

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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A VERY GREAT EFFORT IS NEEDED NOW

The spirit of a Cause may be measured by the devotion which it inspires in its followers—by the faithfulness and self-sacrifice which they offer for love of it. Thus does a martyr serve the Cause he dies for—he shows to the world such supreme devotion, he inspires his fellow-believers by his example to ever greater efforts, and through his sacrifice an idea spreads and the Cause grows. The foundations of the Bahá'í Cause were laid by the sacrifice of twenty thousand martyrs and the sacrifice is not yet finished. We hear that only last year four more believers died for the Faith in the province of Mázarán in Northern Persia. They were, of course, not the victims of an organised persecution, but were murdered by a body of fanatical armed men who broke into their house. Their death, however, is a reminder to the Bahá'í world that the Cause of God is only in its early days, and that it still depends on the sacrifice of the believers for its growth. The majority of us probably will never be called upon to die for our Faith—but to live for it, and to adjust our lives to its service, is equally a sacrifice and that is what Bahá'u'lláh needs us to do. We have to devote our lives to spreading the teachings and our energy and our money to the maintenance and development of its institutions.

The object of our most serious consideration just at present should be, we suggest, the support of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust. The trust was instituted five years ago for the publication of books—Bahá'í books with which the Cause of God can be taught. It has a number of publications already to its credit which are being used in the service of the Cause and will continue to be used—it has gone from one success-

ful project to another, the last, the most ambitious, being the recent publication of the *Compilation of Bahá'í Scriptures*. This was most urgently needed—supplies of the *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, of *Prayers and Meditations* are all sold and not many *Gleanings* remain, and how can we teach the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh if we cannot give people His Word when they are ready to learn? For this purpose we shouldered a large debt, which has to be paid very quickly, and it is the whole community which has undertaken this responsibility and the community which will pay it.

This then is our great task of the moment—having published such an important and valuable book, to pay for it, and having paid for it, to offer the teachings which it contains to all who will listen to them. Like the Bábis, the earliest believers, like the American believers who are exerting every possible effort to finish the Temple, we certainly shall not fail.

All contributions, large or small will help, and should be sent to the Treasurer of the National Fund.

To the Isolated Believers

The suggestion was made at Convention "that isolated believers be recommended to write their views in the Journal." This suggestion called attention to a state of affairs which was perhaps a weakness in our community life and work—that the N.S.A. and the community does not know much about the thoughts and ideas, the problems and difficulties of the isolated believers. We should all share our thoughts, help each other solve problems—and so far as

the isolated believers are concerned, the remedy to a great extent lies with them. Nobody can advise on a difficulty which is never heard about. Therefore the N.S.A., following the suggestion of Convention, appeals to the isolated believers to keep more in touch with the rest of the community and recommends that this may be done by writing to the Journal. Then ideas, problems and successes can be shared by us all and those who can help will do so. Of course, if immediate advice were needed, this would be supplied—by the National Teaching Committee or from some other suitable source. Please, therefore, write to the community through the Journal—give us all the benefit of your ideas and consult the other believers about your problems. Letters, etc., should be sent to the Secretary of the N.S.A.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CONVENTION

The N.S.A. has now considered the recommendations from Convention, with the following results. To save space the recommendations themselves will not be repeated and readers are asked to refer to the June issue of "Bahá'í Journal" when reading this section.

1. As will be seen from the June issue, the membership of the National Teaching Committee is this year much more varied. The second part of this recommendation has been passed on to them and they will take it into consideration when planning the teaching work.

2. The National Teaching and Publicity Committees are working together to carry out this recommendation.

3. This recommendation is in the hands of the Publicity Committee, who will consult with local assemblies and groups.

4. This was accepted by the N.S.A.

5. Enquiries are being made about this form of advertisement.

6. Accepted. Isolated believers should therefore in future, when they wish to buy books, send their orders to the nearest local community, which will supply them with what they need.

7. It was not thought time yet to institute a book token scheme. Sales of books are not big enough to justify the institution of such a complicated system. It is quite simple for anyone wishing to present a book to a fellow-believer to write to one of the local assemblies authorising the latter to buy books to any specified amount.

8. The "Bahá'í Journal" will, in future, be given free of charge to all believers, but we should all bear in mind that nevertheless it has ultimately to be paid for by us, inasmuch as it is our contributions which support the National

Fund and that if the fund has to bear this additional expense, it naturally needs the money to do so.

9. Accepted. See separate section of this Journal.

10. The Guardian has been asked for advice on the question of prayers for children.

BRIDGET HILL

A tribute by R. St. Barbe Baker.

Bridget Hill of the Air Transport Auxiliary, only daughter of Major-General and Mrs. Walter P. H. Hill, of West Amesbury House, Wiltshire, was killed on Active Service in an aeroplane crash on Sunday, 15th March, 1942. Her immortal spirit winged its flight into the Great Beyond leaving her friends stunned with unutterable sorrow and anguish.

It was in June, 1937, while staying at Government House, Jersey, that I met her when she was a fellow guest. That too was her first introduction to the Bahá'í Cause.

On her return to Salisbury, her parents at once became interested, independently investigated the Bahá'í Faith and were subsequently inspired to invite Bahá'í speakers to their beautiful home to interest their many friends.

Bridget and her mother were very welcome members of the Bahá'í Summer School at Matlock Bath where they were able to make a deeper study of the teachings. It was after long and careful research that Bridget declared herself a Bahá'í.

I had never met a single human being so human yet so divinely human as Bridget.

In her new Faith Bridget became more radiantly lovely than ever before and, whenever I saw her, there seemed to me to be some new grace and charm reflecting divine attributes.

Bridget was fond of trees and all living things, she was clever with horses and even the most highly strung animals immediately responded to her.

When she was so suddenly taken it came as a rude shock which took me unawares. It seemed such a ghastly waste, so young, only twenty-seven, so courageous, so daring, so competent, so kind and with infinite understanding and personal charm. I was angry and resentful, forgetful of the profound teachings so clearly given in the Writings. Then on Thursday night following the tragedy, perhaps at four o'clock in the morning, I felt Bridget was standing near me; she did not speak but had a look of such divine radiance I was at once aware that all anger and resentment had vanished for ever.

Bridget was deeply loved by many people and at the end of her life she met a man of very fine character, serving with the Parachutists,

to whom she would have been married within a month. Her company was equally enjoyed by her elders as those of her own age and children alike. Our hearts go out to him and to her devoted parents in deepest sympathy.

How can we extol a life so full of joy and solace, so rich in imperishable memories? How certain in her belief, how steadfast her faith in the Bahá'í Cause. Her radiant spirit will forever conquer space, she has created an abiding place in our hearts' affections, which time will not obliterate nor the passing years change.

RICHARD MARLOW

Richard Marlow was, for over thirty years, a familiar figure in Southbourne. Having been deprived of both legs by an accident, he supplemented his small pension by selling matches, knitted and raffia work. So it was that Dr. Esslemont one day found him, sitting in his wheeled chair at a corner of the road, and struck by his spiritual character, gave him the Bahá'í message. To this he made a ready response, and when a local Spiritual Assembly was formed in the district in April, 1923, Mr. Marlow was made a member and when possible would be taken by friends to our meetings.

Although he had no opportunity of teaching the Cause, he lived the life, and was a shining example of quiet courage and cheerful resignation to the Will of God. When the Bahá'í group became dispersed, only Miss Challis was able to keep in touch with him through letters. But before his death he was destined to make personal contact again with the friends, who gave him every help in their power.

The spiritual assurance of Richard Marlow never seemed to falter, and one came away from his dark little room impressed by the simple faith and patience of a truly beautiful soul.

When on 30th April, in his 76th year, the mortal cage was opened, with what joy he must have winged his flight to the "Paradise of the Placeless."

F. PINCHON.

The World Community of Bahá'u'lláh

A letter of greeting and good wishes has been received from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran. One of the believers has also received a letter from Mr. Samimi of Tehran, who visited us some years ago, in which he stated that he had just seen Mr. and Mrs. Alizade, who were members of the London community until about six years ago.

The periodical news letters from Haifa, Palestine, report that our beloved Guardian continues in good health.

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SOUTHERN SUMMER SCHOOL

Quite a number of believers were present at the Torquay Centre during Whitsun week-end, the local community being augmented by most of the members of the N.S.A. and some friends from other parts of the country, and all spent a very happy three days together. Interesting talks were given, which were followed by a great deal of animated discussion. History, one's individual life as a Bahá'í and the Administrative Order were all exhaustively dealt with. On the Saturday the friends present celebrated together the Feast of the Declaration of the Báb, and on Sunday a public meeting was held, which was well attended. Torquay people worked hard for the Summer School and were very generous too in their hospitality, and the whole Bahá'í community is grateful to them.

LONDON SUMMER SCHOOL

To hold a Summer School primarily for one local community in the familiar local surroundings was a new experiment, which was, however, completely justified by the results. Not all the sessions, which started on Friday evening and finished Sunday evening, were equally well attended, but nevertheless, a great deal of good work was done, and everyone felt encouraged and helped even by a brief attendance. In addition to the usual talks, two fresh types of meeting were tried out and found successful. At one, all the friends were asked to come with questions on the Teachings, on which they needed help or which they thought it would be profitable to discuss. This is not an entirely new idea but has not, so far as we know, been used before at a summer school, and we recommend it as an extremely good way of learning more about the Cause. The other meeting was on the lighter side. Two of the believers prepared in advance a number of questions, which were designed to draw on the friends' experience rather than to test their knowledge—questions based on teaching experiences and ideas, opinions and such like. A question was drawn out of a box, together with the name of a friend present, who had to answer the question as briefly and quickly as possible. Some good ideas were produced and some interesting experiences recounted. The local believers are very grateful to the four friends from outside London who travelled up for the Summer School and contributed greatly to its success.

NEWS

Mr. and Mrs. Balyuzi, Mrs. Brown and Mr. Abbas Dehkan have transferred to the London community from Evesham.

Mr. Ferraby has been appointed Manager of the Publishing Trust and Mrs. Langdon-Davies, Editor.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

Whenever men set themselves a high goal, they are in danger of falling into one or other of two pitfalls. Either they become discouraged after a very little while, by the seeming insignificance of their achievements, and have not the heart to pursue further the little that they could yet do with vigour and determination, since they lack the courage to attempt more; or else, they strain every nerve and muscle to the breaking point in sheer determined obstinacy to beat the time factor, and then find that the work was done badly, and has all been wasted because it had no firm foundation.

The wise man prepares his ground carefully, builds steadily and slowly, and if he measures up the amount yet to do and considers the limitation of time, carries on as best he can, trying to get as much as possible done properly, even if he can't quite finish the job—at least he knows that he has done something well, and can safely hand it over to others to carry on.

That is the view we must take with regard to the Four-Year Plan and its modifications, as recommended from Convention.

We cannot hope to realize our ambition in the normal way, in war-time. But that does not give us an excuse for sitting back on our heels with a sigh of mingled despair and relief. There is work in plenty to be done, and it must not stop for a day, whether it be the effort of the individual, teaching through personal contacts anywhere in the country, independently; or whether it be the planned and concerted effort of the Teaching Committee or Publicity Committee and the groups and communities. In either way, by sowing seeds wherever we go, or by tending the first fragile shoots that spring from such seeds, the work goes on. Whether it be a four or a twenty-year plan, the ideal of nineteen assemblies in this country still remains vivid before our eyes.

Library

The National Teaching Committee has a small library for the use of teachers. Applications for books should be addressed to the secretary of the Committee. The Committee would be grateful if believers having duplicates of any books would kindly give them to the National Teaching Library to be used in teaching. The Committee will also be glad to hear from any believer who possesses copies of books now unobtainable and who would be willing to lend them through the intermediary of the Committee if required. Anyone willing to lend such books is asked to advise the secretary of titles, etc.

Isolated believers wishing to borrow books not specifically for teaching are advised to borrow them from their nearest Bahá'í Centre.

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"Whoso ariseth among you to teach the Cause of his Lord, let him, before all else, teach his own self, that his speech may attract the hearts of them that hear him. Unless he teacheth his own self, the words of his mouth will not influence the heart of the seeker. Take heed, O people, lest ye be of them that give good counsel to others but forget to follow it themselves." The words of such as these, and beyond the words the realities of all things, and beyond these realities the angels that are nigh unto God, bring against them the accusation of falsehood.

Should such a man ever succeed in influencing any one, this success should be attributed not to him, but rather to the influence of the words of God, as decreed by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Wise. In the sight of God he is regarded as a lamp that imparteth its light, and yet is all the while being consumed within itself."

The World Community of Bahá'u'lláh—continued.

We hear that as a result of a teaching campaign in Yezd, Iran, last year, sixty new believers declared themselves. In this town more than 2,500 believers have openly declared themselves and, in spite of official disapproval, there have been nineteen Bahá'í marriages during the year. Yezd is still a town of considerable fanaticism and we must all rejoice that so many devoted believers have been willing to face difficulties of all kinds for their Faith. The community in Tehran continues, in spite of many difficulties, with the construction of its Hazirat-ul-Quds and it is hoped that the dome will soon be completed.

The Indian believers are making good progress. Bahá'í Youth in Bombay, Karachi, Poona, Calcutta and Kotah, held successful meetings in connection with the Seventh Annual Bahá'í Youth Day in February of this year, and even two solitary young Bahá'ís in Surat also held a meeting. The Bahá'ís in India have undertaken a Six Year Plan of teaching, which they are prosecuting with great determination and self-sacrifice. Several of the friends have left their homes and gone as pioneers to spread the Cause in fresh districts.