

# NEW WORLD ORDER

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*"The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."*

—BAHA'U'LLAH.

## THE IMPERATIVE NEED.

"The Great Being, wishing to reveal the pre-requisites of the peace and tranquility of the world and the advancement of its peoples, hath written : The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. 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 foundations 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 among themselves. Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him. If this be done, the nations of the world will no longer require any armaments, except for the purpose of preserving the security of their realms and of maintaining internal order within their territories. This will ensure the peace and composure of every people, government and nation. We fain would hope that the kings

and rulers of the earth, the mirrors of the gracious and almighty name of God, may attain unto this station, and shield mankind from the onslaught of tyranny . . . 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 service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith : Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interest of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. In another passage He hath proclaimed : It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

*Bahá'u'llah.*

*"Then tell Me : Do the children know the Father and confess Him, or do they contradict Him as the people contradicted Him before ?"*

—(BAHA'I SCRIPTURES).

## "THEN TELL ME."

We wandered in perpetual night  
Without a star, without a moon,  
The sun from which men drew their light  
Was hid in clouds themselves had wrought.  
The earth was dumb and still and stark.  
Oh, star, for which the wise men sought.  
Was there not once a promise made  
That he would come when night was dark ?  
Are we betrayed, are we betrayed ?

In other lands and other skies  
Lived Eastern Christs, as well-beloved  
As our own Christ, the Jewish Lord.  
Their light gave knowledge to the wise  
They, too, had strange symbolic birth  
And lived and died and rose again.  
And left with men their holy Word.  
Praise be to God that He has left  
His fingerprints on all the earth !  
Yet still our brothers weep, bereft  
"The gold has gone from that gold story  
We, too, have lost the heavens' glory."

I have a secret I must tell  
For it bursts my breast with its bursting bell,  
When night was blackest and most men slept  
The promise given was kept, was kept.  
He shook the earth with His thunderous tread  
And stirred the living and moved the dead,  
Who rose from their self-wrapped winding  
sheet,  
At the thud of His sound shattering Feet.  
Though the whole earth shivered, scarce  
one knew why  
Scarce any knew when the Lord went by.  
Oh, stars that fell in the black, black night  
And lightless moon—now rich with light,  
Oh, darkened Sun, now brightly gold—  
The story of the Lord is told.

Shout His New Name both wide and far  
Baha'u'llah, Baha'u'llah.

ELSIE PATERSON CRANMER.



# THE STORY OF A WORLD FAITH (8).

## (2) *BAHÁ'U'LLAH.*

The Tablet to Queen Victoria should be quoted in some length. Here in this momentous document, Bahá'u'lláh draws a clear and compelling picture of the ills afflicting human society and presents His divinely-ordained remedy. In this Tablet a sincere seeker can find the answer to questions that have baffled his generation :

“O Queen in London ! Incline thine ear to the voice of thy Lord, the Lord of all mankind, calling from the Divine Lote-Tree : verily, no God is there but He, the Almighty, the All-Wise ! Cast away all that is on earth, and attire the head of thy kingdom with the crown of the remembrance of thy Lord, the All-Glorious . . . We have also heard that thou hast entrusted the reins of Counsel into the hands of the representatives of the people. Thou, indeed hast done well, for thereby the foundations of the edifice of thine affairs will be strengthened, and the hearts of all that are beneath thy shadow, whether high or low, will be tranquilized. It behoveth them, however, to be trustworthy among His servants, and to regard themselves as representatives if all that dwell on earth. This is what counselled them, in this Tablet, He Who is the Ruler, the All-Wise. And if any of them directeth himself towards the Assembly, let him turn his eyes unto the Supreme Horizon and say : ‘O my God ! I ask Thee by Thy most Glorious Name, to aid me in that which will cause the affairs of Thy servants to prosper, and Thy cities to flourish. Thou indeed, hast power over all things ! Blessed is he that entereth the Assembly for the sake of God, and judgeth between men with pure justice. He indeed is of the blissful.’

“O ye members of Assemblies in that land and in other countries ! Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind and bettereth the condition thereof ; if ye be of them that scan heedfully. Regard the world as the human body which, though at its creation whole and perfect, hath been afflicted, through various causes, with grave disorders and maladies. Not for one day did it gain ease, nay, its sickness waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of ignorant physicians, who gave full rein to their personal desires, and have erred grievously. And if at any time, through the care of an able physician, a

member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before. Thus informeth you the All-Knowing, the All-Wise . . .”

“That which God hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of 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. By My life ! This is the truth, and all else naught but error. Each time that Most Mighty Instrument hath come, and that Light shone forth from the Ancient Day-spring, He was withheld by ignorant physicians, who, even as clouds, interposed between Him and the world. It failed therefore to recover, and its sickness hath persisted until this day. They indeed were powerless to protect it, or to effect a cure, whilst He Who hath been Manifestation of Power amongst men was withheld from achieving His purpose, by reason of what the hands of the ignorant physicians have wrought . . .”

Then Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the opposition to His divine task, points out the burdens that oppress the peoples of the world, defends the cause of the poor and the victims of injustice, and finally gives a severe warning to those who wield authority amongst men : “Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace, hold ye fast unto this the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents. Be reconciled amongst yourselves that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions . . . Be united, O Kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempests of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples 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 . . .”

This is Collective Security so hotly debated, so unnecessarily complicated and so ill-served in the period between Bahá'u'lláh's declaration and the outbreak of world catastrophe. Bahá'u'lláh states the case of collective security very plainly and very simply. He makes it synonymous with Justice. And of Justice, He says in the Hidden Words : “O Son of Spirit ! The best beloved of all things

in My sight is Justice ; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know through thy own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbour. Ponder this in thy heart ; how it behoves thee to be. Verily Justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness set it then before thine eyes."

It is related that Queen Victoria's comment on reading Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet, was : " If this is of God, it will endure ; if not, it can do no harm."

Bahá'u'lláh's fame was now spreading far and wide. Except for a very small number who supported Azal, the vast majority of the Bábís wherever they were accepted the divine mandate of Bahá'u'lláh. The Turkish authorities in Adirnih treated Him with marked respect. Governors such as Salaymán Páshá and Khurshíd Páshá, sought His company with great eagerness. And many of His followers from Persia and neighbouring lands travelled to Adirnih to drink deeply at the fount of His Revelation. All these things stung His adversaries to fresh action. Azal and his miserable accomplices now discredited, and disowned by the Community, with their plots and designs miscarried and exposed, next tried to poison the mind of the Ottoman Government against their true Benefactor Whom they hated greatly. They sent anonymous letters to Istanbul, in which they accused Bahá'u'lláh of collusion with the Bulgarian leaders and European Powers in a plot to capture the Capital with the aid of His followers. Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz and his

ministers took fright and decided to deal still another blow at the fortunes of Bahá'u'lláh. They decreed His exile to the barracks of 'Akká—the foul prison in the Holy Land, to which they would commit the dangerous criminals of the realm.

On a morning, without any previous intimation, soldiers were posted round there house of Bahá'u'lláh, and His followers were ordered to prepare for their departure from Adirnih. Bahá'u'lláh writes thus of that event : " The loved ones of God and His kindred were left on the first night without food . . . The people surrounded the house, and Muslims and Christians wept over us . . . We perceived that the weeping of the people of the Son (Christians) exceeded the weeping of others—a sign for such as ponder." Agá Ridá, a steadfast follower of Bahá'u'lláh, who shared all of His exile, says : " All were perplexed and full of regret . . . Some expressed their sympathy, others consoled us, and wept over us . . . Most of our possessions were auctioned at their half value." Some of the foreign Consuls resident in Adirnih offered their assistance to Bahá'u'lláh, which he courteously refused. The Governor, Khurshíd Páshá, considered his government's decision a travesty of justice and felt unable to carry it through. He deputed another to inform Bahá'u'lláh of the judgment passed on Him. People thronged to bid farewell to the One Whom they had learned to love and esteem. There were tears in their eyes, and they kissed the hem of His robe.

And on August 12th, 1868, Bahá'u'lláh and His family, accompanied by a Turkish escort, took once again the road to exile.

## WORDS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHA.

O army of Life ! East and West have joined to worship stars of faded splendour, and have turned in prayer unto darkened horizons. Both have utterly neglected the broad foundation of God's sacred laws, and have grown unmindful of the merits and virtues of His religion. They have regarded certain customs and conventions as the basis of the Divine faith, and have firmly established themselves therein. They have imagined themselves as having attained a glorious pinnacle on achievement and prosperity, when in reality they have touched the innermost depths of heedlessness and deprived themselves wholly of God's bounteous gifts.

The cornerstone of the religion of God is the acquisition of divine perfections and the sharing

in its manifold bestowals. The essential purpose of faith and belief is to ennoble the inner being of man with the outpourings of grace from on high. If this be not attained, it is, indeed, deprivation. It is the realisation of this deprivation that is the true eternal fire.

He is a true Baha'i who strives by day and night to progress and advance along the path of human endeavour, whose cherished desire is so to live and act as to enrich and illumine the world ; whose source of inspiration is the Essence of Divine perfection ; whose aim in life is to conduct himself so as to be the cause of infinite progress. Only when he attains unto such perfect gifts can it be said of him that he is a Baha'i.



## A CALL TO THE NATIONS.

UNIFICATION of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life.

*"A new life," Bahá'u'lláh proclaims, "is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth; and yet none hath discovered its cause, or perceived its motive." "O ye children of men," He thus addresses His generation, "the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interest and promote the unity of the human race . . . This is the straight path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure." "The well-being of mankind," He declares, "its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." "So powerful is the light of unity," is His further testimony, "that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words . . . This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations." "He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful," He, moreover, has written, "cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. Haste ye to win your share of God's good grace and mercy in this Day that eclipseth all other created days."*

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safe-

guarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve centre of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will co-operate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be co-ordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and co-operation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. 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 unchallengable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

*"One of the great events,"* affirms 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *"which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that incomparable Branch is the hoisting of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself."* *"Now, in the world of being,"* He has moreover explained, *"the Hand of Divine power hath*

*firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest bounty, and this wondrous gift. Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy Cycle shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth, and the day-spring of the revelation of its signs. Ere the close of this century and of this age, it shall be made clear and evident how wondrous was that spring-tide, and how heavenly was that gift."*

No less enthralling is the vision of Isaiah, the greatest of the Hebrew Prophets, predicting, as far back as twenty-five hundred years ago, the destiny which mankind must, at its stage of maturity, achieve: *"And He (the Lord) shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more . . . And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots . . . And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together . . . And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."*

The writer of the Apocalypse, prefiguring the millennial glory which a redeemed, a jubilant humanity must witness, has similarly testified: *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."*

Who can doubt that such a consummation—the coming of age of the human race—must



signalize, in its turn, the inauguration of a world civilization such as no mortal eye hath ever beheld or human mind conceived? Who is it that can imagine the lofty standard which such a civilization, as it unfolds itself, is destined to attain? Who can measure the heights to which human intelligence, liberated from its shackles, will soar? Who can visualize the realms which the human spirit, vitalized by the outpouring light of Bahá'u'lláh, shining in the plenitude of its glory, will discover?

What more fitting conclusion to this theme than these words of Bahá'u'lláh, written in anticipation of the golden age of His Faith—the age in which the face of the earth, from pole to pole, will mirror the ineffable splendors of the Abhá Paradise? *“This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendors of the Light that shineth from the face of thy*

*Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of Our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have then called into being a new creation, as a token of Our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days. This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: ‘Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the foot-stool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne!’ The realm of glory exclaimeth: ‘Would that my life could be sacrificed for thee, for He Who is the Beloved of the All-Merciful hath established His sovereignty upon thee, through the power of His name that hath been promised unto all things, whether of the past or of the future.’”*

(From “THE UNFOLDMENT OF WORLD CIVILIZATION”—1936).

## THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD.

The Bahá'í Faith gives to the world an opportunity which it never had before to study the growth of a world religion. Already after a hundred years there are more Bahá'ís than there were Christians a hundred years after the birth of Jesus, spread over a greater area of the world than the followers of any religion have been a similar length of time from its foundation. Already after a hundred years it has achieved a unity and stability of administration which other religions, if they ever achieved it, have long since lost. From the extreme south of the world to the extreme north, from the extreme east to the extreme west, from peoples of all colours, races and religions, come the followers of the Bahá'í Faith.

To the inhabitants of countries in which there are still only few Bahá'ís it may seem that these are the members of an ephemeral sect. Banded together for a moment in an eccentric belief, it may be thought, they will be dispersed to-morrow into nothingness along with the multitudinous other well-meaning societies, sects and associations which have no roots in time. A consideration of some of the facts about the Bahá'í World shows how false this misconception is.

There are Bahá'ís in 78 countries, 56 of which are sovereign states. Just as St. Paul did not wait to lead large numbers of the inhabitants of Palestine to Christianity, but travelled far and near diffusing the word of God over a large area, so the Bahá'ís have

sought to scatter the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world; with what success the figures show. There are Maori Bahá'ís and Eskimo Bahá'ís, Chinese Bahá'ís and Indian Bahá'ís, Scandinavian, French and Polish Bahá'ís, and members of most other races. Contact has been established with such diverse minorities as the Laps of Scandinavia and the Mayans of Yucatan; Bahá'í administrative bodies established in such far separated countries as Chile, 'Irâq, Bulgaria and New Zealand. Geographically the Bahá'í world covers the surface of the earth.

Like the other great religions, this wide-spread Faith has been built upon the blood of many martyrs. 20,000 of its followers were killed for being steadfast in their belief, large numbers of them dying only after prolonged and brutal torture. Even now reports are sometimes received that Bahá'ís have been murdered for their Faith by fanatics in one part of the world. Although at first treated as Moslem heretics by the Islamic hierarchy, it is now 20 years since the highest ecclesiastical court in Egypt decreed that the Baha'í Faith should be looked upon as an independent religion and Bahá'ís not treated as Moslems before the Islamic law. It is one of the greatest testimonials to the universality of the Bahá'í Faith that in spite of this many Moslems say “This is only the teaching of Mohammed; Christians “This is only the teaching of Jesus”; Buddhists “This is only the teaching of Buddha”; and other religions, societies

and individuals "This is only what I think myself." As 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "At present the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh are such that all the communities of the world, whether religious, political or ethical, ancient or modern, find in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the expression of their highest wish." It is not surprising therefore that Bahá'is originate from all the great religious communities of the world.

Bahá'is are of all types and drawn from all walks of life. The late Queen Marie of Roumania, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, wrote: "Indeed a great light came to me with the message of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It came as all great messages come at an hour of dire grief and inner conflict and distress, so the seed sank deeply . . . If ever the name of Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá 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 lesson sink into your hearts as they have into mine." And again: "The Bahá'í teaching 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."

The late Professor Auguste Forel, one of the great scientists of the century, wrote in his will: "En 1920 seulement j'ai appris a connaître, à Karlsruhe, la religion supranationale et mondiale des Bahá'is fondée en Orient par le persan Bahá'u'lláh il y a 70 ans. C'est la vraie religion du Bien social humain, sans dogmes, ni pretres, reliant entre eux tous les hommes sur notre petit globe terrestre. Je suis devenu Bahá'í. Que cette religion vive et prospere pour le bien de l'humanité; c'est la mon voeu le plus ardent."

\*And in the Burmese jungle there is a village of ordinary people of which all the members are Bahá'is. Until recently they lived in what Europeans would consider a primitive state: before they became Bahá'is they were quite illiterate. Now they have their own school, court and hospital and puzzle the local European administrative officers because there are rarely any cases to try.

The poor are nameless and their sayings are never quoted. To demonstrate that Baha'is are drawn from all walks of life one other example must suffice, a late member of the Bahá'í community of this country. Richard Marlow lost both his legs in an accident and supplemented his small pension by selling

matches, knitted and raffia work. He was an example of quiet courage and cheerful resignation to the will of God. A friend wrote of him: "One came away from his dark little room impressed by the simple faith and patience of a truly beautiful soul." Such people, as well as the great and the learned, find that the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the true need of mankind.

Alongside the spread of the Bahá'í Faith throughout the world, Bahá'í institutions are growing up which can bear comparison with those of any religion. In the heart of America on the shores of Lake Michigan is a Bahá'í House of Worship about the model for which a noted American architect, H. Van Buren Magonigle, exclaimed: "The architect has conceived a Temple of Light in which structure, as usually understood, is concealed, visible support eliminated as far as possible, and the whole fabric to take on the airy substance of a dream; it is a lacey envelope enshrining an idea, the idea of Light, a shelter of cobweb interposed between earth and sky, struck through and through with light—light which shall partly consume the forms and make of it a thing of faery." The exterior ornamentation was completed in 1943, and it is known that its novel design is receiving the attention of the experts. Who knows that the eulogy of an American journalist after viewing the model will one day be considered less exaggerated than it may have seemed at the time when he reported: "Many persons who have seen the model of this building say that it will be the most beautiful structure in the world. Some go so far as to say it will be the most beautiful structure ever erected."

This House of Worship has so far cost 1,342,813 dollars, and the decoration of the interior has not yet been commenced. Bahá'í endowments in America alone are valued at 1,768,339 dollars. The Faith is also blessed with the ownership of considerable property associated with the early history of the Faith, the most important of which are the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahji, just outside 'Akká, and the so-called "Persian Gardens" on Mount Carmel, in which are the shrines of the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and of some of the members of Bahá'u'lláh's family. The gardens are continually being improved and the Guardian of the Faith has announced that work is being commenced on the com-

\* See page 10.



pletion of the building containing the Shrines. Here is the world headquarters of the Faith, the centre from which an administrative system radiates which embraces the whole world.

This administrative system is the Bahá'í institution upon which all the others are dependent. Based on the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh Himself and on the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, it is now being developed under the guidance of the present Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi. It embodies the principle of universal secret voting, but is not simply a democratic system; it includes also the principle of hereditary rights, but without the weaknesses this principle has always implied in the past, and the principle of aristocracy, but an aristocracy that consists of those with special merit alone. It has already, although still in the formative stage, demonstrated its powers to maintain unity among people as diverse as the Bahá'í world community, and it is through its strength that the Faith has achieved its most outstanding successes.

The legal standing of the national and local administrative bodies varies from country to country. In some they are legally incorporated, in some they are permitted to solemnise marriages, in some they hold properties in trust for the local community, in some they possess their own administrative buildings, in some they publish literature, in some they have been disbanded and persecuted under an autocratic regime. A very important undertaking of these administrative bodies is the publica-

tion of literature. Bahá'í literature is available in 41 languages and translations into a further 12 languages are now proceeding. One book alone has been translated in 37 languages. Particular attention has been paid to Braille transcriptions for the blind, though these are not at present available in this country.

This is the condition of the Bahá'í community after 100 years. These are facts, not conjectures. They are the evidence of the vital force embodied in the Bahá'í Faith, of its universality, of its ordered progress. They justify to all men its claim to be considered one of the great religions of the world. And it is yet but one hundred years old.

It is 1,300 years since the most recent of the other great religions were born; great religions do not appear each year, nor even each century. We have no record of the growth of the majority of religions and where records exist they are few and unreliable.

Religion has always provided the motive power of men and through them of social groups and through them of the world. In this age there is an opportunity which cannot be expected to recur again for a thousand years to study the growth and the spread of what is already a world Faith. Bahá'ís invite all men, be they rich or poor, atheist or believers, historians, priests, politicians or dustmen, to investigate for themselves this young World Faith, and to see for themselves how a great religion spreads in spite of all its enemies may do.

## THE MANIFESTATIONS AND ART

In the Bahá'í Revelation a unique emphasis has been placed upon work done with the whole heart in the service of life.

Such work is stated by Abdu'l-Bahá to be the worship of God.

The implications are very great for it rejoins the world of art to the religious life with a clarity not to be found in any previous dispensation. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words in Paris were: "In the Bahá'í Cause, arts, scientists and all crafts are counted as worship. The man who makes a piece of note paper to the best of his ability, conscientiously concentrating all his forces on perfecting it, is giving praise to God. Briefly all effort and creation put forth by man from the fulness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity."

One effect of the Industrial Age has been a greater separation of art from the common life than at any former time in history. Not that art has vanished but because in the main it has either been prostituted or reserved as something over-precious for the few.

The factory system as such takes creative initiative out of the hands of the workers so that they can no longer "concentrate all their forces on perfection." What initiative is left after the business manager and the middleman have decided what to do with demand goes to the "designer-on-paper." To counter this the trend towards shorter hours and higher pay is palliative but not curative. Inately men and women want to enjoy their work and that of their fellows to the fullest extent possible. During the war it has been a surprise and an

encouragement to see the unmistakeable growth of a part of that desire, as for example in the response to C.E.M.A. and in the sale of all forms of art. Our responsibility as Bahá'is living at the end of one age and the beginning of another is not only to live truth but also to produce beauty as a proof of it. That is art. Truth is incomplete without this flowering of beauty. Such art of the people has always been a touchstone to the value of a culture. Our museums are crowded with examples of such art in living. But how rare it is today to find "a sheet of note paper" lovely in its material and make and exactly suited to its purpose.

It should be part of a Bahá'í's privilege to surround him or herself with good buildings, furniture, utensils, textiles, metal work, glass, pottery, etc., besides music, literature, dance, drama, pictures and sculpture, not as luxuries, but as expressions howsoever simple, of this attitude towards responsible living and making.

That at this early stage of a fresh and inclusive religious culture we cannot display an art as characteristic as that let us say of Byzantium in the West or of T'ang Dynasty China in the East need surprise neither ourselves nor our critics for such an expression of a new religious dynamic of culture takes centuries to develop. It is the outcome of a slow percolation of the original creative thought of a manifestation through innumerable people into the habits of their lives and the work of their hands. These gradually take on a new distinctive character. A certain amount of true tradition is preserved but previous false standards of beauty are shed by the purity and recentred power of the new vision.

The character of our western civilization, during the last few centuries in particular, has developed material control over nature at the expense of spiritual insight at such a speed that the discovery of Atomic energy and its use in Japan brings the outside-in process to a terrible and dangerous issue.

'Abdu'l-Bahá foresaw this possibility and prayed that it might be averted. Events tell even the man-in-the-street that the world has arrived at the crisis of history but it requires the vision of Heaven-on-earth granted only to those great God-driven geniuses to tell us how to cross over Jordan.

Through the Renaissance and the Reformation, but still more during the last two hundred years or so of free scientific investigation of truth, the general spread of know-

ledge, education and a rising standard of living have produced modern individualism. The effect of this evolution has been to break down tradition in art as in life.—"Each man for himself and the devil take the hindermost." This alienation of society from its ultimate purpose is the ebb-tide of our Christian culture. Its effect on art has been to throw us back on the integrity of the individual artist. 'Abdu'l-Bahá makes it clear that when he "works from the fulness of his heart" and "the will to do service to humanity" he may achieve true beauty even as the disinterested scientist may arrive at his truth. Moreover we have the faith to perceive the subtle as well as the direct influence of the Manifestation in the whole creative world of ideas during the hundred years since the Declaration of the Báb. Sensitive spirits are able to draw unconsciously upon that Source.

Artists, perhaps more than others, cling tenaciously to the preciousness of self-found truth, or what is often mistaken for it, and are prevented for that very reason from accepting the idea and authority of fresh manifestation. They welcome many of the principles of the Bahá'í Faith but not the ultimate authority of its high Prophets, for this appears to them to cut across their own so hardly won truth. In fact there is no need for this apprehension for Prophetic authority is related to the authority of genius in any particular field, for example that of art.

Art insofar as it is true is of the Divine World.

The difference between the great artist and the great Prophet is in the field of activity and in directness of reflection of the Divine Will. The Prophet is a pure and steady mirror of the sun, the artist catches fitful gleams of Heaven.

B.H.L.

#### BURMA.

The latest information from Burma discloses the fact that the Bahai village Daidanaw was attacked and partially destroyed by a mob at the time of the Japanese invasion. Siyyid Mustafa Rounic, the aged Bahai pioneer, with several others, was murdered. The Guardian has declared him to be a 'Hand of the Cause'.

#### FOREL.

"It was only in 1920, in Karlsruhe, that I came to learn of the un-sectarian, world religion of the Bahais, founded in the Orient by the Persian, Baha'u'llah 70 years previously. It is the true religion of the ideal human society, without dogma, without a priesthood, uniting all men in our little earth. I became a Bahai. That this religion should prosper for the good of humanity is the world's greatest need."



## “BASIC CHRISTIANITY.”

THE REV. CANON H. D. A. MAJOR, D.D., F.S.R.

*Principal of Ripon Hall, Oxford. Editor of The Modern Churchman.*

(Basil Blackwell. Oxford 3/6).

The failure of the Christian Churches to establish the Kingdom of God on earth greatly troubles Canon Major, and in his “Basic Christianity,” he expresses his deep concern and suggests a remedy. It is a remarkable book which should be widely read by the many who share his views and are eager for spiritual co-operation.

“If Christianity is to be rendered capable of becoming the Universal Religion of mankind,” says Canon Major, “it needs to be subjected to a preliminary simplification. Its essential truth, its fundamental moral and spiritual values Basic Christianity will have to present to mankind expressed in the clearest, purest, simplest, most cogent and universal form. How is this to be done? What actual form is it to take? What is to be included, what excluded, what dogmas, what scriptures, what moral and spiritual values, what institutions is it to retain? Who is to authorize it as true and adequate? Will Basic Christianity require a new Church? Will it be possible for those who accept Basic Christianity to be also members of other Christian denominations, and even members of other religions, e.g. Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Confucianism, etc.?”

After reviewing the possibilities for implementing Basic Christianity, and doubting

whether the Churches would engage in the necessary cleansing and revitalizing reformation, the author suggests the founding of a “Fellowship of the Kingdom.”

One of the most interesting features of this work is the realization expressed that a new religious revival is actually pervading the thoughts and desires of intelligent people, as can be seen in the declared aims of political leaders, in art, literature, and particularly among educationalists. It is as if the spirit, like a rushing mighty wind were blowing away the dead chaff of outworn dogma and filling the hearts of the faithful with wonder and bewilderment.

“These ‘founded religions’ as they are called possess a vigour and vitality against which the older ‘customary religions’ have no power of prolonged existence. The religions founded by Moses, Gautama, Zarathustra, Mohammed and Jesus are of this quality.”

If Canon Major were to meditate upon the above passage from his own book, the truth of Progressive Revelation might come to him, and he might be moved to direct the searchlight of his mind upon the founded religion which alone has power and divine authority to canalize these spiritual forces.

### EDITOR'S NOTES.

Apologies from the former Editor are transmitted for delay in issuing the present number, and readers are assured that their subscriptions are being carried on into 1946.

It is hoped to begin a Youth Column in the next number. Articles or verses from readers below the age of 21 will be gratefully considered. Contributions from others are cordially invited. Items of interesting news will be gladly received. There will also be space for questions and answers which may be useful in discussions.

M.E.H.

## BAHAIS OF STUTTGART AND ESSLINGEN.

26TH AUGUST, 1945.



*Years of suppression failed to kill their faith.*

This photograph was contributed by Sergeant C. Eichenauer III, U.S.A. Army, who has been visiting the friends in Germany. We hope to publish an article by him in our next issue.—EDITOR.