

NEW WORLD ORDER

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THE CENTENARY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

"THIS is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of unity of the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes. You are loosed from ancient superstitions which have kept men ignorant, destroying the foundations of true humanity.

The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and of the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between nations, and by the will of God the Most Great Peace shall come; the world will be seen as a new world, and all men will live as brothers."

SPOKEN BY 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ IN THE CITY TEMPLE
SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1911

PLANS FOR THE BAHÁ'Í CENTENARY

THE Báb first declared His Mission in Shiráz on May 22nd, 1844, at two hours and eleven minutes after sunset. Consequently in May of this year will be the hundredth anniversary of His Declaration and of the foundation of the Bahá'í Faith, and as the exact moment arrives Bahá'ís all over the world will commemorate it.

Besides this, plans have been made for public celebrations and preparations are now in hand. Our public celebrations will consist of two parts. Firstly, from May 20th to May 27th we are holding an Exhibition illustrating the growth of the Bahá'í Faith from its beginning to the present time, showing the expansion all over the world, its publishing work, etc., and the influence of its Teachings as seen in world developments. This Exhibition will be held in London at the Alliance Hall, Palmer Street, Westminster, S.W.1. It will be opened officially on Saturday, May 20th, at 2.30 p.m., and thereafter will be open from

11 a.m. to 9 p.m. each day. We hope some evenings during the week also to hold different functions, such as a film-lecture on Palestine, —a country intimately connected with the lives of the Founder and the Exemplar of the Bahá'í Faith,—musical items, etc. No charge will be made for admission.

On Tuesday, May 23rd, at 6.30 p.m., we are holding a large public meeting, for which we have booked the Great Hall at Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1., right by Victoria Station (S.R.). At this meeting various well-known people will either personally or by messages attest to their appreciation of the Bahá'í Teachings and Bahá'í speakers also will explain their Faith.

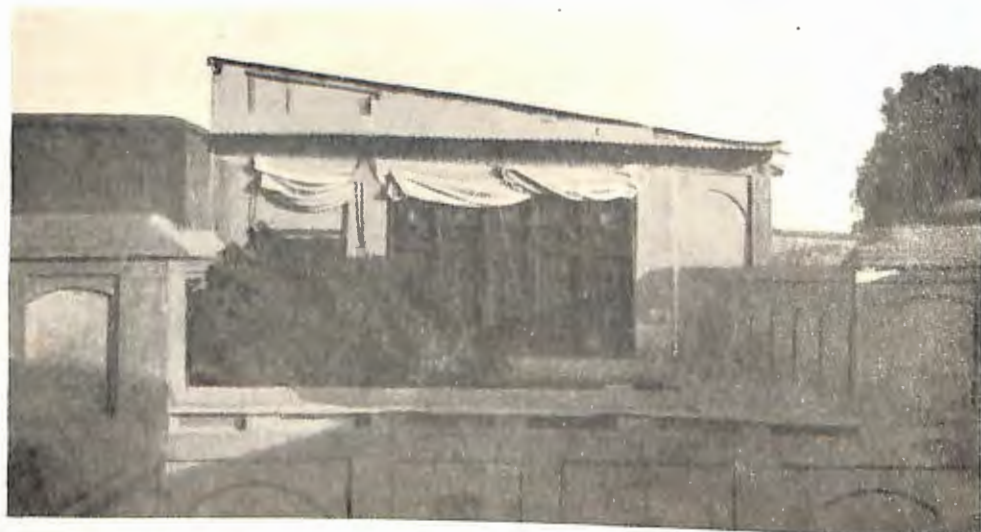
All visitors will be very welcome at both the Exhibition and its attendant entertainments and at the Public Meeting, and we extend a special invitation to all the subscribers of New World Order and their friends to be present.

THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS

IN May of this year 1944, the Bahá'í world celebrates its Centenary.

It was on the evening of May 22nd, 1844, that the Herald of the Bahá'í Faith first

announced His mission. He, the Herald, a young merchant of Shiráz in Southern Persia, declared that He was the Divine Messenger expected by the people of Islám—and even



The House in Shiráz where the Báb declared Himself.

more, He had come to give the tidings of the near approach of a still greater Advent—the one promised to mankind from time immemorial. Thereupon He took the title of the Báb—The Gate.

The Báb had only six short years of ministry, more than half of which He lived in captivity. Finally, in His thirtieth year, He suffered martyrdom in the public square of Tabriz amidst the jeers of hostile multitudes. And thousands met the same fate joyously in His path.

Then on April 21st, 1863, Bahá'u'lláh who had undergone imprisonment and exile for the sake of the new Faith, while on the eve of a further banishment—from Baghdád to Istanbul—announced that He was the One foretold by the Báb. He, too, was opposed and denounced. He, too, was cast into prison. For two years He and His family together with numbers of His followers were shut in the grim barracks of 'Akká in the Holy Land. When He left this world in May, 1892, He was, although living in a mansion outside 'Akká, still a prisoner. All throughout those years and for many years after, persecution and torture was the lot of the adherents of the Bahá'í Faith. Some twenty thousand died for the Cause.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, the eldest Son of Bahá'u'lláh, and His Successor, appointed by Him to be sole Interpreter of the revealed Word, spent forty years in bondage. The Turkish revolution of 1908 set Him free. Years of hardship had left their marks on His physical frame, and yet at the age of sixty-seven He embarked upon a series of journeys in Europe and America to teach the Cause of His Father. Twice in September, 1911, and December, 1912, He visited London. From April to December, 1912, He toured the American Continent. Many a time He told His western audiences that the world was perilously near a catastrophic war. He likened Europe to an arsenal which just one spark would set aflame. When the first world war broke out He was back in the Holy Land. In 1920 His Majesty's Government in recognition of His work for the poor and the afflicted gave Him a Knighthood of the British Empire. He accepted it as the gift of a "Just King." In November, 1921, He passed away, mourned and honoured by men.

'Abdu'l-Bahá in His will and Testament appointed His eldest grandson Shoghi Effendi to succeed Him as the first Guardian of the Cause, and made provision for a line of

Guardians on whom will devolve the task of interpreting the Scriptures, and who will also be life-presidents of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme legislative organ of the Faith. At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing Shoghi Effendi was a student at Balliol College, Oxford.

In its first Century, the Bahá'í Faith has reached sixty-one Countries of the world, almost the whole span of the globe. It has over eight hundred Communities spread over the five Continents. Everywhere it has been a factor of reconciliation and enlightenment. Within its pale, people of all faiths, and people who had no religious convictions before, have found their common bond of humanity in allegiance to one God and one common revelation. They have ceased to regard men as members of diverse and conflicting races and classes. They rather view them in the first instance as human beings whose reality is essentially a spiritual reality. Thus they believe whole-heartedly in the Oneness of Mankind. They also refuse to classify religions into incompatible and fundamentally antagonistic systems, because they accept the Oneness of Religion as a cardinal principle of their Faith.

The followers of Bahá'u'lláh (and in an earlier period the followers of the Báb) have met every kind and manner of opposition, hostility and persecution. Within their own ranks there has been many a case of dark treachery and ingratitude, of base betrayal. Both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá saw in their own brothers, their own kith and kin, shameless traitors. Yet after a hundred stormy years the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh has preserved its unity and the strength which arises from that unity. And no degree of oppression has stifled its life. On the contrary, as of old, the blood of the martyr, the sufferings of the faithful, agonies and pains, have brought fresh vigour to the Cause. The greater the persecution, the more towering the heights of constancy scaled.

The principles which Baha'u'lláh gave the world some eighty years ago, are now fast becoming the aim and the goal of increasing numbers. Since His days these principles have commanded more and more the attention of the peoples of the world. Millions upon millions have not as yet heard the name of Bahá'u'lláh, but the direction in which their corporate life is moving is that which Bahá'u'lláh both promised and charted.

THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND THE INDIVIDUAL

MAN is a creature of physical limitations, and his body reacts to varied physical conditions by certain processes of adjustment, which may produce feelings of depression, discomfort, and irritation, or increased buoyancy and well-being, until equilibrium is reached under the new circumstances. A familiar example is the reaction of the body to high altitudes. The atmosphere is more rarified, and this, and the exertion of attaining the height, causes a more frequent intake of breath. But to compensate, the clean, light and pure air produce a sensation of elation, and the eye must readjust itself to the new focus demanded by the increased angle and depth of vision, while the mind reacts correspondingly to the glorious new sight revealed.

So the individual soul and intelligence react, when they first attain to the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. The individual feels lifted to a great height above the valley landscape and its limited field of vision. The climber now sees a vision, which is real enough, of a much bigger landscape that lies waiting to be explored, if he should wish to make the effort. That landscape has, of course, always been there, but he just did not see it.

Perhaps we have passed by, disinterestedly, when we could have made contact with somebody of another nationality, another race, and we could have learnt so much of interest and practical use, adding to our store of the riches of life. We could have learnt how many things we *shared*, and not only the differences in our outward modes of life.

Then, too, how many of us have ever tried to find out anything about the origins or teachings of any religion other than our own? Why,—most people avoid discussing even their *own* Faith, let alone mixing in such queer things as other people's "Heathenish practices." A true seeker knows no such fear, for he turns eagerly to the chance of learning more about the varied forms of expression of love for one and the same God, and the additional facets of Truth revealed by all the Great Teachers.

The study of history as the history of Man, on a world scale, rather than on a National Saga basis, gives a new perspective. Every

advance in medicine or industrial science or other field, is eagerly, and also anxiously, watched, as it opens up possibilities for the betterment of social conditions, for the betterment of relationships between one person and another, between one nation and another, unless it is used for unscrupulous ends by selfish individuals or groups. And every pronouncement or conference on the improvement of educational facilities for peoples of our own, or the "backward" countries, for the increased production of food resources to be allocated to a world pool,—indeed, anything that shows the trend towards international planning and the handling on an international scale of problems, amenities, material resources, etc.,—all these a Bahá'í correlates as evidence of the working out of Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies, and the Potency of His Revelation. Bahá'u'lláh said: "A new life have I breathed into all created things..."

Added advantages usually bring added responsibilities and need for extra effort, as with the mountaineer, and if the individual has awakened to all these extra interests, and has become a more "live" person, it is also good for him to realise that he can, and should, communicate this awareness to others, and should lead them towards the light of Unity. He should be as a nuclear cell, that gradually builds up an ever-growing colony of cells to form the firm basic structure of world-citizenship. By sheer force of example, by the magnetic charm of a personality that creates harmony and concord among the most diverse elements, that helps to remove prejudices which are the result of fear and ignorance, that is trustworthy, helpful, and just in all dealings, he should stimulate curiosity as to the source of such a steady unwinking flame, amidst all the turmoil of a world at present in the throes of rebirth.

It is no easy path that the believer in the teachings of the Founders of the Bahá'í Faith must tread, but it gives to the individual the consciousness of a definite direction of movement, towards a goal that lies far beyond our own individual interests and well-being, and that continues through many stages beyond the limitation of one's journey through this world.

THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH AND SOCIAL ECONOMICS

SOCIAL Economics is concerned with the human factors which enter into the production and consumption of material things. As a subject of study it is so important as to be accorded high place in our universities; so extensive as to be divided into departments; so contentious as to give rise to conflicting theories and opposing schools. Experience proves that such inconclusiveness is due to incomplete understanding of the human factors which give to Economics the quality, "Social."

There are those who maintain that the impulse which urged Man along the road from the primitive to the present plane of civilisation was the satisfaction of his ever-increasing needs and desires. The struggle for the possession of material things, they contend, has sharpened man's native wit and led to the intellectual development which is now his. Morality is but the attempt to mitigate the ferocity of the struggle. Spiritual factors have no place in this their law of human progress. The highest authority of Man is Man. Mankind experiences in this day the malevolent product of such teaching.

The Bahá'í Faith teaches that Man's progress is his response to a Divine beneficent Purpose. Bahá'u'lláh says: "All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilisation." The advance of civilisation has given rise to social-economic problems which man has hitherto failed to solve. Bahá'u'lláh provides the solution. His Laws do not constitute a rigid system. They are the foundations on which may be built the social structure most appropriate to the stage of development of a particular people. But the fundamental principles must be maintained, principles designed to effect the harmonious, reciprocal relationship of individual and community.

Briefly summarised the Social-Economic Laws revealed by Bahá'u'lláh enjoin that: Every fit person shall engage in some socially useful trade, business or profession; the

community must provide the individual with the opportunity for such occupation. It is incumbent on parents and the community to provide the children and youth with the education which will fit them to be self-supporting adults. The arts and sciences must be taught, not only for their utilitarian value but because of the pure pleasure they give to the educated life. The principles of Religion must be taught in school. "But this in such measure that it may not injure the children by resulting in ignorant fanaticism and bigotry."

The primary and most important industry is Agriculture; "It is endowed with the first station." In all industries harmony must be established between employers and employed. To this end working conditions and remuneration shall be mutually agreed upon by friendly discussion. All employees shall, in addition to salary or wages, receive a share in the profits of the undertaking and, through their representatives, participate in the administration. Interest on investments is permitted but the rate must not be excessive.

The payment of "income" tax is to be general but the rate graduated so that in general, the larger the income the higher the rate of the tax. Inherited fortunes shall be equitably apportioned amongst the next-of-kin so that no excessive amount shall accrue to any one individual. The care of the needy is the responsibility of the community as a whole but individual philanthropy is encouraged.

The social equality of the sexes is a basic Bahá'í principle. Constitutional monarchy with parliament elected by adult suffrage is the form of government recommended for nations.

Since they were revealed seventy to eighty years ago, Britain has advanced far towards complete acceptance of these social-economic Laws of Bahá'u'lláh. In such progress Bahá'ís perceive the quickening of the human spirit in response to the divine purpose.

THE BAHÁ'Í VIEW OF WORLD ORGANISATION

THE surprising thing about Bahá'í ideas of World Organisation is that they were first put forward by Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká, in Palestine, eighty years ago.

As 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in America in 1912,

"Bahá'u'lláh declared the 'Most Great Peace' and international arbitration. He voiced these principles in numerous epistles which were circulated broadcast throughout the East. . . . Because he promulgated the message of

Universal Peace and International Agreement, the kings of the Orient arose against him, for they did not find their personal and national benefit advanced by his admonition and teaching... Then they arose against his followers. For the establishment of International Peace the blood of twenty thousand Bahá'ís was spilt."

In his letter to Queen Victoria Bahá'u'lláh says:—"Be united, O Kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your people find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should anyone among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice." Bahá'u'lláh also prophesied: "The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realised. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and participating in its deliberations must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundation of the world's Great Peace amongst men. Such a peace demandeth that the Great Powers should resolve for the sake of the tranquility of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled amongst themselves." Bahá'ís regard the conference at Teheran, the birthplace of Bahá'u'lláh, as a step towards this reconciliation.

Bahá'u'lláh further said: "The Day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential. It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to

translate that which hath been written into reality and action... That one indeed is a man who to-day dedicateth himself to the entire human race."

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith to-day, speaking of Bahá'u'lláh's letter to Queen Victoria, says: "What else could these weighty words signify if they did not point to the inevitable curtailment of unfettered national sovereignty as an indispensable preliminary to the formation of the future Commonwealth of all the nations of the world? Some form of a world super-state must needs be evolved, in whose favour all the nations of the world will have willingly ceded every claim to make war, certain rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for the purpose of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions."

The central theme of the Bahá'í Teaching is the Oneness of Mankind. In common with many progressive thinkers Bahá'ís believe in a World Federation, a World Tribunal, a World Parliament, but they also believe that you must begin with the individual, that you must have unity in your own heart, in the family, in the village, in the nation.

The lesser peace, *i.e.*, World Organisation, they believe will be brought about within this century by "The kings and rulers of the earth," and the Bahá'í Faith, which has its own international organisation, will be at first only a leaven in the World Organisation. But the Most Great Peace will come when the political World Organisation and the religious organisation, and the spirit pervading it, are welded, by evolutionary processes, into one great whole which will then begin to bear the fruits of a New Civilisation.

THE THREE UNITIES

THE Bahá'í Faith lays special stress on three Unities in the realm of Being, the Oneness of God, the Oneness of Mankind and the Oneness of Religion.

The first of these has been stressed by all religions. Even in those religions which no longer emphasise the Oneness of God traces can be found that in its pure form the Teachings of the Founder spoke of a single Divine Force. The Teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is, as always, an amplification and explanation of the earlier Teachings, in essence the same as the earlier Teachings, but suited to the needs

of a more developed humanity. Acknowledgement of the Oneness of God requires not only a verbal acknowledgement that there is only one Absolute Power, one First Cause in the Universe, but also behaviour at every moment of life in accordance with that belief. To set up one's own ideas against the Teachings of the Manifestations of God is to deny the Oneness of God; to give more importance to one's own desires than to the will of God expressed through His Manifestations is to deny the Oneness of God; all forms of selfishness and all self-centredness are in reality

denials of the Oneness of God. In early days when Abraham fled from Ur, verbal acknowledgement of the Oneness of God was the most that could be achieved by a humanity immersed in the worship of idols; in this day, when all but the most backward peoples acknowledge verbally the Oneness of God, a deeper realisation of the true meaning of this Oneness is required.

The Oneness of Mankind also has been taught in former generations. The meaning of this also has been more fully explained by Bahá'u'lláh. In past ages there were few opportunities of meeting those who lived in lands far from one's own. In the earliest days, a man might live and die without meeting one from outside his own tribe, save in war or as slaves. At first it was sufficient for a man to love those with whom he came in daily contact, then it became necessary that he should love also his neighbour. Gradually man learnt that his true neighbour was not only the man who lived next door, and now the time has come when he can realise that all the world are his neighbours.

Bahá'u'lláh teaches particularly that the superficial differences which have always divided mankind should no longer do so. Colour, Race, and Creed, must no longer be

regarded as dividing mankind into vast groups having little to do with each other; rather should mankind be regarded as a garden of different coloured flowers whose variety adds to the beauty of the garden as a whole. In earlier ages this Teaching would not have been acceptable in this form because man had not yet passed through the stages in which he gave allegiance first to family, then to tribe, city-state and nation. Now it is possible for man to be told not only that all men are brothers, but also that prejudices regarding race and colour are contrary to the Will of God.

That religion is one has never before been taught specifically by a Manifestation of God. Only now, when man's vision is becoming world-wide, is he able to realise that other religions have equal validity with his own, were also originally revealed by God, and like his own, have become distorted by the interpretations which men have put upon the Teachings of the Founder. Each was revealed according to the needs of an age. Now the time has come when the essential truth of each shall be ~~revealed~~ ^{seen} by all men, and all will merge into the Message of God revealed for this Day, by Bahá'u'lláh, which is the Eternal Truth of Religion adapted to the present needs of mankind.

THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE

"YET so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come."

Such were the inspired words of Bahá'u'lláh recorded by Professor Browne in 1890. Many years, by man's reckoning of time, have passed since they were uttered, and those who read them in these latter days of slaughter and carnage may well feel sceptical. To those, however, who acknowledge the Source from which they spring there can be no doubt. When the Word of the Lord goeth forth out of His mouth, it does not return unto Him void; but will accomplish that which He wills. A thousand years in His sight are but as yesterday,—and we cannot expect to see the birth of an era and its growth and maturity in one generation. Have we not seen in Nature an early promise of Spring temporarily eclipsed by bitter winds and numbing frosts? Slowly, the powerful leaven is working in the heart of the Universe; but many yet only see the surface disturbances which

come from the changes taking place in its depths.

Gradually there will emerge the Day when the Kingdoms of the World will become the Kingdom of God and His Christ.

The Sovereignty of God must first hold sway in the hearts of men, before it obtains authority over their lives.

The world of the future as foreseen by Bahá'u'lláh will be buttressed against the forces of disintegration by the full recognition of the Oneness of Mankind and all that it implies. Diversities that enrich the heritage of mankind will remain. There will be no deadening uniformity.

In a world that is organised on a world basis, which is conscious of the dignity of human life, which is freed from the hatreds of creeds, races and classes, there will be no room for any form of tyranny and exploitation. The personal freedom and initiative of the individual will be held sacred and inviolable. The natural wealth of the Earth will be

controlled by a world authority enjoying the trust and the confidence of all men, for the welfare of all. Agriculture will be accounted as the primary industry of mankind.

A Supreme Court of Justice will adjudicate between the component states of the World Commonwealth whenever conflicts arise, and a world police force will see that matters of conflict are brought before the Court and that the verdict given by it is put into effect. Science and religion, the two mighty instruments of human progress will find their common denominator and work in complete harmony and full co-operation for the uplift of the entire world. An auxiliary world language, either invented or adopted from the existing languages will be spoken by all men.

In the words of the present Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith: "the enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human

inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral and spiritual life of the entire human race."

"A World federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources . . . a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice." such is the world of the future.

The Dawn is here and through the mists it is impossible yet for the objects of the landscape before us to take shape; but the eye of faith discovers the Source of the Promised Day and the Glory of it.

THE WILL OF GOD

THE Will of God is His living Love given definite direction by His perfect Idea of the Kingdom; for the force of love has not in itself any concentrated direction; it is thought that gives love definite direction. Love in the idea causes the idea to be dynamic, and the limits of the idea localise the dynamic force. This concentrated dynamic issue we call Will; but the Love and the Idea in God are universal, whereas in man they have yet to become universal.

Through Divine Revelation we learn that Love is the power of God and that the Idea of God is the Kingdom; that is to say, universal orderliness under His direction.

Now man is created by God for His Kingdom,—and for nothing else. Just as an acorn is created to be an oak tree and nothing else (neither wheat nor a palm tree), so is man created to be the servant of God's Kingdom. He may never grow to maturity, or he may become warped or stunted; but if he grows at all he will prosper only in the direction of the Kingdom. All that man endeavours to do in the opposite direction to the Kingdom only perishes. In his life all that he does in the direction of the Kingdom is "good," but that which he does in the opposite direction is "evil."

Now a true Kingdom possesses (1) a King; and (2) the people of that King; and (3) its Constitution. With regard, therefore, to the Kingdom of God, education must be to the end that man may know God, his King, and also come to realise that mankind must become a complete fellowship bonded together by the faith of love in the Great Name of God, the King; and, furthermore, education must be to the end that man may learn to be fully appreciative of, and obedient to, the Constitution of the glorious Kingdom of God.

It was the most especial mission of Christ Jesus to prepare the hearts of men for true citizenship in God's Kingdom; and it is the especial mission of Bahá'u'lláh (the manifested Spirit of Truth) to establish in the whole of mankind the Constitution of the Kingdom of God. The Will of God from the original Idea, and the will of Christ Jesus, and the will of Bahá'u'lláh, are one and the same will in action in this world, training and developing the character of mankind to the Primary Purpose,—the Kingdom of God in perfection on earth as it is in perfection in heaven.

A merely commercial education is utterly insufficient; the knowledge of the Divine Kingdom must be the glorious guiding light in every human soul.

RECOGNITION

HAIL to Thee, Scion of Glory, whose
utterance poureth abroad
The joy of the heavenly knowledge and the
light of the greatest of Days.
Poet of mysteries, chanting in rapture the
beauty of God,
Unto thee be thanksgiving and praise !

Child of the darkness that wandered in gloom
but dreamed of the light,
Lo, I have seen Thy splendour ablaze in
the heavens afar
Showering gladness and glory, and shattering
the shadows of night
And seen no other star !

Thy words are to me as fragrances borne
from the gardens of heaven,
Beams of a lamp that is hid in the height
of a holier world,
Arrows of fire that pierce and destroy with the
might of the levin
Into our midnight hurled !

Sword of the father, none other can rend the
dark veil from my eyes,
None other can beat from my limbs with
the shearing blade of God's might
The sins I am fettered withal and give me the
power to rise
And come forth to the fulness of light.

Lo, Thou hast breathed on my sorrow the
sweetness of faith and of hope,
Thou hast chanted high paeans of joy that
my heart's echoes ever repeat
And the path to the knowledge of God begins
to glimmer and ope
Before my faltering feet.

Weak and unworthy my praise. Yet as from
its throbbing throat
Some lone bird pours its song to the flaming
infinite sky,
So unto Thee in the zenith I lift from a depth
remote
This broken human cry.

GEORGE TOWNSHEND.

THE STORY OF A WORLD FAITH

2. *BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*

(Continued)

DAY by day, they would come to the prison
and call out the names of those who were to
meet their martyr's death on that day. And
out would walk those whose names were
called with firm steps and shining brows. One
of that glorious band who gave their lives with
joy in the path of their Lord was Sulaymán
Khán, the same brave spirit who had rescued
the body of the Báb. They bored nine holes
in his body and placed nine lighted candles
in them, and thus they paraded him in the
streets. And his happiness was immeasur-
able. Sulaymán Khán was a young courtier, a
man accustomed to power and pageantry.
On this day of his martyrdom he stopped in
the midst of his torturers and exclaimed :
"What greater pomp and pageantry than those
which this day accompany my progress to
win the crown of Glory ! Glorified be the
Báb, who can kindle such devotion in the
breasts of His lovers, and can endow them with

a power greater than the might of kings."
As the candles flickered in his wounds, he
said : "You have long lost your sting, O
flames, and have been robbed of your power
to pain me. Make haste, for from your very
tongues of fire I can hear the voice that calls
me to my Beloved." Thus died Sulaymán
Khán.

Another victim in this tornado of suffering
was Táhirih, the beautiful, heroic, talented
poetess of Qazvín. She it was who at the
conference of Badasht had sounded the call of
the emancipation of her sex. Now in the dead
of night they strangled her and cast her body
into a pit of which no trace was left. But the
memory of her supreme constancy, courage
and devotion will endure forever. She knew
of her approaching end and was ready for it.
To her hostess, the wife of the magistrate in
whose custody she was placed, Táhirih said
on the day preceding the night of her martyr-

dom : " I am preparing to meet my Beloved, and wish to free you from the cares and anxieties of my imprisonment." She was in bridal array.

Those closing months of the year 1852 saw many such scenes. And for four months Bahá'u'lláh lingered in chains. Once poison was introduced into His food, and the effects of the poison remained with Him for many years of His life. There was no shadow of doubt that Bahá'u'lláh was not an accomplice in the attempt made on the life of the Sháh. However, the enemies were loth to release Him and at the same time they dared not bring Him to the scaffold. In the end, He was freed and exiled. All His property was confiscated and, in the midst of severe winter, He and His family were sent on a long slow journey over snow-covered peaks and plains. His health was shattered and His adversaries hoped that He would not have the strength to survive.

On January 12th, 1853, Bahá'u'lláh left His native city and never saw it again. That arduous journey in the heart of a severe winter took more than two months, and Bahá'u'lláh reached Baghdád towards the end of March. His physical strength was then at a low ebb, but the hopes of the adversaries remained unfulfilled. He survived all the hardships to which He was subjected, and as soon as His

health was restored, He arose to reassemble and reanimate the shattered Community of the Báb.

The plight of the Bábís was grievous indeed. Not only had the blows dealt at them by a vigilant and relentless foe deprived them of the sustaining hand of the close disciples and the able lieutenants of the Báb, not only were they robbed of any measure of security, but internal dissension had added its venom to their lives. The Báb had constantly spoken and written of the near advent of " Him whom God will Manifest,"—the Deliverer of Latter Days. And now several adventurers came forth with such claims and caused much confusion. Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother, Mirzá Yahyá, entitled Subh-i-Azal, who was known as the nominal Head of the Community, was totally unable to rise to the requirements of the situation. He lacked courage. At a time when Bahá'u'lláh was facing the enemy with calm fortitude, Azal was a fugitive trying to save his own life. While Bahá'u'lláh bore chains and fetters, Azal sought safety. Disguised as a strolling dervish, he betook himself to Baghdád, sometime after the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh. As conflicts grew and rifts widened, as baseless claims became more blatant, the hopes of the Bábí Community sank lower and lower. And yet still unknown to the Bábís as the One promised to them by



Entrance to Garden of Ridván, Baghdád, where Bahá'u'lláh declared His Mission.

the Báb, there was amongst them and suffering with them, He who was destined to change their misery to glory, their weakness to towering strength.

There in the murky dungeons of Tihrán, Bahá'u'lláh had seen the Light of God shining in His own Self, and there He had vowed to rescue the Bábís from the pitfalls that gaped in their course. No sooner had He set upon that task in Baghdád than the fickle, incompetent Azal and a few of the self-seeking who had chosen to make that already discredited figure the instrument of their own petty designs, began to oppose Him. Bahá'u'lláh had no wish to add to the injuries afflicting the Bábí Community. He did not desire further contentions in their ranks. For that reason He decided to leave Baghdád and retire to the Mountains of Northern Iráq. Bahá'u'lláh's self-imposed exile was a test to the Bábís. Were He to be the only one who could restore to them their broken inner peace, their vision, their serenity, their faith and determination, the passage of time and His absence would amply demonstrate it. The force of events and the passage of time did at the end make it clear to the Bábís that none but Bahá'u'lláh could guide and comfort them.

Such seclusion from the society of men has always occurred in the lives of the Manifestations of God. Moses went out to the desert of Sinai. Buddha sought the wilds of India. Christ walked the wilderness. Muhammad paced the sun-baked hillocks of Arabia.

Bahá'u'lláh went to the mountains of Kurdistán. Not even the members of His own family knew the place of His retreat. For two years He lived the life of a hermit. But even in the solitude of those mountains the fame of His wisdom, His knowledge and His kindness spread far and wide. News reached Baghdád that there in the hilly country had appeared a sage of extraordinary powers of mind and character. The Bábís on hearing it were convinced that this sage could be no other than the One whose presence they now desired with their whole being.

Emissaries were sent to find Him and beg Him to return.

In Kitáb-i-Iqán (the Book of Certitude) Bahá'u'lláh speaks of those days :—

“... For a number of people who have never inhaled the fragrance of justice, have

raised the standard of sedition, and have leagued themselves against us. On every side we witness the menace of their spears, and in all directions we recognize the shafts of their arrows. This, although we have never gloried in anything, nor did we seek preference over any soul. To everyone we have been a most kindly companion, a most forbearing and affectionate friend. In the company of the poor we have sought their fellowship, and amidst the exalted and learned we have been submissive and resigned... In the early days of our arrival in this land, when we discerned the signs of impending events, we decided ere they happened to retire. We betook ourselves to the wilderness, and there, separated and alone, led for two years a life of complete solitude. From Our eyes there rained tears of anguish, and in Our bleeding heart there surged an ocean of agonizing pain. Many a night we had no food for sustenance, and many a day Our body found no rest... The one object of Our retirement was to avoid becoming a subject of discord among the faithful, a source of disturbance unto Our companions, the means of injury to any, or the cause of sorrow to any heart. Beyond these we cherished no other intention, and apart from them, we had no other end in view...”

On March 19th, 1856, Bahá'u'lláh returned to Baghdád. The ill-wishers and the plotters were still bent on their own schemes, but their purpose was now apparent. They wished to obtain leadership for its own sake,—a leadership to satisfy their own vanities and cravings for power and authority. The Bábís came to know them for what they were. No measure of opposition brought forward by them would cause cleavage in the ranks of the believers. And so it came that Bahá'u'lláh's divine guidance rallied the Bábís once again to the noble way set before them by the Báb, and abandoned by many of them under the impact of disruptive forces. Once again they lived with faith in their hearts, their deeds testifying to the belief they bore. Their renown was once again bruited abroad, and the adversaries who thought their oppression had killed the Cause of the Báb, who believed that nothing more would ever be heard of the people and the Faith they intensely hated, saw the frustration of their fierce efforts and took flight.

(to be continued)

A GUIDE TO BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE

"THE PROMISE OF ALL AGES," by *George Townshend*.

IN this book the author traces the history of religion from the earliest times, as successive acts in a great epic drama planned by the Creator from the beginning of time, to culminate in the promised Era of Peace. Step by step, led by a succession of High Prophets, mankind progresses to fulfil this great destiny. The author records for us the lives of the three latter-day Teachers, showing them to fulfil the prophecies of ancient scriptures in a startling manner, and appeals to the world to recognise their divine mission, and carry out the tasks which they charge us to perform.

"GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH," translated by *Shoghi Effendi*.

HERE we have selections from the writings of the Divine Messenger for this age. They

contain many profound spiritual teachings and admonitions addressed to His followers and contemporaries. This is a work which should not be read through in the ordinary way, but studied at leisure in order to penetrate the full significance of its contents.

"SOME ANSWERED QUESTIONS," by *Laura Clifford Barney*.

THE author of this book had the supreme privilege of spending several months at different times with the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and in this book she gives a translation of many discourses given by Him during those visits. There are interesting explanations of various Christian teachings, also of passages from the Old Testament. Two sections of the book deal with the powers and conditions of the Manifestations of God, and those of man, respectively. There is also instruction on miscellaneous subjects, such as the theory of reincarnation, the treatment of criminals, and strikes.

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.

SOME 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.