

News Letter from Baha'is of the British Isles.

December, 1931.

"Guidance hath ever been in words, and now it is given by deeds. That is, everyone must show forth deeds that are pure and holy, for in words all partake, whereas such deeds as these are special to our loved ones. Strive then with heart and soul to distinguish yourselves by your deeds. In this wise we counsel you in this holy and resplendent Tablet."

From 'Hidden Words' of Baha'u'llah.

"O My Servants! Ye are the trees of My Garden; Ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent upon every one to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth, O men of understanding! For things are dependent upon their means, and the Grace of God shall be sufficient unto you. Trees that yield no fruit have been and will ever be fit for fire."

DEAR FRIENDS,

Our beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, fully realizing the difficult problems that many of us have to face, as we come to the close of another year, sends the following message through the N.S.A.:—"I deeply sympathise with the increasing difficulties confronting the believers in Great Britain, but I feel that these will serve to deepen their faith in the power of the Cause and will enable them to reinforce the spirit of Baha'i solidarity among them. I strongly feel that the maintenance of the Centre (Walmar House) is indispensable and vital to the interests of the Cause, and I will continue to pray that Baha'u'llah may protect and bless and sustain the upholders of His Faith in that land."

Ruhi Afnan, writing on the Guardian's behalf, says:—"He hopes that the friends will display a certain amount of faith and courage and not fear present economic conditions. We should not let financial considerations hamper our work and discourage us in rendering our services. Giving lavishly during days of plenty cannot be termed sacrifice. It applies only to our activities when depression and economic difficulties seem to block our way."

We who are Baha'is and familiar with the Message of Baha'u'llah know with certainty that even worse days will be met, if the world remains heedless to the Call of God and gives precedence to material over spiritual considerations. Whatever we sacrifice at present is to assure the welfare of humanity and ourselves as members of it in the future.

Shoghi Effendi is very anxious to see England, which is the centre of the greatest Empire the world has seen, become also a spiritual centre, that it should radiate the light of Baha'u'llah to the distant lands over which her political power has been established. He wants to see the friends there arise to the occasion and spread the tenets of the Faith far and wide. Please convey to them all Shoghi Effendi's loving greetings.

Ruhi Afnan also writes in another letter—"The present social and economic problems that are facing the British people are surely occupying their whole attention, but they should also operate as a reminder and draw them closer to spiritual matters. The people

have to be made conscious of the fact that without a complete change in our outlook and a total reform of the guiding principles of our life, such as the Cause advocates, our social and economic problems cannot be solved nor our conditions ameliorated. Nothing short of the full message of Baha'u'llah can end the suffering that is befalling humanity.

In his moments of prayer and meditation Shoghi Effendi will think of you all and ask God to help you and guide you in spreading His Message. The task is surely great and the handicaps you have are surely discouraging, but God's blessings are infinite and the promises of Abdu'l Baha concerning the future victories of His Faith very clear."

In the light of the forgoing it is comforting and helpful to see how the Guardian's attitude to our problems is reflected in the following article written by one of the friends in the north of England.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

(A Message to all people of goodwill.)

It must be clear to all people of right thinking that it is better to use time and money in establishing the principles of the Kingdom of God upon earth, than in wasting such means in contention! It is becoming known through the Baha'i Revelation that it is God's Will that we should advance to meet one another for the common good (for the happiness of all) instead of separating in jealousy and bitterness. By co-operating good results are achieved; by separation we lose all. What good can result from the separation of Capital and Labour as though such things are matters for contention? Capital is but another title for Means, and Labour is but a title for Service! How can means and service be separated without destroying productivity and cheerfulness? To accumulate wealth for selfish purposes is a great evil; and to rise up with hearts full of vengefulness against the selfish people is also a great evil. The happy issue out of all our troubles is to turn our thoughts from the ignoble to the noble; from the sordid contentions between so-called Capital and so-called Labour, to the Glory of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

We must turn our thoughts to Christ and to the Spirit of God which is guiding us in these days, as in the days of old. The Spirit of orderliness which is working in the Universe is not less working in mankind, and it is this which Christ manifested when He preached

in Galilee the Gospel of the Kingdom. He heralded the coming of the Kingdom (the condition of orderliness in the world) and by preaching the Gospel began the preparation of the hearts of men and women for the coming of the Spirit of truth which should lead the world into the actual Kingdom. His teaching began with the declaration that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and finished with the sweetest of all assurances: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." When His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray aright He gave them the prayer in which we all now ask God that His Kingdom may come and His Will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. Christ looked upon the Kingdom as the full truth of the Word—the full truth of God's loving thought of Man. He explained to His disciples that He would send the Spirit of truth (the Spirit of the Kingdom) to guide them into all truth, and that when the Gospel had been preached in all the world, "then shall the end be."

Nineteen hundred years have passed away; martyrs, saints, and self-sacrificing teachers have carried the Gospel into all the world, and the end has come. The time of preparation is over and the Spirit of truth has been manifested, in all goodness and beauty in Baha'u'llah, the giver of the constitution of the Kingdom to the whole of mankind. The whole condition of the world of humanity has changed since the time of Christ. The world is known, and inventions have facilitated education besides bringing the ends of the world together. The time has arrived for Unity—for perfect orderliness in the general life of mankind. All this is clear in the Spiritual and social teachings of the Baha'i Revelation. First was God, then the people of God, then the hope of the Kingdom, and now the Constitution of the Kingdom upon earth. The King, the People, and the Constitution have become a reality, and the Kingdom is completed and must now grow in the world.

That which was hitherto unfinished is now finished and we are fully sensible of the "all truth" mentioned by Jesus; in other words we are at last living in the full knowledge of the Kingdom. We are drawn to the Kingdom in Heaven and at the same time we are working for the establishment of that same Kingdom upon earth. Surely, to allow prejudices and selfish opinions to stand in the way of such work is not worthy of man! In the Constitution of the Kingdom as laid down in the teachings of Baha'u'llah is the Glory of God's loving thought; and, of this, the Light and the Truth are Justice and Unity. In the Constitution it is understood that mankind is one family, and that God is the all-loving Father. Therefore, by the nature of it, in the Constitution here can be known no such divisions as Capital and Labour (Means and Service) for in the Kingdom all means, and all service will be used and given

by all for the good of all. Unemployment, prostitution, slums, workhouses, prejudice against half-castes, war—all such evils as these will disappear as mankind unites in the Kingdom; and by this same Constitution the Oneness of the world of humanity will become reality, whilst man will be nearer the Divine, because its Spirit is love and its function is Harmony.

With this in our minds (the Constitution covering the whole life of mankind) how can we ever again descend to parties, sects, classes and nationalities? We are at one with God's loving Thought for all people; how, then, can we descend to the animosities of sections that are fighting? We cannot. Our only way is to stand clear of all the fighting and jarring, so that the Baha'i Cause may be a refuge for all those who believe in God and who love mankind more than themselves. Thus shall we be a power for good—a centre of harmony in the midst of all peoples until divisions such as exist today are unknown and the Glory of God is manifest in all.

E. T. HALL.

Manchester.

London.

We welcomed with much pleasure Abdu'l Baha's grand-daughters, Miss Meranghiz Rabbani who has come to London to study and Miss Mariam Jalal, lately returned from a visit to Haifa during the summer holiday. We know their presence here will be an inspiration. Mr. Dekham and Mr. Hafezi have also resumed their studies in London after a holiday on the Continent.

Mrs. Ellery B. Paine and Miss Sylvia Paine of Urbana, Ill., U.S.A., spent some time in London en route for Haifa and cheered and helped us all with their enthusiasm and love for the work of the Cause.

Mr. Mark Tobey, formerly of San Francisco and New York, is now teaching art at Darlington Hall, Totnes, Devonshire. He is an earnest worker for the Cause and we are anticipating his second visit to London when he has promised to speak at our Wednesday meeting.

Prof. Dr. S. C. Junker and Mrs. Junker of Stuttgart, Germany, attended the feast at the Baha'i Room in commemoration of the Birth of Baha'u'llah on November 12th.

Mr. P. K. Ghosh, of India, who was for some time an active member of the Baha'i group in San Francisco, is staying in London. Our growing list of young people encourages the hope that this youthful group will soon be able to resume active work and attract many others to our centre.

During the last quarter we have co-operated with several liberal-minded groups and have welcomed their speakers to our platform.

Mrs. Joan Cather, a well-known worker for Peace, gave us a most interesting address on October 14th, speaking especially of the splendid international work being done among the children of the world.

The Rev. Will Hayes, who has succeeded the late Rev. Walter Walsh, D.D., as leader of the Free Religious Movement, Lindsey Hall, spoke to us on November 18th on "A Synthesis of Religions." As Abdu'l Baha tells us often that we must study all religions and that the original basic teachings of all are the same, this talk was deeply appreciated. Mr. Hayes is an authority on his subject, having made a life study of it. He is doing much to eliminate narrowness and prejudice from the minds of men.

On Wednesday, December 9th, Mr. John P. Fletcher will speak to us on "The Colour Bar in England and How to Overcome it." Mr. Fletcher is a prominent worker at the Friends' House, and work such as he is doing to eliminate race prejudice is exactly in line with the Baha'i Teachings.

Sir Francis Younghusband, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., who works tirelessly in countless directions for the uplift of humanity, will address our Wednesday evening meeting on December 16th. This is a great privilege for us, as Sir Francis is one of the busiest men in the world and we all are looking forward eagerly, to the event, knowing that the rich experiences of Sir Francis's life will enable him to give us much of interest and inspiration.

Professor Patrick Geddes, who was an honoured guest as a speaker at our headquarters not long ago, talked informally to a group of Baha'is and their friends recently at the London School of Economics. He has original and illuminating ideas on a synthesis of Science—comparable to the Synthesis of Religions referred to above—and knew and loved Abdu'l Baha. He said he knew of no religious movement with such splendid views on the harmony of science and religion; and he wished the Baha'is would expand their efforts so that their sound teaching on this and other problems of the day could be more widely disseminated throughout the world.

Professor H. P. Shastri, D.Litt., who knew the Baha'is in Shanghai intimately and has read many of the writings in their original Persian, is a frequent visitor at our Room and includes a lecture on the "World Significance of the Baha'i Movement" in his varied and learned discourses. He refers to Baha'u'llah in many talks and places and realizes the vital importance of this Teaching.

He is also a most devoted admirer of the life and works of that martyred Persiab Baha'i saint Quarratu'l Ayn.

Manchester.

With thanksgiving to the Most High we record a further period of loving labour for the Cause. During this period our Meetings have been held in the homes of various friends, friends who found delight in thus rendering service. Our knowledge of the Teachings has been extended; our faith deepened and strengthened, our Spirit revived. Several new friends have been attracted; they show sustained interest in the Teachings.

We have had the pleasure of visits from Miss Hodgkinson and Mr. Asgarzadeh. Contact with these friends from London helps us to realise that our communion extends beyond the bounds of our immediate district, that it embraces the whole whole.

We are co-operating with the Manchester District Joint Disarmament Council. Our representative, Miss Williams, is taking an active share in the efforts of the Council to educate public opinion locally on this most important matter.

We take to heart the words of Baha'u'llah: "With the hands of loving kindness I have planted in the holy garden of paradise the young tree of your love and friendship, and have watered it with the goodly showers of My tender grace; now that the hour of its fruiting is come strive that it may be protected, and be not consumed with the flame of desire and passion."

THE JUNIOR ESPERANTIST SOCIETY.

An Esperanto Class has been formed among the children of the Manchester Baha'is, and meets on the first Saturday in the month at the home of one of the members. The childrens' ages vary between five and seventeen, and the meetings are much enjoyed by them all. The Manchester Friends pray that from this fulfilment of one of the twelve principles will spring a desire for, and acceptance of the fuller Baha'i Teachings, by these young people.

Bradford.

To the friends in this city who, by their regular attendance at our fortnightly Meetings, give proof that their interest in the Teachings is real and vital, these words of Baha'u'llah are particularly appropriate: "Proclaim unto the children of assurance that within the realms of holiness, nigh unto the celestial paradise, a new garden hath appeared, round which circle the denizens of

the realm on high and the immortal dwellers of the exalted paradise. Strive, then, that ye may attain that station, that ye may unravel the mysteries of love from its wind-flowers and learn the secref of divine and consummate wisdom from its eternal fruits. Solaced are the eyes of them that enter and abide therein."

Bradford friends have given testimony that by means of our Meetings they have found "solace for their eyes" and strength for their spirits. Peace has displaced anxiety, doubt given way to assurance. The address delivered by Mr. E. T. Hall of Manchester on his visit here contributed largely to this happy state.

On the invitation of the local Esperantist Society a Bradford Baha'i addressed the members on the Baha'i Movement. Friendly interest was shown and a happy discussion followed the address. A copy of the Esperanto edition of "Baha'n'llah and the New Era" was sold, and also several booklets in Esperanto. We rejoice in these opportunities to further the Cause.

Leeds.

A sympathiser with the Cause has voluntarily undertaken the cost and the labour of distribution of 240 of our "Folders", "What is the Baha'i Movement?" Also of the distribution of a number of E. T. Hall's pamphlets, "The Universal Religion." The gratitude of all Baha'is will go out to our friend for his zeal in making known the Cause to the people of this large industrial city.

Altrincham.

The friends in this district were much encouraged by a visit on November 22nd, from Mr. E. T. Hall of Manchester, who delivered a very helpful address on "Baha'u'llah the Sun of Truth." His address was followed by a discussion which lasted for over an hour, when questions were answered which appeared to deepen conviction in the hearts of those present, on the truth of the message given. The friends are endeavouring to hold regular Meetings, and welcome believers from other centres.

York.

Mrs. Kenworthy writes:—"We do not make much progress as yet in forming an organized group, but we keep in touch with one another as much as we can, and have recently been encouraged and helped by a visit from Mr. E. T. Hall of Manchester, who spent part of two days here, and besides calls and little talks with a few separately, addressed a small group Meeting, giving us helpful and inspiring exposition of the truth, and answering questions. Several young people are becoming deeply interested in the Teachings.