

Home of Abdul Baha
Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria
May 17th 1915

Dear friends

The larvae of the locusts boil up out of the earth like water. A tidal waves of tremendous fury they rise and rise to wash away the land by their irresistible force. It seems to me that Jehovah has struck in His hand the cock of the country of Syria and instead of twelve fountains of crystalline water millions of springs of larvae have gushed forth to inundate the earth with a flood of terrific consequences. The government issued an order yesterday that for the next few days all the people must shut their stores and go into the country to kill as much as they can these pestiferous insects. The order is general and does not exclude any person of station or rank, even the officials, the bank officers and Gaemmagam will go out to set an example of strict obedience. The Master told us last night that all the believers including his three sons-in-law must join the national crusade against the common enemy, thus when we arose this morning we needed no further impetus, and no sooner the friends were collected in the garden we ascended the mountain and pitched in the work. The lands surrounding the Pilgrims Home and the holy Tomb were assigned to us. There are two ways to do away with the insects. In the first place we formed a circle and pushed them toward dry thorns, picked and put together. When they were all inside, they were lighted and burned with a match. I do not know how many millions were ^{roasted} during those few hours! Poor creatures! but they are so harmful. Are they not? The surface of the mountain looked ^{like} unto a waving, undulating sea of larvae. They could not rise above the earth but they hopped from one place to another. By noon ^{we} were all fatigued and perspiring, so we resorted to the Pilgrims Home, ate our lunch and rested for an hour. There is another way by which these larvae are destroyed. They take a large piece of cloth in the centre of which a big hole is made. Then ^{under} this hole a sac is sown. Four persons hold in their hands the four ends and lower the edge to the ground. Then the rest go after the larvae and from

the four directions chase them toward the cloth. It is very strange that when one of them starts on the road, all the rest follow its wake like sheep. Soldier-like they march as a regiment. It will be enough to change the course of one and the rest will follow it blindly. Now you can easily imagine that when from four sides thousands upon thousands ~~came~~ march in an orderly manner toward the white sheet otherwise the trap - it is filled in a minute. When the cloth is groaning under its weight they raise its four ends and with one or two shaking they all slide down through the hole into the sac. This process was continued till an hour before sunset and we felt quite satisfied with the results of our labor. Meanwhile we found out that the latter process was more advantageous than the one we followed in the morning. We had altogether a lovely pic-nic.

Every morning as I ascend the mountain and pass by the thorns and bushes and trees, thousands drop ~~themselves~~ to the earth and here and there the roads are turned into a moving mass of black insects. They are generally following a downward course from the high slope to the foot of the mountain.

The authorities have decided to push this work of destruction. For this reason they have made a bylaw that those who would not like to go out or is busy may pay three Beshleeks and another person will be sent instead of him.

When the other day the Loroastrian farmers came over from Adassiah and reported that the ~~army~~ ^{army} of locusts have entered their gardens and fields and were eating every green thing in sight the Beloved comforted and instructed them to be resigned and submissive. "The world of humanity is suffering" he said. "And we must also take a share in this general grievance. Not one single soul is excepted. I am thinking of you and will protect you. Continue to stay in Adassiah. I desire that you may sow there the seeds of the Love of God and the knowledge of God and gather the spiritual harvest of truth. These locusts are your guests and may not leave your vicinity until they are satiated."

When we gathered tonight in the presence of the Beloved of our hearts and told him what we have done during the day he said:—"There are two kinds of afflictions the first is human, the second is divine. Human affliction can be ~~safed~~ ^{safed} with and eradicated by human agencies and methods but when an affliction is brought down upon mankind, occasioned by their utter heedlessness and negligence the displaying of all their available forces will not be crowned with the least success. Under such exceptional circumstances they must gather in their temple of worship and ~~upraise~~ ^{raise} their hands toward heaven, begging and invoking God to shower upon them His benedictions and turn ~~the tide of trouble~~ ^{the tide of trouble} away from them. With heartfelt contrition and humiliation they must invoke and beseech Him to forgive them and overlook their sins and rebellions.

..... These heedless people merit the descent of the terrible wrath of God. They are not at all entitled to His Love. Even what they have and are enjoying has been and is through His limitless Mercy. On the other hand if we look upon this God's catastrophe from another standpoint it is Mercy itself, for it may become the cause of their wakefulness and mindfulness. But if this much-desired spiritual regeneration is not obtained, then it is indeed God's wrath. For example, the student commits a mistake, the teacher punishes him. Now if this correction will become conducive to his improvement, then indeed it is identical with mercy and kindness but if on the contrary it adds to his ~~unawareness~~ ^{unawareness}, obtusity and dullness, it is a heavy and grievous chastisement. Therefore God has never and will never be anything else but Clement, Merciful and Kind. From whatever standpoint we may approach the Creator and the Sustainer we find Him the Main spring of Mercy.

In short you must know that God is the source of heavenly goodness and the Giver of life and light. Thus it is written in the book of Psalms Chapter 9th: "The Lord shall endure forever: he hath prepared his thrones for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."