

The Travels of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and their Impact on the Press

A Survey

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The travels of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the West generated a great interest, not only among His followers but also in public opinion. Hundreds of personalities sought an opportunity to meet the Master in person and tens of thousands attained His presence at any of His many public addresses or read about Him in the press.

As part of an investigation of the first references to the Bábí and Bahá'í religions in the Western press, particular research has been carried out during the last decade on the attention that European and American journals dispensed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to the Bahá'í Faith during the period of His travels throughout the West.

So far, this research has brought to light nearly eleven hundred references made in journals, magazines and bulletins of the time. These documents offer indispensable insights into the impact of the figure of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on public opinion at the time, while comprising an important historical record of this momentous episode in the history of the Bahá'í Faith.¹

It would be impossible, in the span of this article, to offer a complete review of all the references and accounts that have been gathered about 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Nevertheless, a few examples will be offered in the following pages.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to give a word of caution about the statements attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in these accounts. It is impossible, except in a very few cases, to be certain that the words reproduced by the press were the actual ones expressed by the Master. On the one hand, it is impossible to know whether the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were always translated with accuracy and precision; on the other, it is equally impossible to ascertain whether the notes taken by the journalists were a faithful transcription of what they had heard. Therefore, these documents, despite their interest and their coincidence, in many cases, with the general tone of the teachings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of His communications, cannot, under any circumstance, be regarded as authoritative.

The references made in the press about 'Abdu'l-Bahá can be divided in the following categories, ordered from lowest to highest importance in terms of the information they can offer about the travels and their impact on public opinion.

1: General Reports on the Bahá'í Faith

The presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the West generated many reports and articles devoted exclusively to describing and summarizing the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and its history. These articles often included biographical notes about Him and were accompanied by His portrait. This category of references to 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not provide many insights into His travels but is very useful to estimate the volume of information about the Faith that the public received during His travels.

The length of these articles varies from full-page reports to brief texts such as this short article, sent through agencies under the title "Leader of Baháism Here", which offered a very brief description of

the lives of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, beginning with the following comments:

Abbas Effendi, known to his millions of followers as Abdul Baha, the leader of "Baháism," is now on a visit to America.

Never before in recorded history has one of the founders of an Oriental religious movement—since become world-wide—visited America. The personality and life history of one who has spent sixty years of his life in banishment, imprisonment and exile from his native land, makes a story of fascinating interest, vividly impressing upon the mind of the investigator the fact that the days of religious persecution are not ended, and that even in this modern age a drama has been, enacted which for human interest equals or surpasses Biblical history...²

2: Announcements and Advertisements

Some of the talks given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá were previously announced in the press. For instance, many of the talks that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was invited to give in churches were previously announced in the religious sections of local newspapers. At times, when a public meeting with 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been arranged by the Bahá'ís or by other organizations, paid advertisements were also inserted in local journals.

These kinds of references to 'Abdu'l-Bahá are of a very short extension. However, they contain important information such as the precise dates and times of some of His talks, the addresses of the places where He spoke, the title by which some of His talks were announced, the name of the pastor of the church or the chairman of the meeting that introduced the Master, and other details such as the names of others who may have shared the table with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

For instance, on 5 May 1912, the *New York Times* published the following announcement of a talk that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was to deliver a week later to a meeting of the Peace Forum, in which Senator Towne appears as a co-speaker:

METHODIST EPISCOPAL

...

Grace 104th, near Columbus. 11- J. Campbell White speaks.
8- Abdul Baha, Senator C. A. Towne, &c., speak.

3: General Accounts about 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Many were those who had the privilege of meeting the Master. Some of them later wrote vivid descriptions of their impressions about Him and, in some cases, reproduced parts of their conversations with Him. Of course, the accuracy and length of this kind of press references vary greatly.

This category comprises those accounts about the Master that do not focus on a particular event or episode during His travels but offer general descriptions about Him or about His impact on people.

For instance, the following notice published in the *Chicago Defender* about His first visit to Washington and His work for racial unity stands as an outstanding testimony of the extent of the transformation that 'Abdu'l-Bahá exerted on others:

TO BREAK THE COLOR LINE.

Abdul Baha, the Great Persian Philosopher and Teacher,
Aims to Unite the Peoples of All Races and Creeds In One
Great Bond of Brotherhood.

Washington, D. C. May—Abdul Baha (the servant of God), the great Persian philosopher and teacher, head of the Bahaists, will reach Chicago next Monday. He comes to bring hope to the colored people.

His visit to Washington has been a triumphal march. He has met and conquered Southern prejudices. He made addresses at Metropolitan A. M. E. church, at Howard University and at many of the white churches and halls and was listened to by many thousands of people of both races, who applauded his propaganda of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

He was the guest of one of Washington's wealthiest women, one who moves in the most exclusive social circles at the capital, and yet her house has been thrown open to rich and poor and black and white. Southern people whose hearts were once filled with the most bitter prejudices against their brothers in black, have publicly acknowledged their change of heart and now they treat the colored people as brother indeed.³

4: Accounts on Talks and Activities of the Master

Many of the articles published at the time offer us unique stories and accounts about some of the activities of the Master during His travels and particularly about His public addresses.

Newspaper representatives attended many of the public meetings at which 'Abdu'l-Bahá was invited, writing afterwards their chronicles for their journals. These chronicles offer interesting details about some of His talks, such as the number of participants at the meetings,

the reactions of the public, or the remarks made by the chairman to introduce the Master.

In some of the public meetings in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá took part, He shared the table with other lecturers, the names of whom are provided in some journals, along with a summary of their speeches, and sometimes their comments on the Master's words.

The accounts of the talks given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá range from reports of just a few lines summarizing what was said by the Master, to detailed articles quoting at length from His words or paraphrasing the entirety of His talk.

The following account published in the *Washington Bee*, for instance, gives us a vivid description about the reaction of the audience after His talk at Howard University:

ABDUL BAHA

Revolution in Religious Worship.

On Tuesday, April 23d, Abdul Baha, the venerable Persian, leader of the Baha movement, which has several millions of followers throughout the world, and is attracting considerable attention in Washington, addressed the student and faculty of Howard University. The occasion was impressive and most interesting, as in flowing Oriental robes this speaker gave his message. He was received with such fervor that the breathless silence during his address was followed by prolonged applause, causing him to bow his acknowledgments and give a second greeting.⁴

This account of the talk delivered at the Church of the Ascension on 14 April 1912, besides describing the general environment of the

moment, quoted from the words pronounced by Rev. Percy S. Grant in his introduction of the Master and paraphrased some of the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

ABDUL BAHÁ PRAYS IN ASCENSION CHURCH

Leader of Bahai Movement, Speaking in Persian, Pleads for
the Oneness of Humanity.

HIS APPEARANCE STRIKING

Congregation Lingers After Service to See Him, In Oriental
Robes, Enter a Modern Limousine.

In the Church of the Ascension, toward the close of the services, yesterday morning the big congregation knelt in the pews or stood in the aisle spaces with heads reverently bowed, and before the altar Dr. Percy Stickney Grant and his assistant, Mr. Underhill, knelt, while a venerable white-bearded Persian, clothed in his linen gaba and wearing his fez and his patriarch's tabouch, stood and offered up a prayer in his native tongue. This was Abbas Effendi, or, as his followers call him, Abdul Baha Abbas, the Persian philosopher and interpreter of the Bahai revelation, who has come to this country to speak at the Lake Mohonk Peace Conference the latter part of this month and to spread his gospel of the fundamental unity of all religions.

Dr. Grant was not the first clergyman to invite the Persian teacher, but his was the first invitation that Abdul Baha accepted, and there was little room left in Ascension Church when the 11 o'clock services began yesterday. As they progressed the venerable Persian took his place in the high-backed seat to the right of the altar, with Dr. Ameen Fareed, his nephew, standing by, ready to act as interpreter.

“It is to be our privilege this morning,” said Dr. Grant, “to hear one who has come out of the East, a new and great herald of good-will, one bearing a message of love to all mankind. Abdul Baha Abbas is a master of the things of the spirit. He comes from that part of the world where men meditate, where contemplation was born. He teaches the fundamental unity of all religions—a truth in which this congregation believes profoundly—and we welcome here one who may help the material fervor of the Occident to gain a new peace by the infiltration of the harmonies of the Orient.”

Abdul Baha spoke in Persian, with Dr. Fareed interpreting a phrase at a time. Our material civilization, the Persian teacher said, has progressed greatly with the perfection of the crafts and the forward steps of material science, but our spiritual civilization, that which is based on divine morals, has declined and become degraded. We should strive, he said, to make our material civilization the purest possible medium, the most unclouded glass, through which the light of our spiritual civilization must shine.

One of the things that supports a spiritual civilization is peace, he said, and the body politic is in need of universal peace, but the oneness of humanity, the human solidarity, which has been the message of all the prophets, will be achieved only through the spiritual power, for neither racial distinctions nor patriotism can further it. The oneness of humanity will come with the supremacy of the spiritual civilization, and not while, as now, we are submerged in a sea of materialism. The cause is progressing in the Orient, he concluded, and the heavenly civilization is daily making itself more manifest.

These things Abdul Baha said in the few moments that he spoke, before he returned to his seat beside the altar. While the offering was being taken those seated near the front could see him delving amid his robes, and finally his hand emerged with a bill that found its way to the plate. During the prayer he stood with his forearms extended, the palms of his hands turned upward, and as he finished he passed these over his eyes in a gesture that ended with the stroking of the patriarchal beard. A sense of the strangeness of the scene seemed to be with many in the congregation, and not a few lingered afterward to see the Persian philosopher, in his costume of the Orient, as he stepped into a modern Occidental limousine, to be whizzed uptown to his apartment at the Ansonia.⁵

There are also many descriptions of the impression that 'Abdu'l-Bahá left during His public appearances. A journalist who was present at the talk at the Ascension Church stated that "The venerable Oriental made a striking figure against the dark background of the chancel at the Church of the Ascension." A similar statement was made by a reporter present during the address that 'Abdu'l-Bahá delivered at the Church of Our Father in Washington on 21 April 1912: "The venerable Persian, with flowing white beard, his slender form enveloped in a long tail garment reaching to the floor; and his snow-white hair surmounted with a white turban-like head covering, made an impressive picture."⁶ Introducing an article about the participation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at the American Unitarian Conference held in Boston on 22 May 1912, the *Post* commented: "Attired in the flowing robes of his native land, the apostle of the Bahai movement made a great impression on his listeners, many of whom were clergymen from all over the United States and Canada. His remarkable face, long white beard and his expression of thought was in keeping with the universal principles of peace which the new religion stands for."⁷

Particularly important are those articles that give information about talks that were not transcribed by Bahá'ís and were therefore not included in any of the later volumes that compiled some of the talks delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the West. Thus for instance, thanks to an article published in the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* on 23 September 1912, it is possible to conclude that the subjects touched by the Master in His talk at the Temple Shaari Tov were very similar to those expounded days later in the Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco.

It is important to note that sometimes more than one reporter wrote about a talk and thus sometimes different reports of the same event were published afterwards. This circumstance allows in some cases for a more complete and accurate perspective about what was said and what transpired during a certain meeting.

5: Talks of the Master.

In addition to offering accounts about the talks of the Master, some newspapers published complete transcripts of His lectures. For instance, the text of His address at the City Temple in London—the first public talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the West—was soon afterwards published in the *Christian Commonwealth* (London)⁸ and then sent to America where it was published at least in the *Los Angeles Times*,⁹ the *Buffalo Express*¹⁰ and the *American* (Baltimore).¹¹ Another example of this is the talk given at the Emanu-El Temple in San Francisco, the transcript of which was published days later in a special number of the *Palo Alto*¹²—which also included the texts of other talks—and then sent to London where it was published in the *Christian Commonwealth*.¹³

Many other talks delivered in America, England, Scotland and France were published by the press, some of which remain unpublished in Bahá'í literature.

6: Interviews

The interviews granted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to some journals and magazines are also an important repository of information about His travels. It would be very difficult to estimate the total number of interviews that 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave to the press, but it can be stated that He was asked to give interviews in almost every city He visited. In some cases, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would receive a group of journalists in a single meeting, answering all their questions at the same time. Thus, in the ensuing days, different journals would publish accounts of the same meeting and produce enough material to ascertain the reliability and accuracy of the accounts.

Some of those journalists who had the privilege of personally seeing 'Abdu'l-Bahá have left for posterity a broad range of descriptions of His appearance and personality, as well as the impression He left on them.

For instance, a reporter of the *Sun* of New York, who met 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Hotel Ansonia soon after His arrival in the city, described the Master in this way: "Abdul Baha is now nearly 68 years of age, but forty years in a Turkish prison have made him appear of greater age. He is of middle height, but has the appearance of a tall man because of his great carriage. His long gray hair flows over his shoulders. His broad beard and mustache are as gray as his hair. His forehead is broad, full and high and his nose is large and aquiline. Abdul Baha's eyes are blue and large, his glance is penetrating."¹⁴

A similar statement about His stature was made by Kake Carew (Mary Chambers)¹⁵ in an article for the *New York Tribune*: “He is scarcely above medium height, but so extraordinary is the dignity of his majestic carriage that he seemed more than the average stature...”. Carew’s article was very sarcastic, as was her style. Besides a writer, Carew was best known for her caricatures and drawings of the personages she interviewed. As a matter of fact, the sarcastic and acid tone she employed in her articles made them also caricaturesque.

The first portions of her article about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá were a mockery of some of the people she met at the Ansonia, who were waiting to see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. But in describing the moment she saw the Master and her meeting with Him, the tone of the articles changed radically. Her interview with the Master and her visit with Him to the Bowery Mission impressed her so highly that she concluded her article with the following statement: “as I went out into the starlight night I murmured the phrase of an Oriental admirer who had described him as *The Breeze of God*.”¹⁶

Another New York reporter, a representative of the *Times*, described the moment she entered ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence in this manner:

The reception room in his apartment was filled with flowers. There was not long to wait, for Abdul Baha is prompt and business like. In two minutes a young Persian opened a door and asked the reporter to enter.

A rather small man with a white beard and the kindest and gentlest face in the world held out a hand. In his brown habit he was extraordinarily picturesque, but one did not think long of that, for he smiled a charming smile and, walking before and holding his visitor’s hand, he led her to a chair. Then he seated himself in another chair, facing her, and spoke in Persian to the younger man, who interpreted.

And after reproducing some of the comments of the Master, she added:

The words delivered in this fashion, in short epigrams, took one miles and miles away from New York. Outside the window was Broadway; under the building the subway; downstairs was all the paraphernalia of a big hotel, but all these things were far less real than the picture the old teacher called up. The only things that seemed near were the mountains of Carmel, so near the Village of Nazareth, and the fields where the lilies grow more beautiful than Solomon in his glory.

The strangeness of it all, the manner of speaking, the curious language, the unfamiliar dress might well have made the listener awkward and ill at ease; but one does not feel awkward with Abdul Baha. The reporter had wondered just how to address him, but that seemed a foolish matter now. It really made no difference what you did or what you said, this kind old teacher would know that you meant well.¹⁷

A Washington reporter who was present at a reception held at the house of Mrs. Parsons described the Master as follows: "His features are finely cut, and as he talks he peers into the faces of his listeners to see if they comprehend his words. He chuckles to himself frequently, when he makes a good point. His brow is high, and he has every appearance of a deep thinker."¹⁸

A Chicago reporter describing His appearance stated: "His eyes, deep sunken beneath his shaggy eyebrows, flashed the vigor of a man who, despite his seventy years, might be said to have no age."¹⁹

Marion Brunot Haymaker, a columnist for the *Chronicle-Telegraph*, who met 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Pittsburgh stated: "And as you sit and watch him as he speaks, noting his sad, kind eyes, his body, old before

its time, his nervous hands, so full of sympathy, you cannot help but feel the personality of the teacher, and you believe, that truly he does represent hospitality, and truth, and that to be humble, to be reverent, to love all mankind are parts of him.”²⁰

A reporter of the *Evening Standard* (London) also stated: “I was astonished that Abdul Baha Abbas notwithstanding the fact that he has passed the greater portion of his life in a prison, was able to show interest and sympathy about the details of the life of Englishmen. He asked me questions about my own life, and I described to him a journey which I had lately made to Russia. I found myself talking to him as to one who had been a friend always.”²¹

To some of journalists 'Abdu'l-Bahá offered His advice on journalism and the role of the media and its professionals. An article appeared in the Chicago *Daily News* describes in the following way the meeting of a group of journalists with the Master and His comments about the press:

Without the door of the Plaza hotel suite a dish of radishes and celery, sprinkled with water, was discovered. This was part of the breakfast of Abdul Baha, who has in company a Persian cook. On the door was a sign, which read:

“Don't ring the bell. Knock softly.”

One of the delegation knocked softly. Ameen Fareed opened the door and down a long corridor ushered the visitors to the room of “the master.”

“Marhaba!” said a voice from the sunshiny room, speaking the Persian word of welcome.

Abdul Baha looked at each of his visitors intently from under white, bushy eyebrows. His dark skin was interlaced with numberless fine wrinkles. He wore a gray-white beard. His forehead was high and surmounted by a fez turban of fawn and cream color. His rather long hair hung in a single curl over the nape of his neck and to his shoulder blades. He wore a fawn colored robe with a cream sash, striped with a simple delicate pink and blue stripe, over which was a black garment. On his feet were congress galsters.

He motioned his visitors to a seat and sat himself in a rocking chair near the bed. He allowed his glance to roam over the flower decorated room before he spoke through his interpreter...

“A reporter must be a purveyor of truth,” he said in Persian and Ameen Fareed translated. “The newspapers are leaders of the people and the people must be able to rely on what they read...”²²

A representative of the *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia) described a conversation with the Master in which the subject of journalism was touched:

“Abdul Baha asks how many newspapers you have in this city?”

“Nine or ten, I think.” The information was transmitted.

The philosopher nodded and made a comment.

“Abdul Baha says that is very good,” volunteered the interpreter.

And there and then Abdul Baha, who is only a few months free from 40 long years imprisonment for the expression of

his progressive teachings in the fever-racked penal settlement at Akka, in Syria, delivered himself, of a series of maxims for American journals and journalists. They were punctuated by impressive pauses, and this is how interpreter Ahmed Sohrab passed them across from the vernacular:

“Newspapers are the mirrors that reflect the progression or the retrogression of the community.

“We may ascertain the progress or the retrogression of a nation by its journalism.

“If journalists should abide by their duties, they would be the promoters of many virtues, among the community. Truth and the virtues would be fostered. This would be so if they carried out the duties incumbent upon them.

“Journalists must serve truth.

“Newspapers must investigate the means for the progress of humanity, and publish them.

“Journalists must write significant articles, articles that shall foster the public welfare. If they so do they will be the first agents for the development of the community.

“From the days when newspapers were first published they have been the cause of progress; if they abide by their duties great will be the benefit forthcoming.

“Journalists must endeavor to make their organ a trustworthy agent, in order that their articles, may be effective in the hearts of the people and that the readers of these articles may be edified.”²³

To the above mentioned Kate Carew 'Abdu'l-Bahá commented: "Remember, you press people are the servants of the public. You interpret our words and act to them. With you is a great responsibility. Please remember and please treat us seriously."²⁴ And to a *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent in London He said: "Those papers... which strive to speak only that which is truth, which hold the mirror up to truth, are like the sun, they light the world everywhere with truth, and their work is imperishable. Those who play for their own little selfish ends give no true light to the world and perish on their own futility. In carrying out the aims of your paper you are adding to the light. Go on, and let nothing stop you."²⁵

Many times 'Abdu'l-Bahá was asked about His position on woman suffrage and His attitude towards the feminist movement. To a reporter of the New York City News Agency 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

"The modern suffragette is fighting for what must be, and many of these are willing martyrs to imprisonment for their cause. One might not approve of the ways of some of the more militant suffragettes, but in the end it will adjust itself. If women were given the same advantages as men, their capacity being the same, the result would be the same. In fact, women have a superior disposition to men; they are more receptive, more sensitive, and their intuition is more intense. The only reason of their present backwardness in some directions is because they have not had the same educational advantages as men.

"All children should be educated, but if parents cannot educate both the boys and the girls, then it would be better to educate the girls, for they will be the mothers of the coming generation. This is a radical idea for the East, where I come from, but it is already taking effect there, for the Bahai women of Persia are being educated along with the men.

“We have only to look about us in nature,” ‘Abdul-Baha continued, “to see the truth of this. Is it not a fact that the females of many species of animals are stronger and more powerful than the male? The chief cause of the mental and physical inequalities of the sexes is due to custom and training, which for ages past have molded woman into the ideal of the weaker vessel.

“The world in the past has been ruled by force, and man has dominated over woman by reason of his more forceful and aggressive qualities both of body and mind. But the scales are already shifting—force is losing its weight and mental alertness, intuition, and the spiritual qualities of love and service, in which woman is strong, are gaining ascendancy. Hence the new age will be an ageless masculine, and more permeated with the feminine ideals—or, to speak more exactly, will be an age in which the masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more properly balanced.”²⁶

These comments were reproduced afterwards in many journals. To a representative of the *New York Tribune* ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said:

“If a mother is well educated, her children will also be well taught. If the mother is wise, the children will be wise; if the mother is religious, the children will also be religious. If the mother is a good woman, then the children will also be good. The future generation depends then on the mothers of today. Is not this a vital position of responsibility for women?

“Surely, God does not wish such an important instrument as woman to be less perfect than she is able to become! Divine Justice demands that men and women should have equal rights. There is no difference between them; neither sex is superior to the other in the sight of God.”²⁷

In an interview for the *American* (New York), 'Abdu'l-Bahá was again questioned about the same subject:

Do you find men or women the more religious—quicker to accept the truths expounded by you?"

"Those who have intelligence and understanding accept our teachings no matter whether they are men or women. For they are all intellectual and logical principles, and they are for the good of all humanity.

"For instance, we say that the people of the world should love each other, should serve each other; they should become as members of one family; they should throw into the corner of oblivion national, religious, patriotic and commercial prejudices. They must put aside these narrow prejudices. They must become united, men and women; all.

"What do you think of the woman suffrage movement?"

Today women, on account of certain reasons, have not yet attained to the vigor of men. But these differences are only accounted for on lines of education. In reality there is no difference between men and women so far as their rights are concerned. They are all the children of one God. Both of them have capacities for progress.

"When we look upon the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms we see there both sexes. There is no difference between them in the animal and vegetable kingdom. Therefore, when the women are highly educated and cultivated, you will see that there will be no difference whatever in rights between the two sexes.

“Truly, America is facing toward progress. There is no question of this. America is also advancing wonderfully in spiritual and ethical principles.”²⁸

Charlotte Despard, editor of the suffragist magazine *The Vote* (London), speaking about an address by 'Abdu'l-Bahá delivered at a meeting organized on London by the Women's Freedom League on 2 January 1913, stated:

It was a memorable occasion, which will leave its impress on all those who were present. Here we are not so much concerned with what was said then, or at other times, during the visit to London of this strange and beautiful human being who is called by his disciples “the Servant of God,” as with the spirit that, wherever he goes, seems to radiate from him.²⁹

7: Articles and Letters by 'Abdu'l-Bahá

One aspect about the travels of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that is not fully known is the fact that, at the request of editors, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sometimes contributed to a publication with a letter or a tablet.

There are several instances of this in the *Christian Commonwealth* (London) but we can also find “articles” by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the *Independent* (New York), the *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (London), or the *International Psychic Gazette* (London) among others. Some of these texts were published along with photographs of the original Persian text.

Just before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's departure from America, Albert Dawson, the editor of *Christian Commonwealth* (London), requested from Him a contribution to be included in an special issue of the magazine

that contained several communications from religious leaders. The following was printed as a communication from 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Convey my greetings to all your readers. I am extremely pleased and grateful for the attitude of The Christian Commonwealth, for its editor is indeed the servant of the world of humanity and the lover of universal peace. This noble editor is free from prejudice. Praise be to God that in America I established spiritual affinity between the hearts of various religions. It is my hope that through the favours of Baha'ollah contention and strife may be abandoned entirely by the followers of various religions. All of them may be welded together. In the Synagogue of the Jews I established the validity of his holiness Jesus Christ, and demonstrated the prophethood of his holiness Mohammed. The all listened most attentively. In brief, I said that the Christians did believe in Moses. They believe that Moses was the prophet of God. They believe that the Torah is the Book of God, and they all believe in the Prophets of Israel. Why should you not believe in Christ, acknowledging that Christ was the Word of God? What harm will come to you thereby? The result of this confession will be the entire disappearance of the prejudice which has been existing between the Christians and the Jews for the last two thousand years. When this address, delivered in the synagogue, is read, the reader will be most pleased and most enlightened.³⁰

In addition to this, the press also reproduced or quoted from the text of the papers sent by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to international congresses to which He was invited—such as the Universal Races Congress held in London in 1911—or the texts of tablets sent to individuals like, for instance, the two letters sent to the businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.

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The references to 'Abdu'l-Bahá quoted previously are only a token of the type of references to the Master that were published during His travels. More than half of the known references were published in the United States. Many other references were published in Canada, France and the United Kingdom, totalling over three hundred. The references published in Germany and Hungary, although fewer in number, are also very interesting and illustrate other less known episodes of His travels.

However, it was not only the press of the countries blessed by the presence of the Master that echoed His travels. In practically all countries in Europe, from Spain to Russia, news were published about Him. In Latin America, articles were published in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Some journals in Australia and New Zealand reported on His visits to England. Even in Japan and South Africa mention was made of the Master in some publications.

NOTES

- 1 This research has been conducted in various public libraries like the British Library, the Bibliothèque Nationale of France or the Biblioteca Nacional of Spain as well as with documents received from the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library or the National Library of Canada, among others. It has also benefited from documents held in various private or institutional libraries like the Bahá'í Archives of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the United States, France, Canada and Germany and the Bahá'í World Centre International Library, as well as various Esperanto and Theosophical archives located in Spain and the United Kingdom. Different digitization projects and digital archives have also provided with an important number of documents related with this period in Bahá'í history.
- 2 The article was part of a section entitled "In the Limelight" and was published at least in the following journals: *National Democrat* (Des Moines, IA), 2 May 1912; *La Estrella* (Las Cruces, NM), 4 May 1912; *The Palo Alto Tribune* (Palo Alto, CA), 8 May 1912; *Marble Rock Journal* (Marble Rock, IA), 9 May 1912; *Gran Valley Times* (Moab, CO), 10 May 1912; *The Press* (Sheboygan, UT), 15 May 1912; *Cloverdale Reveille* (Cloverdale, CA), 15 June 1912; *The News* (Van Nuys, CA), 5 July 1912; *The Agitator* (Wellsboro, PA), 5 July 1912.
- 3 *The Chicago Defender*, 4 May 1912, p. 5, col. 1.
- 4 *Bee* (Washington, DC), 25 May 1912.
- 5 *The New York Times* (New York, NY), 15 April 1912, p. 9, col. 5.
- 6 *Washington Herald* (Washington, DC), 22 April 1912, Abdul Expounds Bahai Doctrine.'
- 7 *Boston Post* (Boston, MA), 23 May 1912.
- 8 *The Christian Commonwealth*, 13 September 1911, p. 850 (2)
- 9 *Los Angeles Times*, 1 October 1911, p. 21, col. 3, 'Persian Prophet Society Cult.'
- 10 *Buffalo Express*, 8 October 1911, p. 5, col. 4, Abdul Baha the Prophet.'
- 11 *American* (Baltimore, MD), 8 October 1911, p. 16, col. 2, 'London Bows at the Feet of a New Prophet.'
- 12 *Palo Altan* (Palo Alto, CA), 1 November 1912, p. 3, col. 1, 'Message to the Jews.'

- 13 *The Christian Commonwealth*, 1 January 1913, pp. 263–264, col. 2, 'The Fundamental Unity of All Religions.'
- 14 *The Sun* (New York, NY), 12 April 1912, p. 5, col. 1, 'Disciples Hail Abdul Baha.' The article included a portrait of the Master in Paris.
- 15 Mary Chambers (1869–1960) is known for being one of the first female caricaturists in America. Her permanent section in the *New York World* and later in the *Tribune* and other newspapers became famous for her interviews with the personalities of the time. She used an incisive and sarcastic language and her texts were decorated with her drawings and caricatures of the personages interviewed.
- 16 *New York Tribune*, 5 May 1912, 1b.
- 17 *New York Times*, 21 April 1912, p. 14, "A Message from Abdul Baha, Head of the Bahais."
- 18 *Amerika Esperantisto* (Washington, DC), June 1912 (11:5), 'A Message from Abdul Baha,' pp. 19–20. The text was published years later in *Star of the West*, 7 February 1921 (11:18), p. 304, and later published in *Promulgation of Universal Peace*.
- 19 *The Chicago Examiner* (Chicago, IL), 1 May 1912.
- 20 *The Chronicle-Telegraph* (Pittsburgh, PA), 8 May 1912.
- 21 *The Evening Standard and St. James Gazette* (London, England), 8 September 1911.
- 22 *Daily News* (Chicago), 30 April 1912, 'Baha is Peace Herald.'
- 23 *Public Ledger* (Philadelphia), 10 June 1912, 'Persian Sage Pays Visit to this City.'
- 24 *New York Tribune*, 5 May 1912, 1b.
- 25 *The Christian Science Monitor* (Boston) 21 October 1911, p. 6, 'Leader of Bahaimism Talks about its Ethics.'
- 26 *Star of the West*, 28 April 1912 (3:3), p. 1
- 27 *The Woman Voter* (New York), June 1912 (3:5), 'Abdul Baha and Woman's Suffrage.'
- 28 *American* (New York), 14 April 1912. The interview was reproduced in *the Examiner* (San Francisco, CA), 20 April 1912.
- 29 *The Vote* (London), 10 January 1913 (7:168), 'Towards Unity,' p. 180.
- 30 *The Christian Commonwealth*, 11 December 1912, p. 206.