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THE PROMULGATION OF
UNIVERSAL PEACE

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`Abdu'l-Bahá

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TALKS 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ DELIVERED IN NEW YORK AND BROOKLYN

11 April 1912

**Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Kinney
780 West End Avenue, New York**

Notes by Hooper Harris

How are you? Welcome! Welcome!

After arriving today, although weary with travel, I had the utmost longing and yearning to see you and could not resist this meeting. Now that I have met you, all my weariness has vanished, for your meeting is the cause of spiritual happiness.

I was in Egypt and was not feeling well, but I wished to come to you in America. My friends said, "This is a long journey; the sea is wide; you should remain here." But the more they advised and insisted, the greater became my longing to take this trip, and now I have come to America to meet the friends of God. This long voyage 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.

I am greatly pleased with the city of New York. Its harbor entrance, its piers, buildings and broad avenues are magnificent and beautiful. Truly, it is a wonderful city. As New York has made such progress in material civilization, I hope that it may also advance spiritually in the Kingdom and Covenant of God so that the friends here may become the cause of the illumination of America, that this city may become the city of love and that the fragrances of God may be spread from this place to all parts of the world. I have come for this. I pray that you may be manifestations of the love of Bahá'u'lláh, that each one of you may become like a clear lamp of crystal from which the rays of the bounties of the Blessed Perfection may shine forth to all nations and peoples. This is my highest aspiration.

It was a long, long trip. The more we traveled, the greater seemed the expanse of the sea. The weather was brilliant and fine throughout; there was no storm and no end to the sea.

I am very happy to meet you all here today. Praise be to God that your faces are shining with the love of Bahá'u'lláh. To behold them is the cause of great spiritual happiness. We have arranged to meet you every day at the homes of the friends.

In the East people were asking me, "Why do you undertake this long voyage? Your body cannot endure such hardships of travel." When it is necessary, my body can endure everything. It has withstood forty years of imprisonment and can still undergo the utmost trials.

I will see you again. Now I will greet each one of you personally. It is my hope that you will all be happy and that we may meet again and again.

12 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard MacNutt
935 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York

Notes by Howard MacNutt

This is a most happy visit. I have crossed the sea from the land of the Orient for the joy of meeting the friends of God. Although I am weary after my long journey, the light of the spirit shining in your faces brings me rest and reward. In this meeting the divine susceptibilities are radiant. This is a spiritual house, the home of the spirit. There is no discord here; all is love and unity. When souls are gathered together in this way, the divine bestowals descend. The purpose of the creation of man is the attainment of the supreme virtues of humanity through descent of the heavenly bestowals. The purpose of man's creation is, therefore, unity and harmony, not discord and separateness. If the atoms which compose the kingdom of the minerals were without affinity for each other, the earth would never have been formed, the universe could not have been created. Because they have affinity for each other, the power of life is able to manifest itself, and the organisms of the phenomenal world become possible. When this attraction or atomic affinity is destroyed, the power of life ceases to manifest; death and nonexistence result.

It is so, likewise, in the spiritual world. That world is the Kingdom of complete attraction and affinity. It is the Kingdom of the One Divine Spirit, the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the affinity and love manifest in this meeting, the divine susceptibilities witnessed here are not of this world but of the world of the Kingdom. When the souls become separated and selfish, the divine bounties do not descend, and the lights of the Supreme Concourse are no longer reflected even though the bodies meet together. A mirror with its back turned to the sun has no power to reflect the sun's effulgence. Praise be to God! The purpose of this assembly is love and unity.

The divine Prophets came to establish the unity of the Kingdom in human hearts. All of them proclaimed the glad tidings of the divine bestowals to the world of mankind. All brought the same message of divine love to the world. Jesus Christ gave His life upon the cross for the unity of mankind. Those who believed in Him likewise sacrificed life, honor, possessions, family, everything, that this human world might be released from the hell of discord, enmity and strife. His foundation was the oneness of humanity. Only a few were attracted to Him. They were not the kings and rulers of His time. They were not rich and important people. Some of them were catchers of fish. Most of them were ignorant men, not trained in the knowledge of this world. One of the greatest of them, Peter, could not remember the days of the week. All of them were men of the least consequence in the eyes of the world. But their hearts were pure and attracted by the fires of the Divine Spirit manifested in Christ. With this small army Christ conquered the world of the East and the West. Kings and nations rose against Him. Philosophers and the greatest men of learning assailed and blasphemed His Cause. All were defeated and overcome, their tongues silenced, their lamps extinguished, their hatred quenched; no trace of them now remains. They have become as nonexistent, while His Kingdom is triumphant and eternal.

The brilliant star of His Cause has ascended to the zenith, while night has enveloped and eclipsed His enemies. His name, beloved and adored by a few disciples, now commands the reverence of kings and nations of the world. His power is eternal; His sovereignty will continue forever, while those who opposed Him are sleeping in the dust, their very names unknown, forgotten. The little army of disciples has become a mighty cohort of millions. The Heavenly Host, the Supreme Concourse are His legions; the Word of God is His sword; the power of God is His victory.

Jesus Christ knew this would come to pass and was content to suffer. His abasement was His glorification; His crown of thorns, a heavenly diadem. When they pressed it upon His blessed head and spat in His beautiful face, they laid the foundation of His everlasting Kingdom. He still reigns, while they and their names have become lost and unknown. He is eternal and glorious; they are nonexistent. They sought to destroy Him, but they destroyed themselves and increased the intensity of His flame by the winds of their opposition.

Through His death and teachings we have entered into His Kingdom. His essential teaching was the unity of mankind and the attainment of supreme human virtues through love. He came to establish the Kingdom of peace and everlasting life. Can you find in His words any justification for discord and enmity? The purpose of His life and the glory of His death were to set mankind free from the sins of strife, war and bloodshed. The great nations of the world boast that their laws and civilization are based upon the religion of Christ. Why then do they make war upon each other? The Kingdom of Christ cannot be upheld by destroying and disobeying it. The banners of His armies cannot lead the forces of Satan. Consider the sad picture of Italy carrying war into Tripoli. If you should announce that Italy was a barbarous nation and not Christian, this would be vehemently denied. But would Christ sanction what they are doing in Tripoli? Is this destruction of human life obedience to His laws and teachings? Where does He command it? Where does He consent to it? He was killed by His enemies; He did not kill. He even loved and prayed for those who hung Him on the cross. Therefore, these wars and cruelties, this bloodshed and sorrow are Antichrist, not Christ. These are the forces of death and Satan, not the hosts of the Supreme Concourse of heaven.

No less bitter is the conflict between sects and denominations. Christ was a divine Center of unity and love. Whenever discord prevails instead of unity, wherever hatred and antagonism take the place of love and spiritual fellowship, Antichrist reigns instead of Christ. Who is right in these controversies and hatreds between the sects? Did Christ command them to love or to hate each other? He loved even His enemies and prayed in the hour of His crucifixion for those who killed Him. Therefore, to be a Christian is not merely to bear the name of Christ and say, "I belong to a Christian government." To be a real Christian is to be a servant in His Cause and Kingdom, to go forth under His banner of peace and love toward all mankind, to be self-sacrificing and obedient, to become quickened by the breaths of the Holy Spirit, to be mirrors reflecting the radiance of the divinity of Christ, to be fruitful trees in the garden of His planting, to refresh the world by the water of life of His teachings—in all things to be like Him and filled with the spirit of His love.

Praise be to God! The light of unity and love is shining in these faces. These spiritual susceptibilities are the real fruits of heaven. The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh over sixty years ago proclaimed the glad tidings of universal peace. The Báb was martyred in the Cause of God. Bahá'u'lláh suffered forty years as a prisoner and exile in order that the Kingdom of love might be established in the East and West. He has made it possible for us to meet here in love and unity. Because He suffered imprisonment, we are free to proclaim the oneness of the world of humanity for which He stood so long and faithfully. He was chained in dungeons, He was without food, His companions were thieves and criminals, He was subjected to every kind of abuse and infliction, but throughout it all He never ceased to proclaim the reality of the Word of God and the oneness of humanity. We have been brought together here by the power of His Word—you from America, I from Persia—all in love and unity of spirit. Was this possible in former centuries? If it is possible now after fifty years of sacrifice and teaching, what shall we expect in the wonderful centuries coming?

Therefore, let your faces be more radiant with hope and heavenly determination to serve the Cause of God, to spread the pure fragrances of the divine rose garden of unity, to awaken spiritual susceptibilities in the hearts of mankind, to kindle anew the spirit of humanity with divine fires and to reflect the glory of heaven to this gloomy world of materialism. When you possess these divine susceptibilities, you will be able to awaken and develop them in others. We cannot give of our wealth

to the poor unless we possess it. How can the poor give to the poor? How can the soul that is deprived of the heavenly bounties develop in other souls capacity to receive those bounties?

Array yourselves in the perfection of divine virtues. I hope you may be quickened and vivified by the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Then shall ye indeed become the angels of heaven whom Christ promised would appear in this Day to gather the harvest of divine planting. This is my hope. This is my prayer for you.

12 April 1912
Talk at Studio of Miss Phillips
39 West Sixty-seventh Street, New York

Notes by John G. Grundy

I give you greeting in love and unity. The affairs of this world are to be accounted as nothing compared to the joy and heavenly happiness of meeting the friends of God. It is to experience this great joy and blessing that I have come here although weary from my long voyage upon the sea. Tonight I am in the greatest happiness, looking upon this concourse of God. Your meeting here is surely an evidence that you are upholding the Cause of God, that you are aiding and assisting in establishing the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the culmination of my happiness is to look upon your faces and realize that you have been brought together by the power of the Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh. In this meeting you are upholding His standard and assisting His Cause. Therefore, I behold in you the making of a goodly tree upon which divine fruits will appear to give sustenance to the world of humanity.

With hearts set aglow by the fire of the love of God and spirits refreshed by the food of the heavenly spirit you must go forth as the disciples nineteen hundred years ago, quickening the hearts of men by the call of glad tidings, the light of God in your faces, severed from everything save God. Therefore, order your lives in accordance with the first principle of the divine teaching, which is love. Service to humanity is service to God. Let the love and light of the Kingdom radiate through you until all who look upon you shall be illumined by its reflection. Be as stars, brilliant and sparkling in the loftiness of their heavenly station. Do you appreciate the Day in which you live?

This is the century of the Blessed Perfection!

This is the cycle of the light of His beauty!

This is the consummate day of all the Prophets!

These are the days of seed sowing. These are the days of tree planting. The bountiful bestowals of God are successive. He who sows a seed in this day will behold his reward in the fruits and harvest of the heavenly Kingdom. This timely seed, when planted in the hearts of the beloved of God, will be watered by showers of divine mercy and warmed by the sunshine of divine love. Its fruitage and flower shall be the solidarity of mankind, the perfection of justice and the praiseworthy attributes of heaven manifest in humanity. All who sow such a seed and plant such a tree according to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh shall surely witness this divine outcome in the degrees of its perfection and will attain unto the good pleasure of the Merciful One.

Today the nations of the world are self-engaged, occupied with mortal and transitory accomplishments, consumed by the fires of passion and self. Self is dominant; enmity and animosity prevail. Nations and peoples are thinking only of their worldly interests and outcomes. The clash of war and din of strife are heard among them. But the friends of the Blessed Perfection have no thoughts save the thoughts of heaven and the love of God. Therefore, you must without delay employ your powers in spreading the effulgent glow of the love of God and so order your lives that you may be known and seen as examples of its radiance. You must deal with all in loving-kindness in order that this precious seed entrusted to your planting may continue to grow and bring forth its perfect fruit. The love and mercy of God will accomplish this through you if you have love in your own heart.

The doors of the Kingdom are opened. The lights of the Sun of Truth are shining. The clouds of divine mercy are raining down their priceless jewels. The zephyrs of a new and divine springtime are wafting their fragrant breaths from the invisible world. Know ye then the value of these days.

Awake ye to the realization of this heavenly opportunity. Strive with all the power of your souls, your deeds, actions and words to assist the spread of these glad tidings and the descent of this merciful bounty. You are the reality and expression of your deeds and actions. If you abide by the precepts and teachings of the Blessed Perfection, the heavenly world and ancient Kingdom will be yours—eternal happiness, love and everlasting life. The divine bounties are flowing. Each one of you has been given the opportunity of becoming a tree yielding abundant fruits. This is the springtime of Bahá'u'lláh. The verdure and foliage of spiritual growth are appearing in great abundance in the gardens of human hearts. Know ye the value of these passing days and vanishing nights. Strive to attain a station of absolute love one toward another. By the absence of love, enmity increases. By the exercise of love, love strengthens and enmities dwindle away.

Consider me—in the years of my advanced age, burdened with physical infirmities—crossing the wide ocean to look upon your faces. It is my hope that through the life of the spirit you may all become as one soul, as one tree adorning the rose garden of the Kingdom. It is my hope that the endless treasures of the bestowals of God may be yours here and hereafter. It is my prayer that the Supreme Concourse may be illumined by your brilliant lights shining forever in the heavens of eternal glory.

13 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Morten
141 East Twenty-first Street, New York

Notes by Esther Foster

Praise be to God! This is a radiant gathering. The faces are brilliant with the light of God. The hearts are attracted to the Kingdom of Bahá. I beg of God that day by day your faces may become brighter; day by day you may draw nearer to God; day by day you may take a greater portion from the outpourings of the Holy Spirit so that you may become encircled by the bounties of heaven.

The spiritual world is like unto the phenomenal world. They are the exact counterpart of each other. Whatever objects appear in this world of existence are the outer pictures of the world of heaven. When we look upon the phenomenal world, we perceive that it is divided into four seasons; one is the season of spring, another the season of summer, another autumn and then these three seasons are followed by winter. When the season of spring appears in the arena of existence, the whole world is rejuvenated and finds new life. The soul-refreshing breeze is wafted from every direction; the soul-quickenings bounty is everywhere; the cloud of mercy showers down its rain, and the sun shines upon everything. Day by day we perceive that the signs of vegetation are all about us. Wonderful flowers, hyacinths and roses perfume the nostrils. The trees are full of leaves and blossoms, and the blossoms are followed by fruit. The spring and summer are followed by autumn and winter. The flowers wither and are no more; the leaves turn gray and life has gone. Then comes another springtime; the former springtime is renewed; again a new life stirs within everything.

The appearances of the Manifestations of God are the divine springtime. When Christ appeared in this world, it was like the vernal bounty; the outpouring descended; the effulgences of the Merciful encircled all things; the human world found new life. Even the physical world partook of it. The divine perfections were upraised; souls were trained in the school of heaven so that all grades of human existence received life and light. Then by degrees these fragrances of heaven were discontinued; the season of winter came upon the world; the beauties of spring vanished; the excellences and perfections passed away; the lights and quickening were no longer evident; the phenomenal world and its materialities conquered everything; the spiritualities of life were lost; the world of existence became life unto a lifeless body; there was no trace of the spring left.

Bahá'u'lláh has come into this world. He has renewed that springtime. The same fragrances are wafting; the same heat of the Sun is giving life; the same cloud is pouring its rain, and with our own eyes we see that the world of existence is advancing and progressing. The human world has found new life.

I hope that each and all of you may become like unto verdant and green trees so that through the breezes of the divine spring, the outpouring of heaven, the heat of the Sun of Truth, you may become eternally refreshed; that you may bear blossoms and become fruitful; that you may not be as fruitless trees. Fruitless trees do not bring forth fruits or flowers. I hope that all of you may become friends of the paradise of Abhá, appearing with the utmost freshness and spiritual beauty. I pray in your behalf and beg of God confirmation and assistance.

14 April 1912
Talk at Church of the Ascension
Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street, New York

Notes by Aḥmad Sohráb and Howard MacNutt

In his scriptural lesson this morning the revered doctor read a verse from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.”

The light of truth has heretofore been seen dimly through variegated glasses, but now the splendors of Divinity shall be visible through the translucent mirrors of pure hearts and spirits. The light of truth is the divine teaching, heavenly instruction, merciful principles and spiritual civilization. Since my arrival in this country I find that material civilization has progressed greatly, that commerce has attained the utmost degree of expansion; arts, agriculture and all details of material civilization have reached the highest stage of perfection, but spiritual civilization has been left behind. Material civilization is like unto the lamp, while spiritual civilization is the light in that lamp. If the material and spiritual civilization become united, then we will have the light and the lamp together, and the outcome will be perfect. For material civilization is like unto a beautiful body, and spiritual civilization is like unto the spirit of life. If that wondrous spirit of life enters this beautiful body, the body will become a channel for the distribution and development of the perfections of humanity.

Jesus Christ came to teach the people of the world this heavenly civilization and not material civilization. He breathed the breath of the Holy Spirit into the body of the world and established an illumined civilization. Among the principles of divine civilization He came to proclaim is the Most Great Peace of mankind. Among His principles of spiritual civilization is the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Among the principles of heavenly civilization He brought is the virtue of the human world. Among the principles of celestial civilization He announced is the improvement and betterment of human morals.

Today the world of humanity is in need of international unity and conciliation. To establish these great fundamental principles a propelling power is needed. It is self-evident that the unity of the human world and the Most Great Peace cannot be accomplished through material means. They cannot be established through political power, for the political interests of nations are various and the policies of peoples are divergent and conflicting. They cannot be founded through racial or patriotic power, for these are human powers, selfish and weak. The very nature of racial differences and patriotic prejudices prevents the realization of this unity and agreement. Therefore, it is evidenced that the promotion of the oneness of the kingdom of humanity, which is the essence of the teachings of all the Manifestations of God, is impossible except through the divine power and breaths of the Holy Spirit. Other powers are too weak and are incapable of accomplishing this.

For man two wings are necessary. One wing is physical power and material civilization; the other is spiritual power and divine civilization. With one wing only, flight is impossible. Two wings are essential. Therefore, no matter how much material civilization advances, it cannot attain to perfection except through the uplift of spiritual civilization.

All the Prophets have come to promote divine bestowals, to found the spiritual civilization and teach the principles of morality. Therefore, we must strive with all our powers so that spiritual influences may gain the victory. For material forces have attacked mankind. The world of humanity is submerged in a sea of materialism. The rays of the Sun of Reality are seen but dimly and darkly through opaque glasses. The penetrative power of the divine bounty is not fully manifest.

In Persia among the various religions and sects there were intense differences. Bahá'u'lláh appeared in that country and founded the spiritual civilization. He established affiliation among the various peoples, promoted the oneness of the human world and unfurled the banner of the Most Great Peace. He wrote special Epistles covering these facts to all the kings and rulers of nations. Sixty years ago He conveyed His message to the leaders of the political world and to high dignitaries of the spiritual world. Therefore, spiritual civilization is progressing in the Orient, and oneness of humanity and peace among the nations is being accomplished step by step. Now I find a strong movement for universal peace emanating from America. It is my hope that this standard of the oneness of the world of humanity may be upraised with the utmost solidity so that the Orient and Occident may become perfectly reconciled and attain complete intercommunication, the hearts of the East and West become united and attracted, real union become unveiled, the light of guidance shine, divine effulgences be seen day by day so that the world of humanity may find complete tranquillity, the eternal happiness of man become evident and the hearts of the people of the world be as mirrors in which the rays of the Sun of Reality may be reflected. Consequently, it is my request that you should strive so that the light of reality may shine and the everlasting felicity of the world of man become apparent.

I will pray for you so you may attain this everlasting happiness. When I arrived in this city, I was made very happy, for I perceived that the people here have capacity for divine bestowals and have worthiness for the civilization of heaven. I pray that you may attain to all merciful bounties.

O Almighty! O God! O Thou compassionate One! This servant of Thine has hastened to the regions of the West from the uttermost parts of the East that, perchance, these nostrils may be perfumed by the fragrances of Thy bestowals; that the breeze of the rose garden of guidance may blow over these cities; that the people may attain to the capacity of receiving Thy favors; that the hearts may be rejoiced through Thy glad tidings; that the eyes may behold the light of reality; that the ears may hearken to the call of the Kingdom. O Almighty! Illumine the hearts. O kind God! Make the souls the envy of the rose garden and the meadow. O incomparable Beloved! Waft the fragrance of Thy bounty. Radiate the lights of compassion so that the hearts may be cleansed and purified and that they may take a share and portion from Thy confirmations. Verily, this congregation is seeking Thy path, searching for Thy mystery, beholding Thy face and desiring to be characterized with Thine attributes.

O Almighty! Confer Thou infinite bounties. Bestow Thine inexhaustible treasury so that these impotent ones may become powerful.

Verily, Thou art the Kind. Thou art the Generous. Thou art the Omniscient, the Omnipotent.

14 April 1912
Talk at Union Meeting of Advanced
Thought Centers Carnegie Lyceum
West Fifty-seventh Street, New York

Notes by Mountfort Mills and Howard MacNutt

I have come from distant lands to visit the meetings and assemblies of this country. In every meeting I find people gathered, loving each other; therefore, I am greatly pleased. The bond of union is evidenced in this assembly today, where the power of God has brought together in faith, agreement and concord those who are engaged in furthering the development of the human world. It is my hope that all mankind may become similarly united in the bond and agreement of love. Unity is the expression of the loving power of God and reflects the reality of Divinity. It is resplendent in this Day through the bestowals of light upon humanity.

Throughout the universe the divine power is effulgent in endless images and pictures. The world of creation, the world of humanity may be likened to the earth itself and the divine power to the sun. This Sun has shone upon all mankind. In the endless variety of its reflections the divine Will is manifested. Consider how all are recipients of the bounty of the same Sun. At most the difference between them is that of degree, for the effulgence is one effulgence, the one light emanating from the Sun. This will express the oneness of the world of humanity. The body politic, or the social unity of the human world, may be likened to an ocean, and each member, each individual, a wave upon that same ocean.

The light of the sun becomes apparent in each object according to the capacity of that object. The difference is simply one of degree and receptivity. The stone would be a recipient only to a limited extent; another created thing might be as a mirror wherein the sun is fully reflected; but the same light shines upon both.

The most important thing is to polish the mirrors of hearts in order that they may become illumined and receptive of the divine light. One heart may possess the capacity of the polished mirror; another, be covered and obscured by the dust and dross of this world. Although the same Sun is shining upon both, in the mirror which is polished, pure and sanctified you may behold the Sun in all its fullness, glory and power, revealing its majesty and effulgence; but in the mirror which is rusted and obscured there is no capacity for reflection, although so far as the Sun itself is concerned it is shining thereon and is neither lessened nor deprived. Therefore, our duty lies in seeking to polish the mirrors of our hearts in order that we shall become reflectors of that light and recipients of the divine bounties which may be fully revealed through them.

This means the oneness of the world of humanity. That is to say, when this human body politic reaches a state of absolute unity, the effulgence of the eternal Sun will make its fullest light and heat manifest. Therefore, we must not make distinctions between individual members of the human family. We must not consider any soul as barren or deprived. Our duty lies in educating souls so that the Sun of the bestowals of God shall become resplendent in them, and this is possible through the power of the oneness of humanity. The more love is expressed among mankind and the stronger the power of unity, the greater will be this reflection and revelation, for the greatest bestowal of God is love. Love is the source of all the bestowals of God. Until love takes possession of the heart, no other divine bounty can be revealed in it.

All the Prophets have striven to make love manifest in the hearts of men. Jesus Christ sought to create this love in the hearts. He suffered all difficulties and ordeals that perchance the human heart might become the fountain source of love. Therefore, we must strive with all our heart and soul that this love may take possession of us so that all humanity—whether it be in the East or in the West—may be connected through the bond of this divine affection; for we are all the waves of one sea; we have come into being through the same bestowal and are recipients from the same center. The lights of earth are all acceptable, but the center of effulgence is the sun, and we must direct our gaze to the sun. God is the Supreme Center. The more we turn toward this Center of Light, the greater will be our capacity.

In the Orient there were great differences among races and peoples. They hated each other, and there was no association among them. Various and divergent sects were hostile, irreconcilable. The different races were in constant war and conflict. About sixty years ago Bahá'u'lláh appeared upon the eastern horizon. He caused love and unity to become manifest among these antagonistic peoples. He united them with the bond of love; their former hatred and animosity passed away; love and unity reigned instead. It was a dark world; it became radiant. A new springtime appeared through Him, for the Sun of Truth had risen again. In the fields and meadows of human hearts variegated flowers of inner significance were blooming, and the good fruits of the Kingdom of God became manifest.

I have come here with this mission: that through your endeavors, through your heavenly morals, through your devoted efforts a perfect bond of unity and love may be established between the East and the West so that the bestowals of God may descend upon all and that all may be seen to be the parts of the same tree—the great tree of the human family. For mankind may be likened to the branches, leaves, blossoms and fruit of that tree.

The favors of God are unending, limitless. Infinite bounties have encompassed the world. We must emulate the bounties of God, and just as each one of them—the bounty of life, for instance—surrounds and encompasses all, so likewise must we be connected and blended together until each part shall become the expression of the whole.

Consider: We plant a seed. A complete and perfect tree appears from it, and from each seed of this tree another tree can be produced. Therefore, the part is expressive of the whole, for this seed was a part of the tree, but therein potentially was the whole tree. So each one of us may become expressive or representative of all the bounties of life to mankind. This is the unity of the world of humanity. This is the bestowal of God. This is the felicity of the human world, and this is the manifestation of the divine favor.

15 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mountfort Mills
327 West End Avenue, New York

Compiled from Stenographic Notes by Howard MacNutt

A few days ago I arrived in New York, coming direct from Alexandria. On a former trip I traveled to Europe, visiting Paris and London. Paris is most beautiful in outward appearance. The evidences of material civilization there are very great, but the spiritual civilization is far behind. I found the people of that city submerged and drowning in a sea of materialism. Their conversations and discussions were limited to natural and physical phenomena, without mention of God. I was greatly astonished. Most of the scholars, professors and learned men proved to be materialists. I said to them, "I am surprised and astonished that men of such perceptive caliber and evident knowledge should still be captives of nature, not recognizing the self-evident Reality."

The phenomenal world is entirely subject to the rule and control of natural law. These myriad suns, satellites and heavenly bodies throughout endless space are all captives of nature. They cannot transgress in a single point or particular the fixed laws which govern the physical universe. The sun in its immensity, the ocean in its vastness are incapable of violating these universal laws. All phenomenal beings—the plants in their kingdom, even the animals with their intelligence—are nature's subjects and captives. All live within the bounds of natural law, and nature is the ruler of all except man. Man is not the captive of nature, for although according to natural law he is a being of the earth, yet he guides ships over the ocean, flies through the air in airplanes, descends in submarines; therefore, he has overcome natural law and made it subservient to his wishes. For instance, he imprisons in an incandescent lamp the illimitable natural energy called electricity—a material force which can cleave mountains—and bids it give him light. He takes the human voice and confines it in the phonograph for his benefit and amusement. According to his natural power man should be able to communicate a limited distance, but by overcoming the restrictions of nature he can annihilate space and send telephone messages thousands of miles. All the sciences, arts and discoveries were mysteries of nature, and according to natural law these mysteries should remain latent, hidden; but man has proceeded to break this law, free himself from this rule and bring them forth into the realm of the visible. Therefore, he is the ruler and commander of nature. Man has intelligence; nature has not. Man has volition; nature has none. Man has memory; nature is without it. Man has the reasoning faculty; nature is deprived. Man has the perceptive faculty; nature cannot perceive. It is therefore proved and evident that man is nobler than nature.

If we accept the supposition that man is but a part of nature, we are confronted by an illogical statement, for this is equivalent to claiming that a part may be endowed with qualities which are absent in the whole. For man who is a part of nature has perception, intelligence, memory, conscious reflection and susceptibility, while nature itself is quite bereft of them. How is it possible for the part to be possessed of qualities or faculties which are absent in the whole? The truth is that God has given to man certain powers which are supernatural. How then can man be considered a captive of nature? Is he not dominating and controlling nature to his own uses more and more? Is he not the very divinity of nature? Shall we say nature is blind, nature is not perceptive, nature is without volition and not alive, and then relegate man to nature and its limitations? How can we answer this question? How will the materialists and scholastic atheists prove and support such a supposition? As a matter of fact, they themselves make natural laws subservient to their own wish and purpose. The proof is complete that in man there is a power beyond the limitations of nature, and that power is the bestowal of God.

In New York I find the people more endowed with spiritual susceptibilities. They are not mere captives of nature's control; they are rising out of the bonds and burden of captivity. For this reason I am very happy and hopeful that, God willing, in this populous country, in this vast continent of the West, the virtues of the world of humanity shall become resplendent; that the oneness of human world-power, the love of God, may enkindle the hearts, and that international peace may hoist its standards, influencing all other regions and countries from here. This is my hope.

16 April 1912
Talk at Hotel Ansonia to Bahá'í Friends of New Jersey
Broadway and Seventy-third Street, New York

Notes by Ahmád Sohráb

Souls from the East and West have been brought together here through the power of the Holy Spirit. Such a gathering as this would be impossible through material means. A meeting of this kind has never been established in New York, for here tonight we find people from remote regions of the earth, associated with the people of America in the utmost love and spiritual unity. This is only possible through the power of God. Christ appeared in this world nineteen hundred years ago to establish ties of unity and bonds of love between the various nations and different communities. He cemented together the sciences of Rome and the splendors of the civilization of Greece. He also accomplished affiliation between the Assyrian kingdom and the power of Egypt. The blending of these nations in unity, love and agreement had been impossible, but Christ through divine power established this condition among the children of men.

A much greater difficulty confronts us today when we endeavor to establish unity between the Orient and the Occident. Bahá'u'lláh through the power of heaven has brought the East and the West together. Erelong we shall know that they have been cemented by the power of God. The oneness of the kingdom of humanity will supplant the banner of conquest, and all communities of the earth will gather under its protection. No nation with separate and restricted boundaries—such as Persia, for instance—will exist. The United States of America will be known only as a name. Germany, France, England, Turkey, Arabia—all these various nations will be welded together in unity. When the people of the future are asked, “To which nationality do you belong?” the answer will be, “To the nationality of humanity. I am living under the shadow of Bahá'u'lláh. I am the servant of Bahá'u'lláh. I belong to the army of the Most Great Peace.” The people of the future will not say, “I belong to the nation of England, France or Persia”; for all of them will be citizens of a universal nationality—the one family, the one country, the one world of humanity—and then these wars, hatreds and strifes will pass away.

Bahá'u'lláh appeared in a country which was the center of prejudice. In that country were many different communities, religions, sects and denominations. All the animosities of past centuries existed among them. They were ready to kill each other. They considered the killing of others who did not agree with them in religious belief an act of worship. Bahá'u'lláh established such unity and agreement between these various communities that the greatest love and amity are now witnessed among them.

Today the Bahá'ís of the East are longing with deep desire to see you face to face. Their highest hope and fondest wish is that the day may come when they will be gathered together in an assembly with you. Consider well the power that accomplished this wonderful transformation.

The body of the human world is sick. Its remedy and healing will be the oneness of the kingdom of humanity. Its life is the Most Great Peace. Its illumination and quickening is love. Its happiness is the attainment of spiritual perfections. It is my wish and hope that in the bounties and favors of the Blessed Perfection we may find a new life, acquire a new power and attain to a wonderful and supreme source of energy so that the Most Great Peace of divine intention shall be established upon the foundations of the unity of the world of men with God. May the love of God be spread from this city, from this meeting to all the surrounding countries. Nay, may America become the distributing center of spiritual enlightenment, and all the world receive this heavenly blessing! For America has developed powers and capacities greater and more wonderful than other nations. While it is true that

its people have attained a marvelous material civilization, I hope that spiritual forces may animate this great body and a corresponding spiritual civilization be established. May the inhabitants of this country become like angels of heaven with faces turned continually toward God. May all of them become the servants of the Omnipotent One. May they rise from present material attainments to such a height that heavenly illumination may stream from this center to all the peoples of the world.

The divine Jerusalem has come down from heaven. The bride of Zion has appeared. The voice of the Kingdom of God has been raised. May you attain supreme capacity and magnetic attraction in this realm of might and power—manifesting new energy and wonderful accomplishment, for God is your Assister and Helper. The breath of the Holy Spirit is your comforter, and the angels of heaven surround you. I desire this power for you. Rest assured that these bounties now overshadow you.

17 April 1912
Talk at Hotel Ansonia
Broadway and Seventy-third Street, New York

Notes by Howard MacNutt

During my visit to London and Paris last year I had many talks with the materialistic philosophers of Europe. The basis of all their conclusions is that the acquisition of knowledge of phenomena is according to a fixed, invariable law—a law mathematically exact in its operation through the senses. For instance, the eye sees a chair; therefore, there is no doubt of the chair's existence. The eye looks up into the heavens and beholds the sun; I see flowers upon this table; I smell their fragrance; I hear sounds outside, etc. This, they say, is a fixed mathematical law of perception and deduction, the operation of which admits of no doubt whatever; for inasmuch as the universe is subject to our sensing, the proof is self-evident that our knowledge of it must be gained through the avenues of the senses. That is to say, the materialists announce that the criterion and standard of human knowledge is sense perception. Among the Greeks and Romans the criterion of knowledge was reason—that whatever is provable and acceptable by reason must necessarily be admitted as true. A third standard or criterion is the opinion held by theologians that traditions or prophetic statement and interpretations constitute the basis of human knowing. There is still another, a fourth criterion, upheld by religionists and metaphysicians who say that the source and channel of all human penetration into the unknown is through inspiration. Briefly then, these four criteria according to the declarations of men are: first, sense perception; second, reason; third, traditions; fourth, inspiration.

In Europe I told the philosophers and scientists of materialism that the criterion of the senses is not reliable. For instance, consider a mirror and the images reflected in it. These images have no actual corporeal existence. Yet if you had never seen a mirror, you would firmly insist and believe that they were real. The eye sees a mirage upon the desert as a lake of water, but there is no reality in it. As we stand upon the deck of a steamer, the shore appears to be moving, yet we know the land is stationary and we are moving. The earth was believed to be fixed and the sun revolving about it, but although this appears to be so, the reverse is now known to be true. A whirling torch makes a circle of fire appear before the eye, yet we realize there is but one point of light. We behold a shadow moving upon the ground, but it has no material existence, no substance. In deserts the atmospheric effects are particularly productive of illusions which deceive the eye. Once I saw a mirage in which a whole caravan appeared traveling upward into the sky. In the far North other deceptive phenomena appear and baffle human vision. Sometimes three or four suns, called by scientists mock suns, will be shining at the same time, whereas we know that the great solar orb is one and that it remains fixed and single. In brief, the senses are continually deceived, and we are unable to separate that which is reality from that which is not.

As to the second criterion—reason—this likewise is unreliable and not to be depended upon. This human world is an ocean of varying opinions. If reason is the perfect standard and criterion of knowledge, why are opinions at variance and why do philosophers disagree so completely with each other? This is a clear proof that human reason is not to be relied upon as an infallible criterion. For instance, great discoveries and announcements of former centuries are continually upset and discarded by the wise men of today. Mathematicians, astronomers, chemical scientists continually disprove and reject the conclusions of the ancients; nothing is fixed, nothing final; everything is continually changing because human reason is progressing along new roads of investigation and

arriving at new conclusions every day. In the future much that is announced and accepted as true now will be rejected and disproved. And so it will continue ad infinitum.

When we consider the third criterion—traditions—upheld by theologians as the avenue and standard of knowledge, we find this source equally unreliable and unworthy of dependence. For religious traditions are the report and record of understanding and interpretation of the Book. By what means has this understanding, this interpretation been reached? By the analysis of human reason. When we read the Book of God, the faculty of comprehension by which we form conclusions is reason. Reason is mind. If we are not endowed with perfect reason, how can we comprehend the meanings of the Word of God? Therefore, human reason, as already pointed out, is by its very nature finite and faulty in conclusions. It cannot surround the Reality Itself, the Infinite Word. Inasmuch as the source of traditions and interpretations is human reason, and human reason is faulty, how can we depend upon its findings for real knowledge?

The fourth criterion I have named is inspiration through which it is claimed the reality of knowledge is attainable. What is inspiration? It is the influx of the human heart. But what are satanic promptings which afflict mankind? They are the influx of the heart also. How shall we differentiate between them? The question arises: How shall we know whether we are following inspiration from God or satanic promptings of the human soul? Briefly, the point is that in the human material world of phenomena these four are the only existing criteria or avenues of knowledge, and all of them are faulty and unreliable. What then remains? How shall we attain the reality of knowledge? By the breaths and promptings of the Holy Spirit, which is light and knowledge itself. Through it the human mind is quickened and fortified into true conclusions and perfect knowledge. This is conclusive argument showing that all available human criteria are erroneous and defective, but the divine standard of knowledge is infallible. Therefore, man is not justified in saying, “I know because I perceive through my senses,” or “I know because it is proved through my faculty of reason,” or “I know because it is according to tradition and interpretation of the Holy Book,” or “I know because I am inspired.” All human standards of judgment are faulty, finite.

17 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Kinney
780 West End Avenue, New York

Notes by John G. Grundy

In the Holy Books it is recorded that when the Sun of Truth dawns, it will appear in the East, and its light will be reflected in the West. Already its dawning has taken place in the East, and its signs are appearing in the West. Its illumination shall spread rapidly and widely in the Occident. The Sun of Truth has risen in Persia, and its effulgence is now manifest here in America. This is the greatest proof of its appearance in the horizon of the world, as recorded in the heavenly Books. Praise be to God! That which is prophesied in the Holy Books has been fulfilled.

On Sunday last at Carnegie Hall the revered soul who introduced ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave voice to the statement that according to tradition demons would appear from the land of the sunrise, but now we find angels appearing instead. At the time this statement was made a reply was not possible, but today we will speak of it. The great spiritual lights have always appeared in the East. The Blessed Perfection, Bahá’u’lláh, appeared in the East. Jesus Christ dawned upon the horizon of the East. Moses, Aaron, Joseph and all the Israelitish prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah and others appeared from the Orient. The lights of Muḥammad and the Báb shone from the East. The eastern horizon has been flooded with the effulgence of these great lights, and only from the East have they risen to shine upon the West. Now—praise be to God!—you are living in the dawn of a cycle when the Sun of Truth is again shining forth from the East, illumining all regions.

The world has become a new world. The darkness of night which has enveloped humanity is passing. A new day has dawned. Divine susceptibilities and heavenly capacities are developing in human souls under the training of the Sun of Truth. The capacities of souls are different. Their conditions are various. For example, certain minerals come from the stony regions of the earth. All are minerals, all are produced by the same sun, but one remains a stone while another develops the capacity of a glittering gem or jewel. From one plot of land tulips and hyacinths grow; from another, thorns and thistles. Each plot receives the bounty of the sunshine, but the capacity to receive it is not the same. Therefore, it is requisite that we must develop capacity and divine susceptibility in order that the merciful bounty of the Sun of Truth intended for this age and time in which we are living may reflect from us as light from pure crystals.

The bounties of the Blessed Perfection are infinite. We must endeavor to increase our capacity daily, to strengthen and enlarge our capabilities for receiving them, to become as perfect mirrors. The more polished and clean the mirror, the more effulgent is its reflection of the lights of the Sun of Truth. Be like a well-cultivated garden wherein the roses and variegated flowers of heaven are growing in fragrance and beauty. It is my hope that your hearts may become as ready ground, carefully tilled and prepared, upon which the divine showers of the bounties of the Blessed Perfection may descend and the zephyrs of this divine springtime may blow with quickening breath. Then will the garden of your hearts bring forth its flowers of delightful fragrance to refresh the nostril of the heavenly Gardener. Let your hearts reflect the glories of the Sun of Truth in their many colors to gladden the eye of the divine Cultivator Who has nourished them. Day by day become more closely attracted in order that the love of God may illumine all those with whom you come in contact. Be as one spirit, one soul, leaves of one tree, flowers of one garden, waves of one ocean.

As difference in degree of capacity exists among human souls, as difference in capability is found, therefore, individualities will differ one from another. But in reality this is a reason for unity

and not for discord and enmity. If the flowers of a garden were all of one color, the effect would be monotonous to the eye; but if the colors are variegated, it is most pleasing and wonderful. The difference in adornment of color and capacity of reflection among the flowers gives the garden its beauty and charm. Therefore, although we are of different individualities, different in ideas and of various fragrances, let us strive like flowers of the same divine garden to live together in harmony. Even though each soul has its own individual perfume and color, all are reflecting the same light, all contributing fragrance to the same breeze which blows through the garden, all continuing to grow in complete harmony and accord. Become as waves of one sea, trees of one forest, growing in the utmost love, agreement and unity.

If you attain to such a capacity of love and unity, the Blessed Perfection will shower infinite graces of the spiritual Kingdom upon you, guide, protect and preserve you under the shadow of His Word, increase your happiness in this world and uphold you through all difficulties. Therefore, it is my hope that day by day you will become more and more effulgent in the horizon of heaven, advance nearer and nearer toward the Kingdom of Abhá, attain greater and greater bounties of the Blessed Perfection. I am joyful, for I perceive the evidences of great love among you. I go to Chicago, and when I return I hope that love will have become infinite. Then will it be an eternal joy to me and the friends in the Orient.

18 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Marshall L. Emery
273 West Ninetieth Street, New York

Notes by Miss Dixon

Tonight I wish to tell you something of the history of the Bahá'í Revelation.

The Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, belonged to the nobility of Persia. From earliest childhood He was distinguished among His relatives and friends. They said, "This child has extraordinary power." In wisdom, intelligence and as a source of new knowledge, He was advanced beyond His age and superior to His surroundings. All who knew Him were astonished at His precocity. It was usual for them to say, "Such a child will not live," for it is commonly believed that precocious children do not reach maturity. During the period of youth the Blessed Perfection did not enter school. He was not willing to be taught. This fact is well established among the Persians of Tíhrán. Nevertheless, He was capable of solving the difficult problems of all who came to Him. In whatever meeting, scientific assembly or theological discussion He was found, He became the authority of explanation upon intricate and abstruse questions presented.

Until His father passed away, Bahá'u'lláh did not seek position or political station notwithstanding His connection with the government. This occasioned surprise and comment. It was frequently said, "How is it that a young man of such keen intelligence and subtle perception does not seek lucrative appointments? As a matter of fact, every position is open to him." This is an historical statement fully attested by the people of Persia.

He was most generous, giving abundantly to the poor. None who came to Him were turned away. The doors of His house were open to all. He always had many guests. This unbounded generosity was conducive to greater astonishment from the fact that He sought neither position nor prominence. In commenting upon this His friends said He would become impoverished, for His expenses were many and His wealth becoming more and more limited. "Why is he not thinking of his own affairs?" they inquired of each other; but some who were wise declared, "This personage is connected with another world; he has something sublime within him that is not evident now; the day is coming when it will be manifested." In truth, the Blessed Perfection was a refuge for every weak one, a shelter for every fearing one, kind to every indigent one, lenient and loving to all creatures.

He became well-known in regard to these qualities before the Báb appeared. Then Bahá'u'lláh declared the Báb's mission to be true and promulgated His teachings. The Báb announced that the greater Manifestation would take place after Him and called the Promised One "Him Whom God shall make manifest," saying that nine years later the reality of His own mission would become apparent. In His writings He stated that in the ninth year this expected One would be known; in the ninth year they would attain to all glory and felicity; in the ninth year they would advance rapidly. Between Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb there was communication privately. The Báb wrote a letter containing three hundred and sixty derivatives of the root Bahá. The Báb was martyred in Tabríz; and Bahá'u'lláh, exiled into 'Iráq in 1852, announced Himself in Baghdád. For the Persian government had decided that as long as He remained in Persia the peace of the country would be disturbed; therefore, He was exiled in the expectation that Persia would become quiet. His banishment, however, produced the opposite effect. New tumult arose, and the mention of His greatness and influence spread everywhere throughout the country. The proclamation of His manifestation and mission was made in Baghdád. He called His friends together there and spoke to them of God.

At one point He left the city and went alone into the mountains of Kurdistán, where He made His abode in caves and grottoes. A part of this time He lived in the city of Sulaymáníyyih. Two years passed during which neither His friends nor family knew just where He was.

Although Bahá'u'lláh was solitary, secluded and unknown in His retirement, the report spread throughout Kurdistán that this was a most remarkable and learned Personage, gifted with a wonderful power of attraction. In a short time Kurdistán was magnetized with His love. During this period Bahá'u'lláh lived in poverty. His garments were those of the poor and needy. His food was that of the indigent and lowly. An atmosphere of majesty haloed Him as the sun at midday. Everywhere He was greatly revered and beloved.

After two years He returned to Baghdád. Friends He had known in Sulaymáníyyih came to visit Him. They found Him in His accustomed environment of ease and affluence and were astonished at the appointments of One Who had lived in seclusion under such frugal conditions in Kurdistán.

The Persian government believed the banishment of the Blessed Perfection from Persia would be the extermination of His Cause in that country. These rulers now realized that it spread more rapidly. His prestige increased; His teachings became more widely circulated. The chiefs of Persia then used their influence to have Bahá'u'lláh exiled from Baghdád. He was summoned to Constantinople by the Turkish authorities. While in Constantinople He ignored every restriction, especially the hostility of ministers of state and clergy. The official representatives of Persia again brought their influence to bear upon the Turkish authorities and succeeded in having Bahá'u'lláh banished from Constantinople to Adrianople, the object being to keep Him as far away as possible from Persia and render His communication with that country more difficult. Nevertheless, the Cause still spread and strengthened.

Finally, they consulted together and said, "We have banished Bahá'u'lláh from place to place, but each time he is exiled his cause is more widely extended, his proclamation increases in power, and day by day his lamp is becoming brighter. This is due to the fact that we have exiled him to large cities and populous centers. Therefore, we will send him to a penal colony as a prisoner so that all may know he is the associate of murderers, robbers and criminals; in a short time he and his followers will perish." The Sultán of Turkey then banished Him to the prison of Akká in Syria.

When Bahá'u'lláh arrived at Akká, through the power of God He was able to hoist His banner. His light at first had been a star; now it became a mighty sun, and the illumination of His Cause expanded from the East to the West. Inside prison walls He wrote Epistles to all the kings and rulers of nations, summoning them to arbitration and universal peace. Some of the kings received His words with disdain and contempt. One of these was the Sultán of the Ottoman kingdom. Napoleon III of France did not reply. A second Epistle was addressed to him. It stated, "I have written you an Epistle before this, summoning you to the Cause of God, but you are of the heedless. You have proclaimed that you were the defender of the oppressed; now it hath become evident that you are not. Nor are you kind to your own suffering and oppressed people. Your actions are contrary to your own interests, and your kingly pride must fall. Because of your arrogance God shortly will destroy your sovereignty. France will flee away from you, and you will be overwhelmed by a great conquest. There will be lamentation and mourning, women bemoaning the loss of their sons." This arraignment of Napoleon III was published and spread.

Read it and consider: one prisoner, single and solitary, without assistant or defender, a foreigner and stranger imprisoned in the fortress of Akká, writing such letters to the Emperor of France and Sultán of Turkey. Reflect upon this: how Bahá'u'lláh upraised the standard of His Cause in prison. Refer to history. It is without parallel. No such thing has happened before that time nor since—a prisoner and an exile advancing His Cause and spreading His teachings broadcast so that eventually He became powerful enough to conquer the very king who banished Him.

His Cause spread more and more. The Blessed Perfection was a prisoner twenty-five years. During all this time He was subjected to the indignities and revilement of the people. He was

persecuted, mocked and put in chains. In Persia His properties were pillaged and His possessions confiscated. First, there was banishment from Persia to Baghdád, then to Constantinople, then to Adrianople, finally from Rumelia to the prison fortress of Akká.

During His lifetime He was intensely active. His energy was unlimited. Scarcely one night was passed in restful sleep. He bore these ordeals, suffered these calamities and difficulties in order that a manifestation of selflessness and service might become apparent in the world of humanity; that the Most Great Peace should become a reality; that human souls might appear as the angels of heaven; that heavenly miracles would be wrought among men; that human faith should be strengthened and perfected; that the precious, priceless bestowal of God—the human mind—might be developed to its fullest capacity in the temple of the body; and that man might become the reflection and likeness of God, even as it hath been revealed in the Bible, “Let us make man in our image.”

Briefly, the Blessed Perfection bore all these ordeals and calamities in order that our hearts might become enkindled and radiant, our spirits be glorified, our faults become virtues, our ignorance be transformed into knowledge; in order that we might attain the real fruits of humanity and acquire heavenly graces; in order that, although pilgrims upon earth, we should travel the road of the heavenly Kingdom, and, although needy and poor, we might receive the treasures of eternal life. For this has He borne these difficulties and sorrows.

Trust all to God. The lights of God are resplendent. The blessed Epistles are spreading. The blessed teachings are promulgated throughout the East and West. Soon you will see that the heavenly Words have established the oneness of the world of humanity. The banner of the Most Great Peace has been unfurled, and the great community is appearing.

19 April 1912
Talk at Earl Hall
Columbia University, New York

From Stenographic Notes

If we look with a perceiving eye upon the world of creation, we find that all existing things may be classified as follows: first, mineral—that is to say, matter or substance appearing in various forms of composition; second, vegetable—possessing the virtues of the mineral plus the power of augmentation or growth, indicating a degree higher and more specialized than the mineral; third, animal—possessing the attributes of the mineral and vegetable plus the power of sense perception; fourth, human—the highest specialized organism of visible creation, embodying the qualities of the mineral, vegetable and animal plus an ideal endowment absolutely absent in the lower kingdoms—the power of intellectual investigation into the mysteries of outer phenomena. The outcome of this intellectual endowment is science, which is especially characteristic of man. This scientific power investigates and apprehends created objects and the laws surrounding them. It is the discoverer of the hidden and mysterious secrets of the material universe and is peculiar to man alone. The most noble and praiseworthy accomplishment of man, therefore, is scientific knowledge and attainment.

Science may be likened to a mirror wherein the images of the mysteries of outer phenomena are reflected. It brings forth and exhibits to us in the arena of knowledge all the product of the past. It links together past and present. The philosophical conclusions of bygone centuries, the teachings of the Prophets and wisdom of former sages are crystallized and reproduced in the scientific advancement of today. Science is the discoverer of the past. From its premises of past and present we deduce conclusions as to the future. Science is the governor of nature and its mysteries, the one agency by which man explores the institutions of material creation. All created things are captives of nature and subject to its laws. They cannot transgress the control of these laws in one detail or particular. The infinite starry worlds and heavenly bodies are nature's obedient subjects. The earth and its myriad organisms, all minerals, plants and animals are thralls of its dominion. But man through the exercise of his scientific, intellectual power can rise out of this condition, can modify, change and control nature according to his own wishes and uses. Science, so to speak, is the breaker of the laws of nature.

Consider, for example, that man according to natural law should dwell upon the surface of the earth. By overcoming this law and restriction, however, he sails in ships over the ocean, mounts to the zenith in airplanes and sinks to the depths of the sea in submarines. This is against the fiat of nature and a violation of her sovereignty and dominion. Nature's laws and methods, the hidden secrets and mysteries of the universe, human inventions and discoveries, all our scientific acquisitions should naturally remain concealed and unknown, but man through his intellectual acumen searches them out of the plane of the invisible, draws them into the plane of the visible, exposes and explains them. For instance, one of the mysteries of nature is electricity. According to nature this force, this energy, should remain latent and hidden, but man scientifically breaks through the very laws of nature, arrests it and even imprisons it for his use.

In brief, man through the possession of this ideal endowment of scientific investigation is the most noble product of creation, the governor of nature. He takes the sword from nature's hand and uses it upon nature's head. According to natural law night is a period of darkness and obscurity, but man by utilizing the power of electricity, by wielding this electric sword overcomes the darkness and dispels the gloom. Man is superior to nature and makes nature do his bidding. Man is a sensitive being; nature is without sensation. Man has memory and reason; nature lacks them. Man is nobler

than nature. There are powers within him of which nature is devoid. It may be claimed that these powers are from nature itself and that man is a part of nature. In answer to this statement we will say that if nature is the whole and man is a part of that whole, how could it be possible for a part to possess qualities and virtues which are absent in the whole? Undoubtedly the part must be endowed with the same qualities and properties as the whole. For example, the hair is a part of the human anatomy. It cannot contain elements which are not found in other parts of the body, for in all cases the component elements of the body are the same. Therefore, it is manifest and evident that man, although in body a part of nature, nevertheless in spirit possesses a power transcending nature; for if he were simply a part of nature and limited to material laws, he could possess only the things which nature embodies. God has conferred upon and added to man a distinctive power—the faculty of intellectual investigation into the secrets of creation, the acquisition of higher knowledge—the greatest virtue of which is scientific enlightenment.

This endowment is the most praiseworthy power of man, for through its employment and exercise the betterment of the human race is accomplished, the development of the virtues of mankind is made possible and the spirit and mysteries of God become manifest. Therefore, I am greatly pleased with my visit to this university. Praise be to God that this country abounds in such institutions of learning where the knowledge of sciences and arts may readily be acquired.

As material and physical sciences are taught here and are constantly unfolding in wider vistas of attainment, I am hopeful that spiritual development may also follow and keep pace with these outer advantages. As material knowledge is illuminating those within the walls of this great temple of learning, so also may the light of the spirit, the inner and divine light of the real philosophy glorify this institution. The most important principle of divine philosophy is the oneness of the world of humanity, the unity of mankind, the bond conjoining East and West, the tie of love which blends human hearts.

Therefore, it is our duty to put forth our greatest efforts and summon all our energies in order that the bonds of unity and accord may be established among mankind. For thousands of years we have had bloodshed and strife. It is enough; it is sufficient. Now is the time to associate together in love and harmony. For thousands of years we have tried the sword and warfare; let mankind for a time at least live in peace. Review history and consider how much savagery, how much bloodshed and battle the world has witnessed. It has been either religious warfare, political warfare or some other clash of human interests. The world of humanity has never enjoyed the blessing of universal peace. Year by year the implements of warfare have been increased and perfected. Consider the wars of past centuries; only ten, fifteen or twenty thousand at the most were killed, but now it is possible to kill one hundred thousand in a single day. In ancient times warfare was carried on with the sword; today it is the smokeless gun. Formerly, battleships were sailing vessels; today they are dreadnoughts. Consider the increase and improvement in the weapons of war. God has created us all human, and all countries of the world are parts of the same globe. We are all His servants. He is kind and just to all. Why should we be unkind and unjust to each other? He provides for all. Why should we deprive one another? He protects and preserves all. Why should we kill our fellow creatures? If this warfare and strife be for the sake of religion, it is evident that it violates the spirit and basis of all religion. All the divine Manifestations have proclaimed the oneness of God and the unity of mankind. They have taught that men should love and mutually help each other in order that they might progress. Now if this conception of religion be true, its essential principle is the oneness of humanity. The fundamental truth of the Manifestations is peace. This underlies all religion, all justice. The divine purpose is that men should live in unity, concord and agreement and should love one another. Consider the virtues of the human world and realize that the oneness of humanity is the primary foundation of them all. Read the Gospel and the other Holy Books. You will find their fundamentals are one and the same. Therefore, unity is the essential truth of religion and, when so understood, embraces all the virtues of the human world. Praise be to God! This knowledge has been spread, eyes have been opened, and

ears have become attentive. Therefore, we must endeavor to promulgate and practice the religion of God which has been founded by all the Prophets. And the religion of God is absolute love and unity.

19 April 1912
Talk at Bowery Mission
227 Bowery, New York

From Stenographic Notes

Tonight I am very happy, for I have come here to meet my friends. I consider you my relatives, my companions; and I am your comrade.

You must be thankful to God that you are poor, for Jesus Christ has said, “Blessed are the poor.” He never said, “Blessed are the rich.” He said, too, that the Kingdom is for the poor and that it is easier for a camel to enter a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter God’s Kingdom. Therefore, you must be thankful to God that although in this world you are indigent, yet the treasures of God are within your reach; and although in the material realm you are poor, yet in the Kingdom of God you are precious. Jesus Himself was poor. He did not belong to the rich. He passed His time in the desert, traveling among the poor, and lived upon the herbs of the field. He had no place to lay His head, no home. He was exposed in the open to heat, cold and frost—to inclement weather of all kinds—yet He chose this rather than riches. If riches were considered a glory, the Prophet Moses would have chosen them; Jesus would have been a rich man. When Jesus Christ appeared, it was the poor who first accepted Him, not the rich. Therefore, you are the disciples of Jesus Christ; you are His comrades, for He outwardly was poor, not rich. Even this earth’s happiness does not depend upon wealth. You will find many of the wealthy exposed to dangers and troubled by difficulties, and in their last moments upon the bed of death there remains the regret that they must be separated from that to which their hearts are so attached. They come into this world naked, and they must go from it naked. All they possess they must leave behind and pass away solitary, alone. Often at the time of death their souls are filled with remorse; and worst of all, their hope in the mercy of God is less than ours. Praise be to God! Our hope is in the mercy of God, and there is no doubt that the divine compassion is bestowed upon the poor. Jesus Christ said so; Bahá’u’lláh said so. While Bahá’u’lláh was in Baghdád, still in possession of great wealth, He left all He had and went alone from the city, living two years among the poor. They were His comrades. He ate with them, slept with them and gloried in being one of them. He chose for one of His names the title of The Poor One and often in His Writings refers to Himself as Darvish, which in Persian means poor; and of this title He was very proud. He admonished all that we must be the servants of the poor, helpers of the poor, remember the sorrows of the poor, associate with them; for thereby we may inherit the Kingdom of heaven. God has not said that there are mansions prepared for us if we pass our time associating with the rich, but He has said there are many mansions prepared for the servants of the poor, for the poor are very dear to God. The mercies and bounties of God are with them. The rich are mostly negligent, inattentive, steeped in worldliness, depending upon their means, whereas the poor are dependent upon God, and their reliance is upon Him, not upon themselves. Therefore, the poor are nearer the threshold of God and His throne.

Jesus was a poor man. One night when He was out in the fields, the rain began to fall. He had no place to go for shelter so He lifted His eyes toward heaven, saying, “O Father! For the birds of the air Thou hast created nests, for the sheep a fold, for the animals dens, for the fish places of refuge, but for Me Thou hast provided no shelter. There is no place where I may lay My head. My bed consists of the cold ground; My lamps at night are the stars, and My food is the grass of the field. Yet who upon earth is richer than I? For the greatest blessing Thou hast not given to the rich and mighty but unto Me, for Thou hast given Me the poor. To me Thou hast granted this blessing. They are Mine. Therefore am I the richest man on earth.”

So, my comrades, you are following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Your lives are similar to His life; your attitude is like unto His; you resemble Him more than the rich do. Therefore, we will thank God that we have been so blessed with real riches. And in conclusion, I ask you to accept 'Abdu'l-Bahá as your servant.

At the end of this meeting, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stood at the Bowery entrance to the Mission hall, shaking hands with four or five hundred men and placing within each palm a piece of silver.

TALKS 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ DELIVERED IN WASHINGTON, D.C

20 April 1912

**Talk at Orient-Occident-Unity Conference
Public Library Hall, Washington, D.C**

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

Tonight I am most happy in presenting myself before an audience such as this. I am an Oriental and have come into the West to meet the people of the Occident. Praise be to God! Upon the faces of those assembled here I perceive the light of God. This I consider an evidence of the possibility of uniting the East and the West, of establishing a perfect bond between Persia and America—one of the objects of this conference. For the Persians there is no government better fitted to contribute to the development of their natural resources and the helping of their national needs in a reciprocal alliance than the United States of America, and for the Americans there could be no better industrial outlet and market than the virgin commercial soil of Persia. The mineral wealth of Persia is still latent and untouched. It is my hope that the great American democracy may be instrumental in developing these hidden resources and that a bond of perfect amity and unity may be established between the American republic and the government of Persia. May this bond—whether material or spiritual—be well cemented. May the material civilization of America find complete efficacy and establishment in Persia, and may the spiritual civilization of Persia find acceptance and response in America.

Some of the creatures of existence can live solitary and alone. A tree, for instance, may live without the assistance and cooperation of other trees. Some animals are isolated and lead a separate existence away from their kind. But this is impossible for man. In his life and being cooperation and association are essential. Through association and meeting we find happiness and development, individual and collective.

For instance, when there is intercourse and cooperation between two villages, the advancement of each will be assured. Likewise, if intercommunication is established between two cities, both will benefit and progress. And if a reciprocal basis of agreement be reached between two countries, their individual and mutual interests will find great development. Therefore, in the unity of this radiant assemblage I behold the link between Orient and Occident. Such unity is the means and instrument of cooperation between the various countries of the East and West. It is evident, then, that the outcomes from this basis of agreement and accord are numberless and unlimited. Surely there will be great harvests of results forthcoming for Persia and America. In Persia advanced material civilization will be established and the doors thrown open wide to American commerce.

Above and beyond all this, a great love and fountain of affection shall bind and blend these two remote peoples, for Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed to the world the solidarity of nations and the oneness of humanity. Addressing all mankind He has said, "Ye are all leaves of one tree and the drops of one sea." The world of humanity has been expressed by Him as a unit—as one family. It is, therefore, hoped that the American and Persian nations may be conjoined and united in reciprocal love. May they become one race endowed with the same susceptibilities. May these bonds of amity and accord be firmly established.

Bahá'u'lláh passed forty years of His life in prison and exile in order that He might upraise the banner of the oneness of the world of men. For this He bore all these ordeals and difficulties. He was under the dominion of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd. I, too, was in the prison of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd until the Committee of Union and Progress hoisted the standard of liberty and my fetters were removed. They exhibited great kindness and love toward me. I was made free and thereby enabled to come to this country. Were it not for the action of this Committee, I should not be with you here tonight. Therefore, you must all ask assistance and confirmation in behalf of this Committee through which the liberty of Turkey was proclaimed.

Briefly, I have traveled this long distance, crossed the Atlantic Ocean to this western continent in the desire and hope that the strongest bond of unity may be established between America and Persia. I know this to be your wish and purpose also and am sure of your cooperation. We shall, therefore, offer supplication in the divine threshold that a great love may take possession of the hearts of men and unite the nations of the world. We will pray that the ensign of international peace may be uplifted and that the oneness of the world of humanity may be realized and accomplished. All this is made possible and practicable through your efforts. May this American democracy be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be the first nation to proclaim the universality of mankind. May it be the first to upraise the standard of the Most Great Peace, and through this nation of democracy may these philanthropic intentions and institutions be spread broadcast throughout the world. Truly, this is a great and revered nation. Here liberty has reached its highest degree. The intentions of its people are most praiseworthy. They are, indeed, worthy of being the first to build the Tabernacle of the Most Great Peace and proclaim the oneness of mankind. I will supplicate God for assistance and confirmation in your behalf.

21 April 1912
Talk at Studio Hall
1219 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

I have come here to visit you. With the greatest longing I have wished to see you. Realizing it was only with great difficulty that you could come to me and that very few could make the trip, I decided to come to you so that all might have the pleasure of meeting. Praise be to God! I am here, and I am looking into your faces—faces radiant with inner beauty, hearts attracted to the Kingdom of Abhá, spirits exhilarated through the glad tidings of God. Therefore, I have experienced the greatest possible happiness. And surely this happiness must be mutual, for the hearts are connected with each other and are filled with the same vibration. The flame and the light of love are reflected in all. Spiritual susceptibilities and heart longings fill every heart. If we should offer a hundred thousand thanksgivings every moment to the threshold of God for this love which has blended the Orient and Occident, we would fail to express our gratitude sufficiently. If all the powers of earth should seek to bring about this love between East and West, they would prove incapable. If they wished to establish this unity, it would prove impossible. But Bahá'u'lláh has accomplished both through the power of the Holy Spirit, and this bond of unity through love is indissoluble. It shall continue unto time everlasting, and day by day its power shall increase. Erelong it shall enchain the world, and eventually the hearts of all the nations of the world will be brought together by its constraining clasp. The world of humanity shall become the manifestation of the lights of Divinity, and the bestowals of God shall surround all. From the standpoints of both material and spiritual civilization extraordinary progress and development will be witnessed. In this present cycle there will be an evolution in civilization unparalleled in the history of the world. The world of humanity has, heretofore, been in the stage of infancy; now it is approaching maturity. Just as the individual human organism, having attained the period of maturity, reaches its fullest degree of physical strength and ripened intellectual faculties so that in one year of this ripened period there is witnessed an unprecedented measure of development, likewise the world of humanity in this cycle of its completeness and consummation will realize an immeasurable upward progress, and that power of accomplishment whereof each individual human reality is the depository of God—that outworking Universal Spirit—like the intellectual faculty, will reveal itself in infinite degrees of perfection.

Therefore, thank ye God that ye have come into the plane of existence in this radiant century wherein the bestowals of God are appearing from all directions, when the doors of the Kingdom have been opened unto you, the call of God is being raised, and the virtues of the human world are in the process of unfoldment. The day has come when all darkness is to be dispelled, and the Sun of Truth shall shine forth radiantly. This time of the world may be likened to the equinoctial in the annual cycle. For, verily, this is the spring season of God. In the Holy Books a promise is given that the springtime of God shall make itself manifest; Jerusalem, the Holy City, shall descend from heaven; Zion shall leap forth and dance; and the Holy Land shall be submerged in the ocean of divine effulgence.

At the time of the vernal equinox in the material world a wonderful vibrant energy and new life-quickenings are observed everywhere in the vegetable kingdom; the animal and human kingdoms are resuscitated and move forward with a new impulse. The whole world is born anew, resurrected. Gentle zephyrs are set in motion, wafting and fragrant; flowers bloom; the trees are in blossom, the air temperate and delightful; how pleasant and beautiful become the mountains, fields and meadows. Likewise, the spiritual bounty and springtime of God quicken the world of humanity with a new

animus and vivification. All the virtues which have been deposited and potential in human hearts are being revealed from that Reality as flowers and blossoms from divine gardens. It is a day of joy, a time of happiness, a period of spiritual growth. I beg of God that this divine spiritual civilization may have the fullest impression and effect upon you. May you become as growing plants. May the trees of your hearts bring forth new leaves and variegated blossoms. May ideal fruits appear from them in order that the world of humanity, which has grown and developed in material civilization, may be quickened in the bringing forth of spiritual ideals. Just as human intellects have revealed the secrets of matter and have brought forth from the realm of the invisible the mysteries of nature, may minds and spirits, likewise, come into the knowledge of the verities of God, and the realities of the Kingdom be made manifest in human hearts. Then the world will be the paradise of Abhá, the standard of the Most Great Peace will be borne aloft, and the oneness of the world of humanity in all its beauty, glory and significance will become apparent. And now in your presence I wish to pray in your behalf. Let your hearts be attentive and directed to the Kingdom of Abhá.

Prayer in Persian

It is my hope that the supplication I have offered to the Kingdom of Abhá in your behalf may soon be answered and that its results and effects may become manifest in your hearts and lives.

21 April 1912
Talk at Universalist Church
Thirteenth and L Streets, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

The doctrines and creed of this church, so capably expressed by its revered minister, are truly commendable, sanctified and worthy of praise and glorification, for these precepts are opposed to the deep-rooted religious prejudices of the day. It is evident that prejudices arising from adherence to religious forms and imitation of ancestral beliefs have hindered the progress of humanity thousands of years. How many wars and battles have been fought, how much division, discord and hatred have been caused by this form of prejudice! But inasmuch as this century is a century of the revelation of reality—praise be to God!—the thoughts of men are being directed toward the welfare and unity of humanity. Daily the mirage of imitations is passing away, and the ocean of truth is surging more tumultuously. All the existing nations had a divine foundation of truth or reality originally, which was intended to be conducive to the unity and accord of mankind, but the light of that reality gradually became obscured. The darkness of superstitions and imitations came and took its place, binding the world of humanity in the chains and fetters of ignorance. Enmity arose among men, increasing to such an extent that nation strove against nation in hatred and violence. War has been a religious and political human heritage.

Now it is enough! We must investigate reality. We must put away these superstitions. It is a self-evident truth that all humanity is the creation of God. All are His servants and under His protection. All are recipients of His bestowals. God is kind to all His servants. At most it is this: that some are ignorant; they must be educated in order that they may become intelligent. Some are immature as children; they must be aided and assisted in order that they may become mature. Some are sick and ailing; they must be healed. But the suffering patient must not be tested by false treatment. The child must not be warped and hindered in its development. The ignorant must not be restricted by censure and criticism. We must look for the real, true remedy.

All the Prophets of God, including Jesus Christ, appeared in the world for the education of humanity, to develop immature souls into maturity, to transform the ignorant of mankind into the knowing, thereby establishing love and unity through divine education and training. The Prophets have not come to cause discord and enmity. For God has wished all good for His servants, and he who wishes the servants of God evil is against God; he has not obeyed the will and emulated the example of God; he has followed Satanic leadings and footprints. The attributes of God are love and mercy; the attribute of Satan is hate. Therefore, he who is merciful and kind to his fellowmen is manifesting the divine attribute, and he who is hating and hostile toward a fellow creature is satanic. God is absolute love, even as Jesus Christ has declared, and Satan is utter hatred. Wherever love is witnessed, know that there is a manifestation of God's mercy; whenever you meet hatred and enmity, know that these are the evidences and attributes of Satan. The Prophets have appeared in this world with the mission that human souls may become the expressions of the Merciful, that they may be educated and developed, attain to love and amity and establish peace and agreement.

In the world of existence the animal is a captive of nature. Its actions are according to the exigencies and requirements of nature. It has no consideration or consciousness of good and evil. It simply follows its natural instinct and inclination. The Prophets of God have come to show man the way of righteousness in order that he may not follow his own natural impulse but govern his action by the light of Their precept and example. According to Their teachings he should do that which

is found to be praiseworthy by the standard of reason and judgment of intellect, even though it be opposed to his natural human inclination; and he should not do that which is found to be unworthy by that same standard, even though it be in the direction of his natural impulse and desire. Therefore, man must follow and manifest the attributes of the Merciful.

The imperfect members of society, the weak souls in humanity, follow their natural trend. Their lives and actions are in accord with their natural propensities; they are captives of physical susceptibilities; they are not in touch or in tune with the spiritual bounties. Man has two aspects: the physical, which is subject to nature, and the merciful or divine, which is connected with God. If the physical or natural disposition in him should overcome the heavenly and merciful, he is, then, the most degraded of animal beings; and if the divine and spiritual should triumph over the human and natural, he is, verily, an angel. The Prophets come into the world to guide and educate humanity so that the animal nature of man may disappear and the divinity of his powers become awakened. The divine aspect or spiritual nature consists of the breaths of the Holy Spirit. The second birth of which Jesus has spoken refers to the appearance of this heavenly nature in man. It is expressed in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and he who is baptized by the Holy Spirit is a veritable manifestation of divine mercy to mankind. Then he becomes just and kind to all humanity; he entertains prejudice and ill will toward none; he shuns no nation or people.

The foundations of the divine religions are one. If we investigate these foundations, we discover much ground for agreement, but if we consider the imitations of forms and ancestral beliefs, we find points of disagreement and division; for these imitations differ, while the sources and foundations are one and the same. That is to say, the fundamentals are conducive to unity, but imitations are the cause of disunion and dismemberment. Whosoever is lacking in love for humanity or manifests hatred and bigotry toward any part of it violates the foundation and source of his own belief and is holding to forms and imitations. Jesus Christ declares that the sun rises upon the evil and the good, and the rain descends upon the just and the unjust—upon all humanity alike. Christ was a divine mercy which shone upon all mankind, the medium for the descent of the bounty of God, and the bounty of God is transcendent, unrestricted, universal.

The revered minister read from the words of the Gospel, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” The century has dawned when the Spirit of Truth can reveal these verities to mankind, proclaim that very Word, establish the real foundations of Christianity and deliver the nations and peoples from the bondage of forms and imitations. The cause of discord, prejudice and animosity will be removed, the basis of love and amity be established. Therefore, all of you must strive with heart and soul in order that enmity may disappear entirely and that strife and hatred pass away absolutely from the midst of the human world. You must listen to the admonition of this Spirit of Truth. You must follow the example and footprints of Jesus Christ. Read the Gospels. Jesus Christ was mercy itself, was love itself. He even prayed in behalf of His executioners—for those who crucified Him—saying, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” If they knew what they were doing, they would not have done it. Consider how kind Jesus Christ was, that even upon the cross He prayed for His oppressors. We must follow His example. We must emulate the Prophets of God. We must follow Jesus Christ. We must free ourselves from all these imitations which are the source of darkness in the world.

I shall ask you a question: Did God create us for love or for enmity? Did He create us for peace or discord? Surely He has created us for love; therefore, we should live in accordance with His will. Do not listen to anything that is prejudiced, for self-interest prompts men to be prejudiced. They are thoughtful only of their own will and purposes. They live and move in darkness. Consider how many different nations and divergent religious beliefs existed when Christ appeared. Enmity and strife prevailed among them—Romans, Greeks, Assyrians, Egyptians—all warring and hostile toward each other. Christ, through the breaths of the Holy Spirit, united them, established fellowship among them

so that no trace of strife remained. Under His standard they became united and lived in peace through His teachings. Which is preferable and more commendable? To follow the example of Jesus Christ or to manifest the satanic instinct? Let us strive with all our powers to unite the East and West so that the nations of the world may be advanced and that all may live according to the one foundation of the religions of God. The essentials of the divine religion are one reality, indivisible and not multiple. It is one. And when through investigation we find it to be single, we have a basis for the oneness of the world of humanity. I will pray for you, asking confirmation and assistance in your behalf.

22 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons
1700 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

See how good Bahá'u'lláh is to us, how great the power of His Word! From what distant parts of the world He has brought us together in this house and caused us to meet at this heavenly table, for love has prepared a feast and bidden 'Abdu'l-Bahá to let this entertainment be in His name. What a union of hearts and what a confirmation of Bahá'u'lláh between East and West has been established! How His bounty has embraced all! How His favors have been perfected for all!

When the Muslims conquered Persia, the chief of the Zoroastrian high priests went to drink wine. According to Muslim law wine is forbidden, and he who drinks it must be punished by eighty-one strokes of the whip. Therefore, the Muslims arrested the high priest and whipped him. At that time the Arabs were considered very low and degraded by the Persians, scarcely to be accounted as human beings. As Muḥammad was an Arab, the Persians looked upon Him with disdain; but when the high priest saw the evidences of a power in Muḥammad which controlled these despised people, he cried out, "O thou Arabian Muḥammad, what hast thou done? What hast thou done which has made thy people arrest the chief high priest of the Zoroastrians for committing something unlawful in thy religion?" By this circumstance the prejudice which caused the Zoroastrian to shun the Muslim had been overcome, for he recognized in what had happened to him the great influence Muḥammad exercised over these people.

Today in this meeting we have an evidence of how Bahá'u'lláh through the power of the love of God has exercised a wonderful spiritual influence throughout the world. From the remotest parts of Persia and the Orient He has caused men to come to this table to meet with the people of the West in the utmost love and affection, union and harmony. Behold how the power of Bahá'u'lláh has brought the East and West together. And 'Abdu'l-Bahá is standing, serving you. There is neither rod nor blow, whip nor sword; but the power of the love of God has accomplished this.

In this world we judge a cause or movement by its progress and development. Some movements appear, manifest a brief period of activity, then discontinue. Others show forth a greater measure of growth and strength, but before attaining mature development, weaken, disintegrate and are lost in oblivion. Neither of these mentioned are progressive and permanent.

There is still another kind of movement or cause which from a very small, inconspicuous beginning goes forward with sure and steady progress, gradually broadening and widening until it has assumed universal dimensions. The Bahá'í Movement is of this nature. For instance, when Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from Persia with 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the rest of His family, they traveled the long road from Tīhrán to Baghdád, passing through many towns and villages. During the whole of that journey and distance they did not meet a single believer in the Cause for which they had been banished. At that time very little was known about it in any part of the world. Even in Baghdád there was but one believer who had been taught by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in Persia. Later on, two or three others appeared. You will see, therefore, that at the beginning the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh was almost unknown, but on account of being a divine Movement it grew and developed with irresistible spiritual power until in this day, wherever you travel—East or West—and in whatever country you journey, you will meet Bahá'í assemblies and institutions. This is an evidence that the Bahá'ís are spreading the blessings of unity and progressive development throughout the world under the direction of divine guidance and

purpose, while other movements which are only temporary in their activities and accomplishments have no real, universal significance.

23 April 1912
Talk at Howard University
Washington, D.C

Translated by Amin Banani

Today I am most happy, for I see here a gathering of the servants of God. I see white and black sitting together. There are no whites and blacks before God. All colors are one, and that is the color of servitude to God. Scent and color are not important. The heart is important. If the heart is pure, white or black or any color makes no difference. God does not look at colors; He looks at the hearts. He whose heart is pure is better. He whose character is better is more pleasing. He who turns more to the Abhá Kingdom is more advanced.

In the realm of existence colors are of no importance. Observe in the mineral kingdom colors are not the cause of discord. In the vegetable kingdom the colors of multicolored flowers are not the cause of discord. Rather, colors are the cause of the adornment of the garden because a single color has no appeal; but when you observe many-colored flowers, there is charm and display.

The world of humanity, too, is like a garden, and humankind are like the many-colored flowers. Therefore, different colors constitute an adornment. In the same way, there are many colors in the realm of animals. Doves are of many colors; nevertheless, they live in utmost harmony. They never look at color; instead, they look at the species. How often white doves fly with black ones. In the same way, other birds and varicolored animals never look at color; they look at the species.

Now ponder this: Animals, despite the fact that they lack reason and understanding, do not make colors the cause of conflict. Why should man, who has reason, create conflict? This is wholly unworthy of him. Especially white and black are the descendants of the same Adam; they belong to one household. In origin they were one; they were the same color. Adam was of one color. Eve had one color. All humanity is descended from them. Therefore, in origin they are one. These colors developed later due to climates and regions; they have no significance whatsoever. Therefore, today I am very happy that white and black have gathered together in this meeting. I hope this coming together and harmony reaches such a degree that no distinctions shall remain between them, and they shall be together in the utmost harmony and love.

But I wish to say one thing in order that the blacks may become grateful to the whites and the whites become loving toward the blacks. If you go to Africa and see the blacks of Africa, you will realize how much progress you have made. Praise be to God! You are like the whites; there are no great distinctions left. But the blacks of Africa are treated as servants. The first proclamation of emancipation for the blacks was made by the whites of America. How they fought and sacrificed until they freed the blacks! Then it spread to other places. The blacks of Africa were in complete bondage, but your emancipation led to their freedom also—that is, the European states emulated the Americans, and the emancipation proclamation became universal. It was for your sake that the whites of America made such an effort. Were it not for this effort, universal emancipation would not have been proclaimed.

Therefore, you must be very grateful to the whites of America, and the whites must become very loving toward you so that you may progress in all human grades. Strive jointly to make extraordinary progress and mix together completely. In short, you must be very thankful to the whites who were the cause of your freedom in America. Had you not been freed, other blacks would not have been freed either. Now—praise be to God!—everyone is free and lives in tranquillity. I pray that you attain to such a degree of good character and behavior that the names of black and white shall vanish. All

shall be called human, just as the name for a flight of doves is dove. They are not called black and white. Likewise with other birds.

I hope that you attain to such a high degree—and this is impossible except through love. You must try to create love between yourselves; and this love does not come about unless you are grateful to the whites, and the whites are loving toward you, and endeavor to promote your advancement and enhance your honor. This will be the cause of love. Differences between black and white will be completely obliterated; indeed, ethnic and national differences will all disappear.

I am very happy to see you and thank God that this meeting is composed of people of both races and that both are gathered in perfect love and harmony. I hope this becomes the example of universal harmony and love until no title remains except that of humanity. Such a title demonstrates the perfection of the human world and is the cause of eternal glory and human happiness. I pray that you be with one another in utmost harmony and love and strive to enable each other to live in comfort.

23 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons
1700 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

Today I have been speaking from dawn until now, yet because of love, fellowship and desire to be with you, I have come here to speak again briefly. Within the last few days a terrible event has happened in the world, an event saddening to every heart and grieving every spirit. I refer to the Titanic disaster, in which many of our fellow human beings were drowned, a number of beautiful souls passed beyond this earthly life. Although such an event is indeed regrettable, we must realize that everything which happens is due to some wisdom and that nothing happens without a reason. Therein is a mystery; but whatever the reason and mystery, it was a very sad occurrence, one which brought tears to many eyes and distress to many souls. I was greatly affected by this disaster. Some of those who were lost voyaged on the Cedric with us as far as Naples and afterward sailed upon the other ship. When I think of them, I am very sad indeed. But when I consider this calamity in another aspect, I am consoled by the realization that the worlds of God are infinite; that though they were deprived of this existence, they have other opportunities in the life beyond, even as Christ has said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." They were called away from the temporary and transferred to the eternal; they abandoned this material existence and entered the portals of the spiritual world. Foregoing the pleasures and comforts of the earthly, they now partake of a joy and happiness far more abiding and real, for they have hastened to the Kingdom of God. The mercy of God is infinite, and it is our duty to remember these departed souls in our prayers and supplications that they may draw nearer and nearer to the Source itself.

These human conditions may be likened to the matrix of the mother from which a child is to be born into the spacious outer world. At first the infant finds it very difficult to reconcile itself to its new existence. It cries as if not wishing to be separated from its narrow abode and imagining that life is restricted to that limited space. It is reluctant to leave its home, but nature forces it into this world. Having come into its new conditions, it finds that it has passed from darkness into a sphere of radiance; from gloomy and restricted surroundings it has been transferred to a spacious and delightful environment. Its nourishment was the blood of the mother; now it finds delicious food to enjoy. Its new life is filled with brightness and beauty; it looks with wonder and delight upon the mountains, meadows and fields of green, the rivers and fountains, the wonderful stars; it breathes the life-quickenning atmosphere; and then it praises God for its release from the confinement of its former condition and attainment to the freedom of a new realm. This analogy expresses the relation of the temporal world to the life hereafter—the transition of the soul of man from darkness and uncertainty to the light and reality of the eternal Kingdom. At first it is very difficult to welcome death, but after attaining its new condition the soul is grateful, for it has been released from the bondage of the limited to enjoy the liberties of the unlimited. It has been freed from a world of sorrow, grief and trials to live in a world of unending bliss and joy. The phenomenal and physical have been abandoned in order that it may attain the opportunities of the ideal and spiritual. Therefore, the souls of those who have passed away from earth and completed their span of mortal pilgrimage in the Titanic disaster have hastened to a world superior to this. They have soared away from these conditions of darkness and dim vision into the realm of light. These are the only considerations which can comfort and console those whom they have left behind.

Furthermore, these events have deeper reasons. Their object and purpose is to teach man certain lessons. We are living in a day of reliance upon material conditions. Men imagine that the great size and strength of a ship, the perfection of machinery or the skill of a navigator will ensure safety, but these disasters sometimes take place that men may know that God is the real Protector. If it be the will of God to protect man, a little ship may escape destruction, whereas the greatest and most perfectly constructed vessel with the best and most skillful navigator may not survive a danger such as was present on the ocean. The purpose is that the people of the world may turn to God, the One Protector; that human souls may rely upon His preservation and know that He is the real safety. These events happen in order that man's faith may be increased and strengthened. Therefore, although we feel sad and disheartened, we must supplicate God to turn our hearts to the Kingdom and pray for these departed souls with faith in His infinite mercy so that, although they have been deprived of this earthly life, they may enjoy a new existence in the supreme mansions of the Heavenly Father.

Let no one imagine that these words imply that man should not be thorough and careful in his undertakings. God has endowed man with intelligence so that he may safeguard and protect himself. Therefore, he must provide and surround himself with all that scientific skill can produce. He must be deliberate, thoughtful and thorough in his purposes, build the best ship and provide the most experienced captain; yet, withal, let him rely upon God and consider God as the one Keeper. If God protects, nothing can imperil man's safety; and if it be not His will to safeguard, no amount of preparation and precaution will avail.

23 April 1912
Talk to Bethel Literary Society
Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church
M Street, NW, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

As I stand here tonight and look upon this assembly, I am reminded curiously of a beautiful bouquet of violets gathered together in varying colors, dark and light. This is an evidence and indication that the United States of America is a just and free government, for I see black and white seated together in perfect harmony and agreement. Hearts are united. This just government makes such a meeting possible. You should thank God continually that you enjoy the security and protection of a government which furthers your development and rules with impartial equity and equality toward all, even as a father; for in the human world there is no greater blessing. This evening I will speak to you upon scientific subjects.

The virtues of humanity are many, but science is the most noble of them all. The distinction which man enjoys above and beyond the station of the animal is due to this paramount virtue. It is a bestowal of God; it is not material; it is divine. Science is an effulgence of the Sun of Reality, the power of investigating and discovering the verities of the universe, the means by which man finds a pathway to God. All the powers and attributes of man are human and hereditary in origin—outcomes of nature's processes—except the intellect, which is supernatural. Through intellectual and intelligent inquiry science is the discoverer of all things. It unites present and past, reveals the history of bygone nations and events, and confers upon man today the essence of all human knowledge and attainment throughout the ages. By intellectual processes and logical deductions of reason this superpower in man can penetrate the mysteries of the future and anticipate its happenings.

Science is the first emanation from God toward man. All created beings embody the potentiality of material perfection, but the power of intellectual investigation and scientific acquisition is a higher virtue specialized to man alone. Other beings and organisms are deprived of this potentiality and attainment. God has created or deposited this love of reality in man. The development and progress of a nation is according to the measure and degree of that nation's scientific attainments. Through this means its greatness is continually increased, and day by day the welfare and prosperity of its people are assured.

All blessings are divine in origin, but none can be compared with this power of intellectual investigation and research, which is an eternal gift producing fruits of unending delight. Man is ever partaking of these fruits. All other blessings are temporary; this is an everlasting possession. Even sovereignty has its limitations and overthrow; this is a kingship and dominion which none may usurp or destroy. Briefly, it is an eternal blessing and divine bestowal, the supreme gift of God to man. Therefore, you should put forward your most earnest efforts toward the acquisition of science and arts. The greater your attainment, the higher your standard in the divine purpose. The man of science is perceiving and endowed with vision, whereas he who is ignorant and neglectful of this development is blind. The investigating mind is attentive, alive; the callous and indifferent mind is deaf and dead. A scientific man is a true index and representative of humanity, for through processes of inductive reasoning and research he is informed of all that appertains to humanity, its status, conditions and happenings. He studies the human body politic, understands social problems and weaves the web and texture of civilization. In fact, science may be likened to a mirror wherein the infinite forms

and images of existing things are revealed and reflected. It is the very foundation of all individual and national development. Without this basis of investigation, development is impossible. Therefore, seek with diligent endeavor the knowledge and attainment of all that lies within the power of this wonderful bestowal.

We have already stated that science or the attribute of scientific penetration is supernatural and that all other blessings of God are within the boundary of nature. What is the proof of this? All created things except man are captives of nature. The stars and suns swinging through infinite space, all earthly forms of life and existence—whether mineral, vegetable or animal—come under the dominion and control of natural law. Man through scientific knowledge and power rules nature and utilizes her laws to do his bidding. According to natural limitations he is a creature of earth, restricted to life upon its surface, but through scientific utilization of material laws he soars in the sky, sails upon the ocean and dives beneath it. The products of his invention and discovery, so familiar to us in daily life, were once mysteries of nature. For instance, man has brought electricity out of the plane of the invisible into the plane of the visible, harnessed and imprisoned that mysterious natural agent and made it the servant of his needs and wishes. Similar instances are many, but we will not prolong this. Man, as it were, takes the sword out of nature's hand and with it for his scepter of authority dominates nature itself. Nature is without the crown of human faculties and attributes. Man possesses conscious intelligence and reflection; nature does not. This is an established fundamental among philosophers. Man is endowed with volition and memory; nature has neither. Man can seek out the mysteries latent in nature, whereas nature is not conscious of her own hidden phenomena. Man is progressive; nature is stationary, without the power of progression or retrogression. Man is endowed with ideal virtues—for example, intellection, volition, faith, confession and acknowledgment of God—while nature is devoid of all these. The ideal faculties of man, including the capacity for scientific acquisition, are beyond nature's ken. These are powers whereby man is differentiated and distinguished from all other forms of life. This is the bestowal of divine idealism, the crown adorning human heads. Notwithstanding the gift of this supernatural power, it is most amazing that materialists still consider themselves within the bonds and captivity of nature. The truth is that God has endowed man with virtues, powers and ideal faculties of which nature is entirely bereft and by which man is elevated, distinguished and superior. We must thank God for these bestowals, for these powers He has given us, for this crown He has placed upon our heads.

How shall we utilize these gifts and expend these bounties? By directing our efforts toward the unification of the human race. We must use these powers in establishing the oneness of the world of humanity, appreciate these virtues by accomplishing the unity of whites and blacks, devote this divine intelligence to the perfecting of amity and accord among all branches of the human family so that under the protection and providence of God the East and West may hold each other's hands and become as lovers. Then will mankind be as one nation, one race and kind—as waves of one ocean. Although these waves may differ in form and shape, they are waves of the same sea. Flowers may be variegated in colors, but they are all flowers of one garden. Trees differ though they grow in the same orchard. All are nourished and quickened into life by the bounty of the same rain, all grow and develop by the heat and light of the one sun, all are refreshed and exhilarated by the same breeze that they may bring forth varied fruits. This is according to the creative wisdom. If all trees bore the same kind of fruit, it would cease to be delicious. In their never-ending variety man finds enjoyment instead of monotony.

And now as I look into your faces, I am reminded of trees varying in color and form but all bearing luscious and delectable fruits, fragrant and delightful to the inner and outer senses. The radiance and spirituality of this meeting is through the favor of God. Our hearts are uplifted in thankfulness to Him. Praise be to God! You are living upon the great continent of the West, enjoying the perfect liberty, security and peace of this just government. There is no cause for sorrow or unhappiness anywhere; every means of happiness and enjoyment is about you, for in this human

world there is no greater blessing than liberty. You do not know. I, who for forty years have been a prisoner, do know. I do know the value and blessing of liberty. For you have been and are now living in freedom, and you have no fear of anybody. Is there a greater blessing than this? Freedom! Liberty! Security! These are the great bestowals of God. Therefore, praise ye God! I will now pray in your behalf.

24 April 1912
Talk at Children's Reception
Studio Hall
1219 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

What a wonderful meeting this is! These are the children of the Kingdom. The song we have just listened to was very beautiful in melody and words. The art of music is divine and effective. It is the food of the soul and spirit. Through the power and charm of music the spirit of man is uplifted. It has wonderful sway and effect in the hearts of children, for their hearts are pure, and melodies have great influence in them. The latent talents with which the hearts of these children are endowed will find expression through the medium of music. Therefore, you must exert yourselves to make them proficient; teach them to sing with excellence and effect. It is incumbent upon each child to know something of music, for without knowledge of this art the melodies of instrument and voice cannot be rightly enjoyed. Likewise, it is necessary that the schools teach it in order that the souls and hearts of the pupils may become vivified and exhilarated and their lives be brightened with enjoyment.

Today illumined and spiritual children are gathered in this meeting. They are the children of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of heaven is for such souls as these, for they are near to God. They have pure hearts. They have spiritual faces. The effect of the divine teachings is manifest in the perfect purity of their hearts. That is why Christ has addressed the world, saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"—that is, men must become pure in heart to know God. The teachings have had great effect. Spiritual souls! Tender souls! The hearts of all children are of the utmost purity. They are mirrors upon which no dust has fallen. But this purity is on account of weakness and innocence, not on account of any strength and testing, for as this is the early period of their childhood, their hearts and minds are unsullied by the world. They cannot display any great intelligence. They have neither hypocrisy nor deceit. This is on account of the child's weakness, whereas the man becomes pure through his strength. Through the power of intelligence he becomes simple; through the great power of reason and understanding and not through the power of weakness he becomes sincere. When he attains to the state of perfection, he will receive these qualities; his heart becomes purified, his spirit enlightened, his soul is sensitized and tender—all through his great strength. This is the difference between the perfect man and the child. Both have the underlying qualities of simplicity and sincerity—the child through the power of weakness and the man through the power of strength.

I pray in behalf of these children and beg confirmation and assistance for them from the Kingdom of Abhá so that each one may be trained under the shadow of the protection of God, each may become like a lighted candle in the world of humanity, a tender and growing plant in the rose garden of Abhá; that these children may be so trained and educated that they shall give life to the world of humanity; that they may receive insight; that they may bestow hearing upon the people of the world; that they may sow the seeds of eternal life and be accepted in the threshold of God; that they may become characterized with such virtues, perfections and qualities that their mothers, fathers and relatives will be thankful to God, well pleased and hopeful. This is my wish and prayer.

I give you my advice, and it is this: Train these children with divine exhortations. From their childhood instill in their hearts the love of God so they may manifest in their lives the fear of God and have confidence in the bestowals of God. Teach them to free themselves from human imperfections

and to acquire the divine perfections latent in the heart of man. The life of man is useful if he attains the perfections of man. If he becomes the center of the imperfections of the world of humanity, death is better than life, and nonexistence better than existence. Therefore, make ye an effort in order that these children may be rightly trained and educated and that each one of them may attain perfection in the world of humanity. Know ye the value of these children, for they are all my children.

24 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons
1700 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

You are welcome this afternoon, most welcome. I am ever happy to see you. I ask God that meeting me may be productive of results; that it may not be like ordinary gatherings, for those who hold meetings where groups of people assemble usually have some interest to further. Praise be to God! I have no personal interests. I have an interest in the Kingdom, and this is a sincere intention. I have perfect love for you; therefore, I have traveled this long distance to meet and greet you. I hope that these gatherings may be productive of great results, and there is no greater result than the love of God. There is no greater result than bonds of service in the divine Kingdom and attainment to the good pleasure of the Lord. Therefore, I desire that your hearts may be directed to the Kingdom of God, that your intentions may be pure and sincere, your purposes turned toward altruistic accomplishment unmindful of your own welfare; nay, rather, may all your intentions center in the welfare of humanity, and may you seek to sacrifice yourselves in the pathway of devotion to mankind. Even as Jesus Christ forfeited His life, may you, likewise, offer yourselves in the threshold of sacrifice for the betterment of the world; and just as Bahá'u'lláh suffered severe ordeals and calamities nearly fifty years for you, may you be willing to undergo difficulties and withstand catastrophes for humanity in general. May you bear these trials and tests most willingly and joyously, for every night is followed by a day, and every day has a night. Every spring has an autumn, and every autumn has its spring. The coming of a Manifestation of God is the season of spiritual spring. For instance, the appearance of Christ was a divine springtime. Therefore, it caused a great commotion and vibrant movement in the world of humanity. The Sun of Reality dawned, the cloud of mercy poured down its rain, the breezes of providence moved, the world became a new world, mankind reflected an extraordinary radiance, souls were educated, minds were developed, intelligences became acute, and the human world attained a new freshness of life, like unto the advent of spring. Then gradually that spring was followed by the autumn of death and decay. The teachings of Christ were forgotten. The Christly bounties ceased. Divine moralities disappeared. Day ended in night. The people became negligent and oblivious. Minds weakened until conditions reached such a crisis that material science rose in the ascendant. Knowledge and sciences of the Kingdom became obsolete, the mysteries of God deepened, and the traces of the bounties of Christ were completely obliterated. The nations were enmeshed in superstition and blind imitation. Discord and disagreement arose, culminating in strife, war and bloodshed. Hearts were torn asunder in violence. Various denominations appeared, diverse sects and creeds arose, and the whole world was plunged into darkness.

At such a time as this Bahá'u'lláh dawned from the horizon of Persia. He reformed and renewed the fundamentals and realities of Christ's teachings. He endured the greatest difficulties and underwent the severest ordeals.

Praise be to God that the teachings of God are revoiced, the light of reality has dawned again, the effulgence is increasing daily, and the radiance is shining more gloriously in the zenith. From the cloud of mercy a deluge is descending; the Sun of Reality is brilliant in its eternal station. Again we are hopeful that the same springtime may pitch its tent and that these boundless bestowals may appear once more among us. Through your efforts and sincerity this is made possible. If you arise in the Cause of God with divine power, heavenly grace, the sincerity of the Kingdom, a merciful heart and decisive intention, it is certain that the world of humanity will be entirely illumined, the

moralties of mankind will become merciful, the foundations of the Most Great Peace will be laid, and the oneness of the kingdom of man will become a reality. This is the great bounty I desire for you, and I pray and supplicate the divine threshold, imploring in your behalf.

O Thou merciful God! O Thou Who art mighty and powerful! O Thou most kind Father! These servants have gathered together, turning to Thee, supplicating Thy threshold, desiring Thine endless bounties from Thy great assurance. They have no purpose save Thy good pleasure. They have no intention save service to the world of humanity.

O God! Make this assemblage radiant. Make the hearts merciful. Confer the bounties of the Holy Spirit. Endow them with a power from heaven. Bless them with heavenly minds. Increase their sincerity, so that with all humility and contrition they may turn to Thy kingdom and be occupied with service to the world of humanity. May each one become a radiant candle. May each one become a brilliant star. May each one become beautiful in color and redolent of fragrance in the Kingdom of God.

O kind Father! Confer Thy blessings. Consider not our shortcomings. Shelter us under Thy protection. Remember not our sins. Heal us with Thy mercy. We are weak; Thou art mighty. We are poor; Thou art rich. We are sick; Thou art the Physician. We are needy; Thou art most generous.

O God! Endow us with Thy providence. Thou art the Powerful. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Beneficent.

24 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mrs. Andrew J. Dyer
1937 Thirteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

A meeting such as this seems like a beautiful cluster of precious jewels—pearls, rubies, diamonds, sapphires. It is a source of joy and delight. Whatever is conducive to the unity of the world of mankind is most acceptable and praiseworthy; whatever is the cause of discord and disunion is saddening and deplorable. Consider the significance of unity and harmony.

This evening I will speak to you upon the subject of existence and nonexistence, life and death. Existence is the expression and outcome of composition and combination. Nonexistence is the expression and outcome of division and disintegration. If we study the forms of existence in the material universe, we find that all created things are the result of composition. Material elements have grouped together in infinite variety and endless forms. Each organism is a compound; each object is an expression of elemental affinity. We find the complex human organism simply an aggregation of cellular structure; the tree is a composite of plant cells; the animal, a combination and grouping of cellular atoms or units, and so on. Existence or the expression of being is, therefore, composition; and nonexistence is decomposition, division, disintegration. When elements have been brought together in a certain plan of combination, the result is the human organism; when these elements separate and disperse, the outcome is death and nonexistence. Life is, therefore, the product of composition; and death signifies decomposition.

Likewise, in the world of minds and souls, fellowship, which is an expression of composition, is conducive to life, whereas discord, which is an expression of decomposition, is the equivalent of death. Without cohesion among the individual elements which compose the body politic, disintegration and decay must inevitably follow and life be extinguished. Ferocious animals have no fellowship. The vultures and tigers are solitary, whereas domestic animals live together in complete harmony. The sheep, black and white, associate without discord. Birds of various species and colors wing their flight and feed together without a trace of enmity or disagreement. Therefore, in the world of humanity it is wise and seemly that all the individual members should manifest unity and affinity. In the clustered jewels of the races may the blacks be as sapphires and rubies and the whites as diamonds and pearls. The composite beauty of humanity will be witnessed in their unity and blending. How glorious the spectacle of real unity among mankind! How conducive to peace, confidence and happiness if races and nations were united in fellowship and accord! The Prophets of God were sent into the world upon this mission of unity and agreement: that these long-separated sheep might flock together. When the sheep separate, they are exposed to danger, but in a flock and under protection of the shepherd they are safe from the attack of all ferocious enemies.

When the racial elements of the American nation unite in actual fellowship and accord, the lights of the oneness of humanity will shine, the day of eternal glory and bliss will dawn, the spirit of God encompass, and the divine favors descend. Under the leadership and training of God, the real Shepherd, all will be protected and preserved. He will lead them in green pastures of happiness and sustenance, and they will attain to the real goal of existence. This is the blessing and benefit of unity; this is the outcome of love. This is the sign of the Most Great Peace; this is the star of the oneness of the human world. Consider how blessed this condition will be. I pray for you and ask the confirmation and assistance of God in your behalf.

25 April 1912
Talk to Theosophical Society
Home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons
1700 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

The greatest power in the realm and range of human existence is spirit—the divine breath which animates and pervades all things. It is manifested throughout creation in different degrees or kingdoms. In the vegetable kingdom it is the augmentative spirit or power of growth, the animus of life and development in plants, trees and organisms of the floral world. In this degree of its manifestation spirit is unconscious of the powers which qualify the kingdom of the animal. The distinctive virtue or plus of the animal is sense perception; it sees, hears, smells, tastes and feels but is incapable, in turn, of conscious ideation or reflection which characterizes and differentiates the human kingdom. The animal neither exercises nor apprehends this distinctive human power and gift. From the visible it cannot draw conclusions regarding the invisible, whereas the human mind from visible and known premises attains knowledge of the unknown and invisible. For instance, Christopher Columbus from information based upon known and provable facts drew conclusions which led him unerringly across the vast ocean to the unknown continent of America. Such power of accomplishment is beyond the range of animal intelligence. Therefore, this power is a distinctive attribute of the human spirit and kingdom. The animal spirit cannot penetrate and discover the mysteries of things. It is a captive of the senses. No amount of teaching, for instance, would enable it to grasp the fact that the sun is stationary, and the earth moves around it. Likewise, the human spirit has its limitations. It cannot comprehend the phenomena of the Kingdom transcending the human station, for it is a captive of powers and life forces which have their operation upon its own plane of existence, and it cannot go beyond that boundary.

There is, however, another Spirit, which may be termed the Divine, to which Jesus Christ refers when He declares that man must be born of its quickening and baptized with its living fire. Souls deprived of that Spirit are accounted as dead, though they are possessed of the human spirit. Jesus Christ has pronounced them dead inasmuch as they have no portion of the Divine Spirit. He says, “Let the dead bury their dead.” In another instance He declares, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” By this He means that souls, though alive in the human kingdom, are nevertheless dead if devoid of this particular spirit of divine quickening. They have not partaken of the divine life of the higher Kingdom, for the soul which partakes of the power of the Divine Spirit is, verily, living.

This quickening spirit emanates spontaneously from the Sun of Truth, from the reality of Divinity, and is not a revelation or a manifestation. It is like the rays of the sun. The rays are emanations from the sun. This does not mean that the sun has become divisible, that a part of the sun has come out into space. This plant beside me has risen from the seed; therefore, it is a manifestation and unfoldment of the seed. The seed, as you can see, has unfolded in manifestation, and the result is this plant. Every leaf of the plant is a part of the seed. But the reality of Divinity is indivisible, and each individual of humankind cannot be a part of it as is often claimed. Nay, rather, the individual realities of mankind, when spiritually born, are emanations from the reality of Divinity, just as the flame, heat and light of the sun are the effulgence of the sun and not a part of the sun itself. Therefore, a spirit has emanated from the reality of Divinity, and its effulgences have become visible in human

entities or realities. This ray and this heat are permanent. There is no cessation in the effulgence. As long as the sun exists, the heat and light will exist, and inasmuch as eternality is a property of Divinity, this emanation is everlasting. There is no cessation in its outpouring. The more the world of humanity develops, the more the effulgences or emanations of Divinity will become revealed, just as the stone, when it becomes polished and pure as a mirror, will reflect in fuller degree the glory and splendor of the sun.

The mission of the Prophets, the revelation of the Holy Books, the manifestation of the heavenly Teachers and the purpose of divine philosophy all center in the training of the human realities so that they may become clear and pure as mirrors and reflect the light and love of the Sun of Reality. Therefore, I hope that—whether you be in the East or the West—you will strive with heart and soul in order that day by day the world of humanity may become glorified, more spiritual, more sanctified; and that the splendor of the Sun of Reality may be revealed fully in human hearts as in a mirror. This is worthy of the world of mankind. This is the true evolution and progress of humanity. This is the supreme bestowal. Otherwise, by simple development along material lines man is not perfected. At most, the physical aspect of man, his natural or material conditions, may become stabilized and improved, but he will remain deprived of the spiritual or divine bestowal. He is then like a body without a spirit, a lamp without the light, an eye without the power of vision, an ear that hears no sound, a mind incapable of perceiving, an intellect minus the power of reason.

Man has two powers; and his development, two aspects. One power is connected with the material world, and by it he is capable of material advancement. The other power is spiritual, and through its development his inner, potential nature is awakened. These powers are like two wings. Both must be developed, for flight is impossible with one wing. Praise be to God! Material advancement has been evident in the world, but there is need of spiritual advancement in like proportion. We must strive unceasingly and without rest to accomplish the development of the spiritual nature in man, and endeavor with tireless energy to advance humanity toward the nobility of its true and intended station. For the body of man is accidental; it is of no importance. The time of its disintegration will inevitably come. But the spirit of man is essential and, therefore, eternal. It is a divine bounty. It is the effulgence of the Sun of Reality and, therefore, of greater importance than the physical body.

I pray for you. You have come to visit me, and I am most grateful. I shall ask confirmation and assistance for you from God, the Generous, the Bestower, that you may be aided in serving the world of humanity.

25 April 1912
Message to Esperantists
Home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons
1700 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

Today the greatest need of the world of humanity is discontinuance of the existing misunderstandings among nations. This can be accomplished through the unity of language. Unless the unity of languages is realized, the Most Great Peace and the oneness of the human world cannot be effectively organized and established because the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of human hearts. The heart is like a box, and language is the key. Only by using the key can we open the box and observe the gems it contains. Therefore, the question of an auxiliary international tongue has the utmost importance. Through this means international education and training become possible; the evidence and history of the past can be acquired. The spread of the known facts of the human world depends upon language. The explanation of divine teachings can only be through this medium. As long as diversity of tongues and lack of comprehension of other languages continue, these glorious aims cannot be realized. Therefore, the very first service to the world of man is to establish this auxiliary international means of communication. It will become the cause of the tranquillity of the human commonwealth. Through it sciences and arts will be spread among the nations, and it will prove to be the means of the progress and development of all races. We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech.

25 April 1912
Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons
1700 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

In the world of existence the greatest bestowals of God are His teachings. The other bounties of God are limited as regards their benefits and provision. Human existence itself is a divine bestowal, but it is circumscribed with limitations. Sight and hearing are bounties of God; both are limited. And so it is with all the other bestowals; the circle of their operation is confined, restricted, whereas the sphere of the divine teachings is boundless. Centuries and ages pass away, but their efficacy continues like the spirit of life which animates the world of existence. Without the teachings of God the world of humanity is like the animal kingdom. What difference is there between the animal and man? The difference is this: that the animal is not capable of apprehending the divine teachings, whereas man is worthy of them and possesses the capacity to understand. In the animal kingdom there is no such bestowal; therefore, there is limited progression. At most, evolution in that kingdom is a development of the organism. In the beginning it is small, undeveloped; it develops, becomes larger; but its sphere of intellectual growth is limited. Therefore, the teachings of God are the bestowals specialized for man.

Although the divine teachings are truth and reality, yet with the passage of time thick clouds envelop and obscure them. These clouds are imitations and superstitions; they are not the fundamentals. Then the Sun of Truth, the Word of God, arises again, shines forth once more in the glory of its power and disperses the enveloping darkness.

For a long time the divine precepts of the effulgent Word were obscured by clouds of superstition and error until Bahá'u'lláh appeared upon the horizon of humanity, rent the shadows, scattered the clouds and revealed anew the foundations of the teachings of God.

The first teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the duty incumbent upon all to investigate reality. What does it mean to investigate reality? It means that man must forget all hearsay and examine truth himself, for he does not know whether statements he hears are in accordance with reality or not. Wherever he finds truth or reality, he must hold to it, forsaking, discarding all else; for outside of reality there is naught but superstition and imagination. For example, during the days of Jesus Christ the Jews were expecting the appearance of the Messiah, praying and beseeching God day and night that the Promised One might appear. Why did they reject Him when He did appear? They denied Him absolutely, refused to believe in Him. There was no abuse and persecution which they did not heap upon Him. They reviled Him with curses, placed a crown of thorns upon His head, led Him through the streets in scorn and derision and finally crucified Him. Why did they do this? Because they did not investigate the truth or reality of Christ and were not able to recognize Him as the Messiah of God. Had they investigated sincerely for themselves, they would surely have believed in Him, respected Him and bowed before Him in reverence. They would have considered His manifestation the greatest bestowal upon mankind. They would have accepted Him as the very Savior of man; but, alas, they were veiled, they held to imitations of ancestral beliefs and hearsay and did not investigate the truth of Christ. They were submerged in the sea of superstitions and were, therefore, deprived of witnessing that glorious bounty; they were withheld from the fragrances or breaths of the Holy Spirit and suffered in themselves the greatest debasement and degradation.

Reality or truth is one, yet there are many religious beliefs, denominations, creeds and differing opinions in the world today. Why should these differences exist? Because they do not investigate and

examine the fundamental unity, which is one and unchangeable. If they seek reality itself, they will agree and be united; for reality is indivisible and not multiple. It is evident, therefore, that there is nothing of greater importance to mankind than the investigation of truth.

The second teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the oneness of the world of humanity. Every human creature is the servant of God. All have been created and reared by the power and favor of God; all have been blessed with the bounties of the same Sun of divine truth; all have quaffed from the fountain of the infinite mercy of God; and all in His estimation and love are equal as servants. He is beneficent and kind to all. Therefore, no one should glorify himself over another; no one should manifest pride or superiority toward another; no one should look upon another with scorn and contempt; and no one should deprive or oppress a fellow creature. All must be considered as submerged in the ocean of God's mercy. We must associate with all humanity in gentleness and kindness. We must love all with love of the heart. Some are ignorant; they must be trained and educated. One is sick; he must be healed. Another is as a child; we must assist him to attain maturity. We must not detest him who is ailing, neither shun him, scorn nor curse him, but care for him with the utmost kindness and tenderness. An infant must not be treated with disdain simply because it is an infant. Our responsibility is to train, educate and develop it in order that it may advance toward maturity.

The third teaching or principle of Bahá'u'lláh is that religion and science are in complete agreement. Every religion which is not in accordance with established science is superstition. Religion must be reasonable. If it does not square with reason, it is superstition and without foundation. It is like a mirage, which deceives man by leading him to think it is a body of water. God has endowed man with reason that he may perceive what is true. If we insist that such and such a subject is not to be reasoned out and tested according to the established logical modes of the intellect, what is the use of the reason which God has given man? The eye is the organ of sense by which we view the world of outer phenomena; hearing is the faculty for distinguishing sounds; taste senses the properties of objects, such as bitter, sweet; smell detects and differentiates odors; touch reveals attributes of matter and perfects our communication with the outer world; yet after all, the circle and range of perception by the five senses is exceedingly limited. But the intellectual faculty of man is unlimited in its sphere of action. The eye views details perhaps a mile, but the intellect can perceive the far East and West. The ear may hear tone modulations at one thousand feet, but the mind of man can detect the harmonies of the heavenly spheres as they swing in their courses. Mind makes geological discoveries in subterranean depths and determines the processes of creation in the earth's lowest strata. The sciences and arts, all inventions, crafts, trades and their products have come forth from the intellect of man. It is evident that within the human organism the intellect occupies the supreme station. Therefore, if religious belief, principle or creed is not in accordance with the intellect and the power of reason, it is surely superstition.

At another time I shall speak further of the principles revealed in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

TALKS 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ DELIVERED IN CHICAGO, WILMETTE, AND EVANSTON

30 April 1912

Talk at Public Meeting Concluding Convention of Bahá'í Temple Unity Drill Hall, Masonic Temple, Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

Among the institutes of the Holy Books is that of the foundation of places of worship. That is to say, an edifice or temple is to be built in order that humanity might find a place of meeting, and this is to be conducive to unity and fellowship among them. The real temple is the very Word of God; for to it all humanity must turn, and it is the center of unity for all mankind. It is the collective center, the cause of accord and communion of hearts, the sign of the solidarity of the human race, the source of eternal life. Temples are the symbols of the divine uniting force so that when the people gather there in the House of God they may recall the fact that the law has been revealed for them and that the law is to unite them. They will realize that just as this temple was founded for the unification of mankind, the law preceding and creating it came forth in the manifest Word. Jesus Christ, addressing Peter, said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." This utterance was indicative of the faith of Peter, signifying: This faith of thine, O Peter, is the very cause and message of unity to the nations; it shall be the bond of union between the hearts of men and the foundation of the oneness of the world of humanity. In brief, the original purpose of temples and houses of worship is simply that of unity—places of meeting where various peoples, different races and souls of every capacity may come together in order that love and agreement should be manifest between them. That is why Bahá'u'lláh has commanded that a place of worship be built for all the religionists of the world; that all religions, races and sects may come together within its universal shelter; that the proclamation of the oneness of mankind shall go forth from its open courts of holiness—the announcement that humanity is the servant of God and that all are submerged in the ocean of His mercy. It is the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. The world of existence may be likened to this temple and place of worship. For just as the external world is a place where the people of all races and colors, varying faiths, denominations and conditions come together—just as they are submerged in the same sea of divine favors—so, likewise, all may meet under the dome of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and adore the one God in the same spirit of truth; for the ages of darkness have passed away, and the century of light has come. Ignorant prejudices are being dispelled, and the light of unity is shining. The differences existing between nations and peoples will soon be annulled, and the fundamentals of the divine religions, which are no other than the oneness and solidarity of the human race, are being established. For thousands of years the human race has been at war. It is enough. Now let mankind, for a time at least, consort in amity and peace. Enmity and hatred have ruled. Let the world, for a period, exercise love. For thousands of years the nations have denied each other, considering each other as infidel and inferior. It is sufficient. We must now realize that we are the servants of one God, that we turn to one beneficent Father, live under one divine law, seek one reality and have one desire. Thus may we live in the utmost friendship and love, and in return the favors and bounties of God shall surround us; the world of humanity will be reformed; mankind, enjoy a new life; eternal light will illumine, and heavenly moralities become manifest.

Then divine policy shall govern the world, for the divine policy is the oneness of humanity. God is just and kind to all. He considers all as His servants. He excludes none, and His judgments are correct and true. No matter how complete human policy and foresight may appear, they are imperfect. If we do not seek the counsel of God or if we refuse to follow His dictates, it is presumptive evidence that we are knowing and wise, whereas God is ignorant; that we are sagacious and God is not. God forbid! We seek shelter in His mercy for this suggestion! No matter how far the human intelligence may advance, it is still but a drop, while divine omniscience is the ocean. Shall we say that a drop is imbued or endowed with qualities of which the ocean is devoid? Shall we believe that the policy and plan of this atom of a human soul are superior to the wisdom of the Omniscient? There is no greater ignorance than this. Briefly, some are mere children; with the utmost love we must educate them to make them wise. Others are sick and ailing; we must tenderly treat them until they recover. Some have unworthy morals; we must train them toward the standard of true morality. Other than this we are all the servants of one God and under the providence and protection of one Father.

These are the institutions of God and the foundations of His temple, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. The outer edifice is a symbol of the inner. May the people be admonished thereby.

I pray in your behalf that your hearts may be enlightened with the light of the love of God; that your minds may develop daily; that your spirits may become aglow with the fire and illumination of His glad tidings, until these divine foundations may become established throughout the human world. The first of these institutions and foundations is the oneness of humanity and love among mankind. The second is the Most Great Peace. Praise be to God! This American democracy manifests capacity, showing forth readiness to become the standard-bearer of the Most Great Peace. May its hosts be the hosts of the oneness of humanity. May they serve the threshold of God and spread the message of the good pleasure of God.

O Thou kind Lord! This gathering is turning to Thee. These hearts are radiant with Thy love. These minds and spirits are exhilarated by the message of Thy glad tidings. O God! Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees, and render this just government victorious. Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world. O God! This American nation is worthy of Thy favors and is deserving of Thy mercy. Make it precious and near to Thee through Thy bounty and bestowal.

30 April 1912 Talk at Hull House Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

When we view the world of creation, we find that all living things may be classified under two aspects of existence. First, they possess bodies composed of material substance common to all—whether vegetable, animal or human. This is their point of agreement or, as it is philosophically termed, their point of contact. Second, they vary and differ from each other in degree and function—that is to say, in their respective kingdoms. This is their point of distinction and differentiation. For instance, the vegetable and animal are alike in the fact that their bodies are composed of the same material elements but widely different in their kingdoms and powers. Man is like the animal in physical structure but otherwise immeasurably separated and superior.

In the human kingdom itself there are points of contact, properties common to all mankind; likewise, there are points of distinction which separate race from race, individual from individual. If the points of contact, which are the common properties of humanity, overcome the peculiar points of distinction, unity is assured. On the other hand, if the points of differentiation overcome the points of agreement, disunion and weakness result. One of the important questions which affect the unity and the solidarity of mankind is the fellowship and equality of the white and colored races. Between these two races certain points of agreement and points of distinction exist which warrant just and mutual consideration. The points of contact are many; for in the material or physical plane of being, both are constituted alike and exist under the same law of growth and bodily development. Furthermore, both live and move in the plane of the senses and are endowed with human intelligence. There are many other mutual qualifications. In this country, the United States of America, patriotism is common to both races; all have equal rights to citizenship, speak one language, receive the blessings of the same civilization, and follow the precepts of the same religion. In fact numerous points of partnership and agreement exist between the two races; whereas the one point of distinction is that of color. Shall this, the least of all distinctions, be allowed to separate you as races and individuals? In physical bodies, in the law of growth, in sense endowment, intelligence, patriotism, language, citizenship, civilization and religion you are one and the same. A single point of distinction exists—that of racial color. God is not pleased with—neither should any reasonable or intelligent man be willing to recognize—inequality in the races because of this distinction.

But there is need of a superior power to overcome human prejudices, a power which nothing in the world of mankind can withstand and which will overshadow the effect of all other forces at work in human conditions. That irresistible power is the love of God. It is my hope and prayer that it may destroy the prejudice of this one point of distinction between you and unite you all permanently under its hallowed protection. Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed the oneness of the world of humanity. He has caused various nations and divergent creeds to unite. He has declared that difference of race and color is like the variegated beauty of flowers in a garden. If you enter a garden, you will see yellow, white, blue, red flowers in profusion and beauty—each radiant within itself and although different from the others, lending its own charm to them. Racial difference in the human kingdom is similar. If all the flowers in a garden were of the same color, the effect would be monotonous and wearying to the eye.

Therefore, Bahá'u'lláh hath said that the various races of humankind lend a composite harmony and beauty of color to the whole. Let all associate, therefore, in this great human garden even as flowers grow and blend together side by side without discord or disagreement between them.

30 April 1912
Talk at Fourth Annual Conference of the National
Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Handel Hall, Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

According to the words of the Old Testament God has said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” This indicates that man is of the image and likeness of God—that is to say, the perfections of God, the divine virtues, are reflected or revealed in the human reality. Just as the light and effulgence of the sun when cast upon a polished mirror are reflected fully, gloriously, so, likewise, the qualities and attributes of Divinity are radiated from the depths of a pure human heart. This is an evidence that man is the most noble of God’s creatures.

Each kingdom of creation is endowed with its necessary complement of attributes and powers. The mineral possesses inherent virtues of its own kingdom in the scale of existence. The vegetable possesses the qualities of the mineral plus an augmentative virtue, or power of growth. The animal is endowed with the virtues of both the mineral and vegetable plane plus the power of intellect. The human kingdom is replete with the perfections of all the kingdoms below it with the addition of powers peculiar to man alone. Man is, therefore, superior to all the creatures below him, the loftiest and most glorious being of creation. Man is the microcosm; and the infinite universe, the macrocosm. The mysteries of the greater world, or macrocosm, are expressed or revealed in the lesser world, the microcosm. The tree, so to speak, is the greater world, and the seed in its relation to the tree is the lesser world. But the whole of the great tree is potentially latent and hidden in the little seed. When this seed is planted and cultivated, the tree is revealed. Likewise, the greater world, the macrocosm, is latent and miniaturized in the lesser world, or microcosm, of man. This constitutes the universality or perfection of virtues potential in mankind. Therefore, it is said that man has been created in the image and likeness of God.

Let us now discover more specifically how he is the image and likeness of God and what is the standard or criterion by which he can be measured and estimated. This standard can be no other than the divine virtues which are revealed in him. Therefore, every man imbued with divine qualities, who reflects heavenly moralities and perfections, who is the expression of ideal and praiseworthy attributes, is, verily, in the image and likeness of God. If a man possesses wealth, can we call him an image and likeness of God? Or is human honor and notoriety the criterion of divine nearness? Can we apply the test of racial color and say that man of a certain hue—white, black, brown, yellow, red—is the true image of his Creator? We must conclude that color is not the standard and estimate of judgment and that it is of no importance, for color is accidental in nature. The spirit and intelligence of man is essential, and that is the manifestation of divine virtues, the merciful bestowals of God, the eternal life and baptism through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, be it known that color or race is of no importance. He who is the image and likeness of God, who is the manifestation of the bestowals of God, is acceptable at the threshold of God—whether his color be white, black or brown; it matters not. Man is not man simply because of bodily attributes. The standard of divine measure and judgment is his intelligence and spirit.

Therefore, let this be the only criterion and estimate, for this is the image and likeness of God. A man’s heart may be pure and white though his outer skin be black; or his heart be dark and sinful though his racial color is white. The character and purity of the heart is of all importance. The heart

illuminated by the light of God is nearest and dearest to God, and inasmuch as God has endowed man with such favor that he is called the image of God, this is truly a supreme perfection of attainment, a divine station which is not to be sacrificed by the mere accident of color.

1 May 1912

Talk at Dedication of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Grounds Wilmette, Illinois

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

The power which has gathered you here today notwithstanding the cold and windy weather is, indeed, mighty and wonderful. It is the power of God, the divine favor of Bahá'u'lláh which has drawn you together. We praise God that through His constraining love human souls are assembled and associated in this way.

Thousands of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, dawning points of praise and mention of God for all religionists will be built in the East and in the West, but this, being the first one erected in the Occident, has great importance. In the future there will be many here and elsewhere—in Asia, Europe, even in Africa, New Zealand and Australia—but this edifice in Chicago is of especial significance. It has the same importance as the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ishqábád, Caucasus, Russia, the first one built there. In Persia there are many; some are houses which have been utilized for the purpose, others are homes entirely devoted to the divine Cause, and in some places temporary structures have been erected. In all the cities of Persia there are Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, but the great dawning point was founded in Ishqábád. It possesses superlative importance because it was the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár built. All the Bahá'í friends agreed and contributed their utmost assistance and effort. The Afnán devoted his wealth, gave all he had to it. From such a mighty and combined effort a beautiful edifice arose. Notwithstanding their contributions to that building, they have assisted the fund here in Chicago as well. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ishqábád is almost completed. It is centrally located, nine avenues leading into it, nine gardens, nine fountains; all the arrangement and construction is according to the principle and proportion of the number nine. It is like a beautiful bouquet. Imagine a very lofty, imposing edifice surrounded completely by gardens of variegated flowers, with nine avenues leading through them, nine fountains and pools of water. Such is its matchless, beautiful design. Now they are building a hospital, a school for orphans, a home for cripples, a hospice and a large dispensary. God willing, when it is fully completed, it will be a paradise.

I hope the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Chicago will be like this. Endeavor to have the grounds circular in shape. If possible, adjust and exchange the plots in order to make the dimensions and boundaries circular. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár cannot be triangular in shape. It must be in the form of a circle.

2 May 1912 Talk at Hotel Plaza Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

In this Cause consultation is of vital importance, but spiritual conference and not the mere voicing of personal views is intended. In France I was present at a session of the senate, but the experience was not impressive. Parliamentary procedure should have for its object the attainment of the light of truth upon questions presented and not furnish a battleground for opposition and self-opinion. Antagonism and contradiction are unfortunate and always destructive to truth. In the parliamentary meeting mentioned, altercation and useless quibbling were frequent; the result, mostly confusion and turmoil; even in one instance a physical encounter took place between two members. It was not consultation but comedy.

The purpose is to emphasize the statement that consultation must have for its object the investigation of truth. He who expresses an opinion should not voice it as correct and right but set it forth as a contribution to the consensus of opinion, for the light of reality becomes apparent when two opinions coincide. A spark is produced when flint and steel come together. Man should weigh his opinions with the utmost serenity, calmness and composure. Before expressing his own views he should carefully consider the views already advanced by others. If he finds that a previously expressed opinion is more true and worthy, he should accept it immediately and not willfully hold to an opinion of his own. By this excellent method he endeavors to arrive at unity and truth. Opposition and division are deplorable. It is better then to have the opinion of a wise, sagacious man; otherwise, contradiction and altercation, in which varied and divergent views are presented, will make it necessary for a judicial body to render decision upon the question. Even a majority opinion or consensus may be incorrect. A thousand people may hold to one view and be mistaken, whereas one sagacious person may be right. Therefore, true consultation is spiritual conference in the attitude and atmosphere of love. Members must love each other in the spirit of fellowship in order that good results may be forthcoming. Love and fellowship are the foundation.

The most memorable instance of spiritual consultation was the meeting of the disciples of Jesus Christ upon the mount after His ascension. They said, "Jesus Christ has been crucified, and we have no longer association and intercourse with Him in His physical body; therefore, we must be loyal and faithful to Him, we must be grateful and appreciate Him, for He has raised us from the dead, He made us wise, He has given us eternal life. What shall we do to be faithful to Him?" And so they held council. One of them said, "We must detach ourselves from the chains and fetters of the world; otherwise, we cannot be faithful." The others replied, "That is so." Another said, "Either we must be married and faithful to our wives and children or serve our Lord free from these ties. We cannot be occupied with the care and provision for families and at the same time herald the Kingdom in the wilderness. Therefore, let those who are unmarried remain so, and those who have married provide means of sustenance and comfort for their families and then go forth to spread the message of glad tidings." There were no dissenting voices; all agreed, saying, "That is right." A third disciple said, "To perform worthy deeds in the Kingdom we must be further self-sacrificing. From now on we should forego ease and bodily comfort, accept every difficulty, forget self and teach the Cause of God." This found acceptance and approval by all the others. Finally a fourth disciple said, "There is still another aspect to our faith and unity. For Jesus' sake we shall be beaten, imprisoned and exiled. They may kill us. Let us receive this lesson now. Let us realize and resolve that though we are beaten, banished,

cursed, spat upon and led forth to be killed, we shall accept all this joyfully, loving those who hate and wound us.” All the disciples replied, “Surely we will—it is agreed; this is right.” Then they descended from the summit of the mountain, and each went forth in a different direction upon his divine mission.

This was true consultation. This was spiritual consultation and not the mere voicing of personal views in parliamentary opposition and debate.

2 May 1912

Talk to Federation of Women's Clubs

Hotel La Salle, Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

One of the functions of the sun is to quicken and reveal the hidden realities of the kingdoms of existence. Through the light and heat of the great central luminary, all that is potential in the earth is awakened and comes forth into the realm of the visible. The fruit hidden in the tree appears upon its branches in response to the power of the sun; man and all other organisms live, move and have their being under its developing rays; nature is resplendent with countless evolutionary forms through its pervading impulse—so that we can say a function of the sun is the revelation of the mysteries and creative purposes hidden within the phenomenal world.

The outer sun is a sign or symbol of the inner and ideal Sun of Truth, the Word of God. Inasmuch as this is the century of light, it is evident that the Sun of Reality, the Word, has revealed itself to all humankind. One of the potentialities hidden in the realm of humanity was the capability or capacity of womanhood. Through the effulgent rays of divine illumination the capacity of woman has become so awakened and manifest in this age that equality of man and woman is an established fact. In past ages woman was wronged and oppressed. This was especially the case in Asia and Africa. In certain parts of Asia women were not considered as members of humankind. They were looked upon as inferior, unworthy creatures, subordinate and subject to man. A certain people known as the Nusayris held to the belief for a long period that woman was the incarnation of the evil spirit, or Satan, and that man alone was the manifestation of God, the Merciful. At last this century of light dawned, the realities shone forth, and the mysteries long hidden from human vision were revealed. Among these revealed realities was the great principle of the equality of man and woman, which is now finding recognition throughout the whole world—America, Europe and the Orient.

History records the appearance in the world of women who have been signs of guidance, power and accomplishment. Some were notable poets, some philosophers and scientists, others courageous upon the field of battle. Qurratu'l-'Ayn, a Bahá'í, was a poetess. She discomfited the learned men of Persia by her brilliancy and fervor. When she entered a meeting, even the learned were silent. She was so well versed in philosophy and science that those in her presence always considered and consulted her first. Her courage was unparalleled; she faced her enemies fearlessly until she was killed. She withstood a despotic king, the Sháh of Persia, who had the power to decree the death of any of his subjects. There was not a day during which he did not command the execution of some. This woman singly and alone withstood such a despot until her last breath, then gave her life for her faith.

Consider the mysteries revealed during the last half century, all due to the effulgence of the Sun of Reality, which has been so gloriously manifested in this age and cycle. In this day man must investigate reality impartially and without prejudice in order to reach the true knowledge and conclusions. What, then, constitutes the inequality between man and woman? Both are human. In powers and function each is the complement of the other. At most it is this: that woman has been denied the opportunities which man has so long enjoyed, especially the privilege of education. But even this is not always a shortcoming. Shall we consider it an imperfection and weakness in her nature that she is not proficient in the school of military tactics, that she cannot go forth to the field of battle and kill, that she is not able to handle a deadly weapon? Nay, rather, is it not a compliment when we say that in hardness of heart and cruelty she is inferior to man? The woman who is asked to arm herself and kill her fellow creatures will say, "I cannot." Is this to be considered a fault and lack

of qualification as man's equal? Yet be it known that if woman had been taught and trained in the military science of slaughter, she would have been the equivalent of man even in this accomplishment. But God forbid! May woman never attain this proficiency; may she never wield weapons of war, for the destruction of humanity is not a glorious achievement. The upbuilding of a home, the bringing of joy and comfort into human hearts are truly glories of mankind. Let not a man glory in this, that he can kill his fellow creatures; nay, rather, let him glory in this, that he can love them.

When we consider the kingdoms of existence below man, we find no distinction or estimate of superiority and inferiority between male and female. Among the myriad organisms of the vegetable and animal kingdoms sex exists, but there is no differentiation whatever as to relative importance and value in the equation of life. If we investigate impartially, we may even find species in which the female is superior or preferable to the male. For instance, there are trees such as the fig, the male of which is fruitless while the female is fruitful. The male of the date palm is valueless while the female bears abundantly. Inasmuch as we find no ground for distinction or superiority according to the creative wisdom in the lower kingdoms, is it logical or becoming of man to make such distinction in regard to himself? The male of the animal kingdom does not glory in its being male and superior to the female. In fact, equality exists and is recognized. Why should man, a higher and more intelligent creature, deny and deprive himself of this equality the animals enjoy? His surest index and guide as to the creative intention concerning himself are the conditions and analogies of the kingdoms below him where equality of the sexes is fundamental.

The truth is that all mankind are the creatures and servants of one God, and in His estimate all are human. Man is a generic term applying to all humanity. The biblical statement "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" does not mean that woman was not created. The image and likeness of God apply to her as well. In Persian and Arabic there are two distinct words translated into English as man: one meaning man and woman collectively, the other distinguishing man as male from woman the female. The first word and its pronoun are generic, collective; the other is restricted to the male. This is the same in Hebrew.

To accept and observe a distinction which God has not intended in creation is ignorance and superstition. The fact which is to be considered, however, is that woman, having formerly been deprived, must now be allowed equal opportunities with man for education and training. There must be no difference in their education. Until the reality of equality between man and woman is fully established and attained, the highest social development of mankind is not possible. Even granted that woman is inferior to man in some degree of capacity or accomplishment, this or any other distinction would continue to be productive of discord and trouble. The only remedy is education, opportunity; for equality means equal qualification. In brief, the assumption of superiority by man will continue to be depressing to the ambition of woman, as if her attainment to equality was creationally impossible; woman's aspiration toward advancement will be checked by it, and she will gradually become hopeless. On the contrary, we must declare that her capacity is equal, even greater than man's. This will inspire her with hope and ambition, and her susceptibilities for advancement will continually increase. She must not be told and taught that she is weaker and inferior in capacity and qualification. If a pupil is told that his intelligence is less than his fellow pupils, it is a very great drawback and handicap to his progress. He must be encouraged to advance by the statement, "You are most capable, and if you endeavor, you will attain the highest degree."

It is my hope that the banner of equality may be raised throughout the five continents where as yet it is not fully recognized and established. In this enlightened world of the West woman has advanced an immeasurable degree beyond the women of the Orient. And let it be known once more that until woman and man recognize and realize equality, social and political progress here or anywhere will not be possible. For the world of humanity consists of two parts or members: one is woman; the other is man. Until these two members are equal in strength, the oneness of humanity

cannot be established, and the happiness and felicity of mankind will not be a reality. God willing, this is to be so.

2 May 1912
Talk at Bahá'í Women's Reception
Hotel La Salle, Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

When we look upon the kingdoms of creation below man, we find three forms or planes of existence which await education and development. For instance, the function of a gardener is to till the soil of the mineral kingdom and plant a tree which under his training and cultivation will attain perfection of growth. If it be wild and fruitless, it may be made fruitful and prolific by grafting. If small and unsightly, it will become lofty, beautiful and verdant under the gardener's training, whereas a tree bereft of his cultivation retrogresses daily, its fruit grows acrid and bitter as the trees of the jungle, or it may become entirely barren and bereft of its fruitage. Likewise, we observe that animals which have undergone training in their sphere of limitation will progress and advance unmistakably, become more beautiful in appearance and increase in intelligence. For instance, how intelligent and knowing the Arabian horse has become through training, even how polite this horse has become through education. As to the human world: It is more in need of guidance and education than the lower creatures. Reflect upon the vast difference between the inhabitants of Africa and those of America. Here the people have been civilized and uplifted; there they are in the utmost and abject state of savagery. What is the cause of their savagery and the reason of your civilization? It is evident that this difference is due to education and the lack of education. Consider, then, the effectiveness of education in the human kingdom. It makes the ignorant wise, the tyrant merciful, the blind seeing, the deaf attentive, even the imbecile intelligent. How vast this difference. How wide the chasm which separates the educated man from the man who lacks teaching and training. This is the effect when the teacher is merely an ordinary teacher.

But—praise be to God!—your Teacher and Instructor is Bahá'u'lláh. He is the Educator of the Orient and Occident. He is the Teacher of the very world of divinity and spirituality, the Sun of Truth, the Word of God. The lights of His education are radiating even as the sun. See what it has accomplished, how it is developing all humanity so that I, a Persian, have come to this meeting of revered souls upon the American continent and am standing here expounding to you in the greatest love. This is through the training of Bahá'u'lláh, which can unite and has united these hearts. In this way it has enlightened the world. Even so it has breathed the spirit of God into men. Even so it has resuscitated the hearts of men.

Therefore, praise be to God that you have been brought under the education of this One Who is the very Sun of Reality and Who is shining resplendently upon all humankind, endowing all with a life that is everlasting.

Praise be to God a thousand times!

2 May 1912
Talk at Hotel Plaza
Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Marzieh Moss

This morning the city is enveloped in fog and mist. How beautiful is a city brilliant with sunshine. Just as these mists and vapors conceal the phenomenal sun, so human imaginations obscure the Sun of Truth. Consider the radiant glory of the great solar center of our planetary system: how wonderful the sight, how its splendor illumines vision until clouds and mists veil it from the eye. In the same way, the Sun of Truth becomes veiled and hidden by the superstitions and imaginations of human minds. When the sun rises, no matter from what dawning point on the horizon it appears—northeast, east, southeast—the haze and mists disperse, and we have clear vision of its glory mounting to the zenith. Similarly, the nations have been directed to the dawning points of the Sun of Reality, each to a particular rising place from which the light of religion has become manifest; but after a time the dawning point has become the object of worship instead of the Sun itself, which is ever one Sun and stationary in the heavens of the divine Will. Differences have arisen because of this, causing clouds and darkness to overshadow again the glorious luminary of Reality. When the mists and darkness of superstition and prejudice are dispersed, all will see the Sun aright and alike. Then will all nations become as one in its radiance.

Inasmuch as these clouds and human vapors of superstition hide the light of the spiritual Sun, we must put forth our utmost endeavor to dispel them. May we unite in this and be enlightened to accomplish it, for the Sun is one and its radiance and bounty universal. All the inhabitants of earth are recipients of the bounty of the one phenomenal sun, and none are preferred above others; so, likewise, all receive the heavenly bestowals of the Word of God; none are specialized as favorites; all are under its protection and universal effulgence. Human strife and religious disagreement complex and disfigure the simple purity and beauty of the divine Cause until clouds obscure the light of reality and disunion results. Therefore, make use of intelligence and reason so that you may dispel these dense clouds from the horizon of human hearts and all hold to the one reality of all the Prophets. It is most certain that if human souls exercise their respective reason and intelligence upon the divine questions, the power of God will dispel every difficulty, and the eternal realities will appear as one light, one truth, one love, one God and a peace that is universal.

2 May 1912 Talk at Hotel Plaza Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Henrietta C. Wagner

When we carefully investigate the kingdoms of existence and observe the phenomena of the universe about us, we discover the absolute order and perfection of creation. The dull minerals in their affinities, plants and vegetables with power of growth, animals in their instinct, man with conscious intellect and the heavenly orbs moving obediently through limitless space are all found subject to universal law, most complete, most perfect. That is why a wise philosopher has said, “There is no greater or more perfect system of creation than that which already exists.” The materialists and atheists declare that this order and symmetry is due to nature and its forces; that composition and decomposition which constitute life and existence are exigencies of nature; that man himself is an exigency of nature; that nature rules and governs creation; and that all existing things are captives of nature. Let us consider these statements. Inasmuch as we find all phenomena subject to an exact order and under control of universal law, the question is whether this is due to nature or to divine and omnipotent rule. The materialists believe that it is an exigency of nature for the rain to fall and that unless rain fell the earth would not become verdant. They reason that if clouds cause a downpour, if the sun sends forth heat and light and the earth is endowed with capacity, vegetation must inevitably follow; therefore, plant life is a property of these natural forces and is a sign of nature; just as combustion is the natural property of fire, therefore, fire burns, and we cannot conceive of fire without its burning.

In reply to these statements we say that from the premises advanced by materialists, the conclusions are drawn that nature is the ruler and governor of existence and that all virtues and perfections are natural exigencies and outcomes. Furthermore, it follows that man is but a part or member of that whereof nature is the whole.

Man possesses certain virtues of which nature is deprived. He exercises volition; nature is without will. For instance, an exigency of the sun is the giving of light. It is controlled—it cannot do otherwise than radiate light—but it is not volitional. An exigency of the phenomenon of electricity is that it is revealed in sparks and flashes under certain conditions, but it cannot voluntarily furnish illumination. An exigency or property of water is humidity; it cannot separate itself from this property by its own will. Likewise, all the properties of nature are inherent and obedient, not volitional; therefore, it is philosophically predicated that nature is without volition and innate perception. In this statement and principle we agree with the materialists. But the question which presents food for reflection is this: How is it that man, who is a part of the universal plan, is possessed of certain qualities whereof nature is devoid? Is it conceivable that a drop should be imbued with qualities of which the ocean is completely deprived? The drop is a part; the ocean is the whole. Could there be a phenomenon of combustion or illumination which the great luminary the sun itself did not manifest? Is it possible for a stone to possess inherent properties of which the aggregate mineral kingdom is lacking? For example, could the fingernail which is a part of human anatomy be endowed with cellular properties of which the brain is deprived?

Man is intelligent, instinctively and consciously intelligent; nature is not. Man is fortified with memory; nature does not possess it. Man is the discoverer of the mysteries of nature; nature is not conscious of those mysteries herself. It is evident, therefore, that man is dual in aspect: as an animal he is subject to nature, but in his spiritual or conscious being he transcends the world of material

existence. His spiritual powers, being nobler and higher, possess virtues of which nature intrinsically has no evidence; therefore, they triumph over natural conditions. These ideal virtues or powers in man surpass or surround nature, comprehend natural laws and phenomena, penetrate the mysteries of the unknown and invisible and bring them forth into the realm of the known and visible. All the existing arts and sciences were once hidden secrets of nature. By his command and control of nature man took them out of the plane of the invisible and revealed them in the plane of visibility, whereas according to the exigencies of nature these secrets should have remained latent and concealed. According to the exigencies of nature electricity should be a hidden, mysterious power; but the penetrating intellect of man has discovered it, taken it out of the realm of mystery and made it an obedient human servant. In his physical body and its functions man is a captive of nature; for instance, he cannot continue his existence without sleep, an exigency of nature; he must partake of food and drink, which nature demands and requires. But in his spiritual being and intelligence man dominates and controls nature, the ruler of his physical being. Notwithstanding this, contrary opinions and materialistic views are set forth which would relegate man completely to physical subservience to nature's laws. This is equivalent to saying that the comparative degree exceeds the superlative, that the imperfect includes the perfect, that the pupil surpasses the teacher—all of which is illogical and impossible. When it is clearly manifest and evident that the intelligence of man, his constructive faculty, his power of penetration and discovery transcend nature, how can we say he is nature's thrall and captive? This would indicate that man is deprived of the bounties of God, that he is retrograding toward the station of the animal, that his keen superintelligence is without function and that he estimates himself as an animal, without distinction between his own and the animal's kingdom.

I was once conversing with a famous philosopher of the materialistic school in Alexandria. He was strongly opinionated upon the point that man and the other kingdoms of existence are under the control of nature and that, after all, man is only a social animal, often very much of an animal. When he was discomfited in argument, he said impetuously, "I see no difference between myself and the donkey, and I am not willing to admit distinctions which I cannot perceive." 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied, "No, I consider you quite different and distinct; I call you a man and the donkey but an animal. I perceive that you are highly intelligent, whereas the donkey is not. I know that you are well versed in philosophy, and I also know that the donkey is entirely deficient in it; therefore, I am not willing to accept your statement."

Consider the lady beside me who is writing in this little book. It seems a very trifling, ordinary matter; but upon intelligent reflection you will conclude that what has been written presupposes and proves the existence of a writer. These words have not written themselves, and these letters have not come together of their own volition. It is evident there must be a writer.

And now consider this infinite universe. Is it possible that it could have been created without a Creator? Or that the Creator and cause of this infinite congeries of worlds should be without intelligence? Is the idea tenable that the Creator has no comprehension of what is manifested in creation? Man, the creature, has volition and certain virtues. Is it possible that his Creator is deprived of these? A child could not accept this belief and statement. It is perfectly evident that man did not create himself and that he cannot do so. How could man of his own weakness create such a mighty being? Therefore, the Creator of man must be more perfect and powerful than man. If the creative cause of man be simply on the same level with man, then man himself should be able to create, whereas we know very well that we cannot create even our own likeness. Therefore, the Creator of man must be endowed with superlative intelligence and power in all points that creation involves and implies. We are weak; He is mighty, because, were He not mighty, He could not have created us. We are ignorant; He is wise. We are poor; He is rich. Otherwise, He would have been incapable of our creation.

Among the proofs of the existence of a divine power is this: that things are often known by their opposites. Were it not for darkness, light could not be sensed. Were it not for death, life could

not be known. If ignorance did not exist, knowledge would not be a reality. It is necessary that each should exist in order that the other should have reality. Night and day must be in order that each may be distinguished. Night itself is an indication and evidence of day which follows, and day itself indicates the coming night. Unless night were a reality, there could not be day. Were it not for death, there could be no life. Things are known by their opposites.

Therefore, our weakness is an evidence that there is might; our ignorance proves the reality of knowledge; our need is an indication of supply and wealth. Were it not for wealth, this need would not exist; were it not for knowledge, ignorance would be unknown; were it not for power, there would be no impotence. In other words, demand and supply is the law, and undoubtedly all virtues have a center and source. That source is God, from Whom all these bounties emanate.

3 May 1912 Talk at Hotel Plaza Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Marzieh Moss

I was in the Orient, and from the Orient to this part of the world is a long distance. Travel is difficult, especially difficult for me on account of my infirmities of body, increased by forty years in prison. My physical powers are weak; it is the power of will that sustains me. Realize from this how great has been my exertion and how strong my purpose in accomplishing this journey through the will of God. May it be the cause of great illumination in the Occident.

In this western world with its stimulating climate, its capacities for knowledge and lofty ideals, the message of peace should be easily spread. The people are not so influenced by imitations and prejudices, and through their comprehension of the real and unreal they should attain the truth. They should become leaders in the effort to establish the oneness of humankind. What is higher than this responsibility? In the Kingdom of God no service is greater, and in the estimation of the Prophets, including Jesus Christ, there is no deed so estimable.

Yet even now warfare prevails. Envy and hatred have arisen between nations. But because I find the American nation so capable of achievement and this government the fairest of western governments, its institutions superior to others, my wish and hope is that the banner of international reconciliation may first be raised on this continent and the standard of the Most Great Peace be unfurled here. May the American people and their government unite in their efforts in order that this light may dawn from this point and spread to all regions, for this is one of the greatest bestowals of God. In order that America may avail herself of this opportunity, I beg that you strive and pray with heart and soul, devoting all your energies to this end: that the banner of international peace may be upraised here and that this democracy may be the cause of the cessation of warfare in all other countries.

Observe what is taking place in Tripoli: men cutting each other into pieces, bombardment from the sea, attacks from the land and the hail of dynamite from the very heaven itself. The contending armies are thirsting for each other's blood. How they can do this is inconceivable. They have fathers, mothers, children; they are human. What of their wives and families? Think of their anguish and suffering. How unjust, how terrible! Human beings should prevent and forbid this. These kings, rulers and chieftains should strive for the good of their subjects instead of their destruction. These shepherds should bring their sheep within the fold, comfort them and give them pasture instead of death and slaughter.

I supplicate the divine Kingdom and ask that you may be instrumental in establishing the great peace in this country and that this government and nation may spread it to all the world.

3 May 1912 Talk at Hotel Plaza Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Marzieh Moss

According to the statement of philosophers the difference in degree of humankind from lowest to highest is due to education. The proofs they advance are these. The civilization of Europe and America is an evidence and outcome of education, whereas the semicivilized and barbarous peoples of Africa bear witness in their condition that they have been deprived of its advantages. Education makes the ignorant wise, the tyrant just, promotes happiness, strengthens the mind, develops the will and makes fruitless trees of humanity fruitful. Therefore, in the human world some have attained lofty degrees, while others grope in the abyss of despair. Nevertheless, the highest attainment is possible for every member of the human race even to the station of the Prophets. This is the statement and reasoning of the philosophers.

The Prophets of God are the first Educators. They bestow universal education upon man and cause him to rise from the lowest levels of savagery to the highest pinnacles of spiritual development. The philosophers, too, are educators along lines of intellectual training. At most, they have only been able to educate themselves and a limited number about them, to improve their own morals and, so to speak, civilize themselves; but they have been incapable of universal education. They have failed to cause an advancement for any given nation from savagery to civilization.

It is evident that although education improves the morals of mankind, confers the advantages of civilization and elevates man from lowest degrees to the station of sublimity, there is, nevertheless, a difference in the intrinsic or natal capacity of individuals. Ten children of the same age, with equal station of birth, taught in the same school, partaking of the same food, in all respects subject to the same environment, their interests equal and in common, will evidence separate and distinct degrees of capability and advancement; some will be exceedingly intelligent and progressive, some of mediocre ability, others limited and incapable. One may become a learned professor, while another under the same course of education proves dull and stupid. From all standpoints the opportunities have been equal, but the results and outcomes vary from the highest to lowest degree of advancement. It is evident, therefore, that mankind differs in natal capacity and intrinsic intellectual endowment. Nevertheless, although capacities are not the same, every member of the human race is capable of education.

Jesus Christ was an Educator of humanity. His teachings were altruistic; His bestowal, universal. He taught mankind by the power of the Holy Spirit and not through human agency, for the human power is limited, whereas the divine power is illimitable and infinite. The influence and accomplishment of Christ will attest this. Galen, the Greek physician and philosopher who lived in the second century A.D., wrote a treatise upon the civilization of nations. He was not a Christian, but he bore testimony that religious beliefs exercise an extraordinary effect upon the problems of civilization. In substance he said, "There are certain people among us, followers of Jesus, the Nazarene, who was killed in Jerusalem. These people are truly imbued with moral principles which are the envy of philosophers. They believe in God and fear Him. They have hopes in His favors; therefore, they shun all unworthy deeds and actions and incline to praiseworthy ethics and morals. Day and night they strive that their deeds may be commendable and that they may contribute to the welfare of humanity; therefore, each one of them is virtually a philosopher, for these people have attained unto that which

is the essence and purport of philosophy. These people have praiseworthy morals, even though they may be illiterate.”

The purpose of this is to show that the holy Manifestations of God, the divine Prophets, are the first Teachers of the human race. They are universal Educators, and the fundamental principles they have laid down are the causes and factors of the advancement of nations. Forms and imitations which creep in afterward are not conducive to that progress. On the contrary, these are destroyers of human foundations established by the heavenly Educators. These are clouds which obscure the Sun of Reality. If you reflect upon the essential teachings of Jesus, you will realize that they are the light of the world. Nobody can question their truth. They are the very source of life and the cause of happiness to the human race. The forms and superstitions which appeared and obscured the light did not affect the reality of Christ. For example, Jesus Christ said, “Put up thy sword into the sheath.” The meaning is that warfare is forbidden and abrogated; but consider the Christian wars which took place afterward. Christian hostility and inquisition spared not even the learned; he who proclaimed the revolution of the earth was imprisoned; he who announced the new astronomical system was persecuted as a heretic; scholars and scientists became objects of fanatical hatred, and many were killed and tortured. How do these actions conform with the teachings of Jesus Christ, and what relation do they bear to His own example? For Christ declared, “Love your enemies, ... and pray for them which ... persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” How can hatred, hostility and persecution be reconciled with Christ and His teachings?

Therefore, there is need of turning back to the original foundation. The fundamental principles of the Prophets are correct and true. The imitations and superstitions which have crept in are at wide variance with the original precepts and commands. Bahá'u'lláh has revoiced and reestablished the quintessence of the teachings of all the Prophets, setting aside the accessories and purifying religion from human interpretation. He has written a book entitled the Hidden Words. The preface announces that it contains the essences of the words of the Prophets of the past, clothed in the garment of brevity, for the teaching and spiritual guidance of the people of the world. Read it that you may understand the true foundations of religion and reflect upon the inspiration of the Messengers of God. It is light upon light.

We must not look for truth in the deeds and actions of nations; we must investigate truth at its divine source and summon all mankind to unity in reality itself.

4 May 1912
Talk to Theosophical Society
Northwestern University Hall, Evanston, Illinois

Notes by Marzieh Moss

I am very happy in being present at this meeting. Praise be to God! I see before me the faces of those who are endowed with capacity to know and who desire to investigate truth. This is conducive to the greatest joy.

According to divine philosophy there are two important and universal conditions in the world of material phenomena: one which concerns life, the other concerning death; one relative to existence, the other nonexistence; one manifest in composition, the other in decomposition. Some define existence as the expression of reality or being and nonexistence as nonbeing, imagining that death is annihilation. This is a mistaken idea, for total annihilation is an impossibility. At most, composition is ever subject to decomposition or disintegration—that is to say, existence implies the grouping of material elements in a form or body, and nonexistence is simply the decomposing of these groupings. This is the law of creation in its endless forms and infinite variety of expression. Certain elements have formed the composite creature man. This composite association of the elements in the form of a human body is, therefore, subject to disintegration, which we call death, but after disintegration the elements themselves persist unchanged. Therefore, total annihilation is an impossibility, and existence can never become nonexistence. This would be equivalent to saying that light can become darkness, which is manifestly untrue and impossible. As existence can never become nonexistence, there is no death for man; nay, rather, man is everlasting and ever-living. The rational proof of this is that the atoms of the material elements are transferable from one form of existence to another, from one degree and kingdom to another, lower or higher. For example, an atom of the soil or dust of earth may traverse the kingdoms from mineral to man by successive incorporations into the bodies of the organisms of those kingdoms. At one time it enters into the formation of the mineral or rock; it is then absorbed by the vegetable kingdom and becomes a constituent of the body and fibre of a tree; again it is appropriated by the animal, and at a still later period is found in the body of man. Throughout these degrees of its traversing the kingdoms from one form of phenomenal being to another, it retains its atomic existence and is never annihilated nor relegated to nonexistence.

Nonexistence, therefore, is an expression applied to change of form, but this transformation can never be rightly considered annihilation, for the elements of composition are ever present and existent as we have seen in the journey of the atom through successive kingdoms, unimpaired; hence, there is no death; life is everlasting. So to speak, when the atom entered into the composition of the tree, it died to the mineral kingdom, and when consumed by the animal, it died to the vegetable kingdom, and so on until its transference or transmutation into the kingdom of man; but throughout its traversing it was subject to transformation and not annihilation. Death, therefore, is applicable to a change or transference from one degree or condition to another. In the mineral realm there was a spirit of existence; in the world of plant life and organisms it reappeared as the vegetative spirit; thence it attained the animal spirit and finally aspired to the human spirit. These are degrees and changes but not obliteration, and this is a rational proof that man is everlasting, ever-living. Therefore, death is only a relative term implying change. For example, we will say that this light before me, having reappeared in another incandescent lamp, has died in the one and lives in the other. This is not death in reality. The perfections of the mineral are translated into the vegetable and from thence into the animal, the virtue always attaining a superlative degree in the upward change. In each

kingdom we find the same virtues manifesting themselves more fully, proving that the reality has been transferred from a lower to a higher form and kingdom of being. Therefore, nonexistence is only relative and absolute nonexistence inconceivable. This rose in my hand will become disintegrated and its symmetry destroyed, but the elements of its composition remain changeless; nothing affects their elemental integrity. They cannot become nonexistent; they are simply transferred from one state to another.

Through his ignorance man fears death, but the death he shrinks from is imaginary and absolutely unreal; it is only human imagination.

The bestowal and grace of God have quickened the realm of existence with life and being. For existence there is neither change nor transformation; existence is ever existence; it can never be translated into nonexistence. It is gradation; a degree below a higher degree is considered as nonexistence. This dust beneath our feet, as compared with our being, is nonexistent. When the human body crumbles into dust, we can say it has become nonexistent; therefore, its dust in relation to living forms of human being is as nonexistent, but in its own sphere it is existent, it has its mineral being. Therefore, it is well proved that absolute nonexistence is impossible; it is only relative.

The purpose is this: that the everlasting bestowal of God vouchsafed to man is never subject to corruption. Inasmuch as He has endowed the phenomenal world with being, it is impossible for that world to become nonbeing, for it is the very genesis of God; it is in the realm of origination; it is a creational and not a subjective world, and the bounty descending upon it is continuous and permanent. Therefore, man, the highest creature of the phenomenal world, is endowed with that continuous bounty bestowed by divine generosity without cessation. For instance, the rays of the sun are continuous, the heat of the sun emanates from it without cessation; no discontinuance of it is conceivable. Even so, the bestowal of God is descending upon the world of humanity, never ceasing, continuous, forever. If we say that the bestowal of existence ceases or falters, it is equivalent to saying that the sun can exist with cessation of its effulgence. Is this possible? Therefore, the effulgences of existence are ever present and continuous.

The conception of annihilation is a factor in human degradation, a cause of human debasement and lowliness, a source of human fear and abjection. It has been conducive to the dispersion and weakening of human thought, whereas the realization of existence and continuity has upraised man to sublimity of ideals, established the foundations of human progress and stimulated the development of heavenly virtues; therefore, it behooves man to abandon thoughts of nonexistence and death, which are absolutely imaginary, and see himself ever-living, everlasting in the divine purpose of his creation. He must turn away from ideas which degrade the human soul so that day by day and hour by hour he may advance upward and higher to spiritual perception of the continuity of the human reality. If he dwells upon the thought of nonexistence, he will become utterly incompetent; with weakened willpower his ambition for progress will be lessened and the acquisition of human virtues will cease.

Therefore, you must thank God that He has bestowed upon you the blessing of life and existence in the human kingdom. Strive diligently to acquire virtues befitting your degree and station. Be as lights of the world which cannot be hid and which have no setting in horizons of darkness. Ascend to the zenith of an existence which is never beclouded by the fears and forebodings of nonexistence. When man is not endowed with inner perception, he is not informed of these important mysteries. The retina of outer vision, though sensitive and delicate, may, nevertheless, be a hindrance to the inner eye which alone can perceive. The bestowals of God which are manifest in all phenomenal life are sometimes hidden by intervening veils of mental and mortal vision which render man spiritually blind and incapable, but when those scales are removed and the veils rent asunder, then the great signs of God will become visible, and he will witness the eternal light filling the world. The bestowals of God are all and always manifest. The promises of heaven are ever present. The favors of God are all-surrounding, but should the conscious eye of the soul of man remain veiled and darkened, he will be led to deny these universal signs and remain deprived of these manifestations of divine bounty.

Therefore, we must endeavor with heart and soul in order that the veil covering the eye of inner vision may be removed, that we may behold the manifestations of the signs of God, discern His mysterious graces and realize that material blessings as compared with spiritual bounties are as nothing. The spiritual blessings of God are greatest. When we were in the mineral kingdom, although we were endowed with certain gifts and powers, they were not to be compared with the blessings of the human kingdom. In the matrix of the mother we were the recipients of endowments and blessings of God, yet these were as nothing compared to the powers and graces bestowed upon us after birth into this human world. Likewise, if we are born from the matrix of this physical and phenomenal environment into the freedom and loftiness of the spiritual life and vision, we shall consider this mortal existence and its blessings as worthless by comparison.

In the spiritual world the divine bestowals are infinite, for in that realm there is neither separation nor disintegration, which characterize the world of material existence. Spiritual existence is absolute immortality, completeness and unchangeable being. Therefore, we must thank God that He has created for us both material blessings and spiritual bestowals. He has given us material gifts and spiritual graces, outer sight to view the lights of the sun and inner vision by which we may perceive the glory of God. He has designed the outer ear to enjoy the melodies of sound and the inner hearing wherewith we may hear the voice of our Creator. We must strive with energies of heart, soul and mind to develop and manifest the perfections and virtues latent within the realities of the phenomenal world, for the human reality may be compared to a seed. If we sow the seed, a mighty tree appears from it. The virtues of the seed are revealed in the tree; it puts forth branches, leaves, blossoms, and produces fruits. All these virtues were hidden and potential in the seed. Through the blessing and bounty of cultivation these virtues became apparent. Similarly, the merciful God, our Creator, has deposited within human realities certain latent and potential virtues. Through education and culture these virtues deposited by the loving God will become apparent in the human reality, even as the unfoldment of the tree from within the germinating seed. I will pray for you.

O Thou kind Lord! These are Thy servants who have gathered in this meeting, have turned unto Thy Kingdom and are in need of Thy bestowal and blessing. O thou God! Manifest and make evident the signs of Thy oneness which have been deposited in all the realities of life. Reveal and unfold the virtues which Thou hast made latent and concealed in these human realities.

O God! We are as plants, and Thy bounty is as the rain; refresh and cause these plants to grow through Thy bestowal. We are Thy servants; free us from the fetters of material existence. We are ignorant; make us wise. We are dead; make us alive. We are material; endow us with spirit. We are deprived; make us the intimates of Thy mysteries. We are needy; enrich and bless us from Thy boundless treasury. O God! Resuscitate us; give us sight; give us hearing; familiarize us with the mysteries of life, so that the secrets of Thy kingdom may become revealed to us in this world of existence and we may confess Thy oneness. Every bestowal emanates from Thee; every benediction is Thine.

Thou art mighty. Thou art powerful. Thou art the Giver, and Thou art the Ever-Bounteous.

5 May 1912
Talk at Children's Meeting
Hotel Plaza
Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Marzieh Moss

You are the children of whom Christ has said, "Of such is the kingdom of God"; and according to the words of Bahá'u'lláh you are the very lamps or candles of the world of humanity, for your hearts are exceedingly pure and your spirits most sensitive. You are near the source; you have not yet become contaminated. You are the lambs of the heavenly Shepherd. You are as polished mirrors reflecting pure light. My hope is that your parents may educate you spiritually and give you thorough moral training. May you develop so that each one of you shall become imbued with all the virtues of the human world. May you advance in all material and spiritual degrees. May you become learned in sciences, acquire the arts and crafts, prove to be useful members of human society and assist the progress of human civilization. May you be a cause of the manifestation of divine bestowals—each one of you a shining star radiating the light of the oneness of humanity toward the horizons of the East and West. May you be devoted to the love and unity of mankind, and through your efforts may the reality deposited in the human heart find its divine expression. I pray for you, asking the assistance and confirmation of God in your behalf.

You are all my children, my spiritual children. Spiritual children are dearer than physical children, for it is possible for physical children to turn away from the Spirit of God, but you are spiritual children and, therefore, you are most beloved. I wish for you progress in every degree of development. May God assist you. May you be surrounded by the beneficent light of His countenance, and may you attain maturity under His nurture and protection. You are all blessed.

(To the Friends)

I am going away, but you must arise to serve the Word of God. Your hearts must be pure and your intentions sincere in order that you may become recipients of the divine bestowals. Consider that although the sun shines equally upon all things, yet in the clear mirror its reflection is most brilliant and not in the black stone. This great effulgence and heat have been produced by the crystal clearness of the glass. If there were no clearness and purity, these effects would not be witnessed. Should rain fall upon salty, stony earth, it will never have effect; but when it falls upon good pure soil, green and verdant growth follows, and fruits are produced.

This is the day when pure hearts have a portion of the everlasting bounties and sanctified souls are being illumined by the eternal manifestations. Praise be to God! You are believers in God, assured by the words of God and turning to the Kingdom of God. You have heard the divine call. Your hearts are moved by the breezes of the paradise of Abhá. You have good intentions; your purpose is the good pleasure of God; you desire to serve in the Kingdom of the Merciful One. Therefore, arise in the utmost power. Be in perfect unity. Never become angry with one another. Let your eyes be directed toward the kingdom of truth and not toward the world of creation. Love the creatures for the sake of God and not for themselves. You will never become angry or impatient if you love them for the sake of God. Humanity is not perfect. There are imperfections in every human being, and you will always become unhappy if you look toward the people themselves. But if you look toward God, you will love them and be kind to them, for the world of God is the world of perfection and complete mercy. Therefore, do not look at the shortcomings of anybody; see with the sight of forgiveness. The

imperfect eye beholds imperfections. The eye that covers faults looks toward the Creator of souls. He created them, trains and provides for them, endows them with capacity and life, sight and hearing; therefore, they are the signs of His grandeur. You must love and be kind to everybody, care for the poor, protect the weak, heal the sick, teach and educate the ignorant.

It is my hope that the unity and harmony of the friends in Chicago may be the cause of the unity of the friends throughout America and that all people may become recipients of their love and kindness. May they be an example for mankind. Then the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abhá and the bestowals of the Sun of Reality will be all-encircling.

5 May 1912
Talk at Plymouth Congregational Church
935 East Fiftieth Street
Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Marzieh Moss

I offer thanks to God for the privilege of being present in an assemblage which is commemorating Him, whose members have no thought or intention save His good pleasure and the unbiased investigation of reality. I praise God for this meeting of human souls free from the bondage of imitations and prejudice, willing to examine reasonably and accept that which is found to be true.

In our solar system the center of illumination is the sun itself. Through the will of God this central luminary is the one source of the existence and development of all phenomenal things. When we observe the organisms of the material kingdoms, we find that their growth and training are dependent upon the heat and light of the sun. Without this quickening impulse there would be no growth of tree or vegetation; neither would the existence of animal or human being be possible; in fact, no forms of created life would be manifest upon the earth. But if we reflect deeply, we will perceive that the great bestower and giver of life is God; the sun is the intermediary of His will and plan. Without the bounty of the sun, therefore, the world would be in darkness. All illumination of our planetary system proceeds or emanates from the solar center.

Likewise, in the spiritual realm of intelligence and idealism there must be a center of illumination, and that center is the everlasting, ever-shining Sun, the Word of God. Its lights are the lights of reality which have shone upon humanity, illumining the realm of thought and morals, conferring the bounties of the divine world upon man. These lights are the cause of the education of souls and the source of the enlightenment of hearts, sending forth in effulgent radiance the message of the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. In brief, the moral and ethical world and the world of spiritual regeneration are dependent for their progressive being upon that heavenly Center of illumination. It gives forth the light of religion and bestows the life of the spirit, imbues humanity with archetypal virtues and confers eternal splendors. This Sun of Reality, this Center of effulgences, is the Prophet or Manifestation of God. Just as the phenomenal sun shines upon the material world producing life and growth, likewise, the spiritual or prophetic Sun confers illumination upon the human world of thought and intelligence, and unless it rose upon the horizon of human existence, the kingdom of man would become dark and extinguished.

The Sun of Reality is one Sun, but it has different dawning places, just as the phenomenal sun is one although it appears at various points of the horizon. During the time of summer the luminary of the physical world rises far to the north of the equinoctial, in spring and fall it dawns midway, and in winter it appears in the most southerly point of its zodiacal journey. These daysprings or dawning points differ widely, but the sun is ever the same sun—whether it be the phenomenal or spiritual luminary. Souls who focus their vision upon the Sun of Reality will be the recipients of light no matter from what point it rises, but those who are fettered by adoration of the dawning point are deprived when it appears in a different station upon the spiritual horizon.

Furthermore, just as the solar cycle has its four seasons, the cycle of the Sun of Reality has its distinct and successive periods. Each brings its vernal season or springtime. When the Sun of Reality returns to quicken the world of mankind, a divine bounty descends from the heaven of generosity. The realm of thoughts and ideals is set in motion and blessed with new life. Minds are developed,

hopes brighten, aspirations become spiritual, the virtues of the human world appear with freshened power of growth, and the image and likeness of God become visible in man. It is the springtime of the inner world. After the spring, summer comes with its fullness and spiritual fruitage; autumn follows with its withering winds which chill the soul; the Sun seems to be going away, until at last the mantle of winter overspreads, and only faint traces of the effulgence of that divine Sun remain. Just as the surface of the material world becomes dark and dreary, the soil dormant, the trees naked and bare and no beauty or freshness remains to cheer the darkness and desolation, so the winter of the spiritual cycle witnesses the death and disappearance of divine growth and extinction of the light and love of God. But again the cycle begins and a new springtime appears. In it the former springtime has returned; the world is resuscitated, illumined and attains spirituality; religion is renewed and reorganized, hearts are turned to God, the summons of God is heard, and life is again bestowed upon man. For a long time the religious world had been weakened and materialism had advanced; the spiritual forces of life were waning, moralities were becoming degraded, composure and peace had vanished from souls, and satanic qualities were dominating hearts; strife and hatred overshadowed humanity, bloodshed and violence prevailed. God was neglected; the Sun of Reality seemed to have gone completely; deprivation of the bounties of heaven was a fact; and so the season of winter fell upon mankind. But in the generosity of God a new springtime dawned, the lights of God shone forth, the effulgent Sun of Reality returned and became manifest, the realm of thoughts and kingdom of hearts became exhilarated, a new spirit of life breathed into the body of the world, and continuous advancement became apparent.

I hope that the lights of the Sun of Reality will illumine the whole world so that no strife and warfare, no battles and bloodshed remain. May fanaticism and religious bigotry be unknown, all humanity enter the bond of brotherhood, souls consort in perfect agreement, the nations of earth at last hoist the banner of truth, and the religions of the world enter the divine temple of oneness, for the foundations of the heavenly religions are one reality. Reality is not divisible; it does not admit multiplicity. All the holy Manifestations of God have proclaimed and promulgated the same reality. They have summoned mankind to reality itself, and reality is one. The clouds and mists of imitations have obscured the Sun of Truth. We must forsake these imitations, dispel these clouds and mists and free the Sun from the darkness of superstition. Then will the Sun of Truth shine most gloriously; then all the inhabitants of the world will be united, the religions will be one, sects and denominations will reconcile, all nationalities will flow together in the recognition of one Fatherhood, and all degrees of humankind will gather in the shelter of the same tabernacle, under the same banner.

Until the heavenly civilization is founded, no result will be forthcoming from material civilization, even as you observe. See what catastrophes overwhelm mankind. Consider the wars which disturb the world. Consider the enmity and hatred. The existence of these wars and conditions indicates and proves that the heavenly civilization has not yet been established. If the civilization of the Kingdom be spread to all the nations, this dust of disagreement will be dispelled, these clouds will pass away, and the Sun of Reality in its greatest effulgence and glory will shine upon mankind.

O God! O Thou Who givest! This congregation is turning to Thee, casting their glances toward Thy Kingdom and favor, longing to behold the lights of Thy face. O God! Bless this nation. Confirm this government. Reveal Thy glory unto this people and confer upon them life eternal. O God! Illumine the faces, render the hearts radiant, exhilarate the breasts, crown the heads with the diadem of Thy providence, cause them to soar in Thy pure atmosphere so they may reach the highest pinnacles of Thy splendor. Assist them in order that this world may ever find the light and effulgence of Thy presence. O God! Shelter this congregation and admonish this nation. Render them progressive in all degrees. May they become leaders in the world of humanity. May they be Thine examples among humankind. May they be manifestations of Thy grace. May they be filled with the inspiration of Thy Word. Thou art the Powerful. Thou art the Mighty. Thou art the Giver, and Thou art the Omniscient.

5 May 1912
Talk at All-Souls Church
Lincoln Center, Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Marzieh Moss

The divine religions were founded for the purpose of unifying humanity and establishing universal peace. Any movement which brings about peace and agreement in human society is truly a divine movement; any reform which causes people to come together under the shelter of the same tabernacle is surely animated by heavenly motives. At all times and in all ages of the world, religion has been a factor in cementing together the hearts of men and in uniting various and divergent creeds. It is the peace element in religion that blends mankind and makes for unity. Warfare has ever been the cause of separation, disunion and discord.

Consider how Jesus Christ united the divergent peoples, sects and denominations of the early days. It is evident that the fundamentals of religion are intended to unify and bind together; their purpose is universal, everlasting peace. Prior to the time of Jesus Christ the Word of God had unified opposite types and conflicting elements of human society; and since His appearance the divine Teachers of the primal principles of the law of God have all intended this universal outcome. In Persia Bahá'u'lláh was able to unite people of varying thought, creed and denomination. The inhabitants of that country were Christians, Muslims, Jews, Zoroastrians and a great variety of subdivided forms and beliefs together with racial distinctions such as Semitic, Arabic, Persian, Turk, etc.; but through the power and efficacy of religion Bahá'u'lláh united these differing peoples and caused them to consort together in perfect agreement. Such unity and accord became manifest among them that they were considered as one people and one kind.

The cause of this fellowship and unity lies in the fact that the divine law has two distinct aspects or functions: one the essential or fundamental, the other the material or accidental. The first aspect of the revealed religion of God is that which concerns the ethical development and spiritual progress of mankind, the awakening of potential human susceptibilities and the descent of divine bestowals. These ordinances are changeless, essential, eternal. The second function of the divine religion deals with material conditions, the laws of human intercourse and social regulation. These are subject to change and transformation in accordance with the time, place and conditions. The essential ordinances of religion were the same during the time of Abraham, the day of Moses and the cycle of Jesus, but the accidental or material laws were abrogated and superseded according to the exigency and requirement of each succeeding age. For example, in the law of Moses there were ten distinct commandments in regard to murder, which were revealed according to the requirement and capacity of the people, but in the day of Jesus these were abrogated and superseded in conformity with the changed and advanced human conditions.

The central purpose of the divine religions is the establishment of peace and unity among mankind. Their reality is one; therefore, their accomplishment is one and universal—whether it be through the essential or material ordinances of God. There is but one light of the material sun, one ocean, one rain, one atmosphere. Similarly, in the spiritual world there is one divine reality forming the center and altruistic basis for peace and reconciliation among various and conflicting nations and peoples. Consider how the Roman Empire and Greek nation were at war in enmity and hatred after the Messianic day, how the hostilities of Egypt and Assyria, though subdued in intensity, still flamed in the warring element of these ancient and declining nations. But the teachings of Jesus Christ proved to be the cement by which they were united; warfare ceased, strife and hatred passed away, and these

belligerent peoples associated in love and friendship. For strife and warfare are the very destroyers of human foundations, whereas peace and amity are the builders and safeguards of human welfare. As an instance, two nations which have remained at peace for centuries declare war against each other. What destruction and loss befalls both in one year of strife and conflict—the undoing of centuries. How urgent their necessity and demand for peace, with its comfort and progress, instead of war, which blasts and destroys the foundation of all human attainment.

The body politic may be likened to the human organism. As long as the various members and parts of that organism are coordinated and cooperating in harmony, we have as a result the expression of life in its fullest degree. When these members lack coordination and harmony, we have the reverse, which in the human organism is disease, dissolution, death. Similarly, in the body politic of humanity dissension, discord and warfare are always destructive and inevitably fatal. All created beings are dependent upon peace and coordination, for every contingent and phenomenal being is a composition of distinct elements. As long as there is affinity and cohesion among these constituent elements, strength and life are manifest; but when dissension and repulsion arise among them, disintegration follows. This is proof that peace and amity, which God has willed for His children, are the saving factors of human society, whereas war and strife, which violate His ordinances, are the cause of death and destruction. Therefore, God has sent His Prophets to announce the message of goodwill, peace and life to the world of mankind.

Inasmuch as the essential reality of the religions is one and their seeming variance and plurality is adherence to forms and imitations which have arisen, it is evident that these causes of difference and divergence must be abandoned in order that the underlying reality may unite mankind in its enlightenment and upbuilding. All who hold fast to the one reality will be in agreement and unity. Then shall the religions summon people to the oneness of the world of humanity and to universal justice; then will they proclaim equality of rights and exhort men to virtue and to faith in the loving mercy of God. The underlying foundation of the religions is one; there is no intrinsic difference between them. Therefore, if the essential and fundamental ordinances of the religions be observed, peace and unity will dawn, and all the differences of sects and denominations will disappear.

And now let us consider the various peoples of the world. All the nations—American, British, French, German, Turkish, Persian, Arab—are children of the same Adam, members of the same human household. Why should dissension exist among them? The surface of the earth is one native land, and that native land was provided for all. God has not set these boundaries and race limitations. Why should imaginary barriers which God has not originally destined be made a cause of contention? God has created and provided for all. He is the Preserver of all, and all are submerged in the ocean of His mercy. Not a single soul is deprived. Inasmuch as we have such a loving God and Creator, why should we be at war with each other? Now that His light is shining universally, why should we cast ourselves into darkness? As His table is spread for all His children, why should we deprive each other of its sustenance? As His effulgence is shining upon all, why should we seek to live among the shadows? There is no doubt that the only cause is ignorance and that the result is perdition. Discord deprives humanity of the eternal favors of God; therefore, we must forget all imaginary causes of difference and seek the very fundamentals of the divine religions in order that we may associate in perfect love and accord and consider humankind as one family, the surface of the earth as one nationality and all races as one humanity. Let us live under the protection of God, attaining eternal happiness in this world and everlasting life in the world to come.

O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.

O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, conferrest life upon all. Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.

O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind.

O God! Establish the Most Great Peace.

Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together.

O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind.

TALKS 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ DELIVERED IN CLEVELAND

**6 May 1912
Talk at Euclid Hall
Cleveland, Ohio**

From Stenographic Notes

This is a very joyous evening, an evidence in itself of the possibility of uniting the East and the West—an eastern man appearing before an assemblage of reverent western people. The East and West, the Orient and Occident, shall be united. If we search history, we shall not find the record of such an occasion where one has traveled from the far East to the far West to address a meeting of this universal character. This is a miracle of the twentieth century which proves that the seemingly impossible may become real and possible in the kingdom of man. Praise be to God! The dark ages have disappeared, and the age of light has at last arrived. The Sun of Reality has dawned with supreme effulgence, the realities of things have become manifest and renewed, the mysteries of the unknown have been revealed, and great inventions and discoveries mark this period as a most wonderful age.

Through the ingenuity and inventions of man it is possible to cross the wide oceans, fly through the air and travel in submarine depths. At any moment the Orient and Occident can communicate with each other. Trains speed across the continents. The human voice has been arrested and reproduced, and now man can speak at long distances from any point. These are some of the signs of this glorious century. The great progress mentioned has taken place in the material world. Remarkable signs and evidences have become manifest. Hidden realities and mysteries have been disclosed. This is the time for man to strive and put forth his greatest efforts in spiritual directions. Material civilization has reached an advanced plane, but now there is need of spiritual civilization. Material civilization alone will not satisfy; it cannot meet the conditions and requirements of the present age; its benefits are limited to the world of matter. There is no limitation to the spirit of man, for spirit in itself is progressive, and if the divine civilization be established, the spirit of man will advance. Every developed susceptibility will increase the effectiveness of man. Discoveries of the real will become more and more possible, and the influence of divine guidance will be increasingly recognized. All this is conducive to the divine form of civilization. This is what is meant in the Bible by the descent of the New Jerusalem. The heavenly Jerusalem is none other than divine civilization, and it is now ready. It is to be and shall be organized, and the oneness of humankind will be a visible fact. Humanity will then be brought together as one. The various religions will be united, and different races will be known as one kind. The Orient and Occident will be conjoined, and the banner of international peace will be unfurled. The world shall at last find peace, and the equalities and rights of men shall be established. The capacity of humankind will be tested, and a degree shall be attained where equality is a reality.

All the peoples of the world will enjoy like interests, and the poor shall possess a portion of the comforts of life. Just as the rich are surrounded by their luxuries in palaces, the poor will have at least their comfortable and pleasant places of abode; and just as the wealthy enjoy a variety of food, the needy shall have their necessities and no longer live in poverty. In short, a readjustment of the economic order will come about, the divine Sonship will attract, the Sun of Reality will shine forth, and all phenomenal being will attain a portion.

Consider: What is this material civilization of the day giving forth? Has it not produced the instruments of warfare and destruction? In olden times the weapon of war was the sword; today it is the smokeless gun. Warships a century ago were sailing vessels; now we have dreadnoughts. Instruments and means of human destruction have enormously multiplied in this era of material civilization. But if material civilization shall become organized in conjunction with divine civilization, if the man of moral integrity and intellectual acumen shall unite for human betterment and uplift with the man of spiritual capacity, the happiness and progress of the human race will be assured. All the nations of the world will then be closely related and companionable, and the religions will merge into one, for the divine reality within them all is one reality. Abraham proclaimed this reality; Jesus promulgated it; all the Prophets who have appeared in the world have founded Their teachings upon it. Therefore, the people of the world have this one true, unchangeable basis for peace and agreement, and war, which has raged for thousands of years, will pass away.

For centuries and cycles humanity has been engaged in war and conflict. At one time the pretext for war has been religion, at another time patriotism, racial prejudice, national politics, territorial conquest or commercial expansion; in brief, humanity has never been at peace during the period of known history. What blood has been shed! How many fathers have mourned the loss of sons; how many sons have wept for fathers, and mothers for dear ones! Human beings have been the food and targets of the battlefield, and everywhere warfare and strife have been the theme and burden of history. Ferocity has characterized men even more than animals. The lion, tiger, bear and wolf are ferocious because of their needs. Unless they are fierce, cruel and unrelenting, they will die of starvation. The lion cannot graze; its teeth are fitted only for food of flesh. This is also true of other wild animals. Ferocity is natural to them as their means of subsistence; but human ferocity proceeds from selfishness, greed and oppression. It springs from no natural necessity. Man needlessly kills a thousand fellow creatures, becomes a hero and is glorified through centuries of posterity. A great city is destroyed in one day by a commanding general. How ignorant, how inconsistent is humankind! If a man slays another man, we brand him as a murderer and criminal and sentence him to capital punishment, but if he kills one hundred thousand men, he is a military genius, a great celebrity, a Napoleon idolized by his nation. If a man steals one dollar, he is called a thief and put into prison; if he rapes and pillages an innocent country by military invasion, he is crowned a hero. How ignorant is humankind! Ferocity does not belong to the kingdom of man. It is the province of man to confer life, not death. It behooves him to be the cause of human welfare, but inasmuch as he glories in the savagery of animalism, it is an evidence that divine civilization has not been established in human society. Material civilization has advanced unmistakably, but because it is not associated with divine civilization, evil and wickedness abound. In ancient times if two nations were at war twelve months, not over twenty thousand men would be killed; now the instruments of death have become so multiplied and perfected that one hundred thousand can be destroyed in a day. In three months during the Russo-Japanese War one million perished. This was undreamed of in former cycles. The cause is the absence of divine civilization.

This revered American nation presents evidences of greatness and worth. It is my hope that this just government will stand for peace so that warfare may be abolished throughout the world and the standards of national unity and reconciliation be upraised. This is the greatest attainment of the world of humanity. This American nation is equipped and empowered to accomplish that which will adorn the pages of history, to become the envy of the world and be blest in the East and the West for the triumph of its democracy. I pray that this may come to pass, and I ask the blessing of God in behalf of you all.

6 May 1912
Talk at Sanatorium of Dr. C. M. Swingle
Cleveland, Ohio

Notes by Sigel T. Brooks

This is a beautiful city; the climate is pleasant; the views are charming. All the cities of America seem to be large and beautiful, and the people appear prosperous. The American continent gives signs and evidences of very great advancement; its future is even more promising, for its influence and illumination are far-reaching, and it will lead all nations spiritually. The flag of freedom and banner of liberty have been unfurled here, but the prosperity and advancement of a city, the happiness and greatness of a country depend upon its hearing and obeying the call of God. The light of reality must shine therein and divine civilization be founded; then the radiance of the Kingdom will be diffused and heavenly influences surround. Material civilization is likened to the body, whereas divine civilization is the spirit in that body. A body not manifesting the spirit is dead; a fruitless tree is worthless. Jesus declares that there is spiritual capacity in some people, for all are not submerged in the sea of materialism. They seek the Divine Spirit; they turn to God; they long for the Kingdom. It is my hope that these revered people present may attain both material and spiritual progress. As they have advanced wonderfully in material degrees, so may they, likewise, advance in spiritual development until the body shall become refined and beautiful through the wealth of spiritual potentiality and efficiency.

Praise be to God! The Sun of Reality has dawned, and its effulgences are shining from all horizons. The signs of God are resplendent, and the teachings of the heavenly Messengers are being spread. May the hearts be directed to the Kingdom of God and become illuminated by witnessing the lights of God in order that all created beings may obtain a portion of the divine bestowals. May the spirit of life be restored through the divine graces of the Almighty, and may the East and West be bound together. May oneness and harmony become manifest in all regions. May the people of the world become as one family and obtain the everlasting bounty. May the doors of the Kingdom be opened from all directions and the praise of the name Abhá be heard throughout the earth.

TALK 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ DELIVERED IN PITTSBURGH

7 May 1912

**Talk at Hotel Schenley
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

Notes by Suzanne Beatty

I have come from the Orient to visit your country. Surely this continent is praiseworthy from all points of view, and there are signs of prosperity everywhere. The people show refinement, and evidences of progressive civilization abound. I will give you a brief exposition of the fundamental principles of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings in order that you may be informed of the nature and significance of the Bahá'í movement.

About sixty years ago the greatest enmity and strife existed among the various peoples and religious denominations of Persia. Throughout the world generally war and dissension prevailed. At this time Bahá'u'lláh appeared in Persia and began devoting Himself to the uplift and education of the people. He united divergent sects and creeds, removed religious, racial, patriotic and political prejudices and established a strong bond of unity and reconciliation among varying degrees and classes of mankind. The enmity then existing among the people was so bitter and intense that even ordinary association was out of the question. They would not meet and consult with each other at all. Through the power of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the most wonderful results were witnessed. He removed the prejudices and hatred from human hearts and wrought such transformation in their attitudes toward each other that today in Persia there is perfect accord among hitherto bigoted religionists, varying sects and divergent classes. This was not an easy accomplishment, for Bahá'u'lláh underwent severe trials, great difficulties and violent persecution. He was imprisoned, tortures were inflicted upon Him, and finally He was banished from His native land. He bore every ordeal and infliction cheerfully. In His successive exiles from country to country up to the time of His ascension from this world, He was enabled to promulgate His teachings, even from prison. Wherever His oppressors sent Him, He hoisted the standard of the oneness of the world of humanity and promulgated the principles of the unity of mankind. Some of these principles are as follows. First, it is incumbent upon all mankind to investigate truth. If such investigation be made, all should agree and be united, for truth or reality is not multiple; it is not divisible. The different religions have one truth underlying them; therefore, their reality is one.

Each of the divine religions embodies two kinds of ordinances. The first is those which concern spiritual susceptibilities, the development of moral principles and the quickening of the conscience of man. These are essential or fundamental, one and the same in all religions, changeless and eternal—reality not subject to transformation. Abraham heralded this reality, Moses promulgated it, and Jesus Christ established it in the world of mankind. All the divine Prophets and Messengers were the instruments and channels of this same eternal, essential truth.

The second kind of ordinances in the divine religions is those which relate to the material affairs of humankind. These are the material or accidental laws which are subject to change in each day of manifestation, according to exigencies of the time, conditions and differing capacities of humanity. For instance, in the day of Moses ten commandments in regard to murder were revealed by Him. These commandments were in accordance with the requirements of that day and time. Other laws

embodying drastic punishments were enacted by Moses—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The penalty for theft was amputation of the hand. These laws and penalties were applicable to the degree of the Israelitish people of that period, who dwelt in the wilderness and desert under conditions where severity was necessary and justifiable. But in the time of Jesus Christ this kind of law was not expedient; therefore, Christ abrogated and superseded the commands of Moses.

In brief, every one of the divine religions contains essential ordinances, which are not subject to change, and material ordinances, which are abrogated according to the exigencies of time. But the people of the world have forsaken the divine teachings and followed forms and imitations of the truth. Inasmuch as these human interpretations and superstitions differ, dissensions and bigotry have arisen, and strife and warfare have prevailed. By investigating the truth or foundation of reality underlying their own and other beliefs, all would be united and agreed, for this reality is one; it is not multiple and not divisible.

The second principle or teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the proclamation of the oneness of the world of humanity—that all are servants of God and belong to one family; that God has created all and, therefore, His bestowals are universal; and that His providence, training, sustenance and loving-kindness surround all mankind.

This is the divine policy, and it is impossible for man to lay the foundation of a better plan and policy than that which God has instituted. Therefore, we must recognize and assist the purpose of the glorious Lord. Inasmuch as God is kind and loving to all, why should we be unkind? As this human world is one household, why should its members be occupied with animosity and contention? Therefore, humanity must be looked upon with the eye of equal estimate and in the same attitude of love. The noblest of men is he who serves humankind, and he is nearest the threshold of God who is the least of His servants. The glory and majesty of man are dependent upon his servitude to his fellow creatures and not upon the exercise of hostility and hatred.

The third principle or teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the oneness of religion and science. Any religious belief which is not conformable with scientific proof and investigation is superstition, for true science is reason and reality, and religion is essentially reality and pure reason; therefore, the two must correspond. Religious teaching which is at variance with science and reason is human invention and imagination unworthy of acceptance, for the antithesis and opposite of knowledge is superstition born of the ignorance of man. If we say religion is opposed to science, we lack knowledge of either true science or true religion, for both are founded upon the premises and conclusions of reason, and both must bear its test.

The fourth principle or teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the readjustment and equalization of the economic standards of mankind. This deals with the question of human livelihood. It is evident that under present systems and conditions of government the poor are subject to the greatest need and distress while others more fortunate live in luxury and plenty far beyond their actual necessities. This inequality of portion and privilege is one of the deep and vital problems of human society. That there is need of an equalization and apportionment by which all may possess the comforts and privileges of life is evident. The remedy must be legislative readjustment of conditions. The rich too must be merciful to the poor, contributing from willing hearts to their needs without being forced or compelled to do so. The composure of the world will be assured by the establishment of this principle in the religious life of mankind.

The fifth principle or teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the abandoning of religious, racial, patriotic and political prejudices, which destroy the foundations of human society. All mankind are creatures and servants of the one God. The surface of the earth is one home; humanity is one family and household. Distinctions and boundaries are artificial, human. Why should there be discord and strife among men? All must become united and coordinated in service to the world of humanity.

The sixth principle or teaching of Bahá'u'lláh concerns the equality of man and woman. He has declared that in the estimation of God there is no distinction of sex. The one whose heart is most

pure, whose deeds and service in the Cause of God are greater and nobler, is most acceptable before the divine threshold—whether male or female. In the vegetable and animal kingdoms sex exists in perfect equality and without distinction or invidious estimate. The animal, although inferior to man in intelligence and reason, recognizes sex equality. Why should man, who is endowed with the sense of justice and sensibilities of conscience, be willing that one of the members of the human family should be rated and considered as subordinate? Such differentiation is neither intelligent nor conscientious; therefore, the principle of religion has been revealed by Bahá'u'lláh that woman must be given the privilege of equal education with man and full right to his prerogatives. That is to say, there must be no difference in the education of male and female in order that womankind may develop equal capacity and importance with man in the social and economic equation. Then the world will attain unity and harmony. In past ages humanity has been defective and inefficient because it has been incomplete. War and its ravages have blighted the world; the education of woman will be a mighty step toward its abolition and ending, for she will use her whole influence against war. Woman rears the child and educates the youth to maturity. She will refuse to give her sons for sacrifice upon the field of battle. In truth, she will be the greatest factor in establishing universal peace and international arbitration. Assuredly, woman will abolish warfare among mankind. Inasmuch as human society consists of two parts, the male and female, each the complement of the other, the happiness and stability of humanity cannot be assured unless both are perfected. Therefore, the standard and status of man and woman must become equalized.

Among other teachings and principles Bahá'u'lláh counsels the education of all members of society. No individual should be denied or deprived of intellectual training, although each should receive according to capacity. None must be left in the grades of ignorance, for ignorance is a defect in the human world. All mankind must be given a knowledge of science and philosophy—that is, as much as may be deemed necessary. All cannot be scientists and philosophers, but each should be educated according to his needs and deserts.

Bahá'u'lláh teaches that the world of humanity is in need of the breath of the Holy Spirit, for in spiritual quickening and enlightenment true oneness is attained with God and man. The Most Great Peace cannot be assured through racial force and effort; it cannot be established by patriotic devotion and sacrifice; for nations differ widely and local patriotism has limitations. Furthermore, it is evident that political power and diplomatic ability are not conducive to universal agreement, for the interests of governments are varied and selfish; nor will international harmony and reconciliation be an outcome of human opinions concentrated upon it, for opinions are faulty and intrinsically diverse. Universal peace is an impossibility through human and material agencies; it must be through spiritual power. There is need of a universal impelling force which will establish the oneness of humanity and destroy the foundations of war and strife. None other than the divine power can do this; therefore, it will be accomplished through the breath of the Holy Spirit.

No matter how far the material world advances, it cannot establish the happiness of mankind. Only when material and spiritual civilization are linked and coordinated will happiness be assured. Then material civilization will not contribute its energies to the forces of evil in destroying the oneness of humanity, for in material civilization good and evil advance together and maintain the same pace. For example, consider the material progress of man in the last decade. Schools and colleges, hospitals, philanthropic institutions, scientific academies and temples of philosophy have been founded, but hand in hand with these evidences of development, the invention and production of means and weapons for human destruction have correspondingly increased. In early days the weapon of war was the sword; now it is the magazine rifle. Among the ancients, men fought with javelins and daggers; now they employ shells and bombs. Dreadnoughts are built, torpedoes invented, and every few days new ammunition is forthcoming.

All this is the outcome of material civilization; therefore, although material advancement furthers good purposes in life, at the same time it serves evil ends. The divine civilization is good

because it cultivates morals. Consider what the Prophets of God have contributed to human morality. Jesus Christ summoned all to the Most Great Peace through the acquisition of pure morals. If the moral precepts and foundations of divine civilization become united with the material advancement of man, there is no doubt that the happiness of the human world will be attained and that from every direction the glad tidings of peace upon earth will be announced. Then humankind will achieve extraordinary progress, the sphere of human intelligence will be immeasurably enlarged, wonderful inventions will appear, and the spirit of God will reveal itself; all men will consort in joy and fragrance, and eternal life will be conferred upon the children of the Kingdom. Then will the power of the divine make itself effective and the breath of the Holy Spirit penetrate the essence of all things. Therefore, the material and the divine, or merciful, civilizations must progress together until the highest aspirations and desires of humanity shall become realized.

These are a few of the teachings and principles of Bahá'u'lláh, briefly presented so that you may be informed of their significance and purpose and find them a stimulus to your knowledge and actions. I ask God to assist this prosperous and progressive nation and to bestow His blessings upon this just government and wonderful continent of the West.

TALKS 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ DELIVERED IN NEW YORK, MONTCLAIR, AND JERSEY CITY

11 May 1912

Talk at 227 Riverside Drive, New York

Notes by John G. Grundy

It is only three weeks that we have been away from the New York friends, yet so great has been the longing to see you that it seems like three months. We have had no rest by day or night since we left you—either traveling, moving about or speaking—yet it was all so pleasantly done, and we have been most happy. Praise be to God! Everywhere and all the time it has been harakat, harakat, harakat (“motion, motion, motion”).

The friends in America are very good. All the people we have met here are kind and pleasant. They are polite and not antagonistic, although somewhat inquisitive. A small minority of them seem prejudiced, yet even these have their good points. The American people have a real love for advancement. They are not content to stand still. They are most energetic and progressive. When you see a tree growing and developing, be hopeful of its outcome. It will blossom and bear fruit eventually. If you see dry wood or old trees, there is no hope whatever of fruitage.

The questions asked us have been opportune and to the point. Our answers have not been utilized for controversy and argument. We met savants and learned men and satisfied them with our explanations. Important people expressed their satisfaction and pleasure at our replies to their inquiries. In brief, it would be difficult to find in the aggregate of people we met anyone who was dissatisfied. Some scholastic minds aimed only at fruitless discussion. In Chicago we met two clergymen—delivering an address at the church of one and having dinner with the other. Both manifested great love. Likewise, among all the people we met, not a single soul arose in opposition or went away disappointed.

Yesterday in Washington we met a group of important people. One prominent in political circles came with a justice of the Supreme Court. There were many ladies of the diplomatic circle present. After we had spoken, the politician referred to raised the point that the foundation of all religions from time immemorial had been peace, love and accord—principles conducive to fellowship and unification—yet Jesus, he declared, had been “the cause of discord and strife and not a factor in the realization of unity.” “Therefore,” he said, “I cannot accept your statements and explanations that religion has been the source of human betterment.” After we explained further he said, “What you have stated may cause me to change my views and agree with you.” During this time the justice remained silent. Fearing he might have some feeling of dissatisfaction, we asked if anything presented had been objectionable to his opinion. He replied, “Not at all! Not at all! It’s all right! It’s all right!” This is the characteristic expression of the Occident—“All right! All right!”

There were also present at this meeting several cabinet officers, United States senators, many from the foreign diplomatic service, army and navy officials and other dignitaries. The servant of God, our hostess, experienced much trouble in preparation and entertainment but was always active and energetic in service, inviting important and influential people to the gatherings. We spoke to all from their own standpoints with most satisfactory results; we were working day and night so there was very little time for individual and private interviews.

In Washington, too, we called a meeting of the blacks and whites. The attendance was very large, the blacks predominating. At our second gathering this was reversed, but at the third meeting we were unable to say which color predominated. These meetings were a great practical lesson upon the unity of colors and races in the Bahá'í teaching.

We said in part: The black man must ever be grateful to the white man, for he has manifested great courage and self-sacrifice in behalf of the black race. Four years he fought their cause, enduring severe hardships, sacrificing life, family, treasure, all for his black brother until the great war ended in the proclamation of freedom. By this effort and accomplishment the black race throughout the world was influenced and benefited. Had this not been accomplished, the black man in Africa would still be bound by the chains of slavery. Therefore, his race should everywhere be grateful, for no greater evidence of humanism and courageous devotion could be shown than the white man has displayed. If the blacks of the United States forget this sacrifice, zeal and manhood on the part of the whites, no ingratitude could be greater or more censurable. If they could see the wretched conditions and surroundings of the black people of Africa today, the contrast would be apparent and the fact clearly evident that the black race in America enjoys incomparable advantages. The comfort and civilization under which they live here are due to the white man's effort and sacrifice. Had this sacrifice not been made, they would still be in the bonds and chains of slavery, scarcely lifted out of an aboriginal condition. Therefore, always show forth your gratitude to the white man. Eventually all differences will disappear, and you will completely win his friendship.

God maketh no distinction between the white and the black. If the hearts are pure both are acceptable unto Him. God is no respecter of persons on account of either color or race. All colors are acceptable to Him, be they white, black, or yellow. Inasmuch as all were created in the image of God, we must bring ourselves to realize that all embody divine possibilities. If you go into a garden and find all the flowers alike in form, species and color, the effect is wearisome to the eye. The garden is more beautiful when the flowers are many-colored and different; the variety lends charm and adornment. In a flock of doves some are white, some black, red, blue; yet they make no distinction among themselves. All are doves no matter what the color.

This variety in forms and colorings which is manifest in all the kingdoms is according to creative wisdom and has a divine purpose. Nevertheless, whether the creatures be all alike or all different should not be the cause of strife and quarreling among them. Especially why should man find cause for discord in the color or race of his fellow creature? No educated or illumined mind will allow that this differentiation and discord should exist or that there is any ground for it. Therefore, the whites should be just and kind to the blacks, who in turn should reflect an equal measure of appreciation and gratitude. Then will the world become as one great garden of flowering humanity, variegated and multicolored, rivaling each other only in the virtues and graces which are spiritual.

12 May 1912

Talk at Unity Church

Montclair, New Jersey

Notes by Esther Foster

I wish to speak upon the subject of divine unity, the oneness of God, before this revered assemblage.

It is a self-evident fact that phenomenal existence can never grasp nor comprehend the ancient and essential Reality. Utter weakness cannot understand absolute strength. When we view the world of creation, we discover differences in degree which make it impossible for the lower to comprehend the higher. For example, the mineral kingdom, no matter how much it may advance, can never comprehend the phenomena of the vegetable kingdom. Whatever development the vegetable may attain, it can have no message from nor come in touch with the kingdom of the animal. However perfect may be the growth of a tree, it cannot realize the sensation of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch; these are beyond its limitation. Although it is the possessor of existence in the world of creation, a tree, nevertheless, has no knowledge of the superior degree of the animal kingdom. Likewise, no matter how great the advancement of the animal, it can have no idea of the human plane, no knowledge of intellect and spirit. Difference in degree is an obstacle to this comprehension. A lower degree cannot comprehend a higher although all are in the same world of creation—whether mineral, vegetable or animal. Degree is the barrier and limitation. In the human plane of existence we can say we have knowledge of a vegetable, its qualities and product; but the vegetable has no knowledge or comprehension whatever of us. No matter how near perfection this rose may advance in its own sphere, it can never possess hearing and sight. Inasmuch as in the creational world, which is phenomenal, difference of degree is an obstacle or hindrance to comprehension, how can the human being, which is a created exigency, comprehend the ancient divine Reality, which is essential? This is impossible because the reality of Divinity is sanctified beyond the comprehension of the created being, man.

Furthermore, that which man can grasp is finite to man, and man to it is as infinite. Is it possible then for the reality of Divinity to be finite and the human creature infinite? On the contrary, the reverse is true; the human is finite while the essence of Divinity is infinite. Whatever comes within the sphere of human comprehension must be limited and finite. As the essence of Divinity transcends the comprehension of man, therefore God brings forth certain Manifestations of the divine Reality upon Whom He bestows heavenly effulgences in order that They may be intermediaries between humanity and Himself. These holy Manifestations or Prophets of God are as mirrors which have acquired illumination from the Sun of Truth, but the Sun does not descend from its high zenith and does not effect entrance within the mirror. In truth, this mirror has attained complete polish and purity until the utmost capacity of reflection has been developed in it; therefore, the Sun of Reality with its fullest effulgence and splendor is revealed therein. These mirrors are earthly, whereas the reality of Divinity is in its highest apogee. Although its lights are shining and its heat is manifest in them, although these mirrors are telling their story of its effulgence, the Sun, nevertheless, remains in its own lofty station; it does not descend; it does not effect entrance, because it is holy and sanctified.

The Sun of Divinity and of Reality has revealed itself in various mirrors. Though these mirrors are many, yet the Sun is one. The bestowals of God are one; the reality of the divine religion is one. Consider how one and the same light has reflected itself in the different mirrors or manifestations of it. There are certain souls who are lovers of the Sun; they perceive the effulgence of the Sun from

every mirror. They are not fettered or attached to the mirrors; they are attached to the Sun itself and adore it, no matter from what point it may shine. But those who adore the mirror and are attached to it become deprived of witnessing the light of the Sun when it shines forth from another mirror. For instance, the Sun of Reality revealed itself from the Mosaic mirror. The people who were sincere accepted and believed in it. When the same Sun shone from the Messianic mirror, the Jews who were not lovers of the Sun and who were fettered by their adoration of the mirror of Moses did not perceive the lights and effulgences of the Sun of Reality resplendent in Jesus; therefore, they were deprived of its bestowals. Yet the Sun of Reality, the Word of God, shone from the Messianic mirror through the wonderful channel of Jesus Christ more fully and more wonderfully. Its effulgences were manifestly radiant, but even to this day the Jews are holding to the Mosaic mirror. Therefore, they are bereft of witnessing the lights of eternity in Jesus.

In brief, the sun is one sun, the light is one light which shines upon all phenomenal beings. Every creature has a portion thereof, but the pure mirror can reveal the story of its bounty more fully and completely. Therefore, we must adore the light of the Sun, no matter through what mirror it may be revealed. We must not entertain prejudice, for prejudice is an obstacle to realization. Inasmuch as the effulgence is one effulgence, the human realities must all become recipients of the same light, recognizing in it the compelling force that unites them in its illumination.

As this is the radiant century, it is my hope that the Sun of Truth may illumine all humanity. May the eyes be opened and the ears become attentive; may souls become resuscitated and consort together in the utmost harmony as recipients of the same light. Perchance, God will remove this strife and warfare of thousands of years. May this bloodshed pass away, this tyranny and oppression cease, this warfare be ended. May the light of love shine forth and illumine hearts, and may human lives be cemented and connected until all of us may find agreement and tranquillity beneath the same tabernacle and with the standard of the Most Great Peace above us move steadily onward.

O Thou kind Lord! O Thou Who art generous and merciful! We are the servants of Thy threshold and are gathered beneath the sheltering shadow of Thy divine unity. The sun of Thy mercy is shining upon all, and the clouds of Thy bounty shower upon all. Thy gifts encompass all, Thy loving providence sustains all, Thy protection overshadows all, and the glances of Thy favor are cast upon all. O Lord! Grant Thine infinite bestowals, and let the light of Thy guidance shine. Illumine the eyes, gladden the hearts with abiding joy. Confer a new spirit upon all people and bestow upon them eternal life. Unlock the gates of true understanding and let the light of faith shine resplendent. Gather all people beneath the shadow of Thy bounty and cause them to unite in harmony, so that they may become as the rays of one sun, as the waves of one ocean, and as the fruit of one tree. May they drink from the same fountain. May they be refreshed by the same breeze. May they receive illumination from the same source of light. Thou art the Giver, the Merciful, the Omnipotent.

12 May 1912
Talk at Meeting of International Peace Forum
Grace Methodist Episcopal Church
West 104th Street, New York

Notes by Esther Foster

When we review history from the beginning down to the present day, we find that strife and warfare have prevailed throughout the human world. Wars—religious, racial or political—have arisen from human ignorance, misunderstanding and lack of education. We will first consider religious strife and conflict.

It is evident that the divine Prophets have appeared in the world to establish love and agreement among mankind. They have been the Shepherds and not the wolves. The Shepherd comes forth to gather and lead his flock and not to disperse them by creating strife. Every divine Shepherd has assembled a flock which had formerly been scattered. Among the Shepherds was Moses. At a time when the tribes of Israel were wandering and dispersed, He assembled, united and educated them to higher degrees of capacity and progress until they passed out of the wilderness of discipline into the holy land of possession. He transformed their degradation into glory, changed their poverty into wealth and replaced their vices by virtues until they rose to such a zenith that the splendor of the sovereignty of Solomon was made possible, and the fame of their civilization extended to the East and the West. It is evident, therefore, that Moses was a divine Shepherd, for He gathered the tribes of Israel together and united them in the power and strength of a great nationhood.

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