



NEW WORLD ORDER

46, BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

Vol. II, No. VII.

1d.

September, 1940.

"The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens."—Bahá'u'lláh.

WORLD ORDER: WORLD RELIGION

Many religious bodies are beginning to realise, and to state publicly, that while creeds are different, there are certain fundamentals upon which all religions agree. Some religious leaders have even stated that the creeds are secondary. All this is good.

It is even better when, as in some rare instances, these opinions have been extended to include other Faiths than Christianity. For we should never forget that Islám, Buddhism and Hinduism, each number hundreds of millions of followers.

This growing liberalism in religious thought is a reaching out towards a wider spiritual unity than has yet been known, a cry for world brotherhood, the voicing of a deep desire to remove the barriers which separate man from man.

But world order, brotherhood, peace, is a more dynamic state than can be reached by agreement about certain values. We agree that brotherhood is preferable to enmity, love to hatred, justice to injustice, but we cannot found a world state or create a new order on this agreement, excellent as it is. There must be some all compelling power which rouses men to action, which penetrates to their inmost being, evoking that mysterious, mystical flame which is the mark of the pioneer and the maker of a new world.

This power has been supplied, at various times in the past, by religion. At the time of Moses, or of Muhammad, for instance. It has been released upon the human world through the pure channel of the Founder of one of the world religions. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains: "A Cause which all the governments and peoples of the world, with all their powers and armies, cannot promulgate and

spread, one Holy Soul can promote without help or support! Can this be done by human power? No, in the name of God! For example, Christ, alone and solitary, upraised the standard of spiritual peace and righteousness, a work which all the victorious governments with all their hosts were unable to accomplish. Consider what was the fate of so many diverse empires and peoples: the Roman Empire, France, Germany, Russia, England, etc.; all were gathered together under the same tent; that is to say, the appearance of Christ brought about a union among these diverse nations; some of whom, under the influence of Christianity, became so united that they sacrificed their lives and property for one another. After the time of Constantine, who was the protagonist of Christianity, divisions broke out among them. The point I wish to make is that Christ sustained a cause that all the kings of the earth could not establish! He united the various religions and modified ancient customs. Consider what great divergencies existed between Romans, Greeks, Syrians, Egyptians, Phœnicians, Israelites, and other peoples of Europe. Christ removed these divergencies, and became the cause of love between these communities. Although after some time empires destroyed this union, the work of Christ was accomplished."

Although much fighting and hating has been done in the name of religion, history provides no examples of a greater power for unifying. Neither the family tie, common nationality or race, mutual interest or mutual grievance can match religion in the matter of creating and sustaining an ordered society over a long period. The bond that unites

The Bahá'í Faith

The Báb, The Forerunner, declaration 1844, martyrdom 1850.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Founder, declaration 1863, ascended 1892.

"Abdu'l-Bahá, The True Exemplar and Interpreter, 1844-1921.

The Basic Principles

The Oneness of Mankind.

The Oneness of Religion.

The Independent Investigation of Truth.

The Relinquishing of Prejudices.

Education for Everyone.

Equal Status for Men and Women.

The Harmony of Religion and Science.

Solution of Industrial and Economic Problems.

A Universal Language. (Auxiliary.)

Universal Peace; international executive authority.

A World Commonwealth.

hearts is the love of God, and this bond is stronger than any other. But it becomes weakened and finally broken when the pure religious teaching has crystallised into creeds and man made doctrines. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá showed, Europe was once Christendom, "although after some time empires destroyed this union."

Now if we are to have a world union, it is necessary for this divine power to be diffused throughout the whole world, to arouse both the East and the West, to lift men's vision above the superficial barriers of race and creed and colour and class, to unify all men in the universal bond of the love of God. It is the message of the Bahá'í Faith that this power is now in the world, available to all men in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

On Prayer

by

'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Prayer and supplication are two wings whereby man soars toward the heavenly mansion of the True One. However, verbal repetition of prayer does not suffice. One must live in a continual attitude of prayer. When man is spiritually free his mind becomes the altar of prayer and his heart the sanctuary of prayer. Then the meaning of the verse, "We will lift up from before his eyes the veil," will become fulfilled in him.

We should speak in the language of heaven—in the language of the spirit—for there is a language

of the spirit and heart. It is as different from our language as our own language is different from that of the animals, who express themselves only by cries and sounds.

When we pray to God a feeling fills our hearts. This is the language of the spirit which speaks to God.

When in prayer we are freed from all outward things and turn to God, then it is as if in our hearts we heard the voice of God. Without words we speak, we communicate, we converse with God and hear the answer. It is said that Moses in the wilderness heard the voice of God. But that wilderness; that holy land was his own heart. All of us when we attain to a true spiritual condition can hear the voice of God speaking to us in that wilderness. We must strive to attain that condition by being separated from all things and from the people of the world and by turning to God alone. It will take some effort on the part of man to attain to that condition but he must work for it, strive for it. We can attain to it by thinking and caring less for material things and more for the spiritual. The further we go from the one, the nearer we are to the other—the choice is ours!

Our spiritual perception, our inward sight must be opened so that we can see the signs and traces of God's spirit in everything. Everything can reflect to us the light of the spirit.

The Promise

by

Betty Yool.

If a person be fair in his judgment he can recognise in current events a definite move towards the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. He will also find, in the downfall of those powers which offered direct opposition to Bahá'u'lláh, one of the most intriguing episodes of modern history.

For here was a Cause, sponsored by a prisoner and an exile, withstanding the fiercest opposition of such powerful forces as the Caliph and the Sultan of Turkey, and the combined forces of Church and State in Persia. Their attempts to exterminate this Cause gave to the new Faith a heroic background of martyrdom and resulted in their own downfall. One by one these strongly entrenched forces collapsed; the Qajar dynasty in Persia; the power of Islám in that same country; the Caliphate and Sultanate in Turkey. Each collapse paved the way for a new and more enlightened order.

It would be still more interesting to follow the fortunes of the rest of mankind, which without

opposition to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, yet finds itself caught in the grip of forces as far beyond its control, and equally disastrous, as those which brought His avowed enemies to their ruin. How far this condition is due to the indifference shown to Bahá'u'lláh, or to the refusal to accept His teachings, history and the impartial observer must decide.

Certain it is that the signs of an approaching World Order follow the general principles outlined by Bahá'u'lláh, and even the calamitous aspects of the present day are recognised by the earnest student of His teachings, as the signs of the dual process which must precede the establishment of World Order. "Soon," Bahá'u'lláh wrote, "will the present day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead."

The present day order, which is now being rolled up, is characterized by division and conflict, in fact it is an order which has brought to its peak the principle of competition. In all departments of life in that order, competition, war, prevails. In business, politics, national relationships, making a living, even in religion, there is struggle for existence and survival of the fittest. Such an order could last, and was even healthy, as long as new frontiers, new markets, new undeveloped territories could absorb the stronger and more determined. With the advance of the industrial age and of modern science, such an order destroys itself.

At such a time the ancient promise comes to mind. ". . . and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." In these words Isaiah, the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, speaking some two thousand five hundred years ago, indicated the condition of the "Most Great Peace."

Bahá'u'lláh, speaking to Edward Granville Browne, said: ". . . that all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled. . . . What harm is there in this? . . . Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come."

Bahá'u'lláh offers guidance on the most immediate of all problems, that of abolishing war and establishing law and order. In His letter to the rulers of the world some seventy years ago He outlined the principle of collective security, with which nations have timorously played, but never

accepted in fact. For collective security, according to Bahá'u'lláh, requires the giving up of certain sovereign rights to an International authority. This international authority must have the power to enforce its decisions and to restrain any nation from violating international law. And this brings to light another great difference between the old order and the new. In the present order war is recognised and rules are made for its conduct. In the world order of Bahá'u'lláh war is not countenanced at all. In the present order it is inevitable. In the New World Order it is impossible. For in that order the right to maintain armaments is vested only in the Universal House of Justice, whose function it is to preserve law and order.

On the vexed problem of religious disunity Bahá'u'lláh sheds the light of truth. He establishes for all time the absolute oneness of all the Messengers of God, including Himself and Those to come in the future. In the Book of Certitude He writes: "All the Messengers of God should be regarded as abiding in the same Tabernacle, soaring in the same Heaven, seated on the same Throne, uttering the same speech, proclaiming the same Faith." Any differences which seem apparent, therefore, are due, not to any superiority of character, but to the fact that Man has progressed under the teaching of one Manifestation of God, or Christ, and becomes ready for a renewal of spiritual truth in a form suited to his advancement.

The achievement of this administrative and spiritual unity of all nations is the chief purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's mission. Surely the processes at work in the world to-day are the means of assisting it! On the one hand the chief barriers in the path of World Order are being removed by the very disasters which they themselves have caused (excessive nationalism, race and class prejudice, economic competition) while on the other the liberal, universal principles of Bahá'u'lláh are spreading through human society wherever men are free.

The fermentation evident in all departments of life, and all over the world, is the means of rearranging human attitudes, institutions, ideas, in preparation for the establishment of Unity. Such fermentation does not arise spontaneously, but is the result of a powerful force working upon material in which great powers are latent. That force is the Word of God and that material is mankind. The Word of God is revealed anew by Bahá'u'lláh; mankind wrestles with himself at the gateway of maturity.

"This is the Day in which God's most excellent favours have been poured out upon men, the Day

in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things. It is incumbent upon all the peoples of the world to reconcile their differences, and, with perfect unity and peace, abide beneath the shadow of the Tree of His care and loving-kindness. . . . Soon will the present day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily, thy Lord speaketh the truth, and is the Knower of things unseen."

The Valley of Search

(A personal letter to the Editor from a friend who wishes to remain anonymous)

About thirty years ago, I began to find it an interesting study to attend all kinds of philosophical groups, cults and societies, both religious and anti-religious.

At the time I was living in America, a seething cauldron of philosophies, faiths and creeds. I was then what would be termed an unbeliever.

My keen interest in all those sects led me to the conviction that in the matter of creeds and religions mankind was raving mad, and I became anxious to discover, if possible, the foundation and meaning of that madness.

Every sect with which I came in contact seemed to lay special stress upon various superstitions which were quite incompatible with reason, things in which—so I thought—a sane person could not sincerely believe. I studied hundreds of different cults and movements and the more I studied the more I realised that man was suffering from inherited superstitions.

Amongst all these movements the Bahá'í Faith presented what was an enigma to me. *A religion enjoining severance from superstition!* A religion without superstition seemed to me then an impossibility. True, I met some of its followers who, in conversation, I found still clinging to many (as I thought) obvious superstitions, but the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith definitely discouraged superstition, and I studied it continually.

I investigated as well non-religious and anti-religious movements, in fact all kinds of movements in the hope of finding some sense and purpose in the apparent madness. The anti-religious viewpoint, that religion was an opiate with which the cunning took advantage of the credulous, did not appear to me to present an answer to the problem.

There were quite a number of highly enlightened men and women among the Bahá'ís who took

the journey to Asia and who stayed with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, studying the Bahá'í teachings. I carefully observed their reactions and the changes in them after their journey and return. I could not fathom the friendliness and hospitality of these people who taught freedom from superstition, and yet did many things which puzzled me. One of these things was this:—They read prayers! To me, at that time, when persons prayed, they were simply talking to empty space or to themselves. Then again there was their frequent reference to God. It was difficult for me to conceive of a God who was interested in mankind or could be influenced by his talk.

Many Bahá'ís used to go to Green Acre, Maine, to spend part of the summer there. I determined to go there and live amongst them, in the hope of solving the mystery of the Bahá'í movement. At Green Acre there were people from all over the United States and from other countries. They had meetings and discussions in which they proclaimed the harmony of religion and science, and I found a sane, kindly and enlightened spirit.

One day I happened to be walking in the country with a Bahá'í whom I had met casually. He sat down by the roadside to read a prayer from a little book and invited me to read one too. For me to do so appeared both silly and dishonest. But to avoid offending or hurting his feelings I read aloud the little prayer he had asked me to read. And in that moment, for me, the mystery was solved, together with ten thousand other problems and puzzles.

"The Call of God, when raised, breathed a new life into the body of mankind, and infused a new spirit into the whole creation. It is for this reason that the world hath been moved to its depths, and the hearts and consciences of men been quickened. Ere long the evidences of this regeneration will be revealed, and the fast asleep will be awakened." 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

"The heights which, through the most gracious favour of God, mortal man can attain in this Day are as yet unrevealed to his sight. The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess, the capacity for such a revelation. The day, however, is approaching when the potentialities of so great a favour will, by virtue of His behest, be manifested unto men." Bahá'u'lláh.