

`Abdu'I-Bahá in Canada

A compilation from written accounts

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Before 'Abdu'I-Bahá's Visit to Montreal

1. 'Abdu'I-Bahá in Canada
2. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada
3. The Maxwells of Montreal
4. PERSIAN TEACHER TO PREACH PEACE, The Gazette

Friday, August 30, 1912

1. Mahmúd's Diary
2. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada
3. The Maxwells of Montreal
4. "Abdu'I-Bahá in Canada" by Amine de Mille

Saturday, August 31, 1912

1. "Abdu'I-Bahá in Canada" by Amine de Mille
2. Mahmúd's Diary
3. "Abdu'I-Bahá in Montreal" by May Maxwell
4. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada

Sunday, September 1, 1912

1. The Maxwells in Montreal
2. "Abdu'I-Bahá in Montreal" by May Maxwell
3. Mahmúd's Diary
4. **'Abdu'I-Bahá's Talk at the Church of the Messiah**
5. RACIALISM WRONG SAYS EASTERN SAGE, The Gazette
6. Mahmúd's Diary
7. The Maxwells in Montreal

8. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada
9. **'Abdu'l-Bahá's Talk at Maxwell Home**
10. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada
11. **'Abdu'l-Bahá's Talk at Maxwell Home**
12. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada

Monday, September 2, 1912

1. Mahmúd's Diary
2. "'Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada" by Amine de Mille
3. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada
4. **'Abdu'l-Bahá's Talk at Maxwell Home** "The Imperfection of Nature"
5. MATERIALISM NO PHILOSOPHY SAYS ORIENTAL SEER, Montreal Daily Star

Tuesday, September 3, 1912

1. Mahmúd's Diary
2. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada
3. **'Abdu'l-Bahá's Talk to Socialists, Coronation Hall** "Bahá'í Economics"
4. APOSTLE OF PEACE MEETS SOCIALISTS, The Gazette

Wednesday, September 4, 1912

1. Mahmúd's Diary
2. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada

Thursday, September 5, 1912

1. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada
2. Mahmúd's Diary
3. **'Abdu'l-Bahá's Talk at St. James Methodist Church**
4. APOSTLE OF PEACE SAID FAREWELL, The Gazette

Friday, September 6, 1912

1. Mahmúd's Diary
2. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada

Saturday, September 7, 1912

1. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada
2. Mahmúd's Diary

Sunday, September 8, 1912

1. Mahmúd's Diary
2. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada

Monday, September 9, 1912

1. Mahmúd's Diary
2. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community in Canada
3. The Maxwells of Montreal
4. WAR MUST PRECEDE UNIVERSAL PEACE, Montreal Daily Star
5. CANADA SHOULD PREPARE FOR A GREAT WAR, Montreal Daily Star

'Abdu'l-Bahá Leaves North America

1. The Maxwells of Montreal

Significance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Visit to Canada

1. "'Abdu'l-Bahá in Montreal" by May Maxwell
2. God Passes By
3. Tablets of the Divine Plan

Appendix A: Contradictory Statements of Fact re Dates of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Visit to Montreal

Appendix B: The Press in Montreal

Bibliography

Before `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Montreal

1. *`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada* (pp xi-xiii)¹

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Son of Bahá'u'lláh and appointed Centre of His Covenant, journeyed to Europe and to North America in 1912 and 1913, after His release from over forty years of exile and imprisonment. At an advanced age, He undertook the strenuous journey both to meet the Bahá'ís and to proclaim publicly the message of peace and world unity which His Father had brought to humanity. His journeys brought Him to Canada, from August 30 to September 9, 1912.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was born on May 23, 1844, the same night the Báb announced Himself as a Messenger of God. When, a few weeks later, His Father announced His support for the new faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, along with His family, was swept into the centre of a whirlwind of persecution which was never to abate. ... The path of exile on which 'Abdu'l-Bahá followed His Father led from the comfort of the governing class in Iran to banishment to Baghdad in Iraq, followed by further exile to Constantinople and Adrianople. The culmination of these exiles was reached in the penal colony of 'Akká in Palestine (now Israel), where 'Abdu'l-Bahá cared for His Father until Bahá'u'lláh's passing in 1892.

In the later years of Bahá'u'lláh's life, as He withdrew from public life to devote Himself to the preparation of the system of laws which was the major task of His Revelation, the service required of His Son assumed new dimensions. The account written by the Cambridge Orientalist Dr. E.G. Browne after his meeting with 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggests the impression made by Him on an erudite and cultured Westerner:

Seldom have I seen one whose appearance impressed me more. A tall strongly-built man holding himself straight as an arrow, with white turban and raiment, long black locks reaching almost to the shoulder, broad powerful forehead indicating a strong intellect combined with an unswerving will, eyes keen as a hawk's, and strongly marked but pleasing features—such was my first impression of 'Abbás Efendi, 'the master' ... as he, par excellence, is called by the [Bahá'ís]. Subsequent conversation with him

¹Preface to the Commemorative Edition of *`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada* (75th Anniversary, 1987)

served only to heighten the respect with which his appearance had from the first inspired me. One more eloquent of speech, more ready of argument, more apt of illustration, more intimately acquainted with the sacred books of the Jews, the Christians, and the Muhammadans, could, I should think, scarcely be found even among the eloquent, ready, and subtle race to which he belongs. These qualities, combined with a bearing at once majestic and genial, made me cease to wonder at the influence and esteem which he enjoyed even beyond the circle of his father's followers. About the greatness of this man and his power no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt. ...

2. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 43-45)

So far, [that is, up to 1912] the social makeup of the early Canadian Bahá'í movement could not lend itself to the formation of a Bahá'í identity. Their spiritual roots allowed them to profess their beliefs in a highly individualistic manner, mirroring an amalgam of turn-of-the-century liberal thought or socialism. Moreover, there were no adequate compilations of basic Bahá'í tenets (the translations that existed were often of dubious value) that exercised enough influence to create a sense of community among the few scattered Bahá'ís in Canada. Even May Maxwell's efforts, however vigorous, were not able to bring the Bahá'ís to a level of organization or commitment that was needed to create a community, however rudimentary.

It was `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Montreal in 1912 that proved to be critical. True, the number of Bahá'ís did not increase appreciably through his visit, but his visit infused the Bahá'ís with a sense of themselves as a community. The press coverage he received in Montreal - the best of his tours in Europe and North America - was more important for conveying to the Bahá'ís their direction as a community than it was for immediately propagating the new religion.

May Maxwell had prepared Montreal well for a visit by `Abdu'l-Bahá in 1912. To Bahá'ís, `Abdu'l-Bahá was more than a son of Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder of their religion. Bahá'u'lláh, in numerous writings on protecting the new revelation from internal schisms and external attacks, designated `Abdu'l-Bahá as the "Centre of the Covenant" and as the "Authoritative Interpreter" of the Bahá'í teachings after the founder's death in 1892. The person of `Abdu'l-Bahá was so charismatic and powerfully magnetic that many Bahá'ís, especially in the

West, personally identified the new religion with him....

`Abdu'l-Bahá, now sixty-four years old, was released from prison after the Young Turk revolution in 1908. Despite his imprisonment, `Abdu'l-Bahá's fame had spread in the Middle East, where he was known for his charitable works, wisdom, and sagacious advice to both high and low alike. Outside the Middle East, he was principally known to the British government and to French scholars. After his release from prison, `Abdu'l-Bahá continued to correspond with a growing number of followers in Burma, India, South Africa, Europe, and North America, in addition to those in his native land, Persia. After a sojourn in Europe and a return visit to Egypt in 1911, `Abdu'l-Bahá, who was now referred to as "The Master," undertook an extended tour of Europe and North America in 1912. The early Bahá'ís in North America eagerly awaited his coming. For some, it meant that they would see `Abdu'l-Bahá again; for others, it meant a first-time acquaintance with a leader who led an active and saintly life.

`Abdu'l-Bahá travelled from Alexandria, Egypt, to Italy and boarded the S.S. *Cedric* in Naples on 24 March 1912, heading for America. He was accompanied by a Canadian family, the Woodcocks. The Bahá'ís of North America had offered `Abdu'l-Bahá passage on the S.S. *Titanic*, which he declined, preferring, instead, the slower vessel. After his arrival in New York, and after receiving news of the sinking of the S.S. *Titanic*, `Abdu'l-Bahá made the point that human safety should precede all technological developments.²

At least three months before his visit to North America, `Abdu'l-Bahá had decided to visit Montreal.³ His appreciation and his fondness for the Maxwell family of Montreal, now with a child, was well known. Yet some of the Bahá'ís, including Percy Woodcock,⁴ advised `Abdu'l-Bahá against travelling to Montreal, saying "the majority of the inhabitants are Catholics, and are in the utmost fanaticism, that they are submerged in the sea of imitations...".⁵ `Abdu'l-Bahá, however, was firm in his intentions to carry out his visit.

Despite successful newspaper coverage during his sojourn in Montreal, there is a surprising

²`Abdu'l-Bahá, 1982:48

³*Montreal Daily Star*, 10 February 1912, p 14

⁴Mr. & Mrs. Woodcock had sailed on the S.S. *Cedric* with `Abdu'l-Bahá.

⁵`Abdu'l-Bahá, 1977

dearth of information about his trip.⁶ Finally, one finds contradictory statements of fact.⁷

In 1912 Montreal was undergoing the most rapid expansion in its history. The city numbered 530,437 people. Ambitious plans to construct train tunnels under Mount Royal and the St. Lawrence River began in summer 1912. The Canadian boom period that started about 1896 continued until the outbreak of World War I in 1914, but the poor suffered, unable to keep up with spiralling prices ... The position of English-speaking Canadians was at its peak, and they comprised one third of the total population. The francophone component remained over 60%, but did not generally participate in these developments....

Any Montrealers who wanted to make an appointment with `Abdu'l-Bahá could telephone the Maxwell home at "Uptown 3015" (*Montreal Daily Star*, 31 August 1912, p 1). His sojourn coincided with the Labour Day weekend, when many Montrealers left the city to spend the last weekend of summer at their cottages or rallied at organized Labour Day parades.

3. *The Maxwells of Montreal* (pp 275-280)

The most exciting event for the Maxwell family, after the birth of their baby, was the news that they were given on 27 December 1922 of `Abdu'l-Bahá's possible trip to America. In response to May's letter to Him, the Master replied:

*O thou who art enkindled with the fire of the love of God!
Thy letter was received, but I have no time to answer. In brief:
God willing, I will set out for America next spring, and perfect and
true joy will be attained.*

This auspicious announcement was the consummation of a dream, the fulfilment of the ardent prayers and cherished wishes of the early Bahá'ís in the West. As early as 1902, intrepid

⁶The official Bahá'í organ, *Star of the West*, did not carry any news of the celebrated visit of `Abdu'l-Bahá to Montreal in 1912 until an incidental reference to the event 4½ years later (*Star of the West*, 7[17], January 1917, 171-72). Yet, this visit received the most extensive publicity ever during his nine-month tour throughout North America. The news of the publicity in Canada, incidentally, did not find its way into *Star of the West* until 1923, more than ten years later (*Star of the West*, 13[13], February 1923, 291-93).

⁷See Appendix A

individuals such as Lua [Getsinger] had undertaken the hopeless task of attempting to sue for His release from the Sultan of Turkey. Her hopes had been dashed, her dreams aborted on that occasion, but ever since the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 the believers in Europe and America had been hoping that

`Abdu'l-Bahá would be free at last to travel. Writing to Agnes Alexander on 2 March 1911, May [Maxwell] had expressed this longing, upon hearing of `Abdu'l-Bahá's sojourn in Port Said and in Ramleh, near Alexandria [Egypt]:

Is not the journey of Our Beloved to Egypt a marvelous event? We hope that He may honor and illumine France – whether America receives this blessing or not is still uncertain. All are working with great longing and sincerity – and surely if any power can enkindle and unite the hearts it will be the hope of His Coming!

The believers in the West were understandably thrilled at the thought that the Master might be free at last after forty long years of imprisonment. Several among them, May included, must have asked Him, invited Him, begged Him to come and visit them. One can well imagine how her heart throbbed with awe when news came that He had boarded the *S.S.Corsica* bound for Marseilles on 11 August 1911, how anxiously she prayed for His health while He wintered in Egypt at the end of that year and the beginning of the next, and how generously she must have contributed to the £3,200 that was raised by the North American Bahá'ís for His ticket on the largest passenger liner in the world, whose maiden voyage was due to take place that spring. `Abdu'l-Bahá returned the gift and embarked on the *S.S.Cedric* instead, which set sail on 25 March 1912, from Alexandria. He docked in New York on Thursday, 11 April 1912, just four days before the sinking of the *Titanic*.

It was hardly surprising that the arrival of `Abdu'l-Bahá in the city of New York would have provoked such joy and celebration among the small band of Bahá'ís in that city. From the vantage point of history, it was also one of the greatest events in the life of the Master Himself. It was not only a high honour for the United States and Canada, but a symbolic blessing for the Americas and of vital consequence to the evolution of the Administrative Order world-wide. By this one act, `Abdu'l-Bahá prepared the way for the writing of the Tablets of the Divine Plan which were to serve as one of the charters of the Covenant. By graciously accepting to set His foot on American soil He caused the spiritual life on that mighty continent to stir, and diffused the fragrances of the Blessed Beauty across the West. It was a journey whose effects were

destined to be felt for centuries. ...

May had the privilege and the bounty of being in the presence of the Master in New York many times, but her crowing glory during this historic trip to the West was `Abdu'l-Bahá's acceptance to pay the Maxwells visit to Montreal. When she learned that He had accepted to come, her ecstasy was absolute, her joy complete. She sent the following letter to Him on 22 August 1912:

We have been so wonderfully happy by the glad tidings that `Abdu'l-Bahá will visit Montreal, and we are all in the utmost joy and expectation! As soon as we hear from Thee the date of Thy coming we will announce it in the paper – and prepare a public meeting – and many, many people are already in joy and hope.

Mr. Thomas, the coloured Bahá'í from Washington, has spoken here in the coloured people's church – through him I also met them and gave them the Message, and Mr. Gantt, the Minister of the Church has offered his church to address the coloured people. We shall do all in our power to enable the people of Montreal to receive the utmost bounty and benefit from the incomparable blessing of Thy adored Presence – and we beg for Thy help and confirmation.

The answer she received must have caused tremendous joy to the couple. On Wednesday 28 August `Abdu'l-Bahá cabled her from Malden, Massachusetts:

YOUR LETTER RECEIVED. IN REALITY THOU ART ILLUMINED. WE
LEAVE FOR MONTREAL FRIDAY MORNING. ABDU'L-BAHA

As Amatu'l-Bahá [née Mary Maxwell, daughter of May and William Sutherland Maxwell] has so eloquently described in her memoris, Sutherland's conservative nature made him reluctant, at first, to invite `Abdu'l-Bahá to stay in their home. May, who adored the Master and had dreamed of having Him beneath her roof, did not insist. Sutherland must have sensed her disappointment. Two days before `Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival, he had a change of heart. According to his daughter:

When `Abdu'l-Bahá consented to come to Montreal and arrangements were being made, my father explained to Mother that though He would of course be their guest, he did not want to have the Master in his home but would engage a suite for him at the Windsor Hotel. All his sensitive Scots reticence shrank from the publicity and limelight that would be thrown on him as the host of such an attention-attracting guest as the Persian Prophet and His entourage would constitute. Mother was heartbroken, but she did not remonstrate, realizing perhaps that such things cannot be debated but must arise from the heart. The day before the scheduled arrival of `Abdu'l-Bahá, my father rushed into Mother's room, the largest bedroom, facing the garden and possessing three bay windows, and looking critically at her furniture declared: 'This is not good enough for `Abdu'l-Bahá, I'm going right down to Morgans to buy a new set', and rushed off and immediately purchased and had delivered a bed, dressing table and chairs in white-painted Louis XV style. One can only imagine how great was her joy that her husband of his own accord should have felt the longing to have the Master under his own roof. He himself met the Master at the train and begged Him to accept the hospitality of his home.

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4. PERSIAN TEACHER TO PREACH PEACE

Abdu'l-Baha, Leader of Great Universalist Movement, Will Visit Montreal

The Gazette, Montreal, Thursday, August 29, 1912

That war must cease and that the time has come for all mankind to live in religious unity, Orient joining hands with Occident, is the burden of the message of Abdu'l-Baha, a venerable religious teacher from the East, who will arrive in Montreal within a day or two for a week's stay in the city. He has been to London and to Paris and has just concluded a mission to the United States. While in Montreal he will stay at 716 Pine Avenue West, where visitors interested in his movement will be made welcome. During his stay here he will address a number of public meetings.

Abdu'l-Baha, who is 68 years old, is the centre of the Baha'i movement ... Most of his life has been spent in captivity at Acca, and he knows what it is to languish in a dungeon and in chains. His release came in 1908, when the Young Turks drove Abdu'l-Hamid from the throne of Turkey. In the meantime, the movement had spread throughout the near East ...

`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada, A Compilation from Written Accounts

True national greatness, says Abdu'l-Baha, is not to be attained by means of dreadnoughts and murderous weapons, but by the doing of justice by nations and by individuals.

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Friday, August 30, 1912

1. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp. 226-227)

`Abdu'l-Bahá left today for Montreal. The only servants He took with Him were Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab and myself. Because He had decided to travel to the Western part of America at the pressing invitation of the friends in California, He said, 'We have a long distance to go and must therefore leave as soon as possible.' For this reason, He instructed Mírzá Valíyu'lláh Khán-i-Varqá, Áqá Mírzá `Alí-Akbar Nakhjávání, Áqá Sa`íd Asad'u'lláh and Dr Getsinger to remain until His return.

As soon as the friends and a group of Arabs saw `Abdu'l-Bahá at the railway station in Boston, they surrounded Him, their faces beaming with joy and enthusiasm. At 9:00 a.m. the train left Boston and reached Montreal at 8:00 p.m. On the way, a Canadian was privileged to speak with `Abdu'l-Bahá. The Master pointed out to him the straight path of truth, and even though this individual had known nothing about `Abdu'l-Bahá before this encounter, he was attracted to Him.

When we arrived at the station, we saw Mr [Sutherland] Maxwell hurrying forward to greet the Master. He had two carriages to convey the Master and His companions to his home.⁸ There a group of friends and a newspaper publisher⁹ were waiting to see the Master. At the table, Mrs [May] Maxwell said, 'So many people have telephoned and sent letters about your arrival and I have replied to all. I have become very tired but I consider this fatigue the greatest comfort of my life.' A pastor had telephoned to ask the Master to address his congregation the day after tomorrow. The editor of the newspaper said that he would publish the announcement the next day. When Mrs Maxwell informed `Abdu'l-Bahá of this, He said, 'Very well. You were tired, having undergone such trouble today. You must rest for the time being.'

2. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 45-46)

⁸The Maxwell home at 1548 Pine Avenue West, Montreal (indicated as 716 Pine Avenue West in *Promulgation*) is now a national Bahá'í endowment, given to the Faith by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum in 1948.

⁹John Lewis, editor of the *Montreal Daily Star*. See Balyuzi, *`Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 265-8

When `Abdu'l-Bahá finished his visit to the Green Acre Bahá'í School in Eliot, Maine, he returned to Boston and on Friday at 9:00 a.m., 30 August 1912, boarded a train for Montreal. On the way to Montreal, `Abdu'l-Bahá met a Canadian who conversed with him. Scheduled to arrive at 8:40 p.m., the train apparently arrived "towards midnight." `Abdu'l-Bahá was met at the Windsor train station on Peel Street by W. Sutherland Maxwell. "In the full brightness of a summer moon," and accompanied by his translator, Ahmad Sohrab, and his diarist, Mahmoud-i-Zarqání, `Abdu'l-Bahá proceeded in a carriage to 716 Pine Avenue West.,¹⁰ the compact four-story Maxwell home, where reporters and Bahá'í friends greeted him (*Montreal Daily Star*, 31 August 1912). Many neighbours watched him through their windows to catch the "first glimpse of this white robed majestic figure."¹¹ Numerous people had already inquired by telephone and letter about him.

The Maxwell family had done everything possible to make the visit memorable, even buying new furniture for the celebrated occasion. `Abdu'l-Bahá was to use the three upper stories of the house. The home was set in an exclusive area of the city, part way up Mount Royal and within a few minutes walking distance from the new growing centre of the city.

The strain of arranging the visit must have shown on May Maxwell, for `Abdu'l-Bahá said, "You are tired having undergone much trouble. You must rest for the time being," to which May replied that "this exhaustion was the greatest repose of [my] life."¹²

His days in Montreal were marked by seven informal presentations and eight public presentations. More than 2,500 people had an opportunity to hear him speak. During the visit, he crisscrossed the city on foot, by streetcar, and taxi, visiting cathedrals and churches, the East End of the city, Mount Royal, and the downtown area. The press, both in English and in French, covered his visit; it was the most extensive press coverage of his North American and European tours. Instead of spending two or three days in Montreal as `Abdu'l-Bahá had planned,¹³ he lengthened his stay to a full nine days. Throughout his stay the weather was most unpleasant, and `Abdu'l-Bahá caught a cold. Only three days were dry; on the other six days it either showered or poured rain. Temperatures were below average.

¹⁰Now 1548 Pine Avenue West, renumbered in 1993

¹¹May Maxwell, "Adu'l-Bahá in Montreal" 1962. In *`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada*, pp. 52-54, compiled by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada.

¹²Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.:129

¹³Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.:134

3. *The Maxwells of Montreal* (p 280)

May must have been in a state of ecstasy when her Beloved finally entered her doors:

In the fullness and splendour of a summer moon `Abdu'l-Bahá arrived on the night of August 30th. As He entered the home of Bahá'í friends on Pine Ave., many watched from their windows to catch a glimpse of the white-robed majestic figure whose advent had been so eloquently heralded thro' all the press.

In her memoirs, she echoed the famous words uttered by 'that venerable and beloved figure' as He stepped in the house. She was to repeat these words so many times that it was as though they were engraved on the stones of the building:

'This is my home,' He said, 'All that is in it is mine' – turning with an ineffable look, He continued – 'You are mine – your husband and child. This is my home.'¹⁴

May recorded how the Master was cold and how they lighted the fire for Him. She described how He looked about Him and asked for the child soon after He arrived, how He told them not to disturb her when He heard that she was sleeping, adding: 'Dark indeed is the home where there is no child.'

A mighty commotion was set up by the presence of `Abdu'l-Bahá from that day on. The fame of His address at the Church of the Messiah was spread abroad; there were constant telephone calls and large numbers made their way to the Maxwell home. Individuals begged to be received by Him in His room and He received a good many. After three night in the Maxwell home, He decided to move to the Hotel Windsor for the remainder of His Montreal visit, but meetings at the Maxwell home continued to the end of His stay in Montreal. Among His other activities during that historic visit were addresses to a gathering in Coronation Hall, associated

¹⁴When Rúhíyyih Khánúm wrote about her mother in 1940, she repeated a slightly different version of these words: 'When He entered it He said: "This is my home, you are mine, your husband is mine and your child is mine." May's own words have been retained as possibly more authentic.

with Jewish strikers, and to the congregation of St James Methodist Church.

4. “`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada” by Amine De Mille, *`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada*, 1962 (pp 55-56)

`Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in Montreal on the evening of the 30th, accompanied by His Persian interpreters. He found an eager audience awaiting Him. Long before 1912, the loving foresight of the Montreal believers had anticipated His coming.

A beautiful home had been built on the slope of Mt. Royal, by William Sutherland Maxwell as a Center [sic] for the teaching of the Bahá'í Faith, and it was here `Abdu'l-Bahá was a guest. This house, so blest by the presence of the Master, is now the Bahá'í Shrine of Canada. It is of native stone, four stories in height, compact and gemlike in proportions. Exquisite workmanship, worthy of its artist-architect, gives it a museum-like appearance. Bas relief over the door cornices and ceiling beams uses the Canadian motifs of pine cones and beavers. The furnishings, largely of European and Oriental origin, added to its dignity and charm. An altar piece from an ancient convent flanked by tall candelabra lent a cathedral atmosphere to the library; Ming vases, Japanese tapestries, soft Persian rugs, adorned the dining room and halls. In the bedroom, arranged for `Abdu'l-Bahá, He found portraits of His own family. Over the doorway was the Greatest Name. Every comfort and attention had been prepared for His reception, and one can imagine the perfect spiritual rest and happiness permeating that privileged household during those memorable days.

At the reception, planned for `Abdu'l-Bahá on His first evening, were gathered the believers and their intimate friends. May Maxwell had been teaching in Montreal for ten years, and her devotion in spreading the message for the New Day had drawn `Abdu'l-Bahá to her assistance. She it was whom He called, in one of His tablets, His “Pearl, a real Bahá'í, pure in heart and attracted in soul.” It was of her He said, “You are like the rain which is poured upon the earth making it bud and blossom and become fruitful, so shall the Spirit of God descend upon you, filling you with fruitfulness and you shall go forth in His Vineyard.” In another tablet, He had foreshadowed her station: “The Lord shall strengthen thee in a matter whereby the queens of the world will envy thy happy state throughout all time and ages. Because, verily, the Love of God is a glorious crown upon thy head, the brilliant jewels of which are glittering forth unto all horizons. Its brilliancy, transparency and effulgence shall appear in future centuries when the Signs of God will be spread and the World of God will encompass the heart of all the people of the earth.”

Names, which will be repeated in the history of the Faith in Canada in ages to come, may be set down here as the first servants to arise through the teaching of Sutherland and May Maxwell. Many of them were guests at His first reception. Martha McBean, a cousin of Sutherland Maxwell, shares with him the distinction of being one of the two first declared believers of Canadian birth. Mrs. V.S. Pomeroy with her daughters, Mary, Elsie and Elizabeth Cowles; Miss Anne Savage, a librarian; Mrs. George S. Thompson; Mr. Percy Woodcock; Professor Armstrong of McGill University; Dr. Carmichael; Dr. Johnson; Mr. Wright; Mr. John Lewis, Editor of the Montreal Daily Star; and Mr. Archie Eddington and his wife, who played such an active part in securing the most outstanding newspaper publicity of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to America: all adorn the roll of these earliest friends of the Faith in Montreal.

Two children of the Maxwell household were present at these historic functions. Mary Maxwell, then a fair-haired little girl of two, would sit on `Abdu'l-Bahá's lap, and He would stroke her curls, saying lovingly, "She is precious! She is very precious!" (One day Mary would become Rúhíyyih Khánum, His granddaughter, through her marriage to Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian.) At this point He counselled her mother to restrain her spirit as little as possible, as He would teach her in the inner world. The other child, Mary's playmate and later her Bahá'í brother, was Eddie, Eddie Elliott. Eddie had the dark skin of the Negro race, his mother being a valued servant in the Maxwell home. In this city of three million inhabitants, with a large Negro population, Eddie was the only member of his race to become a Bahá'í during His [that is, `Abdu'l-Bahá's] lifetime. As a member of the Montreal Local Spiritual Assembly for many years. He distinguished himself by his loyal services, his honourable character, and his beautiful singing voice. ...

Saturday, August 31, 1912

1. “`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada” by Amine De Mille, *`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada*, 1962 (pp 56-57)

Saturday, August 31, `Abdu'l-Bahá received guests in the Maxwell home. Early in the morning they began to arrive, their hearts bursting with anticipation and long awaited fulfilment. Among those who came was the Reverend F.J. Griffin, minister of the Church of the Messiah, Unitarian, who was to introduce `Abdu'l-Bahá to his congregation on the following morning. To him `Abdu'l-Bahá presented an armful of gorgeous American Beauty roses, standing in a tall vase at His side, sending him away with amazement and awe at the regal manners and gentle courtesy of this Prisoner from the East. All during the day, visitors flowed in and out of the Master's presence, fascinated by His smile, His warm handclasp, His unfailing interest and instinctive understanding of their deepest needs and longings. From all walks of life, young and old, poor and rich, doctors of divinity and doctors of medicine, professors from the universities, charwomen from the slums, students, labour leaders, skeptics and believers, they came and listened and marvelled. Majestic in His flowing white robes and turban, He graciously welcomed each one, blessing and strengthening all by His words and His love. ...

2. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 227-230)

In the morning, the pastor of the Unitarian Church came with several others to visit `Abdu'l-Bahá. The Master discussed with them the elimination of religious superstitions and prejudices, which are contrary to science and common sense and which are obstacles to the attainment of the foundation of truth of the divine religions.

A newspaper reporter was then announced. He had come to interview the Master about His life and the history of the Cause. `Abdu'l-Bahá gave a detailed account, which was recorded by the reporter.

The Master went to the dinner table. Mr Maxwell had come from the customs house and said that when the inspector opened the first suitcase and saw a picture of the Master, he asked, 'Is this the picture of the prophet of Persia?' When he received an affirmative reply, the inspector said, 'There is no need to inspect these goods' and released all the luggage.

Some of the newspapers accounts about the visit of the Master are full of reverence and praise.

In the afternoon, at the invitation of Mr Maxwell, the Master went for ride in the town. While in the carriage He remarked:

Every city in which the remembrance of God is raised is a divine city. `Akká was a despised city but when it became the center of the mention of God and the dawning place of His Light, it illumined the world.

When He saw some of the college buildings, `Abdu'l-Bahá said:

As only material education is imparted and only natural philosophy is taught, these universities do not produce highly talented scholars. When both the natural and the divine philosophies are expounded, they will bring forth outstanding souls and evince great advancement. The reason for the success of the Greek schools was that they combined both natural and divine philosophies.

As His carriage passed by the Unitarian Church, He said, `Tomorrow we will raise the Call of God in this place.'

The carriage reached the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Notre Dame. Everything was quiet and no one was in sight. The Master alighted and went in to see the huge building. With rapt attention, He gazed at the vast cathedral, its ornamentation and numerous statues and spoke of its grandeur and embellishments. Standing in an open space at the entrance, He addressed us saying:

Behold what eleven disciples of Christ have accomplished, how they sacrificed themselves! I exhort you to walk in their footsteps. When a person is detached, he is capable of revolutionizing the whole world. The disciples of Christ met together in consultation on top of a mountain. They pledged themselves to undergo all manner of hardships, to accept every affliction as a bounty and to consider all difficulties easy to overcome. `He who is tied to a family, let him arrange to leave it; he who is not should remain single. He should forgo his comfort and his life.' Consulting thus, they descended from the mountain and each one went a different way and never returned. It is for this reason that they were able to leave behind such achievements. After Christ, the disciples truly forgot themselves, and not merely in word. Hence, the Blessed Beauty cited:

Either be like women and indulge in adornment and pleasure

Or like men, come out and throw down the gauntlet.¹⁵

‘Abdu'l-Bahá took His seat in the carriage again and told us:

On our way to Baghdád we had to put up with unbearable hardships. At one time a Turkish soldier of the Ottoman army appeared before us. Mírzá Yahyá, on seeing the soldier sitting on the horse with majesty and dignity, cried out with great grief and despair, ‘Oh! Where were we? Where are we now going? They say that all heads will bow. When shall it be?’ I said to him in reply, ‘When the divine bounty attains perfection, persons greater than this soldier will bow their heads under the shadow of the Word of God.’ Where is Mírzá Yahyá now? Let him come and see how the power of Bahá'u'lláh has so inspired humility in these Americans, who consider the Turks as nothing, that a person like Mr Maxwell, an American, is with deference serving Mírzá Ahmad,¹⁶ a Persian.

In the evening there was a well-attended meeting at ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s residence. He spoke, with good effect, about spiritual progress and the manifestation of divine virtues in human realities. Afterwards many requested private interviews. On receiving satisfactory answers to their questions, they expressed their heartfelt gratitude. Among them was the president of a socialist organization who invited the Master to his group. His request was granted. As it grew late in the evening and other people were waiting for private interviews, we suggested that since the Master might be weary, it would be better if the rest of those waiting came back in the morning. He replied, ‘No, this is the time to work. We must not think of our fatigue. Everyone is to be met.’

3. “‘Abdu'l-Bahá in Montreal” by May Maxwell, *‘Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada*, 1987 (pp 41-42)

The following morning Saturday, August 31st, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s arrival was again widely featured in the leading newspapers. From that hour people flocked to His presence in every-increasing numbers,—the great search of humanity for guidance, for happiness, for peace and assurance amidst the troublous conditions of the world, and none came in vain. The combined impression of His presence and His words was profound. One newspaper later pictured “the moving scene, the crowds, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá a serene majestic figure, calm, commanding, austere and wise.” His audience was held in a spell of wonder and amazement ... even when ‘Abdu'l-Bahá had finished speaking the people would not let go and lingered on asking question after

¹⁵From Saná’í, 12th century, the first of the great Persian mystic poets.

¹⁶Ahmad Sohrab, one of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s entourage.

question, so satisfied and tranquillized by His replies that many of them followed Him later to His room. ...

His first act the morning following His arrival, so characteristic of His wonderful love and sympathy, was the healing of a sick child. A wealthy family, living opposite, had a little daughter of nine who had been an invalid all her life. The mother of this child, also an invalid, was the first to beg `Abdu'l-Bahá to come and see them inasmuch as they could not go to Him. When the message was given to Him, He was told of the invalid child, and a great softness and gravity came into His face. "Do you wish me to heal this child?" He asked. And as the reply was an ardent appeal, He immediately went to the home of this family. The pale ethereal little girl with great luminous eyes came into the room and walked straight into those loving outstretched arms, and for a moment all was silent. Then pressing her fondly He exclaimed, "This child is not of this world! She is from the Kingdom of Abhá and has come to the world at this time to be the cause of the guidance and illumination of all her family, both in the seen and unseen worlds! From now on throughout all eternity she is under the special protection of Almighty God!"

Caressingly He laid His hands upon her head and shoulders and then told the family that she must go out every day, in the middle of the day, on the ground, and that she would be entirely healed. Nine months later, when the Master's words had finally taken effect and superseded the instructions of their physicians, as the snows were melting from the ground in early spring, this beautiful child came out of her prison house and walked upon the ground, gradually becoming perfectly healthy, strong and well.

On leaving the home of these people `Abdu'l-Bahá went directly to their store and bought a number of watches and rings which He gave away lavishly on His trip as a mere outward token of a love too great, too infinite to be comprehended.

4. The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada (pp 46-47)

On this bleak, cool and grey day, `Abdu'l-Bahá started early, with his characteristic vigour, buying watches and rings which he distributed to those he met.¹⁷ The pastor of the Unitarian Church, Rev. Frederick R. Griffin, paid him a visit, whereupon `Abdu'l-Bahá presented him with an "armful of gorgeous American Beauty roses," which happened to be standing in a vase

¹⁷National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962: 53; Balyuzi, 1971: 261. Such gifts acquired a special significance because they were handled by `Abdu'l-Bahá and became a token of remembrance.

nearby.¹⁸ People flocked to him at the Maxwell home.¹⁹ That morning he also visited a sick child at 715 Pine Avenue West, across the street from the Maxwell's home.²⁰ Geraldine Birks was the child, daughter of Presbyterians John Henry (1870-1949) and Annie (née McNeill) Birks, who, in 1912, owned six jewellery stores across Canada. Geraldine, reflecting on that event some seventy-nine years later, did not remember `Abdu'l-Bahá visiting her. She did, however, remember her family saying that Mrs. Maxwell "had invited a guru from India," and that, indeed, she was sick.²¹

A reporter from *The Standard* visited `Abdu'l-Bahá the same morning. Greeting him warmly, `Abdu'l-Bahá "spoke in clear resounding tones carrying the ring of sincerity with them." When asked whether he had a message for the Canadian people, he said:

You have a very beautiful country and you must be very happy here. My message to the Canadian people is this: "Your country is very prosperous and very delightful in every aspect; you have peace and security amidst you; happiness and composure are your friends; surely you must thank God you are so submerged in the sea of His mercy. (*The Standard*, 31 August 1912, p. 13)

`Abdu'l-Bahá, in this interview, also spoke of Montreal as a "city of wonderful progress and prosperity."

During lunch in the afternoon, W. S. Maxwell told the assembled guests of his experience at

¹⁸ Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.: 129

¹⁹National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962: 52

²⁰May Maxwell (1962: 53) devotes more than one-fourth of her account of `Abdu'l-Bahá's stay in Canada to the invalid child. A number of the oldest Bahá'ís in Canada, such as Emeric Sala (1990) and Dorothy Wade (1990), told the author that the child was of the Birks family. One other account, by Audrey Robarts (1993), tells us that `Abdu'l-Bahá suggested to the Birks family that the "little girl was to be kept in the house when the streets are wet." Although the Birks family did live across the street from the Maxwells, and their daughter, Geraldine, was indeed sick, the story is puzzling. Geraldine Birks (1991) does not remember `Abdu'l-Bahá coming over to her house, and she was not an invalid. I [Will van den Hoonaard] is indebted to Golgasht Mossafa'i of Montreal for following through on the story of the Birks child (Mossafa'i, 1991).

²¹Doug Wilson, 1991. There is an unconfirmed story after `Abdu'l-Bahá reportedly visited the Birks family to the effect that Mount Royal would host centres of medical healing in the future and be renowned for same.

the Customs House. The inspector had opened the first box, found a picture of `Abdu'l-Bahá, and taking it in his hand, he said, "It is the likeness of the prophet of Persia?" When W. S. Maxwell replied in the affirmative, the inspector said, "There is no need of searching these goods."²²

In the afternoon visitors continued to come,²³ and W.S. Maxwell then invited `Abdu'l-Bahá for a ride in the city. In passing some university buildings, `Abdu'l-Bahá spoke of the need to combine natural sciences and "divine philosophies" to ensure human advancement; otherwise, "these universities do not produce inventive heads endowed with sciences." His carriage also passed the Unitarian Church of the Messiah, on the corner of Sherbrooke West and Simpson Streets, where he was to give an address the next day.²⁴

The carriage then reached the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Marie-Reine-du-Monde (Mary Queen of the World) on the corner of Dorchester [now named René Lévesque Boulevard] and Mansfield, a scaled-down replica of St. Peter's in Rome with statues above the façade representing patron saints.²⁵ There were only a few Montreal buildings like the cathedral that provided a break in the otherwise drab downtown skyline of Montreal, filled with "workmanlike" factories and buildings.²⁶ `Abdu'l-Bahá spoke of the "grandeur and embellishments" of the church, built in 1829, and, standing in front of the door, told the friends who accompanied him: "Behold what eleven disciples have done. How they effaced themselves! I exhort you to walk in their footsteps. When a person is severed, he is capable of revolutionizing the whole world."²⁷

`Abdu'l-Bahá took his seat in the carriage again and recounted the unimaginable hardships his family suffered during exile and imprisonment, and the impact of his father's religion in upraising believers in North America.²⁸

²²Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.: 129

²³National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962: 57

²⁴Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.: 129

²⁵Balyuzi (1971: 260) says it is the "Church" of Notre-Dame (i.e., basilica) at 116 Notre-Dame Street West. I [Will van den Hoonaard] am inclined to believe it was the cathedral, not the basilica, because Mahmoud said that `Abdu'l-Bahá was "standing in the open field in front of the door..." (Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.: 129). Only the cathedral had such a field. An unsubstantiated account states that while he was commenting on the beauty of this church, he said it was an evidence of the great love for God of the francophones (Léonard, 1988).

²⁶Knott, 1976

²⁷ Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.: 129

²⁸Ibid., 130

In the evening, the Maxwells held a reception in `Abdu'l-Bahá's honour for the believers and "intimate friend" of the new religion,²⁹ with `Abdu'l-Bahá giving his own greetings.³⁰ Many people waited for a private interview with `Abdu'l-Bahá, including Mr. H.A. Goulden, who headed a socialist organization whose members were on strike.³¹ `Abdu'l-Bahá's Bahá'í associates suggested, given the fact that he was so tired, that people should return the next day. He answered, "No, this is the time to work. We must not think of exhaustion or anything else. Let every one come to me."³²

²⁹ National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962: 55

³⁰The text is given in National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962: 13-16

³¹ Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.: 130

³² Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.: 130

Sunday, September 1, 1912

1. *The Maxwells in Montreal* (pp 281-283)

Rúhíyyih Khánum's biographical notes record more details of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit. She recalls 'How perpetually vivid in my Mother's mind remained the memories of those days He spent in her home.' She tells of how according to May, the banal day-to-day affairs in the Maxwell household acquired a strange wonderful glow of significance in the presence of the Master. She records how 'eagerly' and with what 'indescribably keenness of interest' `Abdu'l-Bahá would look out of the window at the activities taking place on Pine Avenue in the morning:

As He stood there [on the landing of the stairs in the Maxwell home] watching the milkman on his daily round - the man delivering at each door-step the morning paper - early workmen on their way to work - what were His thoughts? What was the penetration of His all-knowing, all-searching spirit in these humble lives in their unconscious journey to Him! They glanced at His might prophetic Figure with wonder and traces of unconscious respect, & went their way - never, never to be the same again. The light of His glance had fallen on them - the warmth & power of His Spirit had for a fraction of time surrounded them in their daily rounds, their common destiny.

She describes how her mother was transported during those days into a state of ecstasy, a degree of devotion comparable to that of the early disciples, how she involuntarily identified with them, worshipping the Master as if He were Christ. No wonder `Abdu'l-Bahá had to repeat over and over again for the early believers that His station was one of servitude - no more; that His honour, His glory, His highest aspiration was to serve His Beloved, and nothing else.

May was in a state of exaltation. It was just as well she had a two-year-old child to bring her back down to earth. Rúhíyyih Khánum describes, in her incomparable memoirs, how 'maddening' her mother must have found her conduct at this time, and how mortifying too:

One day the Master, in the drawing-room, caught little Mary up in His arms and tried to kiss her; I say tried advisedly for He did not

succeed as the small, strong, chubby and highly independent infant gave him such a slap on the face that the shock knocked the turban off His head! Then began a mad chase around the drawing-room in which the Master pursued the elusive and indignant child. Mother always said at that moment she could have gladly killed me. She managed to say, Oh `Abdu'l-Bahá, she is very naughty! What shall I do to punish her.' By the time the Master had succeeded in catching and kissing me. 'Leave her alone,' He said, 'she is the essence of sweetness.'

She admitted, with her characteristic candour and forthrightness, that 'No good reported have reached me of my conduct during His visit' and then continues:

One day as He rested after lunch on a couch at the foot of His bed, Mother had quieted the whole household and particularly instructed me not to waken `Abdu'l-Bahá on any account. Her back was scarcely turned when I rushed into His room and, going up to Him, pried His eyelids open with my small fingers, crying: 'Wake up, `Abdu'l-Bahá!' It seems He took me in His arms and let me sleep on His breast. I was so attracted to Him that it was hard to keep me away from Him at all.

These wonderful stories, which Rúhíyyih Khánum so often repeated to Bahá'ís as well as her friends, bring to life the moments of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit in Montreal and make vividly real for us a time which, as she put it in her own words, it will be 'hard to recapture - and will as time passes, grow increasingly difficult to do so'. Another such moment was the historic occasion when `Abdu'l-Bahá stepped through the doors of the Maxwell brothers' firm at 6 Beaver Hall Square. Amatu'l-Bahá has written in her notes:

`Abdu'l-Bahá visited Daddy's office; Mother introduced Him to Miss Parent.³³ She said, 'I could not keep my eyes away from him - it is a face you cannot forget!' She said `Abdu'l-Bahá turned to

³³Known fondly as AMP by all the Maxwells, Mrs. A.M. Parent Brooks was the secretary of W. S. Maxwell for many years and a close friend of the family.

Mother and said: 'You can trust her.' ...

Many year later, in a letter to Leah Graham dated 27 January 1938, May herself referred to other words of `Abdu'l-Bahá spoken in their Montreal home:

I remember when the Master was in Montreal and there had been a strike for months in Dublin, women and children starving and a generally desperate condition. It had affected me very painfully; I slept little and could barely eat, and had that terrific helpless feeling, not knowing what to do about it. All this Sutherland told to the Master, begging Him to tell me that my attitude was all wrong; and as he spoke the Master turned very white and great beads of perspiration formed on His brow through His own agony and human sufferings; then He said, 'If more people felt as your wife does the world would not be in this dark and terrible state.' Then He added, 'However, you must strive to overcome these feelings, do everything in your power to help, pray, then leave it with God, because the world will grow steadily much worse, and if you suffer like this you will not be able to survive.'

Nevertheless His words opened a door of help to these strike sufferers, and on my return to Montreal I went to a very wealthy and prominent Irishman here, whom I had never even seen, burst into tears in his office, to his astonishment and mine, and asked him what he was going to do about it. Well, to end the story, he headed a committee to raise a fund which we sent to Dublin through private channels and which came just in time to succour thousands of women and children.

2. "Abdu'l-Bahá in Montreal" by May Maxwell, *Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada*, 1987 (p 41)

In the Unitarian Church, where He first spoke, has arisen the most important public forum in Canada, a centre so vivid and universal that for the past twenty years speakers from every country and nation in the world, men and women representative of every advanced group of thought on all topics of human life have given their message, have raised the voice of truth and liberalism, unafraid and untrammled! Such is His power! Such the abiding fruits of a single hour of His mighty Presence.

3. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 230-236)

This was a momentous day. From the pulpit of the Unitarian Church, the voice of the Center of the Covenant was broadcast afar. As He prepared to leave for the church, He asked me to sit by Him in the carriage. I said that there was room on the other seat. He replied, 'Come and sit here. When I see someone who is ambitious and selfish, I observe these formalities merely for his correction. Otherwise, everyone may sit wherever he wishes. These things are entirely unimportant.' When the carriage arrived, the pastor, who had been waiting at the entrance, came forward, took the Master's arm with the utmost reverence and courtesy, led him to the pulpit and offered Him his own chair. After the music, the pastor stood and read verses from the Book of Isaiah which allude to the appearance of a promised one from the East. Everyone listened with rapt attention to these verses and felt that they had been specifically written for this day.

In introducing the Master, the pastor said:

We are honored today with the presence of the Prophet of Peace whose message is the Message of God. God has raised Him to exterminate war and bloodshed. His presence in this church is the cause of eternal honor and the fulfillment of our long-cherished hopes and desires. He is the sign of love among the people and the promoter of oneness and brotherhood among the sons of men. His object is to free people from the shackles of imitation and to unfurl the banner of the oneness of humanity. He is the temple of kindness, the possessor of the greatest news, the inspirer of the new thoughts and the expounder of the happiness of this great cycle. Although He has suffered violence and affliction for many years and has seen persecutions, His spiritual power is still flowing like the water of life. Although His body has felt the cross, yet His spirit, which is life-giving, has not been crucified. He has journeyed by land and sea to come to these western countries. We extend Him a sincere welcome and offer the incense of gratitude for His teachings which are the cause of the recovery of hearts and are the source of eternal blessings and happiness. Now His Holiness `Abdu'l-Bahá will speak to you.

The Master rose and, pacing the stage, gave the following address:

God the Almighty has created all humanity from dust, from the same elements. All are descended from one race and all are created to live on the same earth, under the canopy of the same heaven. As members of humanity He created them sharing the same susceptibilities. As created by Him all are one, without discrimination. He provides for all; He trains all; He protects

all; He is kind to all. He has left no difference in His bounties and favors to men. He raised prophets and sent divine teachings. These teachings unite all and generate love in human hearts. He has proclaimed the unity of the world of man. He deprecates all obstacles to unity and commends everything that is conducive to harmony and unity. He admonishes all to establish unity at all levels. All the Prophets of God were raised up to deliver the message of love and unity to the sons of men. All the Books of God were revealed to establish fellowship and union. All the Prophets of God were the servants of truth. All their teachings were the essence of truth. Truth is one; it does not accept multiplicity. Therefore, the foundation of truth of all the religions of God is one.

Yet, alas, blind imitations, which have nothing to do with this truth, have crept in. As these vain practices vary, contention, warfare and bloodshed became rampant and strife prevailed. These are the destroyers of the divine foundation. Men kill one another like beasts and bring desolation to one another's families. God has created man for love. He made love the illumination of the world of man. Love is the cause of the unity of creation. All the prophets were promulgators of love. Man, however, arose against the decree of God and acted contrary to the divine will. For this reason, since the beginning of present history, man has never experienced harmony. Bloodshed and massacre have been rampant among them. The hearts have been suspicious of one another. Man has acted against God's good pleasure. All the wars and massacres of the past have been induced either by religious or racial prejudices or by political and patriotic bias which have made this world a place of constant agony for the sons of man.

These prejudices were intense in the Orient, for there was no freedom.

The gloom of blind imitations had darkened the entire Orient and all the nations and religions were on terms of extreme hostility and at war with each other. At such a time Bahá'u'lláh appeared and proclaimed the oneness of the world of man, saying that all men are created by God and all the religions are under the shadow of the mercy of God. God is kind to all; He loves all. All the prophets loved one another. The holy books confirm one another. Why then should there be strife and contention among men? When all are the creatures of one God, and like sheep all are under the protection of one shepherd who helps each one, why should not the sheep live in perfect harmony with one another? If one has gone astray, the others must bring it back and guide it. At the most, if a person is ignorant, he must be informed; if he is imperfect, he must be made perfect; if he is sick, he must be cured; if he is blind, he must be healed and not be made a target of enmity and hatred.

Second, Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed that religion must be the means of love and fellowship. If

religion is the cause of hatred, it has no meaning. Irreligion is preferable to such a religion, for it produces enmity and hatred. That which produces enmity is odious to God and that which brings forth love and harmony is acceptable to Him and praised by Him. If religion becomes the cause of bloodshed and rapacity, it is not religion. Irreligion is better than that. Religion is like a remedy. If the remedy produces sickness, it is better not to have it at all. Thus if religion is the cause of warfare and massacre, irreligion is preferable.

Third, religion must be in accord with reason and science. If religion is not consistent with science and reason, it is superstition. God has given us reason so that we may comprehend the realities of things and become lovers of truth. If religion is inconsistent with science and reason, it cannot produce confidence. When confidence is not generated, it is but superstition. Religious issues must therefore conform with reason and science so that hearts may derive assurance, and happiness may prevail.

Fourth, all prejudices -- religious, racial, patriotic and political -- are destroyers of the human edifice. The religion of God is but one for all. All religions are founded on truth. Abraham summoned the people to reality; Moses proclaimed reality; Christ founded reality; and Muhammad promoted reality. All the prophets were the servants of reality. All were founders and enforcers of reality. Religious prejudice, therefore, is vain and false, for it negates the truth.

As to racial prejudice: all humanity is one progeny. All are servants of one God. All are of one essence. There is no plurality in race because all are the sons of Adam. Plurality in race is an unfounded belief. Before God there is no England, France, Turkey or Persia. All these people are regarded as one before God. God did not make these divisions. They are made by man; hence, they are false and contrary to reality. Everyone has two eyes, two ears, one head and two feet. There is no racial prejudice among animals, no such prejudice among pigeons. A pigeon of the East will mingle with a pigeon of the West harmoniously. A sheep of the West will not say to a sheep of the East: 'You are of the East and I am of the West.' Instead they mix together. If a pigeon comes from the East, it will mix with the pigeons of the West. It will not say, 'I am of the East while you are of the West.' Is it worthy of man to entertain an attitude which animals do not allow? Patriotic prejudice prevails although the whole earth is one globe, one country. God has made no divisions in it. He has created all as one. Before Him there are no differences. How can man lay down divisions which God has not created? Europe is one continent. We have created imaginary lines. We fix a boundary and say that on this side of the river is France and on that side Germany, although the river exists for both sides. What idle fancy is this? What ignorance! A thing not purposed by God is made by man, through his own imagination, a cause of bloodshed and strife. Hence, all these prejudices have no valid basis and are odious before

God. God has created love, amity and affection which He has desired for His servants. Enmity is reprobated by Him, while love and harmony are accepted in His presence.

Fifth, one of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that every human being must acquire knowledge, so that misunderstandings which are rampant among the people of different nations may be removed. All differences are begotten of misunderstandings. If these are removed, all humanity will become united. Misunderstandings can be removed only when knowledge is universally diffused. It is incumbent on every father to educate his children. If the father is incapable, the community must help so that knowledge may prevail and misunderstandings disappear.

Sixth, Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed the equality of the sexes, because women were not free. Men and women belong to the human race and are the servants of the same God. Before God there is no difference of gender. Whosoever has a purer heart and performs a better deed is nearer to God, irrespective of sex. The differences that exist at the present time are due only to the various degrees of education because women have not had the same opportunity as men. If women were given the same education, they would become equal in all degrees because both are human beings and share the same faculties and in this God has created no differences.

Seventh, a universal language is necessary. A language should be adopted which can be acquired by all. Every person will have to learn two languages -- one, his own, and the other, universal, so that all persons will have a means of communication. This will cause the removal of misunderstandings among the various nations. All worship one God and all are the servants of the one God. Differences occur when people cannot understand one another. When they can talk in the same language, differences due to misunderstandings will melt away, while love and harmony will have their sway. The East and the West will then join hands and unite with each other in bonds of union.

Eighth, the world is in sore need of universal peace. As long as universal peace is not established, the world will find no rest. The nations and powers will be forced to form a Supreme Tribunal to which all differences will be referred for decision. As the differences of individuals are settled in the courts of law, so must the differences of nations and peoples be settled, so that they may not lead to wars as at the present time. Fifty years ago Bahá'u'lláh sent epistles to the ruling monarchs of the time. All these teachings were recorded in the Tablets to the Kings and Rulers and to others and were printed and published forty years ago in India, so that prejudices between men might vanish. All those who adopted His teachings have lived in perfect harmony and love. If one goes to their meetings, one sees Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Muslims associated together with utmost love and amity. All their talk and effort are

concentrated on the removal of misunderstandings among nations.

When I came to America, I found the people noble and high-minded and the government just. I pray to God that this just government and this respected nation may be the cause of proclaiming universal peace and the oneness of humanity. May it become the means of uniting all the nations of the world. May it light a lamp which will give light to the world -- the lamp of the oneness of humanity. My hope is that you will all be instrumental in raising aloft the standard of universal peace, that is, that the American nation and government will further the cause of international peace and thus bring security to the whole world. They would win thereby the good-pleasure of God and divine favors would surround the East and the West.

O Thou kind Lord! These people have turned to Thee in prayer. With utmost humility and sincerity they have raised their voices to Thy Kingdom to beg Thy forgiveness. O God! Make this assemblage noble and these persons holy. Enkindle the lights of guidance, illumine the hearts, bring joy to the souls, admit them into Thy Kingdom and enable them to attain felicity in both worlds.

O God! We are abased, glorify us; we are poor, make us rich from the treasury of Thy Kingdom; we are sick, grant us health; we are weak, give us power. O God, guide us to Thy good-pleasure and make us free from self and desire. O God, make us firm in Thy love and assist us to be kind to all creatures. Help us to render service to humanity so that we may serve all Thy servants, love all Thy creatures, be kind to all mankind. O God, verily Thou art the Powerful, the Merciful, the Forgiving and the Omnipotent.

The Master's address on the unity of humanity and the oneness of the Manifestations of God, together with an explanation of the new teachings, was so enthusiastically received by the audience that it is difficult to describe adequately, especially the effect of the prayer He chanted. As well as the local residents, some Turks and Arabs came to the church to pay their respects to the Master.

A wonderful change came over the hearts of the people of the city and a new excitement was felt in the public meetings. One person asserted that the only religion which was worthy to be acknowledged today was the Bahá'í religion while another thanked God that he was granted life to hear the great message. ...

4. TALK `ABDU'L-BAHÁ DELIVERED IN MONTREAL³⁴

1 September 1912

³⁴*The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (pp 297-302)

Talk at Church of the Messiah, Montreal, Canada

God, the Almighty, has created all mankind from the dust of earth. He has fashioned them all from the same elements; they are descended from the same race and live upon the same globe. He has created them to dwell beneath the one heaven. As members of the human family and His children He has endowed them with equal susceptibilities. He maintains, protects and is kind to all. He has made no distinction in mercies and graces among His children. With impartial love and wisdom He has sent forth His Prophets and divine teachings. His teachings are the means of establishing union and fellowship among mankind and awakening love and kindness in human hearts. He proclaims the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. He rebukes those things which create differences and destroy harmony; He commends and praises every means that will conduce to the solidarity of the human race. He encourages man in every step of advancement which leads to ultimate union. The Prophets of God have been inspired with the message of love and unity. The Books of God have been revealed for the upbuilding of fellowship and union. The Prophets of God have been the servants of reality; Their teachings constitute the science of reality. Reality is one; it does not admit plurality. We conclude, therefore, that the foundation of the religions of God is one foundation. Notwithstanding this, certain forms and imitations have been persistently adhered to which have nothing to do with the foundation of the teachings of the Prophets of God. As these imitations are various and different, contention and strife prevail among the people of religious beliefs, and the foundation of the religion of God has become obscured. Like beasts of prey, men are warring and killing each other, destroying cities and homes, devastating countries and kingdoms.

God has created His servants in order that they may love and associate with each other. He has revealed the glorious splendor of His sun of love in the world of humanity. The cause of the creation of the phenomenal world is love. All the Prophets have promulgated the law of love. Man has opposed the will of God and acted in opposition to the plan of God. Therefore, from the beginning of history to the present time the world of humanity has had no lasting rest; warfare and strife have continuously prevailed, and hearts have manifested hatred toward each other. The cause of bloodshed and battle, strife and hatred throughout the past has been either religious, racial, patriotic or political prejudice. Therefore, the world of humanity has ever been in torment. These prejudices are more pronounced in the Orient, where freedom is restricted. In the nineteenth century the nations of the East were restless and in a state of inner commotion. The darkness of imitations and forms had enveloped religious belief. The people of religions were in constant warfare, filled with enmity, hatred and bitterness. In the midst of

these conditions Bahá'u'lláh appeared. He proclaimed the oneness of the world of humanity and announced that all are the servants of God. He taught that all the religions are beneath the shadow and protection of the Almighty, that God is compassionate and loving to all, that the revelations of all the Prophets of the past have been in perfect unity and agreement, that the heavenly Books have confirmed each other; therefore, why should contention and strife exist among the people?

As all mankind have been created by the one God, we are sheep under the care and protection of one Shepherd. Therefore, as His sheep we must associate in accord and agreement. If one single lamb becomes separated from the flock, the thoughts and efforts of all the others must be to bring it back again. Consequently, Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed that, inasmuch as God is the one heavenly Shepherd and all mankind are the sheep of His fold, the religion or guidance of God must be the means of love and fellowship in the world. If religion proves to be the source of hatred, enmity and contention, if it becomes the cause of warfare and strife and influences men to kill each other, its absence is preferable. For that which is productive of hatred amongst the people is rejected by God, and that which establishes fellowship is beloved and sanctioned by Him. Religion and divine teachings are like unto a remedy. A remedy must produce the condition of health. If it occasions sickness, it is wiser and better to have no remedy whatever. This is the significance of the statement that if religion becomes the cause of warfare and bloodshed, irreligion and the absence of religion are preferable among mankind.

Bahá'u'lláh has declared that religion must be in accord with science and reason. If it does not correspond with scientific principles and the processes of reason, it is superstition. For God has endowed us with faculties by which we may comprehend the realities of things, contemplate reality itself. If religion is opposed to reason and science, faith is impossible; and when faith and confidence in the divine religion are not manifest in the heart, there can be no spiritual attainment.

According to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh all religious, racial, patriotic and political prejudice must be abandoned, for these are the destroyers of the real foundation of humanity. He has announced that the religion of God is one, for all revelations of it are based upon reality. Abraham summoned the people to reality; Moses proclaimed reality; Christ founded reality. Likewise, all the Prophets were the servants and promulgators of reality. Reality is one and indivisible. Therefore, the prejudices and bigotries which exist today among the religions are not justifiable, inasmuch as they are opposed to reality. All prejudices are against the will and plan of God. Consider, for instance, racial distinction and enmity. All humanity are the children of God; they belong to the same family, to the same original race. There can be no multiplicity of

racess, since all are the descendants of Adam. This signifies that racial assumption and distinction are nothing but superstition. In the estimate of God there are no English, French, Germans, Turkish or Persians. All these in the presence of God are equal; they are of one race and creation; God did not make these divisions. These distinctions have had their origin in man himself. Therefore, as they are against the plan and purpose of reality, they are false and imaginary. We are of one physical race, even as we are of one physical plan of material body--each endowed with two eyes, two ears, one head, two feet. Among the animals racial prejudice does not exist. Consider the doves; there is no distinction as to whether it is an oriental or an occidental dove. The sheep are all of one race; there is no assumption of distinction between an eastern and a western sheep. When they meet, they associate with perfect fellowship. If a dove from the West should go to the Orient, it will associate with the eastern doves unhesitatingly. There will be no attitude of unwillingness as if saying, "You belong to the East; I am from the West." Is it reasonable or allowable that a racial prejudice which is not observed by the animal kingdom should be entertained by man?

Consider the prejudice of patriotism. This is one globe, one land, one country. God did not divide it into national boundaries. He created all the continents without national divisions. Why should we make such division ourselves? These are but imaginary lines and boundaries. Europe is a continent; it is not naturally divided; man has drawn the lines and established the limits of kingdoms and empires. Man declares a river to be a boundary line between two countries, calling this side French and the other side German, whereas the river was created for both and is a natural artery for all. Is it not imagination and ignorance which impels man to violate the divine intention and make the very bounties of God the cause of war, bloodshed and destruction? Therefore, all prejudices between man and man are falsehoods and violations of the will of God. God desires unity and love; He commands harmony and fellowship. Enmity is human disobedience; God Himself is love.

Bahá'u'lláh has announced that inasmuch as ignorance and lack of education are barriers of separation among mankind, all must receive training and instruction. Through this provision the lack of mutual understanding will be remedied and the unity of mankind furthered and advanced. Universal education is a universal law. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every father to teach and instruct his children according to his possibilities. If he is unable to educate them, the body politic, the representative of the people, must provide the means for their education.

In the Orient women were degraded and considered subordinate to man. Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed equality of the sexes--that both man and woman are servants of God before Whom there is no distinction. Whosoever has a pure heart and renders good deeds is nearer to God

and the object of His favor--whether man or woman. The sex distinction which exists in the human world is due to the lack of education for woman, who has been denied equal opportunity for development and advancement. Equality of the sexes will be established in proportion to the increased opportunities afforded woman in this age, for man and woman are equally the recipients of powers and endowments from God, the Creator. God has not ordained distinction between them in His consummate purpose.

Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed the adoption of a universal language. A language shall be agreed upon by which unity will be established in the world. Each person will require training in two languages: his native tongue and the universal auxiliary form of speech. This will facilitate intercommunication and dispel the misunderstandings which the barriers of language have occasioned in the world. All people worship the same God and are alike His servants. When they are able to communicate freely, they will associate in friendship and concord, entertain the greatest love and fellowship for each other, and in reality the Orient and Occident will embrace in unity and agreement.

The world is in greatest need of international peace. Until it is established, mankind will not attain composure and tranquillity. It is necessary that the nations and governments organize an international tribunal to which all their disputes and differences shall be referred. The decision of that tribunal shall be final. Individual controversy will be adjudged by a local tribunal. International questions will come before the universal tribunal, and so the cause of warfare will be taken away.

Fifty years ago Bahá'u'lláh wrote Epistles to the kings and rulers of the world in which the teachings and principles revealed by Him were embodied and set forth. These Epistles were printed in India forty years ago and spread broadcast.

Briefly, by the promulgation of these principles Bahá'u'lláh has caused the prejudices which afflicted the people of the Orient to disappear. The communities which have accepted His teachings are now living together in the greatest love and harmony. When you enter a meeting of these people, you will find Christians, Jews, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Buddhists gathered together in perfect fellowship and agreement. In their discussions the greatest spirit of tolerance and friendship has supplanted the former hostility and hatred witnessed among them.

I have visited America and find everywhere the evidences of just and equitable government. Therefore, I pray God that these western peoples may become the means of establishing international peace and spreading the oneness of the world of humanity. May you become the cause of unity and agreement among the nations. May a lamp be lighted here which will

illumine the whole universe with the oneness of the world of humanity, with love between the hearts of the children of men, and the unity of all mankind. I hope that you may become assisted in this supreme accomplishment, that you may raise the flag of international peace and reconciliation upon this continent, that this government and people may be the means of spreading these lofty ideals in order that the world of man may find rest, in order that the good pleasure of the Most High God shall be attained and His favors encircle the Orient and Occident.

O Thou compassionate, almighty One! This assemblage of souls have turned their faces unto Thee in supplication. With the utmost humility and submission they look toward Thy Kingdom and beg Thee for pardon and forgiveness. O God! Endear this assembly to Thyself. Sanctify these souls, and cast upon them the rays of Thy guidance. Illumine their hearts, and gladden their spirits with Thy glad tidings. Receive all of them in Thy holy Kingdom; confer upon them Thine inexhaustible bounty; make them happy in this world and in the world to come. O God! We are weak; give us strength. We are poor; bestow upon us Thine illimitable treasures. We are sick; grant unto us Thy divine healing. We are impotent; give us Thy heavenly power. O Lord! Make us useful in this world; free us from the condition of self and desire. O Lord! Make us brethren in Thy love, and cause us to be loving toward all Thy children. Confirm us in service to the world of humanity so that we may become the servants of Thy servants, that we may love all Thy creatures and become compassionate to all Thy people. O Lord, Thou art the Almighty. Thou art the Merciful. Thou art the Forgiver. Thou art the Omnipotent.

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5. RACIALISM WRONG SAYS EASTERN SAGE

Strife and War Caused By Religious and National Prejudices

The Gazette, Montreal, Monday, September 2, 1912

Both in matter and in style the message which was delivered in the Church of the Messiah yesterday morning by Abdu'l-Baha was unique and it had a picturesque setting all its own. A venerable looking figure with a long white beard, just streaked with a dark shade, the leader of the Baha'i movement wore a white silk turban, white vestments to match, over which was a loose brown robe; the whole fulfilling the usual conceptions of the Eastern sage.

In introducing Abdu'l-Baha, Rev. F.R. Griffin said, "The strangest part of all about him is that nothing is strange. He seeks to be the embodiment of that which is most natural. Is this not

turning back to religion itself? Venerable in years, he is young as a child in the purity of his outlook on life; disciplined by long years in prison, his spirit has never yet been crucified by pain.”

Abdu’l-Baha speaking through his interpreter, in his opening sentences said: “God the Almighty has created all humanity from earth, from the same element. All men are descended from the same race and live on the same globe. As members of the human race He created them equal in all susceptibilities. He left no difference whatever.”

The chief points brought out by the speaker were the equality of the human race and the unnaturalness of the division of nations and countries, the horror of religious or any warfare whatever and the equality of the sexes.

“... All the bloodshed and strife of the past have been induced either through religious or racial prejudices or political or patriotic bias.

“... Baha’u’llah proclaimed that religion must be the means of love and fellowship. If religion is the cause of hatred it has no meaning; it is not religion, but is irreligion for it has produced opposite results... The remedy must give health.

“... God has granted reason so that we may comprehend the reality of things. If religion is against science and reason then confidence is impossible. Where faith and confidence are not created we cannot call that religion... All religious systems must correspond with intellect and science, so that the heart may obtain faith and assurance...”

In his closing sentences Abdu’l-Baha pointed out that a universal language was needed and that this would help the cause of international peace and goodwill... The speaker expressed the wish that the governments of America would further the cause of international peace, thus bringing rest to the world.

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6. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 236-237)

In the afternoon a number of people of different nationalities, having obtained permission by telephone, came to visit the Master. Some of the Turks became so attracted to Him that they were continually to be found in His presence, both day and night.

This evening a great multitude assembled to hear `Abdu'l-Bahá. He unfolded the mysteries of the evolution of humanity, the divine civilization and the new birth so impressively and with

such majesty that His taj fell from His head and His hair tumbled down. He continued to speak in this state for more than half an hour and at last He passed through the crowd to His room. The longing souls in that meeting did not let the Master rest. Out of respect for the people's wishes, He came out into the crowd and again spoke on spiritual subjects, including the immortality of the spirit, His words diffusing joy and happiness to all.

As He left for His room, some asked for a private interview with Him. Everyone had a request to make and expressed his sincerity and humility and each received His bounties. One of the ladies said that her young son places the Master's picture in front of him and cries out, ‘O Thou, my Beloved.’ The Master replied, ‘It is a proof of your own love.’

Later the Master said to us, ‘Tomorrow we should move to a hotel. A traveler should stay in a hotel.’ Mr and Mrs Maxwell tried their utmost to dissuade Him but did not succeed.

7. The Maxwells of Montreal (pp 283-284)

But the doors which opened wide to welcome ‘Abdu'l-Bahá to Montreal that summer also had to part to let Him leave. Rúhíyyih Khánum records in her memoirs that after ‘this brief stay’ of three blessed days in their house on Pine Avenue,

He expressed the desire to go to a hotel, saying more people would feel free to seek Him out there than in a private home – a fact which of course was obviously true, particularly so in such a conservative city as Montreal. A suite was engaged for Him in the Windsor Hotel where He continued to be the guest of my father.

His departure from the house on Pine Avenue even had an impact on the servants:

The cook we had at that time, though very capable in her own capacity, was a hot-tempered and somewhat irascible Irish woman. Mother was both astonished and touched when, on hearing ‘Abdu'l-Bahá was going to the Windsor Hotel, she came to her and said, ‘Ah, Mrs. Maxwell, why is He going away! Tell Him I will work my fingers to the bone if He will only stay.’

8. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 48-49)

On Sunday, `Abdu'l-Bahá gave his now well-known address at the (Unitarian) Church of the Messiah,³⁵ on the topic "The Oneness of Religion." On preparing to leave for the church, he called his diarist, Mahmoud, to sit with him in the carriage. When the Persian companion showed some hesitation by replying that there was plenty of room on another seat, `Abdu'l-Bahá insisted: "Come sit here. When I see someone selfish and hankering after rank, I observe these formalities for his correction merely. Everyone may sit wherever he wishes. These things are entirely unimportant."³⁶

Upon arrival at the church on tree-lined Sherbrooke Avenue, "Montreal's Fifth Avenue," he found Rev. Frederick R. Griffin³⁷ waiting for him outside the door. The grey outside light rehabilitated itself as it passed through the beautiful stained glass windows. The pastor, after proffering his chair to `Abdu'l-Bahá and following some hymns and readings from the Book of Isaiah, introduced him as the "temple of kindness," "the sign of love," and the "inspirer of the present thoughts and the expounder of the happiness of this great cycle." Among those attending the service were Turks and Arabs who came to offer their respects to `Abdu'l-Bahá.³⁸ It was a singularly happy occasion for W.S. Maxwell to have `Abdu'l-Bahá speak in a church of which he was the architect. The church was finished in 1905, replacing one built in 1844,³⁹ the same year that `Abdu'l-Bahá was born.

In the afternoon, `Abdu'l-Bahá spoke at 716 Pine Avenue West,⁴⁰ attracting persons of

³⁵*Montreal Daily Star*, 31 August 1912, p. 1. See Appendix B for the text of the talk.

³⁶Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.: 130

³⁷W.S. Maxwell, in a letter to Marion Holley (1940), misspells his name as "Griffith".

³⁸ Mahmoud-i-Zarqání. n.d.: 132. It is not known how many people attended. When, thirty-five years later, on 5 February 1947, Horace Holley, Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, gave a talk there, about 150 were in the audience, and all but one radio station refused to publicize the event (*Bahá'í News*, No. 194 (April 1947): 11).

³⁹Cooper, 1969: 75. Only the lower remnants of the church building are left standing today (1993) after a fire, set by a church organist, destroyed the church in May 1987. The congregation is considering auctioning off the assets for a high-rise condominium, towering above or atop the remnants. Facts about the church can be gleaned from *The Gazette* (12 November 1988, 24 February 1990, 3 March 1990, 28 July 1990) and from AMM (Archives municipales de Montréal), Folder R4178.2.

⁴⁰National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962: 13

“different nationalities” who had telephoned earlier; a number of Turks were in attendance. This is perhaps the occasion when a server spilled some hot water over her hand, seriously scalding it. `Abdu'l-Bahá held her hand and assured her, “It will be all right, it will be all right. You will be laughing soon.” Later, the woman reported to a Bahá'í, that, after `Abdu'l-Bahá's reassuring words and touch, her hand “no longer bothered her.”⁴¹ Showers during the day prevented `Abdu'l-Bahá from taking his preferred afternoon walk.

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9. Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. William Sutherland Maxwell⁴²

1 September 1912

I am exceedingly happy to meet you. Praise be to God! I see before me souls who have unusual capability and the power of spiritual advancement. In reality, the people of this continent possess great capacity; they are the cause of my happiness, and I ever pray that God may confirm and assist them to progress in all the degrees of existence. As they have advanced along material lines, may they develop in idealistic degrees, for material advancement is fruitless without spiritual progress and not productive of everlasting results. For example, no matter how much the physical body of man is trained and developed, there will be no real progression in the human station unless the mind correspondingly advances. No matter how much man may acquire material virtues, he will not be able to realize and express the highest possibilities of life without spiritual graces. God has created all earthly things under a law of progression in material degrees, but He has created man and endowed him with powers of advancement toward spiritual and transcendental kingdoms. He has not created material phenomena after His own image and likeness, but He has created man after that image and with potential power to attain that likeness. He has distinguished man above all other created things. All created things except man are captives of nature and the sense world, but in man there has been created an ideal power by which he may perceive intellectual or spiritual realities. He has brought forth everything necessary for the life of this world, but man is a creation intended for the reflection of divine virtues. Consider that the highest type of creation

⁴¹The story is told by Keith Eldridge in *Canadian Bahá'í News*, No. 15 (September 1950): 6.

⁴²*The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (pp 302-306)

below man is the animal, which is superior to all degrees of life except man. Manifestly, the animal has been created for the life of this world. Its highest virtue is to express excellence in the material plane of existence. The animal is perfect when its body is healthy and its physical senses are whole. When it is characterized by the attributes of physical health, when its physical forces are in working order, when food and surrounding conditions minister to its needs, it has attained the ultimate perfection of its kingdom. But man does not depend upon these things for his virtues. No matter how perfect his health and physical powers, if that is all, he has not yet risen above the degree of a perfect animal. Beyond and above this, God has opened the doors of ideal virtues and attainments before the face of man. He has created in his being the mysteries of the divine Kingdom. He has bestowed upon him the power of intellect so that through the attribute of reason, when fortified by the Holy Spirit, he may penetrate and discover ideal realities and become informed of the mysteries of the world of significances. As this power to penetrate the ideal knowledges is superhuman, supernatural, man becomes the collective center of spiritual as well as material forces so that the divine spirit may manifest itself in his being, the effulgences of the Kingdom shine within the sanctuary of his heart, the signs of the attributes and perfections of God reveal themselves in a newness of life, the everlasting glory and eternal existence be attained, the knowledge of God illumine, and the mysteries of the realm of might be unsealed.

Man is like unto this lamp, but the effulgences of the Kingdom are like the rays of the lamp. Man is like unto the glass, but spiritual splendors are like unto the light within the glass. No matter how translucent the glass may be, as long as there is no light within, it remains dark. Likewise, man, no matter how much he advances in material accomplishments, will remain like the glass without light if he is deprived of the spiritual virtues. Material virtues are like unto a perfect body, but this body is in need of the spirit. No matter how handsome and perfect the body may be, if it is deprived of the spirit and its animus, it is dead. But when that same body is affiliated with the spirit and expressing life, perfection and virtue become realized in it. Deprived of the Holy Spirit and its bounties, man is spiritually dead.

Children, for instance, no matter how good and pure, no matter how healthy their bodies, are, nevertheless, considered imperfect because the power of intellect is not fully manifest in them. When the intellectual power fully displays its influences and they attain to the age of maturity, they are considered as perfect. Likewise, man, no matter how much he may advance in worldly affairs and make progress in material civilization, is imperfect unless he is quickened by the bounties of the Holy Spirit; for it is evident that until he receives that divine impetus he is ignorant and deprived. For this reason Jesus Christ said, "Except a man be born of water and of

the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." By this Christ meant that unless man is released from the material world, freed from the captivity of materialism and receiving a portion of the bounties of the spiritual world, he shall be deprived of the bestowals and favors of the Kingdom of God, and the utmost we can say of him is that he is a perfect animal. No one can rightly call him a man. In another place He said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The meaning of this is that if man is a captive of nature, he is like unto an animal because he is only a body physically born--that is, he belongs to the world of matter and remains subject to the law and control of nature. But if he is baptized with the Holy Spirit, if he is freed from the bondage of nature, released from animalistic tendencies and advanced in the human realm, he is fitted to enter into the divine Kingdom. The world of the Kingdom is the realm of divine bestowals and the bounties of God. It is attainment of the highest virtues of humanity; it is nearness to God; it is capacity to receive the bounties of the ancient Lord. When man advances to this station, he attains the second birth. Before his first or physical birth man was in the world of the matrix. He had no knowledge of this world; his eyes could not see; his ears could not hear. When he was born from the world of the matrix, he beheld another world. The sun was shining with its splendors, the moon radiant in the heavens, the stars twinkling in the expansive firmament, the seas surging, trees verdant and green, all kinds of creatures enjoying life here, infinite bounties prepared for him. In the world of the matrix none of these things existed. In that world he had no knowledge of this vast range of existence; nay, rather, he would have denied the reality of this world. But after his birth he began to open his eyes and behold the wonders of this illimitable universe. Similarly, as long as man is in the matrix of the human world, as long as he is the captive of nature, he is out of touch and without knowledge of the universe of the Kingdom. If he attains rebirth while in the world of nature, he will become informed of the divine world. He will observe that another and a higher world exists. Wonderful bounties descend; eternal life awaits; everlasting glory surrounds him. All the signs of reality and greatness are there. He will see the lights of God. All these experiences will be his when he is born out of the world of nature into the divine world. Therefore, for the perfect man there are two kinds of birth: the first, physical birth, is from the matrix of the mother; the second, or spiritual birth, is from the world of nature. In both he is without knowledge of the new world of existence he is entering. Therefore, rebirth means his release from the captivity of nature, freedom from attachment to this mortal and material life. This is the second, or spiritual, birth of which Jesus Christ spoke in the Gospels.

The majority of people are captives in the matrix of nature, submerged in the sea of materiality. We must pray that they may be reborn, that they may attain insight and spiritual

hearing, that they may receive the gift of another heart, a new transcendent power, and in the eternal world the unending bestowal of divine bounties.

Today the world of humanity is walking in darkness because it is out of touch with the world of God. That is why we do not see the signs of God in the hearts of men. The power of the Holy Spirit has no influence. When a divine spiritual illumination becomes manifest in the world of humanity, when divine instruction and guidance appear, then enlightenment follows, a new spirit is realized within, a new power descends, and a new life is given. It is like the birth from the animal kingdom into the kingdom of man. When man acquires these virtues, the oneness of the world of humanity will be revealed, the banner of international peace will be upraised, equality between all mankind will be realized, and the Orient and Occident will become one. Then will the justice of God become manifest, all humanity will appear as the members of one family, and every member of that family will be consecrated to cooperation and mutual assistance. The lights of the love of God will shine; eternal happiness will be unveiled; everlasting joy and spiritual delight will be attained.

I will pray, and you must pray, likewise, that such heavenly bounty may be realized; that strife and enmity may be banished, warfare and bloodshed taken away; that hearts may attain ideal communication and that all people may drink from the same fountain. May they receive their knowledge from the same divine source. May all hearts become illumined with the rays of the Sun of Reality; may all of them enter the university of God, acquire spiritual virtues and seek for themselves heavenly bounties. Then this material, phenomenal world will become the mirror of the world of God, and within this pure mirror the divine virtues of the realm of might will be reflected.

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10. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 48-49) continued

In the evening `Abdu'l-Bahá spoke at the Maxwell home.⁴³ He delivered his talk with such enthusiasm that his turban fell from his head and rolled on the floor. He continued, nevertheless, speaking for half an hour more.⁴⁴ The enthusiastic crowd prevented his going up to his room; "spellbound," they listened to what he had to say. Even then, a few wished to have a private audience with him in his room. That same evening `Abdu'l-Bahá decided to move to a hotel,⁴⁵ despite entreaties by the Maxwells to dissuade him.

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11. Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. William Sutherland Maxwell⁴⁶
1 September 1912

The subject of immortality has been suggested.

Life is the expression of composition; and death, the expression of decomposition. In the world or kingdom of the minerals certain materials or elemental substances exist. When through the law of creation they enter into composition, a being or organism comes into existence. For example, certain material atoms are brought together, and man is the result. When this composition is destroyed and disintegrated, decomposition takes place; this is mortality, or death. When certain elements are composed, an animal comes into being. When these elements are scattered or decomposed, this is called the death of the animal. Again, certain atoms are bound together by chemical affinity; a composition called a flower appears. When these atoms are dispersed and the composition they have formed is disintegrated, the flower has come to its end; it is dead. Therefore, it is evident that life is the expression of composition, and mortality, or death, is equivalent to decomposition. As the spirit of man is not

⁴³ National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962: 23

⁴⁴ *Bahá'í News*, No. 212 (October 1948): 3. The text is found in the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962: 23-25. [This talk appears not to be in the 1987 edition.]

⁴⁵ Balyuzi, 1971: 264

⁴⁶ *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (pp 306-308)

composed of material elements, it is not subject to decomposition and, therefore, has no death. It is self-evident that the human spirit is simple, single and not composed in order that it may come to immortality, and it is a philosophical axiom that the individual or indivisible atom is indestructible. At most, it passes through a process of construction and reconstruction. For example, these individual atoms are brought together in a composition, and through this composition a given organism--such as a man, an animal or a plant--is created. When this composition is decomposed, that created organism is brought to an end, but the component atoms are not annihilated; they continue to exist because they are single, individual and not composed. Therefore, it may be said that these individual atoms are eternal. Likewise, the human spirit, inasmuch as it is not composed of individual elements or atoms--as it is sanctified above these elements--is eternal. This is a self-evident proof of its immortality.

Second, consider the world of dreams, wherein the body of man is immovable, seemingly dead, not subject to sensation; the eyes do not see, the ears do not hear nor the tongue speak. But the spirit of man is not asleep; it sees, hears, moves, perceives and discovers realities. Therefore, it is evident that the spirit of man is not affected by the change or condition of the body. Even though the material body should die, the spirit continues eternally alive, just as it exists and functions in the inert body in the realm of dreams. That is to say, the spirit is immortal and will continue its existence after the destruction of the body.

Third, the human body has one form. In its composition it has been transferred from one form to another but never possesses two forms at the same time. For example, it has existed in the elemental substances of the mineral kingdom. From the mineral kingdom it has traversed the vegetable kingdom and its constituent substances; from the vegetable kingdom it has risen by evolution into the kingdom of the animal and from thence attained the kingdom of man. After its disintegration and decomposition it will return again to the mineral kingdom, leaving its human form and taking a new form unto itself. During these progressions one form succeeds another, but at no time does the body possess more than one.

The spirit of man, however, can manifest itself in all forms at the same time. For example, we say that a material body is either square or spherical, triangular or hexagonal. While it is triangular, it cannot be square; and while it is square, it is not triangular. Similarly, it cannot be spherical and hexagonal at the same time. These various forms or shapes cannot be manifest at the same instant in one material object. Therefore, the form of the physical body of man must be destroyed and abandoned before it can assume or take unto itself another. Mortality, therefore, means transference from one form to another--that is, transference from the human kingdom to the kingdom of the mineral. When the physical man is dead, he will return to dust;

and this transference is equivalent to nonexistence. But the human spirit in itself contains all these forms, shapes and figures. It is not possible to break or destroy one form so that it may transfer itself into another. As an evidence of this, at the present moment in the human spirit you have the shape of a square and the figure of a triangle. Simultaneously also you can conceive a hexagonal form. All these can be conceived at the same moment in the human spirit, and not one of them needs to be destroyed or broken in order that the spirit of man may be transferred to another. There is no annihilation, no destruction; therefore, the human spirit is immortal because it is not transferred from one body into another body.

Consider another proof: Every cause is followed by an effect and vice versa; there could be no effect without a cause preceding it. Sight is an effect; there is no doubt that behind that effect there is a cause. When we hear a discourse, there is a speaker. We could not hear words unless they proceeded from the tongue of a speaker. Motion without a mover or cause of motion is inconceivable. Jesus Christ lived two thousand years ago. Today we behold His manifest signs; His light is shining; His sovereignty is established; His traces are apparent; His bounties are effulgent. Can we say that Christ did not exist? We can absolutely conclude that Christ existed and that from Him these traces proceeded.

Still another proof: The body of man becomes lean or fat; it is afflicted with disease, suffers mutilation; perhaps the eyes become blind, the ears deaf; but none of these imperfections and failings afflict or affect the spirit. The spirit of man remains in the same condition, unchanged. A man is blinded, but his spirit continues the same. He loses his hearing, his hand is cut off, his foot amputated; but his spirit remains the same. He becomes lethargic, he is afflicted with apoplexy; but there is no difference, change or alteration in his spirit. This is proof that death is only destruction of the body, while the spirit remains immortal, eternal.

Again, all phenomena of the material world are subject to mortality and death, but the immortal spirit does not belong to the phenomenal world; it is holy and sanctified above material existence. If the spirit of man belonged to the elemental existence, the eye could see it, the ear hear it, the hand touch. As long as these five senses cannot perceive it, the proof is unquestioned that it does not belong to the elemental world and, therefore, is beyond death or mortality, which are inseparable from that material realm of existence. If being is not subject to the limitation of material life, it is not subject to mortality.

There are many other proofs of the immortality of the spirit of man. These are but a few of them. Salutations!

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12. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 48-49) continued

It is unclear why `Abdu'l-Bahá moved to a hotel. According to his diarist, `Abdu'l-Bahá had stated that a “traveller must stay in a hotel.” Others said that `Abdu'l-Bahá felt that people would be reluctant to come to a private home. Still others⁴⁷ thought that too many people were coming to the home, either leaving him with too little private time or imposing a heavy burden on the Maxwell household.

`Abdu'l-Bahá exercised a magnetic influence, even on those who had not yet met him. The story of Annie Savage, a “Dickens’ type of spinster,” illustrates such an influence, as told by her to Dorothy Ward (now Wade):

[Annie Savage] had read in the paper that he [`Abdu'l-Bahá] was coming. She said to her sisters, “I’m going to see that man.” They said, “Why on earth would you want to see a foreign man like that?” She said, “I must go.” She got into her little cart and horse, and came. She said, “I was so shy when I saw him. He motioned for me to come to that side, but, I couldn’t. I was so shy, but it was so wonderful just to stand there and see him,” although I knew nothing about him, nothing about the [Bahá'í] Faith.⁴⁸

Others, like Mildred (“Milli”) Rina Gordon, who became a well-known Montreal comedienne, and Rosemary Sala (née Gillies) would recall having a vision of `Abdu'l-Bahá at the same time, but not encountering the Bahá'í Faith until many years later.⁴⁹

⁴⁷For example, Dorothy Wade (1990), whose mother, like herself, was a housekeeper in the Maxwell home. I [Will van den Hoonaard] concur with this view. `Abdu'l-Bahá’s statement that travellers must stay in a hotel can be seen as a courteous way of making his wish known to the Maxwell household.

⁴⁸Wade (1990)

⁴⁹Gordon (1990)

Monday, September 2, 1912

1. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 237-240)

After the morning obligatory prayer Mrs Maxwell came to `Abdu'l-Bahá and said that the people were changing and becoming interested. Her neighbor, who had previously reproached her, was so enchanted after visiting `Abdu'l-Bahá that she telephoned to request that He visit her home. She also suggested that `Abdu'l-Bahá use her carriage every day.

After the Master visited and encouraged this neighbor, He went to the hotel [the Hotel Windsor] and rented three rooms. On the way back to the Maxwell home, the Master bought some valuable rings to give as gifts. A large number of people were waiting for Him and attained new spiritual heights and powers through His discourses.

One of His talks concerned the abandonment of blind imitation and the elimination of those customs and dogmas that are contrary to the fundamental truth of the religion of God. He said: When educated people see the priests taking bread and wine in their hands, blowing a few breaths over them and saying that the bread and wine are now changed into the flesh and blood of Christ, or hear them saying that by making a confession before a priest their sins are pardoned, they will begin to despair of their religion and become totally irreligious.

At lunch time the Master invited a number of people to the table, saying: `Come! We are in Montreal, Canada, in this home, eating Persian rice which has been cooked by Mírzá Ahmad. This has a relish all its own; what a tale it makes! Continuing, He said:

To be grateful for the blessings of God in time of want and trouble is necessary. In the abundance of blessings everyone can be grateful. It is said that Sultán Mahmúd cut a melon and gave a portion of it to Ayáz who ate it cheerfully and expressed gratitude. When the Sultán ate a little of the same melon, he found it bitter. He asked, `How did you eat such a bitter melon and show no sign of disliking it?' Ayáz answered, `I had eaten many sweet and palatable things from the hands of the Sultán and I thought it very unworthy of me to express dislike on eating a slightly bitter thing today.' Thus man, who is immersed in the blessings of God, should not be grieved if he experiences a little trouble. He should not forget the manifold divine bounties.

In the afternoon, professors, clergy and press representatives came one after another to visit `Abdu'l-Bahá. The samovar was steaming and fruits and sweets were served to all. That His Persian servants in their Eastern attire served the guests was considered a social novelty and was reported in the press.

One of `Abdu'l-Bahá talks was this:

Because of material civilization, industry has progressed and sciences and arts have burgeoned but at the same time weapons of war and bloodshed designed for the destruction of the edifice of humanity have multiplied and political problems have vastly increased. Hence, this material civilization cannot become the means of comfort and ease for all until it acquires spiritual power and the attributes of a divine civilization. Rather, the difficulties will increase and the troubles will multiply.

Continuing, He said:

The government of the United States of America has recently provided fifteen million dollars toward the cost of building new battleships. Before international peace is established, a great war will in all certainty take place. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá made many such important addresses and all who heard Him were eloquent in their praise and adoration of Him.

Today ‘Abdu'l-Bahá moved into the Hotel Windsor. As He was leaving for a meeting at Mr and Mrs Maxwell's home, he took the tram. We asked whether we could call for a carriage. He said: ‘Oh, it matters little. This saves expense. There is a difference of one dollar in the fare.’ He was very careful over this type of personal expense but when He reached the home of Mr and Mrs Maxwell, He gave one pound to each of their servants.

Although two adjoining rooms had been set with chairs in rows, there was still not enough space. We all felt the absence of the Eastern friends. Everyone wished they were present so they too could witness the excitement and joy that was engendered by the talk of the Master, who spoke on the inherent imperfection of the world of nature and its ultimate perfection through divine education. After the Master's talk each guest came to shake His hand and received His blessing yet when He went upstairs, the majority followed Him, especially the new seekers.

2. “‘Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada” by Amine De Mille, *‘Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada*, 1962 (p 57)

After each public appearance, the stream of visitors to the Maxwell home increased, until the house was no longer large enough to accommodate them all. So, on Wednesday, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá moved into a suite in the Windsor Hotel. Here larger crowds poured in and out, seeking His guidance. Untiringly, with divine patience and insight, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá gave of His love and wisdom. Nowhere did He meet opposition, criticism or rebuff. All doors opened before Him, all hearts responded to His magic word. The believers were never far from Him all during these exalted hours. Well aware in Whose radiance they bathed, they forsook their business and

homes, day after day, to drink of the spiritual water offered so freely, with such humility and sweetness.

3. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 49-50)

`Abdu'l-Bahá's visit gained fame when he received even more visitors on Monday. He breakfasted with a number of invited guests. In the morning, he visited a neighbour of the Maxwells who had previously reproached May Maxwell, but who now begged her on the telephone to have `Abdu'l-Bahá visit her. Afterwards, he moved into the Windsor Hotel in the centre of the city, taking a suite of three rooms. No other hotel in Montreal was so identified with splendour and elegance. The architect, G. H. Worthington, conceived this Second Empire structure with Georgian and Renaissance details, in the 1870s. The hotel conferred "undisputed social dignity," and it had complete Egyptian and Turkish salons.⁵⁰ Dominion Square, which had the Windsor Hotel on one of its corners, gave Montreal its "Continental look."

In the afternoon, university professors, church ministers, and the press came to the hotel. A reporter from the *Toronto Star Weekly* interviewed him and asked if `Abdu'l-Bahá intended to visit Toronto or any cities in western Canada. He replied it would be impossible at that time, "But you may tell your people, that I am very pleased with your country. It is a prosperous and delightful land," whereupon he handed the reporter a "handsome gold ring,"⁵¹ a number of which he had bought on his way to the hotel. The samovars steaming, tea and sweets were served to all by `Abdu'l-Bahá's Persian attendants.

In the evening, `Abdu'l-Bahá took a streetcar to the Maxwell house. Montreal had one of the most progressive street railway systems in North America, totalling some 232 track miles and `Abdu'l-Bahá found his way around the city with relative ease. In preparing to go to the Maxwells, the Bahá'í friends asked if they should call a carriage for him, whereupon he replied, "It matters little. It saves expenses. There is a difference of one dollar in the fare." After his

⁵⁰Information taken from d'Iberville-Moreau (1975). The old part of the Windsor Hotel, already seriously damaged by fire in 1957, was demolished around 1960, making way for a modern bank building, the tallest in the British Commonwealth in 1962, but a wing of the hotel built in 1906 remains. The hotel occupied the length of a whole block, facing Dominion Square. It is not known what room `Abdu'l-Bahá stayed in, or where the hotel's guest book, presumably containing his signature, went. For background information on this historic building see *The Gazette*, 13 September 1985, 3 October 1987, and 31 October 1987.

⁵¹Ward, 1979: 137 (no source indicated, however).

arrival, he gave one sterling pound to each of the servants.⁵² He spoke in the drawing room on Pine Avenue, a meeting which was well attended. After the meeting, he shook hands with all and retired upstairs to his room, granting private audiences to certain individuals.

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4. The Imperfection of Nature⁵³

Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. William Sutherland Maxwell

2 September 1912

Nature is the material world. When we look upon it, we see that it is dark and imperfect. For instance, if we allow a piece of land to remain in its natural condition, we will find it covered with thorns and thistles; useless weeds and wild vegetation will flourish upon it, and it will become like a jungle. The trees will be fruitless, lacking beauty and symmetry; wild animals, noxious insects and

reptiles will abound in its dark recesses. This is the incompleteness and imperfection of the world of nature. To change these conditions, we must clear the ground and cultivate it so that flowers may grow instead of thorns and weeds--that is to say, we must illumine the dark world of nature. In their primal natural state, the forests are dim, gloomy, impenetrable. Man opens them to the light, clears away the tangled underbrush and plants fruitful trees. Soon the wild woodlands and jungle are changed into productive orchards and beautiful gardens; order has replaced chaos; the dark realm of nature has become illumined and brightened by cultivation.

If man himself is left in his natural state, he will become lower than the animal and continue to grow more ignorant and imperfect. The savage tribes of central Africa are evidences of this. Left in their natural condition, they have sunk to the lowest depths and degrees of barbarism, dimly groping in a world of mental and moral obscurity. If we wish to illumine this dark plane of human existence, we must bring man forth from the hopeless captivity of nature, educate him and show him the pathway of light and knowledge, until, uplifted from his condition of ignorance, he becomes wise and knowing; no longer savage and revengeful, he becomes civilized and kind; once evil and sinister, he is endowed with the attributes of heaven. But left in

⁵²According to notes found in EVH, destined for *Star of the West*, 19 `Abdu'l-Bahá gave the "butler, the nurse and the maid" each a "five-dollar gold piece".

⁵³*The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (pp 308-312)

his natural condition without education and training, it is certain that he will become more depraved and vicious than the animal, even to the extreme degree witnessed among African tribes who practice cannibalism. It is evident, therefore, that the world of nature is incomplete, imperfect until awakened and illumined by the light and stimulus of education.

In these days there are new schools of philosophy blindly claiming that the world of nature is perfect. If this is true, why are children trained and educated in schools, and what is the need of extended courses in sciences, arts and letters in colleges and universities? What would be the result if humanity were left in its natural condition without education or training? All scientific discoveries and attainments are the outcomes of knowledge and education. The telegraph, phonograph, telephone were latent and potential in the world of nature but would never have come forth into the realm of visibility unless man through education had penetrated and discovered the laws which control them. All the marvelous developments and miracles of what we call civilization would have remained hidden, unknown and, so to speak, nonexistent, if man had remained in his natural condition, deprived of the bounties, blessings and benefits of education and mental culture. The intrinsic difference between the ignorant man and the astute philosopher is that the former has not been lifted out of his natural condition, while the latter has undergone systematic training and education in schools and colleges until his mind has awakened and unfolded to higher realms of thought and perception; otherwise, both are human and natural.

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high. This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power. God has purposed that the darkness of the world of nature shall be dispelled and the imperfect attributes of the natal self be effaced in the effulgent reflection of the Sun of Truth. The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies. They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

If the world of nature were perfect and complete in itself, there would be no need of such

training and cultivation in the human world--no need of teachers, schools and universities, arts and crafts. The revelations of the Prophets of God would not have been necessary, and the heavenly Books would have been superfluous. If the world of nature were perfect and sufficient for mankind, we would have no need of God and our belief in Him. Therefore, the bestowal of all these great helps and accessories to the attainment of divine life is because the world of nature is incomplete and imperfect. Consider this Canadian country during the early history of Montreal when the land was in its wild, uncultivated and natural condition. The soil was unproductive, rocky and almost uninhabitable-- vast forests stretching in every direction. What invisible power caused this great metropolis to spring up amid such savage and forbidding conditions? It was the human mind. Therefore, nature and the effect of nature's laws were imperfect. The mind of man remedied and removed this imperfect condition, until now we behold a great city instead of a savage unbroken wilderness. Before the coming of Columbus America itself was a wild, uncultivated expanse of primeval forest, mountains and rivers--a very world of nature. Now it has become the world of man. It was dark, forbidding and savage; now it has become illumined with a great civilization and prosperity. Instead of forests, we behold productive farms, beautiful gardens and prolific orchards. Instead of thorns and useless vegetation, we find flowers, domestic animals and fields awaiting harvest. If the world of nature were perfect, the condition of this great country would have been left unchanged.

If a child is left in its natural state and deprived of education, there is no doubt that it will grow up in ignorance and illiteracy, its mental faculties dulled and dimmed; in fact, it will become like an animal. This is evident among the savages of central Africa, who are scarcely higher than the beast in mental development.

The conclusion is irresistible that the splendours of the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, have been the source and cause of human upbuilding and civilization. The world of nature is the kingdom of the animal. In its natural condition and plane of limitation the animal is perfect. The ferocious beasts of prey have been completely subject to the laws of nature in their development. They are without education or training; they have no power of abstract reasoning and intellectual ideals; they have no touch with the spiritual world and are without conception of God or the Holy Spirit. The animal can neither recognize nor apprehend the spiritual power of man and makes no distinction between man and itself, for the reason that its susceptibilities are limited to the plane of the senses. It lives under the bondage of nature and nature's laws. All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books--mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day

who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit-- deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

This is not the glory of man. The glory of man is in the knowledge of God, spiritual susceptibilities, attainment to transcendent powers and the bounties of the Holy Spirit. The glory of man is in being informed of the teachings of God. This is the glory of humanity. Ignorance is not glory but darkness. Can these souls who are steeped in the lower strata of ignorance become informed of the mysteries of God and the realities of existence while Jesus Christ was without knowledge of them? Is the intellect of these people greater than the intellect of Christ? Christ was heavenly, divine and belonged to the world of the Kingdom. He was the embodiment of spiritual knowledge. His intellect was superior to these philosophers, His comprehension deeper, His perception keener, His knowledge more perfect. How is it that He overlooked and denied Himself everything in this world? He attached little importance to this material life, denying Himself rest and composure, accepting trials and voluntarily suffering vicissitudes because He was endowed with spiritual susceptibilities and the power of the Holy Spirit. He beheld the splendors of the divine Kingdom, embodied the bounties of God and possessed ideal powers. He was illumined with love and mercy, and so, likewise, were all the Prophets of God.

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5. MATERIALISM NO PHILOSOPHY, SAYS ORIENTAL SEER

Philosophy Founded on Nature is Bankrupt Declares Abdu'l-Baha

Montreal Daily Star, Tuesday, September 3, 1912

“The Imperfection of Nature” was the subject of Abdu’l-Baha’s discourse and he showed that the earth if left to itself without the application of human intelligence and labour would remain forever a barren wilderness. In the same way man, unless touched by the divine rays would remain a savage.

That the godless materialistic philosophy of the present age is hopelessly bankrupt and of no benefit to the human race was emphatically declared by Abdu’l-Baha.

“The animals themselves have reached the same plane of intellectuality without so much deep cogitation... to them God is nonexistent and they have no souls and no spiritual aspirations. They are mere creatures of the senses.

“No, the material world is not perfect and despite all the sayings of contemporaneous philosophers, nothing but the divine message, the ray of the sun of reality such as was brought to us by His Holiness the Christ, will ever lift up mankind...

“It is to lift man up out of his natural state and imbue him with a sense of the divine that God has sent his holy prophets to give their messages. They are the gardeners of God, and mankind are the wild growths that are the object of their cultivation out of the natural state. Without the message of God, from age to age, man would relapse into a state of barbarity and become like unto wild animals.”

Tuesday, September 3, 1912

1. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 240-242)

The morning was cloudy and rainy. At the hotel the Master was presented with some newspaper articles reporting last night's meeting and giving an account of His talk. Dr Faríd arrived today from Boston to join us. As some professors and clergymen had come by to visit the Master, He spoke to them on the relationship of human souls, universal peace and the harm caused by prejudices. His words were particularly enjoyed by the professors from the university and the ministers showed their humility. After giving a detailed description of the teachings of the Supreme Pen, He said:

This is the purpose of the people of Bahá. Would you not like to serve such an ideal? I hope you will put forth effort in this direction so that the world of men may find real unity, become released from prejudice and be freed from war and bloodshed. Our efforts are for this. Bahá'u'lláh has opened a broad vista to humanity. For instance, when the people of different religions, races and nations were reviling each other, He addressed the people of the world saying, 'O people! Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch.'

The minister from the black church extended an invitation to the Master to speak at his church. Because of the lack of time, the Master gave His apologies. Although the Master had intended to stay in Montreal for only two or three days, His visit had lengthened into a week. The fame of the Master had spread throughout the vicinity. Newspapers printed accounts of the meetings and many of the tributes to `Abdu'l-Bahá. The Master had requested copies of the news stories to be sent to the friends in the East. The response was so generous that one room was completely filled.

During the afternoon, while cheering the friends, He also attended to the mail and read petitions from the friends of the East and the West. At one moment He was answering important questions and the next He was dictating words conducive to the betterment of the social status of women and their confirmation in the Kingdom of God.

When the guests had left and the Master was completely exhausted, He went out alone for a walk to refresh Himself. He then boarded a tram which took Him far out of the city, then another tram which went out of the city by another route and finally took a taxi. The driver asked for the name of the hotel but `Abdu'l-Bahá did not know. He pointed to him to go straight ahead and, suddenly, there was the hotel. With His hair dishevelled and His smiling face, He told us how He had gotten lost. 'Once in the Holy Land,' He said, 'Áqá Faraj lost the way to Yirkih. I

advised him to loosen the reins of the animal. When the ass was left to itself it went straight to its destination. Today I pointed to the chauffeur to go straight on and by chance I reached my hotel among all these hotels.'

That evening He spoke to a meeting of the Socialist Club with majesty and dignity. The audience lined His way and the chairman, who was speaking as the Master arrived, stepped forward, grasped His hand and led Him to the podium. The president introduced the Master in most glowing terms, concluding, 'Now, `Abdu'l-Bahá will teach us the principles of brotherhood, prosperity and the upliftment of the poor.'

As the Master was delivering His address on economics and the adjustment of society according to the principle of moderation, the audience broke into spontaneous applause, clapping their hands with joy and excitement. At the end, the chairman sought `Abdu'l-Bahá's permission for those who had questions to ask them. Every answer evoked further applause and admiration to such an extent that the walls of the building seemed to vibrate to their foundations.

The meeting continued to such a late hour that the audience itself began to realize that to continue would not only be impolite but might also be injurious to `Abdu'l-Bahá's health. As the Master moved towards His carriage, the people surrounded Him, demonstrating their heartfelt reverence and humility. `Abdu'l-Bahá, often moved to express His thankfulness for the help and assistance of the Blessed Beauty, said, 'Praise be to God that the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abhá are descending continually. Mr Woodcock used to say that Montreal was a city of Catholics and the center of intolerance. Now let him come and see what has transpired here. Not a sound can be heard from the Catholics.'

2. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 50-51)

Tuesday was a cloudy and dull day, interspersed with showers. `Abdu'l-Bahá was once again meeting with professors and ministers. One of the first callers was the principal of McGill University, Dr. William Peterson. To him, `Abdu'l-Bahá explained the Bahá'í principles, adding:

these are the aims of the people of Bahá'u'lláh. Do you not wish to do the same work? You also should strive that the real oneness of the world of humanity may be realised; that mankind may be free from prejudices and relieved from wars and conflicts. It is for

*this that we are striving.*⁵⁴

A pastor from a Negro Church in Montreal came by, hoping that `Abdu'l-Bahá would have time to speak to his congregation on St. Antoine Street.

The afternoon was spent reading the mail and receiving more guests. The guests left, and `Abdu'l-Bahá, who was quite tired, decided to go out alone for a walk. He used the opportunity to take a streetcar that went far out of central Montreal and then took yet another streetcar. One unconfirmed account has `Abdu'l-Bahá going towards the east end of the city, the francophone area, and visiting Parc Lafontaine.⁵⁵ `Abdu'l-Bahá then took a taxi and guided it back to the Windsor Hotel, although he could not remember the hotel's name.

His evening address to 500 socialists at Coronation Hall at 204 St. Lawrence Street,⁵⁶ (now 1074 Boulevard St. Laurent), on the topic of "The Economic Happiness of the Human Race," gave `Abdu'l-Bahá an opportunity to expound Bahá'í economic teachings. Mr. H.A. Goulden, president of the socialist group, was speaking when `Abdu'l-Bahá arrived, but the president stepped forward to welcome him. He introduced him as one who will "teach us the principle of brotherhood, prosperity, and upliftment of the poor." The audience broke into spontaneous applause, and "divided into the surging sea of joy which was stirred within them." The question period was interrupted by further outbursts of applause "so intense that the walls of the building seemed to vibrate to the foundation." Only politeness and a concern for the health of `Abdu'l-Bahá ended the meeting.

3. Bahá'í Economics⁵⁷

`Abdu'l-Bahá's address to Socialists and labour leaders of the day, Coronation Hall

⁵⁴From document destined for publication in *Star of the West*, 19, found in EVH.

⁵⁵Léonard, 1988

⁵⁶*Montreal Daily Star*, 3 September 1912, p. 9; National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962: 31; and Mahmoud-i-Zarqání, n.d.: 134-35. *La Patrie* (4 September 1912) refers to this building as "Corinthian Hall". According to Anderson (1993), it was Honoré Jaxon who apparently arranged `Abdu'l-Bahá's meeting with the socialists. The ground floor of the building is currently (1995) occupied by a row of Vietnamese stores. The entrance used by `Abdu'l-Bahá is boarded up.

⁵⁷ *`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada*, pp10-13

It seems as though all creatures can exist singly and alone. For example, a tree can exist solitary and alone on a given prairie or in a valley or on the mountainside. An animal upon a mountain or a bird soaring in the air might live a solitary life. They are not in need of cooperation or solidarity. Such animated beings enjoy the greatest comfort and happiness in their respective solitary lives.

On the contrary, man cannot live singly and alone. He is in need of continuous cooperation and mutual help. For example, a man living alone in the wilderness will eventually starve. He can never, singly and alone, provide himself with all the necessities of existence. Therefore, he is in need of cooperation and reciprocity. The mystery of this phenomenon, the cause thereof is this: that mankind has been created from one single origin, has branched off from one family. Thus, in reality, all mankind represents one family. God has not created any difference. He has created all as one that thus this family might live in perfect happiness and well-being.

Regarding reciprocity and cooperation, each member of the body politic should live in the utmost comfort and welfare because each individual member of humanity is a member of the body politic, and if one member is in distress or is afflicted with some disease, all the other members must necessarily suffer. For example, a member of the human organism is the eye. If the eye should be affected, that affliction would affect the whole nervous system. Hence, if a member of the body politic becomes afflicted, in reality, from the standpoint of sympathetic connection, all will share that affliction since this [one afflicted] is a member of the group of members, a part of the whole. Is it possible for one member or part to be in distress and the other members to be at ease? It is impossible! Hence, God has desired that in the body politic of humanity each one shall enjoy perfect welfare and comfort.

Although the body politic is one family, yet, because of lack of harmonious relations some members are comfortable and some in direst misery; some members are satisfied and some are hungry; some members are clothed in most costly garments and some families are in need of food and shelter. Why? Because this family lacks the necessary reciprocity and symmetry. This household is not well arranged. This household is not living under a perfect law. All the laws which are legislated do not ensure happiness. They do not provide comfort. Therefore, a law must be given to this family by means of which all the members of this family will enjoy equal well-being and happiness.

Is it possible for one member of a family to be subjected to the utmost misery and to abject poverty and for the rest of the family to be comfortable? It is impossible unless those members of the family be senseless, atrophied, inhospitable, unkind. Then they would say, "Though these members do belong to our family, let them alone. Let us look after ourselves. Let them die. So

long as I am comfortable, I am honoured, I am happy—this my brother—let him die. If he be in misery, let him remain in misery, so long as I am comfortable. If he is hungry, let him remain so; I am satisfied. If he is without clothes, so long as I am clothed, let him remain as he is. If he is shelterless, homeless, so long as I have a home, let him remain in the wilderness.”

Such utter indifference in the human family is due to lack of control, to lack of a working law, to lack of kindness in its midst. If kindness had been shown to the members of this family, surely all the members thereof would have enjoyed comfort and happiness.

Bahá'u'lláh has given instructions regarding every one of the questions confronting humanity. He has given teachings and instructions with regard to every one of the problems with which man struggles. Among them are [the teachings] concerning the question of economics, that all the members of the body politic may enjoy through the working out of this solution the greatest happiness, welfare and comfort without any harm or injury attacking the general order of things. Thereby no difference or dissension will occur. No sedition or contention will take place. This solution is this:

First and foremost is the principle that to all the members of the body politic shall be given the greatest achievements of the world of humanity. Each one shall have the utmost welfare and well-being. To solve this problem we must begin with the farmer; there will we lay a foundation for system and order because the peasant class and the agricultural class exceed other classes in the importance of their service. In every village there must be established a general storehouse which will have a number of revenues.

The first revenue will be that of the tenth or tithes.

The second revenue [will be derived] from the animals.

The third revenue, from the minerals; that is to say, every mine prospected or discovered, a third thereof will go to this vast storehouse.

The fourth is this: whosoever dies without leaving any heirs, all his heritage will go to the general storehouse.

Fifth, if any treasures shall be found on the land, they should be devoted to this storehouse.

All these revenues will be assembled in this storehouse.

As to the first, the tenths or tithes: We will consider a farmer, one of the peasants. We will look into his income. We will find out for instance, what is his annual revenue and also what are his expenditures. Now, if his income be equal to his expenditures, from such a farmer nothing whatever will be taken. That is, he will not be subjected to taxation of any sort, needing as he does all his income. Another farmer may have expenses running up to one thousand dollars, we will say, and his income is two thousand dollars. From such a one a tenth will be required,

because he has a surplus. But if his income be ten thousand dollars and his expenses one thousand dollars or his income twenty thousand dollars, he will have to pay as taxes, one fourth. If his income be one hundred thousand dollars, and his expenses five thousand dollars, one third will he have to pay because he has still a surplus since his expenses are five thousand and his income one hundred thousand. If he pays, say, thirty-five thousand dollars, in addition to the expenditure of five thousand he still has sixty thousand left. But if his expenses be ten thousand and his income two hundred thousand, then he must give an even half because ninety thousand will be in that case the sum remaining. Such a scale as this will determine allotment of taxes. All the income from such revenues will go to this general storehouse.

Then there must be considered such emergencies as follows: A certain farmer whose expenses run up to ten thousand dollars and whose income is only five thousand will receive necessary expenses from the storehouse. Five thousand dollars will be allotted to him so that he will not be in need.

Then the orphans will be looked after, all of whose expenses will be taken care of. The cripples in the village—all their expenses will be looked after. The poor in the village—their necessary expenses will be defrayed. And other members who for valid reasons are incapacitated—the blind, the old, the deaf—their comfort must be looked after. In the village no one will remain in need or in want. All will live in the utmost comfort and welfare. Yet no schism will assail the general order of the body politic.

Hence, the expenses or expenditures of the general storehouse are now made clear and its activities made manifest. The income of this general storehouse has been shown. Certain trustees will be elected by the people in a given village to look after these transactions. The farmers will be taken care of, and, if after all these expenses are defrayed, any surplus is found in the storehouse, it must be transferred to the national treasury.

This system is all thus ordered so that in the village the very poor will be comfortable, the orphans will live happily and well; in a word, no one will be left destitute. All the individual members of the body politic will thus live comfortably and well.

For larger cities, naturally, there will be a system on a larger scale. Were I to go into that solution the details thereof would be very lengthy.

The results of this [system] will be that each individual member of the body politic will live most comfortably and happily under obligation to no one. Nevertheless, there will be preservation of degree because in the world of humanity there must needs be degrees. The body politic may well be likened to an army. In this army there must be a general, there must be a sergeant, there must be a marshall, there must be the infantry; but all must enjoy the greatest

comfort and welfare.

God is not partial and is no respected of persons. He has made provision for all. The harvest comes forth for everyone. The rain showers upon everybody and the heat of the sun is destined to warm everyone. The verdure of the earth is for everyone. Therefore, there should be for all humanity the utmost happiness, the utmost comfort, the utmost well-being.

But if conditions are such that some are happy and comfortable and some in misery, some are accumulating exorbitant wealth and others are in dire want—under such a system it is impossible for man to be happy and impossible for him to win the good pleasure of God. God is kind to all. The good pleasure of God consists in the welfare of all the individual members of mankind.

A Persian king was one night in his palace, living in the greatest luxury and comfort. Through excessive joy and gladness he addressed a certain man, saying, “Of all my life this happiest moment. Praise be to God, from every point of prosperity appears and fortune smiles! My treasury is full and the army is well taken care of. My palaces are many; my land is unlimited; my family is well off; my honour and sovereignty are great. What more could I want?”

The poor man at the gate of his palace spoke out, saying: “O kind king! Assuming that you are from every point of view so happy, free from every worry and sadness, do you not worry for us? You say that on your own account you have no worries, but do you never worry about the poor in your land? In view of our needs and troubles, how can you rest in your palace, how can you even say that you are free from worries and sorrows? As a ruler you must not be so egoistic as to think of yourself alone, but you must think of those who are your subjects. When we are comfortable, then you will be comfortable; when we are in misery, how can you, as a king, be in happiness?”

The purport is this, that we are all inhabiting one globe of earth. In reality we are one family, and each one of us is a member of this family. We must all be in the greatest happiness and comfort, under a just rule and regulation which is according to the good pleasure of God, thus causing us to be happy, for this life is fleeting.

If man were to care for himself only he would be nothing but an animal, for only the animals are thus egoistic. If you bring a thousand sheep to a well to kill nine hundred and ninety-nine, the one remaining sheep would go on grazing, not thinking of the others and worrying not at all about the lost, never bothering that its own kind had passed away, or had perished or been killed. To look after one’s self only is, therefore, an animal propensity. It is the animal propensity to live solitary and alone. It is the animal proclivity to look after one’s own comfort. But man was created to be a man—to be fair, to be just, to be merciful, to be kind to all his species, never

to be willing that he himself be well off while others are in misery and distress. This is an attribute of the animal and not of man. Nay, rather, man should be willing to accept hardships for himself in order that others may enjoy wealth; he should enjoy trouble for himself that others may enjoy happiness and well-being. This is the attribute of man. This becoming of man. Otherwise man is not man—he is less than the animal.

The man who thinks only of himself and is thoughtless of others is undoubtedly inferior to the animal because the animal is not possessed of the reasoning faculty. The animal is excused; but in man there is reason, the faculty of justice, the faculty of mercifulness. Possessing all these faculties, he must not leave them unused. He who is so hard-hearted as to think only of his own comfort, such a one will not be called man.

Man is he who forgets his own interests for the sake of others. His own comfort he forfeits for the well-being of all. Nay, rather, his own life must he be willing to forfeit for the life of mankind. Such a man is the honour of the world of humanity. Such a man is the glory of the world of mankind. Such a man is the one who wins eternal bliss. Such a man is near to the threshold of God. Such a man is the very manifestation of eternal happiness. Otherwise, men are like animals, exhibiting the same proclivities and propensities as the world of animals. What distinction is there? What prerogatives, what perfection? None whatever! Animals are better even—thinking only of themselves and negligent of the needs of others.

Consider how the greatest men in the world—whether among prophets or philosophers—all have forfeited their their own comfort, have sacrificed their own pleasure for the well-being of humanity. They have sacrificed their own lives for the body politic. They have sacrificed their own wealth for that of the general welfare. They have forfeited their own honour for the honour of mankind. Therefore, it becomes evident that this is the highest attainment for the world of humanity.

We ask God to endow human souls with justice so that they may be fair, and may strive to provide for the comfort of all, that each member of humanity may pass his life in the utmost comfort and welfare. Then this material world will become the very paradise of the Kingdom, this elemental earth will be in a heavenly state and all the servants of God will live in the utmost joy, happiness and gladness. We must all strive and concentrate all our thoughts in order that such happiness may accrue to the world of humanity.

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4. APOSTLE OF PEACE MEETS SOCIALISTS

Abdu'l Baha's Novel Scheme For Distribution of Surplus Wealth

The Gazette, Montreal, Wednesday, September 4, 1912

Passing from the inviting atmosphere of a drawing room meeting held in a Pine Avenue residence on Monday night to a socialistic and very cosmopolitan gathering held in Coronation Hall, associated with Jewish strikers, Abdu'l Baha the apostle of peace and concord exhibited his catholicity of spirit last night, and also developed in his address something more in the shape of practical politics as he unfolded a scheme for dealing with the superfluous wealth of a nation. How to obtain economic happiness was the theme of Abdu'l Baha's address.

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Wednesday, September 4, 1912

1. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 242-244)

An account of the Master's talk at the Socialist Club and its influence was published in glowing terms in the newspapers. The force of His explanations and the persuasiveness of His proofs were the talk of the day. Many newcomers came to visit Him. The friends told the Master how happy they were to see the extent to which the Cause of God had penetrated the hearts. `Abdu'l-Bahá said in reply:

The greatness of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh will be known when they are acted upon and practised. Not one of a hundred has as yet come into force. All of your thoughts should be turned toward bringing these blessed teachings into practice.

When the translations of some of the newspaper articles were read to `Abdu'l-Bahá, He said, again, `This is all through the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty. Otherwise, even if the king of Persia had come here he would not have been able to bring about even one such meeting.'

In the afternoon, for a change of routine, the Master took the elevator down from the seventh floor and went for an automobile ride to the foot of a mountain outside the city limits. It is a fine place where people go for recreation. It has a cable car, which took the Master and His companions up the mountain. The side of the mountain was perpendicular like a wall. The Master said, `This cable car is like a balloon flying in the air.' It made one nervous to look down. When we reached the top, the Master walked around. It was a magnificent sight, with a view of the whole city stretched before us. The canals, streets and orchards of the town were below. It appeared as if a beautifully painted picture had been spread before one's eyes.

While we were here, translations of other accounts of the meetings that had been published in the evening newspapers were read to Him. Suddenly He cried out:

O Bahá'u'lláh! May I be a sacrifice for Thee. O Bahá'u'lláh! May my life be offered up for Thee. Thou hast spoken the Word which cannot be refuted. What a wonderful Cause Thou hast founded! It satisfies every assemblage! Each group testifies to its greatness. In the churches it shakes the souls; it excites the Theosophists; it imparts spirituality to the spiritualists; it makes the Unitarians aware of the reality of unity; it makes the socialists contented and grateful and inspires joy and happiness in the peace meetings. There is no refuge for any denomination except in submission to it. It is a miracle! It is the greatest force in the world of existence. This is all through the assistance of the Blessed Beauty. If healing the lame and crippled is a miracle, it can also be produced by a dose of medicine. This is no great achievement.

From here the Master and His companions went to the home of Mr and Mrs Maxwell where letters from the East were given to Him. He read the petitions of the friends. Among them was a letter from Mírzá Haydar-ʿAlí, in which he dwelt on the greatness and significance of the journey of the Master. The Master said:

Yes, the value and greatness of these travels are not known now but will be apparent later on. As we had no other intention except to offer devotion to the Threshold of the One True God, we were assisted and the brightness of divine favor and grace appeared.

Continuing, He said:

At the time of Muhammad's migration to Medina under divine protection, Abú Bakr,²⁶⁹ was with Him. He said to Abú Bakr, 'Be not afraid, God is with us.' These very words became afterwards the cause of his succession to the Caliphate because the word 'with us' included him also. Many proofs and arguments based on these words have been advanced. The value of this bounty, too, is not known now.

At a meeting in the evening at Mrs Maxwell's home, ʿAbdu'l-Bahá gave an address on spiritual brotherhood and the economic principles upheld by the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh which will be the cause of the salvation, prosperity and liberation of the nations of the world. This meeting was very special because the Master's talk was so influential. The audience was invited to light refreshments of sweets and beverages. Among the guests were Americans, as well as Turks and Arabs clothed in their splendid robes, all of whom were attracted to ʿAbdu'l-Bahá and fascinated by His demeanor and words.

2. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 51-52)

This was a day of pouring rain with cool temperatures. In the morning ʿAbdu'l-Bahá read newspaper accounts of his visit. He commented on the success of the meetings: "This is all through the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty [i.e. Bahá'u'lláh]. Otherwise even if the King of Persia had come here, he would not have been able to attract such meetings."⁵⁸

Despite the inclement weather, ʿAbdu'l-Bahá obviously enjoyed moving about the city, for in the afternoon he went on another car ride and took the elevator up the mountain, commenting that the perpendicular ride was "like a balloon which flies in the air."⁵⁹ The "Mountain Elevator," or incline-railway, was opened during 1886. The elevator consisted of two counter-balanced

⁵⁸Mahmoud-i-Zarqání, n.d.: 135

⁵⁹Ibid.

cable-drawn cars, climbing from Fletcher's Field to the top.⁶⁰ The thrilling ride up the mountain on the steam-driven elevator, which cost five cents, took the party to a spectacular lookout. On top, `Abdu'l-Bahá walked to and fro on the East-End Lookout, admiring the view.⁶¹ After descending from the mountain, he headed for 716 Pine Avenue West, where letters from the East were waiting for him.

During the evening, `Abdu'l-Bahá once again spoke at the Maxwell home⁶² to a large gathering of Americans, Canadians, Turks, and Arabs, who all enjoyed sweets and sherbet at the end of the evening.⁶³ The Maxwell home seemed a most appropriate place to have such gatherings. The building itself reflected "exquisite workmanship" and gave a "museum-like appearance."⁶⁴ Later, Shoghi Effendi would declare that the Maxwell Home "should be viewed in the nature of a national shrine, because of its association with [`Abdu'l-Bahá]⁶⁵ and that it was "destined to be regarded as the foremost Bahá'í shrine throughout that Dominion [Canada]."⁶⁶ The house would be given by Rúhíyyih Khánum - who was the two-year-old Mary Maxwell in 1912 - to the Bahá'ís of Canada in 1953.

⁶⁰Cooper, 1969: 126. The elevator structure became weak, and the "incline" stopped working in 1918 (*The Gazette*, 31 October 1981). It was demolished around 1930 (d'Iberville-Moreau, 1975: 141).

⁶¹The lookout consisted of an elegant wooden structure erected in 1906 by the architectural firm Maxwell, Marchand and Haskell, and was a favourite walking spot for Montrealers. The building partially collapsed, was demolished around 1930, and replaced by the present chalet (d'Iberville-Moreau, 1975: 143).

⁶²*Montreal Daily Star*, 3 September 1912, p. 9

⁶³Letter from W.S. Maxwell to Marion Holley, 18 March 1940, EVH

⁶⁴De Mille, 1962: 55

⁶⁵Shoghi Effendi, 1965: 38

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 48

Thursday, September 5, 1912

1. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (p. 52)

After three days of steady rain, Thursday was dry and warm. The Archbishop of Montreal, Msgr. Louis Joseph Paul Bruchési, paid a visit to `Abdu'l-Bahá, expressing his pleasure at the meeting and gratitude for 'the address concerning the purpose of the Manifestation of Christ and the other holy Manifestations.'⁶⁷ `Abdu'l-Bahá invited the Archbishop, who took great interest in Orientals,⁶⁸ to come to his public address at the St. James Methodist Church later that day. Other visitors included a rabbi⁶⁹ and the editor of an "illustrated magazine" from Toronto.

`Abdu'l-Bahá and his party arrived at St. James Methodist Church, on the north side of Saint-Catherine and west of Bleury. Inspired by French cathedral architecture, the church was one of the most beautiful in Montreal and was praised by many visitors.⁷⁰ The church, called the "Westminster Abbey of Canada,"⁷¹ and the "Cathedral Church of Methodism,"⁷² was the largest Methodist church in the world, seating 2,700 people. An electric sign announced that the "Prophet of the East" would deliver an address regarding the principles of the Bahá'í Cause and the "salvation of the world of humanity." `Abdu'l-Bahá expressed grave concern at people's habit of referring to him as a "Prophet"; he corrected that mistaken impression in his talk.⁷³

⁶⁷Mahmoud-i-Zarqání inadvertently refers to Bruchésu as a "Bishop" (n.d.: 136)

⁶⁸Louis Bruchési (1855-1939), after studying in Europe, was ordained in 1878. He occupied a progressive series of posts and appointments until his appointment as archbishop of Montreal in 1897. He was deeply interested in the temperance movement, forestry, hospitals and education. He introduced several nursing orders (Delaney and Tobin, 1961: 180).

⁶⁹There were five synagogues in Montreal, but the likely visitor was Rabbi Nathan Gordon of the (Reformed) Temple Emmanuel.

⁷⁰The church's cornerstone was laid in May 1844 (from a wall plaque). The church is now hidden behind nondescript commercial buildings (d'Iberville-Moreau, 1975: 112). Its front door is found in a row of shops along Ste-Catherine, between St-Alexandre and City Councillors. In 1926, land in front of the church was leased for commercial buildings, a year after the Methodist, Congregationalist and Presbyterian denominations merged to form the United Church of Canada. The church now serves as an inner-city institution, providing assistance to pensioners, welfare recipients, and the unemployed. It continues to face financial difficulties. There is currently (1995) a major \$8 million renovation project underway.

⁷¹*The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 18 November 1989

⁷²*Montreal Star*, 18 March 1978

⁷³Mahmoud-i-Zarqání, n.d.: 136

A crowd of 1,200 people⁷⁴ arose when `Abdu'l-Bahá came into the auditorium. Rev. Herbert Symonds, the Anglican vicar of Christ Church Cathedral, introduced him.⁷⁵ `Abdu'l-Bahá then spoke on "The Bahá'í Principles for the Happiness of the Human Race."⁷⁶ Recorder Robert Weir of the church thanked him for his lecture.⁷⁷ After the church visit, `Abdu'l-Bahá caught a cold and he had to delay his departure from Montreal.

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2. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 244-246)

The Bishop of Montreal came to visit the Master to express his admiration and gratitude for the Master's address concerning the purpose of the appearance of Christ and the other Manifestations. He was pleased to learn about other meetings and talks. The Master said to him, 'Tonight I shall speak at the Methodist church. You may come if you wish.'

The editor of an illustrated Toronto magazine was announced. He happily recorded a detailed account of the history and teachings of the Cause. Another visitor was a Jewish rabbi who became very enthusiastic when he heard the Master's explanations.

⁷⁴One account (Holley, 1942: 637) states that 1,200 were in attendance; a letter from W.S. Maxwell to Marion Holley, 18 March 1940, EVH, gives 1,500.

⁷⁵Letter from W.S. Maxwell to Marion Holley, 18 March 1940, EVH. The document mistakenly refers to him as "Rev. De Symonds." The *Montreal Directory* (Lovell, 1913: 47) mentions W. Sparling as the pastor for this church; the question remains why Rev. Symonds, and not Rev. Sparling, introduced `Abdu'l-Bahá. Rev. Herbert Symonds (1860-1921) came to Canada as a young man and was eventually appointed as Headmaster of Trinity College School in Port Hope, Ontario. In 1903, he was appointed vicar to Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal. Known as a liberal minister, he supported biblical criticism. He authored *Lectures on Christian Unity* in 1899 (*Canadian Who's Who*, 1910: 218). Dr. J. Ralph Watson, the current historian of the St. James United Church, suggests that Rev. Symonds, a liberal, might have been motivated by his beliefs "that all lovers of truth and seekers after God had a deep and fundamental bond of common interest and each was in duty bound to aid and encourage one another in the great quest." (Watson, personal communication to van den Hoonaard, 6 September 1995).

⁷⁶*Montreal Daily Star*, 3 September 1912, p. 9; National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 1962: 37

⁷⁷*La Patrie*, 6 September 1912, p. 12; *The Montreal Directory*, 1912: 1996, indicates that Robert Stanley Weir, D.C.L., was Recorder of Montreal City Hall.

One of `Abdu'l-Bahá's talks today was this:

The degree to which these different denominations testify to the greatness of the Cause of God has never been seen in past history. Even socialists say that although so many philosophers have written books on economic questions, the Bahá'í Cause has the solution.

When we arrived at the Methodist Church in the evening, we saw an electric illumined sign reading: `This evening the Prophet of the East will speak on the principles of the Bahá'í Faith and the salvation of the world of humanity.' When the translation of this announcement was read to the Master, He said, `So, people are calling me a prophet. Oh, would that they had omitted that word!' In order to correct this impression, in the course of His address He emphasized His devotion to Bahá'u'lláh.

`Abdu'l-Bahá went to the vestry where a number of ministers came to greet Him with such reverence and humility that it was really something to be seen. He then went into the auditorium and took a seat on the platform. The minister welcomed Him by motioning the audience to rise, which they immediately did to show their respect. The minister then made an introductory speech about the world's apathy to the commandments of the Gospel and the urgent need for laws of peace and harmony among the peoples of the West. Finally he urged the audience to listen carefully to the address and the new teachings given by `Abdu'l-Bahá.

The Master stood before the audience and spoke about the continuity of the Divine Bounties, the power and majesty of the Kingdom of God and these wonderful teachings. The audience was awakened to the Faith to such a degree that a judge named Mr Riger, who had previously heard of the Master and had come for the first time this evening to hear Him speak, stood and said, `Some have imagined that the succession of the Prophets and the bounties of God were limited. But tonight we have heard with our own ears these divinely ordained teachings from an Eastern prophet who is the successor of the Prophets of God. We will never forget his message. There is no doubt that these teachings of universal peace, the oneness of humanity and the distribution of wealth are in complete accord with the principles of economic law, the equality of rights and the adoption of one universal language. These are the basic principles for the progress of the world of humanity.' The minister then stood and said, `It is an error to think that the West has attained perfection and that the East has no bounties or teachings to offer to the West. `Abdu'l-Bahá has said many things which we have not heard before or understood.

The Master then chanted a prayer and publicly thanked the judge. Later, in the vestry, the clergymen were so deferential in His presence, they could not find words to express their gratitude. Of particular note was the judge, who repeatedly expressed his desire to become a

Bahá'í.

3. Talk at St. James Methodist Church⁷⁸

Praise be to God! It is with a deep realization of happiness that I am present here this evening, for I am looking upon the faces of those who are earnest in their search for reality and who sincerely long to attain knowledge of truth. God has created man and endowed him with the power of reason whereby he may arrive at valid conclusions. Therefore, man must endeavor in all things to investigate the fundamental reality. If he does not independently investigate, he has failed to utilize the talent God has bestowed upon him. I am pleased with the American people because, as a rule, they are independent seekers of the truth; their minds are actively employed instead of remaining idle and unproductive. This is most praiseworthy.

Some souls imagine that there is a cessation to the bounties of God, as if at one time the divine bestowals are poured out, at another time withheld from mankind and ceasing. If we carefully reflect upon this matter, we find that such a statement is in fact a denial of Divinity, for the reality of Divinity is evidenced by virtue of its outpourings or bestowals. The cessation of the bestowals of God at any time would be equivalent to the cessation of the sovereignty of God. The sun is the sun because of its ray and heat; it is the sun because of its bestowal; but if at any time its effulgence, splendor and radiance should cease to emanate, it would no longer be the sun. Consequently, it is inconceivable that the bounties of Divinity should cease, for the attributes of Divinity are everexistent. God has ever been divine; He hath ever exercised His sovereignty and still possesses everlasting divinity and sovereignty. He is like the sun, which has ever had its splendor, heat and radiance and will continue to possess these bounties and attributes. If at any time its splendor and heat should cease, it would no longer be pronounced the sun. Therefore, the sound reasoning mind concludes that the bounties of the Holy Spirit are continuous and that holy souls are ever the recipients of these divine emanations. The potency of the Holy Spirit is everlasting, not temporary; for the sanctity of the Holy Spirit is its power and efficacy manifest in the spirits it quickens. We pray that all of us may become recipients of its bestowals, that we may be illumined by the lights of heaven, edified through the teachings of God and imbued with the virtues of divine character, as mirrors reflecting the light of the sun. Unless the mirror reflects the sunlight, it is only dark, inanimate matter. Likewise, the hearts and spirits of mankind, when deprived and without their portion of the bounties of the Holy Spirit,

⁷⁸*The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (pp 312-319)

linger in the abyss of darkness and ignorance.

From time immemorial the divine teachings have been successively revealed, and the bounties of the Holy Spirit have ever been emanating. All the teachings are one reality, for reality is single and does not admit multiplicity. Therefore, the divine Prophets are one, inasmuch as They reveal the one reality, the Word of God. Abraham announced teachings founded upon reality, Moses proclaimed reality, Christ established reality and Bahá'u'lláh was the Messenger and Herald of reality. But humanity, having forsaken the one essential and fundamental reality which underlies the religion of God, and holding blindly to imitations of ancestral forms and interpretations of belief, is separated and divided in the strife, contention and bigotry of various sects and religious factions. If all should be true to the original reality of the Prophet and His teaching, the peoples and nations of the world would become unified, and these differences which cause separation would be lost sight of. To accomplish this great and needful unity in reality, Bahá'u'lláh appeared in the Orient and renewed the foundations of the divine teachings. His revelation of the Word embodies completely the teachings of all the Prophets, expressed in principles and precepts applicable to the needs and conditions of the modern world, amplified and adapted to present-day questions and critical human problems. That is to say, the words of Bahá'u'lláh are the essences of the words of the Prophets of the past. They are the very spirit of the age and the cause of the unity and illumination of the East and the West. The followers of His teachings are in conformity with the precepts and commands of all the former heavenly Messengers. Differences and dissensions, which destroy the foundations of the world of humanity and are contrary to the will and good pleasure of God, disappear completely in the light of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh; difficult problems are solved, unity and love are established. For the good pleasure of God is the effulgence of love and the establishment of unity and fellowship in the human world, whereas discord, contention, warfare and strife are satanic outcomes and contrary to the will of the Merciful. In order that human souls, minds and spirits may attain advancement, tranquillity and vision in broader horizons of unity and knowledge, Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed certain principles or teachings, some of which I will mention.

First, man must independently investigate reality, for the disagreements and dissensions which afflict and affect humanity primarily proceed from imitations of ancestral beliefs and adherences to hereditary forms of worship. These imitations are accidental and without sanction in the Holy Books. They are the outcomes of human interpretations and teachings which have arisen, gradually obscuring the real light of divine meaning and causing men to differ and dissent. The reality proclaimed in the heavenly Books and divine teachings is ever

conducive to love, unity and fellowship.

Second, the oneness of the world of humanity shall be realized, accepted and established. When we reflect upon this blessed principle, it will become evident and manifest that it is the healing remedy for all human conditions. All mankind are the servants of the glorious God, our Creator. He has created all. Assuredly He must have loved them equally; otherwise, He would not have created them. He protects all. Assuredly He loves His creatures; otherwise, He would not protect them. He provides for all, proving His love for all without distinction or preference. He manifests His perfect goodness and loving-kindness toward all. He does not punish us for our sins and shortcomings, and we are all immersed in the ocean of His infinite mercy. Inasmuch as God is clement and loving to His children, lenient and merciful toward our shortcomings, why should we be unkind and unforgiving toward each other? As He loves humanity without distinction or preference, why should we not love all? Can we conceive of a plan and policy superior to the divine purpose? Manifestly, we cannot. Therefore, we must strive to do the will of the glorious Lord and emulate His policy of loving all mankind. The wisdom and policy of God are reality and truth, whereas human policy is accidental and limited to our finite understanding. The policy of God is infinite. We must emulate His example. If a soul be ailing and infirm, we must produce remedies; if ignorant, we must provide education; if defective, we must train and perfect that which is lacking; if immature and undeveloped, we must supply the means of attainment to maturity. No soul should be hated, none neglected; nay, rather, their very imperfections should demand greater kindness and tender compassion. Therefore, if we follow the example of the Lord of divinity, we will love all mankind from our hearts, and the means of the unity of the world of humanity will become as evident and manifest to us as the light of the sun. And from our example the light of the love of God will be enkindled among men. For God is love, and all phenomena find source and emanation in that divine current of creation. The love of God haloes all created things. Were it not for the love of God, no animate being would exist. This is clear, manifest vision and truth unless a man is veiled by superstitions and a captive to imaginations, differentiating mankind according to his own estimate, loving some and hating others. Such an attitude is most unworthy and ignoble.

Third, religion must be the mainspring and source of love in the world, for religion is the revelation of the will of God, the divine fundamental of which is love. Therefore, if religion should prove to be the cause of enmity and hatred instead of love, its absence is preferable to its existence.

Fourth, religion must reconcile and be in harmony with science and reason. If the religious beliefs of mankind are contrary to science and opposed to reason, they are none other than

superstitions and without divine authority, for the Lord God has endowed man with the faculty of reason in order that through its exercise he may arrive at the verities of existence. Reason is the discoverer of the realities of things, and that which conflicts with its conclusions is the product of human fancy and imagination.

Fifth, prejudice--whether it be religious, racial, patriotic or political in its origin and aspect--is the destroyer of human foundations and opposed to the commands of God. God has sent forth His Prophets for the sole purpose of creating love and unity in the world of human hearts. All the heavenly Books are the written word of love. If they prove to be the cause of prejudice and human estrangement, they have become fruitless. Therefore, religious prejudice is especially opposed to the will and command of God. Racial and national prejudices which separate mankind into groups and branches, likewise, have a false and unjustifiable foundation, for all men are the children of Adam and essentially of one family. There should be no racial alienation or national division among humankind. Such distinctions as French, German, Persian, Anglo-Saxon are human and artificial; they have neither significance nor recognition in the estimation of God. In His estimate all are one, the children of one family; and God is equally kind to them. The earth has one surface. God has not divided this surface by boundaries and barriers to separate races and peoples. Man has set up and established these imaginary lines, giving to each restricted area a name and the limitation of a native land or nationhood. By this division and separation into groups and branches of mankind, prejudice is engendered which becomes a fruitful source of war and strife. Impelled by this prejudice, races and nations declare war against each other; the blood of the innocent is poured out, and the earth torn by violence. Therefore, it has been decreed by God in this day that these prejudices and differences shall be laid aside. All are commanded to seek the good pleasure of the Lord of unity, to follow His command and obey His will; in this way the world of humanity shall become illumined with the reality of love and reconciliation.

Sixth, the world of humanity is in need of the confirmations of the Holy Spirit. True distinction among mankind is through divine bestowals and receiving the intuitions of the Holy Spirit. If man does not become the recipient of the heavenly bestowals and spiritual bounties, he remains in the plane and kingdom of the animal. For the distinction between the animal and man is that man is endowed with the potentiality of divinity in his nature, whereas the animal is entirely bereft of that gift and attainment. Therefore, if a man is bereft of the intuitive breathings of the Holy Spirit, deprived of divine bestowals, out of touch with the heavenly world and negligent of the eternal truths, though in image and likeness he is human, in reality he is an animal; even as Christ declared, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born

of the Spirit is spirit." This means that if man be a captive of physical susceptibilities and be lacking the quickening of spiritual emotions, he is merely an animal. But every soul who possesses spiritual susceptibilities and has attained a goodly portion of the bestowals of the Holy Spirit is alive with the divine life of the higher Kingdom. The soul that is portionless and bereft is as dead. Therefore, He said, "Let the dead bury their dead." Just as the physical body of man is in need of its force of life, even so the human soul is in need of the divine animus and vivification emanating from the Holy Spirit. Without this vivification and sustenance, man would be an animal, nay, rather, dead.

Seventh, the necessity of education for all mankind is evident. Children especially must be trained and taught. If the parent cannot afford to do this owing to lack of means, the body politic must make necessary provision for its accomplishment. Through the broadening spirit of education illiteracy will disappear, and misunderstandings due to ignorance will pass away.

Eighth, universal peace will be established among the nations of the world by international agreement. The greatest catastrophe in the world of humanity today is war. Europe is a storehouse of explosives awaiting a spark. All the European nations are on edge, and a single flame will set on fire the whole of that continent. Implements of war and death are multiplied and increased to an inconceivable degree, and the burden of military maintenance is taxing the various countries beyond the point of endurance. Armies and navies devour the substance and possessions of the people; the toiling poor, the innocent and helpless are forced by taxation to provide munitions and armament for governments bent upon conquest of territory and defense against powerful rival nations. There is no greater or more woeful ordeal in the world of humanity today than impending war. Therefore, international peace is a crucial necessity. An arbitral court of justice shall be established by which international disputes are to be settled. Through this means all possibility of discord and war between the nations will be obviated.

Ninth, there must be an equality of rights between men and women. Women shall receive an equal privilege of education. This will enable them to qualify and progress in all degrees of occupation and accomplishment. For the world of humanity possesses two wings: man and woman. If one wing remains incapable and defective, it will restrict the power of the other, and full flight will be impossible. Therefore, the completeness and perfection of the human world are dependent upon the equal development of these two wings.

Tenth, there shall be an equality of rights and prerogatives for all mankind.

Eleventh, one language must be selected as an international medium of speech and communication. Through this means misunderstandings will be lessened, fellowship established and unity assured.

These are a few of the principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. He has provided the remedy for the ailments which now afflict the human world, solved the difficult problems of individual, social, national and universal welfare and laid the foundation of divine reality upon which material and spiritual civilization are to be founded throughout the centuries before us.

Praise be to God! I find these two great American nations highly capable and advanced in all that appertains to progress and civilization. These governments are fair and equitable. The motives and purposes of these people are lofty and inspiring. Therefore, it is my hope that these revered nations may become prominent factors in the establishment of international peace and the oneness of the world of humanity; that they may lay the foundations of equality and spiritual brotherhood among mankind; that they may manifest the highest virtues of the human world, revere the divine lights of the Prophets of God and establish the reality of unity so necessary today in the affairs of nations. I pray that the nations of the East and West shall become one flock under the care and guidance of the divine Shepherd. Verily, this is the bestowal of God and the greatest honor of man. This is the glory of humanity. This is the good pleasure of God. I ask God for this with a contrite heart.

O my Lord! Thou Who art ever-forgiving! Verily, this assembly hath turned its face toward Thy Kingdom. Verily, they are all of Thy flock, and Thou art the one Shepherd of all. O Thou real Shepherd! Educate and train Thy sheep in Thy green and verdant pastures. Suffer these birds of Thine to build their nests in Thy rose garden. Adorn Thine orchard with these fresh plants and flowers. Refresh these human trees by Thy shower of beneficence and favor. O God! Verily, we are all Thy servants--all Thine--and Thou art the One Lord. We all adore Thee, and Thou art the beneficent Master. O Lord! Render the eyes perceptive that they may witness the lights of Thy Kingdom. Render the ears attentive that they may hear the heavenly summons. Resuscitate the spirits that they may be exhilarated through the breath of the Holy Spirit. O Lord! Verily, we are weak, but Thou art almighty. We are poor, but Thou art rich. Have mercy upon us. Apportion unto us a goodly share of Thy realities, and lead us into the arena of Thine attainments. Thou art the Powerful. Thou art the Able. Thou art the kind Lord.

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4. APOSTLE OF PEACE SAID FAREWELL

Advocated Establishment of International Arbitration Court With Plenary Powers

The Gazette, Montreal, Friday, September 6, 1912

... Although the Oriental visitor had addressed meetings every night since Sunday, he had not really been heard by those who are only attracted by a central assembly.

The eastern prophet proceeded to reiterate the teachings of Baha'u'llah under a number of headings. Investigate independently the realities, he said, for dissensions result from lack of that. The oneness of the race, the necessity of education, the folly of racial, national and patriotic strife, and the cultivation of the spiritual life were all briefly touched upon. Then the prophet came to the question of international peace, and depicted the growing armaments in Europe and their burden on the people. His remedy was the establishment of an international tribunal, which would apparently have greater powers than that of the Hague.

In concluding Abdu'l-Baha expressed his appreciation of the justice and amity enjoyed on this continent and hoped the governments in America would play a leading part in establishing such a tribunal.

Mr. Recorder Weir, in moving a vote of thanks, said some people believed the race of prophets had become extinct, but it was a pleasure to listen to one who was in the lofty succession of the long line of prophets. He had brought a message that would not be speedily forgotten...

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Friday, September 6, 1912

1. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 246-248)

In the morning `Abdu'l-Bahá came into our room. When He saw the pile of newspapers which had been collected to send to the friends in the East, He asked, with surprise, `What have you done? What are all these newspapers for?' We replied that they were the signs of the power and influence of the Cause of God. After leaving the church last night, the Master had caught a cold and His voice was hoarse, so even though He had planned to leave Montreal, His departure was delayed for a few days. During this time He went nowhere except to the home of Mr and Mrs Maxwell. However, many came to visit Him at the hotel.

Mrs Maxwell said to Him, `At the time that I visited `Akká I despaired of ever having the blessing of children. Praise be to God! My supplications and your prayers at the Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh were accepted and I was blessed with a dear baby.'²⁷¹ Bestowing His grace and kindness upon her and the child, the Master said, `Children are the ornaments of the home. A home which has no children is like one without light.'

Mrs Maxwell said that her husband had used to say to her: `You have become a Bahá'í. Very well, you are responsible for this yourself. I have no hand in it. You must not speak to me about it anymore.' But now, she added, he was so proud of the Master's visit that if kings had come to their home he would not have felt so exalted. The room in which the Master stayed was considered by him to be holy and he would not allow anyone to enter it.

`Abdu'l-Bahá's advice to Mr Maxwell and others was this:

You must cling to those things which prove to be the cause of happiness for the world of man. You must show kindness to the orphans, give food to the hungry, clothe the naked and offer help to the poor so that you may be accepted in the Court of God.

Here is a quotation from one of the Tablets that was revealed today:

It is because the friends of California, and particularly those of San Francisco, have so frequently called and pleaded, expressed despair and wept and sent incessant supplications, that I have determined to go to California.

2. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 52-53)

On 6 September, the anniversary of Jacques Cartier's birth, `Abdu'l-Bahá spent most of the day in the Windsor Hotel, dropping into the room of his diarist, Mahmoud. Based on `Abdu'l-Bahá's previously planned itinerary, some newspapers announced that he already had left Montreal for Chicago.⁷⁹

Later that day, he went to the Maxwell home. The weather was seasonally cooler, but fair, a continuing reprieve from the wet and cold spell.

That evening May Maxwell expressed her profound gratitude at being "blessed with a dear baby," Mary. Mary, now two years old, sat often on `Abdu'l-Bahá's lap. He would stroke her curls, saying, "She is precious! She is precious!" Bahá'ís would later frequently refer to these words when, twenty-five years later, Mary Maxwell married Shoghi Effendi.

May Maxwell also shared with `Abdu'l-Bahá her thoughts to the effect that W.S. Maxwell had, at first, no interest in the Bahá'í Faith and that he had discouraged her from speaking to him about it. Now, however, her husband was extremely pleased with `Abdu'l-Bahá's stay in his home.⁸⁰ `Abdu'l-Bahá presented a rug to W.S. Maxwell.⁸¹ May Maxwell would later tell her daughter Mary that `Abdu'l-Bahá had said, in effect, "this is my home."

⁷⁹E.g., *Montreal Daily Herald*, 6 September 1912, p. 5; *La Presse*, 6 September 1912, p. 14; and *La Patrie*, 6 September 1912, p. 12

⁸⁰The story is told when `Abdu'l-Bahá saw W.S. Maxwell leaving the house with a set of golf clubs, he asked him where he was going. Mr. Maxwell said that he was going golfing and `Abdu'l-Bahá said in English, "Very good! Very good!"

⁸¹*Canadian Bahá'í News*, April 1971, p. 10

Saturday, September 7, 1912

1. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (p. 53)

Little is known about the activities of 7 September. Nevertheless, in the morning people continued to visit `Abdu'l-Bahá at the hotel. In the afternoon, he spoke to a group of other visitors.

Like a number of other days in Montreal, we lack certain details about `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the city. For example, the prime minister of Canada, Sir Robertó Borden, shared the same hotel during `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit, but we do not know if contact was ever made between `Abdu'l-Bahá and Borden, who had just arrived in Montreal from a successful trip to Great Britain. The year 1912 marked nearly a hundred years of peace between Great Britain and the United States. Following a mile-long parade with fireworks and bands – the inclement weather had cleared by then – the prime minister moved into the Windsor Hotel. There is thus no evidence that `Abdu'l-Bahá met Prime Minister Borden, either casually or at the lavish reception organized in the hotel on his behalf.⁸² Mahmoud's diary is silent on this point.

2. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 248-249)

Today `Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to a group of people who came to visit Him at the hotel. Here is some of what He explained:

As in the physical world there are four seasons, so in the realm of religion there is the season of heavenly and spiritual springtime. When its outpourings gradually diminish, the trees of existence cease to be verdant and creeping torpor spreads, it will become like winter. The souls will become withered and distressed and the soil of the hearts will become full of thorns and thistles. There will be no flowers, no hyacinths, no greenery, no pleasure, no freshness and no cheer. Then, once again, the divine spring will raise its tabernacle. The gardens of the world of humanity will become green and verdant, full of freshness and purity. The flowers of reality

⁸²van den Hoonaard combed the Borden Papers (M.G. 26, H. Volume 353) in the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa for any clues. The Memoir Notes and the Nominal Index (both Author and Subject) revealed no reference to `Abdu'l-Bahá, Abbas Effendi, or other similar designations. The list of 1,000 guests at the Prime Minister's reception at the hotel also produced no evidence of any contact.

will open and the trees of existence will bring forth enduring fruit. This is the law of God and is in accord with the world of creation and this is the cause for the reappearance of holy Manifestations Who effect renewal and change in religious laws and commandments.

In the afternoon the Master spoke about the oneness of the fundamental truths of the religions of God and the vain imaginings and beliefs of various peoples, saying:

The foundation of all religions is one and the aim of all creeds of the world is also one. All are believers in the oneness of God. All believe that a mediator between the Creator and the creatures is needed. The question is that to the Jews Moses is the last, to the Christians it is Christ, to the Muslims it is Muhammad and to the Parsis it is Zoroaster. But their differences are only those of names. If these names are set aside, it is evident that their aim is one. Every divine religious law was complete for its time. The renewal of the laws of God and the appearance of the Manifestations of the bounties of the Lord in each cycle are necessary. Thus the people who seek truth and inner meanings can discover the divine mysteries and become aware of the secrets of the Books of God. They know God to be the Supreme, His bounties infinite and the doors of His mercy unbarred. They believe in all the Prophets and affirm `No difference do we make between any of them' [Qur'án 2:130]. But those who adhere to outer meanings only, who worship outer form, cling to imitations and follow their superstitions. They use the allegories set forth in the verses of God to deny the Cause of the Lord of Signs. Therefore, offer thanks to God that you have attained unto reality, have responded affirmatively to the Call of God, have given up dogmatic imitations and have become cognizant of the mystery of oneness. Offer thanks to God. Be grateful to your Lord.

Sunday, September 8, 1912

1. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 249-250)

`Abdu'l-Bahá's discourses today consisted of divine exhortations, admonitions and expressions of farewell to the friends. 'I have sown the seed,' He said. 'You must water it. You must educate the souls in divine morals, make them spiritual and lead them to the oneness of humanity and to universal peace.'

In the afternoon He gave an account of His imprisonment in the Most Great Prison and of His return to the Holy Land. Someone suggested that His return to `Akká might bring trouble to Him and again cause His imprisonment. 'Oh no,' He replied, that organization has been rolled up; that system has been rendered null. Those days were so hard that all had believed that when the Commission of Investigation returned to Constantinople `Abdu'l-Bahá's life and name would be effaced. But God did not will it. As we were imprisoned for the Cause of God and not for political reasons, while in prison we were not perturbed and had no worries. However, the others thought that after I was set free I would raise the banner of independence among the Arabs and unite them with me! See, how ill-informed was such a judgment!

As this was the last day of His stay in Montreal, all the friends, both old and new, expressed their sorrow. `Abdu'l-Bahá consoled them with the glad tidings of certitude, spiritual nearness, assistance and heavenly grace.

2. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 53-54)

Nearing the end of his sojourn in Montreal, `Abdu'l-Bahá spent a quiet Sunday at the Windsor Hotel, his last full day. In both the morning and afternoon he spoke there. In addressing his friends, he said, "I have sown the seed. Now water it. You must educate the souls in divine morals, make them spiritual, and lead them to the oneness of humanity and to universal peace."

Monday, September 9, 1912

1. *Mahmúd's Diary* (pp 250-252)

In the morning the bill for \$700 for the week's stay at the hotel was paid. As usual, `Abdu'l-Bahá directed me to take personal charge of His bags and move them myself. I fell short of my duty as the hotel stewards carried His bags with the other luggage. When He saw that His bags were not with me, He said: `In spite of these repeated reminders, you were neglectful. I would not have asked you to be so careful had it not contained valuable documents and writings which I wish to present to the libraries of London and Paris. Otherwise, material things are not important to me.'

All luggage sent through the railway station had to be examined by the Customs officers; but the chief officer at the Customs and his assistants passed our baggage, indicating that they were perfectly satisfied and had no reason to examine the effects of the Bahá'ís! When the Master was told this, His face opened up like a rose and He expounded on the stations of truthfulness and trustworthiness, which are the sources of the prosperity and assurance of the people of the world.

The enthusiasm and ardor of the friends knew no bounds. They surrounded `Abdu'l-Bahá like moths. Until the train pulled out of the station at nine o'clock, the friends continued to sigh and express their sorrow at His departure.

It is astonishing to see that `Abdu'l-Bahá does not want any comfort and will not take any rest, even while traveling on the train. When translations of the newspaper articles and letters from the friends were read to Him, He immediately answered and bestowed His bounties upon them. To some He wrote in His own hand. When He was tired of writing, the Master spoke about the coming of Christ from the heaven of holiness:

The Gospel expressly records that in His first coming, although Christ was born to Mary, He Himself said that He came from heaven. Thus, the meaning of `heaven' is the greatness of the Cause and eminence and might of the Manifestation of God Who spreads this divine Cause by His heavenly power and divine strength and not through material means.

Whenever His eyes fell on the luxuriant beauty of the lakes and rivers along the route He would remember the Blessed Perfection.

At noon He said to us: `You have lunch. I will not eat anything until I am hungry.'

The air in the coach was stifling and, owing to the speed of the train, even though the windows and doors were closed, the dust was heavy. `Abdu'l-Bahá felt tired. When the train

reached Toronto to change tracks, He walked a little on the platform, saying that He was exhausted. `We have not gone far, He said, `yet we feel tired. How will the great distance to California be traversed? We have no choice, as in the path of God we must regard troubles as blessings and discomforts as greatest bounties.' We reached Buffalo late at night but, in obedience to His request, the friends were not informed.

2. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 54-55 and pp 60-63)

September 9 marked another day of showers, but `Abdu'l-Bahá's departure for Toronto (en route to Buffalo) was already arranged. The group paid a bill of \$700 for the stay in the Windsor Hotel. The diarist Mahmoud was asked to take personal charge of `Abdu'l-Bahá's luggage. When instead, the hotel staff took his luggage, Mahmoud was chastised, for `Abdu'l-Bahá's luggage contained valuable documents and writings that he intended to present to the libraries of London and Paris. At the Grand Trunk Railway station, the chief customs inspector and his assistants cleared the luggage without any inspection, stating that they had no reason to inspect the luggage of Bahá'ís.

The influence of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit spread beyond the approximately 2,500 people in Montreal who heard him speak or had direct personal contact with him. Some 440,000 readers of Montreal's lively press, in English and in French, also became aware of his visit and teachings.⁸³

...

Amid the excitement of the many Bahá'ís and others who had gathered to see him off, a Grand Trunk Railway train, the "International Limited", pulled out of Bonaventure Station at 9:00 a.m.⁸⁴ The Grand Trunk "Moccasin" engine (No. 1008) was probably assigned to this run, taking `Abdu'l-Bahá to Toronto.⁸⁵ While the Montreal Bahá'ís numbered fourteen souls⁸⁶ - two fewer

⁸³See Appendix "X", The Press in Montreal

⁸⁴Mahmoud-i-Zarqání, n.d.: 138. The (now) Canadian Pacific Railway train left Montreal at 9:05 a.m. Mahmoud's diary seems quite insistent on the detail of `Abdu'l-Bahá's departure at 9:00 a.m. which is designated in timetables as the Grand Trunk Railway run to Toronto.

⁸⁵Bedingfield, 1992a

⁸⁶Henry F. Armstrong, Mary Coristine, Rose Henderson, Arthur Johnston, Martha MacBean, Mary Maxwell (two years old), May Maxwell, W.S. Maxwell, Elsie Pomeroy, Mary

than when the community first organized itself in 1908 – the believers were now stronger in faith and more steadfast than before.

After leaving Montreal, `Abdu'l-Bahá spent time on the train going over the newspaper articles that had been translated for him. He also admired the “verdure, luxuriance, and beauty” of the scenery as the train sped along its way, at approximately sixty to sixty-five km per hour.⁸⁷ In contrast, the air in the train became stifling hot and heavy with dust. The trip made `Abdu'l-Bahá very tired, and he took a stroll on the train station platform during a stop.

The train route taking `Abdu'l-Bahá from Montreal to Toronto, and then to Niagara Falls and Buffalo in the United States, passed villages and towns that were home to individuals who would soon thereafter declare their belief in the new revelation: Farran's Point, Brockville, Belleville, Toronto, Burlington, Hamilton, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls.

Some twenty years after `Abdu'l-Bahá's train passed through Farran's Point (now Morrisburg) in the early 1930s, a well-known and respected osteopath and her father could be found as Bahá'ís in Farran's Point.⁸⁸ Of Swiss background, Dr. Anna D. Sheets (b. 1872) occupied a home, where she planted nine pines⁸⁹ at the back of her property, alongside the Grand Trunk Railway tracks. (This property now forms part of the St. Lawrence Park Commission's Farran's Beach.)⁹⁰

The stately, tall and thin Anna Sheets was apparently not very active in the new religion, but she was most active in the local Women's Institute and retained membership in the Presbyterian church. She tried, nevertheless, to teach the new religion to her family and close friends. Her efforts were greeted with hostility and estrangement, except by her grandfather, Ezra A. Dillabough, who was also a Bahá'í. We have no information about how they became Bahá'ís.

Pomeroy, Anne M. Savage, Aloysia Woodcock, May Woodcock and Percy C. Woodcock.

⁸⁷Some of the railway information was provided by Douglas Smith of Ottawa, a railroad archivist (D. Smith, 1993).

⁸⁸See *Bahá'í World*, Vol. 6: 518.

⁸⁹In the design of a Bahá'í House of Worship and in the membership of local, national and international Bahá'í governing councils, the number “nine” has a practical and symbolic importance. Some Bahá'ís occasionally extend this importance into their daily life, such as did Dr. Sheets in planting her nine trees.

⁹⁰In 1957, Dr. Sheets and her husband were forced to relocate to higher ground, known as Ingleside, due to the St. Lawrence Seaway flooding. The couple was close. Three hours before Anna died in the fall of 1959, her husband suffered a severe stroke and the two died within a week of each other.

About half way between Farran's Point and Kingston, the train passed Brockville. As early as 1905 Percy Woodcock and his family lived in Brockville. Woodcock's involvement with the new religion⁹¹ may have crossed `Abdu'l-Bahá's mind as the train passed by Brockville. It may well be that Percy Woodcock or his family left a positive influence in that town, for two other Bahá'ís lived in Brockville in 1913: Mrs. J.F. Roberts and John Pridmore.⁹² Seven years later, in 1920, "Mother" Beecher⁹³ of the United States visited Brockville⁹⁴, when Dr. J.L. Carroll is known to have lived there as well.⁹⁵ There are virtually no accounts, published or unpublished, of these early believers.

The train passed through the town of Belleville at 1:47 p.m. A four-year-old Mohawk boy, Jimmy Loft, was sitting on fence that afternoon, watching the train. At that moment, `Abdu'l-Bahá stood up and, facing the window, smiled and waved at the child. Loft later reported that he "was so confused and delighted" that he toppled backwards off the fence. It was many years later, in May 1948, that James Loft would become one of the first Native Bahá'ís in Canada.⁹⁶

When `Abdu'l-Bahá's train reached Toronto at 4:30 p.m., he was exhausted. "We have not gone very far," he said, "yet, we feel tired. How will this great distance to California be spanned?"⁹⁷

⁹¹Percy Woodcock, his wife and his daughter, travelled on the S.S. *Cedrick* with `Abdu'l-Bahá from Egypt to New York in 1912, and during the time of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit in Montreal, the Woodcocks were living in the Windsor Hotel.

⁹²"Membership List," 14 April 1913, Alfred Lunt Papers, Box 27, Folder 18. In 1916 John Pridmore was familiar to May Maxwell and he attended the 1919 Bahá'í national convention in New York (letters from May Maxwell to Alfred E. Lunt, 1916 and 30 November 1920, respectively, AL)

⁹³It was not uncommon during the early days of the Bahá'í Faith to refer to the more outstanding Bahá'ís as "Father," "Mother," "Brother" and so on, a practice that has now (in 1996) long been abandoned.

⁹⁴*Star of the West*, 20 August 1920, pp. 172-73

⁹⁵October 1920, AL, Box 27, Folder 38

⁹⁶Watts and Jardine, 1978: 514. See also *Return to Tyendinaga: The Story of Jim and Melba Loft, Bahá'í Pioneers* by Evelyn Loft Watts & Patricia Verge, 2011

⁹⁷Mahmoud-i-Zarqání, n.d.: 138

`Abdu'l-Bahá briefly stopped at Union Station, while waiting for his connecting train to Buffalo at 6:05 p.m. He walked along the length of the south-facing platform of the elegant station; it looked out over the harbour and lake. The Victorian station, the largest of its kind in Canada, had a 200-foot long façade. Only the name “Station Street,” railway tracks, and a CN (Canadian National Railway) office building mark the site where `Abdu'l-Bahá once walked.⁹⁸

Twenty-six years after `Abdu'l-Bahá passed through Toronto, in 1938, the Bahá'ís in that city would form its Spiritual Assembly. When `Abdu'l-Bahá was pacing Union Station, there was perhaps only one Bahá'í in Toronto, James Oakshette. One year after, two more had enrolled in the new religion: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Nickel;⁹⁹ four years later, Louis Benjamin and Harry Crone became Bahá'ís.

`Abdu'l-Bahá's train left Toronto in the early evening, and stopped briefly in Hamilton, after which it passed through Niagara Falls. As `Abdu'l-Bahá's train rolled past the harvested fields of Ontario, there were only three other believers in that province: the Carmichaels and David Spence in Brantford. Places like Barrie would, by 1913, have one Bahá'í, Mrs. M. Emilie Walker. When `Abdu'l-Bahá finally arrived in Buffalo at 10 p.m., the Bahá'ís there had not yet been apprised of his coming. Fourteen years later, on 26 October 1926, another prominent Bahá'í, Queen Marie of Rumania, would travel in the opposite direction, from Niagara to Toronto.¹⁰⁰

With `Abdu'l-Bahá's departure from Canadian soil, the randomness of attraction among these early adherents came to an end, and a new period had begun. The Bahá'ís in Canada had now met their “Perfect Exemplar” in the person of `Abdu'l-Bahá. This was as close to the source of the new religion as they would ever come. They needed no further vindication to embark on establishing the roots of a new religion in Canada, a country still steeped in, and committed to, Christianity.

3. *The Maxwells of Montreal* (pp 284-285)

And so it was, on Monday, 9 September 1912, that the Master's wonderful visit to Montreal

⁹⁸See also *Take My Love to the Friends: The Story of Laura R. Davis*, p. 193. The Union Station visited by `Abdu'l-Bahá was a block east and south of the current Union Station on Front Street, the latter one opening around 1930.

⁹⁹“Membership List”, 14 April 1913, lists only a Mrs. Charles Nickel for 1913. Both Mr. & Mrs. Nickel were listed as Bahá'ís well into 1928 (*Bahá'í News*, January 1929, p. 2)

¹⁰⁰Morris, 1927: 79-80

drew to a close. His departure marked the making of a shrine in that city and the beginning of a new spiritual epoch in the history of Canada. But He kept in touch with May as He travelled from city to city in America. Some time towards the end of October 1912, on His return to Washington DC from the West Coast, He addressed the following Tablet to her. His words show how much He missed his ‘home’ in Montreal:

O Thou my daughter in the Kingdom!

From the day of leaving Montreal until now I have not rested nor reposed for a moment. From morn until midnight I was engaged in heralding the Kingdom, and in numerous assemblages and meetings, even in the Jewish Temple, I raised the call proclaiming the Revelation of the Kingdom. Many a night I did not sleep, and on many a day, like unto a surging seas, I was in the utmost state of agitation. Praise be to that in the great Temple of the Jews in San Francisco, proofs were produced to demonstrate the truth of Christ’s divine Revelation, and all listened with great joy. No one objected. At the end of the speech, they expressed utmost gratitude....

I am very pleased with the glad tidings of the exaltation of the Cause of God in Montreal and the unity of the believers. Convey wondrous Abhá greetings to all.

On the 5th of November, we will possible arrive in New York. I am now on the point of leaving to depart for the East, for we have reached Los Angeles on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. Now we must return.

Kiss on my behalf thy honoured husband and thy dear child.

-ooOoo-

4. WAR MUST PRECEDE UNIVERSAL PEACE

Montreal Daily Star, Wednesdays, September 11, 1912

Abdu’l-Baha has preached Universal Peace for fifty years ... In a word, Abdu’l-Baha is the

great protagonist of Peace in the world today. To bring about its accomplishment is the practical corollary of the two tenets which are the foundation of his creed—the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. For forty years he was persecuted for preaching it, for twenty years imprisoned.

Yet the universal peace for which he hopes and in which he believes has no resemblance to the fantastic chimera of slack-thinking sophists [with] the easy assumption that all things are as they ought to be... For Abdu'l-Baha, with all his hatred of war and horror at its moral and material results, has no delusions as to the conditions in Europe today or the trend of political events. "It is futile to hope for any slackening of the present race of the nations to increase their armaments," he says. "A great war in Europe is a certainty before permanent peace can be established. International peace can only be reached by an international agreement entered into by all nations."

Strong words, those, from a teacher whose life has been spent in preaching peace on earth. There is no smug complacency about them nor any blinking the facts that one's fragile fabric of assertions may not be rudely destroyed. Abhorrent as war is to Abdu'l-Baha and his followers, they have the moral courage to recognize and acknowledge the probability of its occurrence.

In an interview printed elsewhere in this issue Abdu'l-Baha elaborates more fully his views on the questions.

5. (EDITORIAL)

CANADA SHOULD PREPARE FOR A GREAT WAR COMING

SAYS APOSTLE OF PEACE

Universal Peace Only Possible By Common Disarmament

That Abdu'l-Baha is under no illusions about the ushering in of a reign of peace all over the world by merely talking about it, was made abundantly clear by him in a special interview accorded to a representative of the Montreal Star.

The venerable apostle of peace emphatically declared that in the temper of the world today it was futile to hope for any slackening of the present race of the nations to increase their armaments. He reiterated his absolute conviction that a great war in Europe was a certainty before permanent peace would be established in the world.

Briefly, Abdu'l-Baha said the permanent peace of the world could only be established by international agreement, voluntarily entered into by all the nations; that for any single nation to disarm at present, or to fail to strengthen its armaments while the neighbouring nations kept on

adding to theirs, was simple out of the question, and, in fact, would be supreme folly...

The International Situation As It Confronts Canadians

The case was put to Abdu'l-Baha thus: -

“Granting the truth of all you say in regard to war—that it is wicked and cruel and a barbarous anachronism which ought to be swept away and replaced by arbitration—the fact stares us in the face that all the nations in the world are arming, and you have stated yourself during your stay in Montreal that an appalling war in Europe is inevitable... In view of the apparent certainty of this struggle, what are we Canadians to do?”

Simultaneous Action Necessary

In reply to this Abdu'l-Baha said:

“As to the question of disarmament, all nations must disarm at the same time. It will not do at all, and it is not proposed, that some nations shall lay down their arms while others, their neighbours, remain armed. The peace of the world must be brought about by international agreement. All nations must agree to disarm simultaneously...

“No nation can follow a peace policy while its neighbour remains warlike. There is no justice in that. Nobody would dream of suggesting that the peace of the world could be brought about by any such line of action. It is to be brought about by a general and comprehensive international agreement, and in no other way...

“Simultaneous action,” he went on, “is necessary in any scheme of disarmament. All the governments of the world must transform their battleships and warcraft into merchant vessels. But no one nation can by itself start in upon such a policy and it would be folly should one power attempt to do so... it would simply invite destruction.” ...

Abdu'l-Baha then told a little story to illustrate his point of reciprocity of action.

The Turning of the Other Cheek

“The one man slapped another on the face. When the man who had received the slap made a move to retaliate, the other reminded him of the precept concerning the turning of the left cheek after one has been smitten on the right. ‘So you must let me slap you again,’ said the aggressor. He allowed the surly one to do so. Next day, the same two men met, and the surly man struck the other on the right cheek once more. ‘Now let me have your left cheek,’ said the assailant. The blow was received, and the injured man quietly went his way. On the third day, the two met again, but by this time the man who had been smitten, thinking he had pretty well

carried out both the letter and the spirit of his Master, said to the aggressor: ‘Now, my friend, it’s your turn to carry out the holy precept.’ And so he went for him and gave him a good sound thrashing.

“So you see,” said Abdu’l-Baha laughing heartily, “there must be reciprocity in carrying out a policy of peace and good-will. As with individuals, the nations must live up to the spirit of amity.

“In the meantime, all people of good-will must ever strive to make international peace the great issue. They must work unceasingly to turn public opinion in favour of this line of action. In the absence of a universal agreement, armament must continue to be piled up against armament and the nations cannot hope for release.”

A Great War Coming

“And a titanic war would seem to be approaching?”

“All Europe is an armed camp. These warlike preparations will necessarily culminate in a great war. The very armaments themselves are productive of war. This great arsenal must go ablaze. There is nothing of the nature of prophecy about such a view,” said Abdu’l-Baha; “it is based on reasoning solely.”

“Are there any signs that the permanent peace of the world will be established in anything like a reasonable period?” Abdu’l-Baha was asked.

“It will be established in this century,” he answered. “It will be universal in the twentieth century. All nations will be forced into it.”

Getting Beyond Human Endurance

“Economic pressure will tell?”

“Yes: the nations will be forced to come to peace to come to peace and to agree to the abolition of war. The awful burdens of taxation for war purposes will get beyond human endurance...

“No,” said Abdu’l-Baha in conclusion, “I repeat, no nation can disarm under these circumstances. Disarmament is surely coming, but it must come, and it will come, by the universal consent of the civilized nations of the earth. By international agreement they will lay down their arms and the great era of peace will be ushered in.

“In this and no other way can peace be established upon the earth.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹A note in *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Canada* observes that “There is no other record of such specific statements having been made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, at any time, on these questions, other than those which appear here reprinted from ... the account in the *Montreal Star*, Wednesday,

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`Abdu'l-Bahá leaves North America

1. *The Maxwells of Montreal* (pp 286-286)

When the arduous trip finally came to an end and the time for a final parting drew near, the beloved Master, in His mercy and compassion, permitted His lovers to gather around Him, to be with Him to the last. He allowed them to come from north and south to bid Him farewell before He left the shores of America. On Saturday, 9 November 1912 May received the following cable from Washington DC:

*WE WILL ARRIVE IN NEW YORK MONDAY NIGHT. THE TIME FOR
SAIL IS NOT YET SET. YOU AND FRIENDS HAVE PERMISSION TO
COME TO NEW YORK. ABBAS*

On 5 December May stood with the rest of that small band on the pier, watching the Cedric drift slowly out of the harbour, her eyes fixed on the dear white handkerchief that fluttered from the deck and finally faded from sight. She had no reason to believe that it was the last time she would see the Master of course, and could not have borne the slightest premonition of such an absolute farewell. But `Abdu'l-Bahá would surely have known it. And her sensitive heart would have sensed His sadness too at this physical parting. In His loving-kindness towards her, and as a sign of His special affection for this faithful maidservant, `Abdu'l-Bahá sent the following cable to May from England on 17 December 1912:

*SAFELY ARRIVED LONDON. REMEMBERED ALWAYS. GREETINGS
MAXWELL KISS BABY. ABBAS*

It was as though He were permitting May to keep her eyes fixed on Him long after His ship disappeared on the horizon.

Although the departure of the Master from the shores of North America left a void in the hearts of those who were devoted to Him, it was nevertheless infused a renewed zeal and dedication in the Bahá'í community in that continent. It confirmed their faith; it broadened their horizons. It galvanized their souls to have seen the Master with their own eyes and heard His words with their own ears.

Significance of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Visit to Canada

1. `Abdu'l-Bahá in Montreal by May Maxwell¹⁰²

In His Tablet addressed to Canada `Abdu'l-Bahá says, "The future of Canada is very great and its historical events infinitely glorious. Thus it shall become the object of the glance of Providence and the manifestation of the favours of the Supreme Lord."

Living once more vividly the great and moving days of 1912 when `Abdu'l-Bahá left an abiding impress[ion] upon the soul and life of Canada, the most profound impression is one of unfathomable depth and peace, a mighty moving sea that swept the land beneath whose surging waves lay infinite eternal calm. All the storms and tempests through which the world was and still is destined to pass, the inevitable period of strife and turmoil ere mankind would emerge, chastened and triumphant in a new divine order of righteousness and peace, all was foreshadowed in the public utterances and published writings of the Master.

The Messengers of God, in whatever age They have appeared, built on the foundations of the existing Faith, so that Their creative power touching the life of the people at its highest point carried it forward on a mighty wave of ideal and spiritual progress. ...

Another touching incident was the morning `Abdu'l-Bahá was sitting in His room overlooking the little garden, on a bleak gray day. He looked out with that far mystic gaze and said, "It is cold here, cold and dark. In the land where I come from it is warm and salubrious; the sun is always shining and the birds are singing! The people of the West have shown `Abdu'l-Bahá the utmost courtesy and kindness, they have opened wide their doors to Him and listened attentively to the voice of Bahá'u'lláh. We have lived in ease and comfort, travelling from place to place after spending forty years in a Turkish prison! Those were the best days!" He exclaimed triumphantly, "The days spent in prison were spent in the path of God, in servitude to God! Those were the best days!" and then added with deep significance, "These days are the fruits of those."

Although Montreal was considered by some a centre of religious bigotry, yet He found "all the doors open," and He met with the same irresistible response as He had throughout His journey, peoples of all nations, races and classes flocking to Him.

Nevertheless we must realize that the power to grasp the significance of His words and the ultimate import of His visit was still in the embryo, and that only through the perspective of time are we able to witness the mighty spiritual, moral and social changes which have already taken place.

¹⁰² *`Abdu'l-Bahá in Canada*, 1987, pp 41-42

2. *God Passes By*, “‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s Travels in Europe and America” (pp 279-295)

The establishment of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh in the Western Hemisphere—the most outstanding achievement that will forever be associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry—had, as observed in the preceding pages, set in motion such tremendous forces, and been productive of such far-reaching results, as to warrant the active and personal participation of the Center of the Covenant Himself in those epoch-making activities which His Western disciples had, through the propelling power of that Covenant, boldly initiated and were vigorously prosecuting.

The crisis which the blindness and perversity of the Covenant-breakers had precipitated, and which, for several years, had so tragically interfered with the execution of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s purpose, was now providentially resolved. An unsurmountable barrier had been suddenly lifted from His path, His fetters were unlocked, and God’s avenging wrath had taken the chains from His neck and placed them upon that of ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, His royal adversary and the dupe of His most implacable enemy. The sacred remains of the Báb, entrusted to His hands by His departed Father, had, moreover, with immense difficulty been transferred from their hiding-place in far-off Tíhrán to the Holy Land, and deposited ceremoniously and reverently by Him in the bosom of Mt. Carmel.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá was at this time broken in health. He suffered from several maladies brought on by the strains and stresses of a tragic life spent almost wholly in exile and imprisonment. He was on the threshold of three-score years and ten. Yet as soon as He was released from His forty-year long captivity, as soon as He had laid the Báb’s body in a safe and permanent resting-place, and His mind was free of grievous anxieties connected with the execution of that priceless Trust, He arose with sublime courage, confidence and resolution to consecrate what little strength remained to Him, in the evening of His life, to a service of such heroic proportions that no parallel to it is to be found in the annals of the first Bahá’í century.

Indeed His three years of travel, first to Egypt, then to Europe and later to America, mark, if we would correctly appraise their historic importance, a turning point of the utmost significance in the history of the century. For the first time since the inception of the Faith, sixty-six years previously, its Head and supreme Representative burst asunder the shackles which had throughout the ministries of both the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh so grievously fettered its freedom. Though repressive measures still continued to circumscribe the activities of the vast majority of its adherents in the land of its birth, its recognized Leader was now vouchsafed a freedom of

action which, with the exception of a brief interval in the course of the War of 1914–18, He was to continue to enjoy to the end of His life, and which has never since been withdrawn from its institutions at its world center.

So momentous a change in the fortunes of the Faith was the signal for such an outburst of activity on His part as to dumbfound His followers in East and West with admiration and wonder, and exercise an imperishable influence on the course of its future history. He Who, in His own words, had entered prison as a youth and left it an old man, Who never in His life had faced a public audience, had attended no school, had never moved in Western circles, and was unfamiliar with Western customs and language, had arisen not only to proclaim from pulpit and platform, in some of the chief capitals of Europe and in the leading cities of the North American continent, the distinctive verities enshrined in His Father’s Faith, but to demonstrate as well the Divine origin of the Prophets gone before Him, and to disclose the nature of the tie binding them to that Faith.

Inflexibly resolved to undertake this arduous voyage, at whatever cost to His strength, at whatever risk to His life, He, quietly and without any previous warning, on a September afternoon, of the year 1910, the year following that which witnessed the downfall of Sultán ‘Abdu'l-Hamíd and the formal entombment of the Báb’s remains on Mt. Carmel, sailed for Egypt. ... He embarked, on His second journey to the West, on the steamship Cedric, on March 25, 1912, sailing via Naples direct to New York where He arrived on April 11. After a prolonged tour of eight months’ duration, which carried Him from coast to coast... He sailed, on the S.S. Celtic, on December 5, from New York for Liverpool; and landing there He proceeded by train to London. Later He visited Oxford, Edinburgh and Bristol ... Paris ... Stuttgart ... Budapest ... Vienna ... Marseilles ... [sailed back to] Egypt [and] returned to Haifa, concluding His historic journeys on December 5, 1913.

It was in the course of these epoch-making journeys and before large and representative audiences, at times exceeding a thousand people, that ‘Abdu'l-Bahá expounded, with brilliant simplicity, with persuasiveness and force, and for the first time in His ministry, those basic and distinguishing principles of His Father’s Faith, which together with the laws and ordinances revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas constitute the bed-rock of God’s latest Revelation to mankind. The independent search after truth, unfettered by superstition or tradition; the oneness of the entire human race, the pivotal principle and fundamental doctrine of the Faith; the basic unity of all religions; the condemnation of all forms of prejudice, whether religious, racial, class or national; the harmony which must exist between religion and science; the equality of men and women, the two wings on which the bird of human kind is able to soar; the introduction of

compulsory education; the adoption of a universal auxiliary language; the abolition of the extremes of wealth and poverty; the institution of a world tribunal for the adjudication of disputes between nations; the exaltation of work, performed in the spirit of service, to the rank of worship; the glorification of justice as the ruling principle in human society, and of religion as a bulwark for the protection of all peoples and nations; and the establishment of a permanent and universal peace as the supreme goal of all mankind—these stand out as the essential elements of that Divine polity which He proclaimed to leaders of public thought as well as to the masses at large in the course of these missionary journeys. The exposition of these vitalizing truths of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, which He characterized as the “spirit of the age,” He supplemented with grave and reiterated warnings of an impending conflagration which, if the statesmen of the world should fail to avert, would set ablaze the entire continent of Europe. ...

During these travels ‘Abdu'l-Bahá displayed a vitality, a courage, a single-mindedness, a consecration to the task He had set Himself to achieve that excited the wonder and admiration of those who had the privilege of observing at close hand His daily acts. Indifferent to the sights and curiosities which habitually invite the attention of travellers and which the members of His entourage often wished Him to visit; careless alike of His comfort and His health; expending every ounce of His energy day after day from dawn till late at night; consistently refusing any gifts or contributions towards the expenses of His travels; unflinching in His solicitude for the sick, the sorrowful and the down-trodden; uncompromising in His championship of the underprivileged races and classes; bountiful as the rain in His generosity to the poor; contemptuous of the attacks launched against Him by vigilant and fanatical exponents of orthodoxy and sectarianism; marvelous in His frankness while demonstrating, from platform and pulpit, the prophetic Mission of Jesus Christ to the Jews, of the Divine origin of Islám in churches and synagogues, or the truth of Divine Revelation and the necessity of religion to materialists, atheists or agnostics; unequivocal in His glorification of Bahá'u'lláh at all times and within the sanctuaries of divers sects and denominations; adamant in His refusal, on several occasions, to curry the favour of people of title and wealth both in England and in the United States; and last but not least incomparable in the spontaneity, the genuineness and warmth of His sympathy and loving-kindness shown to friend and stranger alike, believer and unbeliever, rich and poor, high and low, whom He met, either intimately or casually, whether on board ship, or whilst pacing the streets, in parks or public squares, at receptions or banquets, in slums or mansions, in the gatherings of His followers or the assemblage of the learned, He, the incarnation of every Bahá'í virtue and the embodiment of every Bahá'í ideal, continued for three crowded years to trumpet to a world sunk in materialism and already in the shadow of

war, the healing, the God-given truths enshrined in His Father’s Revelation. ...

It was reserved, however, for the North American continent to witness the most astonishing manifestation of the boundless vitality ‘Abdu’l-Bahá exhibited in the course of these journeys. The remarkable progress achieved by the organized community of His followers in the United States and Canada, the marked receptivity of the American public to His Message, as well as His consciousness of the high destiny awaiting the people of that continent, fully warranted the expenditure of time and energy which he devoted to this most important phase of His travels. A visit which entailed a journey of over five thousand miles, which lasted from April to December, which carried Him from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast and back, which elicited discourses of such number as to fill no less than three volumes, was to mark the climax of those journeys, and was fully justified by the far-reaching results which He well knew such labours on His part would produce. “This long voyage,” He told His assembled followers on the occasion of His first meeting with them in New York, “will prove how great is My love for you. There were many troubles and vicissitudes, but in the thought of meeting you, all these things vanished and were forgotten.”

The character of the acts He performed fully demonstrated the importance He attached to that visit. The laying, with His own hands, of the dedication stone of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, by the shore of Lake Michigan, in the vicinity of Chicago, on the recently purchased property, and in the presence of a representative gathering of Bahá’ís from East and West; the dynamic affirmation by Him of the implications of the Covenant instituted by Bahá’u’lláh, following the reading of the newly translated Tablet of the Branch, in a general assembly of His followers in New York, designated henceforth as the “City of the Covenant”; the moving ceremony in Inglewood, California, marking His special pilgrimage to the grave of Thornton Chase, the “first American believer,” and indeed the first to embrace the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh in the Western world; the symbolic Feast He Himself offered to a large gathering of His disciples assembled in the open air, and in the green setting of a June day at West Englewood, in New Jersey; the blessing He bestowed on the Open Forum at Green Acre, in Maine, on the banks of the Piscataqua River, where many of His followers had gathered, and which was to evolve into one of the first Bahá’í summer schools of the Western Hemisphere and be recognized as one of the earliest endowments established in the American continent; His address to an audience of several hundred attending the last session of the newly-founded Bahá’í Temple Unity held in Chicago; and, last but not least, the exemplary act He performed by uniting in wedlock two of His followers of different nationalities, one of the white, the other of the Negro race—these

must rank among the outstanding functions associated with His visit to the community of the American believers, functions designed to pave the way for the erection of their central House of Worship, to fortify them against the tests they were soon to endure, to cement their unity, and to bless the beginnings of that Administrative Order which they were soon to initiate and champion.

No less remarkable were ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s public activities in the course of His association with the multitude of people with whom He came in contact during His tour across a continent. A full account of these diversified activities which crowded His days during no less than eight months, would be beyond the scope of this survey. Suffice it to say that in the city of New York alone He delivered public addresses in, and made formal visits to, no less than fifty-five different places. Peace societies, Christian and Jewish congregations, colleges and universities, welfare and charitable organizations, members of ethical cults, New Thought centres, metaphysical groups, Women’s clubs, scientific associations, gatherings of Esperantists, Theosophists, Mormons, and agnostics, institutions for the advancement of the coloured people, representatives of the Syrian, the Armenian, the Greek, the Chinese, and Japanese communities—all were brought into contact with His dynamic presence, and were privileged to hear from His lips His Father’s Message. Nor was the press either in its editorial comment or in the publication of reports of His lectures, slow to appreciate the breadth of His vision or the character of His summons.

His discourse at the Peace Conferences at Lake Mohonk; His addresses to large gatherings at Columbia, Howard and New York Universities; His participation in the fourth annual conference of the National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People; His fearless assertion of the truth of the prophetic Missions of both Jesus Christ and Muhammad in Temple Emmanu-El, a Jewish synagogue in San Francisco, where no less than two thousand people were gathered; His illuminating discourse before an audience of eighteen hundred students and one hundred and eighty teachers and professors at Leland Stanford University; His memorable visit to the Bowery Mission in the slums of New York; the brilliant reception given in His honour in Washington, at which many outstanding figures in the social life of the capital were presented to Him—these stand out as the highlights of the unforgettable Mission He undertook in the service of His Father’s Cause. Secretaries of State, Ambassadors, Congressmen, distinguished rabbis and churchmen, and other people of eminence attained His presence, among whom were such figures as Dr. D. S. Jordan, President of Leland Stanford University, Prof. Jackson of Columbia University, Prof. Jack of Oxford University, Rabbi Stephen Wise of New York, Dr. Martin A. Meyer, Rabbi Joseph L. Levy, Rabbi Abram Simon, Alexander Graham Bell, Rabindranath Tagore, Hon. Franklin K. Lane, Mrs. William Jennings Bryan, Andrew Carnegie, Hon. Franklin

MacVeagh, Secretary of the United States Treasury, Lee McClung, Mr. Roosevelt, Admiral Wain Wright, Admiral Peary, the British, Dutch and Swiss Ministers in Washington, Yúsúf Díyá Páshá, the Turkish Ambassador in that city, Thomas Seaton, Hon. William Sulzer and Prince Muhammad-‘Alí of Egypt, the Khedive’s brother.

“When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited this country for the first time in 1912,” a commentator on His American travels has written, “He found a large and sympathetic audience waiting to greet Him personally and to receive from His own lips His loving and spiritual message. ...Beyond the words spoken there was something indescribable in His personality that impressed profoundly all who came into His presence. The dome-like head, the patriarchal beard, the eyes that seemed to have looked beyond the reach of time and sense, the soft yet clearly penetrating voice, the translucent humility, the never failing love,—but above all, the sense of power mingled with gentleness that invested His whole being with a rare majesty of spiritual exaltation that both set Him apart, and yet that brought Him near to the lowliest soul,—it was all this, and much more that can never be defined, that have left with His many ... friends, memories that are ineffaceable and unspeakably precious.”

A survey, however inadequate of the varied and immense activities of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His tour of Europe and America cannot leave without mention some of the strange incidents that would often accompany personal contact with Him. The bold determination of a certain indomitable youth who, fearing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would not be able to visit the Western states, and unable himself to pay for a train journey to New England, had traveled all the way from Minneapolis to Maine lying on the rods between the wheels of a train; the transformation effected in the life of the son of a country rector in England, who, in his misery and poverty, had resolved, whilst walking along the banks of the Thames, to put an end to his existence, and who, at the sight of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s photograph displayed in a shop window, had inquired about Him, hurried to His residence, and been so revived by His words of cheer and comfort as to abandon all thought of self-destruction; the extraordinary experience of a woman whose little girl, as the result of a dream she had had, insisted that Jesus Christ was in the world, and who, at the sight of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s picture exposed in the window of a magazine store, had instantly identified it as that of the Jesus Christ of her dream—an act which impelled her mother, after reading that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in Paris, to take the next boat for Europe and hasten to attain His presence; the decision of the editor of a journal printed in Japan to break his journey to Tokyo at Constantinople, and travel to London for “the 291 joy of spending one evening in His presence”; the touching scene when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, receiving from the hands of a Persian friend, recently arrived in London from Ishqábád, a cotton handkerchief containing a piece of dry black bread

and a shrivelled apple—the offering of a poor Bahá’í workman in that city—opened it before His assembled guests, and, leaving His luncheon untouched, broke pieces off that bread, and partaking Himself of it shared it with those who were present—these are but a few of a host of incidents that shed a revealing light on some personal aspects of His memorable journeys.

Nor can certain scenes revolving around that majestic and patriarchal Figure, as He moved through the cities of Europe and America, be ever effaced from memory. The remarkable interview at which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, while placing lovingly His hand on the head of Archdeacon Wilberforce, answered his many questions, whilst that distinguished churchman sat on a low chair by His side; the still more remarkable scene when that same Archdeacon, after having knelt with his entire congregation to receive His benediction at St. John’s the Divine, passed down the aisle to the vestry hand in hand with his Guest, whilst a hymn was being sung by the entire assembly standing; the sight of Jalálu’d-Dawlih, fallen prostrate at His feet, profuse in his apologies and imploring His forgiveness for his past iniquities; the enthusiastic reception accorded Him at Leland Stanford University when, before the gaze of well nigh two thousand professors and students, He discoursed on some of the noblest truths underlying His message to the West; the touching spectacle at Bowery Mission when four hundred of the poor of New York filed past Him, each receiving a piece of silver from His blessed hands; the acclamation of a Syrian woman in Boston who, pushing aside the crowd that had gathered around Him, flung herself at His feet, exclaiming, “I confess that in Thee I have recognized the Spirit of God and Jesus Christ Himself”; the no less fervent tribute paid Him by two admiring Arabs who, as He was leaving that city for Dublin, N. H., cast themselves before Him, and, sobbing aloud, avowed that He was God’s own Messenger to mankind; the vast congregation of two thousand Jews assembled in a synagogue in San Francisco, intently listening to His discourse as He demonstrated the validity of the claims advanced by both Jesus Christ and Muh.ammad; the gathering He addressed one night in Montreal, at which, in the course of His speech, His turban fell from His head, so carried away was He by the theme He was expounding; the boisterous crowd in a very poor quarter of Paris, who, awed by His presence, reverently and silently made way for Him as He passed through their midst, while returning from a Mission Hall whose congregation He had been addressing; the characteristic gesture of a Zoroastrian physician who, arriving in breathless haste on the morning of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s departure from London to bid Him farewell, anointed with fragrant oil first His head and His breast, and then, touching the hands of all present, placed round His neck and shoulders a garland of rosebuds and lilies; the crowd of visitors arriving soon after dawn, patiently waiting on the doorsteps of His house in Cadogan Gardens until the door would be opened for their admittance; His majestic figure as He paced

with a vigorous step the platform, or stood with hands upraised to pronounce the benediction, in church and synagogue alike, and before vast audiences of reverent listeners; the unsolicited mark of respect shown Him by distinguished society women in London, who would spontaneously curtsy when ushered into His presence; the poignant sight when He stooped low to the grave of His beloved disciple, Thornton Chase, in Inglewood Cemetery, and kissed his tombstone, an example which all those present hastened to follow; the distinguished gathering of Christians, Jews and Muslims, men and women and representative of both the East and the West, assembled to hear His discourse on world unity in the mosque at Woking—such scenes as these, even in the cold record of the printed page, must still have much of their original impressiveness and power.

Who knows what thoughts flooded the heart of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as He found Himself the central figure of such memorable scenes as these? Who knows what thoughts were uppermost in His mind as He sat at breakfast beside the Lord Mayor of London, or was received with extraordinary deference by the Khedive himself in his palace, or as He listened to the cries of “Alláh-u-Abhá” and to the hymns of thanksgiving and praise that would herald His approach to the numerous and brilliant assemblages of His enthusiastic followers and friends organized in so many cities of the American continent? Who knows what memories stirred within Him as He stood before the thundering waters of Niagara, breathing the free air of a far distant land, or gazed, in the course of a brief and much-needed rest, upon the green woods and countryside in Glenwood Springs, or moved with a retinue of Oriental believers along the paths of the Trocadero Gardens in Paris, or walked alone in the evening beside the majestic Hudson on Riverside Drive in New York, or as He paced the terrace of the Hotel du Parc at Thonon-les-Bains, overlooking the Lake of Geneva, or as He watched from Serpentine Bridge in London the pearly chain of lights beneath the trees stretching as far as the eye could see? Memories of the sorrows, the poverty, the overhanging doom of His earlier years; memories of His mother who sold her gold buttons to provide Him, His brother and His sister with sustenance, and who was forced, in her darkest hours, to place a handful of dry flour in the palm of His hand to appease His hunger; of His own childhood when pursued and derided by a mob of ruffians in the streets of T.ihrán; of the damp and gloomy room, formerly a morgue, which He occupied in the barracks of ‘Akká and of His imprisonment in the dungeon of that city—memories such as these must surely have thronged His mind. Thoughts, too, must have visited Him of the Báb’s captivity in the mountain fastnesses of Ádhirbayján, when at night time He was refused even a lamp, and of His cruel and tragic execution when hundreds of bullets riddled His youthful breast. Above all His thoughts must have centered on Bahá’u’lláh, Whom He loved so passionately and Whose

trials He had witnessed and had shared from His boyhood. The vermin-infested Síyáh-Chál of T.ihrán; the bastinado inflicted upon Him in Ámul; the humble fare which filled His kashkúl while He lived for two years the life of a dervish in the mountains of Kurdistán; the days in Baghdád when He did not even possess a change of linen, and when His followers subsisted on a handful of dates; His confinement behind the prison-walls of ‘Akká, when for nine years even the sight of verdure was denied Him; and the public humiliation to which He was subjected at government headquarters in that city—pictures from the tragic past such as these must have many a time overpowered Him with feelings of mingled gratitude and sorrow, as He witnessed the many marks of respect, of esteem, and honor now shown Him and the Faith which He represented. “O Bahá’u’lláh! What hast Thou done?” He, as reported by the chronicler of His travels, was heard to exclaim one evening as He was being swiftly driven to fulfil His third engagement of the day in Washington, “O Bahá’u’lláh! May my life be sacrificed for Thee! O Bahá’u’lláh! May my soul be offered up for Thy sake! How full were Thy days with trials and tribulations! How severe the ordeals Thou didst endure! How solid the foundation Thou hast finally laid, and how glorious the banner Thou didst hoist!” “One day, as He was strolling,” that same chronicler has testified, “He called to remembrance the days of the Blessed Beauty, referring with sadness to His sojourn in Sulaymáníyyih, to His loneliness and to the wrongs inflicted upon Him. Though He had often recounted that episode, that day He was so overcome with 294 emotion that He sobbed aloud in His grief.... All His attendants wept with Him, and were plunged into sorrow as they heard the tale of the woeful trials endured by the Ancient Beauty, and witnessed the tenderness of heart manifested by His Son.”

A most significant scene in a century-old drama had been enacted. A glorious chapter in the history of the first Bahá’í century had been written. Seeds of undreamt-of potentialities had, with the hand of the Centre of the Covenant Himself, been sown in some of the fertile fields of the Western world. Never in the entire range of religious history had any Figure of comparable stature arisen to perform a labour of such magnitude and imperishable worth. Forces were unleashed through those fateful journeys which even now, at a distance of well nigh thirty-five years, we are unable to measure or comprehend. Already a Queen, inspired by the powerful arguments adduced by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá in the course of His addresses in support of the Divinity of Muhammad, has proclaimed her faith, and borne public testimony to the Divine origin of the Prophet of Islám. Already a President of the United States, imbibing some of the principles so clearly enunciated by Him in His discourses, has incorporated them in a Peace Program which stands out as the boldest and noblest proposal yet made for the well-being and security of mankind. And already, alas! a world which proved deaf to His warnings and refused to heed His

summons has plunged itself into two global wars of unprecedented severity, the repercussions of which none as yet can even dimly visualize.

3. *Tablets of the Divine Plan* (pp 93-96)

Revealed on February 21, 1917, in Bahá'u'lláh's room at the house of Abbúd in 'Akká, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of Canada—Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Mackenzie, Keewatin, Ungava, Franklin Islands and Greenland.

He is God!

O ye kind friends and the maidservants of the Merciful:

In the great Qur'án, God says: "Thou shalt see no difference in the creatures of God." In other words, He says: From the ideal standpoint, there is no variation between the creatures of God, because they are all created by Him. From the above premise, a conclusion is drawn, that there is no difference between countries. The future of the Dominion of Canada, however, is very great, and the events connected with it infinitely glorious. It shall become the object of the glance of providence, and shall show forth the bounties of the All-Glorious.

'Abdu'l-Bahá during his journey and sojourn through that Dominion obtained the utmost joy. Before My departure, many souls warned Me not to travel to Montreal, saying, the majority of the inhabitants are Catholics, and are in the utmost fanaticism, that they are submerged in the sea of imitations, that they have not the capability to hearken to the call of the Kingdom of God, that the veil of bigotry has so covered the eyes that they have deprived themselves from beholding the signs of the Most Great Guidance, and that the dogmas have taken possession of the hearts entirely, leaving no trace of reality. They asserted that should the Sun of Reality shine with perfect splendor throughout that Dominion, the dark, impenetrable clouds of superstitions have so enveloped the horizon that it would be utterly impossible for anyone to behold its rays.

But these stories did not have any effect on the resolution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He, trusting in God, turned his face toward Montreal. When he entered that city he observed all the doors

open, he found the hearts in the utmost receptivity and the ideal power of the Kingdom of God removing every obstacle and obstruction. In the churches and meetings of that Dominion he called men to the Kingdom of God with the utmost joy, and scattered such seeds which will be irrigated with the hand of divine power. Undoubtedly those seeds will grow, becoming green and verdant, and many rich harvests will be gathered. In the promotion of the divine principles he found no antagonist and no adversary. The believers he met in that city were in the utmost spirituality, and attracted with the fragrances of God. He found that through the effort of the maidservant of God Mrs. Maxwell a number of the sons and daughters of the Kingdom in that Dominion were gathered together and associated with each other, increasing this joyous exhilaration day by day. The time of sojourn was limited to a number of days, but the results in the future are inexhaustible. When a farmer comes into the possession of a virgin soil, in a short time he will bring under cultivation a large field. Therefore I hope that in the future Montreal may become so stirred, that the melody of the Kingdom may travel to all parts of the world from that Dominion and the breaths of the Holy Spirit may spread from that center to the East and the West of America.

O ye believers of God! Be not concerned with the smallness of your numbers, neither be oppressed by the multitude of an unbelieving world. Five grains of wheat will be endued with heavenly blessing, whereas a thousand tons of tares will yield no results or effect. One fruitful tree will be conducive to the life of society, whereas a thousand forests of wild trees offer no fruits. The plain is covered with pebbles, but precious stones are rare. One pearl is better than a thousand wildernesses of sand, especially this pearl of great price, which is endowed with divine blessing. Erelong thousands of other pearls will be born from it. When that pearl associates and becomes the intimate of the pebbles, they also all change into pearls.

Again I repeat that the future of Canada, whether from a material or a spiritual standpoint, is very great. Day by day civilization and freedom shall increase. The clouds of the Kingdom will water the seeds of guidance which have been sown there. Consequently, rest ye not, seek ye no composure, attach not yourselves to the luxuries of this ephemeral world, free yourselves from every attachment, and strive with heart and soul to become fully established in the Kingdom of God. Gain ye the heavenly treasures. Day by day become ye more illumined. Draw ye nearer and nearer unto the threshold of oneness. Become ye the manifestors of spiritual favours and the dawning-places of infinite lights! If it is possible, send ye teachers to other portions of Canada; likewise, dispatch ye teachers to Greenland and the home of the Eskimos. ...

Appendix A

Contradictory Statements of Fact regarding Dates of `Abdu'l-Bahá's Visit to Montreal *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (p 63)

A publication commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Canada indicates that he gave his addresses and lectures from 30 August to 9 September 1912 (National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, 1962:1), while, in fact, dates are challenged elsewhere. A published memoir, *Portals to Freedom* (Ives, 1967:133) lists 1 to 10 September. A Ph.D. dissertation (Ward, 1960), which was later published (Ward, 1979), indicates 1 to 9 September as the dates of `Abdu'l-Bahá's stay in Montreal. *Messages to Canada* (Shoghi Effendi, 1965:73), published by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, states that `Abdu'l-Bahá stayed from 30 August to 12 September 1912. Balyuzi in *`Abdu'l-Bahá* (1971:256) indicates 8 September as `Abdu'l-Bahá's last day in Canada. As recently as 1987, a Canadian Bahá'í national commemorative program contains the idea that `Abdu'l-Bahá was in Canada for eleven days. According to all these accounts, `Abdu'l-Bahá visited Canada for as few as eight full days to as many as twelve. The historical work by Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, *God Passes By* (1974:291) makes no reference to the dates of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit, and neither does Hatcher and Martin (1984). Esslemont's *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* (1970:60), a basic introduction to the Bahá'í faith, makes only a reference to the United States, not Canada or Montreal.

Only one work (Mahmoud-i-Zarqání, n.d.) carries the correct dates of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Canada, namely, 30 August to 9 September 1912. The diary by Mahmoud-i-Zarqání is entitled *Badáyi'u'l-Athár (The Wondrous Annals)* and was published in Persian in 1914. An informal English translation can be found in various Bahá'í archives. The author used the translation found in the Green Acre Bahá'í Archives, Eliot, Maine.

[Note: See *Mahmûd's Diary, The Diary of Mírzá Mahmûd-i-Zarqání Chronicling `Abdu'l-Bahá's Journey to America*, Translated by Mohi Sobhani, 1998 which may have words and phrases translated differently than the version available in Green Acre.]

Appendix B

The Press in Montreal

1. *`Abdu'l-Bahá The Centre of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh* (pp 266-260)

`Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Montreal constituted a very remarkable episode in the whole of His American tour. To begin with, the newspaper coverage of His visit was particularly noteworthy. On the very evening of His arrival, John Lewis, editor of the *Montreal Daily Star*, was at the Maxwell home to meet Him. That newspaper and *The Gazette*, in reporting `Abdu'l-Bahá's activities, provided such headlines as: 'Persian Teacher to Preach Peace'; 'Racialism Wrong, Says Eastern Sage, Strive and War Caused by Religious and National Prejudices'; 'Materialism No Philosophy, Says Oriental Seer'; 'Apostle of Peace Meets Socialists, Abdu'l Baha's Novel Scheme for Distribution of Surplus Wealth'. These may well be compared with 'His Holiness Visits Us, Not Pius X but A. Baha' which appeared in a Chicago paper on September 14th. Furthermore the reportage in those Montreal papers was noticeably free of journalistic quirks and extravagances....

It should not be assumed that the reportage in the newspapers of the United States was always unmitigated journalese. There were notable and outstanding exceptions; but the fact remains that in tone and range and substance the newspapers of Montreal excelled consistently. Walking one day into the room occupied by His attendants `Abdu'l-Bahá was surprised to see a stack of newspapers laid in a corner. He was told that these were evidences of the power of His word and of the Cause, which they intended to dispatch to the East.

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2. *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada* (pp 55-60)

The highly competitive atmosphere of Montreal newspapers provided a vital response of the press to `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit. There were at least twelve dailies and another fourteen weekly magazines and newspapers, serving some 200,000 households. The Montreal press was

balkanized. The smallest (*Le Devoir*) and largest (*La Presse*) dailies were both in French. The daily newspapers served parallel audiences: Catholics, Protestants, francophones, English mercantilists, Conservatives, Liberals, Empire Loyalists, Irish Catholics, and radical liberals. The weeklies tended to serve smaller interest groups, including Italians, , literary people, rural populations, evangelical Protestants, religious radicals, and political independents.

Despite the distractions of Labour Day weekend activities inside and outside the city, and the interest that Prime Minister Borden's visit generated in the press, newspapers provided ample coverage of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the city. Ten of the twelve dailies (five English-language and five French-language papers) covered this visit in thirty-four articles; one of the English weekly newspapers also responded. Eight photographs of `Abdu'l-Bahá appeared in these papers. However, there were almost three times more English-language articles than French-language ones. The press coverage peaked on 4 and 6 September. The presentations at Coronation Hall and the Methodist Church provoked the most interest among the press. His talk at the Unitarian Church of the Messiah received far less publicity. Interest by the press waned after 6 September, because it was widely accepted¹⁰³ that `Abdu'l-Bahá would leave for Chicago immediately after his evening address at the Methodist Church on 5 September.

Not only was the response a measure of the breadth of coverage and of the particular nature of the press in Montreal, but it also indicated the kinds of topics the newspapers thought relevant and interesting about `Abdu'l-Bahá's sojourn.

The *Montreal Daily Star* gave the most coverage to `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit, resulting in ten articles, including an editorial. The newspaper was considered to have had a "judicious blending of the sensational and the patriotic (or imperial)". The *Star* analyzed events abroad related to the British Empire and fostered the idea that Canada should participate in imperial wars.

The *Star* also published two weekly papers, the *Family Herald and Weekly Star*, which was directed towards the rural population, and the *Montreal Standard*, carrying one and two articles, respectively, about `Abdu'l-Bahá. The *Standard* served the anglophone elite of Montreal and was distributed across Canada. A *Standard* reporter took so much interest in `Abdu'l-Bahá's views about Canada and Canadians that the paper reprinted the lengthy article, with very minor revisions, in its next weekly issue, and included a photograph.

It was Archibald Eddington, a reporter with the *Star*, who was instrumental in securing the attention of the press for `Abdu'l-Bahá's sojourn in Montreal.¹⁰⁴ With the second-largest

¹⁰³On 6 September, in fact, at least four papers said that `Abdu'l-Bahá had already left the city.

¹⁰⁴Estall and Sala, 1987. There are, curiously, no references to A. Eddington in the main

circulation in Montreal (70,000), the impact of the coverage of `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit was considerable. Not surprisingly, the overall themes of `Abdu'l-Bahá's talks emphasized by the *Star* relate, on one hand, to world peace and `Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecy of World War I, and on the other hand, to the inadequacies of socialism and materialism.

The Gazette, a morning paper, featured six articles on `Abdu'l-Bahá's presence in Montreal. As one of Canada's oldest newspapers, the paper was identified with English mercantile interests. *The Gazette*, on 4 September, satisfied itself with mentioning only `Abdu'l-Bahá's statement that all must enjoy welfare and comfort. `Abdu'l-Bahá's address at St. James Church was only covered by *The Gazette* and *Le Devoir*, the former listing about one half of the twelve principles of Bahá'í teachings [iterated in `Abdu'l-Bahá's talk]. *The Gazette* also highlighted the abolition of racism and the need for peace as the pivotal elements of `Abdu'l-Bahá's talks.

The Montreal *Daily Witness* followed `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit with a keen interest. Based on "Christian" (i.e., Protestant) principles, the paper favoured temperance and prohibition. It sought to reconcile all the Protestant denominations and regularly attacked Roman Catholicism. The *Daily Witness* carried, on 10 September, an article by a clergyman expounding the view that `Abdu'l-Bahá's "Oriental Doctrines are not new." This article must have caught many readers off guard, for the previous four articles were overwhelmingly sympathetic to the Bahá'í Faith.

La Patrie carried, among its three articles, the longest article of the French-language dailies. *La Patrie* expressed the radical tendencies of the Liberal party, advocating equal justice for all, respect for religious freedom, and the advancement of civil liberties. Under the title of *Le Prestige de l'Exotisme* ("The Prestige of Exotic Things"), the newspaper attributed `Abdu'l-Bahá's success to the fact that he was an oriental, rather than to the "deep, but old truths" he set forth. The article underscored the fact that his teachings contained nothing that was not taught by prophets of the past and by socialists, except adding belief in God and the need of prophets to morally and intellectually educate humankind. According to *La Patrie* `Abdu'l-Bahá couched his presentation in aphorisms.

Favourable articles appeared in *Le Devoir*. Its "intellectual and literary excellence" made it easily one of Montreal's most influential newspapers, read by the rising francophone middle class. Covering `Abdu'l-Bahá's address at St. James Church, *Le Devoir* mentioned the statement that refers to love as the purpose of religion, as presented to a "large gathering of English speakers." The reporter also mentioned `Abdu'l-Bahá's idea that the West can learn much from the East, namely, from its more subtle philosophy and more clearly articulated religion. With the

works dealing with newspapers and journalists in Quebec.

possibility of war, the article continued, it was necessary to establish an international tribunal to solve the problems among the civilized peoples of the world.

Montreal's largest newspaper, *La Presse*, devoted two articles to `Abdu'l-Bahá. A paper with a liberal outlook, it welcomed him as "le Sage Turc" ("Turkish sage"), and buried its two brief articles on pages 5 and 14, respectively. The first article provided a synopsis of `Abdu'l-Bahá's views on the elimination of the extremes of poverty and wealth; the second highlighted his talk at St. James Methodist Church, mentioning only his call for religious unity and universal peace.

The remaining newspapers carried one article each. *Le Canada* represented the left-wing interests of the Liberal Party. It addressed the comfortable classes of Montreal, namely, the people "who think, have money, and who have the pleasure and means to read before heading off to work." It focussed exclusively on `Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings on the economic well-being of the human race. Perceived as an "aged man who has some resemblance to a Muslim priest," his teachings were summed up as an "admixture of socialism and Christianity."

The *Daily Herald* was considerably more sympathetic to `Abdu'l-Bahá's message than was *Le Canada*. Originally set up as a Scottish publication defending Presbyterianism, it printed the evocative headline of "Church and Bench Give a Farewell Tribute to Sage," emphasizing `Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings on international peace and amity, and the independent search after truth.

Le Nationaliste carried the most prominent and satirical article among the French-language dailies. The paper advocated an autonomous Canada within the Empire, and autonomous provinces in Canada. The author of the article, "Caliban", mentioned that `Abdu'l-Bahá had travelled so far that he "stood a good chance of becoming a prophet." Whether speaking in elegant salons or braving the dangerous currents of the halls of socialists, `Abdu'l-Bahá carried the message of peace. In biting tones, Caliban explained how one must have an "unusual" name like `Abdu'l-Bahá, not an ordinary one, before he can call himself a "prophet". If an ordinary person propounds these ideas, said Caliban, we can take them or leave them, but if `Abdu'l-Bahá speaks of them, they are worth their weight in gold. "And that's too bad for us, who not call ourselves "Abdu'l-Bahá". Caliban summed up the Bahá'í teachings as "sentimental communism".

There were, then, notable differences between the French-language and English-language press coverage of `Abdu'l-Bahá's stay in Montreal. First, the French-language press did not carry any advance of his public addresses. One explanation lies in the fact that `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit had been arranged by an English-speaking family whose wide circle of friends and contacts seems to have consisted primarily of other English-speaking people in the city. The first French-language articles (in *Le Canada* and *La Presse*) appeared five days after `Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival in Montreal,

and climaxed in coverage on 6 September, three days before his departure.

Second, the French-language and English-language press were interested in different aspects of `Abdu'l-Bahá's public pronouncements and formal and informal talks. `Abdu'l-Bahá's public statements during his stay in Montreal can be broken down into six areas, namely, (1) war and peace, (2) religion, (3) the Bahá'í Faith, (4) humanity, (5) the life of `Abdu'l-Bahá, and (6) economics.¹⁰⁵ *War and peace* relates to `Abdu'l-Bahá's reported observations about the advent of a world war and the means of bringing about international relations and peace. *Religion* entails `Abdu'l-Bahá's references to the nature and purpose of religion in society, both past and present. The rubric *Bahá'í Faith* deals with the history and purposes of the Bahá'í Faith. *Humanity* covers what `Abdu'l-Bahá said about the basis of past, and future, society such as education, the equality of women and men, the need for each one to independently investigate reality, a universal auxiliary language, etc. *Abdu'l-Bahá* refers to reports about his life, his itinerary, and details of his speaking engagements. Finally, *Economics* refers to those paragraphs that highlight `Abdu'l-Bahá's observations about the economic basis of society.

Third, the differences in the reporting by the English- and French-language press are striking. The English-language press was overwhelmingly more interested in war and peace and religion, while `Abdu'l-Bahá's ideas on humanity received less attention. `Abdu'l-Bahá's life and Bahá'í economic teachings created far less interest among the English-language press than among the French-language newspapers. The Bahá'í Faith, as a topic to be reported, received equal coverage in English- and French-language presses.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, the tone of the reports differed widely between the two presses. On the whole, the English-language press offered a more sympathetic view of `Abdu'l-Bahá's statements, while the French-language press, with the exception of *Le Devoir*, tended to be more critical.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵If a paragraph contains several topics, the most dominant one would be used to assign it to a particular category.

¹⁰⁶`Abdu'l-Bahá's sojourn also did not escape the notice of Canada's celebrated humorist Stephen Leacock, who published, just two years after `Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Montreal, a satirical short story. David Legates' biography of Leacock (1970: 72) called the story a spoof, and surmised how the "biting tomfoolery in "The Yahi-Bahi Oriental Society," ... must have given hurt to a small coterie of his fellow citizens who represented a branch of a Middle East religious sect." (The satire, entitled "Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich" is devoid of any factual information concerning the Bahá'í Faith.)

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