

THE BAHÁ'Í NEW WORLD ORDER

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

Vol. II, No. 12.

1d.

July, 1941.

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

THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION

The principles of international law which have been set forth by Bahá'u'lláh, and discussed in this paper, are not ends in themselves. They are the application to human affairs of basic spiritual principles.

Unselfishness, consideration for others, regard for the common weal have been taught by all the religions of the world and are universally regarded as good. But they have only been thought of as good for individuals and it is still not recognised that nations have to live by the same code, if they would live in peace and happiness.

Thus we see the extraordinary spectacle of "men of good will" all over the world, who behave with generosity and unselfishness to their neighbours, acting when grouped into a nation in the most abominable way. They put up tariffs to lessen the other nation's trade, they manipulate their currency to get an advantage over him, they monopolise sources of raw material which everyone needs, they are even willing to accept taxation in order to take away his livelihood (under sell him in the markets of the world). On top of all this they fiercely uphold their right to act in this way and will fight anyone who tries to stop them.

In order to put an end to this condition of banditry between nations, Bahá'u'lláh prescribed a vigorous remedy, but a remedy based on a fundamental spiritual truth. The remedy is collective security to enforce international law and order and the reorganisation of the world on a co-operative basis. The spiritual principle is the oneness of mankind. The remedy, and the spiritual truth, are embodied in the single sentence which appear at the head of this paper. "The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens."

The nations have so far refused to accept either the remedy or the principle, and consequently we find ourselves imbroiled in this chaos of pain and destruction. Acceptance of the remedy means that nations must yield their unfettered sovereign rights in such

matters as the maintenance and use of armaments, the monopoly of raw material and markets and the manipulation of currency. These things must be under the full control of a world authority. Self-preservation, the lowest instinct of man, is impelling us towards such action.

The oneness of mankind is the redeeming truth which spiritualises and ennobles the plan. It makes of the nations and people brothers, children of one Father, citizens of one country. It removes the prejudices, estrangement and apathy which characterise present relationships between the peoples of the world. Only the love of God, the highest instinct of man, will bring this change of attitude.

Intellectual attitudes may be changed by education or the force of circumstances, but emotional attitudes persist for a long time after the intellectual change. When, however, the emotional change is made first, intellectual change is swift to follow, for men delight in finding reasons to uphold their emotional attitudes. See how a person with a violent prejudice will find all sorts of reasonable grounds for it.

True religion changes static emotional attitudes. It liberates the spirit from the fetters of convention, "good form" and traditional teaching. It changes prejudice to brotherhood and widens our outlook upon the rest of mankind. For this change of ethos man still requires intellectual backing, so he sets to work to investigate more thoroughly and more deeply. A renaissance of knowledge, science, art, takes place and the social order changes so that the new ideals may be better expressed in action. All these things are the result of re-born spiritual life, and they always follow the appearance of a Founder of religion.

That is why our new world order must be founded on a rebirth for all mankind. Such rebirth is brought about by the influence of a Manifestation of God; in this day.—Bahá'u'lláh.

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.

Au Revoir

The publishers of "New World Order," the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, announce with regret their decision to stop publication for the time being. This will be the last number, until we resume later on.

No doubt is felt about the urgent need for the ideals and teachings which have been presented in this paper. In order to answer this need in some measure, and to keep the spiritual principles of world order before our minds, a single sheet will be issued from time to time containing commentary on this important subject and quotations from Bahá'í sacred writings.

If you would like further information about the world order of Bahá'u'lláh, write for literature to Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 46 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1. An excellent outline of the subject is a book by J. E. Esslemont, "Bahá'u'lláh and The New Era," at 2/6, or "Security for a Failing World," by Stanwood Cobb, at the same price. We also recommend "The Goal of a New World Order," price 2d; The "Hidden Words" of Bahá'u'lláh, price 6d.; The Bahá'í Peace Programme, containing two important letters of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, price 2/6.

We wish to thank all those who have supported our paper and to express the assurance that the vision of world brotherhood will soon become a reality. "Is not this that which Christ foretold?"

A New Technique

The principle of the oneness of mankind, the central theme of the world order of Bahá'u'lláh, has practical application to all phases of life. Its expression in a world society, with a world economy and world administration, are visualised by many to-day. But only those who have attempted to practise it in community life can know of the very great change which it implies in the working out of every day affairs.

Consultation replaces debate. In debate you enter the council chamber intending to get your own ideas put into law. In the new technique you enter the council to consider problems and to seek the best solution. Administrative bodies in this new system are not composed of a majority and a minority, each member of which has made various promises and is committed to defined programmes. They are composed of a number of men and women, elected not to carry out a traditional or specified programme, but to consult among themselves and with the people, and to order all affairs in the most satisfactory and progressive way.

Under the old method of debate, the chairman could not voice his opinion and was burdened with a casting vote. In the new way, the chairman must express his opinion and take part in the discussion with the rest. He must also vote as a member of the council at the same time as the others. His function is to keep order in the meeting, but beyond that he has no right or privilege, either more or less, than other members of the council.

Personal authority and leadership is very greatly lessened in this new technique. One instance is described above, where a chairman loses his casting vote and position of leadership. Individual initiative and exercise of talent need not be restricted, but by frequent and full consultation with the community, administration by individuals gives place to administration by the people.

In the religious life of man there are similar changes to a more mature method. Up to now, certain prerogatives and functions have been discharged by a special class of men, known as priests. In the new system access to God, to spiritual truth and the scriptures is made by each individual for himself. Problems which a person cannot solve unaided are taken to the local council, which in its collective wisdom gives advice and spiritual re-inforcement. Ritual in worship is eliminated and religious services are arranged by a council, or a committee, which makes full use of the talents of the community for music, reading of prayers and commentary on spiritual truths.

These are some of the changes wrought in the internal life of a community which truly accepts the oneness of mankind. It imposes obligations on all alike. Those

who are diffident or shy about stating their opinions, have to recognise that they owe this duty to their fellows. Those who are too eager to see their own ideas accepted have to submit to discussion and collective wisdom.

In consultation, surprise tactics or other political manœuvring, such as forcing a vote, are not possible. All matters have to be thoroughly thrashed out and no one can demand a vote until all members of the council are ready.

A World Religion

(From *"The Unfoldment of World Civilisation,"* by the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.)

"Far from wishing to add to the number of the religious systems, whose conflicting loyalties have for so many generations disturbed the peace of mankind (the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh) is instilling into each of its adherents a new love for, and a genuine appreciation of the unity underlying, the various religions represented within its pale.

"It is like a wide embrace,' such is the testimony of Royalty to its claim and position, 'gathering together all those who have long searched for words of hope. It accepts all great Prophets gone before it, destroys no other creeds and leaves all doors open.' 'The Bahá'í teaching,' she has further written, 'brings peace to the soul and hope to the heart. To those in search of assurance, the words of the Father are as a fountain in the desert after long wandering.' 'Their writings,' she, in another statement referring to Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'-Bahá, has testified, 'are a great cry towards peace, reaching beyond all limits of frontiers, above all dissension about rites and dogmas. . . . It is a wondrous message that Bahá'u'lláh and His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá have given us. They have not set it up aggressively knowing that the germ of eternal truth which lies at its core cannot but take root and spread.' 'If ever the name of Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá,' is her concluding plea, 'comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine.'

"The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has assimilated, by virtue of its creative, its regulative and ennobling energies, the varied races, nationalities, creeds and classes that have sought its shadow, and have pledged unswerving fealty to its cause. It has changed the hearts of its adherents, burned away their prejudices, stilled their passions, exalted their conceptions, ennobled their motives, co-ordinated their efforts and transformed their outlook. While preserving their patriotism and safeguarding their lesser loyalties, it has made them lovers of mankind, and the determined

upholders of its best and truest interests. While maintaining intact their belief in the Divine origin of their respective religions, it has enabled them to visualise the underlying purpose of these religions, to discover their merits, to recognise their sequence, their interdependence, their wholeness and unity, and to acknowledge the bond that vitally links them to itself. This universal, this transcending love which the followers of the Bahá'í Faith feel for their fellow-men, of whatever race, creed, class or nation, is neither mysterious nor can it be said to have been artificially stimulated. It is both spontaneous and genuine. They whose hearts are warmed by the energising influence of God's creative love, cherish His creatures for His sake and recognise in every human face a sign of His reflected glory.

"From Iceland to Tasmania, from Vancouver to the China Sea spreads the radiance and extend the ramifications of this world-enfolding System, this many-hued and firmly-knit Fraternity, infusing into every man and woman it has won to its cause a faith, a hope and a vigour that a wayward generation has long lost, and is powerless to recover. They who preside over the immediate destinies of this troubled world, they who are responsible for its chaotic state, its fears, its doubts, its miseries will do well, in their bewilderment, to fix their gaze and ponder in their hearts upon the evidences of this saving grace of the Almighty that lies within their reach—a grace that can ease their burden, resolve their perplexities and illuminate their path."

The Body-Politic of Mankind

'Abdu'l-Bahá

The body-politic to-day is greatly in need of a physician. It is similar to a human body afflicted with serious ailments. A doctor diagnoses the case and then prescribes treatment. He does not prescribe, however, until he has made the diagnosis. The disease which afflicts the body-politic is lack of love and absence of altruism. In the hearts of men no real love is found, and the condition is such that unless their susceptibilities are quickened by some power so that unity, love and accord may develop within them, there can be no healing, no agreement among mankind. Love and unity are the needs of the body-politic to-day. Without these no progress or prosperity can be attained. Therefore the friends of God must adhere to the power which will create this love and unity in the hearts of the sons of men. Science cannot create amity and fellowship in human hearts. Neither can patriotism nor racial prejudice effect a remedy. It must be accomplished solely through the divine bounties and spiritual bestowals which have descended from God, in this day,

for that purpose. This is an exigency of the times, and the divine remedy has been provided. For the spiritual teachings of the religion of God can alone create this love, unity and accord in human hearts . . .

Although the body-politic is one family, yet because of the lack of symmetry some members are comfortable and some are in the utmost misery; some members are satisfied and some are hungry; some are clothed with the most costly garments while some families are in need of food and shelter. Why? Because this family has not that reciprocity and symmetry needed. This household is not well arranged. . . Is it possible for a member of a family to be subjected to the utmost of misery and abject poverty, and for the rest of the family to be comfortable? It is impossible unless the rest of the family be without feeling, having become spiritually atrophied, inhospitable, unkind . . .

The purport is this, that as we are all inhabitants of the same earth, in reality we are one family, and each one of us is a member of that family. Therefore we must all live in the utmost of happiness and comfort under a just rule and regulation in accordance with the laws of God, because this life is fleeting, and if man looks after himself only, he is no better than the animal, for the animal alone is to that degree egotistic. On the contrary man should be willing to accept hardships for himself in order that others may be happy . . . This is characteristic of man, this is becoming to man . . . Such a man is the honour of the world of humanity; such a man is the glory of the world of mankind; such a man is he who wins eternal bliss; such a man is nearer the threshold of God; such a man is the very manifestation of eternal happiness. . .

Words of Bahá'u'lláh

"Behold the disturbances which, for many a long year, have afflicted the earth and the perturbation that hath seized its peoples. It hath either been ravaged by war, or tormented by sudden and unforeseen calamities. Though the world is encompassed with misery and distress, yet no man hath paused to reflect what the cause or source of that may be. Whenever the True Counsellor uttered a word in admonishment, lo, they all denounced Him as a mover of mischief and rejected His claim. How bewildering, how confusing is such behaviour! "

"Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled among you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice."

"That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error."

"Justice is, in this day, bewailing its plight, and Equity groaneth beneath the yoke of oppression. The thick clouds of tyranny have darkened the face of the earth and enveloped its peoples. Through the movement of Our Pen of glory, We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration."

"O, concourse of the rulers of the world! There is no force on earth that can equal in its conquering power the force of justice and wisdom. . . . Blessed is the king who marcheth with the ensigns of wisdom unfurled before him, and the battalions of justice massed in his rear. He verily is the ornament that adorneth the brow of peace and the countenance of security. There can be no doubt whatever that if the day star of justice, which the clouds of tyranny have obscured, were to shed its light upon men, the face of the earth would be completely transformed."

"There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly source and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed."

"O, people of God! do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men. This can best be achieved through pure and holy deeds, through a virtuous life and a goodly behaviour. Valiant acts will ensure the triumph of this Cause and a saintly character will reinforce its power."

"How lofty is the station which man, if he but chooseth to fulfil his high destiny, can attain! To what depths of degradation he can sink, depths which the meanest of creatures have never reached! Seize, O friends, the chance which this Day offereth you, and deprive not yourselves of the liberal effusions of His grace."