



ineffable way, shedding a warm spiritual glow upon the whole affair. As I had previously met her in Cambridge at the home of Mrs. Ole Bull, I ventured to recall myself to her.

Miss Farmer took my hand in hers and cordially held it while she looked into my eyes and asked, "Have you heard of the Persian Revelation?"

"No," I answered.

"Well, go to that lady in a white headdress and

This was my general frame of mind when Mary

ask her to tell you about it. I know by your eyes that Lucas, the

"woman in white" — a singer just back

you are ready for it." from visiting

'Abdu'l-Baha — took me under an apple

What had she seen in my eyes? I do not know. But tree on the sloping

lawn and proceeded to unfold to

what she had read there proved true. For within half me the Persian

Revelation. Her exposition was very

an hour from that moment I became a confirmed simple. It

consisted of only these four words: "Our

Baha'i and have remained so ever since. Lord has come!"\*

But it is of 'Abdu'l-Baha that I am writing, and not The moment Mary

Lucas uttered those words I

of myself. How did it happen that 'Abdu'l-Baha, seven felt, This is it!

How did it happen that I felt that way?

thousand miles away and a prisoner in 'Akka, could at The "woman in

white" had not discoursed to me upon

such a distance confirm me with such immediacy into the spiritual

character and greatness of 'Abdu'l-Baha,

the Baha'i Faith? nor upon the

principles of the Baha'i Faith. How

It happened in this way. The path had been pre- great is the power of

speech, when one simple ut-

tered, so to speak. For in reviewing books for the terance could

sweep me — mind, heart and soul —

Boston Transcript which dealt with the prevailing and into that Faith!

rapidly increasing flaws in our present civilization, But it was

more than these four words that em-

and the need of a better world order, I had begun powered Mary Lucas

so to usher me into the Cause.

to debate deeply with myself on this matter of such It was more than

speech itself. It was a unique spiritual

great universal concern. vibration which

Mary Lucas had brought from 'Akka

It is true, I thought, that a new and better pattern that convinced me. And

it was the strange cosmic

oj civilization needs to be devised. But even if such a dynamism with which

her words were charged that  
 pattern — an ideal pattern — were conceived, who moved my soul.  
 could put it over? Could I, as a clergyman, hope to If 'Abdu'l-Baha  
 Himself had stood under that apple  
 convert all my congregation to it? Much less could I tree and addressed  
 me, I could not have been more  
 hope to convert the whole country. And no human convinced. For what  
 is distance on the plane of spirit?  
 being could by any conceivable power of vision and Mary Lucas had  
 brought the spirit of 'Abdu'l-Baha  
 of personality bring all humanity into such a kingdom with her. I felt it,  
 and I was convinced. Especially  
 of perfection. as my own soul had  
 already sought out and found  
 I still vividly remember how I was taking a long the answer to the  
 world's dire needs: Someone must  
 walk in the beautiful suburb of Chestnut Hill, around appear with more  
 than human authority.  
 the reservoir, when the solution of this problem flashed

## II

into my mind. Someone must appear with more than So that was my  
 first meeting with 'Abdu'l-Baha —  
 human authority, in order to win the allegiance of the •Bahá'u'llah,  
 Founder of the Baha'i Faith.  
 whole world to an ideal pattern for humanity.  
 strangely vicarious, perhaps predestined. The second large French windows  
 at the farther end. I saw a  
 meeting — with 'Abdu'l-Baha in person while He was large desk there,  
 but no person sitting at it. Only a  
 still a prisoner in 'Akka — took place in the following radiance of light.  
 As we approached the end of the  
 way. In February of 1908 I had the great privilege room, a majestic  
 figure in Oriental garb became evi-  
 dent to me. It was  
 of visiting Him in company with Lua Getsinger, fa-  
 'Abdu'l-Baha.  
 mous in the annals of Baha'i history. Lua Getsinger,  
 with the devotion of a Mary Magda-  
 I accidentally (or was it by destiny?) ran into Lua lene, fell to her knees  
 and fervently kissed His robe.  
 on the steps of Shepard Hotel in Cairo, where I had But what was I to do?  
 I am not one who can act  
 gone for a few days of travel during the midyear insincerely. Should I  
 merely shake hands with Him?  
 holidays of Robert College (Constantinople), in which As I stood in  
 hesitation 'Abdu'l-Baha, fully realizing  
 at that time I was teacher of English and Latin. my predicament, saved  
 me from it by taking me in

"What are you doing here?" asked Lua in great surprise. "You are welcome!" He said.

"What are you doing here?" I asked, in equal surprise. Every evening at dinner 'Abdu'l-Baha, who did not eat at that time, helped to serve us. He went around from guest to guest, putting more food upon the plates. This is the height of Oriental hospitality, to and she urged me to leave off my travels in Egypt and join her. I explained that I had written 'Abdu'l-guest with one's own hands. serve an honored Baha for permission to visit, but had been answered When the meal was over, 'Abdu'l-Baha would give us a brief talk on that at that time it was not advisable. spiritual themes. I regret I have not a memory sufficient "But I have standing permission to take anyone to recall all that He said. with me," urged Lua. But I do recall two of these messages of spiritual wisdom.

"But I have arranged a trip up the Nile with my friend Hussein." "It is not enough to wish to do good. The wish should be followed by action. What would you think of privilege of visiting the Master?" a mother who said, "How I love you, my babe!" — yet Lua's logic was convincing and her ardor compelling. Twenty-four hours later saw me ensconced in a room adjoining 'Abdu'l-Baha's in the historic "prison of 'Akka," in reality a large compound enclosed within walls. On another occasion He spoke of the need for loving patience in the face of aggravating behavior on the part of others. "One might say, 'Well, I will endure such-and-such a person so long as he is endurable.' But Bahá'ís must endure people even when they are unendurable?"

Three extraordinary qualities which characterized overwork at Dartmouth. I had been earning my way through Dartmouth, all of 'Abdu'l-Baha's utterances were to be found in

and also at the Harvard Divinity School. At times I  
these two brief conversations: His supreme logic; would feel so depressed that I  
His delightful sense of humor; and the inspiring buoy- should have been  
glad to have found a hole in the ground, crawled into  
ancy with which He gave forth solemn pronounce- ground, crawled into  
it, and pulled the hole in after  
ments. me. I understood at  
such times the Hindu craving for  
For instance, when He said, "But Baha'is must en- extinction.  
dure people even when they are unendurable," He 'Abdu'l-Baha came  
into my room one morning with-  
did not look at us solemnly as if appointing us to an out His translator.  
He sat beside me and took one of  
arduous and difficult task. Rather, He beamed upon us my hands in both of  
His and held it for a minute or  
delightfully, as if to suggest what a joy to us it would two. He had not at  
any time inquired as to my health.  
be to act in this way! He knew. From that  
moment on I found myself perma-  
/ want to emphasize this important point — the joy- nently relieved of  
these depressive moods. No matter  
ousness with which 'Abdu'l-Bahd always depicted the how hard the going,  
I have always since then been glad  
spiritual life as He enjoined it upon us. And why not? to be alive.  
Is man's spiritual life not in reality more joyous than At last, all too  
soon, the time came to go. The three  
any other kind of life that he can lead? days assigned for  
our visit had come to an end. I  
This philosophy of joy was the keynote of all of shall never forget how  
Lua Getsinger sobbed as if her  
'Abdu'l-Bah&'s teaching. "Are you happy?" was His heart would break as  
she slowly descended the long  
frequent greeting to his visitors. "Be happy!" flight of steps,  
looking back frequently at 'Abdu'l-Baha  
Those who were unhappy (and who of us are not at Who stood benignly at  
the top.  
times!) would weep at this. And 'Abdu'l-Baha would And I shall never  
forget how joyously 'Abdu'l-Baha  
smile as if to say, "Yes, weep on. Beyond the tears is smiled at Lua's  
tears, knowing that they were more  
sunshine." precious than pure  
gold. For they were the complete  
And sometimes He would wipe away with His own offering, at that  
moment, of Lua's heart and soul to  
hands the tears from their wet cheeks, and they the Master — the  
instinctive expression of her great

would leave His presence transfigured. love. 'Abdu'l-Baha  
knew that these were not tragic  
\* \* \* tears. They were like the vernal showers that  
prel-  
ude the rich blossoming of spring.  
On the occasion of this visit I had been under a  
Needless to say, the ensuing spring at Robert Col-  
severe strain at Robert College, due to disciplinary  
lege was one of the most glorious periods of my  
troubles. That was one of the reasons for my diversion-  
life. Never had the birds sung so sweetly, the flowers  
ary trip to Egypt. Also I had been slowly recovering  
and shrubs bloomed so exquisitely, the golden sun-  
in previous years from a nervous depression due to  
shine seemed so intoxicating. As for my disciplinary to walk the rest of  
the way for the sake of exercise.  
troubles at the college, they vanished like mist which All of the Persian  
pilgrims stood in their customary  
the sunshine dispels. My pupils, some of whom had reverential  
attitude, awaiting His approach with bowed  
been carrying knives and revolvers, loved me again and heads and arms  
crossed upon their breasts. I alone,  
more than ever. Such was the magic power that I as an American, took  
the privilege of watching Him  
brought from 'Akka. as He approached,  
enjoying the majesty of His move-  
ments and the nobility of His whole appearance. But  
Ill  
as He neared me I involuntarily also bowed my head.  
Again it was my privilege to visit 'Abdu'l-Baha in Some power emanating  
from Him seemed to obligate  
the summer of 1910, and this time at His own in- this attitude. So  
had Professor E. G. Browne, the  
vitation. I was given the privilege of spending a only Occidental ever  
to visit Baha'uTlah, felt obligated  
week there, in the Persian guest house on the slopes to bow his head in  
the presence of the Prophet.  
of Mt. Carmel. 'Abdu'l-Baha at this time was living This power  
emanating from 'Abdu'l-Baha was not  
in Haifa in the home built for Him by Mrs. Jackson, expressed for the  
purpose of producing submission.  
having been freed from His imprisonment by the It was a power which  
He never expressed to non-  
Young Turks in the summer of 1908. The oppressive Baha'is. Let us say,  
rather, that it was a privilege  
and cruel governor who had in vain sought graft He gave us, of  
seeing a little behind the veil; of

from Him and had threatened to send Him to the direct effect of that Cosmic Power malign dungeons of Tunis, had himself met the fate which in this early period of our development seems he had designed for 'Abdu'l-Baha — the fate of death, supernormal, however normal it may become to us at and at the hands of the Young Turks. And 'Abdu'l- some distant future stage of our soul's development.

Baha was enjoying, for the first time since His boy- No, 'Abdu'l-Baha never put forth any of His spiritual hood, the luxury of freedom.

power to dazzle, persuade or overawe sceptics or un- He seemed to me more noble in countenance, more believers. Of this fact I shall later give a vivid in- regal in bearing, more potent in the power of His stance.

presence than ever before. Every evening at sunset

\* \* \*

He met with the pilgrims, assembled in a large room, and gave a spiritual discourse. On the day I arrived at Haifa I was ill with a One afternoon I found the pilgrims waiting outside dysentery which I had picked up in the course of my travels. at the gate for 'Abdu'l-Baha. He had been making 'Abdu'l-Baha sent His own physician to me, and visited me a call upon the Turkish consul and was expected and visited me Himself. He said, "I would that I soon. After a few moments we saw His carriage stop could take your illness upon Myself." I have never at the foot of the short hill, where He got out in order forgotten this. I felt, I knew, that in making this remark 'Abdu'l-Baha was not speaking in mere terms But there is still another cause of illness, 'Abdu'l- of sympathy. He meant just what He said. Baha went on to say. Illness may be caused by nervous Such is the great love of the Kingdom, of which factors. Anything that shocks us or affects our nerves may also affect our 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke so often and so much. This is a health. love which is difficult, almost impossible, for us to acquire — though we may seek to approximate its per-

IV

fection. It is more than sympathy, more than empathy. All that has been written up to this point is a sort of It is sacrificial love. introduction to the recording of my memories of Looking back, it seems strange that 'Abdu'l-Baha 'Abdu'l-Baha on the

occasion of His visit to this coun-  
 did not employ His healing power directly upon me, try in 1912. The  
 purpose of this introduction is to show  
 as He had done on the occasion of my previous visit. what sort of a  
 personage it was that on April 11, 1912,  
 He left me to the care of His physician and to the landed at the port  
 of New York for an extended visit  
 prescribed medications. It took three days for me and lecture tour in  
 this country.  
 to get on my feet again. Here was an  
 Oriental in Oriental garb, a man Who  
 Why did He not restore me directly to health by had been prisoner most  
 of His life, a character Whose  
 means of spiritual healing? There is some deep spir- life was for the  
 most part lived on a spiritual plane  
 itual lesson here. It was not 'Abdu'l-Baha's province so lofty as to be  
 almost beyond our comprehension.  
 to go about healing physical diseases. It was His How did this Servant  
 of God meet, fit into and adjust  
 mission to expound the Teachings and express the to the objective,  
 dynamic and materialistic life  
 spiritual potency of the world's Divine Physician. Phys- of America?  
 ical events and conditions are of less importance in 'Abdu'l-Baha,  
 upon landing in New York and being  
 our lives than the development of our spiritual nature. surrounded by alert  
 and inquisitive reporters, was  
 In regard to health in general, I will quote here a perfectly at home. And  
 why not? Is there any limit  
 statement which 'Abdu'l-Baha had made to me on to the power of  
 spirit? Was not 'Abdu'l-Baha's univer-  
 my previous visit: that health is the expression of sal spirit as  
 capable of dealing with the fast-vibrating  
 equilibrium; that the body is composed of certain technological  
 Occident as it had been in dealing with  
 elements, and that when these elements are in the the mystic and more  
 spiritual Orient? We shall see, as  
 right proportion, health results; and that if there is this narrative  
 continues, how He was "all things to  
 any lack or preponderance in these elements, sickness all men"; protean in  
 His universality; thoroughly at  
 results. home in every  
 environment.  
 Thus fifty years ago 'Abdu'l-Baha gave in a simple This majestic  
 figure — in tarboosh, turban and flow-  
 statement to me all the truths which the new science ing robes — drew  
 the newspaper men into His aura and  
 of biochemistry is now discovering. immediately won

their favor.

10

11

"What do you think of America?" He was asked. He constantly  
illuminated this translation with the dy- namic power of His  
"I like it. Americans are optimistic. If you ask them namic power of His  
own spiritual personality. And when He  
how they are they say 'All right!' If you ask them And when He  
spoke, the Persian words — so beauti- ful and strong —  
how things are going, they say, 'All right!' This cheer- ful and strong —  
boomed forth almost as musically as  
ful attitude is good." in operatic  
recitatives. While He spoke He was in constant and majestic  
And so 'Abdu'l-Baha won reporters' hearts and con- constant and majestic  
motion. To hear Him was an experience  
tinued to do so throughout His stay in America. He experience  
unequaled in any other kind of platform delivery. It was a  
never seemed to them, or was described by them, as delivery. It was a  
work of art, as well as a spiritual service. First  
a strange or exotic personality. He always received service. First  
would come this spiritual flow of thought musically  
favorable and constructive notices from the press. thought musically  
expressed in a foreign tongue. Then,  
as the translator set forth its meaning to us, we had the  
For eight months 'Abdu'l-Baha traveled over the  
added pleasure of watching 'Abdu'l-Baha response to  
United States from coast to coast, giving addresses in  
the art of the translator. It was, all in all, a highly  
churches, universities and lecture halls. Several of  
colorful and dramatic procedure.  
these addresses I was privileged to attend. As I look  
The substance of 'Abdu'l-Baha's talks, here and in  
back on these occasions, I recall more vividly His  
London and Paris, have been published and are avail-  
platform presence than the contents of His addresses,  
able for study. One can perceive in all of these ad-  
which of course have all been published.  
dresses and discussions a peculiar adaptation to the  
'Abdu'l-Baha did not, as a lecturer, stand still. His Occidental mentality  
and way of thinking. They are, to sum it up in  
movements were very dynamic. He paced back and to sum it up in  
one word, supremely logical.  
forth on the platform as He gave forth His spiritual It was the  
Greeks who taught the world how to  
utterances. I felt that the general atmosphere and the think in logical  
terms, and they thereby laid the foun-

effect of His words were enhanced rather than diminished by the presence of a translator. For the techniques of translation gave 'Abdu'l-Baha a certain spiritual dignity, such as could not have been attained by a straight address in the language of His hearers. do not think in just this way. Their The situation was as follows: 'Abdu'l-Baha would submitted to the Greek discipline. Their minds are more mystical, more im- translator to render; then He would stand and smile as perception. They do not have to begin at the translation was given, or He would nod His head to comprehend the station of "Z." affirm important points. In other words, 'Abdu'l-Baha sensitivity, through rapid intuitional did not stand passive during the period of translation. can often gain an immediate aware-

12

13

ness or comprehension of the ultimate — earnestly religious man, devout, spiritual and "ga" itself. sympathetic to my adherence to All Oriental seers and prophets speak oracularly. he had said, "Son, I am too old One sentence, one paragraph will contain a wealth was in Constantinople, Father had which a lifetime of thought cannot exhaust. Christ attended some of the Baha'i meetings spoke this way. Baha'u'llah spoke this way. he was glad to have this op- But 'Abdu'l-Baha, for the sake of the Western world, 'Abdu'l-Baha. adopted the Greek mode of presentation, carefully consternation to perceive that elaborating His theses and developing them from conversation into his own hands. known and admissible premises. In no place is 'Abdu'l- which I never shall forget. Fa- Baha ever obscure or recondite. If He wishes to present half-hour proceeded to lay down the a great spiritual truth, He takes it up at an initial

dations for all  
Greeks we have  
to get to "Z" —  
"Omega."  
The Orientals  
mentality has never  
cipline. Their  
mediate in  
"A" in order to  
Through spiritual  
processes, they  
— of the "Ome- age — an  
prayerful. He was  
the Baha'i Cause, but  
to change." While I  
at my request  
in Boston; and now  
portunity to visit with  
But what was my  
Father was taking the  
It was an occurrence  
ther for some  
law to 'Abdu'l-Baha,

or let us say, to enlighten Him  
 point where its truth will be acknowledged by all, and on spiritual themes.  
 Or to be more exact, let us say  
 then develops it into a larger presentation such as that Father took this  
 opportunity to express to the  
 can expand our very minds and souls. loving, listening ear  
 of 'Abdu'l-Baha the spiritual phi-  
 And so, whatever else 'Abdu'l-Baha was and in the philosophy which had guided  
 him in life.  
 future will be realized to be, it is recognizable even I sat there quite  
 shocked. But I didn't need to be.  
 today that He was God's special gift to the Occident. 'Abdu'l-Baha plainly  
 was not shocked at this reversal  
 He translated the oracular teachings of Baha'u'llah of the customary role  
 — He now to be the listener and  
 into a language and form easily comprehensible to His visitor the  
 discourser. He sat there smiling, saying  
 the West. So that no one, having available these lucid little, enveloping us  
 with His love. And at the end Fa-  
 pronouncements of 'Abdu'l-Baha, can say that the ther came away  
 feeling that he had had a wonderful  
 Baha'i Faith is hard to understand. 'Abdu'l-Baha has interview. What a  
 lesson in humility this was, that  
 set forth its Teachings with all the lucidity of day- 'Abdu'l-Baha thus  
 exemplified! There are so many  
 light and the warmth of sunlight. times when we can  
 help others best just by being good  
 Regarding the countless personal interviews which listeners.  
 the Master gave to Baha'is and non-Baha'is alike, The last interview  
 I had in this country with 'Abdu'l-  
 volumes could be written. I will tell here only of the Baha was in  
 Washington. Strange, that I do not recall  
 interviews which I personally was privileged to have. what He said. My  
 heart was too full to take any notes!  
 When 'Abdu'l-Baha was in Boston, I seized this op- I only can recall how He  
 embraced me at the end,  
 portunity to take my father in to see Him, from our kissed me, and said  
 three times: "Be on fire with the  
 home in the suburb of Newton. Father at that time love of the Kingdom!"  
 was a venerable Boston artist seventy-five years of What is this  
 "love of the Kingdom"? That is what  
 14 15  
 humanity must henceforward spend a few thousand should come first.  
 And why not? The material world, as  
 years to discover and apply to life. Did 'Abdu'l-Baha the expression of  
 man's spirit, is subordinate to the  
 mean the love for the Kingdom or the kind of love that spiritual world.

Therefore education should begin with  
prevalis in the Higher Kingdom? Or did He mean both that which is  
primary and causal; and not with that  
these loves? which, as the  
creation of man, is secondary to his cre-  
Here in these nine words 'Abdu'l-Baha summed up ative spirit and to  
the Creative Spirit of the cosmos.  
the gist of all His teaching; which was that love applied 'Abdu'l-Baha  
kindly invited me to bring Porter Sar-  
by means of the Holy Spirit is the one thing that will gent and the pupils  
to see Him. Mr. Sargent gladly ac- cepted the  
solve all problems of man, both as an individual and  
invitation, and four of the boys did. The  
as a collective society. others had excuses,  
like those people in the Bible who  
were invited to the wedding feast but did not go. One  
boy had to buy a pair of shoes; another had planned to  
The most important interview I had with 'Abdu'l- take afternoon tea at  
a restaurant where a gypsy or- chestra furnished  
Baha was in Paris in the spring of 1913. I was one of  
music, et cetera. How many of life's  
the staff of Porter Sargent's Travel School for Boys. On important  
opportunities thus pass us by, through our  
my first visit He inquired about the school and asked own  
unperceptiveness or neglect!  
me what I taught. I told Him that I taught English, I was deeply  
interested and concerned to see what  
Latin, algebra and geometry. He gazed intently at me impression  
'Abdu'l-Baha would make on the owner of  
with His luminous eyes and said, "Do you teach the the school. Porter  
Sargent, ten years my senior, was a  
spiritual things?" confirmed and  
positive atheist. He had been a biologist,  
This question embarrassed me. I did not know how and was suffering from  
that spiritual myopia which so  
to explain to 'Abdu'l-Baha that the necessity of prepar- often afflicts this  
type of scientist. But he was an ideal-  
ing the boys for college-entrance exams dominated the ist, a  
humanitarian, a man of great vision for human-  
nature of the curriculum. So I simply answered: "No, ity, and somewhat  
of a genius.  
there is not time for that." In one intimate  
discussion with me on the nature of  
'Abdu'l-Baha made no comment on this answer. But existence, during a  
long hike we took together on the  
He did not need to. Out of my own mouth I had con- sunny island of  
Capri, he had outlined to me his con-

demned myself and modern education. No time for the universe. cept of life and spiritual things! That, of course, is just what is wrong "What do you think of it?" he asked me, with some eagerness. Perhaps with our modern materialistic "civilization." It has no eagerness. Perhaps this was the first occasion on which he had so fully time to give for spiritual things. he had so fully expounded his philosophy of life. But 'Abdu'l-Baha's question and His silent response "It is splendid!" I said. "Hut it only covers half of existence." indicated that from His viewpoint spiritual things existence."

16

17

"What is the other half?" individual, the greater was the revelation of spiritual "Spirit." potency which 'Abdu'l-Baha displayed. But this other half did not exist for Porter Sargent. Thus Juliet Thompson, who painted 'Abdu'l-Baha's Idealist that he was, creative-minded, somewhat of a portrait, has testified to the glorious revelations of Him- self which her poet — I felt sad that not one ray of spirit could pene- self which her Subject at times made to her. In similar trate the pride of his intellect. vein have testified the Kinneys, with whom 'Abdu'l- So when this golden opportunity came of an inter- Baha spent several weeks. And May Maxwell once view with 'Abdu'l-Baha, I had great hopes. Now, in this told me that she had received, upon one sacred oc- casion in the intimate meeting with the Master, I thought, Sargent casion in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Baha, such a revela- tion of Him that will be forced to realize the existence of spirit. 'Abdu'l- tion of Him that she would never attempt to describe it. Bahá's spiritual potency will at last penetrate his shell But materially-minded people 'Abdu'l-Baha met upon their own of skepticism. upon their own plane, as He did Porter Sargent. And as And so, when we came out from the hotel after a I also saw Him do in Washington with the Turkish am- bassador, on the half-hour conference with 'Abdu'l-Baha, I eagerly bassador, on the occasion of Mrs. Parson's reception. This being a asked, "Well, what do you think of Him?" This being a social affair, 'Abdu'l-Baha did not play the part of the I have never forgotten my shattering disappointment the part of the Master but the part of a guest amenable to the situation. at the answer: "He's a dear, kind, tired old man." to the situation.

And anyone who had looked into the large reception room, as I did, and had seen 'Abdu'l-I was chagrined. But this experience taught me two Baha sitting in a corner and exchanging funny stories spiritual lessons. The first was that skepticism must with the ambassador, would have seen in 'Abdu'l-Ba- solve its own problems, in its own way. The second ha's facial expressions no trace of spiritual power. For truth, even more important, was that Spirit never primarily for spiritual purposes, but forces itself upon the individual. It must be invited. part.

He was not here  
to play a social

Theologians have frequently made the observation indeed "all things to all men." He that God could easily force us to reverence and stand some were prepared only to see Him in awe of Him, if He wished. But He does not wish to the Sea, such He was to them. But win man's reverence and awe and love by any forceful prepared to see Him as more than this, way. The initiative must come from man himself.

'Abdu'l-Baha was  
was protean. If  
as the Old Man of  
if they were  
the degree of

their receptivity was proportionately And so in the case of 'Abdu'l-Baha, I noticed upon many occasions that He never expressed spiritual power for the purpose of dazzling people, or of winning

blessed.

## VI

them to a spiritual allegiance for which they were not interviews with 'Abdu'l-Baha I had an ex- inwardly prepared. The greater the receptivity of the feeling of receiving truth from a higher

In all my  
traordinary

18  
plane than that of the mere intellect. Man's intellect is know everything. But when I need to an organ of discrimination, an instrument for analysis is pictured before Me."

"No, I do not  
know something, it

and attack. As we listen to other people more learned 'Abdu'l-Baha, on the occasion of His tour of than ourselves we are pleased to get information, but Electric Works, knew more about electric- we consciously reserve the right of judgment. Some of Steinmetz.

And so  
the General  
ity than did

the things said to us we accept immediately; some with has said that intuition is a power of reservations; and some we inwardly oppose. No matter this power that was always available how wise or how learned the teacher, we reserve the

Shoghi Effendi  
the soul. It was  
to 'Abdu'l-Baha,

and available in its totality. He has  
right of our own judgment. spoken many times  
of this "immediate knowledge"—  
But with 'Abdu'l-Baha it was different. I accepted al- this knowledge  
attained without the means of books or  
ways His statements with humility and with total con- other humans, this  
strange intuitive power which to  
viction; not because of any assumption of authority, some degree is  
available to us all.  
but because I always felt in the depths of my soul that And often, in  
closing an interview after answering  
what He said was truth. It always rang true, so to some abstruse  
question, 'Abdu'l-Baha would say:  
speak. Let us say, as it was said of another great leader "Time does not  
permit of further answer. But meditate  
of men, that He spoke "with authority." on this, and truth  
will come to you."  
In the course of His lectures here and abroad And so — although  
'Abdu'l-Baha is no longer with  
'Abdu'l-Baha discoursed on many subjects. Where did us to answer our  
questions — the power of the Holy  
He get His wide knowledge of things and of affairs? Spirit so strong in  
Him is still available to us to guide,  
He had had but one year of schooling at the age of to fortify, to  
heal.  
seven. He had been a prisoner all His life. He had few  
books, no scholarly library, no encyclopedias.

## VII

Yet at Schenectady, as 'Abdu'l-Baha was being  
I have tried to describe 'Abdu'l-Baha as I saw and  
shown around the General Electric Works by Stein-  
knew Him. But how can anyone give an adequate  
metz, this "wizard of electricity" was observed to be  
description of this personality that, like St. Paul, was  
eagerly absorbing 'Abdu'l-Baha's elucidation of elec-  
all things to all men?  
tricity. The Rev. Moore, Unitarian clergyman who was  
The Persian doctor who attended Him from 1914  
present at the time, testified to me: "Steinmetz's jaw  
till His death, when recently asked at a meeting in  
seemed to drop open as he drank in 'Abdu'l-Baha's  
Milwaukee to describe 'Abdu'l-Baha, replied that this  
talk."

was very difficult to do; because 'Abdu'l-Baha expressed

\* \* \*

Himself differently at different times,

meeting every

" 'Abdu'l-Baha, do You know everything?" Saffa occasion as the

occasion demanded.

Kinney is said to have asked.

If one were

asked to describe 'Abdu-Baha in a

single word, that word would be: "Protean." This

unusual adjective is derived from the name of a minor

His directives to

Baha'is always focussed on the

deity in Greek mythology who had the magic power to

need of Divine

aid—the aid of Spirit—in order to

assume any form he wished. And so 'Abdu'l-Baha

exemplify and

propagate the Baha'i Faith and lay the

could be on one occasion all love; on another occasion

foundations for

that New World Order laid down by

supreme wisdom; and on other rare occasions, ex-

Bahau'llah for the

establishment of a spiritually

pressing a power that seemed cosmic.

motivated world

civilization.

And since love, wisdom, and power are the three

### VIII

principles upon which the Cosmos is run; and since

'Abdu'l-Baha was designated as our exemplar, it

To those who

would like to pursue further the

follows that these qualities should be developed in us

marvelous details

of 'Abdu'l-Baha's life we recom-

all, as we grow spiritually toward the attainment of

mend "Portals to

Freedom" by Howard Ives,\* a

our full stature as citizens of that Kingdom of God

Unitarian clergyman

prior to his conversion to Bahai.

destined to be the consumation of our planetary

We had the pleasure

of meeting Ives in New York in

existence.

1910 when he was at

the beginning of his search for

What was the secret of 'Abdu'l-Baha's power? He

spiritual reality.

suggests the answer in His own words.

"Cobb, I'd like

you to meet a young clergyman who

"The human body is in need of material force, but

is becoming interested

in Baha'i," said my friend Mont-

the spirit has need of the Holy Spirit. — If it is aided

fort Mills to me

one day. "Can you have lunch with

by the bounty of the Holy Spirit it will attain great

us tomorrow?"

power; it will discover realities; it will be informed of

I was glad to

accept this invitation and to meet an

the mysteries. The power of the Holy Spirit is here for

earnest seeker. I

do not recall our conversation at the

all. The captive of the Holy Spirit is exempt from

lunch table. But

it was evident that Ives was seriously

every captivity.

searching.

"The teachings of His Holiness Bahau'llah are the

This meeting with

Ives resulted on my part in a breaths of the Holy Spirit which create man anew." memorable friendship with a man who was destined ultimately to Whatever was and still is the reality of 'Abdu'l-Baha, celebrate the personality and teachings of one who in 1912 it is evident from the events of His life that He was became his Teacher and Master. In his vivid endowed with a cosmic power for the fulfillment of narrative Howard Ives reports many loving meetings His mission. Every unexpected circumstance, every and interviews with 'Abdu'l-Baha. The impression of this event in the midst of the Occidental civilization so spiritual leader which remained a constant in Ive's foreign to His own background, He met not only recollections is expressed by him in the following successfully but also with a power that won all hearts. words: "What 'Abdu'l-Baha said im-

•Bahá'í Publishing Trust. 112 Linden Ave., Wilmette, 111.  
 pressed me with the force of the impact of Divine Truth. There was not a question in my mind of the authority with which He spoke."

— Memories of 'Abdu'l-Baha (Used by permission of the curator)