

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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TEACHING THE CAUSE

***"Delighted News Safety English Believers
Progress Teaching Work Assure them each all
Loving Continued Prayers."***

Dear Friends,

This message was received from the Guardian in reply to a cable sent by the N.S.A. after its last meeting, which read: "Teaching work developing well friends safe praying confirmations send heart-felt wishes revered Guardian family."

The Four Year Plan, which aims at the establishment of Nineteen Spiritual Assemblies by 1944, is the chief concern of us all. While the National Teaching Committee has the responsibility of directing the Teaching work, the foundation lies in the response which every individual believer makes to the needs of the Plan. This plan is not being carried out in any haphazard manner, but has been well thought out in the light of past experience, and with proper consultation. The immediate object is to establish study groups and classes in as many places as possible, for these are the beginnings of Bahá'í communities. In order to do this it is necessary for Bahá'í teachers to travel to the places concerned, and often to stay for a time. A clearer idea of what is being done, and what is being undertaken, will be obtained by reading the section of the Journal under the heading of National Teaching Committee. At present only a number of the friends are available as visiting teachers, but every believer can assist the work by teaching in his own district and by contributions to the Fund. Indeed, without financial assistance from all the friends, the work will not continue.

In the last number of the Journal it was recommended that money which would have been spent on going to Summer School should be contributed to the Teaching Fund. It is gratifying to report that

already an amount of thirteen pounds has been received in this manner. Four believers who had been saving up for Summer School contributed this amount, their donations ranging from half-a-crown to seven pounds. We strongly urge the rest of the friends to consider this matter, and to remember the following points. By co-operating in this manner the energy which would have gone into the Summer School will be preserved and directed into the carrying out of the Four Year Plan. The unity of the national community will be greatly strengthened by this national undertaking. For this purpose send your contribution direct to the National Treasurer. Some believers do not have to save up to go to Summer School, but if they will contribute the amount they would have spent, they will be taking part too.

As the work of the Faith progresses, so will the needs of the Fund increase, and we must all be prepared to make greater and greater sacrifices. There is no better way than beginning now, for it is not until we have made the utmost possible sacrifice that we realise we can still do more. It is this which attracts the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, sacrifice and prayer, and it is the confirmations of the Holy Spirit which cause the Faith to grow and become established.

"Gird up thy loins to serve the Cause of God in His great vineyard; trust in the favours of thy Lord, supplicate unto Him and beseech in the middle of the night and at early morn just as a needy and captive one beseeches. It is incumbent upon thee to turn to the Kingdom of God and to pray, supplicate and invoke at all times. This is the means by which thy soul shall ascend upward to the apex of the gift of God." 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

CASUALTIES

The friends are advised to carry clear identification with them wherever they go, and to specify that in the event of death they wish to be buried according to the manner of the Bahá'í Faith. The address of their local community should be stated, and a request to notify the National Office, in London, of any casualties.

REGISTRATION

Several believers have not yet completed registration cards, and they are, therefore, deprived of the voting right. This right may be recovered at any time by completing registration cards. It should be emphasized that loss of the vote does not debar believers from attending the Feasts and taking part in the discussions, but only believers who have a registration card bearing the seal of the N.S.A. may vote, either in elections or on recommendations to a Spiritual Assembly. It is again stressed that this measure is to protect the Faith, is only temporary, and that believers who do not register may be assisting those who would wish to harm the Faith.

PUBLISHING TRUST

Photographs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, like the one in The Chosen Highway, are available at 3d. They are unmounted.

The Publishing Trust will supply books at cost price for presentation to public libraries.

Attention is again drawn to the list of books published in the last number of Bahá'í Journal, with special reference to the following :—

Bahá'í Peace Programme, 2/6.
The Reality of Man, 1/-.

The three titles under "Bargains," which are still available.

NEWS

The friends in Tasmania send "our warmest greetings to the friends in England. We meet very frequently and read with the greatest interest everything we receive."

Philip Hainsworth is in Northern Ireland and finding opportunities of teaching; he has placed two books in the Bangor public library.

Mr. Peter Esslemont, Dr. Esslemont's brother, has lately been in touch with the N.S.A., and has distributed a number of the new edition of his brother's book among his friends.

Margaret Bonney and Mary Shaw, members of the London Youth Group, have joined the Land Army and are now training in the south-west.

At the time of writing all the friends are safe, and reports from many places show that air-raid shelters, when occupied during an air raid, are very good places in which to speak about the Cause. Readings from the books have been appreciated in some places, while in others prayers and discussion have been welcomed.

THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF THE COMMUNITY

'Abdu'l-Bahá said in Paris in 1912: "Numerous meetings are held in Paris every day for different purposes, to discuss politics, commerce, education, art, science and many other subjects. All these meetings are good: but this assembly has met together to turn their faces towards God, to learn how best to work for the good of humanity, to seek how prejudices may be abolished, and the seed of Love and Universal Brotherhood sown in the heart of man."

"God approves of the motive of our gathering together and gives us His blessing."

In these words the Master tells us what is the real foundation of the Bahá'í community, and what must be the purpose of all our meetings. Whether in the Feasts, or Spiritual Assembly meetings, or in public teaching meetings, we should turn our faces towards God and seek how best to establish His Kingdom on earth. God will approve and give His blessing to such meetings.

A community devoted to such ends, and using such methods, must surely be founded on some deeper thing than mutual interest, or even a common purpose, though both these exist in the Bahá'í community. And what else lies at the core of Bahá'í life than love of God? This is the foundation of the individual, and the communal, Bahá'í life. This love, awakened by Bahá'u'lláh, is directed by Him in channels of service and creativeness, so that we are not left inarticulate with the force which He has aroused in us. The "divine art of living," as exemplified by the Master, is the way of perfect expression for the individual, and the Administrative Order is the vessel which can gather in unity all the individual effort, and express mankind's love for God.

Within the Bahá'í community this fundamental power, love of God, must be expressed in our love and affection for each other; in other words, in friendship. How often did our beloved Master express his longing to see the friends at one with each other, to know that they were attracted to each other; this, He said, was the cause of His happiness.

"All the resources of my physical strength are exhausted, and the spirit of my life is the news of the unity of the people of Bahá. I am straining my ears towards the East and towards the West, towards the North and towards the South. Perchance I might hear the songs of love and good-fellowship raised from the meetings of the believers. My days are numbered, and save this there is no joy left for me. . . . Will they not rejoice my heart? Will they not satisfy my longing? Will they not comply with my request? Will they not fulfil my anticipations? Will they not answer my call? I am waiting, I am patiently waiting."

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

REPORT

Teaching work has been conducted in a number of places, chiefly with the object of establishing study classes or fireside meetings which will be the beginnings of new Bahá'í communities.

Nottingham

Miss Clayton spent a week-end early in July with Miss Richardson, Mrs. Lacey, and their friends, and discussed with them the possibility of a Teaching week-end when public meetings could be held. The week-end was arranged for July 28th—29th. Five friends from London, Miss Eastgate from Birmingham and Mr. Hurst from Leeds, were present. It was not possible to hold public meetings, but informal gatherings were held both in Ilkeston and Nottingham. On the Saturday evening there were seventeen present at Mrs. Lacey's, and great interest shown. After the meeting Mr. Balyuzi and Mr. Hofman visited Mr. Lacey's relatives and spoke about the Cause. On Sunday at Miss Richardson's fourteen were present: two brief talks were given and general discussion followed. Some friends had to leave about six o'clock, but others continued the discussion. It is intended to establish a regular meeting in this district and teachers will go again as often as possible.

Brighton

Mr. Lee has addressed Toc H and is trying to get "The Promise of All Ages" into the library. Several copies of "New World Order" are sold from his shop every month.

Newcastle

Miss Jacobs has addressed the Theosophical Society twice and is holding a fireside meeting. She writes: "We had a very successful fireside meeting last night, six 'strangers,' Bertha Wilson and I. If I stay on here I shall hold at least one meeting each week."

Salisbury

Mr. Hofman stayed a few days with Mrs. Hill, who invited a large number of her friends to hear a talk on "Order Out of Chaos." About forty people were present and keen interest was shown. On the following days Mr. Hofman and Miss Hill visited a number of those who had been present, and discussed the Faith with them. We are delighted to report that Miss Hill, and Mrs. Rideout (who is the wife of General Hill's gardener) have both accepted the Faith. They are arranging for a study meeting, and in the absence of other people hold it among the members of the household. Our thanks are due to Mrs. Hill, who has been to so much trouble and has helped greatly. Mr. Hofman is returning to Salisbury with the intention of holding a public meeting in the city.

Bristol

Here is a report from Mr. Hofman. "I stayed with Mrs. Weeks and had a delightful time. Her four children are fine youngsters. A meeting had been arranged at the Sea Mills Adult School, where I spoke. All of them knew of the Faith already, but were glad to discuss further. In the evening a number of people came to Mrs. Weeks' house and we had another meeting.

"During the week I made a number of contacts, and approached some of the people to whom Mark Tobey had spoken. The new contacts proved more encouraging, especially one man, a poet, who already knew much of the Teachings through intuition. The Rev. Tyssul Davis was very helpful, and arranged for me to be chairman at a discussion group on Sunday afternoon. Afterwards he took me to tea with some friends who were very interested and promised to have a meeting in their house when I returned. In the evening I attended Mr Davis' church and after the service gave a short address to the congregation on 'Fellowship.' Just before I stood up Mr. Davis gave me a rose, which inevitably directed my thoughts to the Master, as He frequently carried a rose. I spoke, as accurately as I could remember, one of the Master's talks, and it had a profound effect.

"I shall go back shortly and hope to address the Theosophical and Psychology Societies, but more especially to establish a study group."

Cheltenham

There is a resident believer here whom some of the older friends will remember as Mrs. Ginman. She is now called Madame Charlot, and has recently returned from America. "I spent a delightful afternoon with her, speaking of the Cause and the work of the last four years. She is anxious to start a study group, but cannot make the contacts, so I have arranged to go and stay a few days and bring a few people to her house. After that she will be able to continue. Mrs. Weeks has put me in touch with the Esperantists here, which will be a help."

Orpington

The London Spiritual Assembly, which has constituted itself a Teaching Committee, organised a week-end Conference at Orpington on August 17th, 18th. The subject under consideration was "The Bahá'í." Splendid talks were given on Saturday afternoon and evening and on Sunday afternoon. A devotional meeting was held on Sunday morning. The attendance was good and the weather perfect, so that all the meetings took place in the garden. We were particularly pleased to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Lacey and Miss Richardson. The public meeting at the London Centre and an unofficial supper party made a delightful ending to an enjoyable and profitable time.

In addition to these activities Manchester and Bradford have been visited by Miss Baxter, Mr. Sugar and Mr. Hofman.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Each number of the *Journal* will contain a number of questions, and references where matter may be found in the Bahá'í books for satisfactory answers. The Committee suggests that everyone should prepare carefully the answer to each of the questions, and where a study group can be arranged these answers should be exchanged orally, so that practice in expressing one's ideas is gradually acquired, together with a basic knowledge of the Cause. If this is followed up thoroughly with each issue, in the course of a year a fairly comprehensive groundwork will have been covered and every believer will feel himself competent not only to answer questions most frequently put, but to explain in detail the Bahá'í standpoint.

1. What do you mean by Progressive Revelation?
Some Answered Questions. 67-8; 76; 81; 87.
Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. 22, 23, 24.
2. What is the special significance of the appearance of Bahá'u'lláh?
Unfoldment of World Civilization. 3-5; 42-46.
Goal of N.W.O. "Principle of Oneness."
3. What is the Bahá'í Teaching on Prayer?
Bahá'u'lláh and The New Era. Chapter 6.
Bahá'í Prayers (A Selection). 3,4.
New World Order, August 1940. On Meditation. Prayers and Meditations 195.
4. What is Death?
Hidden Words. Arabic 32, Persian 70. Chosen Highway 215-16.
Gleanings. 153; 155; 156; 169.
Paris Talks. 59; 80, whole chapter.
5. Explain the two lines of Prophets, Aryan and Semitic.

An answer to this question has been prepared as follows: In the Aryan branch of religion we have such Faiths as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism. In the Semitic branch we have Judaism, Christianity, and Islám. The religion of the Báb also comes under the Semitic line. The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is the heir of both branches, and provides the converging point.

The Aryan branch has laid its accent on Divine immanence, that is the dwelling of God within His creation, and the Semitic branch has taught Divine transcendence, that is the reflection of God in His creation. The Aryan branch deals in the main with self-development, the Semitic branch stresses the relationship of Man to God, the relationship of the

created to the Creator. The implications of the Aryan branch are mainly individualistic, and those of the Semitic branch are social.

ADMINISTRATION

Guardianship—The Guardian

Guardianship of the Cause of God is unique and was instituted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament for the preservation of the Faith from multiplicity of sects, consequent on varied interpretations of the sacred Writings. Guardianship is for life, and is hereditary, devolving upon the eldest son if he proves worthy of such high calling. The Guardian appoints his successor in his own life time, which appointment must be ratified by a body of the Hands of the Cause of God. (Will and Testament, p.14).

Several years before His passing, 'Abdu'l-Bahá drew up a will, appointing His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, the first Guardian, urging the friends to take the greatest care of him, so that "no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature," and says of him, "for he is, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the guardian of the Cause of God, the Afnan, the Hands (Pillars) of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God, and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One." How emphatic, dear friends, are these words of the Master, calling our attention to the fact that the Guardian is the human representative of Bahá'u'lláh, Whose invigorating power is focussed in him, radiating thence throughout the Cause and so to the whole world. Nor should we overlook the colossal sacrifice entailed by a Guardian in the putting aside of family interests and the sweet intercourse of friends, the severe self-discipline and arduous, constant labour required for the fulfilment of the many and varied duties of Guardianship. So let us be true and devoted helpers of our beloved Guardian, putting all our time and energy into the great task before us, knowing for certain that he is praying and supplicating at the sacred threshold of Bahá'u'lláh on our behalf.

STEADFASTNESS

"If thou standest steadfast and firm in this seeking and advancement, not becoming agitated by the trials, giving repose and composure to the mind, and freeing thyself from attachment to this ephemeral world, be thou assured that thou shalt become an enkindled lamp, spreading the lights of faith, assurance, knowledge and the love of God in every gathering place." 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

"The essential thing is firmness and steadfastness. I hope that all the friends and the maidservants of the Merciful One may be strengthened and confirmed therein." 'Abdu'l-Bahá.