

# Prelude

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



## Prelude

The following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were uttered after his American sojourn on the occasion of his second visit to Europe, in 1913, when he stopped for some months on his way to the Orient.

During his stay in Paris 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave five public addresses (see Chapters 4,5,6,7 and 8).

Each morning a group assembled at his apartment, 30 rue St. Didier, where he spoke informally; sometimes answering questions, or on request, explaining points touched on in public addresses. In this way, although there are seeming repetitions, many abstruse subjects are elucidated in these informal conferences, which are to be found in the first few chapters of the book. (See chapters 1,2 and 3.)

On these occasions 'Abdu'l-Bahá would sometimes sit by the window over-looking Paris and anon the majestic white-robed figure would pace the room as he discoursed.

Every Friday evening he addressed an assemblage at M. and Mme. Dreyfus-Barney's, 15 rue Greuze and every Monday afternoon he visited a group at the studio of Mr. Scott (an American artist), in the Latin quarter, 17 rue Boissonade.[pg 29]

His time in Paris was completely occupied. In the afternoons and evenings one found him surrounded by French *savants* and lovers of truth who sought an audience with this master of



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wisdom. Of a sudden he would sweep majestically forth, and should an attendant make as though to follow, he would wave him aside — “I walk alone!” Many an hour did this man of mystery wander the streets of Paris dispelling the fogs of ignorance.

On the eve of his departure from Paris his addresses which had been translated were duly presented, with the thought that he might like to preserve them. “You do it,” he said. “Get someone to help you and publish them.”

After ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had returned to Egypt, the writer visited him at Ramleh, taking with her, on that memorable occasion, the final manuscript for his approval. “Print and circulate,” he said “together with articles and books, which will be conducive to the attraction of hearts.”

Speaking of America one day, he said, “I have great hopes for the American people, but alas! as yet they do not understand the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. One of the veils is literal interpretation. To penetrate the inner significances a mighty effort is needed.”

When one in reading substitutes the symbolic or spiritual title of the great ones, the human temple fades and only reality remains. The spirit of faith, the beloved, the spiritual ego, the friend, the adored one, the desired one, the rays of the sun of truth, the flame of reality, the radiations of the celestial world, the lord, the nightingale, etc., are all synonyms of the one reality of man.

“This,” says ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “has been the mission of all the divine messengers — to make man conscious of his eternal part.

“By God, who is the only God and there is no God but he, this servant swears the masters did not come that man should adore them, or worship[pg 30] them or acknowledge their prophethood. Nay, rather, the masters of all time have suffered for none other than this — the fleshly veils might be rent asunder and reality become manifest.

“Once again the dove of eternity hath descended from the Riḍván<sup>1</sup> of nearness to sing the long-forgotten melody in this gloomy and disastrous age. O, when will one arise and while listening to this song don the garment of selflessness and hasten to the precinct of the friend!”[pg 31]



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<sup>1</sup> Riḍván — a Persian word which means garden or paradise and symbolizes a heavenly condition.