

[Photocopied by Sen McGlinn, in 1999, from the edition of *River of Life* in Leiden, the Netherlands. That was scanned and initially formatted by Richard Stamats. Then it was further proofread by Thellie Lovejoy, 2001. Formatting was completed by Jonah Winters for posting to bahai-library.com, 2012.]

[page 1, script written in Arabic or Persian]

[page 2, blank]

[Title page, page 3]

THE RIVER OF LIFE

A SELECTION FROM THE TEACHINGS
OF BAHA'U'LLAH AND 'ABDUL BAHA

*Giving the Message of the Bahai Revelation. With
Facsimiles of the original Arabic and Persian
Documents, translated in English, with
Explanatory Notes and a Preface*

by
YUHANNA DAWUD.

[In handwriting:]

*"Twelve Copies
of this edition
were printed.
(signed) Y. Dawud.
30th May 1914."*

LONDON
COPE & FENWICK
8 BUCKINGHAM STREET, STRAND, W.C.

[page 4, script written in Arabic or Persian, signed 1911]

page 5

PREFACE

IT is through ‘Abdul Baha’s permission that I have been permitted to translate the following “Tablets” of Baha'u'llah and ‘Abdul Baha from Arabic and Persian into English, and to reproduce in facsimile the original documents, so that all the Bahais in the East and West may be equally benefited thereby.

The originals are in the handwriting of Baha’u’llah, and ‘Abdul Baha; and the greater part was written by Mushkin Qalam, the famous Bahai Calligrapher.

I have made an earnest endeavour to ascertain the exact meaning of every sentence; and to convey to the reader, not only the deep spiritual significances of these Divine teachings, but to retain, as nearly as the difference of idiom allows, the wealth of Oriental imagery and metaphor which forms so striking a feature of the original. The headings and the notes as already intimated are in explanation of the rendering given.

This book is called “The River of Life,” because therefrom flows the Life-giving water: even God’s Love, which only can satisfy our spiritual thirst; and create within us a living stream flowing out to all men, and springing up for the Life of the Ages.

YUHANNA DAWUD.

LONDON,
May, 1914.

[page 6, blank]

CONTENTS

	PAGE
BAHA'I REVELATION AND ITS OBJECT	11
MORAL AND SPIRITUAL EXHORTATIONS	15
THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SPIRIT	16
THE PROPHETS AND KINGS IN PRE-ADAMIC AGES	18
THE COMPLAINTS OF BAHAU'LLAH, WHEREIN HE CENSURES THE PEOPLE OF BAYAN FOR THEIR OPPOSITION	21
THE WORD OF GOD	26
THE DOCTRINE OF THE UNITY OF GOD	30
BAHA'U'LLAH'S EPISTLE TO A CHRISTIAN BISHOP RESIDING AT CONSTANTINOPLE	33
THE BLESSED PEOPLE	38
THE PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES OF THE BAHAIS	41
BAHA'U'LLAH'S EPISTLE TO THE CHIEF OF THE PERSIAN MYSTICS	45
BAHA'U'LLAH'S EPISTLE TO AN EARLY BAHAI	48
BAHA'U'LLAH'S COMFORTETH HIS DISCIPLES	57
MANIFESTATION OF GOD	51
BAHA'U'LLAH'S TEACHING AND INFLUENCE	55
THE UNIVERSAL ENLIGHTENMENT	57
THE DUTY OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL	58
'ABDUL BAHA'S EPISTLE TO A BAHA'I TEACHER	60

page 9

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST GLORIOUS

THE object of the Heavenly Books and Divine Verses is this, that the people may be educated in truth and wisdom, and become the means of their own peace, and that of others.

Every cause that giveth peace to the heart and increaseth the dignity of mankind, and satisfieth its (higher) longings, shall be acceptable.

Lofty is the station of *Man*, if he be adorned with true humanity, otherwise he is considered lower than all creatures. Say, O Friends, take advantage of to-day and do not deprive yourselves of the Grace of the Supreme Ocean.

I ask God, to adorn ye all in this day with the ornament of pure and sincere deeds.

Verily, He is the Almighty!
BAHA'U'LLAH.

[page 10, blank]

page 11

THE RIVER OF LIFE

BAHAI REVELATION AND ITS OBJECT

O FRIENDS! To-day the Door of Heaven is opened with the key of God's Name ! and now the Ocean of God's Bounty is overflowing and manifest to all men. The Sun of Grace has risen and shineth forth. Do not deprive yourselves thereof and waste not your precious lives in following the sayings of this or that person (*i.e.* don't imitate others, but think for yourselves).

Gird up the loins of resolution and turn to the education of the inhabitants of the world.

Do not make the religion of God the cause of differences, hatred and rancour.

The tongue of greatness saith.—The object of whatever (teaching) hath been revealed in this most Holy Manifestation from the heaven of Primal Will, is for the concord, charity, and affection of the people.

The people of Baha—that is, those who have quaffed the spiritual wine—must consort with all the people of the world with perfect joy and fragrance, and remind them of that whereby benefit accrues to all mankind.

This is the counsel of “this Oppressed One” to His Saints and Holy Ones. The world was created by Love, and all mankind is commanded to deal with one another in kindly affection and harmony.

page 12

THE RIVER OF LIFE

Meditate upon this blessed Word which hath shone forth from the horizon of the King of (Divine) Unity, and remember it :—“In my ancient Entity and in my Eternal Being was I hidden, I knew my Love in thee, therefore I created thee; upon thee have I laid my image, and to thee revealed my Beauty.”

O people of Baha, ye are in your native lands and this “Oppressed One” is in the greatest Prison. At a time wherein He is overwhelmed by the sea of sorrows, He remembereth ye all with such words and utterances, that if one of those words shone on the mirrors of existing Being, upon all of them the word, “Verily Thou art the Beloved,” will be beheld to such a degree that they would come and read it.

Do not let this infinite Grace escape from your hand, and do not be neglectful of whatsoever hath befallen this “Oppressed One” and you in the Path of God.

Know your own worth and protect your station in the name of God. For the unbeliever, the deniers of the truth and the betrayers have appeared disguised as believers in Divine Unity, Faith and trustworthiness, and they are engaged in misleading the people.

Verily, your Lord, the merciful One, speaketh the truth, and informeth you in wisdom, and guideth you to the Right Path! Abandon the ways of the people, and count as naught the paths of the neglectful ones: and say to them, verily, we do not walk in your ways, and do not

act as ye. Verily the Right Path hath appeared and we all know that His way is the straightest one. Happy is the soul that hasteneth toward the ocean of the mercy of his Lord. Happy is the ear which heareth the sound of His Supreme Pen. Glad is the eye

BAHAI REVELATION AND ITS OBJECT page 13

which seeth His great verses, and joyous the tongue which celebrateth His beautiful praises.

Say unto them “Have mercy upon your souls, and do not follow those who blaspheme God, and His revelations, and deny His evidences and testimonies, and arise in opposition with open oppression.

Verily, He is in the “greatest’ Prison,” and calleth both the Kings and the people unto the “Greatest Name,” which was hidden in the knowledge of God, and recorded in the Holy Books of all His prophets.

O Friends, ye have all been and will be remembered in the Holy Books, and if some of the Saints of God have not been favoured with a separate Epistle, they may know it for certainty that, their names, turnings to God, and their beliefs, according to their grades are written and recorded by the Supreme Pen. Ask God to assist you to be favoured with that which is the cause and reason of everlasting remembrance. Verily, He seeth, He heareth, He is the all-wise and the all-knowing! The world had and hath not any glory; soon all the inhabitants of the earth will return to their graves.

By Him to the praise of whose Self all things cry forth: to the possessors of sight, this world and whatsoever is seen therein, cannot be equal to one of the Divine Words. For this (world) hath been and ever will be inconsistent and transitory; while the Word (of God) is everlasting and endureth to the Eternity of the Names and Attributes (of God). For the sake of the world’s one day, no wise man would ever let the “Two Days” of God’s everlasting Bliss escape from his hand.

I speak in truth that the “Soul of the Eternal Being” hath had, and hath still the desire to

page 14 THE RIVER OF LIFE

Chant in the Rose-garden of Revelation and Union, but the imaginations and lusts (of men) have prevented it from singing in the Kingdom of Nearness. Ye must burn these veils with the fire of certainty and the light of faith (in God), and illumine the hearts and spirits.

Strive to drink from “the River of Assurance” which floweth from the Right Hand of the Throne of God. Whosoever is favoured therewith, he will be recorded in “The Red Tablet” as one of the people of immortality.

Thanks be to God, who by His Grace and Mercy hath guided the Faithful to the Straight Path, and hath favoured them with the Greatest Gift, and highest benevolence! Know ye, the worth of your station (of Saintship) and be ye watchful under all circumstances.

For those who have gone astray have been and will be lurking for the Faithful! Verily, your Lord, the Merciful One, is the All-Wise and All-Knowing.

Hath ever a true seeker been seen on earth who was “deprived of the Grace of the Gracious One? or hath it been seen that any messenger who sincerely desired to attain to the Right Goal, hath been prevented therefrom? No, by God Himself.”

If some of the believers in the Unity of God, or the Near Ones, or the Faithful have desired a matter and apparently have not been favoured therewith, this has been in accordance with the perfect wisdom of God. They must not repine: for there is appointed and ordained a stated time for everything. When the time is ripe then that thing will appear in truth from God, the Lord of all the worlds.

Rejoice, O ye Saints of God, and His Holy ones, in which remembereth ye my Supreme Pen in this Night wherein the tongue of greatness

MORAL & SPIRITUAL EXHORTATIONS page 15

speaketh. Verily, there is no God, but He, the Helper, the Adviser, the Unique, the Mighty, the Praised One! Blessed is he who is favoured with steadfastness. Verily he is mentioned among the denizens of the Highest Paradise in the Book of God, the Possessor of Names, and the maker of Heaven, who hath appeared in truth, with Manifest Power. Beware lest the veils of names withhold ye from the King thereof, and its revealer and Creator. Grasp the rope of the favour of your Lord, the Merciful One, and lay hold on the luminous Hem of His Garment.

Whosoever doeth as he hath been commanded, the people of the highest Heaven and the dwellers in the Supreme Paradise will call him blessed. This is a command from God, the Mighty, the Glorified!

Thus remembereth ye “the Oppressed One” when He was in the Prison of the Negligent, and teacheth ye that which brings ye under all

circumstances, near to God, the Potent, the Protector, the Mighty, the One!

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL EXHORTATIONS

VERILY we advise all (to walk and act) in wisdom and utterance in the religion of their Lord, the Merciful One; even as we have exhorted them before: Verily He is the Faithful Counsellor! The teaching which we have revealed in various Epistles is incumbent upon all believers in God, in this manifestation: that they should take hold thereof and be of those who are steadfast. We have forbidden all (the believers) from committing that which God loveth not, and have commanded them to do that which rejoiceth the hearts of (the people)

page 16 THE RIVER OF LIFE

of all nations. Verily He is the Compassionate, the Gracious!

Consort, my Friends, with (people of all) religions, with joy and fragrance.

Beware lest ye make the Word of God* a reason for your discords or a cause of manifesting hatred between yourselves. Say, fear God, O people of the earth, and do not be of those who are neglectful. Verily, we command you to do that wherefrom ye may perceive the scent of joy, if ye (will) be of those who know.

Glory be upon ye and upon those who are with ye, and love and serve ye, and hear from ye that which hath been written by “the Supreme Pen,” in this manifest, most evident and irresistible Religion.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SPIRIT

CONCERNING the question : —

“Do the same consciousness, personality, understanding and perception of the human being (except in the Prophets and Saints) exist in him after natural death, even as they were before, or will these be destroyed with his body? Granted that it will exist, how is it that during life through some little hurt that befalls his external sense, such as fainting or severe illness, his knowledge and understanding fail him, and how can it be imagined that after decomposition of his compound elements his personality and understanding should be believed to survive or exist, while all his members have become disjointed?”

May it be known to thee, that the spirit is the

* *i.e.* God's One and the same message, which hath been revealed through all prophets for the peace and Unity of the world of Humanity.

same in its original state and stands and remaineth firm; and that when one seeth weakness in a sick person, it is through some hindering causes. For, the spirit in the original state findeth no weakness.

For example, consider the lamp, it is bright, but if it be hidden by a screen, in that case its light will be hindered; notwithstanding in its original state it is bright, but through some hindering obstacles its light is darkened, likewise is the sick one in his ailment.

The appearance of the power and strength of the spirit will be hindered through screened causes, but after abandoning the body, it will manifest itself with such power, strength and victory that the like thereof cannot be possible.

The pure, good, and Holy Spirits have been and ever will be in perfection, power and bliss.

For example, if the lamp be put under an iron globe, its light will never appear to those without; notwithstanding in its place it is bright.

Reflect on the sun when it is behind the clouds, in reality it is bright and shining, but because of the screening cloud, its light appeareth dim. Consider this sun to be the spirit of man, and all things as its body: for the whole body is lighted by that light—this is when no hindering cause is hiding its light, like unto a veil. Likewise when the clouds are concealing the sun, although the earth is (already) lighted by its light, yet that light is weakened and after the cloud hath passed away the light of the sun will appear with great perfection. In either of these two states the sun in its grade is of one power, even thus is the sun of souls, which is known as the Spirit. “The human spirit is in one and the same condition; it neither becomes sick with diseases of the body, nor healed by its health.”

Likewise consider the invisibility of the existence

of the fruit in the tree before it buddeth therefrom. Although it is in the tree, yet it is so invisible that it cannot be seen. And if anyone were to cut that tree into pieces he could find neither a particle of its fruit nor the shape thereof, but after coming out of the tree it will appear as a new

ornament (*i.e.* beauty) and in great strength as it is seen in the fruits. There are some fruits which will ripen after they are plucked from the tree.

Many examples have been mentioned here that thou mayest attain to an object through each of them, and compare the same with that which thou hast asked of God, thy Lord and the Lord of the world. God, glorious is his mention, is able to manifest and prove all the infinite sciences in any one of the aforesaid examples amongst the people. Howbeit on every example the hand of power doth spread itself, and over every word thereof the hand of protection is laid. No one knoweth it save him who desireth, and when the seal of the perfume vase is broken by the hand of power, then its fragrance will be perceived. The Command is in God's hand. He giveth, He withholdeth, He blindeth, He openeth the eye—"He doeth what He wishes, and Commandeth what He wills."

THE PROPHETS AND KINGS IN PRE-ADAMIC AGES [Note following Tablet found in "Gleanings" LXXXVII]

CONCERNING thy question as to how it be that the mention of the Prophets, previous to Adam the father of Man, and the Kings of those ages, are not recorded in history. The non-existence of the mention hath not been, and is not, a proof of the non-existence of the thing.

Through the long lapse of time and revolutions on the earth, they have not survived. And besides

PRE-ADAMIC PROPHETS AND KINGS page 19

this, before Adam, the father of Man, styles of writing and such characters which are now in use amongst men did not exist. There was a time when no figures of writing ever existed. They used another form, and if its detail were explained in full it would be too lengthy.

Reflect upon those changes which have come to pass since Adam, for in the beginning these known languages did not exist on earth, and likewise the rules which are now in use were expressed differently to these known languages.

The diversity of tongues came later in the land, which was known as Babel, and for this reason that country is called Babel.

And after this the Syriac language was universally known amongst men, and God's Books were revealed in those periods in that language until the time wherein the "Friend of the Merciful" was manifested from the Horizon of the world with Divine Light. In crossing the river of Jordan His Holiness spake in a tongue, and called it Hebrew.

As in crossing the “Friend of the Merciful,” spake in that tongue, therefore it was called Hebrew, and afterwards the Divine Books and Epistles were revealed in that tongue. Some time elapsed and the Arabic language came in use. The first man who spoke in that tongue was called Ya’rab Ben Kahtan, and the first man who wrote in Arabic was called Miramir Al-Taiy, and the first man who composed Arabic verse was called Hamir Ben Saba and afterward the rules of writing were changed from one style to another until it has reached its present character. Now, reflect how many times since Adam the languages, expressions, and rules of writing have been changed.

How much more those which were before Adam!

The object of these utterances in [sic] this: that from

page 20

THE RIVER OF LIFE

eternity God is the same in His height and sublime exaltation and hath been and ever will be holy from the commemoration of all others beside Him. And there has been creation and the manifestations of the mighty Primal Unity and the Holy dawning—places of eternity have been chosen from centuries without beginning, and have called the peoples to God. But because of differences and changes in the conditions of the world, some of the names and mentions have not survived. In the sacred books the event of the Flood is recorded and in that catastrophe, whatever was upon the earth was swept away, both the historical books, and other things. Likewise many other revolutions have occurred which have caused the loss of these things.

Besides these, in the chronicles which now exist on earth differences are seen; and every nation of the various existing nations has another account of the age of the world, and other events are recorded therein. Some date from eight thousand years and some from twelve thousand years, and some more. If any hath seen the book of Juk he well knows how many differences are among the books. God willing, ye must gaze towards “the great outlook” and disregard all these differences and mentions. To-day the realities of “manifestations of the commands” are adorned with the most glorious ornament and are evident, and all the names are revealed in a “new name,” and all realities are hidden in his reality. Whosoever believeth in him verily he believeth in God and in the “manifestations of His command” through all ages, and whosoever opposeth Him verily he blasphemeth God, the powerful, the mighty, the Sovereign! If any reflecteth upon whatsoever hath been mentioned herein, he will attain to the object. Although it is briefly revealed, yet a hundred thousand details are

hidden therein, and with thy Lord is the knowledge of all things in the written tablet! We ask God that he may supply thee with the same, as He hath ordained for all His Saints: and that He may open unto thy heart the doors of Significances that thou mayest know from His words what is His Will. Verily He is powerful in all things, and praise be to God, Lord of all the worlds!

THE COMPLAINTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH,
WHEREIN HE CENSURES THE PEOPLE
OF BAYAN FOR THEIR OPPOSITION

IN THE NAME OF THE ONE BELOVED!

THE fragrance of sorrows hath surrounded the *beauty* of the Merciful One; and the doors of joy and gladness are closed through the oppression of the rebellious amongst the people of Bayan.* Alas for them!

This is most certain, clear, and evident, that each previous Manifestation (of God) hath given the glad tidings of the coming Manifestations to the people (of that age) according to the degree of their stations (of knowledge) and capacities. Some (of the manifestations) have expressed this (glad tiding) by signs and some, by hidden interpretations. But my previous Manifestation (*i.e.* Bab) hath endeavoured to admonish and train the people of Bayan; more than that which could be comprehended

* Bayan, collection of teachings of the Bab, meaning "Explanation"—that is to say, the setting forth and expounding of all which it was important to know, concerning "Man, Yazhar'ullah"—He whom God shall manifest. An important copy of which exists in the British Museum marked "Or. 2819."

page 22 THE RIVER OF LIFE

and understood (*i.e.* more than was possible).*

Notwithstanding this (prophecy) what was ordained hath come to pass.

We say one word, and demand justice from the people of Bayan. Is it mentioned in any portion of the Holy Books (*i.e.* Bab's work) that in the time of the subsequent Manifestation, ye should cease to obey His Command? Say "show it?" Nay (ye cannot), by my Lord, the All-Knowing, the Informed! † Besides this truth—Is there mentioned in any part of the parts of the Bayan that if anyone should come with verses, should ye deny Him? ‡ Or should ye arise to slay Him?

If anyone should doubt these verses, this is like unto the doubts which were in “the dawning-places of the seventh Hell” (*i.e.* the Antichrists) at the time of the appearing of the Manifestations of (God’s) Command.

I swear by the Sun of the Significance, that if these verses which are now revealed (by Baha’u’llah) be denied, no one were able to prove the (identity of the) previous verses (as revealed by the Bab).

As the Nūqta-i-Bayan (*i.e.* the Bab) (May the life of all beside him be his sacrifice) could foresee these days, and that which his servants are doing; therefore naught hath been revealed by His Supreme Pen, except strong precepts and approved

* In the Bayan great stress is laid on the doctrine that this revelation is not final, but that believers therein must continually expect the coming of “Him whom God shall manifest.”

† Any who read the Bayan will find “Him whom God shall manifest” mentioned on every page. The Bab thus prepared and warned his followers, in order that they might have no excuse for failing to recognise and accept “Him whom God shall manifest” when he appears.

‡ Should anyone at any time come and claim to be “He,” and produce the necessary proofs of his identity—viz. verses (ayat) —no one is to dare to deny him.—Bayan.

THE COMPLAINTS OF BAHĀ’U’LLĀH page 23

counsels, and goodly sermons regarding this Manifestation (*i.e.* of Baha’u’llah). He (*i.e.* the Bab) revealed the “Book of Asma” (*i.e.* Names). Therefore reflect on that which was the object of its revelation, and the reason wherefore He called it the “Book of Asma.” *

He hath mentioned all the names (therein) one by one, and explained them, and then he hath ascribed the manifestations of those names to the Creator of Names.

O heart of the world! hast thou ear to hear what the Nightingale of Sorrows is singing, in this time wherein Satan hath raised his voice behind that of the Merciful One?

Verily, we have found the people of Bayan in negligence and great loss.

By the Beloved Himself! No one hath yet understand [sic] why especially the “Book of Asma” hath been revealed when every kind of Holy Epistle was already revealed (by the Bab).

Thus proclaims to you, the Wise, the All Knowing. But where are the pure ears to hear the voice which in all times is upraised in the region of the Primal Unity? And where are the clear eyes to perceive the Lights of Divine Wisdom from the revealed Words? The Promised One hath appeared in manifest Beauty. He is the Beauty of Nine,† which all (prophets) have prophesied concerning Him. ‡

Nevertheless the vile odours of jealousy and hatred have seized the people to such a degree that

* *i.e.* “the Book of Names” is another work of the Bab, in which he prophesies concerning the manifestations of Baha’u’llah.

† The Beauty of Nine is a title of Baha’u’llah, because the sum of the letters in the word “Baha” is Nine.

‡ The Promised One, whom all creatures await. “The Jews await the Messiah, the Christians the return of Christ, the Muslims the Mahdi, the Buddhists the fifth Buddha, the Zoroastrians Shah Bahram, the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna, and the Atheists a better social organisation! Baha’u’llah represents all these, and thus destroys the rivalries and the enmities of these different religions; reconciles them in their primitive purity and frees them from the corruption of dogmas and rites.”

page 24

THE RIVER OF LIFE

they utterly flee from The Divine Breaths and Heavenly fragrances.

Say; O people, do not follow these on whom the word of punishment is pronounced, and from whose faces shineth forth the wrath of God, the King, the Potent, the Wise, the All-Knowing. It is not evident what these people would have done, if the “Supreme Pen”* had not written these precepts and sermons, No, by Him Who hath made me independent of all the worlds, with the Grace He hath given to me of His Presence—higher than that which they have done and desire to do, hath never been and will not be possible to do.

It is amazing that they read the Divine verses. By God! the revelation thereof curseth them—and they do not understand. Notwithstanding all those strong and convincing Commandments, yet, the Beloved of the Contingent Being (*i.e.* the Bab) hath announced (in his writings) that which they will do, as it appeared and will appear hereafter.

To any whom we did not regard, to the honour of God’s Religion; these (rebellious) men, in dishonouring the Religion of God, have shown sincerity and obedience and in all parts they call the people unto themselves.

That secret act and this manifest deed require some justice.

For this “Servant” hath held no enmity for anyone. This is most evident: that whomsoever we did not regard, it was for the sake (of the

* A title of both the Bab and Baha’u’llah, as the instrument whereby God’s pleasure is made known to men.

THE COMPLAINTS OF BAHU’U’LLAH page 25

exaltation) of God’s Command and it will be as a showing forth of His Majesty and glorifying of His Word.

Whosoever hath been offended in this respect, these rebellious people have given him pre-eminence, as an injury to God’s religion, and in revolting against Him. And no one of the Friends of God for the sake of the Face (of God) hath withheld these unbelievers from committing such wicked deeds.

Hath no sign of the Divine Fire remained in the hearts of the people? Hath not the Light of the Lamp of the Primal Unity shined forth in their souls?

What hath befallen, that “the temples of souls” are not enkindled by this Fire and are not illumined by these Lights?

Say, O Caravans from the cities of the Knowledge of the Beauty of the Merciful One! The True Dawn hath appeared from the horizon of the heaven of God’s Will. Hasten that perhaps ye may join the host of those near ones (to God). Assuredly, the lighter ye journey (*i.e.* having fewer burdens) the better it be. Cast away from yourselves the hindering burden of signs, and turn ye to the region of the Primal Unity. The Pre-existing Pen saith— “Do ye not hear my groaning and affectionate cry? ”

Or ye hear and do not comprehend it. If ye are unable to soar in the pleasant atmosphere of the significances, then soar ye in the sphere of the Words.

If ye do not understand the wonderful Arabic verses of this Manifestation, then reflect on the Persian Bayan, which I have revealed before (*i.e.* through the Bab), and on the Persian Words (*i.e.* writings and discourses written in Persian) which

have been revealed in this Manifestation, so that ye may find a way to the Truth!

By Him, who hath enkindled the Fire of His Love in my heart so greatly, that the waters of opposition of all the Worlds cannot chill it, the “Appearance of Bayan” hath had no other aim (in view) except (to proclaim) this Manifestation.*

May my life be a sacrifice to Him, he hath not neglected in delivering my Message (to the World), but the people are faulty and gone astray.

Whosoever freeth himself, even for an hour from the veils and signs † ; and for the sake of God would reflect upon whatever hath been revealed in Arabic and Persian, from the Divine Kingdom: By God! he will sever himself from this World and the next, and will lament for this Oppressed One, the Prisoner, the Stranger.

THE WORD OF GOD

THE hard stones are (affected) by the Divine Word, ‡ and groan and lament thereof, but the people are in great negligence!

This is that which hath been revealed in former

* Anyone who reads the Bayan will find that stress is laid on the doctrine that this revelation is not final. On the contrary, it is merely intended to prepare the world for the fuller measure of truth which will be uttered by “Him whom God shall manifest.” Almost every ordinance in the Bayan is similarly designed to be a perpetual reminder of “Him whom God shall manifest.”

† *i.e.* Veil of selfishness, with which the eyes and hearts of men are veiled; as it is said :—“The veil between God and His servants, is neither earth nor heaven, nor the Throne nor the Footstool; thy selfhood and illusions are the veils and signs, and when thou removest these thou hast attained unto God.”

‡ Uncreated Word of God, The Logos—*i.e.* the Divine Thought and Word regarded as two aspects of one entity.

THE WORD OF GOD page 27

times (and recorded) in the Divine Books— “From the stones flow *rivers*, but no sign (of betterment) will appear from the hearts of the wicked.”

It is a true (saying), by God, the Most High, the Great! Know, O questioner, that the Divine Word is the summing up of all Significances—that is to say, all the meanings, and Divine Mysteries are

hidden (or summed up) in the Word. Blessed is he who attains unto it, and bringeth the pearls hidden therein.

Consider the splendour of the Divine Word, to be as the shining forth of the Sun; even as the sun after rising shineth on all things, likewise, the sun of the Word, when it dawneth from the horizon of the Divine Will; shineth on all (existing Beings).

May God forgive, for this comparison, because the phenomenal Sun is aided by the collective Word.

Reflect to understand it! *

But the splendour of the phenomenal Sun can be beheld by the outward eye; while the effulgence of the Sun of the Word will only be perceived by the inner sight.

By Him in whose hand is my life: if even for a moment the inner aid and power of the Divine Word, should cease from the world and its inhabitants, all will be lost and return to nothingness.

But if any observe it with the spiritual eye, he will see its splendour and light manifested in all things.

Likewise, if he turn to it, with a pure ear, he will hear the first Divine Voice at all times.

The Divine Voice is ever lifted up, but the ears are deaf unto it.

The splendour of the lights of the “Luminary of

* The phenomenal Sun is entirely dependent on the Word of God, while the Word is absolutely independent of it.

page 28 THE RIVER OF LIFE

the Universe” * are manifest, but the eyes are veiled.

O Wise! the Physician † is needed so that He may by the elixir (*i.e.* virtue) of the “Greatest Name,” cure the blindness of the eyes, and change the base metal of being unto gold.‡ O Would! that the arena of knowledge of the Beloved, become enlarged by the existence of perfect believers. So that, He could manifest infinite sciences and explain them by the outward letters of the (Divine) Word.

The people are smitten by such a disease that its cure is very hard except for him who seeketh healing from the Greatest Antidote (*i.e.* Knowledge of God).

That disease is this: whosoever thinketh that he hath perceived a slight fragrance of knowledge (*i.e.* dogmatic religion), taketh for granted that God is also like unto himself. To-day there are many who are afflicted with this disease; and it hath caused them to remain deprived from God ('s true knowledge) and that which is with Him (*i.e.* His infinite Blessings). Ask God to purify the hearts and strengthen the eyes (of men) so that perhaps they might know themselves and distinguish God from all else beside Him; and be able to comprehend God's Will from His revealed Words.

Had the nations been favoured with the Divine Plan, they would never have become veiled at the time of His Manifestations. Albeit they read for years in the Divine Book, yet, they did not comprehend

* *i.e.* Baha'u'llah.

† The Prophets of God, the universal Manifestations are as skilled Physicians, while the contingent world is like the body of man: and the Divine laws are the remedy and treatment thereof.

‡ Love in Bahai revelation is "the Sovereign Alchemy" through which the Manifestation of God transmutes the base metal of humanity into Divine Gold.

THE WORD OF GOD page 29

one letter of its significances (*i.e.* spiritual meanings).

Even so they have been utterly veiled and neglectful from the Great Object. Notwithstanding all (which was important to know) is mentioned and written in the Divine Book, yet all (the professors thereof) became deprived to such a degree that, those who accounted themselves of the favoured ones, were even neglectful of some of the traditions which were established amongst the common people, such as the existence of the Qaim, in the well-known city. They are so confident in this traditional saying, that whosoever believeth that this Holy One (*i.e.* the Qaim, whom the Muslims await) hath yet to be born, they have decreed for Him the sentence of death.

Consider, how far away have been these so-called people, from the Truth and how greatly deprived thereof.

Until, in the year sixty * the veil was rent asunder, and all which was hidden became disclosed.

Likewise the resurrection † and whatever appertaineth to it, for none know of the utterances which have been recorded in the sacred Books.

Thus all of them (the so-called favoured people) imagined the mirage of the desert to be water; even as it was seen (that they were mistaken).

Apart from these grades, they have also been veiled from the real knowledge of “the Beloved of

* *i.e.* In the year one thousand two hundred and sixty, A. H. (A.H. 1260 = 23rd May A.D. 1844) the Bab, when he was in his twenty-fifth year, began to speak and disclose to be the Forerunner of *Him whom God shall manifest*.

† The Day of Resurrection is the day of the appearance of the “Tree of Truth” : for example, from the (first) day of the mission of Jesus Christ till the day of His ascension was the resurrection of Moses, etc.

page 30

THE RIVER OF LIFE

all the inhabitants of the world,” and the vapour of their imaginations and dust of their doubts have withheld all these people from gazing on the “Outlook of the Primal Unity.” Until “the Great Purifier.” (*i.e.* the Bab) came and baptized all men in “the purest River,” and invited them to “the Most Luminous Outlook,” and gave them the glad tidings thereof.

Now, consider, that whatever appeared (in these latter days) were the very approved things which all (the people) neglected. If it be said that all these (teachings) were mysteries and hidden in the Sacred Book; and their valid meanings, which were enclosed in the Chambers of the Holy Words, rent asunder the veils, and came forth, through the appearance of the Nuqta-i-Bayan (*i.e.* the Bab, the Point of Revelation) (may the life of all in the world be His sacrifice); this is a true saying. And if also it may be said that these teachings were briefly mentioned before (in the Book), and now the Explainer and Expounder thereof hath come— this is also true and there is no question about it. And if again it be said, that these teachings which are manifested in this new Revelation, were not before, and these are all new, this saying is also true and just. For, if God—glorious, is His mention—speaketh to-day in a word that all men have used before and will use hereafter, that word will be new if ye will be of those who think!

THE DOCTRINE OF THE UNITY OF GOD

REFLECT on the word of Tauhid (*i.e.* the Unity of God) which have been proclaimed by every one of the Divine Manifestations, and all people of different nations have acknowledged and uttered this

THE UNITY OF GOD page 31

blessed Word. Nevertheless, in every manifestation, it hath presenteth itself anew, and the value of newness hath never been taken away from it.

The Word wherewith God speaketh; in that word a new spirit will be breathed; and the breath of life emanates and passeth from it on everything both outwardly and inwardly. Then when, and in what age, are the signs of the Divine Word to be made manifest, both in the material (world) and human (nature)—(*i.e.* the illumination of Word both of hearts and horizons).

Regarding that which some men speak of certain imaginary things, and boast and show their pride in these matters: they are rejected in God's sight, and are not remembered in His Presence. For, pride should be in knowledge of God, and in being true and steadfast of faith, and firmness in the Religion of God; and not in external utterances. My previous Manifestation (*i.e.* the Bab) hath explained these grades. Look and understand! For example, those who have ascended to the summit of knowledge, and those who have remained in the lowest stage thereof, they stand before God on one basis: For the honour which science and knowledge have, is not due to science and knowledge themselves. If they have God as their Goal, and (lead men to) the belief of Him, then, they are beloved, otherwise they are rejected.

All (mere) words are mentioned in one and the same grade on that (*i.e.* God's) Threshold. For example, if He had said "I was born" is even like unto that which He saith "He begetteth not, and He is not begotten." Although apparently, the highest station to which human knowledge can attain is to comprehend (this truth) that "God hath no counterpart, that none is like unto Him, and that He hath no peer"; and even so this is the highest

and most exalted Grade amongst men. Yet, this pre-eminence is also through the favour of God, and hath been permitted by His Will. As in the cycles of the Quran and the Bayan, the Divine Will is related to all that is pure and holy. Therefore the effulgence of their utterances is reprinted and made manifest in the hearts of the servants (of God).

Had there been no such revelations, that Ocean of pre-existence and the most holy Threshold (of God) would have no need of any of these narrated Words and explanations.*

The eyes must be fixed on the essence of the Religion of God, and not on the height and depth of degrees of wordy knowledge (or the knowledge which ends in words and not in reality), which is established amongst men.

Would to God! that I could unfold (to the world) that which is hidden, but the people are veiled (and do not see the Truth).

Nevertheless, He (God) is the Rich, the Praised One! At one time, He saith— “Thou canst see me!” Another time, He saith— “Look and behold me!” †

To-day, whosoever believeth in that which hath been sent down from “the Heaven of the Will of God”: he is favoured and hath attained to the highest summit of knowledge.

And whosoever hath not this (belief), he is deprived of these high favours, and lost (in comparison to him who is thus favoured). We ask God to grant us and you, the favour of being established in this religion whereby the *Kingdom*

* God is holy above any description and definition.

† Alluding to this Koranic verse :—Moses said, O Lord, Show me *thy glory* that I may behold thee. God said thou shalt in no wise behold me, but look toward the mountain, and if it stand firm in its place, then shalt thou see Me.”

EPISTLE TO A CHRISTIAN BISHOP page 33

of Names is changed, while it taketh away the intoxication of the dwellers in the cities of creation: except, those who have been guided by God, the Protecting, the Self-Subsisting.

O Believer, reflect well on that which hath been revealed by the “*Supreme Pen*,” so that the doors of infinite knowledge may be opened to thy heart, and thou mayest behold thyself, rich and independent of all else beside God (*i.e.* satisfied with God and not craving for the riches and allurements of this world). Do not imagine that the Manifestation of God appeareth particularly for the advancement of outward education, or to alter such laws as are already in force amongst the people (of the world).

On the contrary, in the time of Manifestation, all things have been and will be laden with blessings and unnumbered merits, which will appear in their time, and according to material causes.

BAHA'U'LLAH'S EPISTLE TO A CHRISTIAN
BISHOP RESIDING AT CONSTANTINOPLE

IN this regard a brief answer hath been sent down from the “Heaven of the Will of the Merciful One,” to the question asked by one of the Christian Bishops who dwelleth in the great city (*i.e.* Constantinople); a portion whereof will be quoted here, so that perhaps some of the servants (of God) may become acquainted with certain of the perfect Divine Mysteries which are hid from the eyes (of the people who are veiled with their own lusts). Where God saith—(*i.e.* It is written in that letter replying to the question of the said Bishop)—“Verily, thy letter hath reached to the Kingdom of thy Lord,

page 34

THE RIVER OF LIFE

the Merciful One. We have received it with joy and fragrance, and we answer thee before thou questionest; ponder, so that thou mayest understand!”

This is a favour from thy Lord, the Mighty, the Helper! Happy art thou, for being favoured therewith, for although it may be hid from thee, yet it will be revealed unto thee, when God willeth, so that thou mayest desire and see what no eye hath ever seen. O thou! who are immersed in the ocean of knowledge, and art gazing towards the region of thy Lord, the Merciful One! Know that verily, this Great Religion is a Mighty Cause.

Reflect and remember that he who was called Peter in the Kingdom of God; though he had been exalted and greatly honoured and raised to a high station (amongst the disciples yet) his feet wished to slip from the Path. Then the Hand of Grace laid hold on him, and kept him from falling, and made him one of the Faithful.* Verily, if thou knowest the melody which this Nightingale is warbling in the branch of the “Tree of Sadratu'l-Muntaha,” † thou wilt be assured that what hath been prophesied aforetime is verily fulfilled in truth, and now He eateth in the Kingdom of God, of eternal and everlasting benefits; and drinketh from the River (*a*) of Realities, and the River (*b*) of Spiritual Thoughts ‡ : But the people are greatly veiled.

Verily, those who hear this voice and neglect (to

* *Vide* Luke xxii. 31-33.

† Name of a tree in Paradise; but here it means the Manifestation, who guides men to God.

‡ The fulfillment of Luke xxii. 29-30. (a) Kowthar, (b) Salsabil, names of two rivers in Paradise. In another tablet Baha'u'llah saith; "Blessed are those who have known the Light, and have hastened towards it; behold, they are in the Kingdom, they *eat* and *drink* with the elect."

EPISTLE TO A CHRISTIAN BISHOP page 35

obey it), if they were not born, it were better for them, than (to have been born and) hesitate (to believe) in this Religion. But that which was to happen hath occurred! and the matter was ordained by God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Sovereign!

Say, O people, the Spirit hath come another time, and that is fulfilled which was prophesied unto you. Thus we promised the same to you in the Epistles; if ye will be of those who understand! Verily, He speaketh as He spake aforetime, and giveth His Life, as He gave it the first time for the love He bore for those who are in the Heavens and the earth (*i.e.* the whole world).

Know, then that when the Son * surrendered up His spirit, verily, all creation wept for Him, but in giving up His life: He bestowed power and assistance on all things, as thou seest and witnessest in all men. By the aid of His Spirit which is the Most High, the Ruler (of all things), and the Light (of the world); the wise have displayed their wisdom, the learned have derived their scientific knowledge, the artist hath been (enabled to) manifest his artistic powers and Kings have shown their puissance.

We testify that verily, when He (Jesus Christ) came into this world, He shone (as a light) on all creation, and thereby He cleansed all who were diseased with the leprosy of ignorance, and blindness. And He healed the sick of all their ailments (which were caused by) negligence and selfish desires; and on behalf of the Powerful, the Almighty, He opened the eyes of the Blind and purified all souls.

And the word "leprosy," may be applied to all things, by which the servant (of God) is veiled from

* *i.e.* Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

the knowledge of his Lord, for whosoever is veiled, he is (in truth) a leper, and will not be remembered in the Kingdom of God, the Almighty, the Praised One!

Verily, We testify, that by the Word of God, all leprosy can be cleansed, and the sick can be made whole. Verily, this (*i.e.* the uncreated Word of God) is for the purification of the world.

Happy is he who approacheth unto it, with a radiant face. Know then, that He who ascended up to Heaven, hath in truth descended (again) from it. The fragrance of His Grace is wafted over all the world, and thy Lord is witness to what I say.

He is perfuming the world by His advent and Manifestation, and those who are occupied with this world and its gold, do not perceive the fragrance of His garment.

And we found them busied with great illusions. Say, verily the Bell rings out His Name and the trumpet proclaimeth Him, and He Himself witnesseth for Himself. Happy are they who (are of those who) know.

But to-day the leper is healed before saying to him "Be thou cleansed!" By His Manifestation He hath healed the whole world, and the inhabitants thereof, of all their diseases and ailments. Sublime is this favour, which is not excelled by any other favour, and great is this Mercy which is unsurpassed by aught in either worlds.

O thou who art remembered in the Kingdom of God; pray for power from thy Lord! Arise, and say, "O people of the earth! verily, the Life Giver of the world, and He who kindleth the fire (of God's love) in the heart of men, hath come!

Verily, the Forerunner named 'Ali Muhammad hath cried in the wilderness (of the Bayan) and given the people the glad tidings of their meeting

EPISTLE TO A CHRISTIAN BISHOP page 37

with God in the Paradise of Abha.* And in His Grace He hath opened the gate unto all men. Verily He fulfilled that which was written (concerning Him) by the "Supreme Pen," in the Kingdom of God, the Lord of the first and the last! Whosoever desireth to partake of this (grace) verily, it is a wonderful sustenance.

Say, The greatest Bell proclaimeth His glad tidings, and the Hand of the Will (of God) strikes it in the Paradise of Primal Unity.

Hearken, O people ! and do not be of (the company of) those who are neglectful. Please God! there will appear a new creation of beings who will comprehend the object of God, the Most Glorious, the Almighty, from these utterances. And they will endeavour to observe the commandments of God with the utmost reverence and humility. And protect them from those who are unbelieving and rejected.

Verily, He is Almighty (to perform) that which He Willeth! Whosoever hath been given to drink even one drop of the River of the Bayan will comprehend that in the Manifestation of the Nuqta-i Bayan (*i.e.* the Bab) there appeared whatsoever was (hitherto) concealed from the beginning. And this Manifestation (*i.e.* of Baha'u'llah) and the previous Manifestation (*i.e.* of the Bab) are exactly like unto that of the Son of Zechariah (*i.e.* John the Baptist) and of the spirit (*i.e.* Jesus Christ).

This (subject) hath been set forth in some of the revealed Epistles, which see [sic].

This Manifestation (of God) is that which hath come for the assistance of the nations of the world, at the time when the annihilation of the world, and of all therein, is at hand.

The existing One, hath come to give eternal Life,

* *i.e.* The day of vision and meeting hath come nigh. Prepare ye to enter into the Kingdom of God.

page 38

THE RIVER OF LIFE

and to keep them eternally, and to grant them the essence of Life (*i.e.* True Spiritual Life).

Whatever was revealed in the Bayan is fulfilled— This is that Promised One, which he (*i.e.* the Bab) said "Cometh after Me, and is before Me." He was the Voice which was lifted up (and cried) betwixt heaven and earth: "Make straight the Divine paths and prepare them"— that is to say, "Your hearts!"

And it was the same voice which the Son of Zechariah (lifted up) before the coming of the Spirit (*i.e.* Jesus Christ), saying: "I am the Voice of that One, who crieth in the wilderness Make straight the way of the Lord." It were better that a woman should bring forth a scorpion, than a man, who standeth in opposition to the Kingdom of God. Happy are the Barren Women, and woe to the mothers who suckle (such) infants! Say, the Supreme Pen saith : —O ye who have gone astray, in the wilderness of selfish desires! Ye say that ye do not believe in me, but ye profess to

believe in Him, who came to proclaim my Name! Ye lie! Ye are the people of darkness, and ye flee from the Bright Morning.

If ye draw nigh, undoubtedly your rejected and carnal deeds, will be seen in the Light.

Woe to those souls, who are neglectful of these days and of their fruits: they will soon break forth into lamentations on their conditions, and will find none to comfort them.

THE BLESSED PEOPLE

BLESSED are the lovers of Truth, for unto them the Manifest Truth will be revealed.

Blessed are the wise who have known the right

THE BLESSED PEOPLE

page 39

Path of God, and have set their faces toward His Kingdom.

Blessed are the joyful and sincere ones, for the lamps of their hearts are lit up and glowing with the oil of the knowledge of the Merciful One Himself; And they are protected against the blows of the gale of sorrow and temptations, by the globes of detachment from the world.

Blessed are the strong-hearted, for their hearts have not been weakened by the attack of the oppressors.

Blessed are the seeing, who have known both immortality and mortality, and have set their faces toward immortality: They are mentioned in the Kingdom of Heaven as the people of immortality.

Surely their heart shall not become weakened for they are of the people of insight.

Say, O servants (of God) in any case, ye will be slain either with the sword of ailments or with the swords of the people, of opposition. In this case, it is meet and right for you to be slain with the swords of the unbelievers, in the Path of the Beloved of men (of God): for the compensation of the soul is more beloved. Be not unmindful of this desirable fruit, and let it not escape from your grasp.

Blessed are the righteous, for from their deeds diffuseth the fragrance of acceptance by the Merciful One.

Unhappy are the detractors, the malefactors, and the oppressors, albeit they may appear in honour and wealth amongst men. Yet very soon sudden abasement and infinite wrath will overtake them.

The word which in all times appeared in a new spirit, this time hath arisen from the Horizon of the Will of God, and this is the word which I addressed to the Son—that is to say, the Spirit—to

page 40

THE RIVER OF LIFE

say: “Moses came to establish religion and law, and the Son of Zechariah, came to baptize. But I have come to give eternal life, and to bring them into the everlasting Kingdom.”

Say: O Friends, thieves and traitors are lurking in hidden places. O bearers of the trust of the Merciful One, be ye not heedless but protect the pearls of God’s love from the thieves.

I swear by the “Luminary of the Horizon of the Heaven of Significances,” that if any will not rend asunder the veil of imagination to-day, he shall never hear the Divine Voice.

Blessed are those, who have broken the idols of imagination by the power of God, and have heard the Voice of the Merciful One, and have arisen from among the dead. Upon them be the breaths of God, the possessor of Names and Attributes.

O people of the earth, the Voice of the Merciful One, hath been lifted up between Heaven and earth, and hearing the Word of God, the heart of the world hath been kindled by the fire of Love.

But the cold-hearted have tarried in the tombs of negligence, and oblivion.

They have not absorbed its heat, how much less the glow thereof.

They abide in the everlasting tombs.

Arise, O people in assisting God! verily the promised One hath come unto you, and the glad tidings of whose coming were given by the Bab, and the great tremor, and the uttermost lamentation (*i.e.* last judgment) have appeared through Him. The lovers of truth are filled with delight at His Manifestation, while the unbelievers are consumed by the fire of hatred.

Say; I adjure ye by God, O people of Bayan, to judge righteously in this one word: Hath not your Lord the Merciful One, made this matter (*i.e.*

PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES page 41

religion) independent from whatsoever was created in the world, as was revealed in the Bayan?

You have acted towards His Beloved, as ye would have done even if this Manifestation were not dependent on aught else beside Itself. Yet ye have treated Him most unjustly; O ye unjust people! Are there any with resolute ear to hear, or of strong sight to perceive (these things)?

Say, verily the eye of God weepeth on your condition, while ye are heedless thereof. O ye ! in you and your deeds the people of the Highest are amazed.

THE PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES OF THE BAHAIS

O MY Friends! ye are the sources of my utterance; and in every source, a drop from the “River of Significances” hath fallen. Cleanse these sources from the dross of doubts and illusions, with the arm of assurance, so that ye yourselves may be enabled to give most strong and convincing answers to such questions which have been asked.

In this greatest Manifestation, all (believers) must be adorned with sciences and knowledge. For all men, nay all things, each one according to its own capacity, receiveth Divine favour from the breezes of the Holy Breaths. In the depths of the revealed Words, are hid the answer to the mentioned questions. Please God, in reflecting with the Divine eye on His words, ye will comprehend what ye desired.

This question hath been exactly put to the Spirit, saying: “The Son of Zechariah came, called the people to God and baptized them. What was the object of His Manifestation? and what is the aim

page 42 THE RIVER OF LIFE

of Thy Manifestation?” He answered and said unto them: “He (John the Baptist) came to witness for me, and fulfilled that which he came to do; But I have come to quicken the people of the world.”

O thou! who art gazing unto the “Great Outlook”! Sorrow hath reached its zenith, that the tongue of the Merciful One is withheld from

utterance; and by God, my eye weepeth, while my tongue speaketh, and he who standeth before my face, writes what proceedeth from it.

For the people of Bayan are veiled to such a degree, that to-day, if any should act contrary to that which God, Glorious is His Dignity, hath commanded from all eternity; they see it with their own eyes, and yet they approve thereof.

For example, the chief of the liars, hath written that in the beginning of the Manifestation, verses were the necessary proof of identity and now it is not so.

Say, O people of Bayan, judge righteously as in the sight of God, your Lord, the Merciful One!

Let alone this Divine Servant (*i.e.* Baha'u'llah) and the appearances of the Mighty Eternity, which have been revealed in this Manifestation, but see the whole Bayan, and judge it yourselves! Ye did not agree to the Command of God, and to that which hath been sent down from His Presence; but God will be satisfied with your judgment, if it be just. So that, perhaps an eye may be opened with justice and look toward God!

This is most evident, that the whole book of the Bayan, clearly and without any interpretation, is against the saying of him who is opposing God.

Nevertheless, they boldly and openly have and are disobeying the whole (teachings) of the Bayan; and yet they consider themselves to be defenders of the Bayan.

PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES page 43

By God! The Bayan laments for them, and curseth them (for their acts).

Now, for God's sake! reflect for a little while, and think what is the cause that they with such boldness have endeavoured to dishonour the Holy Book?

This is plain and evident: the cause is that some of the people of Bayan agree to it (*i.e.* dishonouring the Book).

By Him who made me utter the truth, and Manifested me to confirm His Religion—they would never do these things, if they were not assured (in their ignorance).

This is one of God's Mysteries revealed in the Book of Bayan: for not a line is written therein, unless it conveyeth either by hidden interpretation or openly: "Fail ye not to believe in Him who cometh after me, and desire naught else from Him, but verses" (*i.e.* Ayat, as the necessary proof of His identity).

Nevertheless, they have rejected (Him) and have committed all these great misdeeds, as ye all know, and no one hath opposed them.

But to this Seat (*i.e.* Baha'u'llah) by whose will all the Books have been written to proclaim belief in Him—Him they have accused of abolishing the Commandments of the Bayan. May God curse the Tyrants!

Notwithstanding that, according to (the teaching of) the Bayan, this Manifestation hath been and ever will be empowered (to confirm) or alter whatsoever He pleaseth in the Bayan.

All the Bayan speaketh of Him, celebrateth His is praise, and proclaimeth His Manifestation. Whatsoever emanateth from His presence, is that which hath appeared from His previous Manifestation; and whosoever putteth a distinction between these,

page 44

THE RIVER OF LIFE

he is a lying infidel, and a chief among those who deny (the truth)!

Besides verses, a great many of the people of (other) religions, have seen supernatural acts performed by the "Holy Seat." This is not mentioned for glory! Ask those who (dwell) in the city (where I was) and in its vicinity, so that they may tell you the truth.

It is not evident what that opposing soul calleth himself. No, by the life of Baha, this is nothing, but a great lie! Ask God to grant ye favour so that ye may be established in the Path of His religion.

For verily, This Great Religion is a mighty cause! It will not be long ere its greatness shall be manifested and proved (to all men).

None can see it, excepting those who look toward the "Great Outlook"! and those who for the love of God, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Wise, are wholly detached from aught beside Him, in either the Heavens or the earth.

To-day, is the day of assisting the religion of God. It is incumbent on every soul that he with perfect firmness should call the people toward the region of God.

God willing! ye will exert yourselves, so that perhaps those who have gone astray in the wilderness of self and carnal desire, may turn to the Holy Horizon of Abha. The good deeds of men have been and ever will be beloved, for the fruit of every man is his action!

The man who lacketh good works is considered, in “the Great Outlook,” like unto a tree without fruit.

Speak ye as in the sight of God, and deliver this message for God’s sake.

Look ye not to the opposition or acceptance (of

THE PERSIAN MYSTICS page 45

men); on the contrary, be active in the service whereto ye are ordained by God.

This is the greatest favour, and everlasting salvation! This is the eternal fruit, and God’s Grace for all times: and the shower of His mercy hath come and ever will come down upon ye.

He who is for God, verily He is with him ! and He will assist him in truth; verily He is powerful in all things! Al-Baha be upon ye, O my friends, to the perpetuation of my Kingdom and the eternity of my omnipotence!

BAHA’U’LLAH’S EPISTLE TO THE CHIEF OF THE PERSIAN MYSTICS

HE IS THE BELOVED!

O MUHAMMAD, congratulate thy soul for that which He (*i.e.* the Beloved) hath revealed to thee in this Holy and generous Epistle.

For it contains that which doth sever thee from the dominion of the Heaven and the earth, and beareth thee away to the Threshold of the Manifest Beloved.

Say: I praise Thee, O my Lord, my God. Look Thou on my infirmity and weakness. Behold my distress and poverty, and waft the breath of Thy Holiness to me, whereof, if but the tiniest atom (*Lit.* small as the antennae of an ant) should breathe upon the first and the last (*i.e.* whole creation) it would turn them towards the power of Thy Luminous Beauty and glorify them with the Light of Thy Manifest Face.

O my God, I am he who doth grasp the strong support of Thy Great Word; and I have laid hold of the hem of Thy Favour in Thy Name, which is

page 46

THE RIVER OF LIFE

the Most High, the Lofty One, and the All-Knowing.

Then, O my God, as Thou hast exalted me in beholding Thee, and made me to know the Manifestation of Thyself: Deprive me not (of the joy of drinking) from this River, which floweth from the right hand of the throne of the Generous One!

And do not, O my God, withhold Thy endless Bounty from me; and grudge me not Thy Grace which of old hath descended (like showers) from the clouds of Thine Infinite Mercy!

Say: O people!

The Fire of Primal Unity hath appeared in this “Lofty Tree,” which encompasseth all the worlds.

Say: verily the Holy Spirit hath Manifested Himself in a new guise.

Say: verily those who comprehend Him, are praising God, in this luminous Place of Refuge.

Say: verily, the veil which concealed the glory of God hath been rent asunder and “The Servant,” hath appeared from the East of His Merciful and compassionate Name! This is He whom none can comprehend, Who is beyond the comprehension of any mortal knowledge or the wisdom of the wise.

He speaketh now within this atmosphere, and calleth all those who are in the heavens and the earth.

He proclaimeth the glad tidings of the Paradise of God to all, and inviteth them (to come) to that Most Holy and praised Place.

Say: whosoever doth not cleanse his heart and (casteth not away) the veils of imitation, can never approach “this Sublime and Resplendent Face.”

Then O Muhammad, soar thou in this Atmosphere on the wings of detachment (from all earthly ties) and be not afraid of (any man).

Trust thou in God, the Lord, the Omnipotent, the

THE PERSIAN MYSTICS page 47

Powerful, the Mighty, and pay no heed to any even though he wish thee the calamities of the whole world.

Call thou all men to God and to that, which hath been revealed, in the Bayan * and do not be of those who fear.

Say: O people, fear ye God, and keep His Commandments in your souls and in your bodies, and do not be (of the company) of the neglectful, lest negligence lake hold on ye in all directions.

Say: I praise Thee, O my Lord, my God! I ask Thee by Thy Name, which washeth away all sins with forgiveness, and changeth Punishment unto Mercy, and causeth sinners to enter into the Beautiful Pavilion of Thy Grace: to leave me not to myself, even for the fraction of a second, and sever not from me the rope of Thy Favour.

Forbid me not to realise Thy Beauty in the Day of Resurrection; and make me not stand afar off on that day of Meeting (with Thee): when all eyes shall be blinded and the wise shall abandon their wisdom, and the feet of the learned shall slip.

O my God, Thou art He who is the King of all beings, and their Creator; the ruler of all created things and their maker.

Verily, Thou art He whose Mercy hath encompassed all things, and His Favour is extended to all that exists in the Heavens and on the earth.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the *Beloved* and the wise King!

O my God, I cling to Thy Power and Might, and I take refuge in Thy Grace and Favour.

Deprive me not of Thy Mercy and Generosity, and drive me not afar from the Paradise of Thy

* “All the splendour (Baha) of the Bayan is ‘He whom God shall manifest!’ All mercy be upon him who believeth, and all chastisement on him who believeth not in Him. —Bayan.

Love and Thy remembrance: for verily, Thou art the Mighty, the Beloved, and Thou art most compassionate and Merciful to all Thy Servants.

(Signed) "152."*

BAHA'U'LLAH'S EPISTLE TO AN EARLY
BAHAI

HE SPAKE AND HIS SPEECH IS OF SURPASSING
BEAUTY!

O SERVANT (of God) who art present with the "Oppressed One"! Know that verily I love the "Ha" and "Seen,"† who hath been imprisoned in the Path of God, and endured great affliction through love to Him, and in accordance with His Will.

I salute and greet Him and those who are with Him, both male and female, the young and the old.

And we remind them of that which hath taken place in their hearts; even the Lights of God's Love. We exhort them to that by which the station of mankind will be exalted in the contingent world; and give them the glad tidings of my remembrance. My felicity be upon them all!

O Friends! Be not grieved because of the inconstancy

* "152." These numerals stand for the equivalent letters of "B.H.A."—*i.e.* Baha.

Note.—On the 24th of December 1913, I showed a photograph of the original of this Tablet, which is reproduced on page . . . , to our Master 'Abdul Baha in London. He said: "This is one of the Tablets which many years ago Baha'u'llah dictated, and I wrote it down." Bearing Baha'u'llah's seal and numeral signature.—*The Translator.*

† *i.e.* Husayn, one of the early Bahais.

EPISTLE TO AN EARLY BAHAI page 49

of this world: for that which is not enduring is not worthy of attention.

I swear by "the Sun of the Horizon of Bayan," that whatsoever is visible to your sight will soon return unto nothingness.*

And whatsoever hath been and is the cause of life and eternal commemoration, is in the good pleasure of God, glorious is His Glory!

Blessed is the soul which is illumined by this Light, and which hath attained to this station.

By night and day, “this Oppressed One” asketh God to protect the Friends from all that is evil in his sight.

O Husayn, Upon thee be My glory and My Peace!

Strive to educate those souls which are with thee; greet thy household and children from “this Oppressed One,” and say to them: be not grieved and sad. God will soon open the doors of His favour and mercy unto ye.

Verily, He is Powerful in all things!

The greatest cause of obtaining Grace in “This Day,” are firmness in the Love of God, and in observance of whatsoever hath been revealed by “the Supreme Pen” in the Book.†

If all the inhabitants of the earth were favoured with that which God wished for them, then would they attain true happiness.

He is the Gracious One! the Bountiful!

There is no God, but He, the Forgiver; the Generous!

* *i.e.* Will soon cease to exist.

† *i.e.* Bayan concerning “He whom God shall manifest.”

Note.—Baha’u’llah’s Epistle to one of the early believers named Husayn. The original is in the handwriting of Aqa Mirza Aqajan, of Kashan (Jenab-i-Khadimu’llah), Baha’u’llah’s amanuensis.

page 50

THE RIVER OF LIFE

BAHA’U’LLAH COMFORTETH HIS
DISCIPLES

“SAY: Grieve not because of that which hath befallen ye, for greater than that befell the Pre-existent Beauty* and now He dwelleth in the greatest prison.

The matter is so severe that the enemies have closed the door of outcoming and ingoing against us. But, we are engaged in the commemoration of the Merciful One, with perfect joy and fragrance.

Let not your hearts be troubled; for that which hath been taken from you.

Soon all the world will speak well of you. No man's reward hath ever been or ever will be lost.

Whatsoever of this world's good hath been violently taken from you, because ye have walked in God's Path: Verily, He will restore it to you in this world, and in the world to come, such exalted stations will be prepared for ye: that if one of those should be revealed to the people of this world and should be beheld by them, they would freely sacrifice their lives in the way of the Friend: hoping that they may also be favoured with (a share in) those Heavenly Mansions.

Hear the exhortation of the "Pre-existing Beauty"; who calleth ye from this greatest prison.

Cease from revolt and rebellion, and lay hold on piety. Purify your souls from satanic deeds, and adorn them with Divine ornaments.

Sedition and strife never have been and never will be worthy of God's people.

* *Lit.* Jamal-i-Qidan, a title of Baha'u'llah.

MANIFESTATION OF GOD page 51

Keep ye far from wicked deeds, and walk in the paths of holiness, submission and resignation.

Endeavour so to live that from you Divine virtues and qualities may shine forth.

Walk ye among (your fellow) men in utter contentment and peace, and deal with one another with perfect justice and equity.

Change ye disloyalty to faithfulness, slandering to purification of soul, oppression to justice and neglect to commemoration (of God).

These are the Divine exhortations which have been revealed and uttered by the Will of God.

Strive so that by God's help whatsoever hath been decreed in the Kingdom of His Will may not be disfigured by evil deeds.

Pray and earnestly beseech God in all times that He may deprive ye not from His Wisdom and Grace; But he may cause ye to dwell under

the shadow of the “Tree of Firmness” and the “Tree of Names and Attributes.” May the Peace of God, your Lord, the “Ancient of Days” be upon you.

Praise be to God, the Most High, the Almighty!

MANIFESTATION OF GOD

O PEOPLE of the world! The dawn of the Sun of Reality” is to illumine the World, and manifest Divine virtues amongst mankind.

It is for praised ends and fruits, and the Holy appearances of every perfect grace! It is all Mercy: it is sheer Bounty!

The brightness of the world and its inhabitants is concord and harmony. It is Love and Union, nay, it is Divine virtue and unity.

page 52 THE RIVER OF LIFE

It shineth to remove estrangements, and to unite all peoples of the earth in perfect liberty and wisdom.

Baha’u’llah saith: “Ye are all the fruits of one tree and leaves of one Branch.” He likeneth the existing world unto a tree, and the people to the leaves, flowers, and fruits thereof.

Therefore all Its branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruits should be of perfect freshness. The attainment of this beauty and sweetness, depends on union and fellowship.

Therefore all must protect each other with their utmost power and thus seek eternal life for one another.

In the world of being, the Friends of God must be (the manifestors of) the mercy of the loving Lord, and the Favour of the King of all the seen and unseen.

They must see neither sin nor rebellion and must overlook both enmity and tyranny.

They must purify their own eyes and behold mankind as the leaves, blossoms and fruits of the “Tree of Being.”

They must ever reflect how they may benefit and show lovingkindness [sic], friendship and help unto others.

They must consider none as an enemy, and account no one of evil thought.

They must regard all the inhabitants of the earth as their friends.

They must know the stranger as an intimate friend, and cherish him like unto a brother. They must not be bound by any attachment, on the contrary, they must be free from every bond.

To-day, the nearest one to the Threshold of the Almighty is he who offereth his enemy the cup of faithfulness, and bestoweth upon him the pearl

MANIFESTATION OF GOD page 53

of generosity; even he, who helpeth the poor oppressor and becometh a loving friend unto his cruel enemy.

These are the precepts of Baha'u'llah!

These are the counsels of the greatest Name!

O Friends! the world is engaged in waging war and slaughter, and mankind is in utter enmity and hostile one to another.

The darkness of oppression surroundeth them and the brightness of fidelity is hidden.

All the nations and tribes of the world have sharpened their talons and are warring one with the other.

The foundation of humanity is overturned, and thousands of households have lost their guardians and their peace.

Every year thousands upon thousands of men are mixed in blood and dust in the arena of battle and slaughter: and the Pavilion of Life and happiness is overthrown and crushed.

The leaders rule and glory in the shedding of blood, and have pride in sedition. One saith, that "I have thrust my sword into the neck of a nation." Another saith: "I have levelled a kingdom unto the dust," and one saith: "I have destroyed an Empire!" This is the centre of pride and arrogance amongst mankind.

In all conditions friendliness, and truthfulness are despised and godliness reproached.

The Herald of Peace and Arbitration, Love, and Safety, is the Law of Baha'u'llah, which hath pitched its tabernacle on the Pole of the contingent world, and calleth in all peoples.

Then, O Friends of God! Appreciate this Beloved Law. Act ye according to its ordinances, walk ye in this right Path, and tread this Straight way, and show it forth unto the people.

page 54

THE RIVER OF LIFE

Uplift ye the Melody of the Kingdom, and propagate these teachings and precepts of the Loving Lord.

So that this world may become another world, and its darkness be illumined.

The dead body of the people may find a new life, and seek immortality from the Divine Breath.

The life of this transitory world will last in a little while: this earthly glory, wealth, repose and pleasure will soon pass away, and return unto nothingness.

Call ye the people to God, and invite them to live the life of the people of the "Highest concourse."

Be ye as kind fathers to the orphans, and a place of refuge for the needy.

Be ye as a treasury of wealth to the poor, and as both medicine and remedy unto the sick.

Be helpers to every oppressed and protect the deprived. Bear for ever the thought of doing service to any of mankind.

Neither attach importance to, nor regard ye the oppositions, denials, arrogance, oppression, and hostility of the people, but treat them differently.

Be kind unto them in reality and not with mere outward show.

Every one of the Friends of God must reflect how he can become the (manifestor of the) Mercy of the All-Provider, and the Bounty of the Forgiving One to mankind, and how he may be enabled to benefit any with whom he cometh in contact.

And he must be appraised for his morals and the justice of his mind: so that the Light of Guidance may shine forth and the favour of the Merciful One surround all.

Where Love dwelleth there is Light! where animosity is there will be darkness!

O Friends of God! strive to dissipate this darkness,

BAHA'U'LLAH'S TEACHING page 55

so that the hidden mystery may be manifested and the reality of all things become clear and visible unto all men.

(Signed) 'ABDUL BAHA 'ABBAS.

BAHA'U'LLAH'S TEACHING AND INFLUENCE

“HE IS GOD!”

“O HEAVENLY Friends! Your letter arrived and its subject afforded me joy and gladness. Thanks be to God! that such an assembly is organised which renders service to the Unity of the world of humanity, and seeks equality among all men.

“Although in Western Countries through justice: hatred and animosity among religions and nations have been abated; yet, in Eastern countries: quarrels and disputes, hatred and enmity among religions and peoples, had reached to such a degree, that they used to drink each other's blood, like refreshing water. If they could they would set on fire one another's houses, and burn their sacred books. While walking in the street, if it happened that the garment of one would touch that of the other, they would either wash or burn it.

The East was in such a troubled condition, and diseased with such darkness of superstition; when Baha'u'llah hoisted the banner of the unity of the world of humanity, and promulgated equality among all men. He extirpated the root of hostility, and founded unity in its place. By the power of the Word of God, the brightness of the teachings, he expelled the gross darkness of hatred, and

page 56 THE RIVER OF LIFE

brought the light of Love. The East was illumined and the star of eternal life did shine.

Many of those contending people were gathered together in unity; meeting round the Manna of love, in perfect harmony and Friendship. One would say that they are kindred or sons and fathers, or brothers and sisters, even more close than these. For the taper of love was lighted, and the sweet melody of the unity of the world, of humanity reached to the regions of the Kingdom. The social gathering was adorned, and the festival of unity established. The light of union and concord shone, and the establishment of unity of humanity was settled in the hearts. The power of the spirit of Baha'u'llah so influenced the hearts that the very enemy became friend, and the strangers as acquaintances. The hated became beloved, and the rejected received honour.

“Now Bahais do not look to men, but have their attention directed toward the Lord of men. Therefore they do not consider anyone as an enemy; on the contrary they count their enemy as a friend. They know no one as a stranger, they love even the outsider as an intimate friend. If they be oppressed, they count it fleeting, but when they see justice they deem it everlasting. If they meet with enmity, they think it like a shadow; but if they should see a kindness, they count it as the radiance of the sun.

“Because the darkness of oppression cannot withstand the light of justice; yea, the sweetness of love will dispel the bitterness of animosity. Thus, they love and show kindness even to the oppressors, the cruel and bloodthirsty ones. We hope that the brightness of these teachings may illumine all the world, and the spirituality of these precepts make the East and the West to clasp their hands round

THE UNIVERSAL ENLIGHTENMENT page 57

each other's necks, like unto two longing and most dear lovers. So that this pavilion of the unity of the world of humanity may shelter the four corners of the earth, and make the five continents of the world as one continent, and its different nations as one nation and the rival religions as one religion, remote native lands as one home, and the different languages into one tongue.

“Upon you be the glory of the most Glorious,
(Signed) “‘ABDUL BAHA ‘ABBAS.”

THE UNIVERSAL ENLIGHTENMENT

“O BELOVED Friend—Your letter arrived and from its contents I received the great joy. There is no time for a detailed answer now.

“Convey my warmest sentiments to . . . His opinions are worthy of respect and full attention, for his purpose is to render service to the

world of humanity and to propagate the Divine teachings of His Highness, Baha'u'llah.

“With regard to . . . I hope that by reading the Epistles and becoming acquainted with the precepts of Baha'u'llah he may quaff the cup of great Guidance. Indeed he has well understood the truth. The old teachings are insufficient for to-day; they cannot cure every disease and are not an ointment for every wound.

“Those heavenly admonitions of old are greatly beloved and profoundly acceptable, but the intellectual aspirations of to-day have advanced and demand fuller explanations of the Divine plan. There was a great need for the Universal Enlightenment. This need is supplied in Baha'u'llah's teachings, which are the sum of all teachings.

page 58

THE RIVER OF LIFE

To-day, he who acquaints himself with the precepts and exhortations of Baha'u'llah and reads the Tablets of Kalimat, Tajaliyat, Ishraqat, Tarazat and Bisharat will know for certainty, that they are the essential food for humanity in this latter day, as well as the means of conjoining this transitory life to the eternal. . . .

“Upon thee be the glory of the most Glorious,”
(Signed) “‘ABDUL BAHA ‘ABBAS.”

THE DUTY OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

HE IS GOD!

“O STRANGER of the Country of God! * Thy letter arrived and the book edited in Persian with Hebrew characters was considered. Verily it is true what thou hast written (in this book):

“The Teachers who have gone to Persia have not become the means of (spiritual) progress and civilisation, of the Israelites: On the contrary they have caused their youths to be deprived of the ornament of faith (in God) and have taught them the teachings of Voltaire and Darwin: While the true education of humanity is accomplished through the ‘spiritual rain of spring cloud.’ If a man becomes deprived from the knowledge of God and assurance (in His love), he is considered as a savage animal, nay, he is counted as one of the underground worms. The teacher must be the cause of progress of men and not of their abasement, he should be a means of exaltation and not of

* *Vide* Heb. xi. 16.

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL page 59

their fall, he must enlighten them, and not darken their minds.

“Therefore, you must strive with your soul and heart to convert the children of Israel, into the sons of God: and ennoble the descendents of Abraham with science and knowledge (which will lead them to God), and set yourself in writing books (for their spiritual education).

“If there were no light of God’s religion, then, this world would have been a dark home; and had not the spirit been the life of guidance, then mankind would have been the captive of the grave! To-day, is not a day wherein the children of Israel should be occupied with the doubts of Voltaire, or suspicions and dubiousness of Darwin. On the contrary in this enlightened age and Divine cycle, they must apply themselves to the study of realities and significances, and to understand the Divine Mysteries. They should uplift the melody of sanctification and praise: and worship the Holy One! They must proclaim the Unity of the world of humanity, and propagate the universality of mankind! They should ignite a Candle: the light of which would be eternal, and plant a tree whose fruit would remain for ever! They should take up the harp and the song, and with David’s melody praise and sanctify the loving Lord; and thus pray unto Him ‘O Lord of Hosts! shew the people of Israel, Thy evident proof, and help them to worship and adore Thee! so that they receive the Manifest Light from the Praised Place. Thou art the Powerful, the Potent! and Thou art He who guideth those who have gone astray!’ ”

(Signed) ““ABDUL BAHA ‘ABBAS.””

page 60

THE RIVER OF LIFE

‘ABDUL BAHA’S EPISTLE TO A BAHAI
TEACHER

“O FRIEND of the Kingdom (of God)! since we separated from each other, and you departed for Europe and America, I keep you in continual remembrance, and I pray and make supplication at the Threshold of God, seeking assistance and grace for you. I hope that wherever you go, you will uplift the voice of the Kingdom of God; hoist the heavenly banner and shew forth divine splendour. May you open your mouth by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and summon the thirsty ones to (drink of ’ the Water of Eternal life, and baptize them with fire and the Spirit. You should blow such a trumpet blast that the dead (of soul) may become quickened, the blind (of heart) see, the deaf hear, and those who are silent may find the tongue of utterance.

“O Friend! the Kingdom of God is infinite in its power, but the ‘army of life’ must be courageous in order that (the Kingdom of God) may give them continual assistance. I hope that through whatever land or country you may pass you will, like the Spring-cloud, shower down (Spiritual) benefits, and cause that land to become verdant and pleasant: or like the soul-nourishing breeze, you will bring new life to the sick, and diffuse the odours of the fragrance of the love of God, and may you hoist the banner of ‘Unity of the world of mankind,’ and extirpate the root of prejudices, whether of religion, country, kind or politics; and may you become the means of bringing about friendships and unity amongst the various communities (which you will meet).

“Praise be to God, that the doors of the Kingdom

EPISTLE TO A BAHAI TEACHER page 61

are open, and that souls from the East and the West are entering, one after another with ardent longing. The arena is wide and the time for the race is at hand. Now is the opportunity for displaying power and strength of both heart and soul! The tribes, communities and nations of the world are struggling and striving like unto reptiles and earthworms, in the lower strata of the earth; and by means of Mathematics they are making wonderful and strange plans, and are seeking to build homes and nests for themselves (on this earth). Do thou make an effort to transform these little worms into birds of the Highest: which shall find wings and soar in this infinite space (*i.e.* in the limitless Kingdom of God).

“O Friend! the light of truth is spreading; strive so that the eyes may become clear and behold the Light, and the tokens thereof. It is a pity that in this blessed age, and enlightened century, people should be deprived of the abundant Grace of the Kingdom. Therefore, sacrifice thyself for the souls of men in order that thou mayest become the means by which many who are now poor may discover the Heavenly Treasure; those who are sick may know the Divine Physician, those who are feeble may obtain Heavenly Strength; and orphans may recognise their Heavenly Father: the weary may become refreshed, and the hopeless learn to trust in the Grace of the most Merciful One, and those who are athirst may find the Spring of Life, and those who are afraid may take refuge beneath the protection (of Him who giveth) safety and peace.

“O Friend, the good things and favours of this material world are finite and inconstant. When you really look deep into them you will perceive that the good things of this transitory world exist merely to avert pain. For instance, thirst is discomfort and is

troublesome; water is used to relieve the heat (caused by thirst); it is not that water in itself hath any pleasantness or deliciousness. Likewise hunger does harm and food is employed to avert the harm (caused by hunger); it is not that food in itself has any intrinsic merit beyond satisfying hunger.

“Again, weariness is an inconvenience: sleep relieves that inconvenience; it is not that sleep in itself has any particular merit. Such, then, are the (so-called) enjoyments of this transitory world. That which hath true enjoyment (indwelling in its nature), is the Grace and bounties of the Kingdom of God. It is the perfection of humanity! It is science and knowledge (which lead men to the knowledge of God). It is Attributes of the Merciful One, and the Eternal Life. Upon thee be the glory of the Most Glorious One!

(Signed) ‘ABDUL BAHA ‘ABBAS.

[Following the above English translations are 32 facsimile pages of Tablets written in Persian and some in Arabic, as described by the translator on the title page and in the preface of this book. -Thellie Lovejoy]