

# ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

in the City of Angels



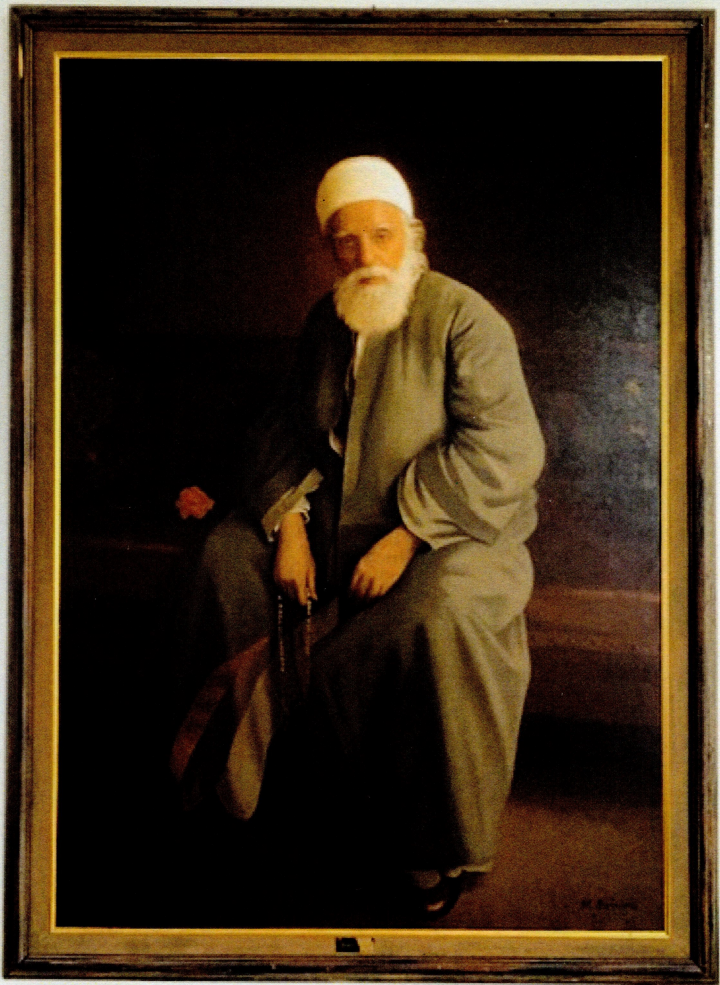
Payam Afsharian

‘Abdu’l-Bahá  
in the  
City of Angels



“Praise be to God! The friends in Los Angeles are good.  
We never imagined there were so many friends here,  
but Praise be to God! I find there are many.  
Therefore, we pray that they may be confirmed.”

Excerpt from discourse given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in  
Los Angeles, California, October 20, 1912



**Paintings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by virtuoso Reza Samimi  
and his son Mehrdad Samimi**

This portrait of Abdu'l-Baha is by Mehrdad Samimi and hangs in the Los Angeles Baha'i Center. Its twin painting by Reza Samimi hangs in the Building of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa. The painting is from a photograph taken at the Schloss Studios in New York in 1912. The Samimis, father and son, have produced two of the greatest paintings of The Master, and we are fortunate to have one of them in Los Angeles.



# ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the City of Angels

and the history of the beginnings of the  
Bahá’í Community in Los Angeles

Payam Afsharian

Los Angeles  
2021

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Local Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Los Angeles.

*For my wife Vida, who patiently listened to me read endless  
lists of names of early believers, and watched me with  
sympathetic eyes as I looked at hundreds and  
hundreds of grave markers.  
Her patience is only exceeded by her love for Baha'u'llah.*



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The US National Bahá'í Archives patiently answered my many emails and have provided much of the materials in this publication.

Please forgive me if I have omitted anyone's name, it was not intentional but merely a reflection of my poor memory.

Special mention must be made of Paulette Pappas who left us too soon and who is sorely missed. Her love for and knowledge of the Southern California Bahá'í community was the backbone of the research for this book.

## **A note on translations and transliterations**

The talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were delivered in Persian and translated by one of His companions. The notes were taken down in English by several people and we have differing versions, which though varying in some wording, nevertheless hold the same message. The versions used in this publication are mainly from the notes in the Ella Cooper Diary at the US National Bahá'í Archives, and the notes taken by Miss Mai M. Auforth photocopy in private hands.

Some Bahá'í words and terminology have been changed to conform to current usage.

## INTRODUCTION

This book chronicles the four-day journey of 'Abdu'l-Baha to Los Angeles from October 18 to October 21, 1912. This unscheduled trip was necessitated by the unexpected passing of a Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Baha, the honored first person to accept the teachings of Baha'u'llah in North America, Mr. Thornton Chase.

'Abdu'l-Baha's travels in Europe and America would not have taken place were it not for His love for the Baha'is and His desire to serve His Beloved Father, Baha'u'llah. 'Abdu'l-Baha had been imprisoned when He was in His early 20s and after 40 years of imprisonment, He was being released as a man in His mid-60s. After years of hardship and deprivation it would have been understandable if He chose to rest and recuperate from the ravages that His body had borne during the years of exile, incarceration and cruel treatment. But 'Abdu'l-Baha did not entertain thoughts of relaxation but was absorbed by thoughts of service to mankind and to spreading the healing message brought by Baha'u'llah. In this regard He shunned the titles He had earned, he could have gone by either His Persian title of Mirza 'Abbas or His Turkish title of 'Abbas Effendi, or even by the title conferred on Him by the British government Sir 'Abbas. However, He preferred the title of 'Abdu'l-Baha ("servant of Baha"):

*My name is 'Abdu'l-Baha. My qualification is 'Abdu'l-Baha. My reality is 'Abdu'l-Baha. My praise is 'Abdu'l-Baha. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem, and servitude to all the human race my perpetual religion... No name, no title, no mention, no commendation have I, nor will ever have, except 'Abdu'l-Baha. This is my longing. This is my greatest yearning. This is my eternal life. This is my everlasting glory.*

Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Baha Abbas

'Abdu'l-Baha (23 May 1844–28 November 1921), was the eldest son of Baha'u'llah and served as head of the Baha'i Faith from the passing of His father in 1892 until His own passing in 1921.

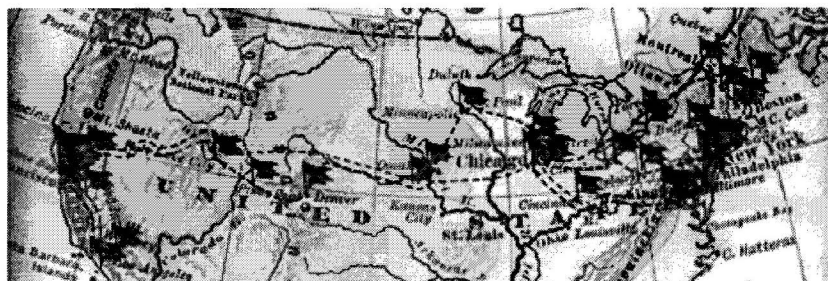
Under His supervision, wise counsel, and patient direction the Baha'i community grew and spread to many countries, and as a result of His epic journeys throughout Europe and America the Baha'i message gained recognition and its adherents grew by thousands.

Today the Baha'i Faith is one of the fastest growing religions in the world and is in fact in more localities, cities and countries than any other religion. (*The World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd edition, 2019). "The teachings of the Baha'i Faith inspire individuals and encourage communities as they focus their attention on improving the lives of everyone around them. Baha'i principles include ideals such as "the oneness of God and religion, the oneness of humanity and freedom from prejudice, the inherent nobility of the human being, the progressive revelation of religious truth, the development of spiritual qualities, the integration of worship and service, the fundamental equality of the sexes, the harmony between religion and science, the centrality of justice to all human endeavors, and the importance of education."

Shoghi Effendi, in his masterpiece *God Passes By*, chronicling the early history of the Baha'i Faith, writes:



It was reserved, however, for the North American continent to witness the most astonishing manifestation of the boundless vitality 'Abdu'l-Baha exhibited in the course of these journeys. The remarkable progress achieved by the organized community of His followers in the United States and Canada, the marked receptivity of the American public to His Message, as well as His consciousness of the high destiny awaiting the people of that continent, fully warranted the expenditure of time and energy which he devoted to this most important phase of His travels. A visit which entailed a journey of over five thousand miles, which lasted from April to December, which carried Him from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast and back, which elicited discourses of such number as to fill no less than three volumes, was to mark the climax of those journeys, and was fully justified by the far-reaching results which He well knew such labors on His part would produce. "This long voyage," He told His assembled followers on the occasion of His first meeting with them in New York, "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" (*God Passes By* pp. 287-288).



'Abdu'l-Baha's travels across North America.

## Petition & Supplications to 'Abdu'l-Baha

**F**rom the first days of the Baha'i Faith in North America the believers constantly urged 'Abdu'l-Baha to come to the United States. But due to His heavy work load and other circumstances this was not possible. So only a few were fortunate enough to make the lengthy and expensive pilgrimage to Palestine and to have the privilege of praying at the shrine of 'Baha'u'llah' and the bounty of meeting The Master.

The friends in America even signed a petition begging 'Abdu'l-Baha to visit.

To our Beloved 'Abdu'l-Baha:

We, thy humble servants in America, rejoice that the door of communication is at last open and we beg of God that it may ever remain so.

Unworthy as we are, yet we supplicate thee, we beseech thee, if it be God's will, to turn thy blessed countenance toward us, that all the regions of the West, even as the East, may be quickened by thy glorious presence.

[*Star of the West*, Vol 10 No 8 p.156]

This document was signed by almost a thousand Baha'is from across America and sent to Haifa. Included were the signatures of many California Baha'is from Geyserville, Tropic (now Glendale), Los Angeles, Oakland, Pasadena, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, San Diego, Santa Paula, and Santa Rosa.

'Abdu'l-Baha eventually accepted this invitation and set off on His long awaited history-making journey. His travels, which lasted almost a year, included visits to over thirty cities and hundreds of gatherings, and speeches given in private homes, churches, and other religious and public meeting halls.

But even after 'Abdu'l-Baha had made His plans to visit America, the final details of His itinerary were not set. California was not on His original agenda and for weeks and months, it was not clear if, due to time constraints, He would come to California. In April, West Coast Baha'is concluded that the only way to see 'Abdu'l-Baha was to go to New York. Then news came that California was scheduled for June but the message ended with a troubling "God willing." Indeed a few weeks later a message was received that a trip to the West Coast was not likely as 'Abdu'l-Baha had to leave for the Orient. 'Abdu'l-Baha invited California Baha'is to visit Him in New York.

Harriet Wise received word from 'Abdu'l-Baha for the California Baha'is: "Convey to them, my greetings and love. It has become necessary to depart for the Orient. Certain obligations have come up, so I must depart for the Orient. I move according to Divine wisdom. I have infinite longing to meet you, but what happens now is according to Divine wisdom, that is, I must depart for the East. Although I leave, yet my heart is with you. There is no separation between us and I am never free from mentioning your names." (US National Baha'i Archives)

The West Coast Baha'is desperately yearned for 'Abdu'l-Baha to visit them, but it remained just a hope for many weeks. On June 24 John Bosch and Luther Burbank received a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Baha, which read, "As to my coming to California it is a little doubtful, for the trip is far and the weather hot and from the labors of the journey the body of 'Abdu'l-Baha has not much endurance. Nevertheless, we shall see what God hath decreed." (US National Baha'i Archives)

Then 'Abdu'l-Baha wrote to John Bosch and gave a glimmer of hope: "O thou who art longing for the visit of 'Abdu'l-Baha! Thy yearning letter was wonderfully eloquent and its effect on

'Abdu'l-Baha was inexpressible. I greatly long to fulfill the request of the friends, but am as yet in these parts, until later the requirements of Wisdom will be revealed. If the Western cities demonstrate their infinite firmness in the Covenant, this will act as a magnet to draw 'Abdu'l-Baha." (US National Baha'i Archives)

'Abdu'l-Baha made His trip west conditional on the firmness and unity of the Baha'is in California. Messages back and forth reached a fever pitch as the California Baha'is, led by Thornton Chase and John Bosch, did all in their power to "act as a magnet to draw" The Master west. In a message to Lua Getsinger, 'Abdu'l-Baha said the friends in California must be united for Him to consider extending His trip. Indeed this long trip traveling from city to city, from meeting to meeting was very hard on 'Abdu'l-Baha's weakened body. On August 7, 'Abdu'l-Baha sent a wire to Thornton Chase: *"Greetings to Friends in Tropico, Pasadena, Los Angeles and all California. I hope from the favor of Baha'u'llah that means be brought about so that I may associate with all of you."* (US National Baha'i Archives).

Finally August 13, 'Abdu'l-Baha sent the following message to John Bosch "Your telegram was a cause of much happiness. God willing I will depart for the Western Part. Give this glad tiding to each and all." (US National Baha'i Archives).

It was that just a few weeks later, and less than a decade after the introduction of the Faith to California, by Edward and Lua Getsinger, 'Abdu'l-Baha set foot on the soil of the Golden State.

However, His itinerary in California only included San Francisco and the Bay area. Sadly, as 'Abdu'l-Baha was enroute from Glenwood Springs, Colorado, to California, Mr. Thornton Chase unexpectedly passed away as a result of a surgical procedure. Mr. Chase, the first American to accept the Baha'i truth, died on September 30, 1912. Thus it was that his many years of suffering and sacrifices for the Faith culminated in his being the path to draw 'Abdu'l-Baha to his city of residence.

Thornton Chase passed way as 'Abdu'l-Baha's train crossed the border into California, and upon hearing of this sad news He is reported to have said:

This revered personage was the first Baha'i in America. He served the Cause faithfully and his services will ever be remembered throughout future ages and cycles. He has written many books in this Cause and they will be studied carefully by the coming generations. He traveled once to Acca and there we associated with each other for several days. Indeed he became free from the troubles of this world. No matter how long he might have remained here, he would have met nothing else but trouble. The purpose of life is to get certain results; that is, the life of man must bring forth certain fruitage. It does not depend upon the length of life. As soon as the life is crowned with fruition then it is completed, although that person may have had a short life. There are certain trees which come to fruition very quickly, but there are other trees which attain to fruition very late; the aim is fruit. If the tree brings forth its fruit young, its life is short; it is praiseworthy. How regretful it is that a man may live a long life and yet his life may not be crowned with success, like unto the cypress tree which does not give any fruitage. Praise be to God! the tree of Mr. Chase's life brought forth fruit. It gave complete fruit, therefore he is free. He attained to eternal rest. He is now in the Presence of BAHÁ'O'LLAH. His Holiness Jesus Christ lived only thirty-three years, but the world is filled with the fruits of his life. Others have lived a hundred years, with no result and no fruitage from their lives. There was a rabbi in Tiberius who lived 120 years, but the tree of his life was fruitless. He had great enmity against Jesus Christ. He often used to argue: 'The ephemeral life is subject to many trials and vicissitudes; there is no enjoyment in it.' The life of Mr. Chase was spiritual in character; his services will ever be remembered and he has already attained to the desire of his heart.

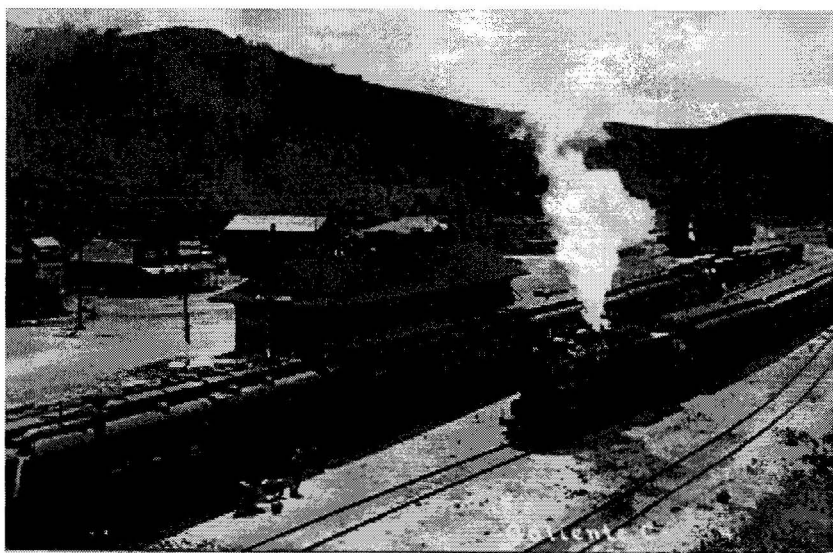
[*Star of the West*, Vol 4, No 11, p.189]

'Abdu'l-Baha changed His schedule to be able to make a trip to Los Angeles and visit the grave of this devoted servant. And so it was that the people of Los Angeles were blessed with the presence of the Master in their own city.



**Letter written by Mrs. Frances L. MacDonald regarding her recollections of 'Abdu'l-Baha in 1912:**

My mother, Mary Lesley Long, formerly O'Keefe, and I were living in Spokane, Washington at that time. We were hoping that He would include Washington in his visit but in response to an inquiry by my mother, she received a telegram from 'Abdu'l-Baha personally stating that He had not planned to come to Spokane and requesting mother to come to San Francisco, California. Mother immediately made arrangements for the trip. On arriving in San Francisco we went to the home He was occupying. While I was a child I still can remember some things rather vividly. 'Abdu'l-Baha was out at the time and there were a great many people in the long foyer awaiting His return. The walls were lined with people. I was at mother's side when He entered and smiled saying, "Is everybody happy?" I cannot describe the emotion I felt but it was deep and reverent. Mother shed tears of joy for at last she was seeing 'Abdu'l-Baha and she whispered, "Master." He



The Pacific Coast Scenic Rail at Caliente Station en route to Los Angeles.  
1910-1912

looked like the pictures we had of Him, the wonderfully kind and beautiful face — the white beard and rather long white hair — the light turban and robe — and as He walked down the long foyer smiling to everyone gathered there and repeating, "Is everybody happy?" There was that spirit emanating from Him that words cannot describe. Once I saw 'Abdu'l-Baha seated before the glassed doors overlooking the garden and some tiny children came over to Him. He laughed and played with them. On a nearby table was a bowl of fruit and a turban. He picked up the turban and placed it on a little boy's head. They all laughed with Him. Then He gave them each some fruit. 'Abdu'l-Baha spent most of His time speaking at various places and mother attended them all. One day everyone was gone but Fugita [Fujita], the much loved and devoted Japanese who traveled with 'Abdu'l-Baha and His Persian followers. The kitchen was in the basement and during their absence I wandered down there where I met Fugita who was pressing 'Abdu'l-Baha's robes. He allowed me to press one of them which was of course a very great privilege. One evening there was a banquet at the home of, as I remember, either Mrs. Goodall or Mrs. Cooper in Oakland. When 'Abdu'l-Baha came down the winding stairs everyone stood up to greet their Beloved Master. It was a joyous occasion and like most children I was hungry and enjoyed the feast. The morning came when 'Abdu'l-Baha left San Francisco to travel by train for Los Angeles. There were in the car just 'Abdu'l-Baha, some Persian Baha'is and mother and I. A delicious lunch had been packed in baskets, including fried chicken. Mahmoud, a Persian in black turban and Persian garb, and I ate lunch together and he was very kind to me. We talked and it was most enjoyable. Later as the train rolled along the coast of California everyone was quiet. 'Abdu'l-Baha was seated alone up at the front of the car and I felt myself being drawn to Him like a magnet. I realize now that what I did was very presumptuous. I took the seat in front of Him, knelt down with my arms folded over the back and silently gazed at my Beloved Master. He was looking

out over the ocean engrossed in His thoughts and fortunately didn't notice me — or was He being kind and allowing me those precious moments? I studied every feature and those wonderful grey eyes I noticed had a blue outline around the iris. What was He thinking as He gazed out over the blue Pacific Ocean? Gone was His dynamic presence. I saw weariness, yes, even sadness. Oh, how I loved Him and longed to serve Him in some way to ease His burden. But poor little me, what could I do but just kneel there before Him and worship Him. He granted me that wonderful privilege. In Los Angeles at the Lankershim Hotel at 7th and Broadway mother and I came to 'Abdu'l-Baha and were granted a short audience with Him in His suite. I do not remember everything He said to mother. I have often wished that I could but I do recall that He said that she had a lovely daughter. We rode down in the elevator with the Master and then out to Inglewood where He made a special pilgrimage to the grave of Thornton Chase, the first believer to embrace the Cause of Baha'u'llah in the western world. There was quite a large gathering there — and a very moving ceremony. Though it was 50 years ago I can still see it as though it were yesterday; 'Abdu'l-Baha standing beside the grave scattering rose petals from a bouquet of pink roses. The foregoing is a summary of the events that were indelibly printed on my mind as a child and I have cherished them through the years as a gift from the Master Himself and which I now pass on to you so you may share with me the warmth and reverence in which I hold them."

**Friday Oct. 18, 1912. San Francisco to Los Angeles**

In the morning 'Abdu'l-Baha met with the friends from Portland and Seattle who had traveled to San Francisco to plead for 'Abdu'l-Baha to visit them in their cities. When He heard of their unhappiness that He was not going to visit them 'Abdu'l-Baha said "they are upset that I am not going there. However, in spite of the great distance they have come to see us . . . Had it been a one or two day trip, I would have gone to Portland and Seattle but the distance is too great. I would not visit Los Angeles were it not for the purpose of visiting the tomb of Mr. Chase."

Later that morning the group that included 'Abdu'l-Baha's Persian companions and a few believers from the bay area, including Mrs. Kathryn Frankland, Mrs. Helen Goodall, Mrs. Georgie Ralston, Mary Lesley Long and her daughter Frances MacDonald Long (12), Ethelwyn Drew Hall and her young daughters Ruth (4) and Virginia 'Ginny' (6) departed San Francisco by train on the long trip to Los Angeles. As the train slowly made its way down the golden state of California, 'Abdu'l-Baha looked at the beauty of the scenery and the magnificent mountains and commented:

*The blessed state of California bears the utmost similarity to the Holy Land, that is, the country of Palestine. The air is of the utmost temperance, the plain very spacious, and the fruits of Palestine are seen in that state in the utmost of freshness and delicacy. (Tablets of the Divine Plan, "Tablet to the Baha'is of the Western States," Feb. 15, 1917)*

*When 'Abdu'l-Baha was traveling and journeying through the state, he found himself in Palestine, for from every standpoint there was a perfect likeness between this region and that state. Even the shores of the Pacific Ocean, in some instances, show perfect resemblance to the shores of the Holy Land—even the flora of the Holy Land have grown on those shores. (Tablets of the Divine Plan, "Tablet to the Baha'is of the Western States," Feb. 15, 1917)*

*During My journey and traveling in those parts, I beheld wonderful scenes and beautiful panoramas of nature, orchards and rivers; national parks and general conclaves; deserts, plains, meadows and*

*prairies; and the grains and fruits of that region greatly attracted My attention; even to the present moment they are in My mind.*

*Particularly was I greatly pleased with the meetings in San Francisco and Oakland, the gatherings in Los Angeles, and the believers who came from the cities of other states. Whenever their faces cross My memory, immediately infinite happiness is realized. (Tablets of the Divine Plan, "Tablet to the Baha'is of the Western States," Feb. 15, 1917)*

On one occasion, someone referred to California as the golden state and the period as the golden age. 'Abdu'l-Baha smiling responded: *"California is the diamond state and this is not the golden age but the diamond age."*

*(Star of the West, volume 13, # 8)*

There were several routes from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Most of these journeys would have taken 14 to 24 hours to complete. Piecing together the observations from Mahmud's Diary and Frances MacDonald's letter it would appear that 'Abdu'l-Baha would have left San Francisco after His morning meeting with the Baha'is who had traveled from Portland and Seattle to see Him. Also several personal notes indicate that the train arrived in Los Angeles in the early evening. Therefore it is very likely that the train was Southern Pacific's "Los Angeles Passenger" which would have taken the faster inland route and would have completed the journey in about 8 ½ hours. Leaving at 10:40 am and arriving at 7:10 pm. The only other possibility would be the "Shoreline Limited" which would corroborate Frances MacDonald's memory of 'Abdu'l-Baha looking out over the ocean on the trip south. This trip would have left San Francisco at 8:00 am and arrived in Los Angeles by 9:50 pm. At this time we cannot be sure which route was taken.

The train arrived in the early evening at the Old River Station, North Spring Street, Los Angeles. They were then taken to the Lankershim Hotel, corner of 7th Street and Broadway where



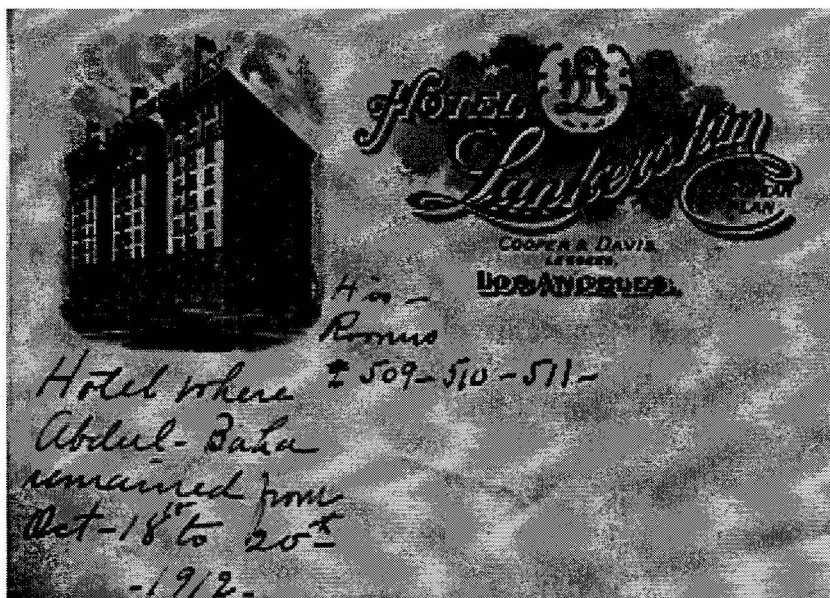
rooms had been reserved for them by Mr. Alexander Frankland. Completed in 1905, the Lankershim was a grand hotel built as an imitation of the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. The nine story building was superior to any other hotel in Los Angeles at the time.

Word soon spread about the visit of the Master and people flocked to the hotel in the hope of seeing and speaking with Him. At the hotel inquirers, reporters, and friends crowded around Him. To the many people seeking to arrange speaking engagements, He replied, "I have no time. I have come here to see the tomb of Mr. Chase and to meet some friends."

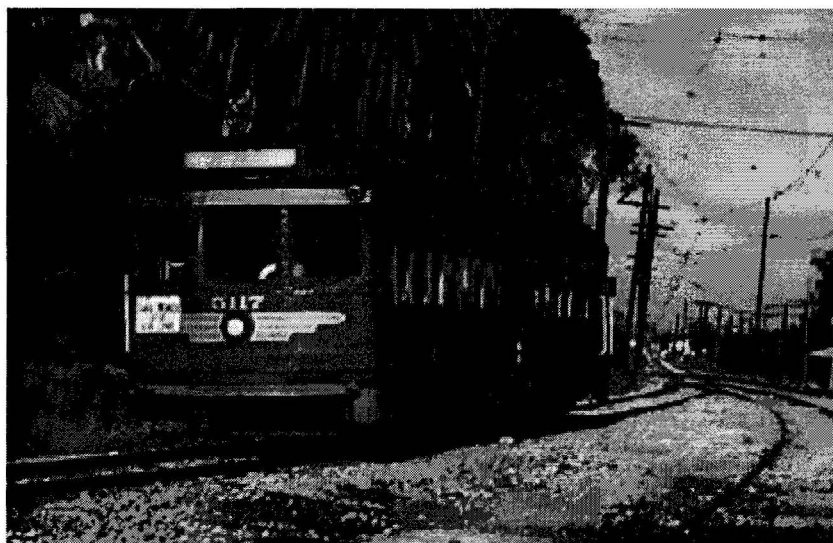
'Abdu'l-Baha then met and spoke with individuals and groups in the hotel lobby and in His rooms.



The Lankershim Hotel where 'Abdu'l-Baha stayed while in Los Angeles.



The Lankershim Hotel notepad showing the rooms occupied by Abdu'l-Baha and his companions.



The tram car between downtown Los Angeles and Inglewood.

## **Visit to Inglewood Park Cemetery**

### **Saturday October 19**

“... visit this grave and on my behalf bring flowers, and seek the sublimity of the spiritual station for him.” ‘Abdu’l-Baha

‘Abdu’l-Baha and some twenty friends took a tram to Inglewood arriving at about noon. Thornton Chase, the first Baha’i in America, died on the evening of September 30, just a few days before ‘Abdu’l-Baha arrived in California, and was buried on October 4, in Inglewood Park Cemetery. ‘Abdu’l-Baha made a special unscheduled trip to Los Angeles to visit Thornton Chase’s grave.

‘The tram stopped near the cemetery, which is located a few miles from the city. The Master alighted and walked towards the grave with dignified solemnity and serenity. He went directly to the grave site without asking directions from anyone. He praised the site and the lushness of the trees and grass. He stood there for a few minutes leaning against a nearby tree. He then stood near the grave of that distinguished man and spread over it bouquets of flowers, adorning that sanctified soil with such love and affection

that bystanders were astonished. Most of the friends carried bouquets of flowers in their hands. One after another the friends gave Him their bouquets and He divided them and scattered them over the grave. Facing in the direction of the Holy Land, the Master chanted Baha'u'llah's Tablet of Visitation. All stood in solemn reverence behind Him. After the chant He recited the following prayer in Arabic for the forgiveness of the departed soul.

*O my God! O my God! Verily, this is a servant of Thine, who did believe on Thee and in Thy signs; verily he hearkened to Thy summons, turned to Thy Kingdom, humbled himself at Thy holy threshold, was possessed of a contrite heart, arose to serve Thy cause, to spread Thy fragrances, to promote Thy word, and to expound Thy wisdom.*

*Verily he guided the people to Thine ancient pathway, and led them to Thy way of rectitude. Verily he held the chalice of guidance in his right hand and gave unto those athirst to drink of the cup of favour. He presented himself at Thy lofty threshold, where he laid his brow on the fragrant soil of Thy garden and circumambulated Thy all-glorious and sublime abode, the traces of which are wide-spread and the fragrances of whose loyalty are sensed everywhere. Later he returned to these vast and extensive countries and proclaimed Thy Name amongst the people, until his respiration ceased and his outward sensation was suspended, returning to Thee with a heart throbbing with Thy love and with an eye opened to Thy direction.*

*O Lord! O Lord! Submerge him in the ocean of Thy glory. O Lord! O Lord! Usher him into Thy delectable garden. O Lord! O Lord! Usher him into Thy lofty paradise and cause him to be present in Thy meeting of transfiguration. O Lord! Submerge him in the ocean of Thy lights.*

*Verily, Thou art the Clement! Verily, Thou are the Merciful, the Precious, the Omnipotent!*

'Abdu'l-Baha then gave a short account of this faithful believer's services, steadfastness and forbearance.

Mr. Chase was of the blessed souls. The best of his life was spent in the path of God. He had no other aim than to do the will of the Lord and no other desire than to attain to the

kingdom of God. During his lifetime he bore many trials and vicissitudes, but he was patient and long-suffering. He had a heart most illumined, a spirit most joyous. He was led by the lights of guidance. He desired to serve the world of humanity, and was unfailing in his efforts. Until at last he witnessed the lights of the kingdom of Abha, he summoned the people to the religion of God, and aided them to enter into the Kingdom. He wrote books and epistles regarding the proofs and evidences of the manifestation of Baha'u'llah. In truth he left certain signs that will never be forgotten throughout ages and cycles. In truth this personage was worthy of respect. He was worthy to be honored by pilgrimages of the friends to his grave. The traces of his life will ever shine. He is a personage who will not be forgotten. At present his worth is not known but in the future it will be inestimably clear. His sun will ever shine; his star will ever bestow light. The people will honor this grave.

Therefore, the friends of God must visit this grave, and on my behalf bring flowers and beseech for him a sublime spiritual station. They must have the utmost consideration for the members of his family. This personage will never be forgotten.

Before The Master left, He placed His forehead on the grave and kissed it. Tears flowed from the eyes of the believers as they bowed before that sacred spot, each one longing to attain to that sublime and exalted station.

In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi writes: "During his lifetime Mr. Chase" who was named 'Sabet' (Thabit, Steadfast) by 'Abdu'l-Baha, "bore many trials and vicissitudes, but he was very patient and long-suffering. He had a heart most illumined, a spirit most rejoiced; his hope was to serve the world of humanity. . . ."

Shoghi Effendi also included Chase as one of the 19 Baha'is of the West whom he designated as "Disciples of 'Abdu'l-Baha." The beloved Guardian mentions the "poignant sight" of 'Abdu'l-Baha kissing the grave of "His beloved disciple" as one of the scenes from 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to the West that will never "be effaced from memory."



Harriet Cline wrote in her memoirs: "As 'Abdu'l-Baha knelt and kissed the soil which covered all that was mortal of Thornton Chase, I felt He had made holy all the soil of my native state."

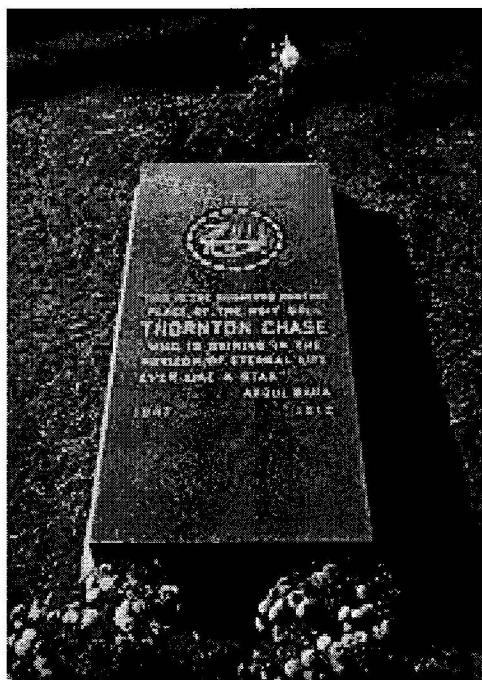


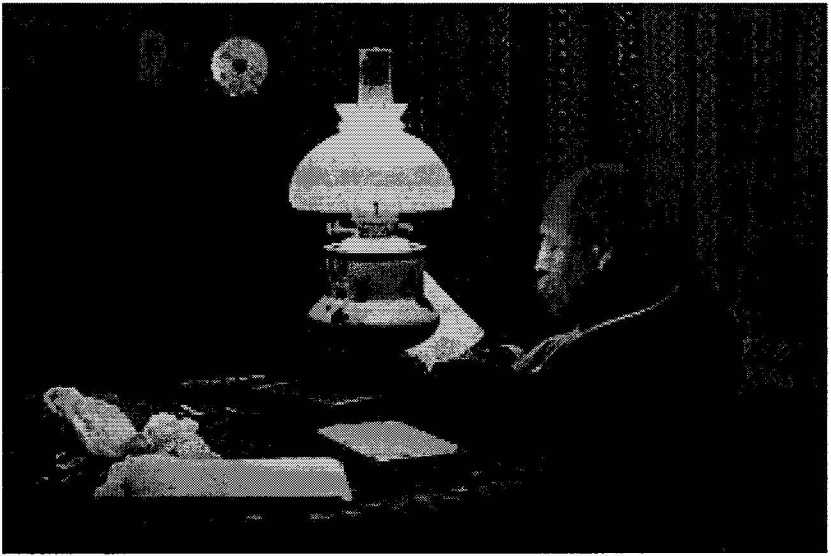
The grave monument of Thornton Chase at Inglewood Park Cemetery.



Mrs. Flora M. Clark, Miss Mai Auforth, Mr & Mrs Beckett – at the grave of Thornton Chase – on the first anniversary of the visit by 'Abdu'l-Baha, 1913.

The foundation for the stone which is a single piece of granite one foot thick, six feet six inches in length and three feet wide, weighing one and three-quarters tons. The top is polished and upon this is inscribed the Greatest name placed within a circle which is divided into nineteen segments, and the following lettering with the words of Abdu'l-Baha: "This is the illumined resting place of the holy soul Thornton Chase who is shining in the horizon of eternal life ever like a star" 1847-1912. (*Star of the West*, vol. 19, # 6)





Thornton Chase at his home deep in study.

"NOTED PERSIAN IS HERE TO  
PLEAD FOR PEACE.

'Abdu'l-Baha Abbas...head of  
the great Baha'i movement,  
a leader in the campaign for  
universal peace and a man  
whose teachings are read in  
every land, arrived in the city  
today to preach the gospel of  
universal peace..."

The Los Angeles Herald,  
October 19, 1912



## Talks of 'Abdu'l-Baha in Los Angeles and Pasadena

**Saturday October 19, 1912**

### **Los Angeles and Inglewood**

This was to be a very special day in the annals of the Los Angeles Baha'i Community. Friends from Los Angeles, Tropic, and Pasadena, were joined by Baha'is from Long Beach, Bakersfield, and San Diego. All who were able to make the journey to Los Angeles joined 'Abdu'l-Baha at the Lankershim Hotel. A group of approximately 25 joined 'Abdu'l-Baha for the trip to Inglewood to visit to the grave of Thornton Chase.

The tram took them to near the Inglewood park Cemetery, arriving about noon. After the ceremony at Thornton Chase's grave they all returned to the Lankershim Hotel where He spoke to the press.

When we returned to the hotel, we found a multitude of people waiting for the Master. Some representatives of the press were also present and 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke to them on various subjects. One of His statements to a newspaper reporter was this:

In the world of existence, civilization is found to be of two kinds: material civilization and spiritual civilization. Philosophers founded the former while the divine Prophets established the latter. For instance, the philosophers of Greece established a material civilization whereas Christ established a spiritual civilization. Material civilization is the cause of worldly prosperity but divine civilization is the means of eternal prosperity. If divine civilization, which is all-encompassing, is established, then material civilization will also attain perfection. When spiritual perfection is attained, then physical perfection is a certainty. Material civilization alone does not suffice and does

not become the means of acquiring spiritual virtues. Rather, it leads to an increase in wars and disputes and becomes the cause of bloodshed and ruin. Despite all this, it is surprising that divine civilization has been completely forgotten and the people are constantly submerged in a sea of materialism. This is why night and day they have no peace and are engaged in war and killing. Every day there is bloodshed and ruin, suffering and distress, preparation for a universal war and the destruction of mankind (*Mahmud's Diary*).



Thornton Chase grave circa 1918.

In the afternoon 'Abdu'l-Baha gave three short talks at the Lankershim Hotel.

**Lankershim Hotel, Los Angeles,  
Saturday, October 19, 1912 – 1:00 pm**

Welcome! Welcome! Are you all well? I am very happy to see you all. I have come from a far distant point to see you, and I am very happy to find you in good health, enjoying the fragrance of spirituality, and I hope that, God willing, your happiness may be complete, that every day a new joy may be added unto you, that God may protect you beneath the shelter of His care and providence, and that each day you may witness a new confirmation. May each one of you become like



a fruitful tree, increasing in verdure and freshness and finally yielding luscious fruits. May you become enriched through the treasury of the kingdom, acquiring boundless bestowals. May you guide the souls to God. Thus Los Angeles will become a city of God, a center of the kingdom of God. If the friends act in accordance with the teachings of Baha'u'llah, become confirmed in guiding the nations, ever serving the cause of the oneness of the world and ever offering their assistance toward the establishment of international peace, undoubtedly Los Angeles will become a center of the kingdom, the lights of divinity will shine, the heavenly manna will descend, and you will attain to that which was the utmost desire of sages and heavenly ones."

Dr. Ameen U. Fareed, Interpreter

At the beginning of the talk, 'Abdu'l-Baha called to Him the three children who were in the room: the children of Mr and Mrs Rice-Wray, Rouhi and Roshan, and the little girl of Mr and Mrs Dible.

He held them on His knees and caressed them as He spoke in English. "Do you know what the name Rouhi means? It means My Spirit. Will you come to your namesake (The Master's grandson in Haifa)? Come over there and you can play with the other Rouhi. We will have a good time. It is delightful there. To the other He said, Your name is Roshan? And to the third child He said what is your name? She answered "Ruth Audrey Dible." 'Abdu'l-Baha repeated the name several times "Ruth, Ruth, Ruth," as if He enjoyed pronouncing it.

**Lankershim Hotel, Los Angeles,  
Saturday, October 19, 1912 – 4:00 pm**

You are most welcome. Are you well? Very happy? Are you attracted to the kingdom? I came especially to see you, that I might know how you are, that I might inquire about your health and your faith, and ascertain whether you are engaged in the service of the kingdom of God. It was a great exertion

for me to come here. It was very difficult; nevertheless I came, because I love you so much, but I cannot remain long.

It is my earnest hope that great results will be the outcome of these meetings, because in these days seeds are being sown. The Blessed Perfection scattered the seeds in the Orient, and we who are His servants have watered those seeds. Those seeds have developed so rapidly day by day that now they are very strong plants, and we have almost the harvest. Likewise you must water the seeds which are being sown today, so that they may grow and develop and attain to fruition, in order that in the West also there may be a harvest.

Every sowing is in need of irrigation to cause the growth and development of the seeds. To-day the vineyard of the kingdom is irrigated by the water of the covenant. The seeds will not grow and develop except by this water. No matter how otherwise irrigated, they will not grow, but will perish. The believers must be confirmed in the covenant, and they must know for a certainty that to-day there is no greater necessity than to be confirmed in the covenant of God. That which issues from the Center of the Covenant is the truth, which is unchangeable; and that which issues from His pen is true and everlasting. All contrary thereto is like parasitic growths having no roots. Such growths may live for two days or five days, or ten days, but at the first breeze they wither. This has been proved in former dispensations.

If you desire that this vineyard of God be ever verdant and luxuriant, that day by day it may grow and advance, and that there may be many harvests, you must always irrigate this orchard with the water of firmness in the covenant. Then you will witness the results and taste of the fruits. You must take fast hold of that which emanates from the Center of the Covenant. That which issues from my lips, and that which is written by my pen is reality. With that you can water the vineyard of God. With that you can cultivate the tree of the cause of God. Through this the name of the Kingdom of God will be spread over the world. Through this the Sun of Reality

will shine. Through this the clouds of mercy will shower.

I have great love for you, and my hope is that you may attain to the essence of your desires and obtain the desire of your hearts."

Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Interpreter

**Lankershim Hotel, Los Angeles,**

**Saturday, October 19, 1912 – 5:00 pm**

Excerpts of talks by 'Abdu'l-Baha to those gathered:

... so that each of you may become a candle, literally a light of guidance, and a manifestor of power. As Bahais you will be accepted as a proof of Baha'u'llah. What wonderful words of instruction! This is a miracle of Baha'u'llah. It is unlimited teaching. You must be newly created. You must not be the same as you were before you became Bahais. A transformation must take place. Your words must be changed, your name must be changed, your very being must be transformed, just as when a child is born from the matrix of the mother into this world. Day by day you must grow. Day by day you must develop. Day by day you must attain to beauty. Day by day you must draw nearer to maturity. This is the new birth. When a man is attracted to the fragrances of God and becomes a Bahai, showing forth certain signs, then he is born out of the matrix of night into the kingdom of light. Day by day he becomes more illumined, more attracted, more wise, and his love to God becomes more manifest. This is the real proof.

I have come from a far country just to see the Bahais, and I have found great joy in meeting you. My hope is that daily you may become more radiant, that your perceptions may be quickened, that the fruits of the world of humanity may become more evident in you, that you may advance. You must associate together in love. Whenever you meet let your conversation be heavenly in character. Speak of reality. Speak of the history of the prophets and of the reality of the religions of God. Speak of the history of Baha'u'llah and of the proof of

the Blessed Perfection. Each one of you should strive with all your heart to become a manifestor of God's inspiration.

Dr. Ameen U, Fareed, Interpreter

Later that evening He received some elite and wealthy people who were fascinated and attracted to Him and immensely pleased to be in His presence. *Mahmud's Diary*. (Their names were not recorded.)

In the evening the Master gave a detailed address in a large auditorium in the building of the Baha'i Headquarters. He spoke about the tribulations and afflictions of the Blessed Beauty and encouraged the friends to be obedient to the verses of the Supreme Pen, to be firm in the Covenant of God and to live in harmony with one another. He spoke in such explicit terms that those present were made firmly aware of their duties. He also told them about those things which are the means of preserving unity and harmony among the Baha'is.

**Grosse Building, 118 West 6th and Spring St., Los Angeles**  
**Location of the Baha'i Headquarters in 1912**  
**Saturday evening, October 19, 1912**

Talk of 'Abdu'l-Baha on service to the Cause of God:

This is a good meeting. It is a good gathering. This assemblage is the assemblage of God for it has not convened here for any worldly purpose. It is not organized because of any commercial purpose, nor is it held because of any political end or purpose. It is held purely for the sake of God. Therefore it is very blessed. I am very glad to find such a meeting in this city. In the Assembly the members are in the utmost unity. This assemblage does not entertain any desire except the favor of God. This assemblage has responded to the Call of the Kingdom of Abha, saying, Ya Baha el Abha! That assemblage the purpose of which is the illumination of the world of humanity, that assemblage the purpose of which is Universal Guidance, surely that assemblage is blessed.

Today various nations of the world are submerged in materialism, having no purpose except material profits and working for naught save the realization of their own ends. The assemblage which has turned to the Kingdom, which is possessed of a conscience, which is directed to God, is a Baha'i Assembly. Outside of that all the others are submerged in the sea of materialism. Therefore you must thank and praise God that the Sun of Reality has shone upon you, for the Breezes of Favor have blown towards you, the signs of God have been elevated towards you. The Heavenly Honor has descended upon you. The hosts of the Blessed Beauty of Abha have surrounded you. You have hearkened to the admonitions of God, you are pursuing the straight pathway. Therefore you must thank God for having become a proof, for having become manifestors of such bountiful bestowals.

I hope that you may act in accordance with the teachings of Baha'u'llah, that you may conduct yourselves in accordance



The Grosse Building was the location of the Baha'i Center and where 'Abdu'l-Baha gave His public talk in Los Angeles.

with the behests of the Blessed Beauty, even so. I have no doubt that the lights of this assemblage will shine upon the world, this assemblage will be the cause of guiding a goodly number of people, this assemblage will be the cause of uniting the people of the world, this assemblage will be instrumental in establishing the peace of the world internationally.

Do not look at your small number. Plurality of numbers is not of importance. It is rather the bounty of God that is essential — it is the confirmation of the heavenly kingdom. Consider past times. How often it has happened that a limited meeting, a small number, has finally widened its circle and grown in proportion, until it included all nations and religions. Therefore, the hearts must be looked at, not the pluralities. If a limited number of souls are possessed of hearts which are pure and tender, that limited number is equivalent in strength of character to the whole population of the earth.

Consider how, after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ — fifty days thereafter — a limited number of disciples gathered together on the Mount of Transfiguration, not far from Jaffa. The number of these was eleven. They gathered there with hearts pure, with intentions sincere, with spirits exhilarated. In the utmost of sincerity, without any care, without any promptings of self-desire did they gather together, this limited number, and there held a meeting on the Mount. Because of the purity of the hearts of those souls, because of their trustworthiness, reliance and the attraction of their hearts, the world was illumined. Christianity was advanced; the Roman empire became Christianized; the Assyrians were converted, also the Chaldeans. In other words, the illumination of his holiness Christ illumined all regions. All these were the blessed results of that meeting of eleven souls on the mountain. They held that meeting in the utmost of purity and sincerity, in the utmost of faith and assurance; in the utmost of attraction and zeal was that meeting held. All these colossal results were attained, these wondrous lights were expressed, this heavenly affair was promulgated.

Therefore do not look at your limited number, that you



are not capable of having a meeting the same as other people. Remember that importance is not attached to numbers. Importance concerns faith, assurance, veracity, firmness, attainment to the Kingdom of Abha, and self-sacrifice in the path of the Kingdom. If you attain to this, though there be but two people, remember that two people are the equivalent in strength of character to the whole world.

Therefore, I pray, asking for confirmations and assistance, that the aid and uplift of Baha'u'llah may reach you, the hosts of the Kingdom of Abha may reinforce you, that the powerful angels of God may assist you. Be assured of the victory; rest assured that you will be confirmed. That which is of essential importance is your unity and agreement. You must be in the utmost state of unity and agreement. You must love one another; you must be self-sacrificing for one another. If you observe any short-comings on the part of any, as much as you can, be forgiving and do not be hard. Even if you wish to admonish, let your admonitions be in symbols; do not express it explicitly lest any heart should be saddened. Remember that in the world of existence there is nothing so bad as inuring a heart, for the heart of man is the place of the descent of the Merciful, and man must not at all disquiet or harm the place of the Merciful. Man must ever strive to make the hearts grateful, to rejoice the spirits, to render his thoughts radiant, to become the cause of the comfort and ease of others. This is the station of the Baha'is and this is the utmost desire of those who are divine.

Now, the friends of God in Persia have reached such a stage that each is willing to sacrifice his life for the others, each one accounting himself the servant of the others. How many of the nobles are occupied with the service of the poor! How many of the dear ones are most humble and submissive in the presence of the lowly! What is it for? It is for the love of God. It is for sincerity. It is for faith. It is for certainty.

I came from San Francisco to see you and to visit Mr. Chase's grave. Truly Mr. Chase was a glorious personage, having no desire save the good pleasure of God. His attention

was directed to the Kingdom of God. He served during his lifetime. He was not at all wanting in service. He compiled several books proving the validity of the Movement. As much as he could, he endeavored to guide the people. You will never forget him, may you ever remember him, be ever respectful to his family and be a source of comfort to them. As many times as possible, at least once a year, you should make it a point to visit his tomb, for his spirit will be exhilarated through the loyalty of the friends, and in the worlds of God will it be happy. The friends of God must be kind to one another whether it be in life or after death.

The Blessed Beauty (Baha'u'llah) appeared in Persia, in Teheran. He was in the utmost of ease and affluence. He was most influential and surrounded with luxury. All the pleasures of the transitory world were provided for Him, and all the grandees of Persia longed to enjoy the influence and affluence, the things of wealth and position of Baha'u'llah. But consider that He suffered all these things to be separated from Him. He sacrificed His honor, His fame and His station amongst men, sacrificing all, even His life. Ever menaced by the sword, many were the ordeals which he endured, and many were the indignities to which He was subjected. How many nights He passed beneath chains, how many days in dark dungeons!

When I visited the dungeon in Teheran, as a child, in order to see Baha'u'llah — when the door was opened there were some steps leading down into the place. They took me as far as midway. I peered through the darkness; I could not see anyone; it was exceedingly gloomy. Then I heard the Blessed Voice saying, "Take the child away!" When I heard His voice, I tried to see the Blessed Beauty, but because of the great darkness I could not. Then I was taken out; they seated me. They said it was customary about midday to take the prisoners out for their meals, so there I sat. About noon the jailers were all ready and the prisoners were taken out. I saw Baha'u'llah's neck in chains, and another, both chained to the same links,

a link about His neck and another about the person who was chained with Him. The weight of the chain was so excessive that His neck was bent; He walked with great difficulty, and He was in a very sad condition. His clothes were tattered and battered; even the hat on His head was torn. He was in the most severe ordeal and His health was quite visibly failing. They brought me and seated me, and they took him to the place where there was a pond, in order that he might wash His face. After that they took Him back to the dungeon and, although I was a child, I was so overcome, I was unconscious. And then Baha'u'llah said, "Take the child to the house," therefore I was taken away.

This shows one of the ordeals of His life, and you can judge of the others accordingly. During fifty years, many were His vicissitudes. He suffered all these catastrophes for us, that we may turn to God; that we may attain to faith; that we may attain to certainty; that we may act in accordance with His teachings; that we may be the cause of the illumination of the world; that we may be the means of guiding the people. And now I wish that you, in the light of these sufferings of the Blessed Beauty for our guidance, for our illumination — likewise may be self-sacrificing. We must not forget His favors; we must not forget His troubles; we must not forget His catastrophes. We must ever remember them, striving that perchance, in thanksgiving for these favors, we may offer worthy service; we may live in accordance with His behests; we may forget ourselves; and that, like those holy souls who have sacrificed their lives, we may sacrifice our lives; we may be the cause of the heavenly peace; be the cause of the spreading of His fragrances; be the cause of the spread of His teachings. His teachings are the cause of the life of humanity; His teachings unify mankind; His teachings render eternal honor to man; His teachings are the cause of the sublimity of human nature; His teachings cause man to attain to progress and prosperity. His teachings are conducive to man's entrance into the Kingdom of Salvation.

All the people of the world look at us to see how we act;

what our characteristics are; what our attributes are; what our mode of procedure is. They all look towards us, and we must act in such wise that we may not be the cause of the degradation of the Cause of God. Nay, rather, that we may be the cause of the glory of God, and if we do not do so, how can we behold His face in His Kingdom? What shall be our apology? Did Baha'u'llah not teach us by his deeds? Did He not teach us through self-sacrifice? Did He not teach us through His ordeals and difficulties? Is it meet that we should forget them?

Thank God that He has suffered you to attain this great bestowal. Let us thank God that He has suffered us to be sheltered beneath the Tree of Life. Let us thank God that He has accepted us in his Kingdom. Let us offer thanks to God that He has specialized us for the favor which was the utmost aim of the holy saints. Let us thank God that, notwithstanding the lack of capacity, He bestows every favor upon us; every grace is showered upon us, and every bounty is revealed to us. He prepared for us the good of both worlds; He prepared for us eternal honor; He gave unto us the everlasting life; He chose us out of all the nations of the world and He caused us to attain to that which is the sublimity of the human world. Praise God for such an attainment at this! Thank God such a guidance is yours! And strive with life to hold aloft the banner of the great guidance, to be the cause of the illumination of the east and west, the cause of unity of all nations, that you may be the means of manifesting the spiritual attributes, that you may become imbued with the qualities of the faithful, that you may be distinguished in all virtues, that you may be set aglow with the fire of the love of God and attracted by the love of God.

This blessed dispensation is differentiated from all the other dispensations. There are special features of it not to be found in all the other dispensations. In the other dispensations the doors of differences were opened, but The Blessed Beauty in this great dispensation closed the doors of all differences so that no more shall there exist sects such as Catholic, or Greek Orthodox, or Protestant, or Arian, or Nestorian. There shall

be none of these; all shall be of the same faith, shall follow the same way. During the Christian dispensation, as recorded in the glorious gospel, there was no distinct standard given whereby you could differentiate the false from the truth; that is to say, various sects were unavoidable. There was no standard to show which was right and which was wrong.

At most, Jesus said to Peter, "Whom does thou say I am?" His holiness Peter said, "Thou art the Son of God." Then Christ said to Peter, "Verily, thou art a rock and upon this rock will I build my church." This was a confirmation of Peter's faith; that the faith of Peter in Christ was perfect, but he did not say, if any differences should arise, you should refer them to Peter, and whatsoever he says is right. He did not say that Peter was the promulgator or expounder of his gospel. He did not say, "Turn to Peter," therefore there were differences caused. There were various sects created. There were alienations. But the Blessed Perfection in this dispensation, in order to close the doors of differences, in order that no one should create a new sect, according to explicit texts in the Holy Book of Akdas, has clearly recorded that after I depart, turn to him who is the Branch extended from this pre-existent Root; and in the second phrase likewise most explicitly does he state. Then in the Book of the Covenant, in his own handwriting, he has recorded as to who he meant, what his purpose was regarding "the Branch extended." Then all the branches, all the twigs, all the relatives were addressed by Him explicitly, saying that all of you must turn to that personage, and that personage is the expounder of the Book.

That is to say, that no one has the right to say that Baha'u'llah has said this or that. Where in the gospel is there anything like that? Because He is the expounder; whatsoever He explains is correct, and beyond that it is incorrect. Likewise in all the Tablets He says, "O God, help those souls who are firm in the Covenant!" "O Lord, render radiant those who hold to the Testament!" "O Lord, those who are infirm, meet them with Thy wrath." "O God, be an assistant

of the Center of the Covenant; help him who helps Him.” “O Lord, avenge him who is wrathful towards Him,” and such statements in all the Tablets and prayers that he revealed. The Blessed Perfection made provisions that no dissension should take place in this dispensation. Lest there should be any disputes among the nations, lest there should be any discord amongst them, He has appointed a Center to ward off all differences whatsoever, so that what he has to say is right — just to ward off all differences. But now my purpose is this, lest there should be any differences here, lest there should be any differences of opinion among the friends who are to be the cause of the oneness of the world of humanity, lest they should disagree, — just as his holiness Christ says, “Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?”

Now, how could there be inharmony and disagreements among the friends? How could there be unity among the people of the world if the friends of God are not in unity? If the friends of God be not attracted to the Kingdom of Abha, who are to be attracted? Praise be to God, in this age the doors of disagreement have been entirely shut. Even He has said that whatever the International House of Justice decides upon, that is the Will of God. Why? In order that there shall be no discords created. In order that all friends of God shall be united and agreed. For no soul shall there be any opportunity to disagree. He has said that whatsoever of the texts are not explicit, the International House of Justice is the Law Giver, and the law given by it is the Law of God, and its prohibition is the prohibition of God. Whatsoever the International House of Justice should decide, if anyone should dispute, he is deprived of God's mercy, and I verily shun him, because the commandments of the International House of Justice are final. Thus He has emphasized this fact lest in future times there should be any differences of opinion, and where differences of opinion obtain, there should be a House of Justice to refer to, and whatever it decides upon, that is ever the Law of



God, and there shall be no room for disagreement.

Consider how distinguished this dispensation is! This dispensation is one people. It presents one pathway. Therefore I admonish you for God, if any souls here should disagree among themselves, know that these disagreements are not accepted at the Threshold of Baha'u'llah.

If anything should happen to you, you should ask that it be decided according to the Law of God.

Again, here in America, I hear so many reported traditions attributed to me, of which I know nothing. For example, it reaches me here that I have said such a thing as the city of New York was to be inundated at a certain time, and that this city would be destroyed. Of this my spirit never dreamt! Therefore if anyone should relate any traditions or opinions, say something or prophecy, you must say, "Let me have a writing on that subject; let us have some trace of His Pen concerning this", and if he should present to you a written statement, it is worthy of credence, otherwise you may know it is not important. This is his or her own traditions. It is an emanation of his own imagination. It is a dream of the person speaking. Would I say such a thing as the city of New York would be drowned, or a part of the country destroyed? These are the sayings of children. Such a thing never emanated from my tongue. That which I utter has to do with the Blessed Writings. I am not an astrologer, or a sorcerer or a fortune-teller, to speak of mountains, seas and happenings. This is the work only of astrologers. This is not worthy of a conscientious man, to say nothing of those who believe in God.

The purpose is this that, praise be to God, Baha'u'llah did not leave anything latent. He has uttered that which He should, and we must act in accordance with His utterances. We must act in accordance with His Teachings. We must be like pens in the writer's hands so that whatever emanates from the pen may be from the writer, we must act in accordance with the explicit texts of the Blessed Beauty, and to that which is explicit we must direct our attention. If anything

should arise, the matter must be referred to the Expounder and whatsoever He says it is His explicit text and it is correct. Otherwise He has said if two people disagree, both are wrong. Beware lest you have any disagreement. Beware lest you have any luke-warmness. Beware lest you have any vain thoughts. Strive with heat to promulgate the Teachings of the people; that you may be an honor to the Cause of Baha'u'llah"

('Abdu'l-Baha rose to go, the audience rising also. He paused, turned to the friends and uttered this final moving appeal.)

We talked a great deal. Good night to all of you. Perchance I will leave tomorrow. I did not have time to come as far as this, but out of love for you I came. I am hastening back to the Orient, perhaps day after tomorrow. Therefore I beg of you never to forget me at all. Pray for me! Ask confirmations in my behalf. Beg for me the assistance and aid of the Blessed Beauty, for I have a weighty burden. No one could bear what I bear. Unless the power of His confirmations should assist me, I am impotent. Hence I beg of you to pray for me ever, or I can do nothing."

(From the Ella Cooper papers, US National Baha'i archives.)

That night the Master was so exhausted that he could not take supper. A little cheese and bread was left in His room so that He could have it if He got hungry during the night.

*Mahmud's Diary*, p. 339

**Sunday October 20, 1912**

**Los Angeles and Pasadena**

The friends wanted to share with Him some local natural beauty, so in the morning 'Abdu'l-Baha was taken on a sightseeing tour which included Pasadena and a visit to the Busch Sunken Gardens,

Busch Gardens was named for Adolphus Busch who purchased a winter home in Pasadena, and landscaped the 36 acres around his home with thousands of plants, as well as statues, waterfalls and walking paths. He opened these "Busch Gardens" to the public in 1906. The gardens became a major tourist attraction and prompted the Pacific Electric Railway to establish a stop for the gardens' visitors. Later the nearby Hollywood film industry used the gardens in many films, including *Frankenstein* (1931), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931), *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), and *Gone with the Wind* (1939).



Busch Sunken Gardens – Pasadena California.

**'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to Miss. Harriet M. Wise at her home in Pasadena.**

Miss Harriet M. Wise had 'received the Baha'i message from Monsieur [Hippolyte] Dreyfus in the winter of 1905 in Paris. She had immediately accepted its truth and wrote to 'Abdu'l-Baha. In response she received the following Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Baha:



Harriet M. Wise (1866 – 1913)

To Miss Harriet M. Wise, Pasadena, Cal.

He is God!

O thou who hast turned thy face towards the Kingdom!

I read what thou hast written. Know thou that there is in the world of existence a Center for each great matter, and bounties shower from that Center.

For instance, in the circle of the sun, the sun is the center of light. Likewise there is a real Center for pure Love and now that Center is manifest in this world, from which the Lights of Love reflect to all parts of the Universe.

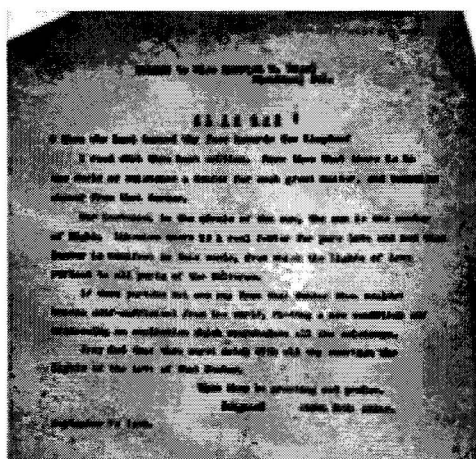
If thou partake but one ray from that Center thou wouldst become self-sufficient from the World, finding a new condition and witnessing an exaltation which overshadows all the existence.

Pray God that thou mayest catch with all thy exertion the Lights of the Love of that Center.

Upon thee be greeting and praise

(signed) 'Abdu'l-Baha Abbas

September 7, 1905.



Tablet from Abdu'l-Baha to Harriet Wise – Sept. 7, 1905.



Home of Miss Wise, Pasadena, California.

When it was uncertain if 'Abdu'l-Baha would visit California a group of Californians, including Helen Goodall, Ella Cooper and Harriet Wise, traveled to New York to see Him. They arrived July 9th, 1912. After a bath and dinner, the women took a taxi to the house where He was staying. "As we stepped from the taxicab, there sat 'Abdu'l-Baha on the steps waiting to welcome us. 'Very welcome! Very welcome! It is good that you have come.' He then

added, "The prayer of my heart now is that, when the veil will be parted for me to step over to the other side, I shall hear His Heavenly Voice say: Very welcome! Very welcome! It is good that you have come."

'Abdu'l-Baha asked Mrs. Goodall to come and sit beside Him. "These are old friends and firm ones. These will be aided because they are firm and steadfast, and holding to the Covenant of God."

Then He was told the California friends were in great unity and harmony. "In reality, this is the cause of my happiness. In reality the friends in California are very warm. I have felt it. Whenever the name California is mentioned, I am made happy. I am very pleased with the people of California. Especially the friends of God."

Mrs. Goodall said she wished she might have brought all the friends in California. "They are here. You did bring them. You are here and that is sufficient. I am made happy by your coming. It is a great thing for 'Abdu'l-Baha to be made happy. I am not always made happy. It is because Mrs. Goodall's heart is so pure. Your hearts are so pure. I am made happy by your coming"

Extracts taken from the notes of Harriet M. Wise

(New York July 9th – July 21st)

Miss Wise was quite ill for many years and For a long time she had been a patient sufferer, but her life was prolonged that she might taste the sweetness of her last year. She had spent several days in the presence of the Center of the Covenant and when she came home was radiant in spirit but sick in body. Her health continued to decline and during the last few days of her illness when asked what message she would send to one of the friends, she said: "It is all so glorious!"

**On Sunday Abdu'l-Baha gave four short talks to the people assembled at the Lankershim Hotel**

**Lankershim Hotel, Los Angeles,**

**Sunday Morning, October 20, 1912**

**Some of the words spoken by 'Abdu'l-Baha in Los Angeles from notes taken by Miss Mai M. Auforth.**

Very welcome! Very welcome! Are you all well? Very welcome! Very welcome. Very, Very. I am very glad to see you all, exceedingly glad to see you. Praise be to God Baha'u'llah has such friends in this city, such radiant friends; such shining faces, such pure hearts is He possessed of. I am thankful, I am very, very glad to see you indeed, and I hope that in this city you may prove to be the standard of guidance; that you may be the cause of the uplift of the Cause; that you may be the means of promoting the word of God; thus may the people declare that, indeed you are Baha'is, real Baha'is; that your attributes are glorious that your conduct is glorious as Baha'is; that your attributes are Baha'is; that your works are Baha'i.

The purpose of being a Baha'i is this, that man should be adorned with all the virtues of humanity. Baha'i means a School, and we are the children in that School; we are the pupils in that School. And when we graduate from that School, we must have a certificate showing that we have acquired virtues; and when we are capable of graduating from that School, when we leave this world, when we hasten to the Kingdom of God, what is our certificate? It consists of good deeds, consists of attractions of the heart, it consists of philanthropies we have achieved. It is Faith; it is Knowledge; it is the love of God. It is Unity and Agreement; It is the fellowship of the hearts. This is the certificate we should carry to the Kingdom showing that in the School we have become imbued with these characteristics, and from the endless bounties of God we have been blessed. I hope that our certificate will be full and valid, and that may show full well our achievements;



that we may be enrolled on the Wonderful Scroll; in short I hope that this visit of mine to this city shall be productive of results, and that these results may be that all humanity enjoy the fragrances which shall emanate from your regions, that news reaching any part shall be the cause of joy to the hearts, shall be the means of dilating the breasts. Thus may all the friends thank God saying: "Praise be to God in Los Angeles there have appeared certain Baha'is who are truly the radiant candles of humanity; are blessed souls, They are the means of admonishing the people; they are progressive amongst mankind; they are very ethical people; they are the cause of the shining forth of the Sun of Reality. May they all thank God; may they all desire to become like you.

This is My Hope; and the foundation of this is firmness in the Covenant. If you are firm in the Covenant you may rest assured that the aid and confirmation of Baha'u'llah will reach you. Consider how it is in Persia. The friends of God, notwithstanding their many enemies, in their hearts are firm in God's Covenant. Day by day they are growing brighter; day by day they are becoming uplifted; day by day becoming dearer; day by day their hearts are more attentive. This is the fundamental; because firmness in the Covenant insures Baha'i oneness. If there is no firmness in the Covenant, this Baha'i oneness will be dissipated and the Baha'i world will be like other worlds, like other religions and will be subjected to various sects and creeds; and there is no greater injury to the Cause of God than this – that the Baha'i Cause should be composed of various sects and denominations. . The Blessed Perfection has uprooted the cause of this, and unless some souls should outwardly stand against Baha'u'llah, should go contrary to His commands, saying Baha'u'llah did not know, that Baha'u'llah made a mistake, that He did not understand; why did He do this? But if you prove to be firm in the Covenant, the confirmation of the Kingdom of Abha will reach you successively and assist you and will be your helper, your assistor (sic) and your confirmer; thus will these confirmations

by (sic) yours under all conditions, even as it is in Persia. In Persia you have a specimen of this. See what it has done; and all this was due to their firmness in the Covenant. If they had not remained firm in the Covenant now they would have been scattered entirely, there would have been no mention of it, there would even have been no trace (sic) Now you read in the papers what they are doing, what progress, what attractions are accomplished. Of what power are they possessed, what minds! That is why I speak of this, and I know that you are firm. You do not listen to the nonsense of the people for this sort of thing has always been. Read the history of Christ; read the history of the Church; consider what things have happened. They were a mighty people, but the people you have here, they are not important at all. You must be steadfast — you must be firm.

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Lankershim Hotel, Los Angeles,

Sunday Afternoon, October 20, 1912

Some of the words spoken by 'Abdu'l-Baha in Los Angeles from notes taken by Miss Mai M. Auforth.

Welcome, very welcome. Are you all well? You must be happy, Very, very grateful because it was very difficult for me to come and reach this part. It was beyond possibility. It was divine confirmation for me to reach here at all; even those in the far East do not believe that I had come as far as Los Angeles Where is Acca – Where is Los-Angeles? These regions are far away, what vast distances between them and you, distance indeed; but consider how I longed to see you wherefore, I traverse such distances across country and ocean; otherwise this great distance between Los Angeles and the Far East was impossible for me, but because of excessive longing, I came. I hope this meeting will bear great results, may it be like the meeting of the rain with the earth; may it be like the meeting of the breeze with the garden; may it be like the meeting of the sun with the mirror – may great results come from it, may wonderful traces emanate from it amongst humanity. There

are many meetings, one is due to family relations, another because of commercial ends or another meeting may be for political reasons. All are due to one or another purpose, but from all such meetings no results are forthcoming, anyway if they do bear results, it is only temporary, not lasting. There is the meeting for the sake of God. This causes ideal attractions. It is the proclivities of the conscience and such meetings bear great results, and now praise be to God our meeting is perfect. We have no purpose, no desire, no consideration save for your assurances for the love of God and surely results will be forthcoming, they may be quick or they may be long in coming. If we turn to the Kingdom of Abha, if we supplicate the Kingdom of Abha, if we be led by the difficulties of Baha'u'llah, if we forget ourselves, if we shun all passions and desires and, in the utmost of humility and submissiveness rely on the Kingdom of Abha, if we achieve good deeds, undoubtedly quick results will be forthcoming, to the extent that we ourselves will be astonished. . . . If we do not attain to this, the results will be long in coming, delayed. Other people will come and they will be able to achieve these results. At all events this is the object, there is no doubt about it, but there is the difference, whether we are able to accomplish it or others. We must strive to be instrumental ourselves; otherwise God has many servants, He has other people who will be instrumental in serving, and they will serve the Kingdom of God. We must strive that this crown of glory may be placed on our heads. This is our desire.

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**Lankershim Hotel, Los Angeles,**

**Sunday Late Afternoon, October 20, 1912**

**Some of the words spoken by 'Abdu'l-Baha in Los Angeles  
from notes taken by Miss Mai M. Auforth.**

Come My Dears: Praise be to God that this city is progressive, that it is adorned with the existence of the believers. One would not have dreamt that this city contained such beautiful friends. The friends in this city are divine from every standpoint; their characteristics are very praiseworthy; their behavior is very lovely, in reality you are befitting to be known as believers of Baha'u'llah, and you are worthy of becoming the servants and maidservants of Baha'u'llah. I have been made hopeful, looking into your faces, and I am made sure that in America believers will be found like unto the believers in Persia. These believers and these friends will advance daily; they will become superior beings, the confirmation of the Kingdom of Abha be with you; the fragrances of the Blessed Beauty are surrounding you, the glances of The Merciful are surrounding you, the heart of 'Abdu'l-Baha is with you, the spirit of 'Abdu'l-Baha is with you, the eyes of 'Abdu'l-Baha are with you. Day and night do I supplicate and entreat and call you. Be confirmed and constant, that from the fragrance and protection of Baha'u'llah, you may become personified spirit; that you may become embodied mind; that you may become worthy personages, that all over the world your fame may be spread; that in reality in the city of Los Angeles there are real Baha'is who will live in accord with the teaching of Baha'u'llah. Therefore they are distinguished above all other people. Their faces are illumined, their characteristics are perfumed, their hearts are brilliant; their spirits are attracted, and although they are walking on the surface of the earth, yet they are traveling in the Kingdom of God; although they are active physical bodies, yet in the Kingdom of Abha do they soar. Day and night do I pray and entreat and commune with God that day by day you may advance; day by day you may progress spiritually; day by day you may become greater; day

by day your spirituality may become brighter; may day by day you receive spiritual life so that you may attain to the highest point of your desires.

The deceased one, Mr. Chase, was a blessed soul. He was a holy reality. His station in this life was not known. Yesterday I specially took a trip to visit his shrine. At the time of visiting his shrine I found wonderful spirituality. You must celebrate yearly the day of his departure from this life, and all of you on my behalf be good and visit his blessed shrine, and if it is possible spread a feast for the poor and give charity to those who are deprived. On that occasion mention the service which he has rendered and read passages from his works, and explain the history of his life. This is my wish of you. I have arranged that they may place a tombstone on his resting place, and have a sentence which may be engraved on that stone. I love Mr. Chase very much indeed, for his heart was pure. He had no other aim except the purpose of the Cause. He had no other thought except the Kingdom, therefore he was very much nearer to me and had the assurance of Baha'u'llah. He was accepted and blessed, perfect. At this very moment he is submerged in the Kingdom of heaven.

Now I say good-bye, but I will never forget you. You will ever be in my memory. I will ever pray for you and beg assistance and confirmation for you.

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**Lankershim Hotel, Los Angeles,  
Sunday Farewell Speech, October 20, 1912  
Some of the words spoken by 'Abdu'l-Baha in Los Angeles  
from notes taken by Miss Mai M. Auforth.**

I desire to say farewell today as I am going to leave in a few hours. But I do not say goodbye. I repeat "au revoir." It is my hope that another meeting will be realized. Some of you will be fortunate enough to come to the Holy Land and will visit the Holy Shrine of Baha'u'llah, and there you will meet me. I

will be made very happy, exceedingly happy to meet you there, for we will converse there at the heavenly court. Now, temporarily I say to you *au revoir*. After my leaving this part you must arise and show the utmost firmness and conviction, for God has chosen you. The light of guidance has illumined your heart and you have become real Baha'is under the shade of His protection. You are all living, you are the bright candles of the Cause for you have discovered the Sun of Reality. You are the brilliant stars of this horizon, for you have stepped into the Kingdom of God. You are the fruitful orchard trees of this orchard; you are implanted in the rose garden of Abha. You are the flowers of the rose garden of significances, for you have attained to reality of the Cause of God. You should not think that you are like other people. They are dead and you are living, they are blind and you are given the power of insight. They are deaf, and you are given the power of hearing; they are mute and you are given the power of speech, and the signs of these bounties will appear in the future. Your lights will flood their world in the future. For the present it is like unto a gardener who scatters seed in the field. In the future these seeds will grow and develop; they will grow into beautiful trees with overshadowing branches, and they will bring forth blossoms and fruits. The all the people will be astonished, and you will be astonished thinking what wonderful bounty has been bestowed upon you, and what a great bestowal and what a wonderful gift; what outpouring of heaven and what divine effulgence. You will be astonished and all the people will be astonished. Just as this condition is realized today in Persia. The believers of God are astonished, and the people are astonished.

It is My great hope that under the protection of the True one you may always be protected; that you may be submerged in the sea of Divine Mercy; that you will be set aglow with the fire of His love, that you may be resuscitated with the water of eternal life. Day by day you may develop in spiritual life, so that you may attain to the apex of the Kingdom, and there you may witness the lights of the Kingdom of God.

Be happy! Be rejoiced! Live! If you are not happy who on earth will be happy? If you are not rejoiced, who will be rejoiced? If you are not illumined, who will be illumined? If you are not honored, who will be honored? Are you not getting the wonderful bounties surrounding you? You will attain to wonderful spirit. you will receive new power; you will soar.

Know this for a certainty. The darkness will not be dispelled save through the light of Baha'u'llah, and this tribulation cannot be calmed save through the tranquility bestowed by Baha'u'llah.

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All through the day people streamed into the hotel and into His rooms to seek a little time with Him. Children were brought to Him to receive His blessings and protection. Churches, clubs and various organizations sent messages asking that He consider prolonging His stay to speak at their gatherings. That afternoon 'Abdu'l-Baha also met with a Theosophist lady, but her name was not recorded.

ANGELES, CAL. TRIBUNE  
Sunday, October 20, 1912

## ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS IS IN LOS ANGELES

Son of Baha-Ollah, the Prophet, Pays  
Visit to City

Abdul-Baha Abbas, son of Baha-Ollah, the prophet, who brought the Bahai movement out of Persia, is in Los Angeles enroute for a tour around the world to bring to the people the message of "oneness of God, the oneness of religion, the oneness of humanity, the eradication of prejudice, and universal peace."

This Persian comes out of the east is an oriental missionary to the modern world. He is a patriarchal figure who wears his native costume with flowing robe, and oriental trousers and head cover. He speaks little English and usually talks through a translator.





The Overland Limited - between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

**Monday 21 October, 1912**

**Departure for San Francisco**

From morning till noon, the Master's suite and corridors were filled with people. 'Abdu'l-Baha walked among the friends with instructions on divine teachings, universal peace, divine virtues, and heavenly perfections. The friends brought their children to meet Him, and receive blessings.

In the afternoon He spoke to a larger crowd about the teachings of the Supreme Pen and the greatness of the Baha'i Cause. In the course of His talk, He said:

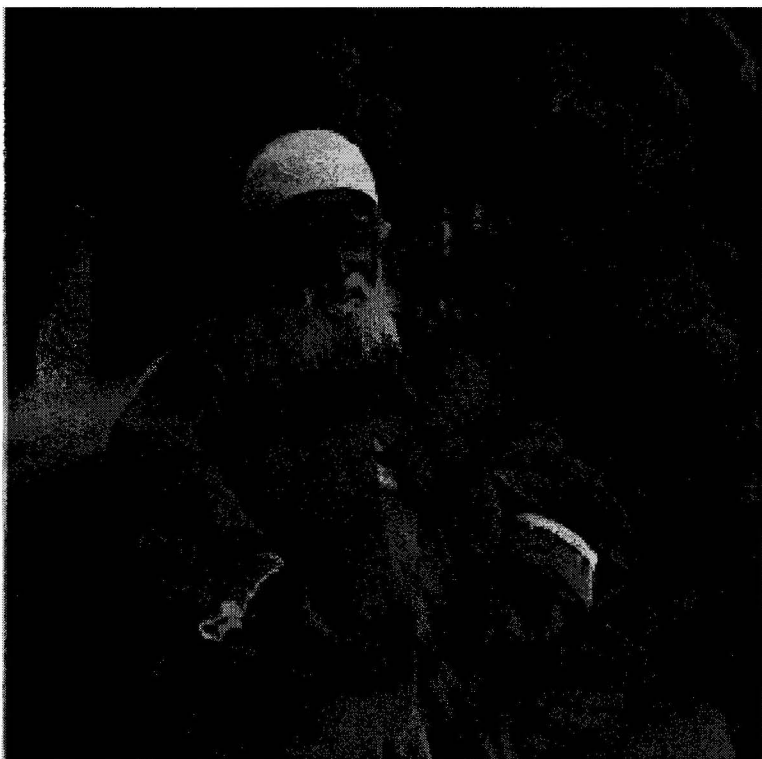
"If you desire the nearness of God, you must sever yourself from everything and become purified and sanctified from the dross of this transitory world. You must become submerged in the sea of the love of God. You must occupy your time with His mention and praise. Baha'u'llah alone must be the Beloved of the world. Observe: until the disciples of Christ renounced themselves they did not resuscitate the world. Thus, you must always be occupied with the mention of God and in spreading the teachings of Baha'u'llah."

He departed by train that afternoon returning to San Francisco.

When the party arrived at the train station it was discovered that Mrs. Goodall had purchased Pullman sleeper accommodations for everyone. But 'Abdu'l-Baha's mind was so occupied that He could not sleep.

The Diary of Mirza Mahmud-i-Zarqani

And so with broken hearts, but with spirits recharged, the Los Angeles friends bid farewell to their Beloved Master, as the train sped away on its long journey back to San Francisco.



## Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Baha to Los Angeles Baha'is

**B**efore the establishment of a Baha'i administrative system when 'Abdu'l-Baha wished to communicate with the friends He would send His Tablets (messages) through individual members of the communities and ask them to share it with other friends. Although thus far we have located six Tablets written directly to the Los Angeles community and the Los Angeles Baha'i Assembly, there are in fact several hundred messages written to the Baha'is in the Los Angeles area. Some of these messages are personal and for the individuals addressed, but many are general in nature and were intended to be shared.

The US National Archives has originals or copies of Tablets written to Los Angeles for the following Baha'is: Frank and Loretta Beckett, Mary Burton, Mrs. M. Carvell, Thornton Chase, Florence Clapp, Flora Clark, Harriet Cline, Julia Culver, Mr. de Boer, Georgiana Dean, Rosella Dennis, Nathan Ward Fitz-Gerald, Alexander J. Frankland, Elizabeth Hammond, Harriet Wise, Miriam and Charles Haney, Willard Hatch, Roy Herrick, Beatrice Irwin, Grace Lamb, Ella Nash, Nellie Phillips, Laura (Orol) Platt, Mabel Rice-Wray, Elizabeth Shoaff, Artie Spear, Henriette Wagner, Louise (Shahnaz) Waite, Edgar Waite, George Winterburn, and George Witte. These are some of the many California Baha'is who received personal letters from Abdul-Baha.

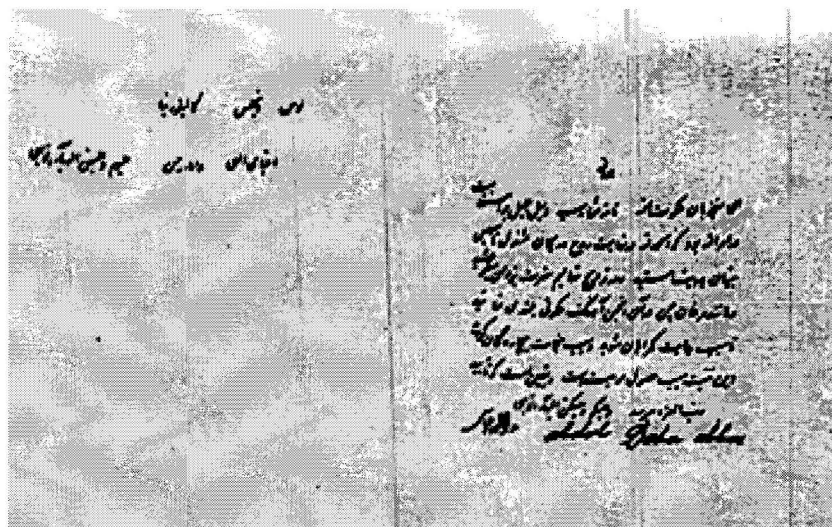
To the believers and the maid-servants of God  
 Los Angeles, California  
 Upon them be Baha'u'llah El Abha.

He is God!

O ye believers of God and the maidservants of the Merciful! Praise be to God that the cloud of Mercy appeared in the heaven of Los Angeles and the rain of the Bestowal of Love poured down. Glorification behoveth him for the signs of vegetation became manifest. It is now evident that the journey of Abdul Baha to Los Angeles has brought forth very important results: the believers have obtained joy and happiness, gained exhilaration and exultation and with hearts intoxicated with the wine of the Love of God are delivering eloquent speeches in the Meetings and are guiding the people to His Highness the promised One, saying: - "Praise be to God He has appeared with a luminous countenance. Verily the Promised One is His Highness Baha'u'llah who hath dawned from the Eastern Horizons like unto a glorious sun and hath diffused the rays of the most great guidance i.e, the heavenly teachings in all the countries of the world, "Happy is your condition for ye have arisen to render such a mighty service," neither were ye agitated by the tests, nay rather, day unto day ye are becoming more illumined and are advancing more and more in this path. Rest yet assured that the bestowals of the Kingdom of Abha, shall encircle you!

Upon ye be Baha El Abha!

Signed Abdul Baha Abbas,  
 Trans., by M. A. Sohrab,  
 July 10, 1913, Port Said Egypt.



To the believers of God and the maid-servants of God  
Upon them be Baha'u'llah – El-Abha – Los Angeles, California  
He is God!

O ye who are attracted to the Kingdom of God!

Your letter was received. It was glorious proof of your firmness in the Cause of God. Praise be to God that with the utmost joy and fragrance ye are engaged in laying the foundation of the edifice of Guidance and are striving in the promotion of the Teachings of His Highness the Almighty, and like unto the birds of meadows you are singing the Anthem of the Kingdom in that meeting – so you may become the cause of guidance of the erring ones and the means of the salvation of the wicked ones.

This intention is conducive to the attainment of the Divine Bounty. It is certain that the Confirmation of the Lord of Glory will descend upon you.

Upon ye be Baha El Abha!

'Abdu'l-Baha Abbas

July 29, 1914, Home of 'Abdu'l-Baha,  
Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria





To the believers of God and the maidservants of the Merciful,  
Los Angeles  
Upon them be Baha-ul-Abha,

He is God!

O ye blessed souls;

The most blessed souls are those who have freed themselves from the material world and have turned their faces toward God. Such souls, though apparently earthly, yet in reality they are heavenly; their body is of the phenomenal world, and yet their spirit (emanated) from the world of God. Since you belong to this class of souls, therefore you have realized the Kingdom of God and have partaken of the bestowals of the Holy Spirit.

Thank ye God that you have been confirmed to achieve such a blessing. I wish I could write to every one of you individually, but letters are pouring from the East and the West and consequently I am obliged to write for every number of letters one single letter; therefore I beg to be excused. My Heart is in touch with every one of you and sends you a special message.

Upon ye be Baha-ul-Abha

(signed) Abdul Baha Abbas  
Translated in Mt. Carmel,  
Haifa, Syria, August 10, 1914



### BAHAIS OF CALIFORNIA

To the friends and maid-servants of the Merciful in Los Angeles and the other cities of California, care of Mr. and Mrs. Beckett—Upon them be BAHA'O'LLAH El-Abha!

He Is God!

O ye friends and maid-servants of the Merciful!

From the spiritual assembly of Los Angeles a letter has been received. It was indicative of the fact that the blessed souls in California, like unto an immovable mountain, are withstanding the gale of violation, have like unto blessed trees been implanted in the soil of the Covenant and are in the utmost firmness and steadfastness. The hope is entertained, therefore, that through the blessings of the Sun of Truth they may daily increase in their firmness and steadfastness. The tests of every dispensation are in direct proportion with the greatness of the Cause and as heretofore such a manifest Covenant, written by the Supreme Pen, has not been entered upon, the tests are proportionately severe. These trials cause the feeble souls to waver while those who are firm are not affected. These agitations of the violators are no more than the foam of the ocean, which is one of its inseparable features, but the ocean of the Covenant shall surge and shall cast ashore those dead bodies for it cannot contain them. Thus it is seen that the ocean of the Covenant has surged and surged until it has thrown out the dead bodies—the souls that are deprived of the Spirit of God and are lost in passion and self and are seeking leadership. In fine, this froth of the ocean shall not endure and shall soon disappear and vanish, while on the other hand the ocean of the Covenant shall eternally surge and roar.

Consider then that Christ, in order to preserve the unity of Christendom, said to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." This Word has secured every one's submissiveness and allegiance and has preserved for a thousand years the unity of the Christian world. Notwithstanding

the fact that this declaration was not a command to obey and to follow and was verbally delivered, yet it has proved to do away with any foam that might appear on the surface of the ocean of Christ and to cast ashore any dead body that sought the vanities of this world. At present His Holiness BAHÁ'O'LLAH, through His Supreme Pen, has written the Book of the Covenant and has called it the "Book of the Covenant," and has entered with every one into a covenant and a testament. He first addresses the Aghsans, then the Afnans and then the relations bidding them to turn their faces to the Center of the Covenant and has then, in accordance with the explicit text of the Most Holy Book (the Book of Laws), made the Center of the Covenant the Expounder of the Book.

From the early days of creation down to the present time, throughout all the divine dispensations, such a firm and explicit Covenant has not been entered upon. In view of this fact is it possible for these foams to remain on the surface of the ocean of the Covenant? No, by God! The violators are trampling upon their own dignity, are uprooting their own foundation and are proud in that they are upheld by flatterers who exert a great effort to shake the faith of feeble souls. But this action of theirs is of no consequence; it is a mirage and not water, the foam and not the sea, the mist and not the cloud, illusion and not reality. All this you shall soon see.

In short, praise be to God, ye are firm and steadfast and be ye thankful that like unto blessed trees ye are firmly implanted in the soil of the Covenant. It is sure that every firm one will grow, will yield fresh fruits and will increase daily in freshness and grace. Reflect upon all the writings of BAHÁ'O'LLAH, whether epistles or prayers, and ye shall surely come across a thousand passages wherein BAHÁ'O'LLAH prays as follows: "O God! Exterminate the violators of the Covenant and defeat the oppressors of the Testament." "He who denies the Covenant and the Testament is rejected by God, and he who remains firm and steadfast therein is favored at the Threshold of Oneness." Such sayings and prayers abound, refer to them

and ye shall know.

In short, never be depressed. The more ye are stirred by violation, the more deepen ye in firmness and steadfastness, and be assured that the divine hosts shall conquer for they are assured of the victory of the Abha Kingdom. Throughout all regions the standard of firmness and steadfastness is upraised and the flag of violation is debased for only a few weak souls have been led away by the flattery and the specious arguments of the violators are outwardly with the greatest care exhibiting firmness but inwardly are engaged in stirring souls. Only a few who are the leaders of those who stir and agitate are outwardly known as violators while the rest, through subtle means deceive the souls, for outwardly they assert their firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant but when they come across responsive ears they secretly sow the seeds of suspicion. The case of all of them resembles the violation of the Covenant by Judas Iscariot and his followers. Consider: Has any result or trace remained after them? Not even a name has been left behind his followers and although a great number of Jews have sided with him it was as if he had no followers at all. This Judas Iscariot who was the leader of the apostles betrayed His Holiness Christ for thirty drachme.

Take heed, O ye people of perception! At present these insignificant violators will surely give away the Center of the Covenant for the large sum which they have begged by every subtle means. It is now thirty years that His Holiness BAHÁ'U'LLAH has ascended and these violators have meanwhile striven with the utmost effort. What have they done so far? Under all conditions those who have remained firm in the Covenant have conquered while the violators have met defeat, dejection and disappointment. After the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha, no trace of them shall remain. These souls ignore what will happen and are proud of their own fancies.

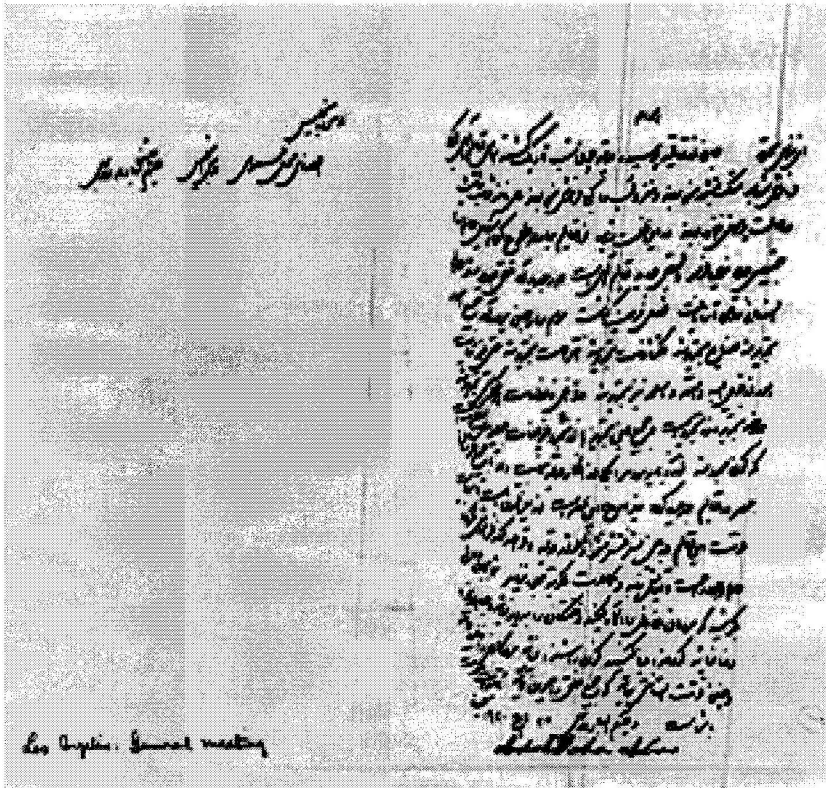
In short, O ye friends of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful! The hand of the divine bounty has placed upon your heads a bejeweled crown, the precious gems of which shall

eternally shine over all regions. Appreciate this bounty and unloosen the tongue in praise and thanksgiving, and engage in the promulgation of the divine teachings for this is the Spirit of Life and the means of salvation.

Upon ye be Baha-El-Abha.

(Signed) 'ABDU'L-BAHA ABBAS.

Translated by Shoghi Rabbani,  
Bahjeh, Acca, Palestine, July 23, 1919



## LOS ANGELES ASSEMBLY

To the members of the spiritual assembly of Los Angeles, California, care of the maid-servant of God, Mrs. Ella G. Cooper—Upon them be BAHA'O'LLAH El-Abha!

He Is God!

O ye blessed souls!

Although ye are undergoing crucial tests in view of the repeated and assiduous attempts of some people to shake the faith of the friends in Los Angeles, yet ye are under the guarding eye of the bounty of BAHA'O'LLAH and are assisted by legions of angels.

Walk, therefore, with a sure step and engage with the utmost assurance and confidence in the promulgation of the divine fragrances, the glorification of the Word of God and firmness in the Covenant. Rest ye assured that if a soul arises in the utmost perseverance and raises the Call of the Kingdom and resolutely promulgates the Covenant—be he an insignificant ant—he shall be enabled to drive away the formidable elephant from the arena, and if he be a feeble moth he shall cut to pieces the plumage of the rapacious vulture.

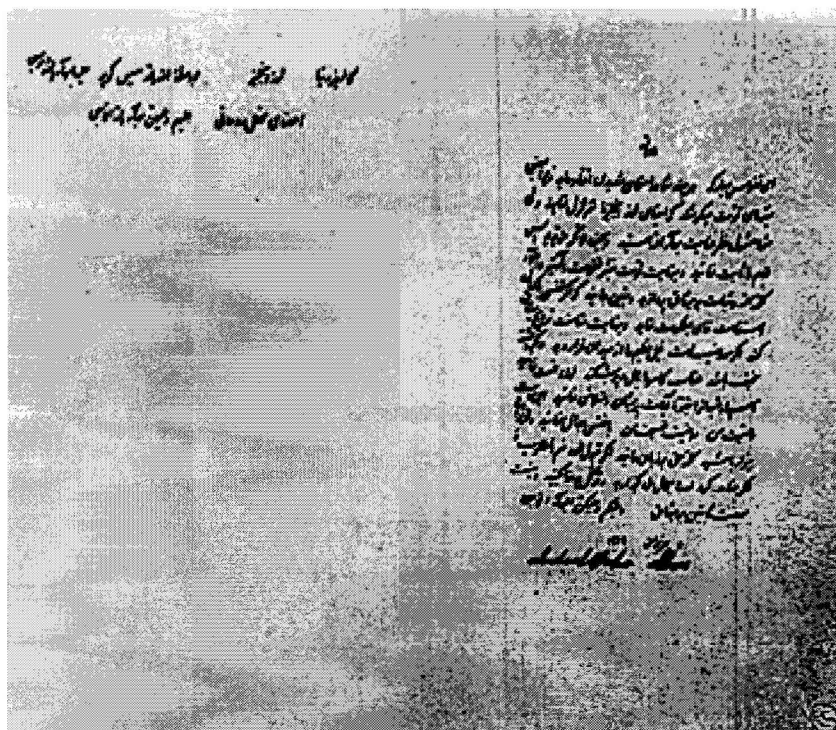
Endeavor, therefore, that ye may scatter and disperse the army of doubt and of error with the power of the Holy Utterances. This is my will and this is my counsel. Do not quarrel with anybody, and shun every form of dispute. Utter the Word of God. If he accepts it the desired purpose is attained, and if he turns away leave him to himself and trust to God.

Such is the attribute of those who are firm in the Covenant.  
Upon ye be Baha-El-Abha!

(Signed) 'ABDU'L-BAHA ABBAS.

Translated by Shoghi Rabbani,  
Haifa, Palestine, June 2, 1919





To the members of the General Assembly of Los Angeles,  
Upon them be the Glory of the Most Glorious.

He is God!

O ye honoured Souls:

The world had, through the rotten, out-of-date and blind imitations, become like unto a dark night. The foundations of the Teachings of God had totally been forgotten. The people had adhered to the shell and neglected the kernel. The nations had, like unto worn-out garments, fallen into a pitiful condition.

In this intense darkness the light of the Teachings of Baha'u'llah appeared and adorned the temple of the world with a new Robe. This new Robe is the Divine Principles. A new Cycle dawned; Creation was renewed; the world of humanity received a new Spirit; the season of autumn passed away and the life-giving springtime arrived. Everything was renewed; sciences were reborn; thoughts were rebuilt; etiquette became remodeled; industry became revolutionized; discoveries were renovated; inventions were regenerated; even trivial matters such as dress, merchandise and weapons were transformed; the laws and regulations of every Government became reconstituted. In short, renovation followed renovation.

All these renovations originate in the Renewal of the Splendid Graces of the Lord of the Kingdom through which the universe was rejuvenated. Therefore the point is to release the people entirely from the worn-out thoughts so that all their mind may be concentrated in the new Teachings which constitute the Spirit of this Age and the light of this Century. Unless these Principles are among men established with full power and unless these old habits and out-of-date customs are forgotten, the world of existence cannot enjoy ease and comfort and cannot exhibit Heavenly accomplishments.

Ye should strive with heart and soul so that those who are negligent may become cognizant, those who are asleep

may become awakened, those who are ignorant may obtain wisdom, those who are blind may obtain sight, those who are deaf may receive hearing, and those who are dead may be revived.

Ye should exhibit such a strength of steadfastness as to make all the people astonished.

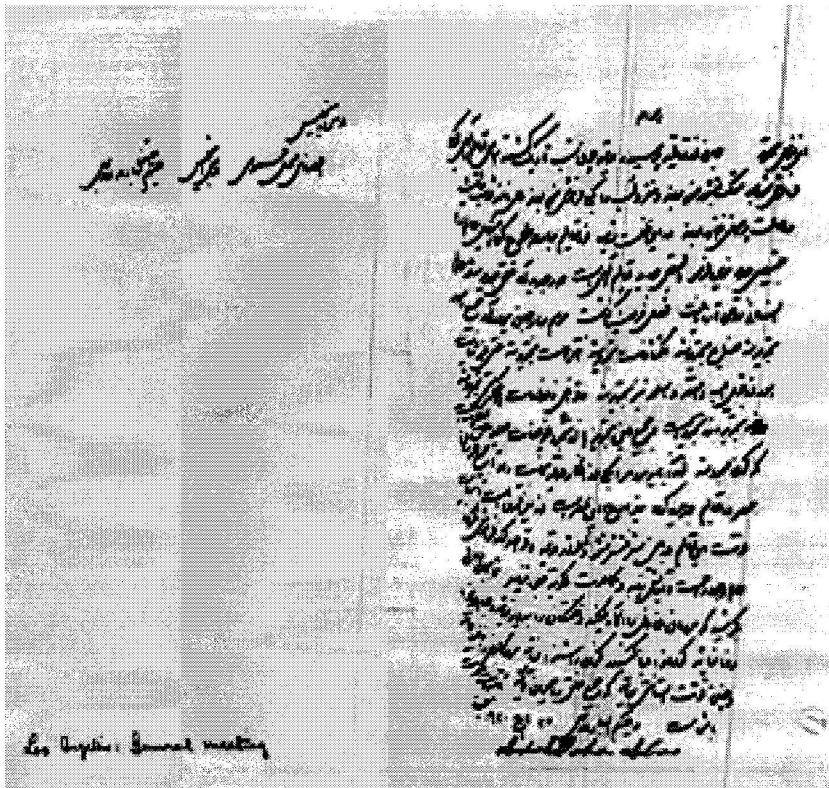
The Heavenly Confirmations are with ye.

Upon ye be Baha-ul Abha.

(Signed) Abdul Baha Abbas.

Haifa, Syria; March 27 1920.

Translated by Azizullah S Bahadur.



## **Baha'i Administration and Formation of the First Assembly in Los Angeles**

The formation of Assemblies and the organization of Baha'i communities was a process that was initiated by Baha'u'llah in the *Kitab-i-Aqdas*: "The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Baha, and should it exceed this number it doth not matter."

The first such gathering in the Los Angeles area was formed on November 9th, 1909 when about 30 Baha'is from the cities of Los Angeles, Tropic (Glendale), Long Beach, Santa Monica, Ocean Park and Pasadena came together to organize an 'assembly': These individuals included Christ Andersen, Mai M. Auforth, Frank Bowman Beckett, Loretha Beckett [von Kirtley Berryhill], Margaret Bickhart, Mae Dickison Carvell, Mr. Thornton Chase, George Claybrooke, Wilfrid Maxwell Cline, Clyde Hyde Dunn, Mrs. B. C. Fisher, A. J. Frankland, Mr. Charles F. Haney, Mrs. Mariam Haney, Mrs. E. B. Kading, Grace J. Lamb, Mrs. W. H. Replogle, George Roper, Mrs. E. G. Roper, Sigurd Russell, L. L. Shell, Mrs. R. B. Tizzard, Dr. Samuel B. Tizzard, Katherine E. Tizzard, George T. Winterburn, Rosa V. Winterburn, Harriet Wise, George E. Wittie, T. C. Rice-Wray, Mable Rice Wray-Ives.

(From *The History of the Baha'i Cause in Los Angeles from 1909-1934* by Willard Hatch and Florence Clapp.)

The Los Angeles Bahai Assembly was organized with thirty believers, who signified their belief in writing. There are as many more who are in fact believers in the Revelation of BAHÁ'O'LLAH but who do not wish yet to connect themselves definitely with any

organization, no matter how informal it may be, beside a large number of people who seem deeply interested. Meetings are held on Thursday afternoons in Pasadena, Tuesday afternoons and Friday evenings in the city of Los Angeles, and Friday afternoons and Sunday evenings in Tropico; also, once a month, on Sunday afternoon, a meeting is held in a down-town hall in the city. At this latter meeting the attendance has been from forty to fifty people and a deep interest is shown in the Revelation.

(F. B. Beckett, *Baha' i News* Vol. I, No. 2. April 9, 1910.)

They also elected an Executive Board which was comprised of five members: Mr. Charles F. Haney, Mr. Thornton Chase, Mrs. Henrietta Clark Wagner, Mrs. Nellie Phillips, and Mrs. Rosa V. Winterburn, and Mr. Frank Bowman Becket as Secretary.

*Star of the West* vol.I, No. 2

### **Public Meetings, Unity Feasts, Study Classes**

Tropico is a beautiful suburb of Los Angeles, about nine miles away, and so many of the friends live there that the Unity Feasts are now regularly held in Tropico. There was a happy gathering at "El Azkar," the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Frankland, June 24th. Mr. and Mrs. Winterburn, Mr. and Mrs. Cline, Mr. and Mrs. Beckett, Mrs. Stoddard, Mrs. Carvel, Miss Tesky, Mrs. Roper, all of Tropico, were there and also two visitors, one from near San Diego and another from Nevada. These meetings are attended by about fifteen believers and the number is steadily growing. A beautiful work is being done through the efforts of the friends in Friday afternoon meetings, where the study of the Ighan is being pursued in a systematic manner under the wise guidance of Mrs. Winterburn. This work is attracting some earnest students whose interest is growing. Regular group meetings are held weekly at Miss Hammond's home in Pasadena and at Mrs. Phillip's home in Los Angeles. The open meetings on Sundays in Blanchard Library Hall are attended by about forty people and are a means of presenting the glad-tidings to strangers who go to a hall rather

than to a home, to learn what is going on. It is hoped that many of them shall find their heart's desire in the wonderful Words of Truth that are offered to them in the Bahai Revelation.

Thahbet [Thornton Chase]

*Baha' i News*, Vol 1, July 13, 1910.

At an Executive Board meeting of November 29th, 1914 it was decided that the number of members of the Executive Board should be changed from five to nine and the elections to be conducted annually.

The City of Los Angeles formed its own Local Spiritual Assembly for the first time on March 21, 1920 with the following 9 members:

Ms. L. Russell Alderson (1877-1920)

Mr. Frank Bowman Beckett (1876-1929)

Mrs. Loretha Lora Beckett Berryhill (1877 - 1965)

Mrs. Harriett W. Cline (1879-1942)

Mr. Wilfrid Maxwell Cline (1875-1935)

Mrs. Stuart "Nellie" French (1868-1954)

Mrs. Annie Laura Libby (1858-1945)

Mrs. Oral Platt (1866-1964)

Mrs. Rosa Winterburn (1861-1938)

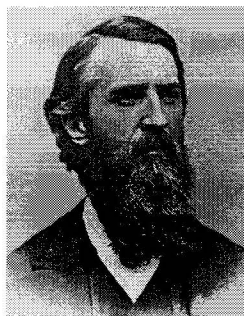


Photo from the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

### First Public Mention of the Baha'i Faith in the United States

The First Public Mention of the Baha'i Faith in America was made in 1893 at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. A paper written by the Rev. Henry Jessup was read by Rev. George Ford. At the end of Jessup's paper he quoted these words of Baha'u'llah:

*That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religions should cease and differences of race be annulled. What harm is there in this? Yet so it shall be. These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come. Do not you in Europe need this also? Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let*



Rev. Henry Jessup (left)  
and Rev. George A.  
Ford.





*Baha'i World*, Vol. 2, p. 169**George Kheiralla and Anton Hadad**

George Ibrahim Kheirallah and Anton Haddad had travelled to America for business reasons but began a series of "Truth Seeker" classes during which Kheirallah presented the Baha'i Faith in the form of 19 sessions at the end of which the student would be presented with 'The Greatest Name' as proof that they had



George Kheiralla,  
first teacher of the Baha'i  
Faith in America

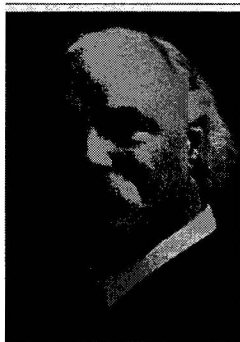


Anton Haddad,  
first Baha'i to come  
to America

completed their spiritual education.

Many became Baha'is as a result of these classes and the first five Baha'is were: William James, Marion Miller, Edward Dennis, Thornton Chase, and Kate C. Ives.

Thornton Chase was given the honorific title of the First Baha'i in the United States, and Kate Ives was the first woman to embrace the Faith in 1895. Kate moved to Boston and was the first



Thornton Chase  
(1847–1912), first  
American Baha'i



Kate Ives, the first woman  
to accept the Baha'i Faith  
in North America.

Baha'i in that city.

### **The First Baha'is in California**

The Baha'i Message was first brought to California in the early summer of 1898 by Edward and Lua Getsinger. They travelled from New York to California looking to present the Faith to influential people in the State. Through various means, Dr. Getsinger was able to secure an appointment with Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, the mother of William Randolph Hearst. Mrs. Hearst became so interested that she gathered a few friends at her country home, the Hacienda del Pozo de Verona in Pleasanton, California, and



Lua and Edward Getsinger



Phoebe Hearst

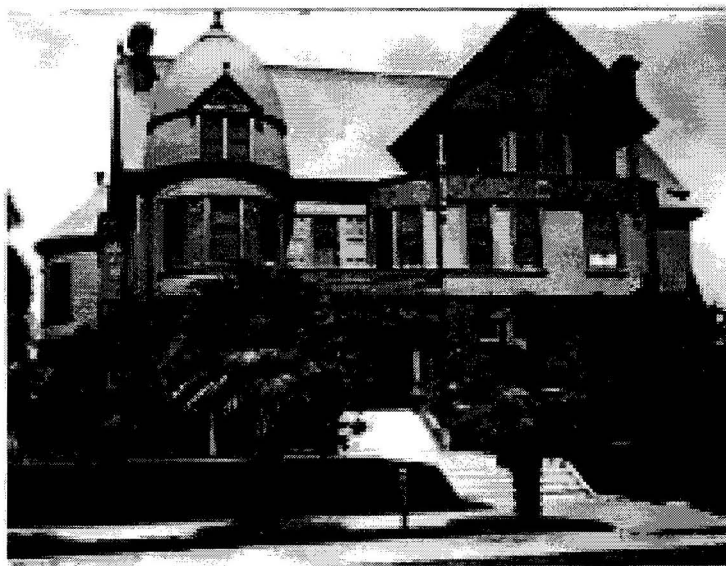
invited Lua Getsinger to become their teacher.

A member of the class, Miss Helen Hillyer (later Mrs. Brown), brought the cause to the attention of Mrs. Helen S. Goodall and her daughter Ella F. Goodall, (later Mrs. Miner) who became so deeply interested that they went to New York to receive further teachings. Later at the invitation of Mrs. Hearst this early group became the first pilgrim party to visit 'Abdu'l-Baha in Palestine in 1899.

Helen Goodall accepted the Baha'i Faith in 1898 and together with her daughter helped establish the first Baha'i community on the west coast in Oakland.



Mrs. Hearst's home: the Hacienda del Pozo de Verona,  
in Pleasanton, California.



Top: Mrs. Helen Goodall.

Below: Mrs. Goodall's residence in Oakland, California.



'Abdu'l-Baha in Oakland, California, 1912, the home of Mrs. Helen Goodall.

### **First Baha'i in Los Angeles**

Emily Goodwin, who lived in Hollywood, California, made a trip to Alaska in 1900, and on the way she stopped in San Francisco to visit Mrs. Helen Goodall, a longtime friend. Mrs. Goodall having heard about the Baha'i Faith, had immediately accepted its truths and had told all her friends and acquaintances about this new message. Though Mrs. Goodwin was not convinced she told her friend, Rosella Dennis, about Mrs. Goodall's new message.

Mrs. Dennis immediately recognized the truth of the message and got in touch with Mrs. Goodall and was confirmed in the Faith by her. Rosella Dennis writes: "Mrs. Goodall was my teacher; sent my letter to 'Abdu'l-Baha; gave me my first ring; and received my first Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Baha in July 14, 1903." Mrs. Dennis received at least four Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Baha and she became the first Baha'i in Los Angeles and perhaps the first in all

of Southern California.

Rosella was born Rosella Miller on August 5, 1863 in Illinois, her mother was from Pennsylvania and a father from Ireland. In 1887 she married Oliver Perry Dennis in Minneapolis, Minnesota. They had two children, a daughter Jessica, born 1889 and a son



Rosella Dennis



Rosella Dennis in Santa Paula 1925  
at a class given by Jinabe-i-Fadil Mazandarani



At a Feast at the home of Loa Schaffer, Los Angeles – 1920s.

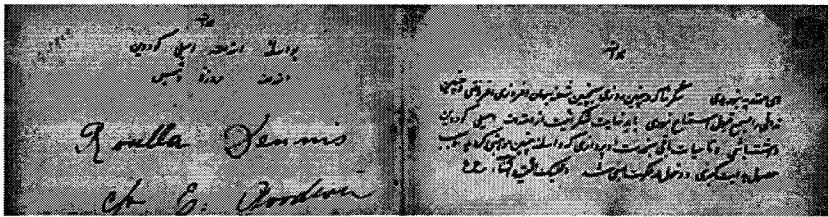
|                   |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Loa Schaffer   | 7. Doris Goodrich | 13. Mr. Adams     |
| 2. Florence Clapp | 8. Mother Nash    | 14. Robert Theiss |
| 3. Edgar Waite    | 9. Mr. Y. Barbour | 15. Mai Auforth   |
| 4. Mrs. Bickhart  | 10. Shahnaz Waite | 16. Fred Babo ?   |
| 5. Rosella Dennis | 11. Mother Spear  | 17. Mrs. Blum     |
| 6. Helen Barbour  | 12. Mr. Schaffer  | 18. Mrs Reed      |

### First Spiritual Assembly of Los Angeles

Scott born 1890, both were born in Tacoma, Washington.

The Los Angeles community grew quickly and by 1909 there was an Assembly in the city. Actually, the Assembly was for a group of cities, including: Los Angeles, Tropic, Glendale, Long Beach, Santa Monica, Ocean Park and Pasadena. Thornton Chase, the first Baha'i in the Western World, moved to Los Angeles and was part of the first Assembly, in fact he was one of the five member Executive Board which included: Mr. Charles F. Haney, Mr. Thornton Chase, Mrs. Henrietta Clark Wagner, Mrs. Nellie Phillips, and Mrs. Rosa V. Winterburn; with Mr. Frank B. Becket as Secretary (mentioned

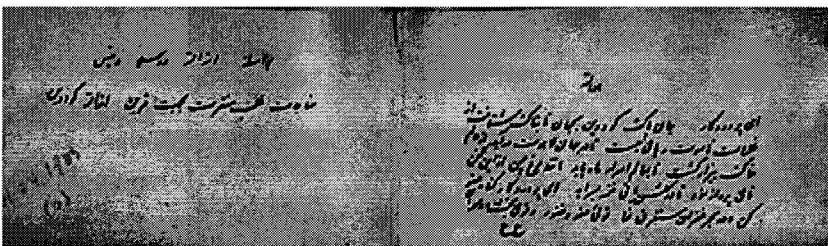




1. (Left side) In care of the handmaid of God, Emily Goodwin, California, the handmaid of God, Rosella Dennis. Upon her be the glory of God

(Right side, Arabic Tablet) He is God! O Handmaid of God! Thank thou God, for He hath guided thee to the Society of Abha, and made thee to hear His most sweet summons, and brought thee to life with a spirit outflowing from the Concourse on high. O Handmaid of God! Be thou attracted with all thy being unto God, and sever thyself from all save Him, and seek thou nothing save His sweetness and good-blessure, that He may cause thee to enter the Kingdom of heaven, and make thee to abide forever in His Abha paradise. Upon thee be greeting and praise. (signed) Ayn-Ayn

The 14th of July, 1903 (This is the only one of the four Tablets that is dated in the original) (In upper right hand corner, the Master's Seal, bearing the Arabic words "Ya Sahibi as-Sijn"-- O My Companion, the Prisoner!)

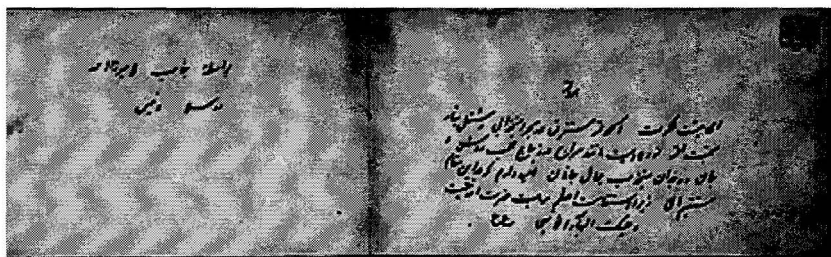


2. (Left side) In care of the handmaid of God, Rosella Dennis. A prayer begging forgiveness for the husband of the handmaid of God, Goodwin

(Right side, Persian Prayer) He is God! O Thou Sustainer! The pure soul of Goodwin hath hastened to the land of lights. It hath been freed from the shades of the avengement world, to come forth in the heavenly realm. It hath fled from the land of dust, to make its way into the kingdom of mysteries. Like a bird of the meadow it hath flown away from the dust heap of this mortal world, that it may sing in the garden that abideth forever. O Thou Sustainer! Pardon Thou his sins, and balm him in the sea of forgiveness. Thou art the Clement and Thou art the Merciful, and Thou art bounteous and most compassionate! (signed) Ayn-Ayn

(In upper right hand corner, the Master's Seal, bearing the Arabic words "Ya Sahibi as-Sijn"-- O My companion, the Prisoner!)

Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Baha to Rosella Dennis – the first Baha'i in Los Angeles.



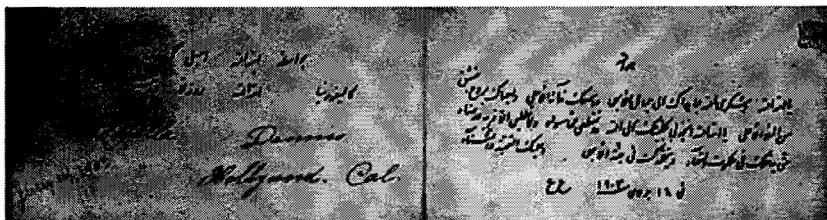
3. (Left side)

In care of Jineb-i-Mirza Ahmad  
Rosella Dennis(Right side,  
Persian Tablet)

He is God! O daughter of the Kingdom! Praised be God, thou art immersed  
in the sea of attraction, and aflame with the fire of the love of God. The  
light of divine guidance is ashine like unto the wick in the lamp of thy heart,  
and thy mind and soul are drawn as by a magnet to the beauty of the Beloved One.  
It is My hope that thou wilt remain constant in this state, for constancy  
is the greatest of the gifts of God.  
Upon thee be the glory of the All-Glorious!

(signed) Ayn-Ayn

(In the upper right hand corner, the Master's Seal, bearing the Arabic words "Ya Sahibi as-Sijn" --  
O My companion, the Prisoner!)



4. (Left side)

He is God! In care of the handmaid of God, Emily Goodwin  
The handmaid of God, Rosella Dennis

(Right side)

He is God! O thou who hast been guided by the light of divine guidance!  
Give thou thanks, that in such a day, thou hast been set aflame with this  
world-consuming fire, and hast heard and welcomed such a summons.  
Thou must ever be exceedingly grateful to the handmaid of God, Emily  
Goodwin, and thou must serve her so long as thy life lasts, for she became  
the channel for this wondrous grace, and made thee to gain the most great  
guidance, and to enter the Abha Kingdom.  
Upon thee be greeting and praise.

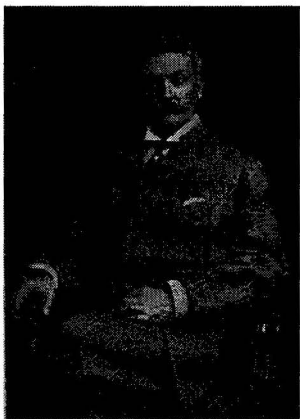
(signed) Ayn-Ayn

(In upper right hand corner, the Master's Seal, bearing the Arabic words "Ya Sahibi as-Sijn" --  
O My companion, the Prisoner!)

Tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Rosella Dennis – the first Baha'i in Los Angeles.



*The Los Angeles Sunday Tribune Magazine – September 10, 1911.*  
 Lua Getsinger's appeal to the Shah of Persia on behalf of the persecuted Baha'i community.

**"Dr. Krug, are you happy?"**

Dr. Florian Krug, who was a successful surgeon in New York became a Baha'i through the efforts of his second wife, Grace, and through the direct contact with 'Abdu'l-Baha.

There were historic family quarrels after Grace, their determined stepmother, became a Baha'i. The siblings cowered, watched and trembled on their perch at the head of the stairs, as their father below them would scream at his wife and hurl down Baha'i books.

In spite of everything, Grace Krug invited the Master to speak at their home, and the young people heard their father shouting, "If that old man comes into this house I'll have the doorman throw him out!" Both Charles and Louise Krug described the fateful day of the visit. Charles said his father's attitude was: "Now I can get my hands on the ringleader of this bunch!"

Louise Krug said, "We were terrified. Charlie and I were standing there by the door as 'Abdu'l-Baha came in. He put His arms out with that wonderful gesture – you could feel the love pouring out. He walked right up to my father and looked him straight in the face. And He said: "Dr Krug, are you happy?"

"I don't know," Louise [Krug] went on, "my father just wilted. He was like a bird letting its wings down, to enjoy the sun. From that time on, never a word against the Master."

(From *Arches of the Years* by Marzieh Gail)

## **Accounts of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha by Florian & Grace Krug**

We retired as usual, but Dr. Krug had a premonition that he would be called to the Master's bedside before morning. About one fifteen o'clock we were awakened by screams from the Master's house, "Come Dr. Krug, the Master, the Master!" Like a flash, the Doctor was up, dressed, out of the room and across the garden into the house. You see, friends, had we not occupied "Abdu'l-Baha's room over the garage, Dr. Krug could not have reached the Master so quickly. I stood absolutely petrified with fear. Finally I was able to slip a one-piece dress over my night robe and rushed after the Doctor. Friends, how can I describe that scene in the Master's bedroom! Dr. Krug stood in the center, his hands raised, saying: "Silence, our Beloved Master has ascended."

(World Order Magazine, vol .7, no.2)

This man who had so bitterly resented his wife's devotion to the Faith of Baha'u'llah was on pilgrimage at the time of 'Abdu'l-Baha's passing and had the honor and privilege of closing the Master's eyes when He passed.

(From 'Abdu'l-Baha by H. M. Balyuzi)

*At that moment His daughter (Ruha Khanum), as a sign of appreciation and a token of love, took the Baha'i ring on 'Abdu'l-Baha's finger and gave it to Dr. Krug. That special ring was given to Doris Goodrick and is now in her collection of papers in the Los Angeles Baha'i Archives.*

## Covenant Breakers



At the time of 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit to Los Angeles a grandson of Baha'u'llah, the covenant breaker Shua'u'llah had made his home here. Taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by the arrival of 'Abdu'l-Baha, he spoke about his blood relationship with Baha'u'llah and how because of his biological relationship he was bound to inherit the station of Prophet. He persuaded a local journalist to publish such misleading comments. 'Abdu'l-Baha paid no attention to such nonsense writings and attached no importance to Shua'u'llah's pretensions. But

when a newspaper editor asked about this man's relationship, He said:

I will tell you one thing and it will suffice once and for all. Beyond this neither question me nor will I reply. And that is the words of Christ when told that 'your brothers have come to see you'. He said 'They are not my brethren but you are my brethren and kindred'. Christ attached no importance to the original relationship with His bretheren. Notwithstanding this, my home is open to all. He who wishes may enter and he who wishes to go out may leave.

The editor published the Master's exact words in his newspaper. The son of the arch covenant breaker, who had boasted that he would speak out 'in the court of the King of the Covenant; and make his wishes known, was from that time on not heard from again. Similarly in Chicago, the covenant breaker Kheiralla had sent a message asking to be summoned to see 'Abdu'l-Baha. The

Master had answered him by saying: 'Since my arrival in this city I have not requested to see anybody. But should anyone come to me, I will meet him with utmost kindness and regard'. Thus 'Abdu'l-Baha responded to animosity and deviousness with gentleness and composure and with the utmost dignity.

The Master repeatedly said: "These two persons have disgraced themselves once again. Otherwise, I would not have mentioned their names but it is not good for the Cause nor are they worthy of mention or attention." Abdu'l-Baha further stated:

If they have good intentions for the Cause of God, they must render some service and they must go out to teach the Cause. If they are able, they should raise the cry of 'Ya Baha'u'l-Abha' in churches and gatherings. What will they reap by sowing doubt and disbelief? They will get nothing but manifest loss in this world and the next. The Blessed Beauty has promised explicitly that the servants and sincere ones who devote themselves to the Cause of God after His ascension shall achieve success and be made victorious. Now see which of the servants are firm and serving and which ones hinder and damage the Cause. One of their misgivings is that the true One has always been oppressed and wronged. What has this to do with the matter? Yes, initially the Cause of God has always been denied but with utmost divine aid and assistance the Lord has ever been the protector and savior of the righteous. The reward of eternity will belong to the God-fearing and honor will belong to the sincere servants of God. Thus He says in the *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, "Let not your hearts be perturbed, O people, when the glory of My presence is withdrawn, and the ocean of My utterance is stilled. In My presence amongst you there is a wisdom, and in My absence there is yet another, inscrutable to all but God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of our favored angels."



## The Baha'i Faith and the Press in Los Angeles up to 1921

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## Photographs of 'Abdu'l-Baha in California

Sadly we have not found any photos from the visit of 'Abdu'l-Baha to Los Angeles. Of course that doesn't mean that there are none — but merely that they have yet to be found. However, the photos taken in Oakland and other Bay Area cities at that time would be very similar to any that might have been taken in Los Angeles. And many of the individuals accompanying 'Abdu'l-Baha in this photo would have been with Him in Los Angeles as well.

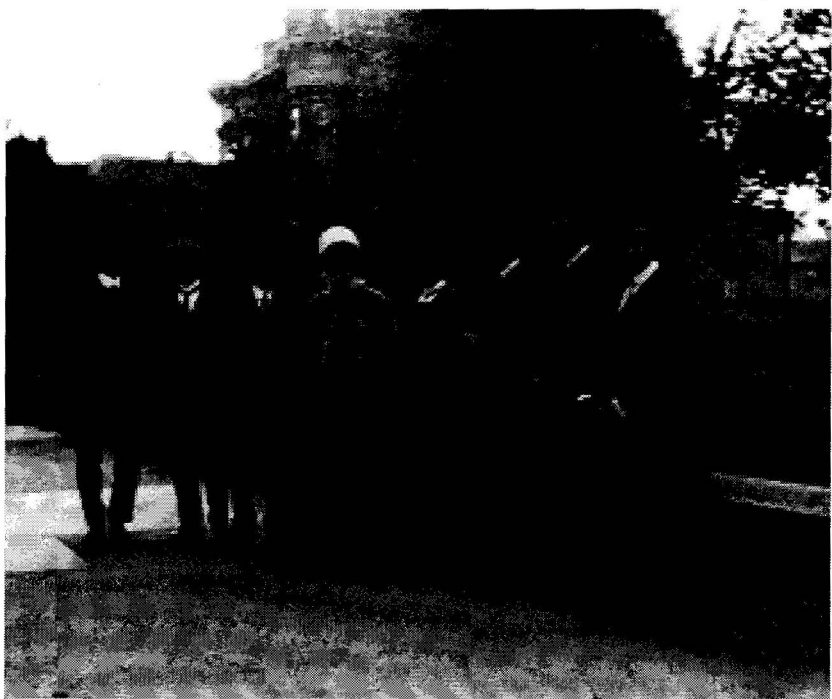


'Abdu'l-Baha with His companions - California 1912

From left: Siyyid Asadu'llah-i-Qumi, Mirza Mahmud -i-Zarqani, Ahmad Sohrab, Mirza Valiyu'llah-i-Varqa, Dr. Aminullah Farid, Mirza Ali-Akbar Nakhjavani



'Abdu'l-Baha at Stanford University – 1912.



'Abdu'l Baha at Berkeley California – 1912.



'Abdu'l-Baha at a children's class at the home of Helen Goodall.

# The Los Angeles Baha'i Community



Los Angeles Baha'is – Feast of Ridvan 1908  
Most of the participants are holding flowers. It was common at early Baha'i Feasts for someone to bring flowers to hand around.



Baha'is at the Feast of Perfection on Rose Hill, Los Angeles,  
taken on Sunday afternoon, August 20, 1916.

Standing from left are:

Minnie Lou Woods, Mr. and Mrs. Woods, Beatrice Irwin, Mr. Isgrigg, Mrs. Beckett, Miss Button, Louise Waite, Mr. Eddy, Mrs. Wagner, Dr. Clark-Smith, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Beckett, and Mrs. Anderson.

Seated from left are:

Mr. Watkins, Mrs. Young, Mrs. Ditzl, Mr. and Mrs. Haug, Mrs. Carlson, Miss Clapp, Miss Auforth, Miss Greig, Mrs. Deckelman, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Bissell, Mrs. Wright, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Reed, Mrs. Reed, Miss Dean, Miss Briggs, Mrs. Bickart, and Ernest Kopp.



LA Baha'i Group – Malibu Lake – 1926.

Included in this photo are: Shahnaz Waite, Charles Witt, Edward Getsinger, Ahmad Sohrab, Rosella Dennis, Howard Luxmoore Carpenter, Willard Hatch, Rahim Khan (Ali Kuli Khan's son).



Los Angeles Baha'is – Malibu Lake – 1927.  
Feast of Nur, at Addie L. Coles cabin.



1927 Glendale and Los Angeles Baha'is.





1931 LA Baha'i Center, Sunday afternoon

Standing: George Finks, Josephine Nelson, Dr Elzosa Gibson, Miss Koch, Mrs Brubaker, Mrs Everly, Dr Getsinger, Shanaz Waite, Olive Thommason, Mignon Thompson, Tillis Kuhne, Mrs Statt, Mr Kyle.

Seated: Elmer Duckett and son, Bessie Duckett, Bessie Jenkins, Mr Adams, Nordells, Oni Finks, Mary Davidson, Keith Ransom Kehler, Clara Wier.

corner of 7th Avenue and St. Andrews Place, Los Angeles.

The building is no longer standing



1936 Los Angeles Baha'i meeting at Naw Ruz

A few in this photo have been identified: Dr. Charles Witt, Mr. Willard Hatch, Mr. Elmore Duckett, Miss Marion Holley Hofman



1938 at the annual gathering at the grave of Thornton Chase.

## Los Angeles Baha'i Center/Headquarters Locations and Dates

1928: March *Baha'i News* mentions that “the friends in Los Angeles . . . now hold meetings in the Beaux Arts Building, Beacon and 8th Streets.”



Beaux Arts Building, Beacon and 8th Streets.

1931: 702 St Andrews Place, Los Angeles



1934: Baha'i Center and Reading Room in the Angelus Hotel, at 4th and Spring St.

1936: News of the Cause. The Los Angeles Assembly has taken a new headquarters in the Beaux Arts Building..."

1930s and 40s: Space was rented in the Haliburton Building on 8th Street in downtown Los Angeles

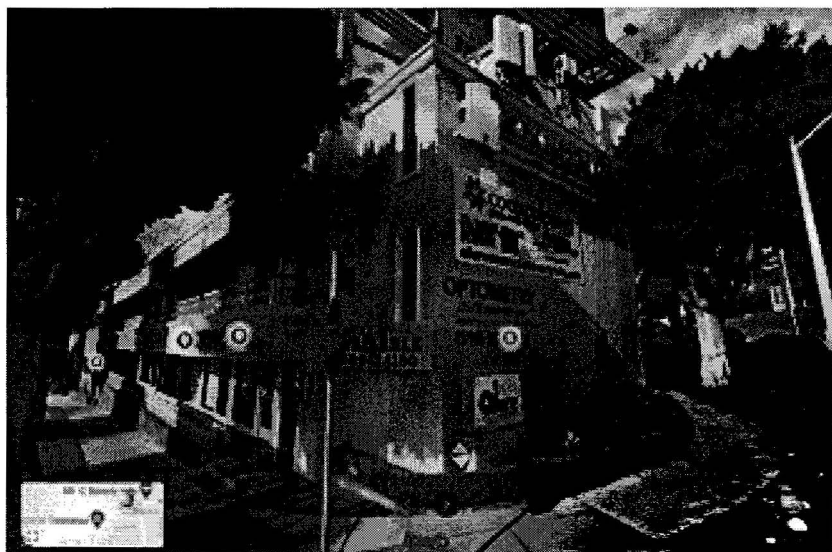
1945: Meetings are being held at West Hall Halliburton Building, 1709 West Eighth Street, Los Angeles .

1946: Building at 311 So. New Hampshire, Los Angeles purchased and remodeled as a Baha'i Center by Mrs. Laura Platt and gifted to the community.



1946 – Building at 311 So. New Hampshire St., Los Angeles.

Late 1960s: Purchased a large commercial property on 9701 Pico Blvd. in West Los Angeles.



1960s purchased a large commercial property on 9701 Pico Blvd. in West L.A.

Early 1980s: Purchased and remodeled 5755 Rodeo Road (now Obama Road) as new Baha'i Center. Present location.



1999: Purchased a community center in Encino, 4830 Genesta Ave., Encino, CA.



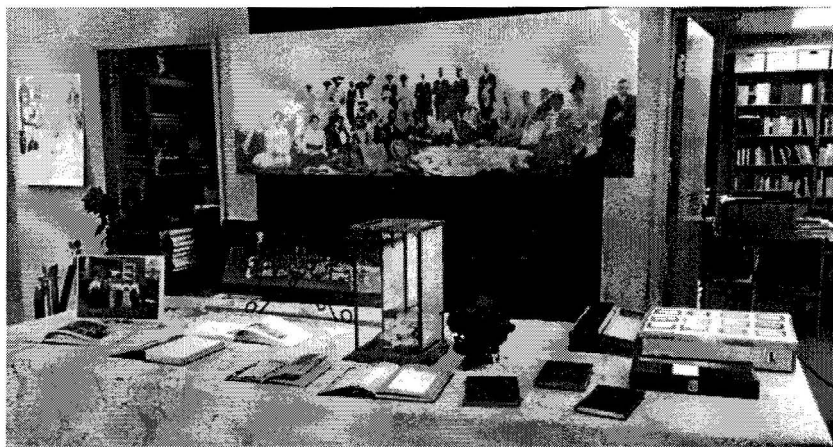
# The Los Angeles Baha'i Archives

The community of Los Angeles is truly blessed with a very extensive archival collection.

The files of the Spiritual Assembly are vast and go back to its early history in 1910. These files occupy hundreds of bankers' boxes and are housed in several rooms at the Los Angeles Baha'i Center. In addition to the Assembly's files, the archives serve as a regional depository for the Southern California area and as such, has files from over thirty surrounding communities.

The archival collection has a very impressive collection of personal papers from approximately 500 individuals, which range from one file folder to a few dozen archival boxes.

The archives also has a very extensive collection of art by Baha'i artists and Baha'i subjects. Included are works by Juliet Thompson, Mishkin Qalam, Marion Jack, Mark Tobey, Bernard Leach, David Ruhe, Hooper Dunbar, Leonard Herbert, Sando Berger, David Villaseñor, and Houshang Seyhoun.

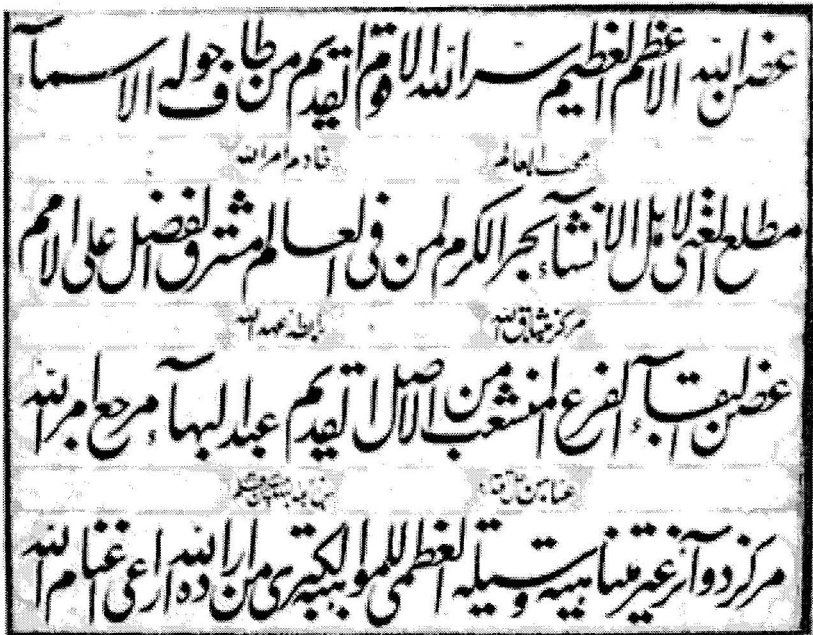


A display of materials from the Los Angeles Baha'i Archives.

The Baha'i audio-visual collection is perhaps the finest in the country. The reel-to-reel films include several rare and unique movies. The reel-to-reel audio tapes collection includes hundreds of recordings by Bob Quigley on his many travels with Hand of the Cause William Sears. The video tapes include recordings produced during the many presentations over the last several decades of an impressive list of speakers who came to the Los Angeles Baha'i Center and spoke to the community.

The collection also has some rare and unique artifacts from 'Abdu'l-Baha including items brought back from the Holy Land by early pilgrims. The night shirt of 'Abdu'l-Baha, hand embroidered by the Greatest Holy Leaf, is perhaps the item with the most imbued history and love.

The Archives also houses an extensive library of Baha'i books in English, Persian and Spanish.



A calligraphic arrangement by Mishkin-Qalam of titles conferred upon 'Abdu'l-Baha.



## Postscript

It is a daunting reality that the Baha'i Faith is so young that we have known individuals who met 'Abdu'l-Baha. We are blessed to have listened to people who were alive in His lifetime. We are so close to the bright light of the Center of the Covenant, that it is impossible for us to appreciate the significance and magnitude of His contribution to humanity and growth and development of the Baha'i Faith. In the future, great studies will be conducted on every aspect of His life. Every day of His life will be given special attention and every word that He uttered will be meticulously parsed. Every individual He met will be studied and afforded a special place in Baha'i history. And His every action will be used as a template for our own actions. Though we are unable to fathom the true reality of the life and service of 'Abdu'l-Baha, we are thankful for His careful nurturing of the community and setting us on the path to understand the message of Baha'u'llah and how to promulgate His teachings.

In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi writes:

"It was in the course of these epoch-making journeys and before large and representative audiences, at times exceeding a thousand people, that 'Abdu'l-Baha expounded, with brilliant simplicity, with persuasiveness and force, and for the first time in His ministry, those basic and distinguishing principles of His Father's Faith, which together with the laws and ordinances revealed in the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* constitute the bed-rock of God's latest Revelation to mankind."

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- Rosella Dennis papers. Los Angeles Baha'i Archives.
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- Letters and papers of Thornton Chase. US National Baha'i Archives.
- Ella Cooper papers. US National Baha'i Archives.
- Edwin Mattoon papers. US National Baha'i Archives.
- Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Baha to Los Angeles and Los Angeles Baha'is are held in various collections at the US National Baha'i Archives.

**Glossary:**

**Baha’u’llah:** b. Ḥusayn-‘Ali, (12 November 1817 – 29 May 1892) was a Persian religious leader, and the founder of the Baha’i Faith.

**‘Abdu’l-Baha:** b. ‘Abbas (23 May 1844–28 November 1921) the eldest son of Baha’u’llah. After the passing of Baha’u’llah served as head of the Baha’i Faith from 1892 until 1921.

**The Master:** a title of respect for ‘Abdu’l-Baha.

**Tablet:** a letter written by Baha’u’llah or ‘Abdu’l-Baha.

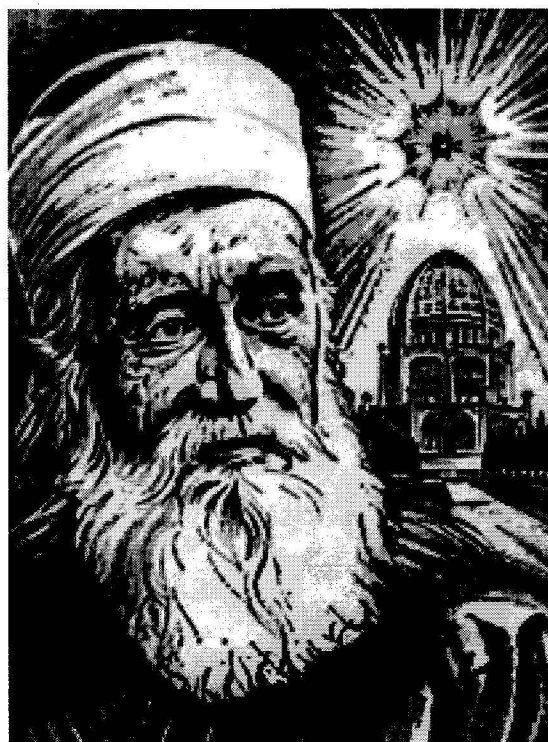
**Shoghi Effendi:** b. Shoghi Afnan (1 March 1897– 4 November 1957) was the grandson and successor of ‘Abdu’l-Baha, appointed as the Guardian of the Baha’i Faith from 1921 until 1957.

**Center of the Covenant:** A reference to ‘Abdu’l-Baha as the leader of the Baha’i community.

**Covenant Breaker:** A person who works against the leadership of the Baha’i Faith.

**National Spiritual Assembly:** The administrative body in a particular country. Refers to the elected council that governs the Baha’i community of that country.

**Local Spiritual Assembly:** the administrative council elected to govern the Baha’i community of a city or locality.



The Power of Faith, by Woodi Ishmael

The *Los Angeles Evening Herald Examiner* – Saturday Oct. 12, 1963.



## Tablets of the Divine Plan

### Tablet to the Bahá'ís of the Western States

*Revealed on February 15, 1917, in Bahá'u'lláh's room at the house of 'Abbúd in 'Akká, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of the eleven Western States of the United States: New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, California, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.*

“During My journey and traveling in those parts, I beheld wonderful scenes and beautiful panoramas of nature, orchards and rivers; national parks and general conclaves; deserts, plains, meadows and prairies; and the grains and fruits of that region greatly attracted My attention; even to the present moment they are in My mind.

Particularly was I greatly pleased with the meetings in San Francisco and Oakland, the gatherings in Los Angeles, and the believers who came from the cities of other states. Whenever their faces cross My memory, immediately infinite happiness is realized.”

