

# A Loving Farewell

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



ORIGINAL

The pages of swiftly-appearing newspapers are indeed the mirror of the world.... However, it behoveth the writers thereof to be purged from the promptings of evil passions and desires and to be attired with the raiment of justice and equity. — (Bahá'u'lláh)

## Chapter IX

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Extract from an Interview Given to the  
Editor of “The London Budget:”

S.S. Chamberlain

'ABBÁS EFFENDI ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Servant of God, as he prefer to calls himself), son of the Persian prophet, Bahá'u'lláh, who is at present sojourning in Paris held an interesting farewell conference at his apartment, 30 rue St. Didier.

'Abdu'l-Bahá willingly endured imprisonment rather than abjure his faith, one of the tenets of which declares for the absolute equality of all souls regardless of such outer differences as sex, race or color. He recognizes no class distinctions except those given by service and in the spirit of brotherly love; for this and other like doctrines he was held prisoner for forty years in the fortified city of 'Akká in Palestine. With the advent of the Young Turks' supremacy realized through the “Union and Progress” committee, in 1908, he was freed.

Something of the daily life of this advocate of universal brotherhood may be of interest.[pg 186]

He lives in an apartment almost in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower and one of the striking sights of Paris is to see him walking about in his Oriental attire through the gardens of the Trocadero and of the Champ de Mars, or visiting Notre Dame. His life is of the simplest, his attitude humble, his needs few. He chants at midnight and at dawn and he who would interview this "master" must be up betimes. His secretaries gather about him and papers and magazines are read and discussed in the reception hall where Persian tea is served. It is then that he answers his mail, always a large one from people and assemblies all over the world. Every letter that is sent him is answered and every one that rings his door bell, from the humblest to the most arrogant, receives due consideration.

Speaking of Paris and the French people, "Paris is a city of adornment," he said, standing at the window, looking out on the sleeping city. "I hope that, as this century is a radiant century and this age a merciful age, the human world will become united and the standard of the solidarity of the human race will be hoisted in Paris; for Paris is a center of refined civilization and has advanced marvelously along the path of science. Paris is like unto a lamp and the light will be the realization of the brotherhood of man. I hope that this light will be ignited in the lamp and that like unto a brilliant star it will shed its benign rays of unity on all religions.

"People have a superstitious respect for [pg 187] certain doctrines which are against science and the wise men of the country have thought that religion is opposed to science. Know thou that the great ethical foundation of knowledge is divine revelation and the basis of religion is reality itself. It is like unto the sun which shines on all things making them clear and luminous, whereas lesser lights as well as superstitious beliefs illumine but one aspect of things leaving room for shade and doubt.

"I have great confidence in the wisdom and understanding of the world leaders of thought that they may discover this reality.

"I hope that the soul of Paris will arise from the city of obscurity and progress steadily forward to the new civilization."

When asked how this new civilization was to be brought about, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

“Through solidarity. In some animals mutual co-operation is frequently seen; when in time of danger, each will try to surpass the others in help. One day as I was standing near the border of a little stream on Mt. Carmel, I noticed a number of locusts that had not yet developed full wings.

“These insects wishing to pass from my side of the stream to the other in order to procure some food, threw themselves forward, each one trying to emulate the other in flinging itself into the water, so that a bridge was formed in order that the others might pass over and this was [pg 188] accomplished; yet those who gave themselves as a bridge finally perished. Consider how much solidarity makes for life as compared to the fighting for self interest which destroys it.”

When the moment came for the patriarch’s parting words, he pushed back his white turban and gave one of his smiles that in itself seems like a benediction.

“I am leaving Paris for the Orient though in reality I am always with you. Place does not matter. Two people may be in the same room and yet not attain to a visitation. When I was in prison many people came to see me. They crossed seas and deserts and yet remained in the city of the blind while others in far-distant lands attained the meeting.

“Alas, alas! the world has not discovered the reality of religion hidden beneath the symbolic forms!” [pg 189]

“May it do good unto me, unto thee, unto whomsoever may ascend to the heaven of knowledge and to him whose heart is fascinated by the zephyr of assurance wafting upon the garden of his innate heart from the sheba<sup>1</sup> of the merciful!



“Peace be upon him who followeth the Right Path!” (Bahá’u’lláh in Seven Valleys) [pg 190]

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<sup>1</sup> Sheba — A symbol of home or dwelling place.