among creatures. On the other hand, if sensuous qualities surround, and if terrestrial darkness and sensuous passions predominate, if they meet in man only the worldly feel-

[page 13]

ings, if they find him a captive of evil qualities and fallen into everlasting death, then such a man is the basest and most abject among all creatures. In such a man divine power does not exist. An animal is not considered unjust and evil because of its cruelty and injustice, for it is not endued, as is man, with divine qualities; but if man falls into the same evil condition it is evident that he has permitted his ungodly attributes to overcome the divine qualities with which he was endowed. This shows the baseness and meanness that exist in human nature.

#### ORIGINS OF THE MANIFESTATIONS

Divine favor, like the sun, appears from different dawning places. In the early days, the prophets were the dawning places of the divine benedictions. The sun shone from those points. There were people who, when the Sun appeared, knew Him by His radiance, by His favors, by His rays. These were the lovers of the light, not the lovers of the rising places of the sun; and they knew the sun in His reality because they were not attracted to the dawning places. These people have always attained.

Others looked at the dawning point only, and did not perceive that the Sun changed places. For instance, the Jews always looked towards Moses, and when that Sun changed to the dawning place of Christ, they were still looking at

[page 14]

the first Orient. So they were veiled. There were others who were the lovers of the light itself. They had recognized the Sun in Moses, and they perceived the greater radiance in the Sun of Christ; while the Jews, who were always looking at the Sun of Moses, were deprived of the beauty of Christ.

It is evident then that we must not look at the dawning places but .it the real sun. The dawning places vary, but the sun does not vary. In whatever point it may appear it is always the sun. Now all the followers of the great religions of the world are veiled because they are looking at the old dawning places and are not watching for the coming of the Sun. Your lover must love you, not your house. If he really loves you he will recognize you in whatever house you may appear; but if he is attached to the house, he will not find you if you appear in a new house. All nations are worshippers of names, not of realities. The Jews worshiped the name of Moses, but they knew him not. Christians worship a name instead of the truth. Mohammedans worship a name, not the truth. Had all

been worshipping the truth they would have recognized it easily in any form, so that now they would be united in faith and no diversity would have appeared among them.

The sun is always fixed in its center. Its apparent changes are due to our conditions. In the space of a year the sun rises from one hun-

[page 15]

dred eighty horizon points, which are called the dawning places. As the sun of the universe has no rising or setting, so also with the Sun of Reality.

According to our station, He has a rising and a setting, and we have named those points according to our own natures. For example: The Sun rose formerly from this dawning place, and the people who knew Him according to His rising place fixed their eyes upon this place; today, when the Sun rose from a far distant point, the dawning was not seen by those people who had fixed their eyes and attention upon the first center, and who were constantly gazing in that direction.

Man must be thirsty for water. He must be seeking the pure water, not the fountain; and he must know that the same salubrious water may gush from different sources. One must be a lover of the fruit, not of the tree. From whatever tree this fruit may come we must like it. The nightingale loves the flower, in whatever garden it may blossom. There are many who have loved the jar, not the wine; they should love the wine in any jar whatsoever.

#### ATTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE IN THE TIME OF THE APPEARANCE OF DIVINE MANIFESTATION.

Every nation is looking for a Promised One, or indeed, for two Manifestations. Zoroastrians expect two. The Jews expect Elias and Christ.

[page 16]

The Mohammedans expect the Mahdi and Christ. The Christians, like the Jews, are also expecting Elias and Christ. Consequently, every religion is expecting two Manifestations, one succeeding the other. Why then did they reject them notwithstanding their earnest seeking? The Jews, for instance, were eagerly and ardently awaiting the coming of Christ. What was the reason for their disbelief? For there must have been a reason. It was because the Jews did not understand the Old Testament. In the Bible Christ was promised according to certain signs, and the Jews did not recognize the signs. They did not understand the verses for they took only their literal meaning; consequently, they were deprived of an appreciation of the beauty of Christ. For instance: They were expecting the coming of Christ with sovereignty. They expected Him to have such power that He would overcome the East and the West. He was to rule with a rod of iron in His hands, and to promote and fulfil the law of Moses. He was to come in such a manner that all nations would be gathered at Zion, worshipping the God of Israel. Wolf and lamb were to drink at the same fountain; deer and lion were to feed together; eagle and partridge should live in the

same nest; mouse and serpent should be in the same hole. These were the signs.

At the time of His appearance not only did the people fail to see Him as a sovereign, but He

[page 17]

did not possess even a span of ground. He had no sword, not even a stick. He did not promulgate the law of Moses; on the contrary, He broke the Sabbath. Not only did He fail to ascend the throne of David, but He had not even a mat on which to lie. Not only did justice fail to reign, but cruelty was spread to such a degree that He himself was crucified. It is not surprising that people said He was a liar and a false Messiah.

Notwithstanding all this, in truth Christ did have sovereignty; but it was not earthly, it was heavenly. His rod was His tongue, the Word of God, that divided right from wrong, believers from unbelievers, father from son. Thus Christ's rod and His sword were His word. Concerning the promulgation of the law of Moses-He did spread the essence of that law. As to the wolf and the lamb - these were the people of the East and the West who, being antagonistic to one another, were like wolves and lambs. Through Christ all of them were gathered under the protection of the Gospel and received light from the same book.

Now see the power of the Word of God! How we are gathered together in this one room!

The Jews, not understanding these prophecies, denied Christ. This is the condition today of other nations. The Christians do not understand the signs. They expect that the sun shall be darkened, and that the moon shall not give

[page 18]

its light. The stars shall fall from heaven. After this, the Son of man shall be seen descending from Heaven, riding upon the clouds, attended by hosts of angels. How is this possible, since it is well understood that the sky is but an unlimited space, and not a dome from which Christ could come? Even those who are expecting Christ's descent admit this fact.

Christ also said: "He who descended from Heaven can ascend to Heaven." He said He came from Heaven and we know that He came from the womb of Mary. He will come this time as He came before.

Concerning the falling of the stars: Many of the stars are larger than the sun. The sun is a million times larger than the earth, and many of the Stars are larger than the sun. How then can they fall upon the earth? It is as if a hundred thousand mountains should be placed upon a grain of mustard. These are symbols only. It is even said that Christ said, "I will come while you are sleeping." In spite of the earthquake, in spite of the trembling of the heavens, in spite of the falling of the stars, He said that the people could sleep during His coming! As concerns the "heavens," there is a special significance. Christ used to say, "Now I am in Heaven," while He was still upon the earth. He was never separated from Heaven, that is to say, from His highest

station.

The stars are persons. The people who dis-

[page 19]

believed in Him fell from the heaven of the previous law. The learned men of higher rank were the stars of that heaven.

Each sign has a special significance. Each is a symbol, requiring special interpretation.

#### CHRIST RE-ESTABLISHES THE LAW OF MOSES.

Christ himself said that whatever happened in the cycle of Moses would occur again in His time. Therefore these occurrences were repeated. We can not say that what happened in the time of Christ was remarkable, since the same had happened before. We can not say that it is extraordinary that the present springtime follows that of last year. We can not say this year that these blossoms are useless because the same ones appeared last spring. The last spring gave out its benefits, and summer, autumn, and winter followed. If a new spring did not come to the world everything would die. In every springtime there will be repeated what has happened in previous springtimes.

If you gather together all the teachings of Christ they will not exceed ten pages. If you gather together the teachings of the BLESSED PERFECTION they will exceed sixty or seventy volumes. Those of Christ have no new laws, except the regulation about divorce. Those of the BLESSED PERFECTION contain many instructions. The greatest teachings of Jesus Christ

[page 20]

are such as these: Love you enemies; bless those who curse you and revile you; when struck on the right cheek turn the left. Of course, these commands are right, and what is contained in the world can not equal them in value; but these instructions refer particularly to individuals, and do not deal with nations. They are personal, not universal. Those of the BLESSED PERFECTION are for all nations, like the injunction for universal peace, although even these apply to individuals as well as to nations. The instructions of Christ were heard by but few persons, and they were not fulfilled during His lifetime. There were really eleven persons who believed, although Christians themselves say that there were a hundred and twenty. The teachings of the BLESSED PERFECTION were spread throughout the world during His lifetime. Jesus Christ Himself did not see during His life the fulfillment of His commands, for He alone fulfilled them in His time; but the fulfillment of the numerous commands of the BLESSED PERFECTION commenced during His time and was witnessed by Him.

The reputation of Christ did not extend from Nazareth to Acca, and it was not until after His ascension that His doctrines spread. The reputation of the BLESSED PERFECTION extended throughout the world. Jesus Christ did not send a letter even to the chief of a village; the BLESSED PERFECTION sent letters to all the kings

[page 21]

of the earth. The BLESSED PERFECTION addressed Napoleon (Napoleon III) with great power, plainly stating that his kingdom would be taken away from him.

The ten commandments were sanctioned by Jesus Christ, and His first order was, "Go and fulfil these commandments." When one of the rich men came saying, "I want to be one of your disciples," Christ told him to follow the ten commandments. The rich man said he knew them and that he would like something superior to them. So Christ said, "Go and give all thy wealth to the poor." The rich man pondered over His words, and went away because he could not give up his riches. Afterwards Christ said: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." We see here that Christ renewed the ten commandments.

There are two general and principal classes of divine teachings. One is spiritual, and pertains to the moralities; this is the fundamental basis of the divine law, unchangeable and unalterable, which has been reiterated and renewed in the cycle of every prophet. Its commands refer to justice, truthfulness, compassion, faith, love of God, self-devotion, self-sacrifice, steadfastness, including all divine and merciful attributes. This is the unchanging and unmoving law of God.

The second class of divine teachings is mate-

[page 22]

rial and deals with behavior; such as divorce, the commandments, the way of worshiping. All these conditions have changed in the cycle of every prophet. The character of divine sovereignty has no change or transformation, but the organization and administration change continually. This is why Jesus Christ said: "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." At the same time there are conditions that are changeable.

CAPACITY.

Abdul-Baha gave many beautiful examples concerning real capacity, some of which are as follows: There is an attractive power in everything in the world, which is called the possibility of receiving the power of progress. Look at this lamp and consider its real condition. When every material of it, as the bowl, the glass, the oil, and the wick have been gathered together, they require a hand to put a flame to it and to light it up, so forming a real lamp. What is the power that attracts the hand to light it? It is the capacity of the lamp itself. When the soil is plowed and the seed scattered in it, a capacity is created which attracts the shower of the mercy of God.

So I hope that you will grow day by day in capacity, so as to receive more and more of the divine blessings. This capacity comes but by being detached from the world and by being

[page 23]

attracted to God with a hearty inclination for His Cause.

By being severed from the world I do not mean holding in contempt the things of the world, for civilization and education are the means of progress; but I mean that one must not attach his heart to the world. There have been some who have had the capacity of receiving the divine blessings, but, not being detached from the world, they at last became cold in the service of God. The people will surely blame you and deride you, scorning you; but these are but instruments which will cause the blessings of God to be bestowed upon you. They will attract to you the divine blessings.

Look at the life of Jesus Christ and His disciples. All those revilings of them were but the divine graces. That crown of thorns, placed upon Him with such dreadful derision, was a crown of honor. That crown has abased and humiliated the crowns of all the sovereigns of the world. Those curses and insults were transformed into these bells pealing to His honor and in His name.

---

Concerning an interview between a Zoroastrian believer and two American believers this forenoon, Abdul-Baha said: Zoroastrians denied Christ for nineteen hundred years. We have tried to convert the Zoroastrians to a belief in Jesus Christ, and still the Christians are not satisfied with Us.

[page 24]

Extracts From a Letter After a Visit  
to Acca

We arrived at Haifa early in the morning of Friday, February 5th, and, as it was not wise for us to attract any attention, we were not met by any of the believers; but, after getting through the customs, we looked up one of the believers in his little store, and he conducted us to the house of Mirza Yazdi. He served us tea and by some rapid means let the believers know that we were there. Among others, there came to see us Mushkin Kalim, the writer, a man seventy years of age, who with love in his eyes said that he had been too unwell to leave his home for some days, but that the news of our arrival had so cheered his heart and strengthened him that he was able to come and bring greetings to us and to express his love for us. This is only one example of the love and kindness shown to us by the believers throughout the Orient. Ahmed Yazdi, at Port Said, and the little circle of believers with him, Mohammed Yazdi, at Alexandria, - everyone, had only the desire to show us some kindness, to be of use to us, regarding their own business always as the secondary

[page 25]

thing, the thing to be laid aside the moment that they have the opportunity of serving another believer in the Cause.

After a visit of an hour or so with these pure souls in Haifa, the carriage was sent for and we left for Acca. The drive is along the shore of the bay and takes about two hours. Starting from Haifa we are facing Acca all of the way.

At first, it is just a white city on the water, but, as one gets nearer, the minaret and domes become distinct, and the buildings and walls begin to take shape.

Soon we were there, under the walls, through the gate, up the narrow streets, built for defence; then through the second line of fortifications by means of a second gate, twisting around right-angled corners, with streets just wide enough for the wagon and its three horses, with pedestrians close up to the walls to get out of the way, and so on to the house of Abdul-Baha. There loving greetings were awaiting us and many willing hands to carry luggage and parcels for us. We were conducted up the long flight of stone steps to the second story, and shown into the room where Abdul-Baha usually receives His visitors. After a little delay, spent with Mirza Younass Khan, the interpreter, Abdul-Baha came to us with kindly inquiries as to our health and our journey, with an apology that all that He could offer us was the hospitality of the prison. With kind words and wishes He

[page 26]

left us, and we were taken to lunch and then shown our rooms.

We left during the afternoon of Thursday, February 11, and of the days between I hardly know where to begin nor how to tell you about it all. We saw Abdul-Baha every day at luncheon and at dinner, and some days He would come to us for a little while in the morning or for a few minutes in the afternoon, and once He spent a long time with us at night after dinner. At the table, between courses, or when He was not eating, He would talk to us, giving us the teachings, the proofs of this great Manifestation. Always His words came with graciousness, with kindness and encouragement, and over and over again did He impress upon us the necessity of service in the Cause. For myself, I had not those great experiences of emotion that some visitors to His Presence have been seized with; but a great peace fell upon my soul, a tranquility and a surety took possession of me, such as comes nowhere else. That is the pervading atmosphere of the Holy House, a calm security that no cataclysm can shake; a love that encircles one, that is expressed by every person there, the great love of service, of doing something for another, of losing one's self completely in the absolute love that comes only from God. The love shown us there I can never forget. May God grant that I may be able to carry the message of it to others! The solution of all the

[page 27]

world's misery, of all the social and economic questions of the day, is in that love for which Baháism stands, which it touches, which is its basis, and which all Baháis should be constantly giving out.

It was not considered wise to permit us to go out very often, nor to visit the homes of any of the believers in Acca, but the friends came to us in the home of Abdul-Baha, and from all of them came that great spirit of love and unity.

Of one experience I must tell you. While we were in Acca there was also

visiting Abdul-Baha a man from Bombay, one who had been a Zoroastrian. He was accompanied by his little son, a child of perhaps eleven or twelve. He heard that two Americans were there, and he begged to be allowed to see us, because in the sacred book of the Zoroastrians, written thousands of years ago, it was prophesied that a new world should be discovered, and that in the "last days" people from this new world should meet with the people of Zoroaster, that they should meet in the worship of the same God, in the same place. To him it was the literal fulfillment of the prophecy, and he wanted to see us. He was a tall man with a great simplicity of manner, that simplicity that comes of great earnestness. He said: "I can not tell you how happy I am to see you, or what my heart feels to meet you here. My words can not express it, but I would give my life for you." He added that he should always remember having seen us. Neither shall we ever forget that meeting.

[page 28]

In the Presence of Abdul-Baha

"You are going now to your greatest test," said a friend, as we drove to the station to begin the trip to Acca, the "White City by the Sea." The words were unintelligible to me then, and it was not until some weeks later that their real meaning became clear. Scarcely heeding them, in fact, in the happiness of making the start, they were forgotten until their truth came back to me when the visit at Acca was slowly moving into our past.

Six days in Acca! Six days in the presence of Abdul-Baha! Six days in an atmosphere of the most perfect love and peace that it has ever been mine to know. Others may have spent six weeks there, six months. That is nothing, for time is nothing in the presence of Abdul-Baha. If a thousand years are but as a day in the sight of the Lord, it may be equally true that a day may be as a thousand years. We lived a lifetime in those six days. The outside world disappeared. The past had never been. There was no future. It was as if the moment in that Presence were all of life, and that it was eternal. "Prayer, peace,

[page 29]

glory, and praise" enveloped us from the moment that Abdul-Baha took our hands in His in a welcoming grasp until He said, "Go back and serve!" and we left His physical presence perhaps forever in this world.

Before starting on our journey I had feared being overwhelmed with sadness at the sight of the imprisonment of our Beloved Master; so I had prayed earnestly that I might be enabled to look into His dear face with smiles only. Once in Acca the prayer was as completely forgotten as if it had never been uttered, but I found myself wondering at the readiness with which I smiled into those eyes that always smiled back at me in tender love. It was not until Acca was fading into the distance beyond the blue waters of the Mediterranean, that I remembered my prayer and marveled at its complete realization.

The entrance into the Holy Presence came as simply and naturally as into that

of some dear friend. We wondered somewhat, my husband and I, for we had thought it impossible to meet Him whom our hearts so revered and loved without being overcome with emotion. Hours passed, we met Him face to face, felt the touch of His hands, basked in the light of His smile, and still we had not been overcome by any mighty wave of irresistible feeling; and still we wondered. Days passed. The life in Acca had received us, had taken us into its loving arms, and still we were wondering when and how was to

[page 30]

come that mighty sweep of power. It did not come. The dominance of the Lord spoke to us only through His love, everywhere triumphant. The influence of Abdul-Baha expressed itself in the peace around us that was always unbroken. His wisdom was manifest in the reverence of the gray-haired men who bowed before its decisions in unquestioning acceptance. The efficiency of His teachings was illustrated in the eagerness of those who had been Zoroastrians, Mohammedans, or Christians to all live together there in perfect love and unity, under His sheltering care; and in their determination to carry with them to the ends of the world the same peace and harmony that wrapped them in its folds in that dreary, but glorious, little prison city, Acca.

The day of departure came. The doors of the home of Abdul-Baha closed upon us. The grim walls and the defiant gates of the crumbling old city of the Crusaders were behind us. The world and the service upon which we had been sent were before us. Slowly driving away, two questions perplexed us: What was the "greatest test" to which we had been subjected? We had been unconscious of it. Why had we not felt some overwhelming conviction of the sanctity of that Presence in which we had spent six such bliss-filled days?

In a moment we almost laughed at our simplicity in asking ourselves the latter. What experience could have been more overwhelming

[page 31]

in its conviction than the steadily cumulating proof of those six days? For now we realized, as it had been impossible to understand while still in the presence of our Beloved Lord, that every hour, every interview with Abdul-Baha, every observation of the life around us, had brought conviction to the reason, to the judgment, to the emotions, to the whole mental, moral, and spiritual nature, that this was indeed the Messenger of the Lord for whom we searched, sent to show the world the way into life eternal. We realized at last that when we first entered His presence so quietly, it was as if we had been taken gently up by the first swell of a great tidal wave, raised so tenderly that we had been scarcely conscious of the uplift; we had been carried on and on, higher and higher, until, as the tidal wave may sweep over coast, rocks, and even cities, we had been carried high over all worldly consciousness, and it had become to us as if the world were not. As this realization came to us, we prayed that we might never again be upon that lower spiritual level where we had been when that wave lifted us and bore us so high into the realms of absolute, common-sense, unquestioning conviction. "By their works ye shall know

them," Christ said would be the final proof of the Manifestation of God in the last days, and it was through the works of Abdul-Baha and of those who serve Him that we had attained to the heights of our conviction of the truth of this Manifestation of God.

[page 32]

There still remained the question, What had been our "greatest test?" It had sunk into insignificance. That incorporation of the living spirit of God in a human body could never be a stumbling block now to our steps. We had met a man, it is true, a man with all the needs and elements of humanity; but it had been to realize how perfect an instrument of the Lord the human body may become. How else could God have spoken to us so forcibly as through those human lips that let fall divine wisdom? As through those human eyes, whose glances bore into one's soul a conception of the love and tenderness of God? As by that human tongue that never uttered a harsh or unkind word? As through that stately form, unbowed by all the grievances of the world or by the sufferings of long years of prison life and deprivation? Surely, if man is the greatest work of God, man must also be the most perfect messenger of God to man.

There had been but six days in Acca; but the human world was behind us, before us was the world of God. They were separated by a conception of timeless eternity made comprehensible to us by the visit in the presence of the Master.

#### METADATA

Views15131 views since posted 2001-10; last edit 2025-09-30 14:50 UTC;

previous at [archive.org.../winterburn\\_table\\_talks](#);

URLs changed in 2010, see [archive.org.../bahai-library.org](#)

Language

English

Permission

public domain

History

Scanned 1998 by Robert Stauffer.

Share

Shortlink: [bahai-library.com/760](http://bahai-library.com/760)

Citation: ris/760

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished

Audio

Bibliographies

BIC

Biographies

Books

Chronologies

Compilations  
Compilations-NSA  
Compilations-personal  
Documents  
East-asia  
Encyclopedia  
Essays  
Etc  
Excerpts  
Fiction  
Glossaries  
Guardian  
Histories  
Introductory  
Letters  
Maps  
Music  
Newspapers  
NSA-documents  
NSA-letters  
Personal  
Pilgrims  
Poetry  
Presentations  
Resources  
Reviews  
Scripts  
Software  
Statistics  
Study  
Talks  
Theses  
Transcripts  
Translations  
UHJ-documents  
UHJ-letters  
Video  
Visual  
Writings

home

sitemap

series

chronology

search:

[author](#)

[title](#)

[date](#)

[tags](#)

[adv. search](#)

[languages](#)

[inventory](#)

[bibliography](#)

[abbreviations](#)

[links](#)

[about](#)

[contact](#)

[RSS](#)

[new](#)

— Table Talks with Abdu'l-Baha (Used by permission of the curator)