

Abdu'l-Bahá's Travels to the West

Montreal, Canada

29-30 August to 9 September 1912

The purpose of religion

Montreal, Canada

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in Montreal, Canada, on 30 August, He first went to stay at the Maxwell residence



Maxwell Home, Montreal

The Maxwell family

May Bolles Maxwell (1870-1940): was on first Western pilgrimage 1898, founded first Baha'i community in Europe (Paris) 1898, first Baha'i community in Canada (Montreal) 1902, earned martyr's death in Buenos Aires 1940

W. Sutherland Maxwell (1874-1952), married May Bolles 1902, famous Canadian architect, designed the Shrine of the Bab, Hand of the Cause

The Maxwell family

Their daughter Mary Maxwell (1910-2000), 2 years old when 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited, married Shoghi Effendi in 1937, became Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum, Hand of the Cause. After the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957, she traveled to over 185 countries teaching the Baha'i Faith.



May
Maxwell
with baby
Mary





William
Sutherland
Maxwell



Mary
Maxwell
as a
child





Maxwell's design for the Shrine of the Bab



Mary
Maxwell
in 1920's



Maxwell Home
Montreal



Maxwell
Home
Montreal



‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Montreal

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá entered the Maxwell home, he said to May

“This is my home, all that is in it is mine. You are mine – your husband and child. This is my home.”

(Earl Redman, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Their Midst*, Oxford: George Ronald, 2011, pp. 180)



Bedroom where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed, with furniture purchased by Sutherland Maxwell the day before His arrival. The house is now a Bahá'í shrine.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Montreal

Little Mary could not keep away from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who said:

“Today I was resting on the chaise lounge in my bedroom and the door opened. The little girl (Mary Maxwell) came in to me and pushed up my eyelids with her small fingers and said ‘Wake up, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!’ I took her in my arms and placed her head on my chest and we both had a good sleep.”

(Earl Redman, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Their Midst, Oxford: George Ronald, 2011, pp. 180)

'Abdu'l-Bahá



'Abdu'l-Bahá in Montreal

On 1 September 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke at the Unitarian Church of the Messiah, where He explained the purpose of religion.

He moved to the Windsor Hotel on 2 September to be more accessible.

The purpose of religion

God, the Almighty, has created all mankind from the dust of earth. He has fashioned them all from the same elements; they are descended from the same race and live upon the same globe. He has created them to dwell beneath the one heaven. As members of the human family and His children He has endowed them with equal susceptibilities. He maintains, protects and is kind to all.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), 98)

The purpose of religion

With impartial love and wisdom He has sent forth His Prophets and divine teachings. His teachings are the means of establishing union and fellowship among mankind and awakening love and kindness in human hearts. He proclaims the oneness of the kingdom of humanity.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), 98)

The purpose of religion

The Prophets of God have been inspired with the message of love and unity. The Books of God have been revealed for the upbuilding of fellowship and union. The Prophets of God have been the servants of reality; Their teachings constitute the science of reality. Reality is one; it does not admit plurality. We conclude, therefore, that the foundation of the religions of God is one foundation.

'Abdu'l-Bahá in Montreal

He gave another talk at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Sutherland Maxwell, 716 Pine Avenue West, Montreal, Canada, on 2 September 1912

The purpose of religion

God has sent forth the Prophets for the purpose of quickening the soul of man into higher and divine recognitions. He has revealed the heavenly Books for this great purpose. For this the breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted through the gardens of human hearts, the doors of the divine Kingdom opened to mankind and the invisible inspirations sent forth from on high.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 101)

The purpose of religion

This divine and ideal power has been bestowed upon man in order that he may purify himself from the imperfections of nature and uplift his soul to the realm of might and power.

The mission of the Prophets of God has been to train the souls of humanity and free them from the thralldom of natural instincts and physical tendencies.

The purpose of religion

They are like unto Gardeners, and the world of humanity is the field of Their cultivation, the wilderness and untrained jungle growth wherein They proceed to labor. They cause the crooked branches to become straightened, the fruitless trees to become fruitful, and gradually transform this great wild, uncultivated field into a beautiful orchard producing wonderful abundance and outcome.

'Abdu'l-Bahá in Montreal

On His last day in Montreal, He told the friends:

“I have sown the seed. You must water it. You must educate the souls in divine moral, make them spiritual and lead them to the oneness of humanity and to universal peace.”

(Earl Redman, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in Their Midst*, Oxford: George Ronald, 2011, pp. 188)