

# Talk at Home of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Parsons

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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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.



ORIGINAL



AUDIO

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,[pg 44] 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 Īhrán 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.

