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Prof. Abdul Majid Khan
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THIS EARTH ONE COUNTRY

This Earth One Country

By
EMERIC SALA



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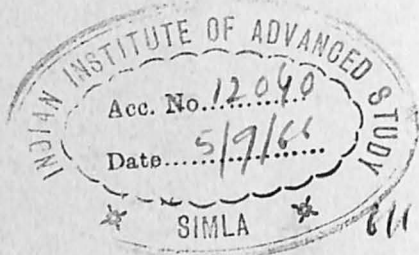


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PREFACE

AN ENGLISH philosopher and jurist, Jeremy Bentham, in the year 1780, introduced into the English language what was then the strange word "international." This word remained confined to legal studies until comparatively recent times. According to *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* there was not enough internationalism in the world to cause it to appear in print before 1877. But within a few decades it had become a common word, its meaning understood by the common man.

Events culminating in two devastating world wars are forcing a change in our outlook. The international community in which nations now live presents gigantic and immediate problems that no form of isolation can solve. The League of Nations failed to establish a peaceful and progressive international society. Failure revealed its greatest weakness, for it has shown that an international community composed of sovereign states cannot prosper. The need for an international authority appears obvious. We have learned at stupendous human and material cost that the nation-state is not the last word in man's political evolution.

The problem of our age is the problem of world order. The need is written large in misery, death, and ruin. We cannot meet this need solely by a political or economic plan. Politics and economics are phases of the larger problem: can we evolve a world society which will bring the greatest good to

the greatest number? Can the vision of democracy be translated into workable planetary terms?

The word "international" adequately described the growing closeness of modern nations. "Supranational" may well be the new term to apply to the kind of world society which will best serve the good of mankind.

A world government, a supranational government, is the ultimate goal from the point of view of the needs of the people. But to work towards this, a new world-ethic is required. Such an ethic must be idealistic in its emphasis upon humanity, and practical in its ability to lessen the great divisions which keep men apart.

This book does not contain a new utopia, nor does it propose another postwar plan. Its aim is to draw the reader's attention to the existence of a supranational community with a plan already agreed upon, which is being put into execution on a world-scale.

I refer to a world community now functioning in many lands. It consists of people of all classes, races, and creeds, who have successfully eradicated the consciousness of an inbred, traditional race superiority and the subtle consciousness of class distinction so poisonous in human relations. To this group of people, religious snobbishness and the consciousness of color, as barriers between men, are foreign. Their future is inextricably linked with a travailing world which, from trial to trial, is irresistibly moving towards its appointed destiny: a supranational community.

The opening chapter explores the economic problems of an intricately organized world. It shows that the postwar era will have to be appraised by the extent to which it can transform national economy for power into a planetary economy for welfare. The second chapter inquires into the

political problems of an interdependent society, the international institutions of which have broken down. The third chapter tries to point to the basic reason for that breakdown. In order to cite a great experiment in civilization outside the immediate experience of western culture, the fourth chapter makes use of Islam as an example. The remainder of the book deals with the subject proper: a supranational community.



CONTENTS

PREFACE	5
I. THE BASIS OF A PLANETARY ECONOMY	13
Trade Makes One Economic World — The Problem of Political Boundaries — The Obstacle of Tariffs — Free Enterprise vs. Collective Planning — Welfare or Power Economy	
II. POSTWAR ALTERNATIVES	28
If We Choose World-Domination — If We Choose World-Association — The League Taught a Lesson — The Obstacle of National Sovereignty — American History Provides a Key — Growth of Federal Sentiment — If We Choose World-Federation	
III. THE CHRISTIAN INDIVIDUAL IN AN IMMORAL SOCIETY	54
Double Standard — Christian Love in Politics and Economics — Religion Unites yet Separates — Man's Coming of Age	
IV. ISLAM — A CASE IN POINT	73
Arabia Before Muhammad — Life of Muhammad — Muhammad Builds a Nation of Many Races — The Political Spirit of Islam — Islam Led the World in Science and Art — The Qur'án and its Teachings — Women in Islam — Conclusion	
V. THE SUPRANATIONAL COMMUNITY	102
Its People and Their Aim — A Democracy Without Party Politics — The Minority Problem — Consultation, a New Technique — The House of Justice — Dual Authority in One — The End of Schism — The Supranational State	

VI. A HISTORY WHICH STARTED IN 1844 **135**

The Báb, the Forerunner — Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder
— 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Interpreter — The Administrative
Order

VII. A WORLD FAITH AND A WORLD PLAN **167**

America's Responsibility — A New Race of Men —
World Faith and a World Plan

THIS EARTH ONE COUNTRY

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CHAPTER I

The Basis of a Planetary Economy

IN 1834 there was a cabinet crisis in London. Sir Robert Peel, recalled post-haste from Rome, spent thirteen days on the journey, "just the time allowed to a Roman official seventeen hundred years ago."¹ Throughout the Christian era, and for millenniums before, there had been practically no increase in travel-speed. Napoleon could not travel faster than Julius Caesar, for the speed of horses and camels on land, and galleys and sailing vessels on the sea remained stationary.

Then, suddenly, something happened. Early in the nineteenth century the railroad and the steamship appeared as if to herald a new era. Until about 1840 the average travel speed on land or water did not exceed ten miles per hour. Between 1840 and 1924 travel speed increased fourfold on the seas, and sixfold on land, contracting distances accordingly. Today we can fly across the Atlantic Ocean faster than we could have crossed the English Channel only a few years ago. The world is now actually smaller in travel-time than was Europe under Napoleon, or the thirteen original states under Washington.

¹ Astley J. H. Goodwin, *Communication Has Been Established*, London, Methuen, 1937, p. 214.

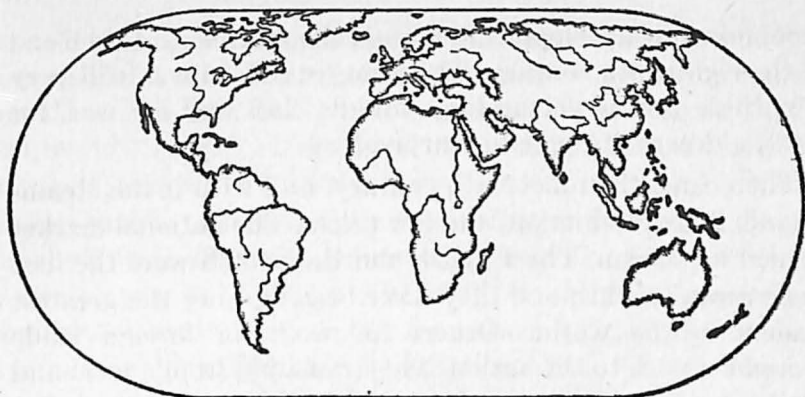
Around 1924 the commercial airplane made its appearance. From any airport we can now reach the farthest city of any land within sixty hours, less than the time required from New York to Albany a century ago. We can fly around the earth faster than a traveller could go from Scotland to London at the time of their union. A new wind tunnel is nearing completion which will test planes flying over 700 miles an hour, approaching the speed of sound itself. Aviation has narrowed the seas into millponds and made the earth a close neighborhood.

This revaluation in travel-time, accelerated still more by the events of the war, means either a multiplication of national rivalries, race antagonisms, and economic warfare, or the greatest opportunity for the creation of a new society. The problem is economic, political, and ethical. The solution is the task of this century.

TRADE MAKES ONE ECONOMIC WORLD

The urge to trade, that is, to exchange the products of one region for those of another, is very great, for it makes life easier. Upon this urge empires have been built, and because of it great wars have been fought. History shows that where trade could best be carried on, there wealth accumulated and civilization developed. Near frequented harbors, navigable rivers, and much-traveled highways cities arose and the arts and sciences flourished. Through barter and trade, community life became possible. Without trade men would still live in the jungle.

In medieval times the town with its surrounding manors was the economic unit. It was largely self-supporting and was separated from other towns by trade barriers. The national



EOTECHNICS

(to 1830's and 40's)

Best regular speed on land and sea 10 m.p.h.



PALEOTECHNICS

(late 19th, early 20th centuries)

Best regular land speed 65 m.p.h. best regular sea speed 36 m.p.h.



NEOTECHNICS

(present era)

Best regular speed in air 200 m.p.h.

TECHNICAL PROGRESS IN TRAVEL TIME

Size of the world, supposing best travel technology in each epoch were applied over the whole surface of the earth

*From: WORLD ECONOMY IN TRANSITION, by Eugene Staley
(Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1939).*

*Material which has been taken by permission from the above book,
in preparation of this chapter, is hereby gratefully acknowledged.*

economic unit developed later, from the fourteenth to the end of the eighteenth century. The living standard was still very low; there was as yet no large middle class and life was, for most, a dreary struggle for survival.

Then came the nineteenth century, and with it the steam-engine, mass-production, and low prices. The national market needed expansion. The English and the Scotch were the first to be aware of this, and they have become since the greatest traders in the world. Others followed, for foreign trade brought wealth to the nation. This transition from a local and national self-sufficiency to a world-wide economy had far-reaching results, for it destroyed the economic independence of nations and made them deeply and intricately interdependent. "International trade in the future, as in the past, will offer a very important means for raising standards of living, and humanity will be the loser if by reason of world anarchy, it proves impossible to take full advantage of this means . . . Trade allows industry to adapt itself to the geographical distribution of material and human resources, and promotes the welfare of all regions by placing the demand of each in touch with the best available sources of supply."²

A British coal miner can more easily dig a ton of coal out of a mine in England than a farmer can grow a ton of wheat in a region not suited to wheat growing. The Argentine farmer gladly exchanges his surplus wheat for the Englishman's surplus coal. Such international transactions have as their ultimate purpose the satisfaction of human needs rather than financial gain. There are several reasons why men will continue to insist on trading on a global scale. For one, the raw materials of the world are not evenly distributed. About

² Staley, *op.cit.*, p. 246.

80% of the world's known coal deposits are located in North America and Europe, inhabited by only a quarter of the world's population. Six countries produce more than 90% of the world's supply of crude oil. Two-thirds of the world's supply of copper is mined in the United States and Chile, while Canada, with less than 1% of the world's population, produces 85% of the world's nickel. Our modern telephone system, using 37 different materials, would not have been possible without access to the far corners of the globe. The Automobile Manufacturers Association of the United States printed, superimposed on a map of the world, 183 essential materials to illustrate that almost every country of the world contributed something to the making of the American car.

Differences of climate and soil are another reason for world trade. The rubber tree and sugar cane are native to the tropics. Coffee and tea do not grow in countries where most of it is consumed. For 90% of the world's cotton crop we depend on the United States, India, China, and Egypt.

Density of population is another contributory factor for regional specialization and world trade. While Australia has only 2 inhabitants per square mile, Japan proper has about 470, Canada 3, Germany 370, and the Netherlands more than 600. Density of population is one reason for Chinese hand-made rugs, while a thin-spread population explains Canada's mechanized agriculture.

Mass-production and access to wide markets have changed man's standard of living. Domestic and foreign trade are now functionally connected. "Every national industrial system as now constituted, is synchronized with every other national industrial system in greater or less degree through an interdependence that has evolved slowly as the countries themselves have developed. National industrial systems depend

upon one another for markets, for financing, and for raw materials.”³

The world has been knit into one gigantic economic fabric. Modern industry has outgrown the national frontier, as at an earlier period it outgrew the boundaries of city-states. If international trade were suddenly to cease, the populations of many countries would starve and other countries would have to close their factories. Fear, misery, and desperation would follow.

THE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

In the sixteenth century the most important trade route of Central Europe was the Rhine. Every nine miles goods had to pass a frontier and pay customs duty. Even a hundred years ago Germany was divided by thirty-eight customs boundaries, and from Berlin to Switzerland one had to pass through ten states paying ten transit duties. In 1787 farmers of New Jersey were charged duties for any products they wanted to sell in New York. Connecticut merchants boycotted New York, and Boston refused to buy Rhode Island grain.

But steady progress has pushed back the frontiers and created the mightier and more prosperous national state. While national boundaries still exist, the economic advantage derived from free movement within larger units has been fully demonstrated.

Economic forces released by the inventive genius of scientists continued to expand and transcend national frontiers, a tendency which was strongly resisted by political

³ Hugh B. Killough, *International Trade*, N. Y., McGraw Hill, 1938, p. 23.

interests. National education and the press conspired with them, stressing the vital interests of "our" country.

The political interests of the nation-state became diametrically opposed to the economic interests of its inhabitants. Political power was increased at the expense of the living standard of large masses of people. Economic problems were treated as national problems without regard for the neighbors across the border. An apparent solution in one country cancelled all efforts in another. The economic war was on.

The expansion of imperialism in the late nineteenth century may be explained as a political adjustment to technological and economic changes. As the sovereign national unit became too cramped for economic activity, new territories were sought and seized, a policy which has been largely responsible for our recent wars.

"The motive for conquest will be lessened by anything that reduces the economic importance of political boundaries. That, in the final analysis, is the only road to equitable adjustment for territorial claims based on a desire for better economic opportunities. To seek adjustment merely by shifting territory from one sovereignty to another, leaving it the exclusive economic preserve of State B instead of State A, treats the interests of the rest of the world as badly as before and does little to remove the seeds of recurring conflict. The real problem for economic welfare and for peace is to make political boundaries less significant economically — that is, less significant as barriers to the best social use of resources."⁴

THE OBSTACLE OF TARIFFS

The advantage of foreign trade is that goods can be imported at a lower price than they would cost if produced

⁴ Staley, *op.cit.*, p. 295.

at home. If tariffs are raised high enough to equalize the difference in cost of production between home and abroad, the advantage is cancelled and trade ceases. The popular fear of high-standard countries that they cannot compete against lower-wage countries has little, if any, real justification. With the highest wages in the world, the United States is the second largest exporting country. The fact that the American car, made with three times higher wages, undersells any other automobile manufacturer in the world is one of many illustrations that efficient adaptation of tools and resources can outweigh the factor of cheap labor.

If the introduction of a new labor-saving device reduces the cost of an article, and the benefit is passed on to the consumer, the economic advantage is evident. The same is true if the saving is derived through importation from a lower-wage country. The campaigns which have been waged for the exclusion of foreign manufactured goods were on the whole as costly to the people as if the introduction of new labor-saving machines, such as the steam shovel, had been suppressed. In either case, displaced labor in the old industry had to find new occupation, but the transition cost paid in the end.

From the point of view of world economic welfare the industries of every country fall under three categories:

Export Industries. This group includes all industries best suited to the country's resources, population, and climate, which can compete successfully in the world's markets.

Domestic Industries. This group consists of regional utilities and services such as construction, transportation, sanitation, and truck marketing which, by their very nature, are limited to a certain territory.

Subsidized Industries. This group came into existence through protective tariffs and is the result of a short-sighted policy, frequently sponsored by vested interests at the expense of the people. Less efficient industries are actually subsidized by the consumers, for they are paying more than they would for the same articles imported from more efficient export industries of other countries.

These subsidized industries hurt not only the export business of foreign countries whose products their protective tariff excludes, but also their own export industries which are handicapped by retaliatory measures. For no country can export unless it imports. Under any national economic policy many foreign export industries are sacrificed for the benefit of a subsidized group at the risk of world peace. When one country or an empire has monopoly over certain raw materials, the temptation to exploit the consumers in the rest of the world is difficult to resist. This policy also invites measures of retaliation, and then it is already too late to control, much less to halt, the vicious circle thus started.

The unprecedented economic and financial progress of the United States of America since federation is one of the classic examples of the development of free trade. In 1789 the original thirteen states had worthless currencies and a foreign and domestic debt of over \$54,000,000. Within ten years they quadrupled their foreign trade and by 1835 distributed a surplus of nearly \$37,500,000. Slave labor in the South contributed to the great difference in the standard of living of the various states. The high-standard states did not have to sacrifice anything to those of a lower level of living in spite of the removal of all tariffs; on the contrary, free trade raised both the lower and the higher standards. And if the tariff barriers had not been removed, the forty-eight American

States of today would not be driving about 82% of the world's motor vehicles. "It can be proved that . . . the unrestricted international exchange of goods increases the real incomes of *all* the participating countries."⁵

"Economists are prepared to demonstrate that free trade between national communities brings more effective production and increases the economic welfare not only of the world as a whole and of the dominant trading nation, but of *all* the nations participating in the freer trading system."⁶

FREE ENTERPRISE VERSUS COLLECTIVE PLANNING

Christianity has always stressed the dignity of human personality and the sacredness of individual conscience. Protestantism, as a consequence of its long struggle with and final separation from its mother-church, has laid great emphasis on the freedom of the individual. The rugged individualist of the industrial era became so absorbed in his struggle for freedom that he forgot the art of losing his own self for something greater and nobler than himself. This obsession for *laissez faire* went so far that the individual eventually lost interest in the freedom of his fellows. At the same time, powerful nations resented with righteous indignation the aspirations of enslaved people.

The Socialist movement, spontaneously supported by millions, arose in protest. Its fundamental aim is the abolition of poverty, the attainment of economic security, and a greater equalization of income. It hopes to achieve this through

⁵ G. Haberler, *The Theory of International Trade*, N. Y., Macmillan, 1937, p. 221.

⁶ J. B. Condliffe, *The Reconstruction of World Trade*, N. Y., W. W. Norton, 1940, p. 120.

government planning and common ownership and control of the means of production. To this end, it wants to abolish the institution of private property, as distinguished from personal property. The more moderate Socialists are willing to leave smaller enterprises in private hands, as long as they do not conflict with the interests of the common man.

The opponents of state control believe that under socialism initiative and freedom of enterprise would be lost. In capitalist countries private enterprise subsists on the hope of gain and the risk of loss. It seizes on every new idea likely to cheapen costs and enlarge turnover; it stimulates invention, originality of method and boldness, qualities which the red tape of government offices tends to hamper and stifle. Under this system, fair but energetic rivalry eliminates the inefficient and unprogressive enterprise. Capitalism gives scope to the spirit of the adventurer who, pursuing his creative impulse, finds freedom for individual expression by making decisions and taking risks from which any committee or government department would shrink.

On the other hand, we must not overlook the phenomenal rise of modern corporations controlled by managers who do not own them. These are usually more efficiently run than small businesses and up to a certain point, as Professor W. L. Crum of Harvard has shown, "the larger the corporation, the higher the rate of return" on capital investment. Competition and its advantages are gradually removed by these corporations, owned by absentee stockholders. Being monopolistic in tendency, these corporations will continue to grow and, if not checked, will eat into the domain of the independent operator, thus preparing the way for the state to assume control.

During the last hundred years, in spite of the controversy

between free enterprise and socialism, modern states have been forced, whether liberal or reactionary, to take over much of the direction and operation of economic activities. The *laissez faire* theory of the nineteenth century liberals, that the greatest economic welfare can be achieved only by privately owned and controlled enterprise, operating all over the world with the least possible government interference, has been rejected. Government control has come to stay, for the interpenetration of economic and political forces has gone too far. "The chief characteristic of change in the organization of society in the last half-century," writes Professor Ohlin, "has been the growth of central organization and control."⁷

Many contemporary economists are searching for a working compromise between state regulation and free enterprise. "Apart from the Soviet Union — which falls into a category of its own — the countries of the world are at present attempting to find some half-way house between *laissez faire* and collectivism; some system which shall as far as possible avoid the disadvantages and combine the benefits of both individual enterprise and management by the State."⁸

These mixed systems, as operated at present, unfortunately do not supply good testing ground. Planning directed by sovereign states for political or military reasons tends to be restrictive, whereas private enterprise is losing the stimulation of fair competition and inclines increasingly towards monopoly. Protective tariffs and import quotas, often extended in return for political consideration, are as harmful to planetary welfare as are monopolistic combinations within the state. Lacking a supranational organization, all economic

⁷ Bertil Ohlin, *The Future of Economic Organization*, in the Sir Halley Stewart Lectures, 1937, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1938, p. 66.

⁸ P. W. Martin, *International Labour Review*, Vol. 25, Feb. 1937, p. 180.

planning, not excepting that of a Socialist government, is by necessity national, even though the problem is international.

An ideal combination of free enterprise and state-control would necessitate the total elimination of all monopolies or special privileges within and between each nation, as otherwise no government planning can remove economic and political conflict.

WELFARE OR POWER ECONOMY

The difference between welfare and power economy is the difference between production for civilian or military use. Undisturbed peace economy could produce enough to abolish poverty everywhere and raise the level of prosperity to heights undreamed of before, provided the goods of the world could move across political boundaries unhindered. Trade barriers breed rivalry over export markets, engender insecurity in domestic affairs, and place a high premium on political control of colonial possessions. A country controlling an important share of the world's resources invites aggression, if it refuses to trade with the rest of the world. This fear of aggression causes nations to follow a power economy rather than a welfare economy.

In a world of sovereign states war is not only possible but inevitable, and a nation's economy has to be geared to the war machine. Its economic policy will tend towards self-sufficiency. For national security, it will encourage the establishment of economically unsound industries. France, for instance, subsidized at great expense the creation of its own dyestuff industry to have, in case of war, enough poison gas and explosives. French peasants were supported to grow wheat at three times the cost of American grain as a precaution against submarine blockade. Germany preferred to pay

almost four times as much for synthetic as for natural oil, and twice as much for artificial rubber, while the price of raw rubber fell heavily in the world's markets. At enormous costs to the population, whole industries were either moved to strategic points, or were newly established. And all this for the purpose of conquering or to prevent conquest.

From the point of view of welfare economy it is a good policy to buy abroad for less what would cost more to produce at home. From the point of view of war economy each nation tries to become self-sufficient, regardless of cost. As long as each nation has to depend on its own resources for its defense, this vicious circle cannot be stopped. To the astronomical cost of the war itself and its aftermath should be added the invisible and incalculable cost of power economy, which is too immense to estimate.

There is a characteristic difference between the pursuit of power economy and welfare economy. Welfare economy is co-operative; it enriches all. Power economy is vicious, for gain to one is loss to another. International conflict in the pursuit of either welfare or power economy is possible, but with this difference: a conflict between two nations pursuing welfare economy in relationship to each other, such as Canada and the United States, or Sweden and Norway, can always be settled around a table; if necessary, by compromise. Common sense dictates that war is not worth the cost. But in case of conflict between nations pursuing a policy of power economy this is not possible, for even the suggestion of compromise can be interpreted as weakness, which means loss of prestige. Nations that build their prestige on power in relationship to each other cannot yield. When it comes to a conflict, they must fight it out. 'Abdu'l-Bahá once compared a peace conference of national governments, proud of their

tradition and power, to a meeting of wine merchants in support of prohibition.

No policy of power economy will be abandoned until each nation feels free from aggression. The measure of success or failure of any postwar plan can be determined to the extent that welfare economy will replace power economy.

The people of all nations are now part of one economically interdependent world. No single nation can be prosperous if the rest of the world is poor, and no one country can enjoy peace if the rest of the world is at war. A larger view, a world approach, is, therefore, necessary if our problems are to be resolved. "The welfare of the part means the welfare of the whole, and the distress of the part brings distress to the whole . . . The interdependence of the peoples and nations of the earth, whatever the leaders of the divisive forces of the world may say or do, is already an accomplished fact. Its unity in the economic sphere is now understood and recognized."⁹

This interdependence cannot be regulated without a corresponding political integration. Recognizing this fact, we must look at the political aspects of man's immediate future. The establishment of some kind of supranational organization is, in the light of events, a foregone conclusion.

⁹ Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, Wilmette, Ill., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1941, p. 127.

CHAPTER II

Postwar Alternatives

WITH Axis victory, the German, the Italian, and the Japanese people and their friends would have rejoiced. They would have celebrated for days and then would have proceeded to organize and dominate the world and all its resources. Probably they would have prospered for a number of years. The rest of the world would have been impoverished and as subject races would have schemed for "der Tag" of revolt and revenge, a day which would just as inevitably have come as did this war. With victory on the side of the United Nations the future is not so clear.

Several postwar projects have been proposed or implied. All of these plans fall within three alternatives: (1) to paralyze all actual and potential enemies through world-domination, which means another war; (2) to create another league or alliance of independent nations, which also means another war; or (3) to make friends of our actual and potential enemies through world-federation, which implies the end of unrestricted national sovereignty and power economy.

IF WE CHOOSE WORLD-DOMINATION

The Allied Powers, having disarmed their enemies and occupied their territory, would proceed to rehabilitate industry and commerce without consulting the vanquished and

the so-called backward people. Since the leading nations will prosper immediately after a victorious war, they will not want to relinquish any of their privileges. Power once tasted is seldom given up voluntarily. They also will want to satisfy the demands of returned soldiers and bereaved civilians to exact punishment from the vanquished.

Control and policing of the world by some of the Great Powers would be resented by most Europeans, Asiatics, and others, and would stir unrest and revolt. If the German and Japanese people are to be deprived of unrestricted national sovereignty for the peace of the world, they can never again feel equal with other nations. By forcing them into an inferior position we would assume the attitude of a superior race, an attitude which we have repeatedly condemned. There is no other solution than to make of the enemy a friend, to accept the have-not nations as equals.

It is unlikely that a combination of powerful nations could hold such a dominating position, however benevolent, as did England in the nineteenth century, without upsetting the world's political and economic equilibrium. To prevent internal chaos and new wars, postwar statesmen will be obliged to forge a world based on welfare rather than on power economy, a world without fear of aggression. An attempt will again be made to outlaw war. And, since world-domination cannot be the way, only two other postwar alternatives remain: world-association or world-federation.

IF WE CHOOSE WORLD-ASSOCIATION

After this war, as in 1919, the soldiers will want to hurry home, and the exhausted civilians will demand a quick return to normalcy. Insistence on the removal of all wartime restric-

tions will follow the natural desire to relax after supreme effort. Such an atmosphere of confused clamoring for peace and vengeance will not be conducive to the formulation of lasting peace plans.

The suggestion of a long armistice, or cooling-off period, to follow the cessation of hostilities is equally dangerous as it would loosen or even break the delicate ties holding the United Nations together. Lack of a unified postwar plan will encourage each nation to formulate its own postwar policy, unrelated to others and without benefit to the world at large. The fear has been expressed that unless international postwar plans are made in time, and supported by an overwhelming public opinion, the peace will be lost as it was lost in 1919. Economic and political interests would also, it seems, make sacrifices more readily during the war than after.

"Not until we are ready," writes a noted English author, "to extend to other nations and races equal access to the means of prosperity which we ourselves enjoy, are they likely to credit us with the love for peace and liberty which we profess. To make peace and liberty secure, we must be willing to share also our prosperity. 'Collective Security' based upon the status quo of a world divided up by past conquests, with nearly one half of its surface held for the benefit of a few sovereign powers against the needs and growing pressure of population of other races — collective security on those terms is an impossibility. We can only have collective security in collective well-being; that is the true way to the preparation of peace."¹

In preparation for such a peace, President Roosevelt perhaps expressed a sound hope in the "Four Freedoms": free-

¹ Laurence Housman, *The Preparation of Peace*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1940, p. 9.

dom of speech and expression, freedom of every person to worship God in his own way, freedom from want, and freedom from fear of aggression, everywhere in the world. Within two days the British Foreign Secretary announced his Government's acceptance of this peace aim.

But eight months later the Atlantic Charter made no reference to the first two freedoms. Its promise to secure equal access to trade and to raw materials for all states, victor and vanquished alike, was made subject to "existing obligations." This proviso alone, if enforced, could undermine any equitable postwar plan. The Charter's guarantee "to all peoples the right to choose their own form of government" has since been denied to several countries.

The Atlantic Charter hopes to see a peace established that will enable all men to live free of fear and want, and to traverse the seas unhindered. Its most promising stipulation, though cautiously and vaguely foreshadowed, is the "establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security."

"We failed in our job after World War I," said Henry A. Wallace, Vice-President of the United States, in May, 1942. "We did not know how to go about it to build an enduring world-wide peace . . . But by our very errors we learned much, and after this war we shall be in a position to utilize our knowledge in building a world which is economically, politically, and, I hope, spiritually sound . . . The peace must mean a better standard of living for the common man, not merely in the United States and England, but also in India, Russia, China, and Latin America — not merely in the United Nations but also in Germany and Italy and Japan . . . No nation will have the God-given right to exploit other nations. Older nations will have the privilege to help younger

nations get started on the path to industrialization, but there must be neither military nor economic imperialism. The methods of the nineteenth century will not work in the people's century which is now about to begin. India, China, and Latin America have a tremendous stake in the people's century. As their masses learn to read and write, and as they become productive mechanics, their standard of living will double and treble . . . International cartels that serve American greed and the German will to power must go. Cartels in the peace to come must be subjected to international control for the common man . . . and when the time of peace comes, the citizen will again have a duty, the supreme duty of sacrificing the lesser interests for the greater interest of general welfare. Those who write the peace must think of the whole world. There can be no privileged peoples. We ourselves in the United States are no more a master race than the Nazis . . ."

Wendell Willkie has said: "If we are to have freedom, we must share freedom . . . The day is gone when men and women, of whatever creed or color, can consider themselves the superiors of other creeds or colors. The day of vast empires is past. The day of equal peoples is at hand . . . We believe that this war must mean an end to the empire of nations over other nations."

These speeches evoked criticism on both sides of the Atlantic. They were called visionary, impractical. The challenge, however, to think in world-terms, to subordinate our national and imperial interests to world interests, has been made. In a later speech Wallace urged the establishment of a world council with enough flexibility to meet changing conditions, an international court to settle disputes, and a machinery to prevent economic warfare. "The aim would be the maximum

of home rule that can be maintained along with the minimum of centralized authority that must come into existence to give the necessary protection."

All postwar planners are faced by two apparently irreconcilable aims. The one is the desire for enduring peace; the other is the desire to hold on to existing economic and political privileges. This incentive for maintaining possessions and political privileges appears to justify the sovereignty of the nation-state, a sovereignty which played such a preponderant role in the rise and fall of the League of Nations. An examination of the structure of this League might reveal whether postwar planners are not deceiving themselves and the world at large when they neglect to point out that national sovereignty is the crux of the problem.

THE LEAGUE TAUGHT A LESSON

By the end of the first World War, a war-weary world was more than anxious to endorse an organization promising lasting peace and prosperity for all nations. Several governments appointed committees to prepare postwar plans, but none of these drafts was co-ordinated or adequately discussed. The year 1919 found the people uninformed and their respective governments unprepared to frame a peace treaty to end war forever. The Great Powers, while agreeing on the desirability of collective organization as a check on future aggression, could not agree on a concerted plan. Some delegates proposed an international police force and compulsory arbitration; the Italians asked for an international legislature and an economic commission to regulate the distribution of raw materials; the Japanese requested a declaration of racial equality. All of these proposals were defeated. Only the un-

swerving perseverance of President Wilson saved some of his original points. The Covenant of the League of Nations was born in an atmosphere of haste and suspicion when a special commission of nineteen, with Wilson in the chair, drafted that historic document.

The purpose of the League was threefold: to settle international disputes, to promote international co-operation, and to maintain peace. Further, it promised to reduce armaments and to protect each member's territory and independence, and provided, in case of a dispute, that the members would not resort to war until three months after a judicial decision or a report of the council had been rendered. If a nation broke its promise and went to war, the other members agreed to stop all financial, commercial, or personal intercourse with the nationals of the covenant-breaking state. In addition to these economic sanctions, article 16 provides that "it shall be the duty of the Council to *recommend* to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval, or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the Covenants of the League." The plan foreshadowed, though with many loopholes, joint military action against a recalcitrant state.

The League made provisions to revise treaties that had become unjust and to discuss and change them by peaceful means. It also created the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague, presided over by judges elected for a term of nine years. Between 1922 and 1940 the Court handed down thirty-one judgments and twenty-seven advisory opinions in disputes between nations, preventing many conflicts and helping to maintain the immediate peace. The colonies taken from the vanquished were to be administered by the League in trust for the benefit of its inhabitants. The Inter-

national Labor Organization, an offspring of the League, shortened working hours, protected health and child labor, and generally improved the conditions of labor.

The League of Nations, with some sixty members, was the first and most daring world organization ever established. It represented the greatest hope born out of the suffering and devastation of the greatest war up to that time. Never before had so many people tasted the bitterness of war and hated the thought of its recurrence. Yet that same generation lived to see it come again. The League collapsed, but not without revealing its limitations. Its very failure brings into sharp relief the mistakes which man need not make again.

One of the principal reasons for the League's downfall was the insistence upon a unanimous vote in almost all deliberations. When unanimity is required any one member can veto a decision and block all progressive measures. This provision also tends to require that all resolutions be worded vaguely, without involving any obligation upon any of its members. A committee or a government which does nothing and decides nothing till all are agreed, stifles initiative, disheartens the resolute, and arrests progress, as the Polish Diet found out to their country's ruin in the eighteenth century.

The purpose of this reservation for unanimity was to prevent any combination of nations from imposing its will over the authority of any one sovereign state. As a further safeguard for the inviolability of national sovereignty, each state reserved the right to interpret and decide for itself whether it would abide by any decisions of the League. And, finally, if an agreement were reached by unanimous vote and subsequently ratified by the respective governments, the League had no means at its disposal to enforce its decisions. "It provided economic sanctions against states resorting to war

in violation of Covenanted obligations; but it left members of the League free to judge for themselves whether such violation had occurred and whether, therefore, they were under any duty to cut off commercial and financial relations with the accused state. As for military sanctions, there was no pretense of making these automatic or compulsory."² The League was thus reduced to a debating society, or at best, to an international co-operative organization, and there was no way to check the disillusionment that followed.

Efforts by the League to bring about disarmament showed no better results. For how could nations disarm without any guarantee of security? It is true that the League could dispense justice, but it had no power to enforce it. Armaments remained with the individual nations, the potential covenant-breakers, who were at the same time the potential police force. No nation would provide an army to enforce a decision beyond its own immediate interest. The demand to disarm was also in conflict with the policy for collective security. For if a nation reduced its armaments to "the lowest level consistent with domestic safety," it could not provide the necessary force for international police measures. The League was in no position to offer immediate help in case of aggression. As the victim was expected to hold out until help arrived or until sanctions, if imposed, proved effective, each nation continued to arm. "Power is an indispensable instrument of government. To internationalize government in any real sense means to internationalize power; . . . Any real international government is impossible so long as power, which is

² P. E. Corbett, *Post-War Worlds*, New York, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942, p. 102.

an essential condition of government, is organized nationally.”³

While the decisions of the Permanent Court of International Justice were reached by a majority vote of the judges present, its jurisdiction was not compulsory. It had authority only over those cases which were voluntarily submitted for decision, but even then it could not enforce its verdicts. When weaker nations challenged a more powerful state to submit a case for arbitration, the latter easily escaped embarrassment by declaring the dispute “nonlegal.” The League, requiring unanimous consent, was helpless since it could hardly persuade a state to vote against an existing inequitable situation if it benefited by the action. Under the League’s provisions, obsolete or unilateral treaties could not be revised without the consent of the beneficiaries, nor were there any other peaceful means to change unjust conditions. Its system was inherently static; it perpetuated the status quo and looked on helplessly as ominous clouds were gathering on the horizon.

It is revealing that Professor Carr, who was for years with the British Foreign Office and is now Director in the British Ministry of Information, should write in the above cited book: “There can be no such thing as a common or collective resistance to aggression, nor is it any more moral to resist aggression than to commit it, for readiness to fight to prevent change is just as immoral as readiness to fight to enforce it.”

To imply that we are fighting for our own national interests and not for the good of humanity, he adds: “it is a moot point whether the politicians and publicists of the satisfied powers, who have attempted to identify international moral-

³ E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, London, Macmillan, 1939, pp. 137, 139.

ity with security, law and order and other time-honoured slogans of privileged groups, do not bear as large a share of responsibility for the disaster as the politicians and publicists of the dissatisfied powers, who brutally denied the validity of an international morality so constituted.”⁴ If justice for one group means injustice to another, it is inevitable that rival nations resort to methods which Carr describes as “a familiar tactic of the privileged to throw moral discredit on the under-privileged by depicting them as disturbers of the peace; and this tactic is as readily applied internationally as within the national community.”

Another weakness of the League of Nations was the absence of an agency to regulate economic relations between the members. The assumption that peace could be assured through a political organization, without regard for economic needs, proved erroneous. Men will fight, as they did before, if they are persuaded that there is no other way to obtain a more equitable distribution of the resources of the world.

To sum up, there are several reasons for the failure of the League of Nations. It could act only by unanimous decision, it had no supreme court of justice with compulsory jurisdiction and no legislature capable of changing existing inequitable conditions, and it upheld the absolute sovereignty of each member state.

General Smuts, who was one of the nineteen original members to draw up the Covenant of 1919, and who has often spoken on behalf of the British Commonwealth, said in a Capetown broadcast: “The failure of the League of Nations was largely due to the absence of a central control which could harmonize the freedom of each with the proper func-

⁴ E. H. Carr, *Ibid*, p. 289.

tioning of the whole of human society. We therefore aim at a society of nations which will supply this defect and which will possess a central organization equipped with the necessary authority and powers to supervise the common interests of mankind." But how can such a central organization supervise the "common interests of mankind" if mankind is not represented?

The League of Nations "failed in its mission of world peace because the states members were allowed to retain their sovereignty and the exclusive title to the loyalty of their nationals. This is the essence of a mere league, which therefore, while it may do useful work as a mechanism of voluntary co-operation, can never be molded into a real world government. World government must have all the power necessary to deal with the issues of peace and war. Such power and authority can be drawn not from a compact between independent states, but only from their citizens, whose loyalty to the world community must transcend any local allegiance."⁵

National sovereignty has been the root cause of international anarchy. It has prevented the pressing need for revision of obsolete treaties. It has driven nations to a vicious economic nationalism, a policy of self-sufficiency and power economy. It has prevented an effective system of collective security and brought about the rearmament race, the alliance system, and dependence upon war as the only means for change. The League of Nations taught us in its failure that unfettered national sovereignty is the arch-enemy of world prosperity and peace.

⁵ Corbett, *op.cit.*, p. 43.

THE OBSTACLE OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Love of home and country is a deeply rooted emotion. Tradition and education instill in the citizen from early childhood unflinching loyalty for his native land. "My country, right or wrong" epitomizes the absolute sovereignty of the state and makes it the sole judge in all matters of national interest, without respect for others. How else could the Foreign Minister of a leading nation have boasted that his country "has no eternal friends, only eternal interests?" In any league, alliance, or pact of sovereign states the danger of war is unavoidable, since each sovereign member subordinates all other interests to that of his country. If agreement between sovereign states fails, they are bound to resort to power politics which leads inevitably to war. Sovereign states, we must remember, cannot be compelled to submit to the decision of an impartial court until they abandon at least part of their national sovereignty.

Another consequence of sovereignty is that the nation-state must be made strong and independent at the expense of the rights and independence of its own citizens. Each sovereign state must maintain its own armed forces, and its economy tends to be self-sufficient, isolationist.

National sovereignty also implies that each country wants to promote the interests of its own nationals with little, if any, concern for the economic interests of other nations. It dislocates both national and world economy by erecting ever increasing barriers to the movement of trade, population, and capital. This can be true of capitalist or socialist sovereign states.

In international affairs sovereign nations subordinate moral to national principles — that is, to self-interest. They

are compelled, for their own security, to place strategic and military considerations before international justice and fair play. Powerful sovereign states are tempted to impose their will upon smaller nations, whether in benevolent or ruthless form, until they reach a position of world domination, at which stage they must meet the challenge of other ambitious powers. Democratic countries have often, and not without reason, been accused of not carrying the principles of democracy beyond their own frontiers.

The Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice, the Covenant of the League of Nations, the charter of the International Labor Organization, and the whole realm of international law, have revolved around the fixed and inviolable principle—the sovereignty of the state. To comply, on the one hand, with a fervent popular appeal for universal peace, and, on the other, to preserve the historic claim of the state for independence, international law came into existence. But no state was automatically bound to this law without its consent. And if occasionally a state did promise obedience, such obedience was conditional upon its own interpretation of the law. To maintain sovereignty and yet to enjoy world peace is like wanting to eat the cake and still have it.

The *New York Times* published, in September, 1931, the following impression of its Geneva correspondent, Clarence K. Streit: "The world as seen from Geneva appears an Alice in Wonderland world, devoted to the propositions that all nations are created superior, the part is greater than the whole, and the day is longer than the year . . . What is impressive in Geneva is that of sixty nations any fifty-nine would realize so acutely the absurdity of the other's claim to be the only one in step, and that none of them ever realizes that each is simultaneously making that very same claim."

Since there is no evidence that nations are going to be punished in the next world for their self-seeking, events seem to demonstrate that calamities follow hard upon national sins.

Sovereignty is a guarantee of independence, but of a very precarious brand. While it is true that an independent nation can do whatever it wants, its neighbors, who are also independent and sovereign nations, can also do whatever they want. It is obvious that all would enjoy a much greater degree of independence if they would merge a part of their sovereignty into a supranational state. The suggestion that an international police organization should enforce the laws of a reconstructed League of Nations is not so simple as it appears at first sight. It would mean that the members of this force would have to pledge allegiance to the League and be willing to fight against their own country, should it refuse to comply with the League. It would also mean that the League would have expenditures comparable to the budgets of the great powers. If these expenses were assessed from each country on a voluntary basis, some might default and cause the whole system to collapse. To avoid this, the League would need the power to tax and collect from each member-state, and that would mean the end of national sovereignty.

AMERICAN HISTORY PROVIDES A KEY

Following the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the confederated thirteen colonies appeared not unlike the now defunct League of Nations. The Continental Congress insisted that "each State retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence." The Articles of Confederation permitted each of the thirteen states to maintain an army, levy taxes, coin money, and erect its own tariffs. Each state was entitled to

one vote, regardless of population, and any change in the Articles of Confederation was subject to unanimous decision.

When John Adams, the first United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James, tried to negotiate a treaty with the Foreign Office, he was asked to be joined by representatives of each of the thirteen states. The British were in fact dealing with each state separately over the head of Congress. During the war against Great Britain, Delaware, a member of Congress, continued to supply the enemy with provisions. Congress had no power to coerce any of its independent and sovereign state-members. The state of New York was then ruled by "His Excellency George Clinton, Esquire, Governor of the State of New York, General and Commander-in-Chief of all the Militia and Admiral of the Navy of the same."

As settlers were pushing westward, state sovereignty led to territorial disputes and bloodshed. Trade wars began among these sovereign democracies; boycotts were common; several threatened to withdraw. The fathers of Massachusetts complained that their sons had to "reside abroad" when they went to Yale. The army of Pennsylvania committed incredible atrocities over a territorial dispute in the Wyoming Valley.

"The total membership of Congress under the League of Friendship was ninety-one, but the average attendance in the six years preceding Union was only about twenty-five. Often Congress could not sit because no quorum came. Things reached a point where little Delaware, though it had the same voting power in Congress as the largest state and though it was not thirty miles from Philadelphia, where Congress met, decided it was no longer worth the expense to send a delegate. The states issued worthless currency, misery was rife, and courts were broken up by armed mobs. When these

troubles culminated early in 1787 with the attempt of Shays' rebels to capture the League arsenal in Massachusetts, so strong was state sovereignty and so feeble the League that Massachusetts would not allow League troops to enter its territory even to guard the League's own arsenal."⁶

About this time Josiah Tucker, Dean of Gloucester and a liberal philosopher, wrote, "As to the future grandeur of America, and its being a rising empire under one head, whether republican or monarchical, it is one of the idlest and most visionary notions that ever was conceived even by writers of romance. The mutual antipathies and clashing interests of the Americans, their differences of governments, habitudes, and manners, indicate that they will have no centre of union and no common interest. They never can be united into one compact empire under any species of government whatever; a disunited people till the end of time, suspicious and distrustful of each other, they will be divided and sub-divided into little commonwealths or principalities." Another contemporary view, also quoted by Clarence Streit, comes from the pen of no less notable a figure than Thomas Paine: "If there is a country in the world where concord, according to common calculation, would be least expected, it is America. Made up as it is of people from different nations, accustomed to different forms and habits of Government, speaking different languages, and more different in their modes of worship, it would appear that the union of such a people was impracticable."

Congress was so feeble, and affairs were so much out of its control, that its President, Nathaniel Gorham, entered into

⁶ Clarence K. Streit, *Union Now*, New York, Harper, 1940, p. 26.

secret negotiations with Prince Henry of Prussia, the brother of Frederick the Great, with a view to establishing a monarchy.

Finally, in 1787, a Convention was called at Philadelphia "for the sole and express purpose of revising the articles of confederation." The convention worked for four months on the American Constitution. Such "visionary young men" as Hamilton and Madison were stressing the revolutionary idea of shifting the basis of unity from equal states to equal citizens, from a confederation of sovereign states to a federation of men, the people of the United States of America. Patrick Henry opposed it for fear of sacrificing the state rights of Virginia, just as, a little over a century later, Senator Borah opposed the League of Nations for fear of losing the national sovereignty of the United States. Richard Henry Lee bitterly opposed the change of the wording from "We, the undersigned delegates of the states" to "We the People of the United States."

James Madison summed up the fundamental decision of the Constitutional Convention which ended the critical period of United States history, as follows: "It was generally agreed that the objects of the Union could not be secured by any system founded on the principle of a confederation of sovereign states. A *voluntary* observance of the Federal Law by all the members could never be hoped for. A *compulsive* one could evidently never be reduced to practice, and if it could, involved equal calamities to the innocent and the guilty, the necessity of a military force, both obnoxious and dangerous, and, in general, a scene resembling much more a civil war than the administration of a regular government. Hence was embraced the alternative of a government which, instead of operating on the States, should operate without

their intervention *on the individuals composing them*; and hence the change in the principle and proportion of representation.”⁷

Thus came into being, for the first time in political history, the voluntary merging of independent, sovereign, armed states into a Federal Union. They merged their thirteen separate armies into one, under a single command. They abolished their thirteen unstable currencies and, with the new federal issue, laid the foundation for economic prosperity. The original states removed the thirteen tariff walls with one act and created a free market which eventually realized the world's highest standard of living for 130,000,000 people. And, finally, they removed all barriers to communication and awarded American citizenship to all inhabitants.

It is true that each of the thirteen states lost in power and prestige and that each lost its sovereignty, but the individual citizens of these states lost nothing. They only transferred some of the authority of the state to the Federal government. They realized that men are more important than the state. They did not become less loyal to their community while accepting a wider and more encompassing loyalty to the federated United States. They performed a political miracle by building a federal system which increased prodigiously the collective power of the new nation, and yet respected local liberties and authorities, without surrendering the principle of political equality. Canada, Australia, the Union of South Africa, and Switzerland have since followed their example.

⁷ “Letters,” Ed. 1865, I, 344. Italics not in original.

GROWTH OF FEDERAL SENTIMENT

For many decades a few people have been urging world federation. The formation of the League and the acceleration of events has encouraged more consideration of this alternative for world peace. The federal idea received an impetus in 1929 when Aristide Briand presented before the League of Nations his premature proposal for a United States of Europe.

A few years prior to the outbreak of the present war Lionel Curtis, historian and statesman, published *World Order*, in which he advocated the submergence of nation-states into a world-commonwealth. As a start, he proposed the federation of Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, to be joined later by Egypt, India, and Holland, since they all have vital common interests. Jointly they would have elected a federal legislature, imposed taxes on individual citizens, and through this common experience, Curtis believes, sufficient interest could have been aroused within two generations to invite others to join.

The same idea has been developed by Clarence K. Streit in his famous book, *Union Now*. As correspondent of the *New York Times* in Geneva, he watched for many years the incompetence of the League of Nations. He, too, came to the conclusion that a league of sovereign nations, with no compulsory jurisdiction, no authority over individual citizens nor appeal to their loyalty, could not succeed. He saw the answer in federation as tried by his country 150 years ago. He wrote a book after a thorough study but could find no publisher to print it. The world was not interested in such utopias. But Streit would not give up, for he knew that another world war was inevitable unless the League devel-

oped into a Federal Union. He spent another year rewriting his book but with no better results. Four times he had to rewrite it, until finally, in 1939, there was enough public interest to warrant the expense of publishing a comprehensive proposal for federal union. His book did not avert World War II, but its unsurmised success, fifteen editions in less than a year, may help to prevent World War III.

Union Now pointed to the insistence upon national sovereignty as the root cause of war and urged, as the first step to world peace, the immediate federation of fifteen democracies: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Union of South Africa, Great Britain, United States, and Switzerland. As Streit considers freedom of speech, press, and worship basic essentials of good government, he disqualifies from the Union all those countries where these fundamental freedoms do not exist.

Within the Federation all tariffs would be abolished, and the national armed forces would merge into one federal force. There would be one currency, one postal system, and one citizenship for all. The Union would contain some 250,000,000 people and would be governed after the pattern of the United States. It would be, Streit believes, invulnerable to attack, and its economic benefits would be immense.

While this plan found many supporters, it encountered also many objections. As representation in the Union Congress would be proportionate to population, the American deputies would outnumber the combined British and French representatives. This would be one stumbling block, although theoretically, the delegates would represent individual citizens and not their countries. Another more serious objection is Streit's exclusion of the totalitarian states which would be

forced into a rival federation. The standing promise to accept them into the fold as soon as they become "good people," that is, democratic, would hurt their dignity and would encourage their banding together into a formidable opposition.

In a later work, *Union Now With Britain*, Streit proposes federation of the English-speaking nations. This would prove even more disastrous for it would engender resentment and suspicion against Anglo-American predominance. Even if other nations were later invited to join, the prerogatives enjoyed by the founder-members would prove too tempting to relinquish, and discrimination of race, or color, or political interest would prevent the final integration of the world. Economic conflict and war would come again on a still larger scale. But despite these dangers, it is significant that a Gallup Survey found over eight million Americans favoring Streit's plan for federation.

The federal idea spread in England because of the outbreak rather than the threat of the present war. The history of the growth of the Federal Union organization is worth recording. It was started in England by a group of three in 1938. The following year a pamphlet was circulated, and after the publication of Streit's book, a public meeting was arranged which had an attendance of 300. A few months after the outbreak of World War II membership passed the 10,000 mark, and W. B. Curry's Penguin Special, *The Case for Federal Union*, sold more than 100,000 copies. Many pamphlets and a fortnightly news-sheet have since been published and membership includes many prominent in British public life. The objective is closely linked with the American Union Now movement.

IF WE CHOOSE WORLD-FEDERATION

The minimum requirement of a federalized world government could be summed up as follows: It should be powerful enough to guarantee peace and yet flexible enough to meet the changing conditions which are inevitable in a progressive society. A static world order would paralyze progress and would inevitably foment unrest.

Foreign policy and the issues of peace and war would have to be entrusted to a supranational government, whose authority should not be derived from independent states, as in a league, but from the citizens, whose loyalty to their country is to be subordinated to their allegiance to the super-state. Through control of trade, currency, migration, and colonies the international federal institutions would grow in strength, and by conferring economic benefits, which no state would desire to relinquish by secession, the loyalty of the people would be assured.

The military power of each nation would have to merge into one supranational police force, responsible only to the super-state. This will be most difficult. Individuals have been taught, since the days of Moses, to submit to the law or suffer the consequences. Nations, on the other hand, are used to absolute independence and resent authority or restraint from outside. It is true that in his most primitive evolutionary stage the individual did depend on his own strength for security. But as soon as he settled into communal life, the neighbors jointly condemned and punished the outlaw; while still later they organized the police force, acting on communal authority. Nations have not extended the same standard to state conduct, although it is now obvious that for the settlement of disputes between nations as between individuals, just

laws have to be made and enforced. Just as individuals need a government to maintain peace and order within the nation, so do nations need a supranational government to maintain peace and order throughout the world.

The jurisdiction of supranational courts, to be effective, would have to be compulsory. The supranational legislature would have to be invested with enough power to improve situations which previously only force could change. Its members would be elected by proportionate representation and with the understanding that this world parliament would be concerned with the welfare of the people and not with the abstract sanctity of individual states. If sufficient authority is not vested in this legislature, international peace is impossible. A league works through delegates appointed by their respective governments, while an effective world legislature would consist of elected representatives not subject to recall. In a league, action is slow and doubtful, for a decision reached by unanimous vote would be subject to ratification by each home government, and even then it might be repudiated by the next party in power. Federal legislation, on the other hand, would be subject to majority vote, or to a qualified majority, and a decision once taken could be enforced immediately.

A supranational civil service would have to be trained to discharge the administrative duties of this world commonwealth. The Secretariat of the League of Nations was composed mostly of French and English nationals, a condition which was resented by the other members. What made the situation even more incongruous was the quite open and partisan loyalty which the members of the Secretariat evinced each to his own country, rather than to the League for which they worked. The administrative officers of a world federal

government would need a sense of world citizenship and impartial devotion to a common cause. The federal government could award scholarships open to all nationals and train officials in special colleges for permanent positions in the field of international service.

Of the three postwar alternatives, we find, after discarding both world-domination and world-association as unacceptable and impractical, world-federation as the only hope for a permanent and just peace.

World-federation, however, is difficult to realize because of our racial, social, and religious prejudices. Reason and common sense have not succeeded in eradicating our emotional and irrational claim for the priority of our race, our country, our church, or our class. We are afraid, however much we may confess belief in Christian brotherhood, of the consequences of organic union with other people. How strange and contradictory must be a religious belief which, on the one hand, invites the people of the world as brothers into spiritual union, and, on the other, refuses to join with them in a political and economic federation, on the grounds that they are inferior or backward, or just because they are strangers. If world-federation means that eventually 500,000,000 Chinese and 300,000,000 Indians will have a right to vote, that discrimination of race and color will have to be abolished, and that the colonies will gradually have to be freed, are we willing to make the sacrifice? Or do we prefer to go under as did the Romans and all those nations since who held firmly to the sword?

There is still hope. For while the old world is disintegrating before our very eyes, a new life with a new faith is germinating amidst the debris of destruction. It is still tender and needs protection, though it has already proved its virility and

ability to survive. It has abolished in its path ingrained prejudices of race and color and creed, and proclaimed that "The world is but one country and mankind its citizens . . . Let not a man glory in that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind." This does not mean that a man should love his country less, but humanity more. It means that he should subordinate the interests of his country to the interests of mankind, that he can best serve his country by having regard for the interests of the world community.

It is the key to a world-ethic which can provide the moral basis for a society in which world-federation and a planetary welfare economy will be possible.

CHAPTER III

The Christian Individual In An Immoral Society

BERTRAND RUSSELL opened a lecture in Montreal a few years ago with the sentence: "Our western civilization is based on the ten commandments of Moses" and, speaking slowly as if to give this thought greater emphasis, he repeated, "Our western civilization is based on the ten commandments of Moses."

Not much scrutiny is required to establish the absence of Christian love in the structure of our western civilization. The pivot around which Christian civilization revolves is the ten commandments rather than the gospel of love. If the government of a Christian nation can maintain "law and order," which is the keynote of the ten commandments, we call it civilized. Virtues characteristic of Christian individuals are not typical of established "Christian" governments. The message of Jesus Christ was essentially for the individual. It influenced individual conduct rather than collective behavior.

How else can the average Christian's horror of murder be explained? As a soldier in his country's service, he suffers no pang of conscience when he kills the enemy. But, as a private citizen, he is restrained not only by his conscience, the product of two thousand years of Christian teaching, but also by fear of the law, enforced in every civilized country, which upholds the commandment: "Thou shalt not kill."

How can we explain an average Christian's reluctance to be dishonest towards his neighbor — in contrast with Christian nations who have consistently robbed "the heathen" and others, without supplicating for divine forgiveness? The Puritans, who were regarded individually as good Christians, deprived the Indians of their land and game and independence. And how can we explain the vile deeds of Spanish conquistadores or the underhand methods of industrial plutocrats, who, in private life, believed in and tried to follow Jesus Christ?

Even today who would call a German as an individual less honest and truthful than an Englishman or an American? And why is it that many a Christian tourist, who could not tell a lie without blushing, will answer the customs officer (in whose uniform he sees a representative of the state): "I have nothing to declare"? And how else can we explain the universal practice of Christmas gifts between individuals — as a token of love — while there is no record of one single Christian government ever having given a yuletide present to a neighboring Christian nation, whether of a colony, a battleship, or the cancellation of a debt? The answer lies perhaps in the fact that two thousand years of Christian teaching has succeeded in instilling in the individual a conscience to guide his action in relation to other individuals, but has failed to awaken a social conscience and exerted little influence in the collective behavior of communities and nations.

DOUBLE STANDARD

In the time of Christ, nations, as we know them today, did not exist. Christ spoke to simple people who could neither read nor write, living in small rural communities where they

knew each other by their first names. They had no social consciousness of a nation, much less of the world. When Christ said "Love thy neighbor," they took him literally and ever since Christians have tried and have usually succeeded in being kind to their neighbors as long as they were individuals.

The people Christ taught did not belong to an integrated society with an awakened social consciousness. How could it have been otherwise? In an agricultural world, for the Christian world was, until very recently, mainly pastoral and agricultural, the individual tiller of the soil lived a solitary and contemplative life. He depended for his sustenance on the elements of nature rather than the life of the community. While worshipping God and getting along peacefully with his few neighbors, he remained ignorant of the world and its inhabitants. In our age of speed, we are apt to forget that for eighteen hundred years the average Christian did not wander more than thirty miles from the place of his birth.

The teachings of Christ satisfied the deeper emotional needs of the individual and made life easier. What could build a greater character than the words: "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"? Christ's message demanded a pure heart and stressed man's duty to his neighbors as an essential part of his duty to God. It consoled the suffering, comforted the destitute, and offered hope when there was no more hope. It reiterated the moral code of Moses and spread it to the far corners of the earth.

There is no evidence that Christ intended to organize society. His contribution was a universal, ethical, and non-political religion, acceptable to both Jew and Gentile. He

emphasized the possibilities of the good life, regardless of external and political conditions. His teachings were followed by individuals rather than by nations. We can point to many a man or woman who has lived a saintly Christian life, but not to the history of any one nation which could be called truly Christian. The words of Christ: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" are of great historic consequence. "Indeed, Christ's emphasis on the idea that government was in one sense irrelevant because it was unable to touch the truly spiritual and socially minded men could in itself readily become a doctrine of lack of duty towards the state."¹

Both St. Augustine and St. Isidore of Seville believed in the divine appointment of wicked rulers, and St. Gregory taught the duty of submission to evil kings. Calvin wrote: "Wherefore if we are cruelly vexed by an inhuman prince or robbed and plundered by one avaricious . . . it is not for us to remedy these evils; for us it remains only to implore the aid of God in whose hands are the hearts of kings and changes of kingdoms."²

The highest spiritual teaching on individual behavior seems to be expressed in these words of Christ: "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also, and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." This, however, could not have been intended to solve the problem of social justice.

¹ Thomas I. Cook, *History of Political Philosophy*, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1937, p. 163.

² Calvin's Institutes, Book IV, Chap. XX.

Love is purest where it desires no return for itself. Ideal love is only possible between individuals where mutual advantages are not consciously sought as the result of love — a condition that nations cannot match. We can, therefore, assume that Christ did not advise going the second mile in the hope that the Roman state might relent, or giving the thief all in the hope that he might return what he had taken, or loving the criminal with no other motive than to disarm him. Love is not social justice although social justice needs love. Christ's teachings on love can be applied effectively by individuals but not by the state. Christ promised neither political peace nor social justice to a world that was too immature to receive a collective message.

That in spite of the limitation of the message of Christ — a limitation imposed by the conditions of his time — Christian institutions were organized, proves that material means, however imperfect, are necessary for the spreading of spiritual truth. The finest wine needs a bottle to contain it. And around the Spirit that came from Nazareth a church was built, without which the message of Christ would have been lost as a river in the desert.

This church, which was so necessary for the spreading of the gospel and which, in the course of centuries, became one of the wealthiest and most powerful institutions in the world, failed when it tried to direct the economic and political affairs of nations. For Christian love, while it could solve problems between individuals, could not settle differences between classes and nations. It was, therefore, unavoidable that the Church, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to take over the reins of temporal power, should eventually be forced to leave politics to Caesar and Machiavelli.

"In Christian circles a double morality . . . prevails, which is explained by the high position given to the State . . . The State with its 'morality' plays its part as a world independent of God and His Kingdom. Anything that puts itself beside God will itself be God. This exalting of the State to the same plane with God must be intolerable to the Christian conscience . . . In home affairs the boundless power of the State may be limited by the claims of Christian morality, but in foreign affairs and the closely associated questions of minorities of other nationality or of other religious confessions it is often quite otherwise. In these spheres the negation of all morality frequently becomes 'morality', if only the interests of the nation may be thereby furthered. Here is the hitherto unconquered stronghold within which the spirit of the world, the spirit of might, has fortified itself."³

The Doukhobors, the Mennonites, the followers of Tolstoy, and other Christian sects — conscious of the conflict between pure individual morality and the "immorality" of the State — withdrew from the world to live apart in segregated communities. Out of this philosophy has grown opposition to military service. People who function by the usual "double morality" often find it very difficult to understand these small Christian sects. But according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* "the Doukhobors found their relations to other people exclusively on love" and "when living up to the standard of their faith [they] present one of the nearest approaches to the realization of the Christian ideal which has ever been attained." These communities strive, with simple logic, to apply the teachings of Christ.

³ Dr. Max Huber, Professor of international law at Zurich, later President of the Permanent Court of International Justice, *Staaten-Politik und Evangelium*, Utrecht, 1924, p. 40.

The tendency to withdraw from this "wicked" world to the seclusion of convents and monasteries, in order to lead a "saintly" life, amounts to a tacit recognition that Christian virtues so intimate in the life of individuals remained foreign to the secular world. The Protestant was not less explicit than the Catholic, in his emphasis on the individual who, following the footsteps of his Master, lived a good Christian life. He believed that he could be "saved" while living in an unjust and, by his own Christian standards, immoral state.

CHRISTIAN LOVE IN POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

One of the statutes of Christian Sweden of the early twelfth century reads as follows: "A land should be built with law and not with deeds of violence . . . Law must be given and maintained to protect the poor, secure peace for the peaceful, but to deal punishment and terror to the violent . . . Because, if there were no law, no man could live in the land. Therefore law [not love] was made, in the beginning by God, and afterwards by our king, with the consent of noblemen and the whole of the common people." A statute of Christian Norway of about the same time read: "A land should be built with law and not laid waste by lawlessness. And he who will not suffer his neighbor to enjoy the protection of the law, let not the law protect him."⁴ Here again, love, as taught by Christ, is conspicuously absent. The Scandinavians, in common with other European nations, have established and maintained civilization by enforcing the law and order of the Old Testament, rather than by using the principle of love and forgiveness as contained in the Gospel. They did not do so out of disloyalty to Christ, but rather because of their

⁴ Quoted by Sigrid Undset in *Free World*, 1943, p. 212.

inability to translate the moral value of love into their social needs.

Christian love arouses pity for a starving man but remains helpless in the face of famine in India or slum conditions in Alabama. To the poor are offered charity and hope but not a social revolution. Contemporary Christians, who vainly seek for love and compassion in industrial and political leaders, jump to the erroneous conclusion that Christianity has failed. They argue, and not without logic, that what Christianity could do for the individual it should do for society, forgetting that Christianity was not intended to be a social religion. It offered salvation to individuals but not to society. It did not guarantee social justice; at best it mitigated human suffering through pity and philanthropy. "The devotion of Christianity to the cross is an unconscious glorification of the individual moral ideal. The cross is the symbol of love triumphant in its own integrity, but not triumphant in the world and society. Society, in fact, conspired [against] the cross."⁵

It is not our purpose to minimize the influence of the teachings of Christ. Who could measure the comfort and hope he instilled in the hearts of untold millions of unfortunates by saying: You too are a man! You too can be saved! He inspired many a noble deed and improved human behavior by giving man a moral conscience.

"The final importance of Christianity from an ethical point of view is perhaps the insistence that true progress is inward, a matter of the individual, and that outward change can never of itself bring about the good life. The danger involved has always been that, turning inward, men might forget the

⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, N. Y., Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934, p. 82.

importance of social justice as a basis for that good life, a danger particularly great since a concern for eternity might lead to the view that earthly conditions were unimportant. The individual might have the duty to be conscientious in his own behavior towards his fellows; but he would not necessarily have a duty to struggle for the general reform of society or for the creation of a more perfect political order. In short, while social welfare might be prompted by political means when opportunity offered, one could perform one's duty as a Christian and as a member of society despite the existence of political oppression. State and society were not synonymous; and if Stoicism and Christianity combined to reject the exclusiveness of the ancient world, they also unfortunately abandoned the idea of State and society as one, the state becoming governmental authority rather than the organization of the whole social process. Government, as a result, could too easily become at once authoritarian and negative, preserving the existing political and social pattern, and acquiesced in, if not supported by, religion."⁶

Social justice is a problem left unsolved by Christianity, although many who gave our nations character and direction were God-fearing men who believed in Jesus Christ. Christian principles inspired many social reformers who left their mark on our political institutions. But there was something in group behavior which could not obey the dictates of individual conscience. The Christian individual soon discovered that the political majority to which he belonged could make no concessions to a minority out of love. Many an industrialist, known in his private life as a good and conscientious Christian, proved callous in his labor relations without con-

⁶ Thomas I. Cook, *op.cit.*, pp. 164-5.

flict of conscience. Who could, without an ulterior motive, induce a nation to go out of its way to help a neighboring nation? That groups and nations can be more covetous and selfish than the individuals that compose them, has been borne out by many an event.

The evils we are fighting have often been called social, political, or economic, beyond the reach of individual action. The fault was not found with the individual as an individual, but rather when that individual merged his individuality with the group or nation. At that stage the Bible ceased to be his guide. The highest moral expression of collective conscience is social justice, for which the Christian individual, nurtured in love, has not been prepared. Love for his master did not liberate the Negro from slavery, nor did labor obtain fairer wages because of the employers' brotherly attitude.

Christ united man with God, and man with man, but not class with class, nation with nation. Social justice and the consciousness of the oneness of mankind are still foreign in the Christian world, not because of any limitations of Christ, but because of the limitations of the people to whom he spoke.

"It is necessary to insist that the moral achievement of individual goodwill is not a substitute for the mechanism of social control. It may perfect and purify, but it cannot create basic justice. Basic justice in any society depends upon the right organization of man's common labor . . . no moral idealism can overcome a basic mechanical defect in the social structure . . . A profound religion . . . cannot afford to dismiss the problem of justice or to transcend it by premature appeals to the goodwill of individuals . . . moral purpose must

become incorporated in adequate social mechanisms if it is not to be frustrated and corrupted.”⁷

We cannot say that Christian principles have been incorporated in the past in our political and economic institutions to ensure basic justice, nor can we hope, in the light of history, that Christianity can do so in the future.

RELIGION UNITES YET SEPARATES

Under the name of a Buddha, a Moses, a Christ, or a Muhammad more people have been united for a longer period of time than under the name of a Caesar, a Plato, a Lincoln, or anyone else in history. Religion has been, we must admit, the greatest of all unifying forces. Ecclesiastical religion, it is true, made very pronounced demarcations between men and was the cause of many wars. Still, it has brought together more people and has been a greater influence for a peaceful community life than any other factor. It was religion that developed man's interest in God, an interest outside himself, in devotion to which he forgot his baser self, at least for a while. This education in self-forgetfulness unwrapped the egocentric individual, awakened his mind, and transformed him gradually into a civilized man.

Religion has been not only the greatest factor in binding people together, it has also been the greatest moral force. Can we compare the influence for good of a Buddha, a Christ, or a Moses with that of a Socrates, a Marcus Aurelius, a Shakespeare, or any other great historic figure? The materialist, arguing that human nature cannot change, must admit that human behavior has changed. Who can disprove that

⁷ Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, London, Student Christian Movement Press, 1937, pp. 192-3.

religion has been the greatest single factor to improve human behavior in the course of centuries? Behavior often repeated becomes a habit, and habit is, as we know, second nature, which is as good as human nature.

If we wonder why a humanitarian may be self-sacrificing and still not adhere to any religion, the answer lies behind centuries of habit-forming ancestors and a cumulative human environment impregnated with Christian virtues. Many an agnostic could not help but assimilate, often unconsciously, the ethical values of his Christian background.

Religion has not made perfect individuals, much less has it created a perfect society. But, if we add up all that can be said for and against it, the balance sheet will show that it has done more good than harm, that it has brought more peace than strife, that, in many of the wars that were fought in its name, it was used as an excuse to shield human failings, and that when religion was served as opium to the people, it was of a kind that lightened their suffering without undermining their health. (Since man craves for intoxication, intake of the Spirit of God seems preferable to distilled spirits from fermented grains.) "All religions are," as C. G. Jung, the famous psychologist puts it, "therapies for the sorrows and disorders of the soul."

Religion has been the greatest civilizing force, though often misused. This was inevitable, for man found in God a Power greater than himself, a Force he could not fully understand. Encouraged by his initial success, he was bound to overreach himself and thus hampered his own progress. Religious movements, like man, pass through the progressive stages of childhood, adolescence, maturity, and old age, and then die. As the life span of great religions is measured in thousands of years, the period of old age often endures for centuries,

and death comes so slowly that whole generations may not notice it. For religious institutions maintain themselves long after the creative spirit which animated them has departed.

According to a contemporary Spanish philosopher, Dr. Domingo Casanovas, every civilization passes through three distinct stages of evolution. The first is characterized by a universal God-consciousness when God is real, intimate, and among the people in every walk of life. This is the period of a living faith when men unquestionably believe, when pilgrims journey with reverence to holy places of worship. In the second period, which inevitably follows, Culture becomes more important than God, pristine faith is subordinated for theology, and intellectual acceptance, rather than an inner conviction, is the order of the day. This is the period when pilgrims and holy men are pushed aside by artisans and adventurers in search of beauty and romance. In the third and last stage, material Power becomes the determining influence, not God or culture. Of the once virile religion only the form remains, which is tradition. Its faith and doctrines have crystallized as do the blood vessels of an old man. It falls behind the times which it cannot understand, much less interpret. It lives in its past and, therefore, appeals to the old and conservative in man. The highways which once were frequented by pilgrims and artisans, are now travelled by tourists, who do not contemplate nor seek beauty, but crave pleasure.

Those who accuse religion of being an enemy of progress, and its dogmas a prison for the mind, should remember that they are judging the virility of youth, the creative spirit of manhood, and the wisdom that comes with maturity, while witnessing the gradual collapse of a shrivelling and decrepit old age. Before rendering judgment, therefore, religion should

be appraised as a whole from the time of its inception. Just as the human spirit takes on a form and acquires a character which runs its course, likewise each religion acquires a form and character in its institutions which, being temporal, are mortal. That we are now at the end of a religious cycle is not difficult to establish. Having completed a cycle, there is every evidence that we shall start all over again, but beginning at a higher level. Was Dr. John Pitts, a Canadian clergyman, not right when he said: "With respect to religion we have reached the end of one era and the beginning of another"?

In this politically and economically interdependent but strife-ridden world is it not logical to ask whether religion could not again supply a unifying force as of old, but this time on a scale to encompass the whole earth?

What did President Roosevelt mean in his Christmas message of 1940 to Pope Pius XII: "I take heart in remembering that, in a similar time, Isaiah first prophesied the birth of Christ. Before His coming the world was not unlike it is today. Then, as now, a conflagration had been set, and nations walked dangerously in the light of the fires they had themselves kindled. But in that very moment, a spiritual rebirth has been foreseen . . . Humble people are looking for a guiding light. We remember that the Christmas star was seen by the shepherds long before the leaders knew. While statesmen are considering a new order of things, a new order may well be at hand. I believe that it is now being built by people whose common faith will write the final history of our time. In the grief and terror of the hour these quiet voices, if they can be heard, may yet tell of the rebuilding of the world."

MAN'S COMING OF AGE

We can visualize two Christians, one in French, the other in Italian uniform, attending separate Sunday services in Tunisia, reading the following passage from the Bible: "The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."⁸ The next day they meet in battle and try to kill each other. They do not feel that their action is in conflict with their conscience for, in their limited experience, loyalty to Christ and allegiance to one's country are two different things. They were made to understand that the greatest commandment of Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," does not mean that the United States should love Japan as itself, or that all Frenchmen should love all Germans collectively as one Christian can love another Christian.

When we enter into the realm of social relations, it is not love nor law but the combination of both, justice, which is the highest moral coefficient. Individuals belonging to a group or nation can express love, truthfulness, charity, and other Christian virtues, but not justice. An individual can never be sure if he is just in his dealings, but he can always be sure if he loves a person or not. If two people love each other, they solve their problems without recourse to justice. This is not true either of two corporations or of two nations. The highest moral expression between groups or nations is not love, which can issue only from individuals, but justice, which is the impersonal expression of a collective conscience.

⁸ Mark 12: 29-31.

Love, the highest moral conception of Christianity, did not and can not supply the key for the solution of our economic and political problems.

The lawgiver of the Hebrews made social progress possible within certain limits. Under the banner of law and order, individuals could band together and establish a comparatively peaceful community life. The modern world, however, has lost its equilibrium. Economic interdependence compels us, though traditionally and psychologically unprepared, to be more conscious of groups and nations than of individuals. Neither the love of Christ nor the law of Moses can offer help, for neither can insure social justice to the whole world.

"The Revelation associated with the Faith of Jesus Christ focused attention primarily on the redemption of the individual and the moulding of his conduct, and stressed, as its central theme, the necessity of inculcating a high standard of morality and discipline into man, as the fundamental unit in human society. Nowhere in the Gospels do we find any reference to the unity of nations or the unification of mankind as a whole. When Jesus spoke to those around him, he addressed them primarily as individuals rather than as component parts of one universal, indivisible entity. The whole surface of the earth as yet unexplored, and the organization of all its peoples and nations as one unit could, consequently not be envisaged, how much less proclaimed or established."⁹

Bahá'ís believe that 1844 marks the beginning of a new spiritual Renaissance, which is awakening in men the social awareness necessary for social justice. The liberation of slaves, the socialist and co-operative movements, progress

⁹ Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, Wilmette, Ill., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1941, p. 124.

toward political and economic democracy, and many other humanitarian movements, all had their origin at about this same time in the nineteenth century.

The Bahá'í faith is not well-known, even though it has circled the earth in the last one hundred years. Its basic principle is the oneness of mankind, and it offers a unique and challenging pattern for the development of a world order. Just as Christ taught individual discipline, so Bahá'u'lláh, founder of the Bahá'í faith, is offering a maturing humanity the means for imposing social discipline on itself. The Bahá'í faith is like the great religions of the past in that it upholds a belief in God and stressed ethical conduct in the individual, but it differs greatly in that its chief concern is the creation of a world government and a world culture based on justice.

Adolescent boys cease fighting each other when they reach manhood, as it is not seemly for grownup men to settle an argument with their fists. Likewise nations will, as they outgrow their adolescence, gather around a table and dispose of their differences as mature men. In a mature age, which, according to Bahá'u'lláh, we are now approaching, a new world-ethic is required. Conformity to law as stressed in the Old Testament and the significance of love as stressed in the New Testament find their synthesis in social justice as expressed in the collective conscience of an awakened humanity.

Bahá'u'lláh has declared that justice is the foundation of all human virtues. Justice is the world-ethic essential for the well-being of all people. And yet when we read of the strikers from a Welsh mine, or the dock workers of Yokahama, or the share-croppers of the South, how many of us would crusade for justice? Bahá'ís believe, and they have demonstrated it already in a world-wide community, that the new emphasis in human experience is centered around the consciousness of

the oneness of mankind. With them, this is not a sentimental or intellectual acceptance of the brotherhood of man, but a deep-rooted conviction experienced through faith in Bahá'u'lláh.

“The principle of the Oneness of Mankind — the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve — is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. Its appeal is not to be merely identified with a reawakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men, nor does it aim solely at the fostering of harmonious co-operation among individual peoples and nations. Its implications are deeper, its claims greater than any which the Prophets of old were allowed to advance. Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. It does not constitute merely the enunciation of an ideal, but stands inseparably associated with an institution adequate to embody its truth, demonstrate its validity, and perpetuate its influence. It implies an organic change in the structure of present day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced . . . It calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units.”¹⁰

Here then is a religion which calls men to build a world

¹⁰ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, N. Y., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1938, p. 42.

society founded upon moral principles and actually outlines the institutions for such a society. This is hardly another postwar plan, although all the Bahá'í teachings apply specifically to the postwar era which we are entering. Besides, the Bahá'í faith for a century has been building a world community of men and women of many different racial, religious, and nationalistic backgrounds.

In order to judge fairly such a claim as this, we would need to find the answer to several questions. First, can religion have a widespread effect upon the institutions of society? This we must know, since nineteen hundred years of Christianity brought primarily change only to individuals. Second, how do the social institutions and principles of the Bahá'í faith meet modern needs? Third, does the first hundred years of the Bahá'í faith indicate an ability to change the social outlook of individuals enough to effect a radical change in society? The remaining chapters in this book are an attempt to answer these questions.

But, first, can religion have a widespread effect upon the institutions of society? For an answer we turn to a much-neglected phase of world history, Islam. Information about Muhammad's invaluable contribution to our common heritage, often sketchy, is generally based on prejudiced and unscholarly sources. And yet the history of Islam furnishes perhaps the most striking example of the influence of religion on civilization. In the light of Muhammad's impact upon a world of barbarians we may find the key to evaluate Bahá'u'lláh's contribution to our modern age.

CHAPTER IV

Islam — A Case In Point

ONE OF THE greatest social experiments of modern times was made in the United States when, in 1919, Congress adopted the National Prohibition Act. The Enforcement Law received support not only of forty-six of the forty-eight states, but also of the church and the press, in an endorsement more sweeping than has ever been given any other amendment to the Constitution. After fourteen years the experiment had to be discontinued with this conclusive finding: social legislation is no substitute for moral education.

America tried but failed to live without liquor. It had apparently forgotten that there existed a community, of more than two hundred and fifty million Muslims, who did not know the degrading effects, the frightful cost and waste, inherent in the consumption of alcoholic beverages. If Christ had said, as did Muhammad fourteen hundred years ago, that men should not partake of intoxicating drinks, we can assume that distilleries and beer signs would be as unfamiliar in the Christian world as they have been until recently in the land of the Muslims.

The prophet of Arabia, the founder of a great civilization, emerges, if we will but investigate, as one of the world's greatest moral educators. The rapid and phenomenal rise of the Arabs to nationhood, and the efflorescence of civilization

which followed wherever the Voice of Allah was heard, is now history, but the force that was Islam still baffles our historians. That a modern democratic state, disposing of unlimited funds, having use of the pulpit, radio, press, and the police, could not compete on a moral issue with a poor, untutored camel driver of Mecca, is one of many proofs that we have not yet found the key for the reading of history. This chapter will attempt to find such a key.

ARABIA BEFORE MUHAMMAD

Arabia was for the most part a waterless wilderness, too sparsely populated to send forth an overwhelming force to subdue and settle the more fertile surrounding countries. The Arabs of the sixth century were divided into innumerable tribes, each with its own god or fetish, and often at war among themselves. "And even where united by blood or by interest they were ever ready on some insignificant cause to separate and abandon themselves to an implacable hostility. Thus at the era of Islam the retrospect of Arabian history exhibits an ever varying state of combination and repulsion such as had hitherto rendered abortive any attempt at a general union."¹

Traces have been preserved of human sacrifices and even cannibalism. There are records of women biting the liver or drinking out of the skull of a fallen foe. "To the taking of human life it is clear that no moral guilt was thought to attach; and between accidental homicide and intentional murder the Arabs seem to have been quite unable to distinguish."² It was common practice to bury superfluous daugh-

¹ Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1877, p. VI.

² D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammed And The Rise Of Islam*, London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931, p. 27.

ters alive and, at the death of a father, to divide the wives among the sons. Pagan Arabia showed no respect for women, property, or honor.

“The prospects of Arabia before the rise of Muhammad were as unfavorable to religious reform as they were to political union or national regeneration . . . The problem had yet to be solved, by what force these tribes could be subdued, or drawn to one common centre; and it was solved by Muhammad, who struck out a political system of his own . . . He, with consummate skill, devised a machinery, by the adaptive energy of which he gradually shaped the broken and disconnected masses of the Arab race into an harmonious whole, a body politic endowed with life and vigour. To the Christian he was as a Christian; to the Jew he became a Jew; to the idolater of Mecca, a reformed worshipper of the Ka’ba. And thus, by unparalleled art and a rare supremacy of mind, he persuaded the whole of Arabia, Pagan, Jew, and Christian, to follow his steps with docile submission . . . It was Muhammad that formed Islam.”³

LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

At the mature age of forty Muhammad received his first call to arise and proclaim the will of God. We are told of his inner conflicts, his doubts and hopes, which alternately wrung his heart and which almost drove him to self-destruction, before he understood and accepted his duty to mankind. His life was not that of a mystic communing with God in solitude. His was a continuous struggle for the liberation of men from bondage and ignorance.

Khadija, his wife, was his first follower. Within two years

³ Muir, *op.cit.*, pp. xciii–xcviii.

Muhammad decided to invite forty of his kindred to a secret meeting where he told them of the new faith. Only Ali, who was then sixteen years old, responded. To those present, the sight of this middle-aged, unlettered man, supported by his wife and this lad, embarking on an enterprise against the whole world, must have appeared hopeless if not ridiculous. And yet the movement this unlearned man initiated was to astound the world.

Muhammad's third believer was Zaid, his slave, to whom he gave his freedom. Ever since that act it has been a spiritual virtue among Muslims to liberate slaves. More than a thousand years before the British Parliament, Islam dealt an effective blow at the age-old institution of slavery. Muhammad ruled that slaves could purchase their liberty by the wages of their service, otherwise public funds were to provide the means, and that fugitives fleeing to the territories of Islam should at once become free. A slave could marry his master's daughter, and many ruled kingdoms and founded dynasties. It is now history that when William Lloyd Garrison launched his anti-slavery campaign in 1830, no religious institution of Boston allowed him to use its hall. Islam has never made a distinction between white and black or yellow.

The twenty-three years of Muhammad's mission are usually divided into two almost equal periods, the first of which occurs in Mecca and the second in Medina. The Meccan episode appeals to Christian historians, for here, not unlike Christ, we find a despised and persecuted messenger of God, hiding in caves, homeless, preaching a simple faith and the good life at the continual risk of his own. The most bitter opposition came from those with a vested interest in the old Kaaba and the idols. Muhammad and his early followers were outlawed and their means of livelihood taken

away. When Muhammad was advised to flee or to remain silent, he replied: "If they placed the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left to force me to renounce my work, verily I would not desist therefrom until God made manifest His cause, or I perished in the attempt." Only when all but one of his followers fled, and when his enemies plotted against his life, did he, on June 22, 622 A.D., in the fifty-third year of his life, flee to Medina.

Had Muhammad been killed during this flight, leaving behind a few scattered and unorganized believers, though with an exemplary moral code for individual conduct not unlike that of Jesus Christ, the subsequent history of Islam would have been similar to Christianity. Destiny, however, decreed otherwise. For we witness during the last ten years of Muhammad's life in Medina the creation of an integrated community. Here Muhammad assumed temporal as well as spiritual power and approved defensive warfare for the protection of the new community. It was precisely here in Medina that Christian criticism has been heaped upon him. In this same period the work of Muhammad was most fruitful, for he united the Arabs into a nation and subordinated temporal to spiritual authority.

He proclaimed the law not only for the individual but also for a new social unit — the nation — composed of people of various ethnical origins. The strict measures he enforced for the preservation of this new nation-state were as foreign to the Christian ideal as they were foreign to the kindness and love associated with Muhammad's personal life. It was to this new nation-state that the believers had to offer their allegiance as a part of their obedience to God, and it was this unifying force from within the state which explains the almost miraculous spread and the sudden flowering of Islam.

Muhammad did not have to tell his followers to "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." He told them rather to render all to God. He made God real to a nation, and history has never since been the same.

Muhammad, though of middle stature, had a stately and commanding presence. "The depth and feeling in his dark black eyes, and the winning expression of a face otherwise attractive, gained the confidence and love even of strangers. His features often unbended into a smile full of grace and condescension. 'He was,' says an admiring follower, 'the handsomest and bravest, the brightest-faced and most generous of men. It was as though the sunlight beamed in his countenance.'"⁴

He was sober and abstemious in his diet, simple in dress. His garments were often patched. His triumphs awakened no pride and did not change his simplicity of manners and appearance. "If he aimed at universal dominion, it was the dominion of faith; as to the temporal rule which grew up in his hands, as he used it without ostentation, so he took no steps to perpetuate it in his family."⁵ Although tributes and riches were lavished upon him, he expended them on the poor and the faithful, and died in comparative poverty. "Allah," says an Arabian writer, "offered him the keys of all the treasures of the earth, but he refused to accept them." Ayesha once asked Muhammad: "Do none enter paradise but through God's mercy?" And when her husband answered, "None," she asked, "But you, O Prophet, will you not enter except through his compassion?" Muhammad answered,

⁴ Muir, *op.cit.*, p. 523.

⁵ Washington Irving, *Life of Mahomet*, London, I. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1928, p. 238.

“Neither shall I enter paradise unless God cover me with His mercy!”

MUHAMMAD BUILDS A NATION OF MANY RACES

The first recorded charter for freedom of conscience reads: “In the name of the most merciful and compassionate God given by Muhammad, the Prophet, to the Believers, and all individuals of whatever origin who have made common cause with them, all these shall constitute one nation . . . The Jews who attach themselves to our commonwealth shall be protected from all insults and vexations; they shall have an equal right with our own people, to our assistance and good offices: the Jews . . . shall form with the Moslems one composite nation; they shall practice their religion as freely as the Moslems . . .”⁶

The Prophet of Mecca not only united the warring tribes of Arabia in a common faith in one God, but he also overthrew the old system of tribal rule by assuming political as well as spiritual authority. Hitherto disunited, Arabia suddenly discovered itself with a common faith and allegiance, swearing obedience to a common ruler, the Prophet. “Muhammad has succeeded in introducing into the anarchical society of his time a sentiment of national unity, a consciousness of rights and duties towards one another such as the Arabs had not felt before.”⁷ By creating national unity, Muhammad made a major contribution to civilization. He recognized the rights of the individual, abolished the privilege of birth, gave protection to the unbeliever, conditions which

⁶ Syed Ameer Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, London, Christopher's, 1891, pp. 140-1.

⁷ T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, Westminster, A. Constable and Co., 1896, p. 40.

had not existed in the Roman Empire and did not exist in Europe for many centuries to come. Human solidarity was a basic principle in Islam.

Mediaeval Europe, in contrast, still consisted of city-states and self-sufficient manors. Aristotle previously had limited the ideal community to a few thousand citizens, as he could not conceive a larger group held together by a common ideal. The Roman Empire, founded and ruled by a city-state, was bound to collapse for lack of a common moral ideal and a common system of education which is essential for the formation of a nation.

In the tenth century Islam had become a united nation. In Europe "the fifteenth century was still a time when nations were forming rather than formed. The mediaeval system of Europe was not a system of States in our sense or in the Greek sense. It was a collection of groups held together by ties of personal dependence and allegiance, and connected among themselves by personal relations of the same kind on a magnified scale. Lordship and homage, from the Emperor down to the humblest feudal tenant, were the links in the chain of steel which saved the world from being dissolved into a chaos of jarring fragments."⁸

Aristotle's separation of ethics from politics was reinforced in mediaeval Europe by Christian emphasis on the salvation of the individual rather than society, culminating in the sixteenth century in Machiavelli's ruthless philosophy. The extent to which the impact of the new nation-state of Islam contributed to the political emancipation of a forlorn and feudal Europe is a field as yet unexplored by Christian historians.

⁸ Sir Frederick Pollock, *History of the Science of Politics*, London, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., rev. ed., 1935, p. 49.

"The Faith of Islam . . . introduced . . . the conception of the nation as a unit and a vital stage in the organization of human society, and embodied it in its teachings. This indeed is what is meant by this brief . . . pronouncement of Bahá'u'lláh: 'Of old (Islamic Dispensation) it hath been revealed: "Love of one's country is an element of the Faith of God!"' This principle was established and stressed . . . inasmuch as the evolution of human society required it at that time. Nor could any stage above and beyond it have been envisaged, as world conditions preliminary to the establishment of a superior form of organization were as yet unobtainable. The conception of nationality, the attainment to the state of nationhood, may, therefore, be said to be the distinguishing characteristics of the Muhammadan Dispensation, in the course of which the nations and races of the world, and particularly in Europe and America, were unified and achieved political independence."⁹

Many historians of Catholic Spain have admitted that their country was never as prosperous, its wealth never as equitably distributed, as during the seven hundred years of Muhammadan rule. With irrigation and new agricultural methods the Moors transformed southern Spain into a garden. Large estates were divided among a prosperous class of small farmers. Trade flourished in the towns, and their products were exchanged with those of Africa, Persia, and India, on highways which were safe for travel.

The first university of Europe was founded at Cordova under Muslim rule. It had thousands of students from Asia, Africa, and even Christian Europe. Many Catholic nobles were known to have come to the Muslims for medical treat-

⁹ Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, Wilmette, Ill., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1941, pp. 124-5.

ment. Learning was greatly encouraged. The people could read and write. To give but one example of Muslim respect for knowledge, Khalif Chakam collected a library of four hundred thousand manuscripts.

"In truth, the northern inhabitants of Europe, living as they did in gloomy city alleys or miserable village hovels clustered around the castles of rude, uncultured nobility, would have thought themselves in fairyland could they have been transported to this joyous, brilliant world. But that which would have especially surprised them, which would have brought a flush of shame to the cheeks of any one with a spark of Christian feeling in his heart, was the noble spirit of toleration and of intellectual freedom which breathed over the happy plains of Andalusia. They would have been forced to admit that the religion of love might receive from the followers of the hated Muhammad instruction in that generous toleration of creeds with which the Founder of their faith had sought to inspire them by word and example. Herein lies the fascination which today impels us to look back with yearning and regret upon the too rapid flight of that happy period when Cordova and Toledo guarded the sacred fire of civilization upon European ground, a fascination which still throws its glamour around the halls of the Alcazar of Seville or the pinnacles of the Alhambra."¹⁰

Under the Moors, the Jews enjoyed their greatest freedom in Europe, and it was in Spain that their medieval literature reached its highest distinction. Muslim jurists taught liberty as the fundamental rule of law, by recognizing that all are equal before God and therefore equal among themselves.

¹⁰ Dr. Henry Schurtz, from *The World's History* edited by Dr. H. F. Helmolt, London, William Heinemann, 1903, vol. III, chap. II.

Equality was established as a fundamental principle of their political and civil system. "The white is not above the black nor the black above the yellow; all men are equal before their Maker" was read out of the Qur'án throughout the Muslim world. "The great racial and cultural complexity of Islam is a very curious spectacle. How strong must the religious bond have been to keep together such disparate elements! . . . the Abbasid court was entirely permeated with foreign influences — Persian, Jewish, and Nestorian. The Persian influence was predominant; one might say that the Persians conquered their Arab victors as the Greeks conquered the Romans."¹¹

THE POLITICAL SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Within one century Islam surpassed the decadent Roman Empire to become the largest continuous domain in the world, stretching over three continents, from Spain to India. It conquered easily wherever it went, like a knife cutting through jelly, for the surrounding civilization was corrupt and decadent. It is recorded that Damascus surrendered to the Arabs at the initiative of the Christian clergy who were in disfavor with Emperor Heraclius. The armies that conquered Syria, North Africa, and Persia never counted more than 20,000 men. The Christians of Tripoli and Tunis submitted gladly to the Arabs for the simple reason that the tribute they exacted was less than taxes levied by the emperor. Great estates were expropriated by the Arabs and divided among serfs and slaves who consequently worked the land with greater zeal and better results. The fact that the

¹¹ George Sarton, *Introduction To The History Of Science*, Washington, Carnegie Institute, 1927, vol. I, p. 524.

Qur'án permitted slaves to buy their freedom released new energy for the general good.¹²

Islam brought to the people it conquered a code based on equal rights and duties, limited taxation, and equality before the law. The established custom of absolute rule and merciless exploitation was mitigated by the executive authority of a state which was subordinated to the religious sanctions and moral obligations of the Qur'án.

"Verily," says the Qur'án, "those who believe, and the Jews, and the Sabeites, and the Christians — whoever of them believeth in God and the last day, and doth what is right, on them shall come no fear, neither shall they be put to grief."¹³

Islam was not the only religion which has used force for the propagation of its faith. It seized the sword in self-defense, and once the sword is drawn it is not easy to distinguish defensive from aggressive action. After three years of ministry, Christ's life was cruelly cut short. The world was apparently neither ready nor willing to hear more than a message for individual salvation. Not so with Muhammad. In the second half of his ministry of twenty-three years, when he reached the mature age of fifty-two and saw his community threatened with extinction, Muhammad declared: "And fight for the cause of God against those who fight against you: but commit not the injustice of attacking them first: God loveth not such injustice."¹⁴ Muhammad did not draw the sword for his own defense nor for the safety of his followers. He approved the use of force in defense of the

¹² See Mohammed Essad Bey, *Allah Est Grand, Decadence et resurrection du monde islamique*, Paris, Payot, 1937.

¹³ Qur'án, 5:73. Everyman's Library Edition, translation by Rodwell.

¹⁴ Qur'án, 2:186.

community, a law to which incidentally every Christian community has had to adhere or perish. To fight for the spread of the faith is not once mentioned in the Qur'án. "Let there be no compulsion in religion,"¹⁵ testifies to Muhammad's tolerance. And this at a time when Christianity was by no means averse to a forcible extension of its faith. The massacres of Justinian and the frightful wars of Christian Clovis were in consonance with the spirit of those days.

Islam, on the whole, was generous to the vanquished and unexpectedly tolerant in an intolerant world. Historians recognize that Muslim treatment of conquered Christians and Jews compares favorably with the general habit of the time. Emperor Heraclius massacred the Jews after capturing Jerusalem; while, when Omar took the city in 637, he rode into Jerusalem at the side of the Patriarch and prayed on the steps of the Church of Constantine. He left shrines and churches untouched and in possession of the Christians.

Later, when the Christian crusaders stormed Jerusalem, an eyewitness says that "in the temple and porch of Solomon the horses waded in blood up to their knees."¹⁶ Another historian reports: "the brains of young children were dashed out against the walls; Muslims were roasted at fires; the Jews were driven into their synagogue by the Christians, and there burnt; a massacre of nearly 70,000 persons took place; and the pope's legate was seen partaking in the triumph."¹⁷ But when Saladin took the city from the crusaders, he shamed the Western world by allowing the clergy to take away their sacred vessels and treasure, "rewarded with gifts

¹⁵ Qur'án, 2:257.

¹⁶ J. F. Michaud, *History Of The Crusades*, N. Y., Armstrong, 1881, Vol. I, p. 224.

¹⁷ Y. W. Draper, *History Of The Intellectual Development Of Europe*, N. Y., Harper, 1901, Vol. II, p. 22.

the virtue and piety of his enemies," and left the Holy Sepulchre to the Christians.¹⁸ The Muslims were, of course, also guilty of unnecessary bloodshed and fiendish cruelties but to condemn Muhammad for their misdeeds would be just as unfair as to accuse Christ of the atrocities committed by his followers.

The secret of the sudden spread and rise of Islamic civilization lies perhaps in the treatment of subject races, a lesson which the ruling powers of the twentieth century could, to their advantage, emulate. They accepted the vanquished, free or slave, as their equals. Muslims did not stand aloof as a superior race nor was their empire colonial in purpose or intent. They have assimilated their adopted comrades, black or white, Gentile or Jew.

"The millions of African and Asiatic converts, who swelled the native band of the faithful Arabs, must have been allured, rather than constrained, to declare their belief in one God and the apostle of God. By the repetition of a sentence the subject or the slave, the captive or the criminal, arose in a moment the free and equal companion of the victorious Moslems . . . Charity will hope that many of his proselytes entertained a serious conviction of the truth and sanctity of his revelation. More pure than the system of Zoroaster, more liberal than the law of Moses, the religion of Muhammad might seem less inconsistent with reason than the creed of mystery and superstition which, in the seventh century, disgraced the simplicity of the Gospel . . . but if they preferred the payment of a moderate tribute, they were entitled to freedom of conscience and religious worship."¹⁹

¹⁸ Michaud, *op.cit.*, p. 430.

¹⁹ Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. VI, London, 1872, pp. 366-7.

ISLAM LED THE WORLD IN SCIENCE AND ART

Six centuries before Columbus could prove the earth was round, Muslim mathematicians of Kufa calculated its circumference at twenty-four thousand miles. It can no longer be disputed that the Crusaders who went East to punish the "heathen" Muslims returned with a course of instruction in civilization.

The first university of Europe was established by the Muslims. Indeed, how often do we recall the origin of our university professors' black gowns in the Arabic Kaftan? From the eighth to the tenth century, Baghdad flourished as the world's most civilized city, with a university attended by six thousand students and having an endowment of over three million dollars. Baghdad possessed elaborate water-works. Its streets were paved and illuminated — while pigs were still roaming the dark and muddy streets of Paris.

For four centuries Arabic was the international language of knowledge. Many Christians studied this language between the eighth and eleventh centuries and attended Muslim universities during this golden age. Aristotle and Plato were re-discovered by Muslim scholars who translated many Greek manuscripts into Arabic. Algebra and astronomy were expanded by the Muslims. They are the originators of modern chemistry, meteorology and geography. One Muslim travelled for forty years collecting mineralogical specimens, while another scholar made botanical observations over the entire Muslim world. They had a passion for intellectual pursuits. The first known telescope was built for a Muslim caliph. Without the Arabic decimal system modern science and business would be impossible. Muslim surgeons were the first to dissect the human body, which was forbidden to Christians by the Church.

Many of our finest cotton fabrics like muslin, damask, and cambric were originated by the Muslims. Damascus swords and Toledo blades are still renowned. Sugar, coffee, rice, cherries, and other fruits reached the European table because of the Arabs. One of the greatest contributions of Islam to the western world is the art of papermaking which they transmitted from China, and without which printing and universal education would have been impossible.

"The ninth century was essentially a Muslim century. To be sure, intellectual work did not cease in other countries; far from it; but the activity of the Muslim scholars and men of science was overwhelmingly superior. They were the real standard bearers of civilization in those days . . . The overwhelming superiority of Muslim culture continued to be felt throughout the tenth century. Indeed, it was felt more strongly than ever, not only because the foremost men of science were Muslims, but also because cultural influences are essentially cumulative . . . To be sure, other languages, such as Latin, Greek, or Hebrew were also used by scholars, but the works written in those languages contained nothing new . . . All the new discoveries and the new thoughts were published in Arabic. Strangely enough, the language of the Qur'án had thus become the international vehicle of scientific progress."²⁰ Arabic, which before Muhammad had only a tribal significance, became a world language. The desire of every Muslim to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca brought together scholars from the most distant countries, and thus scientific knowledge rapidly spread and new discoveries were easily exchanged in all parts of Islam.

While Christian Europe was enveloped in darkness and

²⁰ George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, Baltimore, Williams and Wilkins, 1927, Vol. I, pp. 543 and 619.

gloom, overshadowed by ecclesiastical intolerance, Muhammad, the founder of an independent religion, established a civilization which our historians have as yet not satisfactorily explained. Sarton, referring to Islam, admits that "The creation of a new civilization of international and encyclopaedic magnitude within less than two centuries is something that we can describe, but not completely explain . . . It was the most creative movement of the Middle Ages down to the thirteenth century."²¹ While the Christian world was burning alive those who dared to question established dogmas, Islam encouraged free thought and developed the experimental method, which is the foundation of modern science. Before Muhammad, men dared not experiment, for fear of evil spirits. By destroying the idols, Muhammad dealt a mortal blow to many superstitions and elemental fears of his time and prepared the field for scientific inquiry. He said: "Science is the remedy for the infirmities of ignorance, a comforting beacon in the night of injustice."

Future historians might by implication recognize as an essential foundation stone of our modern world the famous statement of Muhammad: "The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr." Knowledge of reading and writing became a universal accomplishment. All Muhammadans read in the Qur'ân that ignorance is the greatest poverty, that a mind without education is like a brave man without arms, and that knowledge increases the honor of princes and brings men of low degree into the palaces of kings. "The day on which I have learned nothing is no part of my life" is an oft-quoted Arab saying.

²¹ George Sarton, *History of Science and the New Humanism*, N. Y., Henry Holt, 1931, p. 102.

The Muslims were kind and tolerant to their non-Muslim subjects. Under their patronage, many important works in Arabic were published by Christians, Jews, and Sabaeans. Down to the twelfth century Arabic was the philosophic and scientific language of the Jews. The greatest Jewish treatise of the Middle Ages was written by Maimonides in Arabic. "The Jewish philosophers, grammarians, scientists who lived under the protection of Islam were generally well treated, and some of them — like Hasdai ibn Shaprut in Cordova — attained positions of high authority and became the intellectual as well as the political leaders of their time."²² A Christian was at the head of the college in Damascus, evidencing a spirit of toleration to which the western world may still aspire.

Islam developed its own distinct architecture and design, fusing Hellenistic, Oriental, Aramaic, Coptic, Persian, and Arab influences into a completely individual style which reached its highest development between the tenth and sixteenth centuries. Its influence can be traced through India as far as Java, to China, to the Sudan, and to the whole of Russia. The Tartars transmitted Muslim culture and art to Russia, and the Turks naturalized it throughout the Balkans, Austria, Poland, and Southern Germany. Bavarian native costumes, Hungarian rugs, Prussian helmets still reveal Islamic origin in design.

Christianity was slow in recognizing Islam as the source of the Renaissance. Through the impact of Islamic scholarship, mainly in Sicily and Spain, Europe became civilized. "Let us compare the two civilizations," said Seignobos in his *Histoire de la Civilisation au Moyen Age*, "which in the eleventh century divided the Ancient World. In the West — miserable

²² Sarton, *Ibid*, p. 92.

little cities, peasant's huts and great fortresses — a country always troubled by war, where one could not travel ten leagues without running the risk of being robbed; and in the Orient — Constantinople, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad — all cities of the 'Arabian Nights,' with their marble palaces, their workshops, their schools, their bazaars, their villages and with the incessant movement of merchants who traveled in peace from Spain to Persia. There is no doubt that the Mussulman and Byzantine worlds were richer, better policed, better lighted than the Western world. In the eleventh century these two worlds began to become acquainted; the barbarous Christians came into contact with the civilized Mussulmans in two ways — by war and by commerce. And by contact with the Orientals the Occidentals became civilized."²³

THE QUR'AN AND ITS TEACHINGS

Just as the Old and New Testaments are the most important and most widely read books in the Christian World, the Qur'án represents the most important moral and literary standard to a world of two hundred and fifty million Muslims. It is doubtful if Muhammad could read or write since his sayings were recorded by his followers on palm-leaves, skins, and bones. "The Koran is written in the rhetorical style and, as Arabic literature, has never been equalled."²⁴ Its voice is pure, of a pristine beauty and an elevated character. "The genius of his language invested his message with poetic majesty. There is a necessary rhythm in the very structure of it which echoes alike from mosque and synagogue and

²³ Quoted by Stanwood Cobb, *Security For A Failing World*, Washington, Avalon Press, 1934, p. 47.

²⁴ E. H. Palmer, *Sacred Books Of The East*, New York, 1900, p. LV.

cathedral.”²⁶ The Qur’án was, until 1844, the last revealed book of a religion of faith. It taught certainty of God and His Will and obedience thereto under all conditions.

“There is no piety in turning your faces toward the east or the west, but he is pious who believeth in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the Scriptures, and the prophets; who for the love of God disburseth his wealth to his kindred, and to the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and those who ask, and for ransoming; who observeth prayer, and payeth the legal alms, and who is of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have engaged in them, and patient under ills and hardships, and in time of trouble; these are they who are just, and these are they who fear the Lord.”²⁸ The oneness of God and the art of self-forgetfulness is the message of the Qur’án. “No man is a true believer, unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself” is taken from the Qur’án though it would fit the Bible. Charity is not less known to Islam than to Christianity. “A man’s true wealth hereafter,” said Muhammad, “is the good he does in this world to his fellowmen.” Muhammad never questioned the authority of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures. “We believe in God,” says the second chapter of the Qur’án, “and that which had been sent down to us, and that which hath been sent down to Abraham and Ismael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes: and that which hath been given to Moses and to Jesus, and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. No difference do we make between any of them: and to God are we resigned.”²⁷

²⁶ G. G. Atkins and G. S. Braden, *Procession Of The Gods*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1936, p. 440.

²⁸ Qur’án II, 172.

²⁷ Qur’án II, 130.

The Bible and the Qur'án are more similar to than unlike each other. What Christian would hesitate to read this prayer from the Qur'án: "O Lord, grant to me the love of Thee; grant that I may love those that love Thee; grant that I may do the deed that may win Thy love; make Thy love to be dearer to me than self, family or wealth." Muslims pray five times a day, at regular intervals, which perhaps explains their peace of mind. During the month of Ramadan, men and women, rich or poor, refrain from food or drink from sunrise to sunset. Fasting must have accomplished some social leveling in a world where so many went hungry all through the year. The rich, fasting for one month out of love for their Creator, could not help but be charitable to the destitute during the remaining months of the year. Most Muslims annually pay the voluntary poor tax of two and a half per cent of the capital value of all their earthly possessions.

Muhammad laid down very strict laws for cleanliness. The description of an English writer's visit to a Muslim village is interesting: "He became tremendously impressed with the cleanliness of the Malays as compared with the filthiness of the pagans, and reflected that no other religion, with the exception of Judaism, had taught the poorer classes the law of cleanliness, so essential to dwellers in hot countries. . . . By the law of Islam they kept no pigs, which, as Chale knew from his travels among the up-country villages, were disgusting creatures in the East, eating any filth, human, animal or vegetable . . . He learned that Europeans disgusted the Malays by their goat-like smell, due to their eating quantities of meat and not shaving under the arms."²⁸

²⁸ Owen Rutter, *Triumphant Pilgrimage*, London, Geo. G. Harrak and Co., Ltd., 1937, p. 86.

The Qur'án is known for its exhortations on hospitality and good manners. The Prophet promised a place in paradise to him who stopped quarreling even though he were in the right. He emphasized that there is no distinction like good manners. The Qur'án gives many injunctions to make life easier and more pleasant; for instance, the rider is to greet first the one who is walking on foot, and the walker is to recognise first one who is seated.

Even today, when Islam is on the decline, travellers will notice with surprise that Friday noon, when every Muslim repairs to the mosque for prayer, all shops and stalls in the market remain open and unguarded. Honesty is a religious trait of the followers of the Qur'án. "It has been a common saying among missionaries in Asia Minor that if an object is lost while passing through a Christian village nine times out of ten it will never be returned; whereas on the contrary an article lost in a Turkish village will nine cases out of ten be honestly returned to the owner."²⁰ Muhammad had to be very strict with the fierce, undisciplined people he was trying to reform. In Arabia of today, under Ibn Saud, in conformity with the civil law of the Qur'án, murderers and adulterers are put to death, thieves have their hands cut off, and drunkards are punished with six months imprisonment and eighty stripes a month.

More than half a century ago a great historian recorded: "It is not the propagation, but the permanency of his religion, that deserves our wonder: the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolution of twelve centuries, by the Indian, the African, and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran. If the

²⁰ Stanwood Cobb, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

Christian apostles, St. Peter or St. Paul, could return to the Vatican, they might possibly inquire the name of the Deity who is worshipped with such mysterious rites in that magnificent temple . . . But the Turkish dome of St. Sophia, with an increase of splendour and size, represents the humble tabernacle erected at Medina by the hands of Muhammad."³⁰

WOMEN IN ISLAM

Polygamy was very common in primitive societies. Frequent wars, excess of women and their usefulness as laborers, established polygamy among pastoral and agricultural people. In the time of Muhammad polygamy or concubinage were universally practiced. Moses did not impose any limit on the number of wives for one man. Only later did the Talmud counsel that a man should have no more wives than he could properly maintain. Not until the eleventh century A. D. was polygamy prohibited among the Jews. An Athenian could have as many wives as he wanted, and a high-caste Brahmin, even today, is free to marry all the wives he chooses. The Roman State gave legal sanction to the institution of concubinage, and so did China until as recently as 1931.

Christ did not forbid the universal practice of polygamy. Concubinage was sanctioned by the Synod of Toledo in 400 A.D. and was not suppressed until the fifth Lateran Council in 1516.³¹ Early Christian emperors, nobles, and priests were known as polygamists. Charlemagne, among other Merovingian kings, had two wives and several concubines. Centuries later, Philip of Hesse and Frederick William II of Prussia entered bigamous marriages with the sanction of the

³⁰ Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1872. Vol. VI, p. 282.

³¹ W. F. Bade, *The Old Testament in the Light of Today*, pp. 52-53.

Lutheran Church. After the devastating Thirty Years' War the population was so greatly reduced that in 1650 the Kreistag at Nuerenberg passed a resolution allowing every man to marry two women.³² Even St. Augustine could not find a plurality of wives reprehensible for he declared that polygamy was not a crime where it was legally practiced. German reformers of the sixteenth century are known to have approved of a second or third wife simultaneously with the first, if the latter remained without issue.

Muhammad did not invent polygamy but actually restricted it by limiting a man's wives to four. In his time the position of women was very much inferior to what it is today. A Hebrew father could sell his daughter as a minor, and, in case of his death, his sons could dispose of her at their pleasure. Among pagan Arabs, women counted as an integral part of a man's estate and were treated and disposed of by father or husband as any other chattel.³³ The Arabs were known to have buried their infant daughters alive, a practice which Muhammad denounced under very severe penalties. To such people Muhammad taught respect for women by saying: "The best of you are those who are best to their wives. To acquire knowledge is an equal duty of man and woman . . . Woman is a queen in her own house." Under Muslim code a woman is not her husband's possession and enjoys rights as an independent human being. She has equal rights in court, can sell or dispose of her properties without the consent of her husband, can sue, and has a definite share in inheritance, privileges which western women have been enjoying only since the turn of this century.

³² *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1941, Vol. 18, p. 186.

³³ Francois Lenormant, *Ancient History of the East*, London, Asher & Co., 1870, Vol. II, p. 318.

Those who blame Muhammad for polygamy should remember that for twenty-five years he was married to his first wife, Khadijah, and only after her death, when he was over fifty, did he accept several wives, as was the local and almost universal custom at that time. Ameer Ali explains that he married the widow Sauda, for instance, because, according to custom, marriage was the only means by which he could protect and help her. On other occasions Muhammad concluded marriage to unite two warring tribes, and the human desire to have a son may also have been a factor. He could, however, never forget his faithful Khadijah of whom Ayesha, his youngest wife, once said "I was never jealous of any of his wives save that toothless old woman."

Islam proved a very powerful regulating agency in the sex life of its people. In the Qur'án we find: "Modesty and chastity are parts of the Faith . . . The most precious thing in the world is a virtuous woman . . . The rights of women are sacred." And these words were directed to a people of intense nature whom a fiery climate would ordinarily incite to sensual passions. And that his words were not ineffective is borne out by the fact that until recently prostitution and moral laxity were unknown in purely Muhammadan countries.

The conviction is gradually forcing itself on many Muslims and students of the Qur'án that Muhammad actually advocated monogamy, for he said: "You may marry two, three, or four wives, but not more, but if you cannot deal equitably and justly with all, you shall marry only one." As it is not likely that a man can be equally just to several wives, Muhammad's hope for the eventual establishment of monogamy seems certain. The subsequent evolution of the status of Islamic women bears this out. Contrary to popular belief, Muslims usually have only one wife and seldom more than

two. A Muslim may take a second wife at the older wife's suggestion, who has given birth to several children and needing help, chooses for her husband another wife rather than see him having promiscuous affairs with other women. The young wife is subservient to the first one who directs the household. This system protected Muslim spinsters from frustration and poverty which is one of the causes of prostitution in the western world.

In India, where the largest Muslim community counts about eighty million followers of the Qur'án, ninety-five per cent are by necessity or conviction monogamous. In the Middle East the tribesmen and the poor can seldom afford more than one wife. In Turkey polygamy is prohibited by law. The general tendency is definitely in favor of monogamy.

While mediaeval Christianity questioned whether women were human beings at all, Muhammad, the great champion of women, described them as "the twin-halves of man" and summed up Islam's attitude towards women in the thirty-third chapter of the Qur'án: "Verily the Moslems of either sex . . . and the devout men, and the devout women, . . . and the chaste men, and the chaste women, and those of either sex who remember God frequently; for these hath God prepared forgiveness and a great reward."

CONCLUSION

That Islam, like Christianity, was one of the most powerful influences for good in the history of civilization can no longer be denied. Regardless of color, race, or wealth, it enrolled into a dynamic brotherhood those who believed: "There is no God but God and Muhammad is His Prophet." It abolished idolatry and infanticide, taught good manners to barbarians, protected the orphans, treated slaves with consideration, pro-

hibited intoxicating drinks, and released one of the greatest forces in history. That it drew its line of toleration otherwise than the Europeans did not make it less tolerant. The British were not more tolerant of widow-burning in India than the Muslims of the worship of idols. It is true that Islam drew the sword, but so did the Christians who participated in the massacre of the Huguenots, the slaughter of the Irish Catholics, the Inquisition, and the annihilation of the Incas and Aztecs.

Islam was bound to weaken and decline as did all the other religions that preceded it. The life-cycle of every great religion passes through the inevitable stages of birth, adolescence, maturity, and old age. Islam was no exception. Bitter controversies over succession divided it into the Shi'ih and the Sunni sects. Too much luxury in a hot climate, combined with an increasing laxity towards a religion that was not easy to follow, eventually undermined the moral fibre of these Semitic races. Since Islam never recovered from the Crusades and the Mongol invasion, decadence was inevitable.

Before its fall, however, Islam made three major contributions to civilization. First, it created a nation-state, guaranteeing freedom of worship and equal rights for all before the law. Second, it developed the experimental method in science, which was unknown to the Greeks. And its third contribution is the history of Islam itself, perhaps the most remarkable example of the influence of religion on civilization.

The similarity of Protestant ideals and those prevailing in the Muslim state are perhaps not due to historic coincidence. Both fought against image-worship and miracle-mongering; both objected to confession of sins. The Protestants, as the Muslims before them, drew the sword in defence of political and religious freedom; both condemned celibacy in favor of

the institution of marriage; both preferred simplicity to pomp, science and poetry to sculpture and painting. This parallel might suggest that the impact of Muhammadan thought on Europe had a positive influence upon the Protestant revolt. The Roman Catholics are known to have attacked the Reformation by comparing its doctrines with that of Muhammad.

Islam reminded a world, otherwise apt to forget, that God is real, that He manifests His Powers in different times and in different degrees according to the capacity of the people to whom He speaks. No man, without divine assistance, could have accomplished in a hostile world the mission which was Muhammad's. Though the man of Mecca did not say the last word on the question of prophetic religion, his record bears witness to the creative spirit latent in more than one religion.

The greatest contribution of Moses consists in the conception of law and order, without which western civilization could never have had its beginning. The Gospel of Jesus Christ will remain immortal for having given the refining influences of love and compassion to an unintegrated society, and thus making life more bearable. Muhammad went a step farther by uniting into a harmonious community tribes of various ethnical origin, and with the experimental method in science, Islam supplied the means for our modern nation-states and empires.

After all, our civilization is based not only on the ten commandments of Moses. Were it so, we would have to call it Jewish. To call our civilization Christian is also historically inaccurate. It is up to future historians to prove to a generation less biased than our own, that the formative influences of our western civilization are not only Hebrew and Christian but also Muhammadan.

We may well conclude, therefore, that religion can have a very powerful effect upon the nature and institutions of society. While we cannot turn to Islam for an answer to the pressing problems of our time, we could logically expect assistance from a new statement of religion. We need, then, to consider our second question: how do the social institutions and principles of the Bahá'í faith meet modern needs? Bahá'u'lláh, we will find, is taking humanity a step farther and is contributing a new pattern-value to the civilization to come.

CHAPTER V

The Supranational Community

THE people who were born in the first century of the Christian era, except a few hundred, died without ever knowing that the man who was crucified between two thieves on the mount of Calvary was the greatest figure of their time. Few realized that the life and teachings of this illiterate carpenter were to influence hundreds of millions of people for twenty centuries, and that costly buildings of learning and of worship would be maintained in his name in lands far beyond the confines of the then known world. If a book had been written in that first historic century suggesting the possibilities latent in Christ's teachings, it would have remained unnoticed. The story presented in the next three chapters of this book makes claims that are no less pretentious.

The history of Bahá'u'lláh can be told now, at the end of its first century, with less hesitation and to a larger audience than it would have been possible to tell the story of Christ in the year 100 A.D. Bahá'u'lláh's message, though more complex, as is the age to which it is directed, can be understood and accepted by the modern mind. In fact, this faith already has reached five continents, and its followers can be found in more than eight hundred communities spread over sixty countries. "The world is but one country and mankind its citizens" epitomizes the spirit which sustains this world-wide community founded upon the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh who,

after forty years of exile and imprisonment, died near 'Akka, Palestine, in 1892.

The Bahá'í Faith is not another creed to compete with the older faiths. It does not offer a new path to immortality, nor does it attempt to abrogate the religions that have preceded it. It upholds the principle that "religious truth is not absolute but relative and that divine revelation is progressive, not final."

The greatest Bahá'í message is the consciousness of the oneness of mankind. "The Tabernacle of Unity has been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers . . . Bahá'u'lláh proclaims, 'Of one tree are all ye the fruit and of one bough the leaves . . . It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country but rather for him who loveth the whole world.' "

Bahá'u'lláh offers world justice as the highest moral principle for our present stage of evolution: "The best beloved of all things in my sight is Justice." Justice, as Bahá'ís conceive it, is the collective moral expression of the community. The range of moral awareness of the individuals that compose a community determines the area in which justice can function. If the range of individual conscience does not project across national frontiers, world justice is impossible.

Divine Love is the highest ideal for the individual. Divine Justice represents the highest attainment for the community. The world, as we have seen, has shrunk into one interdependent community. Any decision in such a community cannot be considered just unless it is partial to none. How many can truthfully say that they are not partial to one particular race, or class, or creed, or color? As long as a world conscience is not produced, world justice is impossible, and without world justice, world peace is unobtainable. Bahá'-

u'lláh's world community is imbued with a world conscience and is creating an instrument for the administration of world justice. In this lies its great significance for the modern world.

ITS PEOPLE AND THEIR AIM

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son and successor of Bahá'u'lláh, was once asked, "What is a Bahá'í?" he replied: "To be a Bahá'í simply means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood." On another occasion 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "The man who lives the life according to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is already a Bahá'í. On the other hand, a man may call himself a Bahá'í for fifty years, and if he does not live the life he is not a Bahá'í."¹ A woman might dress and behave like a man, yet she deceives no one, not even herself.

Bahá'ís are usually recognized as good people. More intimate association with them will reveal that there is something about them not easily found elsewhere. Some might call it love, but if so, it has a new expression. For these Bahá'ís possess a kind of love which they display indiscriminately toward every Jew or Gentile, Capitalist or Communist, be he German, English, or Japanese, red or black, a university professor or a boot-black. But this is not all. They have taken hold of this love and transmuted it to the social plane.

We know that Christian nations are not united primarily out of love for Christ or in obedience to a divine commandment. We also know that nations today are held together because of common interests rather than because of a common ideal, and that unity within a nation increases in relation to pressure from outside. The United States was perhaps

¹ *'Abdu'l-Bahá in London*, Surrey, The Unity Press, 1912, p. 109.

never in her history as united as after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Vested interests or a common grievance will hold together a political organization, rather than love for the underdog. These forces do strive for unity, but they are inherently exclusive. They will fight their opponents because of fear.

Unity within the Bahá'í world community is not conditioned by fear of aggression. It does not fight its opponents; it assimilates them. In fact, there is no room in the Bahá'í conscience for a stranger, much less for an enemy, be he an individual or a nation. Through Bahá'u'lláh, he is united with all men, believers and non-believers alike. In a conflict, for instance, between the British and the Germans, victory, from the Bahá'í point of view, will only be achieved when both nations realize they belong to the same community in which both have equal political and economic privileges and responsibilities.

If this suggestion appears utopian, we should remember that Bahá'u'lláh belongs to a long chain of independent prophets and he did not come to convert animists. For the first time in history, a Great Educator has appeared among people who have lived for more than a thousand years in an environment permeated with the teachings of a Krishna, a Buddha, a Zoroaster, a Moses, a Christ, or a Muhammad. Bahá'u'lláh is speaking to a world of which only about ten per cent are animists. Christian missionary effort has been directed primarily towards the pagan, with little to offer the Jew or Muhammadan. The Crusaders were, in fact, surprised to find the Muslims at least as moral and religious as themselves. Nor has a Buddhist much more to offer a Hindu than a Greek Orthodox can offer a Roman Catholic. Not so with Bahá'u'lláh. Acceptance of his message presupposes belief in

all the previous prophets. It is directed to people who have knowledge of one or more of the established religions and who are civilized, at least in a way.

Bahá'í confidence in the future rests on conviction rather than hope. For Bahá'ís, the brotherhood of man is not something to be hoped for, but, rather, something that exists. They belong neither to a segregated community nor to a community maintained by utilitarian motive. They are conscious of world citizenship not out of fear of aggression, but because of an all-inclusive faith in the common heritage and origin of mankind.

Bahá'ís are known to have no racial or color prejudice, the origin of which is fear, suspicion, and the desire for power. Anthropologists believe that prehistoric man was probably black or of an olive-brown color and, as men moved about, their color changed with the environment. The white man's dominance over other races dates back only four hundred years, and there is every indication that it is temporary. To a Bahá'í, any race discrimination is immoral. "Concerning the prejudice of race," writes 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "it is an illusion, a superstition pure and simple, for God created us all of one race . . . In the beginning also there were no limits and boundaries between the different lands; no part of the earth belonged more to one people than to another. In the sight of God there is no difference between the various races. Why should man invent such a prejudice? How can we uphold war caused by such an illusion? God has not created man that they should destroy one another. All races, tribes, sects and classes share equally in the bounty of their Heavenly Father. The only real difference lies in the degree of faithfulness, of obedience to the laws of God. There are some who are as lighted torches; others who shine as stars in the sky of human-

ity. The lovers of mankind, these are the superior men, of whatever nation, creed or color they may be."²

Bahá'í writings broaden the mind by encouraging and challenging the individual to think in world terms. "Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self . . . All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization . . . Bend your energies to whatever may foster the education of men . . . That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race . . ."³ Such inspiring themes as these have a powerful effect upon a community which includes people not only of every race but also of every religion.

Bahá'u'lláh recognizes the divine origin of all established religions and admits the identity and continuity of their purpose. "All the Prophets of God," writes Bahá'u'lláh in the *Kitab-i-Iqan*, "utter the same speech, and proclaim the same Faith . . . They differ only in the intensity of their revelation and the comparative potency of their light." He further explains that the difference in degree is not due to the limitations of the Prophet but, rather, to the receptive capacity of the people to whom he speaks. Bahá'ís regard all religions as different stages in the constant evolution of one religion. They try to widen the basis of all religions, reconcile their aims, and demonstrate their oneness. The Bahá'í Faith does not aim to undermine the spiritual foundation of any of the world's recognized religious systems. On the contrary, it tries to restate their original purpose, reinvigorate their life, and co-ordinate their highest aspirations with the needs of the twentieth

² *The Wisdom of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, New York, Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1924, p. 137.

³ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, N. Y., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1935, pp. 9, 94, 215, 250.

century. "The Bahá'í religion," writes Rev. J. Tyssul Davis in his book, *A League of Religions*, "has made its way . . . because it meets the needs of its day. It fits the larger outlook of our time better than the rigid exclusive older faiths. A characteristic is its unexpected liberality and toleration. It accepts all the great religions as true, and their scriptures as inspired."

Since there is only one God, there can be only one truth and, therefore, only one religion, which means that all religions are one. The Latin root of the word religion, *religio*, means to bind together, to unite. When religion ceases to unite people, it ceases to be useful. "Doctors of religion were instituted to bring spiritual healing to the people and to be the cause of unity among the nations. If they become the cause of division, they had better not exist. A remedy is given to cure a disease, but if it only succeeds in aggravating the complaint, it is better to leave it alone. If religion is only to be a cause of dissension, it had better not exist."⁴

The Bahá'í community has no clergy. Priesthood was necessary in the past when the great majority of the people could not read or write or think independently. In the Bahá'í world everyone is encouraged to learn for himself, and the Bahá'í writings are available to everyone since Bahá'u'lláh was the first founder of a world religion who recorded his teachings in books and letters. No special group of people is trained or given authority to interpret the teachings. Nor do Bahá'ís have religious rites or ceremonies to be administered by a professional clergy.

"The central fact to be noted concerning the nature of the Bahá'í Faith is that it contains a power, fulfilled in the realm of conscience, which can reverse the principal momentum of

⁴ *Wisdom of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 111.

modern civilization — the drive toward division and strife — and initiate its own momentum moving steadily in the direction of unity and accord.”⁵

Christianity, as previously shown, could unite neighbors as individuals, but, when it tried to project love into communal affairs, it was compelled to revert to the Law of Moses. “What Christ meant by forgiveness and pardon is not that, when nations attack you, burn your homes, plunder your goods, assault your wives, children, and relatives, and violate your honour, you should be submissive in the presence of these tyrannical foes, and allow them to perform all their cruelties and oppressions. No, the words of Christ refer to the conduct of two individuals towards each other: if one person assaults another, the injured one should forgive him. But the communities must protect the rights of man . . . The continuance of mankind depends upon justice and not upon forgiveness.”⁶ One of the distinctions of the Bahá’í Faith is that it can, unlike Christianity, project its faith into the realm of social action. In Bahá’í experience, divine love of the individual is transformed to divine justice in the community. Bahá’í religious practice does not consist of formal worship and adherence to certain rituals, but rather of membership in an organically united community which satisfies the individual and collective needs of men.

The cause of war and the forces that divide the world are, to all intents and purposes, economic and political. Our leaders and statesmen have been incapable of drawing a world charter

⁵ Horace Holley in *Bahá’í World*, Vol. VIII, Wilmette, Ill., Bahá’í Publishing Committee, 1942, p. 1.

⁶ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in *Bahá’í Procedure*, Wilmette, Ill., Bahá’í Publishing Committee, 1942, p. 29.

which is just and satisfactory to all peoples. Bahá'u'lláh is the first Messenger of God to promise the "Most Great Peace" and to formulate the means to attain it. The key he uses is justice. That is why he has established the institution of Local, National, and Universal Houses of Justice. These Houses of Justice, which are temporarily called Spiritual Assemblies, represent a new departure in social experience, for they give moral expression to the collective conscience of the group. Only an authority which can pronounce the collective conscience of all the people of the world, regardless of religious, racial or social background, can establish a world government and world justice without which world peace is impossible.

Bahá'ís are building just such an organism and their method of development is worth investigating. The material is ordinary human beings, often below the average, as if so directed by providence to demonstrate its working to an unbelieving world. This organism which Bahá'ís are determined to establish all over the world, cannot be demonstrated by one or two individuals. It requires in each community at least nine people who have reached the age of twenty-one. That is why the American and Canadian Bahá'ís have been engaged during the last seven years of the first century of the Bahá'í era (1844-1944) in establishing an administrative unit of at least nine people in every state and province of North America. The next decades are to witness the founding of similar units in every country of the world.

The following is perhaps one of the best summaries of the principles of this world community: "The Bahá'í Faith recognizes the unity of God and His Prophets, upholds the principle of an unfettered search after truth, condemns all forms of superstition and prejudice, teaches that the fundamental purpose of religion is to promote concord and harmony, that it

must go hand-in-hand with science, and that it constitutes the sole and ultimate basis of a peaceful, an ordered and progressive society. It inculcates the principle of equal opportunity, rights and privileges for both sexes, advocates compulsory education, abolishes extremes of poverty and wealth, recommends the adoption of an auxiliary international language, and provides the necessary agencies for the establishment and safeguarding of permanent and universal peace.”⁷

A DEMOCRACY WITHOUT PARTY POLITICS

The history of governments is the history of the long struggle between freedom and authority. The various forms of government which have been created to organize people fall into the following four categories, which sometimes overlap:

- (1) autocratic, that is, one-man-rule; (2) aristocratic, rule by a minority; (3) theocratic, rule by an organized church; and (4) democratic, rule by a majority.

The autocratic form of government, one of the most ancient, still persists in modern times. It proved efficient and could furnish a stable rule for several decades. Its dictator, however, could not be held responsible, the system did not provide for peaceful change, nor could it guarantee justice within its territory.

The aristocratic form of government could often carry out policies with a long range view, requiring the support of several generations, as did the Roman Senate or the Victorian Parliament, and could boast of statesmen of character and blood who had been specifically trained from early childhood to govern. Rule by a minority class, however, was bound to degenerate, as it was not responsible to the people, resisted

⁷ Shoghi Effendi in *Bahá’i World*, Vol. VIII, p. 12.

change, and fell short of any approximation of social justice.

Even the theocratic commonwealth, like that of the ancient Hebrews or the Caliphate in Islam, could not reconcile freedom with authority, although it drew its inspiration from the Book of God whose moral sanctions must have exercised a powerful influence on the rulers and the people. Its greatest weakness, allowing no satisfactory provision for change, brought about its downfall. A religious system which draws its authority from a Book without provision for succession and an instrument to bring about change when required, is bound to become bigoted, intolerant, divided, and corrupt.

The democratic system is the best form of government so far developed. It boasts of being the government of the people, deriving its authority from the majority of the electors by consent. It guarantees freedom of speech, worship, equality before the law, and is the only known form of government which provides for change without revolution through periodic elections. Herein lies its greatest strength, but also its greatest weakness. To bring about change by means of the popular vote, democracy introduced the party system, which divides the nation into political parties. This division inherent in the system reveals the characteristics of a house divided against itself.

The justification of the party system is vigilance. One part of the population mistrusts the other part which is in power. The opposition checks and criticizes the party holding power for fear that it might usurp it. This attitude, therefore, is uncooperative. It watches jealously and critically the actions of its avowed political enemies. This disunity, inherent in democracies, is not conducive to respect for the law, nor propitious in introducing effective measures for social justice.

So far, only the danger of war or a great crisis has been able to unite our democracies for anything resembling a concerted national effort.

In contrast, the Bahá'í system of government that now operates in more than sixty countries, cannot be identified with any of these four systems. It embodies new principles and establishes a standard unknown in the history of political or ecclesiastical institutions. The world plan of Bahá'u'lláh calls for democratic elections at regular intervals without political parties, without any campaign promises or party platform, without candidates or nominations, and, perhaps most important of all, without party funds. The people chosen are not politicians, for they do not represent any party or group interest. They are chosen for their ability, character, and past service to the community rather than for their political views or personal interests. Great moral emphasis is laid upon the election of the right individuals, since they are called upon to function as "the trustees of the Merciful among men."

The local, national, and universal Houses of Justice elected by the Bahá'ís are, contrary to present democratic practice, not responsible to the people who elect them, nor are they allowed to be swayed by public opinion, mass emotion, or the convictions of the electorate. They are bound only by the promptings of their own conscience, a conscience which in the process of Bahá'í education and consultation is transmuted into the collective consciousness of the community.

Under our present system the party in power tends to extend its favor to those who contribute to the party fund and to those who might vote for it at the next election. Such favoritism, inherent in the system, is made at the expense of the rest of the community. Social justice under such patronage is unobtainable. The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh rests on the

collective conscience of the whole community without which social justice, whether local, national, or international, is impossible.

No Bahá'í will, therefore, join a political party which divides a community into parts. It is inconsistent with the Bahá'í attitude of life to sacrifice the whole for a part. No Bahá'í can conscientiously subscribe to a political program which discriminates against a class, a race, or a nation. Nor can a Bahá'í take sides in any economic, political, or military conflict between nations. He is first of all a citizen of the world, and in any dispute between nations he sees the virtues and shortcomings of both. Is it not true that any political party or nation which claims to be the sole judge of what is just is inevitably doing an injustice to others? The Universal House of Justice, now being reared by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, is not to be supported by any vested interests, or sustained by a political party, but rather it is to be the synthesis of all interests born out of and upheld by the collective conscience of mankind.

Nor can the Bahá'í Administrative Order be confused with any ecclesiastical or political autocracies. The elected Universal House of Justice has the exclusive right to legislate on all matters not contained in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Furthermore, any of their laws can be abrogated by succeeding Houses of Justice. The need for progressive change in all institutions is a basic Bahá'í view. For Bahá'í legislators recognize that religious truth is relative and not absolute, that divine revelations are progressive and not final. "Know thou," said Bahá'u'lláh, "that in every age and dispensation all divine ordinances are changed and transformed according to the requirements of the time except the

law of love, which, like unto a fountain, flows always and is never overtaken by change.”⁸

THE MINORITY PROBLEM

Will the Bahá'ís be more tolerant to minorities than were, for instance, the Christians to the Jews? If humanity has progressed during the last two thousand years, that advancement must show the difference between adolescence and the maturity of a race. Bahá'ís will inadvertently, as they do already, discriminate amongst minorities; but they will discriminate not against but in favor of the minorities, whether racial, social, or religious: an attitude which, as Bahá'ís have already discovered, not only works but solves the minority problem.

A Bahá'í majority will never place obstacles in the way of assimilation, should the minority desire it. On the contrary, it will welcome and facilitate it. With Bahá'ís it is a religious and social conviction that all people are of the same origin, regardless of color or place of birth. (Christian prejudice, as history bears out, has been a stronger factor for the survival of Jewish minorities than their religious or racial pride.) The Bahá'í way of life has again and again demonstrated that social intercourse and genuine companionship is attainable between people hitherto considered irreconcilable.

With the shrinking of the world into a neighborhood the minority problem can no longer be shelved. Migration of large groups of people has not been stopped. If the pressure of future conflicts is to be relieved, the movement of populations will continue. The tendency in favor of larger and larger political administrative units will increase rather than lessen

⁸ *Bahá'í Magazine*, May, 1933, p. 38.

the minority problem. And when this tendency culminates in the political federation of all the peoples of the world, every majority group of today will find itself a minority in such a world federation.

Bahá'í conscience can neither segregate nor divide humanity. Its very essence is all-embracing, all-inclusive. Since its substance is faith in God, and its motive voluntary, coercion loses significance. Bahá'ís do not condemn nor stand aloof from other groups. Their genuine interest includes them all. The consciousness of a Bahá'í has simply grown big enough to include all mankind.

CONSULTATION, A NEW TECHNIQUE

Men have always lived in small or large groups, and have submitted to authority voluntarily or by necessity. Under an autocracy, authority is vested in one man; under plutocracy or aristocracy, it rests with a minority; and under democracy, with the majority. In the popular conception, authority, in a democracy, rests with the people. In actual practice authority is held at best by a majority to which the minority must submit. These minorities, even in a democracy, are often treated with unfairness.

The minority problem has not been solved by our democracies. This problem is not only racial and religious but also political. It is known, for instance, that almost all progressive ideas are first presented by a minority which is seldom given a hearing. That is one explanation why in the interwar period a problem like unemployment has remained unsolved.

The Bahá'í system of government has a solution for the problem of minorities. To understand it, however, a working knowledge of the Bahá'í principle of consultation is necessary,

a principle which reconciles freedom with authority, minorities with majorities, and mercy with justice.

Bahá'í communities, wherever they function, elect once a year their Local and National Houses of Justice by secret ballot and plurality vote. In the local election each Bahá'í man or woman over twenty-one years of age votes for nine individuals who, in his or her considered judgment, have the qualifications of character and ability to represent — not a section or party — but the interests of the whole community.

In selecting the National House of Justice, the Bahá'ís of each state elect delegates to an annual national convention. One of the functions of the delegates is the election of the National House of Justice. These delegates are selected as the most active and capable members of the state community; they are not committed beforehand to the election of any particular individual to office but are under obligation to vote for nine individuals most capable of functioning in national office. Although the local election is direct and the national election indirect, the basic criterion is the same — election of the nine people who seem best qualified to function as trustees for the community.

These nine people when elected, are, as a body, entrusted with legislative, executive, and judiciary powers. They choose from their midst a chairman who, however, is not the leader in the sense of a Prime Minister in a cabinet meeting. Alone, no one can make any decisions affecting the community. Together, they hold almost absolute power. They have not been elected by a majority, nor were they opposed by a minority. No one in a Bahá'í community can celebrate a partisan victory, and no one can feel defeated. The Bahá'í House of Justice is chosen by a united community, by all the people, and no

one has reason to feel disaffected. Those elected are not committed to any party platform, nor can the voters be disappointed by broken promises. The only bond, the only promise is that of conscience, and on that plane there is no disagreement.

When these nine people meet, they may represent different temperaments, varied economic and cultural backgrounds, and more often than not, different points of view. In these meetings Bahá'ís are encouraged to have differing opinions; in fact, they are anxious that every side should have a hearing. "The shining spark of truth cometh forth," admonishes 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "only after the clash of differing opinions."⁹ When each view has been presented as clearly as possible, individual opinion becomes unimportant, for the decision reached is not the idea of one member or another, or of a clique, but the decision of the whole body of nine. While nominally a decision is carried by majority vote, in actual practice the support is unanimous, for once a vote is taken, all opposition ceases. Then everyone helps to put the decision into operation. No individual is praised or blamed for the original idea which in the course of consultation usually is modified. All responsibility is assumed by the assembly. For in the process of Bahá'í consultation individual will and conscience are transmuted into the collective conscience of the assembly.

It is the function of the chairman to see that no dominant personality gains prevalence over the others. Group thinking can easily be disturbed by sheer force of individual will. Unless the necessary preparatory training is received, which no Bahá'í can escape, the results are not satisfactory. "They

⁹ *Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 286.

must," 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns, "in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden."¹⁰ That is why it is not likely that two Bahá'ís will argue with each other. They will, after presenting their case as well as they can, try to understand the other point of view rather than defend their own. The religious mind is considered usually a closed mind. Bahá'í training, however, does exactly the opposite, for Bahá'í religious practice consists chiefly of communal experience. One's ego is constantly tested and purified, as the individual will has, on matters of group action, to submit unreservedly to the will of the group. As this discipline is voluntary and self-imposed, it is the more effective.

In Bahá'í consultation each mind gives as well as takes, is constantly trained to remain open, and to understand and appreciate other points of view than its own. The ideas born in such a meeting are the result of creative interaction with other minds, inspired by a common faith and a common aim: the welfare of the whole community. The union of these unselfish minds produces a breadth of vision and a power of insight which is incomprehensible to the uninitiated.

As social responsibility is shifted from the individual to the assembly, individual opinion tends to become more and more impersonal. A mind freed from personal ambition and detached from the ego can see more clearly. It is the detached attitude of a scientist absorbed in an objective search, and yet with a passion for truth. It is a new process of inter-creative thinking. It cures the opinionated person whose mind is all made up.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 294.

While unanimity of decision in Bahá'í consultation is desirable, it is not essential. In fact, insistence on a unanimous vote would be harmful for it would compel the majority to compromise with the minority, even if that minority consisted of one person. The requirement of unanimity would undermine the whole structure, as was the case with the League of Nations. Yet, without compromise, Bahá'í group decision is often carried by unanimous vote as a result of creative discussion.

In the "Tablet of the World" Bahá'u'lláh wrote, "... hold fast to the rope of consultation, and decide upon and execute that which is conducive to the people's security, affluence, welfare and tranquility. For if matters be arranged otherwise, it will lead to discord and tumult."¹¹ At a time when representative government was still very new and unheard of in most parts of the world, Bahá'u'lláh wrote to his native city of Tíhrán: "Ere long will the state of affairs within thee be changed, and the reins of power fall into the hands of the people."¹² And at another time he wrote, "Soon will the present day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead."¹³

THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Many a Christian who, out of tact and good breeding, would not say directly to a Negro or a Jew: "Stay out of this country" or "I do not wish to associate with you," would unhesitatingly support legislation or a social code enforcing such

¹¹ *Bahá'í World Faith*, Wilmette, Ill., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1943, p. 178.

¹² Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Wilmette, Ill., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1941, p. 149.

¹³ *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 57.

a measure. This shows again that Christian influence on individual action is lost as soon as it passes from the realm of individual conscience into the field of social action. Individuals with such a limited moral background cannot very well qualify to administer social justice.

Christ, as we have seen, addressed his message primarily to individuals, while the message of Bahá'u'lláh is directed primarily to society. "What other interpretation can be given to these words, addressed specifically by Bahá'u'lláh to the followers of the Gospel, in which the fundamental distinction between the Mission of Jesus Christ, concerning primarily the individual, and his own Message, directed more particularly to mankind as a whole, has been definitely established: *Verily, he (Jesus) said: 'Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men!'* In this day, however, we say: *'Come ye after me, that we may make you to become the quickeners of mankind.'*"¹⁴

Bahá'u'lláh speaks to kings and rulers as the trustees of mankind. He admonishes them to dispense "justice," not "love." He refers to just governments and Houses of Justice as "one soul and one body," with a collective conscience, collectively responsible to God. In the following words Bahá'u'lláh calls for collective action: "O ye the elected representatives of the people in every land! Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind . . . 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

¹⁴ Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, p. 124.

rein to their personal desires, and have erred grievously. And if, at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before . . .

"We behold it, in this day, at the mercy of rulers so drunk with pride that they cannot discern clearly their own best advantage, much less recognize a Revelation so bewildering and challenging as this. And whenever any one of them hath striven to improve its condition, his motive hath been his own gain, whether confessedly so or not; and the unworthiness of this motive hath limited this power to heal or cure. 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 people 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."¹⁵

Bahá'u'lláh imbues mankind not only with an individual but also with a collective conscience. Perhaps that is why he said: "He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body."¹⁶ Bahá'í communities find the expression of their collective conscience in their Local, National, and Universal Houses of Justice.

How can a government be just without a conscience? A government that has no conscience cannot distinguish right from wrong in a moral sense. It presumes that it is always right as an absolute sovereign power, responsible to no one, not even to God. That is why the paradox of Christian individuals supporting a heathen state is so prevalent. And that

¹⁵ *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 57.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

is why modern man follows a dual standard of morals. On the one hand, out of Christian chivalry he would risk his life to rescue a drowning German woman, and on the other, he would support measures for the total annihilation of her race. In the former instance he would follow his individual conscience awakened by Christ, and in the latter case, the baser instinct for the survival of the fittest. Such a person is disjointed, unbalanced, and presents poor material for any House of Justice.

Bahá'u'lláh's greatest contribution lies perhaps in the projection of individual conscience into collective action. For Bahá'u'lláh regenerates not only the individual as an entity, but also society as a unit. The Bahá'í House of Justice represents the collective conscience of the community. Bahá'í community action is, therefore, as responsive to Divine Revelation as was formerly the Christian individual. Responsible, God-fearing individuals no longer shrug their shoulders at governmental irresponsibility. The challenge to be good cannot be separated by the individual from collective action. For in a Bahá'í community responsibility to God is coexistent in the individual and society.

One who obeys his conscience has overcome his baser instincts. A community with a collective conscience overcomes the desire for naval supremacy, for monopolistic privileges or for racial priority. The Bahá'í Administrative System not only incorporates individual goodwill into a social mechanism, but produces a quality of the soul which can be born only out of collective experience. It rests on the principle that nine people organically united can not only produce more work in a given time than if they worked separately, but also that the quality of their work could never be equalled by the same individuals acting alone.

"Equity," writes Bahá'u'lláh, "is the most fundamental among human virtues . . . The essence of all we have revealed for thee is justice, is for man to free himself from idle fancies and imitations, discern with the eye of oneness His glorious handiwork, and look into all things with a searching eye."¹⁷

Justice as an abstract idea is relative. It is often mistaken for legalized revenge. Justice is the balance between reward and retribution. This balance is impossible between individuals without love. Between nations the same love is necessary to obtain that balance, but then love expresses itself through justice. Though love and justice spring from the same divine source, their expression is different. Nine true Christians will, as individuals, show the same qualities of love and goodwill as nine true Bahá'ís, but with this difference — the nine Bahá'ís will form a House of Justice and will express their attitude towards others as one organic unit, with a collective conscience, trained for collective social action, collectively responsible to God. The nine Christians, on the other hand, remaining true to their faith, will disclose love and goodwill as nine independent individuals, each independently responsible to God. This does not mean that Bahá'ís are not responsible for individual action. On the contrary, their responsibility is greater, for they have to account not only as individuals but also as conscious and integral parts of a World Order of God.

"The affairs of the people," Bahá'u'lláh commands, "are placed in charge of the men of the House of Justice of God. They are the trustees of God among His servants and the day-springs of command in His countries.

"O people of God! The trainer of the world is justice, for

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 142.

it consists of two pillars: reward and retribution. These two pillars are two fountains for the life of the people of the world. Inasmuch as for each place and day a particular decree and order is expedient, affairs are therefore entrusted to the ministers of the House of Justice, so that they may execute that which they deem advisable at the time . . . Administrative affairs are all in charge of the House of Justice; but acts of worship must be observed according as they are revealed in the Book."¹⁸

Justice cannot be enshrined in any constitution. No book can contain it. Justice like love cannot be preserved in a legal document or established by precedent. Bahá'í justice, like Christian love, cannot be separated from conscience. When conscience goes, justice goes with it. Social justice is impossible without a collective conscience. And that is exactly what Bahá'u'lláh has given to the House of Justice.

Bahá'u'lláh has also revealed laws for the individual. He asks the individual to pray at least once a day, to live a clean life, to fast for a certain period each year, and to obey all the commandments of God for this age. These rules are self-imposed by the individual, according to his insight, and cannot be enforced by the House of Justice. Nor can the latter impose any form of worship or assume the function of an authoritative interpreter of the sacred writings. The House of Justice directs social action and enacts laws which, while in force, must be carried out by the whole community. "It is incumbent upon the Trustees of the House of Justice," writes Bahá'u'lláh, "to take counsel together regarding such laws as have not been expressly revealed in the Book. Of these whatever they deem advisable and proper that must they en-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

force.”¹⁹ As a personal religion, the Bahá’í Faith safeguards the sanctity of individual conscience; as a social religion, it gives expression and guidance to the collective conscience of mankind.

DUAL AUTHORITY IN ONE

In a democracy authority rests with the people, who are inclined to be indifferent to law and order. Among equal people, they argue, those who have been voted into power cannot be better than the people who elected them; therefore, why obey and respect authority? This lack of respect is evidenced not only in their attitude toward the legislators and executives of the country, but also toward the aged and the learned. It is even evidenced in the attitude of children toward their parents.

As if to avoid the spread of lawlessness, the British have combined democracy with monarchy. Each citizen is obedient to Parliament because he is loyal to the King. The Government is His Majesty’s, though chosen by the people. Loyalty to the King binds each subject individually to collective action directed by Parliament. In the symbolic union of the King and His Government, the individual expresses his loyalty to the King in obedience to His Majesty’s Government which has been chosen by the people. The citizens of the United States have tried, though less successfully, to uphold the American Flag as a sacred symbol of fidelity to the Constitution, as if to witness the need for a focal centre of unity which, at least figuratively, is infallible and immortal.

World federation, the next inevitable step in our political evolution, requires not only a government representing all

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 182.

the people of the world, but also a common focal centre — like the King for the British nations — who can claim the undivided loyalty of every citizen on this planet. As humanity could not agree on any existing national or spiritual sovereign, Bahá'u'lláh has established the institution of the Guardianship.

The Guardian, as the only authoritative interpreter of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, is the focal centre of the Bahá'í world. He is chosen for life on the hereditary principle and is also the permanent chairman of the Universal House of Justice. These twin institutions, the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice, are interlocked yet separate. Each operates within a clearly defined sphere of action without the possibility of ever coming in conflict with the other. The Guardian safeguards the identity and unity of the Faith and maintains a spiritual contact with every believer. The elected Universal House of Justice provides for change, enacts and enforces laws which have not been revealed in Bahá'í sacred writings. The Guardian as chairman of the Universal House of Justice has only one vote as any other member. To safeguard the flexibility of the Faith, future Guardians can abrogate the interpretations of previous Guardians, just as each Universal House of Justice can abolish any decision made by a previous Universal House of Justice.

On matters of religious belief, every Bahá'í accepts the Guardian's interpretation of the revealed writings. On matters of community action, every Bahá'í casts his vote and pledges unflinching allegiance to the Local, National, and Universal Houses of Justice. Loyalty to the Guardian as the divinely appointed Successor to the Founder of the Faith is expressed by each believer through obedience to the democratically elected Houses of Justice. Man with his dual nature,

afflicted by a double standard of morals, torn asunder by conflicting loyalties, finds at last the synthesis of his self. He holds on to a plan for peace not only with God but also with his fellow men.

"Let us also bear in mind," writes Shoghi Effendi, the first Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, "that the keynote of the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation. Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá'í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand, and fellowship, candor, and courage on the other."²⁰

"Let no one," writes Shoghi Effendi in another of his communications to the West, "while this System is still in its infancy, belittle its significance or misrepresent its purpose. The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day. The Source from which it derives its inspiration is no one less than Bahá'u'lláh Himself . . . The central, the underlying aim which animates it is the establishment of the New World Order as adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh. The methods it employs, the standard it inculcates, incline it to neither East nor West, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither rich nor poor, neither white nor colored. Its watchword is the unification of the human race; its standard the 'Most Great Peace.' "²¹

²⁰ Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, Wilmette, Ill., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1941, p. 54.

²¹ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 156.

THE END OF SCHISM

Every religion has become divided as time went on. The Bahá'í world community as conceived by Bahá'u'lláh is indivisible. The two historic reasons for division in religious groups are: conflict in authority, or difference of opinion. Bahá'u'lláh and later 'Abdu'l-Bahá provided in their Wills and Testaments safeguards which were unknown in any previous religious dispensation.

The Bahá'í community cannot have a professional priesthood nor any group of people authorized to interpret the writings of the Founder. If in the past a clergyman disagreed with the established dogmas of his church, he left with his following, built a new church and formed a sect. In the Bahá'í Faith only the Guardian can interpret the teachings with authority. No Bahá'í can claim authority over another. There is nothing absolute or final in anything a Bahá'í says or writes about the teachings. That is why it is easy for Bahá'ís to admit that they can be wrong. Even the Guardian's interpretation can be changed by future Guardians. This principle discourages theological speculation and induces the mystically inclined to walk with practical feet.

"One of the enemies of the Cause," writes 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "is he who endeavors to interpret the words of Bahá'u'lláh and thereby colors the meaning according to his capacity, and collects around him a following, forming a different sect, promoting his own station, and making a division in the Cause."²²

When it comes to social issues, whether they are educational, political or economic, Bahá'ís will represent points of view as diversified as any other group. There will be some who are satisfied and others who are dissatisfied. But none

²² *Star of the West*, Vol. III, p. 8.

will be entirely satisfied or entirely dissatisfied. For Bahá'í training discourages the extreme point of view. Criticism will be welcome but not in the form of an organized opposition. The would-be reformers will not have to organize to obtain the attention of the House of Justice. The Bahá'í system is inherently flexible, open to new ideas which are tried without fear of opposition. The old is constantly and gradually replaced by the new. The Bahá'í administrative order is like a self-lubricating machine which automatically removes friction. Its secret is that the whole community is like one body, united in the Guardian through faith in Bahá'u'lláh. The rebel can receive a hearing but no following. His revolutionary idea, if it takes, will spread within the community without danger of division. As no opposition is possible, the old need not fear the new; on the contrary, new ideas will receive a sympathetic hearing much more readily than under our present party system. A decision once taken by a Bahá'í House of Justice is supported by the whole community, without opposition. Thus a new idea can have a fair trial in which to prove itself. If the decision were wrong, it will soon be found out and corrected.

A Jew, to be true to his faith, must be faithful to his tribe. A Christian can honestly say that he is a faithful follower of Jesus Christ by being kind to the people he meets as an individual. The Muhammadan, as we have seen, combined obedience to God with loyalty to his country, an attitude which the Christian world adopted with certain modifications after the Renaissance. The Bahá'í, to be true to his faith, cannot conscientiously support any group or nation that is opposed to another group or nation. His heart includes all mankind. To support one half of humanity against the other half is like

cutting his heart in two, or like asking a Christian to kill his next door neighbor.

The Bahá'í Faith has spread in its first century over a wider geographical area than any other historic religion in a like period. Several abortive attempts have been made by ambitious individuals to divide this nascent Faith, and for reasons not unlike those which divided Christianity and Islam. The Bahá'í Community, as events testify, has not only survived but grown stronger and more unified after each attack. Every Bahá'í knows that he belongs to a community which is divine in origin, world-wide in scope, and indivisible in its institutions.

THE SUPRANATIONAL STATE

Over seventy years ago, in a Tablet to Queen Victoria, Bahá'u'lláh revealed the following: "We see you adding every year unto your expenditures and laying the burden thereof on the people whom ye rule; this verily is naught but grievous injustice. Fear the sighs and tears of this wronged one, and burden not your peoples beyond that which they can endure . . . Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need armaments no more save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions. Be united, O concourse of the sovereigns of the world, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you and your peoples find rest. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice."²³

In the seventy years that have passed since this warning was made, wars have been fought which killed more people and destroyed more human property than all previous wars

²³ Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 40.

put together. In 1919, when the whole world celebrated the signing of the Covenant of the League of Nations as the end of all wars, 'Abdu'l-Bahá with tears in his eyes said: "Another war, fiercer than the last, will assuredly break out." Wars cannot cease until Bahá'u'lláh's advice is followed, implying surrender of part of our national sovereignty to a supranational state.

"Some form of a world Super-State must needs be evolved," writes the first Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, "in whose favor 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 purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions. Such a state will have to include within its orbit an International Executive adequate to enforce supreme and unchallengeable authority on every recalcitrant member of the commonwealth; a World Parliament whose members shall be elected by the people in their respective countries and whose election shall be confirmed by their respective governments; and a Supreme Tribunal whose judgment will have a binding effect even in such cases where the parties concerned did not voluntarily agree to submit their case to its consideration. A world community in which all economic barriers will have been permanently demolished and the interdependence of Capital and Labor definitely recognized; in which the clamor of religious fanaticism and strife will have been forever stilled; in which the flame of racial animosity will have been finally extinguished; in which a single code of international law — the product of the considered judgment of the world's federated representatives — shall have as its sanction the instant and coercive intervention of the combined forces of the federated units; and finally a world community in which the fury of a

capricious and militant nationalism will have been transmuted into an abiding consciousness of world citizenship — such indeed, appears, in its broadest outline, the Order anticipated by Bahá'u'lláh, an Order that shall come to be regarded as the fairest fruit of a slowly maturing age.”²⁴

“This commonwealth must,” adds Shoghi Effendi in another letter, “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.”²⁵

It should encourage those who labor for a better and braver world to know that an organized community exists which combines worship with social action, and identifies its faith in God with a plan for world federation. A confused and war-trodden world will eventually be compelled to take notice of the existence of this world community, which claims as an article of faith that: “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.”

This does not mean that Bahá'ís are not loyal to their respective governments, or not anxious to support their best interests. Bahá'ís are law-abiding citizens. Their outlook on life is determined by a faith which they “conceive to be essentially non-political, supra-national in character, rigidly non-partisan, and entirely dissociated from nationalistic ambitions, pursuits, and purposes. Such a faith knows no division

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

of class or of party. It subordinates, without hesitation or equivocation, every particularistic interest, be it personal, regional, or national to the paramount interests of humanity, firmly convinced that in a world of inter-dependent peoples and nations the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole, and that no abiding benefit can be conferred upon the component parts if the general interests of the entity itself are ignored or neglected."²⁶

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 198.

CHAPTER VI

A History Which Started in 1844

THAT a vital and forward movement could have emerged out of feeble and backward Persia of the nineteenth century is one of the wonders of modern times. A movement with a universal note, that could awaken a country spiritually as barren and morally as degenerate as Persia, is a phenomenon which cannot remain for long unnoticed.

A century ago the government of Persia was hopelessly corrupt, its despotic rulers were either feeble or cruel, its priests bigoted and intolerant, and its people were fanatically superstitious. If, on a rainy day, a Jew or a Zoroastrian touched the wet garment of a Shí'ih Muhammadan, he defiled a true believer and had to run for his life. Money had to be washed before a Muslim would accept it from a cursed heathen. Bitter fighting and pillage were common. Roads were unsafe, if passable, while sanitation was beyond description.

Lord Curzon, stationed in Persia at that time, wrote: "From the Sháh downwards, there is scarcely an official who is not open to gifts, scarcely a post which is not conferred in return for gifts, scarcely an income which has not been amassed by the receipt of gifts . . . Hereby is instituted an arithmetical progression of plunder from the sovereign to the subject, each unit in the descending scale remunerating himself from the

unit next in rank below his, and the hapless peasant being the ultimate victim . . . It is useless to graft new shoots on a stem whose own sap is exhausted or poisoned. We may give Persia roads and railroads; we may work her mines and exploit her resources; we may drill her army and clothe her artisans; but we shall not have brought her within the pale of civilized nations until we have got at the core of the people, and given a new and a radical twist to the national character and institutions . . . In every rank below the sovereign, the initiative is utterly wanting to start a rebellion against the tyranny of immemorial custom; and if a strong man like the present king can only tentatively undertake it, where is he who shall preach the crusade?"¹

Little did Lord Curzon, who later became British Foreign Minister, know that a crusader had already appeared in Persia, the import of whose reforms may yet change the whole world. For, when the Báb arose in 1844, not unlike John the Baptist in relation to the Christ, he inaugurated a social and spiritual movement which in less than one century has crossed almost every national frontier.

THE BĀB — THE FORERUNNER

Siyyid'Alí-Muhammad, who afterwards assumed the title of the Báb (*i.e.*, Gate) was born at Shíráz on October 20, 1819. He lost his father, a merchant, soon after birth and was reared by his maternal uncle. He is known to have received some education, and at fifteen was in business with his uncle. At an early age he was distinguished by a remarkable insight, charm of manner, clean living, and a noble character. At the

¹ Lord Curzon *Persia and the Persian Question* (2 vols.) London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1892.

age of twenty-two he married. His only son died in infancy.

On May 23, 1844, at the age of twenty-five, the Báb made a startling declaration, announcing the beginning of a new era. He made himself known as the Qá'im, the Prophet, who was to do away with Islam in fulfillment of messianic prophecy, and also as the Gate through whom a Manifestation greater than himself was to follow. His first eighteen disciples, known as the "Letters of the Living," he sent to all parts of Persia and Turkistán. The fame of this youth and the news of his message spread rapidly throughout the length and breadth of the land.

"When the Báb revealed his Book (the Bayán), proclaimed a new code of religious law, and by precept and example instituted a profound moral and spiritual reform, the priests immediately scented mortal danger. They saw their monopoly undermined, their ambitions threatened, their own lives and conduct put to shame. They rose against him in sanctimonious indignation. They declared before the Sháh and all the people that this upstart was an enemy of sound learning, a subverter of Islam, a traitor to Muhammad, and a peril not only to the holy church but to the social order and to the State itself.

"The cause of the rejection and persecution of the Báb was in its essence the same as that of the rejection and persecution of the Christ. If Jesus had not brought a New Book, if he had not only reiterated the spiritual principles taught by Moses but had continued Moses' rules and regulations too, he might as a merely moral reformer have escaped the vengeance of the Scribes and Pharisees. But to claim that any part of the Mosaic law . . . could be altered — and altered by an unordained preacher from the village of Nazareth — this was to threaten the interests of the Scribes and Pharisees themselves,

and was blasphemy against the Most High. As Jesus refused to desist, he was put to death.”²

The Báb knew the risks he was taking. He knew that his innovations were to undermine the corrupt church-state of his country. He was, as he had expected, imprisoned and scoffed at, and after six years of strict confinement was put to death.

Like the Pharisees eighteen hundred years before, the mullahs of Persia could not provide a good reason for the death sentence that was imposed on the Báb. Dr. Cormick, an English physician resident in Tabriz, was asked by the Persian authorities to report on his mental condition. Professor E. G. Browne in his book, *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion*, quotes a letter of Dr. Cormick as the only known record of a European who had seen the Báb.

“You ask me,” writes the doctor, “for some particulars of my interview with the founder of the sect known as Bábís. (The Bábís were later known as Bahá’ís.) Nothing of any importance transpired in this interview, as the Báb was aware of my having been sent with two other Persian doctors to see whether he was of sane mind or merely a madman, to decide the question whether he was to be put to death or not. With this knowledge he was loth to answer any questions put to him. To all enquiries he merely regarded us with a mild look, chanting in a low melodious voice some hymns, I suppose. Two other siyyids, his intimate friends, were also present, who subsequently were put to death with him, besides a couple of government officials. He only deigned to answer me, on my

² Shoghi Effendi, Introduction to *The Dawnbreakers, Nabil’s Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá’í Revelation*, New York, Bahá’í Publishing Committee, 1932, p. XXXI.

saying that I was not a Mussulman and was willing to know something about his religion, as I might perhaps be inclined to adopt it. He regarded me very intently on my saying this, and replied that he had no doubt of all Europeans coming over to his religion. Our report to the Sháh at that time was of a nature to spare his life. He was put to death some time after . . . On our report he merely got the bastinado, in which operation a farrásh, whether intentionally or not, struck him across the face with the stick destined for his feet, which produced a great wound and swelling of the face. On being asked whether a Persian surgeon should be brought to treat him, he expressed a desire that I should be sent for, and I accordingly treated him for a few days, but in the interviews consequent on this I could never get him to have a confidential chat with me, as some government people were always present, he being a prisoner. He was a very mild and delicate looking man, rather small in stature and very fair for a Persian, with a melodious soft voice, which struck me much. Being a Siyyid (descendant of Muhammad), he was dressed in the habit of that sect, as were also his two companions. In fact his whole look and deportment went far to dispose one in his favor. Of his doctrine I heard nothing from his own lips, although the idea was that there existed in his religion a certain approach to Christianity. He was seen by some Armenian carpenters, who were sent to make some repairs in his prison, reading the Bible, and he took no pains to conceal it, but on the contrary told them of it. Most assuredly the Mussulman fanaticism does not exist in his religion, as applied to Christians, nor is there that restraint of females that now exists."

The writings of the Báb consisted of prayers, commentaries on the Qur'án, moral exhortations, and praise of "Him whom God shall make manifest." He summoned his followers to

depend on God, to sever themselves from earthly things, so that they would be able to recognize him who was to follow. Comparing his own work with that of the Greater Manifestation, the Báb writes: "I am a letter out of that most mighty book and a dewdrop from that limitless ocean, and when He shall appear, my true nature, my mysteries, riddles and intimations will become evident, and the embryo of this religion shall develop . . . and attain to the station of 'the most comely of forms' . . ."³

The Bábí movement spread with a momentum too alarming for church and state. The Bábís were soon accused of disloyalty, and their activities were condemned as subversive to the security of the state. It was easy for the mullas to incite the fanatical mob to plunder and murder. The callousness and fiendish tortures which the Persian mind could devise far surpass any Frankenstein. The Bábís were burned alive, chopped to pieces, blown from the mouths of cannon, beheaded, or torn apart by being bound to the crowns of two trees which were bent together and then allowed to spring back to their natural position. Their houses were burned and their women seized and carried off.

Thus, inadvertently, these heroic martyrs fulfilled a prophecy concerning the return of the Messiah as recorded by Jábír, which many Muhammadans regard as authentic: "In him shall be the perfection of Moses, the preciousness of Jesus, and the patience of Job; his saints shall be abased in his time, and their heads shall be exchanged as presents, . . . they shall be slain and burned, and shall be afraid, fearful and dismayed; the earth shall be dyed with their blood, and lamentation

³E. G. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, Cambridge, The University Press, 1891, p. 54.

shall prevail amongst their women; these are my saints indeed.”⁴

“The story of the Báb was the story of spiritual heroism . . . That a youth of no social influence and no education should, by the simple power of insight, be able to pierce into the heart of things and see the real truth, and then hold on to it with such firmness of conviction and present it with such suasion that he was able to convince men that he was the Messiah and get them to follow him to death itself, was one of those splendid facts in human history . . . The Báb’s passionate sincerity could not be doubted, for he has given his life for his faith. And that there must be something in his message that appealed to men and satisfied their souls was witnessed by the fact that thousands gave their lives in his cause and millions now follow him. If a young man could, in only six years of ministry, by the sincerity of his purpose and the attraction of his personality, so inspire rich and poor, cultured and illiterate, alike, in belief in himself and his doctrines that they should remain staunch though hunted down and without trial sentenced to death, sawn asunder, strangled, shot, blown from guns; and if men of high position and culture in Persia, Turkey and Egypt in numbers to this day adhere to his doctrines; his life must be one of those events in the last hundred years which is really worth study.”⁵

To render this nascent faith a mortal blow, the execution of the Báb was ordered on July 9, 1850. He was suspended by ropes under the armpits, together with a devoted disciple, facing an Armenian regiment who were commanded to fire.

⁴ E. G. Browne, *New History of the Báb*, Cambridge, The University Press, 1893, p. 132.

⁵ Sir Francis Younghusband, *The Gleam*, London, John Murray, 1923, pp. 183-4.

When the smoke cleared, the Báb and his companion were found unhurt. The bullets had severed the ropes, leaving the Báb free to complete a conversation which had been interrupted. Again they were suspended but the soldiers, having witnessed this miraculous escape, refused to fire. Another detachment was called, and this time the Báb was killed. Thus, in his thirty-first year, ended the heroic career of a true God-man. The spectators might well have wondered whether or not they had been present at another Calvary.

"Such a prophet," writes the Rev. Dr. T. K. Cheyne, "was the Báb; we call him prophet for want of a better name . . . His combination of mildness and power is so rare that we have to place him in a line with super-normal men . . . We learn that, at great points in his career, after he had been in an ecstasy, such radiance or might and majesty streamed from his countenance that none could bear to look upon the effulgence of his glory and beauty. Nor was it an uncommon occurrence for unbelievers involuntarily to bow down in lowly obeisance on beholding His Holiness; while the inmates of the castle, (where he was imprisoned) though for the most part Christians and Sunnis, reverently prostrated themselves whenever they saw the visage of His Holiness. Such transfiguration is well known to the saint. It was regarded as the affixing of the heavenly seal to the reality and completeness of the Báb's detachment."^a

"But just as remarkable as his boldness in claiming Divine authority," writes Sir Francis Younghusband, "is his restraint in insisting that his authority was not final. He felt competent and commissioned to reveal much, but he felt with equal cer-

^a T. K. Cheyne, *The Reconciliation of Races and Religions*, London, A. and C. Block, 1914, pp. 8-9.

tainty that there was infinitely more yet to be revealed. Herein was his greatness. And herein was his greatest sacrifice. He thereby risked the diminution of his personal fame. But he insured the continuance of his mission . . . He insured that the movement he has started would grow and expand. He himself was but 'a letter out of that most mighty book, a dewdrop from that limitless ocean' . . . This was the humility of true insight, and it has yet a great future before it."⁷

"Few believe that by these sanguinary measures the doctrines of the Báb will cease from propagation. There is a spirit of change abroad among the Persians, which will preserve his system from extinction; besides which, his doctrines are of an attractive nature to Persians. Though now subdued, and obliged to lurk concealed in towns, it is conjectured that the creed of the Báb, far from diminishing, is daily spreading."⁸

And to add one more comment of European travellers, who could not help but notice, while visiting Persia, that something extraordinary had happened: "The Báb was dead, but not Bábiism. He was not the first, and still less the last, of a long line of martyrs who have testified that, even in a country gangrened with corruption and atrophied with indifferentism like Persia, the soul of a nation survives, inarticulate, perhaps, and in a way helpless, but still capable of sudden spasms of vitality."⁹

The enemies of the Báb almost succeeded. They murdered all of his distinguished disciples, except one, Bahá'u'lláh. The spirit of the Báb had already penetrated too deeply into the

⁷ Younghusband, *op.cit.*, pp. 210-211.

⁸ Lady Sheil, *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia*, London, John Murray, 1856, p. 181.

⁹ Sir Valentine Chirol, *The Middle Eastern Question*, London, J. Murray, 1903, p. 120.

life of Persia to be extinguished by violence. The fire was still there, though smouldering. It needed little to be fanned into a conflagration.

The Báb prepared the path for Bahá'u'lláh at the cost of his own life, which he gave gladly. He had no other ambition than to sacrifice his cause and his life for the world educator who was to come after him.

BAHA'U'LLAH — THE FOUNDER

Mírzá Husayn'Alí, who later assumed the title of Bahá'u'lláh (*i.e.*, Glory of God), was born in Tihrán, the capital city of Persia, on November 12, 1817. His father was a Minister of State. Although of a wealthy and distinguished family, Bahá'u'lláh never went to school. The little education he received from private tutors consisted mostly of reading the Qur'án and Persian poetry.

As a child, Bahá'u'lláh revealed extraordinary powers of attraction. His amazing knowledge, combined with an innate modesty, proved irresistible to the people around him. At the age of fourteen he was famous for leading public discussions on religious subjects. He was known to be kind and generous, loved the outdoors, and spent most of his time in gardens or in the fields.

When his father died, Bahá'u'lláh was twenty-two years old and in charge of an extensive family estate. He refused an offer to succeed his father in the Court of the Sháh. To this the Prime Minister remarked: "He has some higher aim in view. I cannot understand him, but I am convinced that he is destined for some lofty career. His thoughts are not like ours. Let him alone."¹⁰

¹⁰ J. E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, Revised Edition, Wilmette, Ill., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1927, p. 31.

In 1844, the Báb sent his first disciple with a letter to Bahá'u'lláh, who accepted the Bábí Cause and later became known as one of its leading and most fearless exponents. The Báb named him Bahá'u'lláh, although he and the Báb never met. Prior to his death, the Báb sent to him as yet obscure co-founder of the new faith, his seals, pen and papers.

A youthful follower, after witnessing the execution of the Báb, became deranged and attempted to assassinate the Sháh. Though unsuccessful, he was not only put to death, but the occasion was used for a new massacre of the Bábís. Eighty of them were horribly tortured, and others were thrown into prison.

Bahá'u'lláh was at that time in the country. Against the advice of friends, he decided to ride to the camp of the Sháh. On the way Bahá'u'lláh was seized, and what happened in the next four months may be understood from his own account: "We were in no wise connected with that evil deed, and our innocence was indisputably established by the tribunals. Nevertheless, they apprehended . . . and conducted us, on foot and in chains, with bared head and bare feet, to the dungeon of Tihrán . . . We were consigned for four months to a place foul beyond comparison . . . Upon our arrival we were first conducted along a pitch-black corridor, from whence we descended three steep flights of stairs to the place of confinement assigned to us. The dungeon was wrapped in thick darkness, and our fellow-prisoners numbered nearly a hundred and fifty souls: thieves, assassins and highway robbers. Though crowded, it had no other outlet than the passage by which we entered. No pen can depict that place, nor any tongue describe its loathsome smell. Most of these men had neither clothes nor bedding to lie on . . .

"During the days I lay in the prison of Tihrán, though the galling weight of the chains and the stench-filled air allowed me but little sleep, still in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of my head over my breast, even as a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of my body would, as a result, be set afire. At such moments my tongue recited what no man could bear to hear . . .

"One night, in a dream, these exalted words were heard on every side: Verily, We shall render thee victorious by thyself and by thy pen. Grieve thou not for that which hath befallen thee, neither be thou afraid, for thou art in safety. Erelong will God raise up the treasures of the earth — men who will aid thee through thyself and through thy name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized Him."¹¹

He became so ill that his death was expected from day to day. In this infested prison Bahá'u'lláh received the first indication of his future calling. Through the intervention of the Russian Minister, Bahá'u'lláh was released, having proved his innocence in the plot against the Sháh, but he was exiled to Baghdád in 'Iráq. His properties were, of course, confiscated.

With the banishment of Bahá'u'lláh, the last surviving champion of the faith as well as the fortunes of the cause sank to the lowest ebb. The Báb appeared to have given his life in vain. His movement was crushed, its resistance broken, and its force apparently spent. We have record of a letter written in 1862 by the ex-Foreign Minister of Persia to his country's

¹¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 20-22.

Ambassador in Constantinople: "Excellency, after carrying out those energetic measures on the part of the Persian Government for the extirpation and extermination of the misguided and detestable sect of the Bábís, with the details of which Your Excellency is fully acquainted, . . . their roots were torn up."¹² Little did this ex-Minister realize that Bahá'u'lláh was carrying with him into exile, on an agonizing journey over snow-covered mountains, the roots which were destined to blossom into Persia's greatest contribution to mankind.

Shortly after arriving in Baghdád, Bahá'u'lláh withdrew into the wilderness for two years of complete solitude. Not unlike Buddha in the forests of India, Christ in the wilderness, and Muhammad in the desert of Arabia, Bahá'u'lláh must have been impelled to commune alone with God before publicly revealing his mission. Of this time, Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "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 . . . Notwithstanding these showers of affliction and unceasing calamities, our soul was wrapt in blissful joy, and our whole being evinced an ineffable gladness."¹³

On his return, the fame of Bahá'u'lláh spread far across the land. Not only Muhammadans but also Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians came to hear him speak. The *Seven Valleys*, the *Hidden Words*, and the *Book of Certitude* were written at this

¹² Facsimile and translation of the document reproduced in Prof. E. G. Browne's *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion*, Cambridge, The University Press, 1918, p. 283.

¹³ Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, The Book of Certitude, N. Y., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1931, p. 250.

time. The stirrings of this new movement were too much for the local priesthood, and, through their instigations, the Turkish Government ordered the removal of Bahá'u'lláh and his family to Constantinople. While the caravan was being prepared for the long journey, Bahá'u'lláh revealed on April 21, 1863, nineteen years after the declaration of the Báb, that he was the promised one in whose path the Báb had laid down his life. In this momentous declaration of Bahá'u'lláh, the cause of the Báb was fulfilled.

After a journey of many hardships, Bahá'u'lláh and eighty of his followers were imprisoned in a small overcrowded house in Constantinople. Within four months they were again moved, this time in the middle of winter, without adequate clothing or food, to Adrianople. In this city Bahá'u'lláh publicly announced his cause, and the Bábís were henceforth known as Bahá'ís.

After five years, as if guided by an invisible hand, Bahá'u'lláh and his little band of devoted followers were sent to the prison-city of 'Akka in the Holy Land. Through the machinations of his persecutors, Bahá'u'lláh was yet to pitch his tent on the slopes of Mount Carmel, in fulfillment of Christian and Muhammadan prophecies.

The Bahá'ís who remained in Persia and the surrounding countries had no news of Bahá'u'lláh's whereabouts. When they did finally hear that the promised one was imprisoned in 'Akka, many of them undertook a journey of more than a thousand miles, some on foot, others on mule-back, to see him. As no visitors were allowed, these early pilgrims had to be content with a glimpse of Bahá'u'lláh waving at them from behind the bars beyond the third moat of the fortress. They would then return home, crossing the deserts of Syria and

'Irâq, and the high mountains of Persia, fired with a new zeal for service and devotion.

At this time Bahá'u'lláh must have written: "The Ancient Beauty hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty stronghold that the whole world may attain unto true liberty. He hath drained to its dregs the cup of sorrow, that all the peoples of the earth may attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness. This is the mercy of your Lord, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. We have accepted to be abased, O believers in the Unity of God, that ye may be exalted, and have suffered manifold afflictions, that ye might prosper and flourish. He who hath come to build anew the whole world, behold, how they . . . have forced him to dwell within the most desolate of cities!"¹⁴

Turkey's most dangerous criminals were sent to perish in the vermin-infested barracks of 'Akka. Its air and water were foul, and its food inedible. Bahá'u'lláh with about eighty-four Bahá'ís, including women and children, were crowded into a few dirty rooms. They all suffered from malaria, dysentery and other diseases. Four died, but their captors would not bury them without an adequate recompense. Bahá'u'lláh then gave them the carpet on which he slept. These terrible years culminated in the fatal injury of Bahá'u'lláh's twenty year old son Mihdí, the Purest Branch. Rúhíyyih Khanúm describes this event as follows:

"Bahá'u'lláh asked of his dying son if he desired to live, but he replied that his sole desire was that the gates of the prison should be opened so that the believers might visit their Lord. Bahá'u'lláh granted that youth's earnest wish and sat beside

¹⁴ *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 33.

his youngest son as they made him ready for the grave, and it was in those tragic circumstances that he revealed the following: 'At this very moment my son is being washed before my face after our having sacrificed him in the Most Great Prison . . .' 'Glorified art Thou, O Lord, my God! Thou seest me in the hands of the enemies, and my son blood-stained before my face!' Such sentences as these were wrung from the heart of Bahá'u'lláh as he gazed upon his child. But then thundering forth came these marvelous words: 'I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given me, that Thy servants may be quickened and all that dwell on earth be united.' The tremendous significance of these words is inescapable; Bahá'u'lláh designates to his own child the role of blood offering in order that the unity of all men which he has proclaimed may come about. The sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham is accomplished."¹⁵

Soon after the death of Bahá'u'lláh's youngest son, prison restrictions were relaxed. For the next seven years Bahá'u'lláh and his family lived in a small house, could receive visitors, and eventually move around within the city walls.

However severe the hardships, Bahá'u'lláh's followers were never discouraged. They carried their burden cheerfully and with confidence. They were fully compensated for any physical discomforts by their nearness to him. He wrote while still in the barracks: "Fear not. These doors shall be opened. My tent shall be pitched on Mount Carmel, and the utmost joy shall be realized." 'Abdu'l-Bahá, his eldest son, describes how this occurred.

Bahá'u'lláh, who loved the country so much, remarked one day: "I have not gazed on verdure for nine years. The coun-

¹⁵ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. VIII, p. 256.

try is the world of the soul, the city is the world of bodies.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá saw in this longing of his father the end of their confinement. One day he passed the city gates unhindered by the guards. He rented a beautiful house about four miles north of the city, surrounded by gardens and a stream of running water. To his great disappointment, however, Bahá’u’lláh refused to move, being still a prisoner. After much persuasion and the intervention of an influential friend, Bahá’u’lláh finally conceded and left the prison walls for the remaining years of his life.

Bahá’u’lláh was not an ordinary prisoner. We cannot judge his action by our own standards. His power over those who came into his presence was overwhelming. Several of his captors voluntarily became his servants. It is known that, when he was exiled from Baghdád, the Governor of that city and many notables came to pay their homage to the departing prisoner. In ‘Akka, the Governor of the city, generals, and other officials, would humbly request the honor of an interview, which Bahá’u’lláh, their prisoner, often refused. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that, on one occasion, the Governor of ‘Akka and a visiting general were granted an interview. This general, a Christian, was so overwhelmed by the majestic power of Bahá’u’lláh that he dared not approach him but remained kneeling at the door. When Bahá’u’lláh offered his guests the water-pipe, as was customary in that country, they were too awestruck to smoke. Only after repeated requests would they touch it with their lips, sitting there listening with arms folded in humble and respectful attitude.

Professor Edward G. Browne of Cambridge University is known as the only westerner who ever visited Bahá’u’lláh. As a non-Bahá’í, he was interested in the Bábí movement only as a historian. About his visit in 1890 to Bahjí, where Bahá-

'u'llah spent the last years of his life, Browne wrote: "So here at Bahjí I was installed as a guest, in the very midst of all that Bábiism accounts most noble and most holy; and here did I spend five memorable days, during which I enjoyed unparalled and un hoped-for opportunities of holding intercourse with those who are the very fountain-heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit which works with invisible but ever-increasing force for the transformation and quickening of a people who slumber in a sleep like unto death. It was, in truth, a strange and moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression. I might, indeed, strive to describe in greater detail the faces and forms which surrounded me, the conversations to which I was privileged to listen, the solemn melodious readings of the sacred books, the general sense of harmony and content which pervaded the place, and the fragrant shady gardens whither in the afternoon we sometimes repaired; but all this was as naught in comparison with the spiritual atmosphere with which I was encompassed . . . The spirit which pervades the Bábis is such that it can hardly fail to affect most powerfully all subjected to its influence. It may appall or attract. It cannot be ignored or disregarded. Let those who have not seen disbelieve me if they will; but should that spirit once reveal itself to them, they will experience an emotion which they are not likely to forget."¹⁶

This distinguished English scholar proceeds to describe his impression of Bahá'u'lláh as follows: "My conductor paused for a moment while I removed my shoes. Then with a quick movement of the hand he withdrew, and, as I passed, replaced the curtain; and I found myself in a large apartment, along

¹⁶ E. G. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. XXXIX.

the upper end of which ran a low divan, while on the side opposite to the door were placed two or three chairs. Though I dimly suspected whither I was going, and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt headdress of the kind called *táj* by dervishes (but of unusual height and make), round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!

"A mild dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: 'Praise be to God that thou hast attained! . . . Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile . . . We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer-up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment . . . Is not this that which Christ foretold? Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind . . . These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family . . .'

"Such, so far as I can recall them, were the words which, besides many others, I heard from Bahá. Let those who read

them consider well with themselves whether such doctrines merit death and bonds, and whether the world is more likely to gain or lose by their diffusion."¹⁷

Unlike Christ, who was speaking only to individuals, Bahá'u'lláh addressed many of his writings to national governments, through their kings and rulers. In the Tablets to the Kings, Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "Fear God, O concourse of kings, and suffer not yourselves to be deprived of this most sublime grace . . . Set your hearts towards the Face of God, and abandon that which your desires have bidden you to follow, and be not of those who perish . . . Ye examined not His Cause when so to do would have been better for you than all that the sun shineth upon . . . Be vigilant, that ye may not do injustice to anyone . . . Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path. Compose your differences, and reduce your armaments, that the burden of your expenditures may be lightened, and that your minds and hearts may be tranquilized. Heal the dissensions that divide you, and ye will no longer be in need of any armaments . . . Rest not on your power, your armies, and your treasures. Put your whole trust and confidence in God, Who hath created you, and seek ye His help in all your affairs.

"Know ye that the poor are the trust of God in your midst. Watch that ye betray not His trust, that ye deal not unjustly with them and that ye walk not in the ways of the treacherous . . . If ye pay no heed unto the counsels which . . . we have revealed in this Tablet, Divine chastisement shall assail you from every direction . . . On that day ye shall have no power to resist Him, and shall recognize your own impotence."

Bahá'u'lláh foretold many events, some of which have

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 39.

already come to pass. In his letter to the Sultán of Turkey he foretold the loss of Adrianopole and its surrounding territory: "The day is approaching when the Land of Mystery (Adrianopole) and what is beside it shall be changed, and shall pass out of the hands of the King." In 1869 Bahá'u'lláh warned Napoleon III of his impending downfall: "Thy doings shall throw thy kingdom into confusion, sovereignty shall pass from thy hands, to requite thee for thy deeds, and thus thou shall find thyself in grievous loss. Convulsions shall seize all people in yonder land, unless thou dost arise in this Cause and in this straight path follow the Spirit."

Napoleon III's conqueror, William I, the German Emperor, Bahá'u'lláh warned thus: "Do you remember the one whose power transcended thy power (Napoleon III), and whose station excelled thy station. Where is he? Whither are gone the things he possessed? Take warning, and be not of them that are fast asleep . . . Think deeply, O King, concerning him, and concerning them who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled men." In the same Book Bahá'u'lláh foresees the plight of the German people: "O Banks of the Rhine! We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and you shall have another turn. And we hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory."

To Queen Victoria Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "And we have heard that thou hast entrusted the reins of deliberation into the hands of the commonwealth. Thou hast done well, . . . But it behooves them to be as trustees amongst the servants of God, and to regard themselves as guardians over whosoever is in all the earth . . . O ye leaders of assemblies, whether there or in some other country, think of results and speak of that

whereby the world and its conditions may be reformed . . .”¹⁸

The writings of Bahá'u'lláh, in Persian and Arabic, are very extensive, and only a part has been rendered into English. In both modern and classical style, he wrote laws for the individual and society, prayers, meditations, and interpretations of the ancient scriptures.

After forty years of exile and imprisonment, Bahá'u'lláh passed away in the Holy Land, on May 28, 1892. The following telegram conveyed the news to his captor, the Sultán of Turkey: “The Sun of Bahá has set.” Subsequent history has demonstrated that the sun of Bahá'u'lláh has since spread to almost all the countries of the world. Its message has been told in more than thirty languages, and the forces that still oppose it are disintegrating one by one.

Less than a year after Bahá'u'lláh's passing, his message was publicly mentioned in America. Dr. Henry H. Jessup, D.D., said in a lecture at the Chicago Exposition of 1893: “In the Palace of Bahjí, or Delight, just outside the Fortress of 'Akka, on the Syrian coast, there died a few months since, a famous Persian sage, the Bábí Saint, named Bahá'u'lláh — the ‘Glory of God’ — the head of that vast reform party of Persian Muslims, who accept the New Testament as the Word of God and Christ as the Deliverer of men, who regard all nations as one, and all men as brothers. Three years ago he was visited by a Cambridge scholar and gave utterance to sentiments so noble, so Christ-like, that we repeat them as our closing words:

“That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion

¹⁸ *The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII, p. 790.

should cease and differences of race be annulled. What harm is there in this? Yet so it shall be. These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the "Most Great Peace" shall come. Do not you in Europe need this also? Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.'"¹⁰

In the following year, 1894, a small group of Americans in Chicago became interested in investigating the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Several years later, the first group of Americans made the journey to the prison-city of 'Akka to investigate this movement at its source. From such a simple beginning dates the history of the Bahá'í Faith in America and the western world.

These early pilgrims arrived too late to meet Bahá'u'lláh. Instead, they met his son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

'ABDU'L-BAHA — THE INTERPRETER

Abbas Effendi, the eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh, who afterwards assumed the title of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (*i.e.*, the Servant of Bahá), was born in Tihrán on May 23, 1844, at the same hour of the very same day when the Báb declared his mission.

One of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's most vivid impressions of early childhood was the sight of his father, bent by the weight of chains, terribly altered, and so ill that he could hardly walk out of the prison dungeon. He remembered when their house was sacked and all their possessions confiscated. This boy accompanied his disgraced father and a destitute family on the road to Baghdád, marching into exile and imprisonment. Imprisonment remained his lot throughout his youth and

¹⁰ *World's Parliament of Religion*, Vol. II, Chicago, Parliament Publishing Co., 1893, p. 1122.

manhood, until he reached the mature age of sixty-five. With Bahá'u'lláh as his teacher, he lived to be known as Master by hundreds of thousands of followers in the East, in Europe, and in America. He was to travel through Europe and North America after fifty-seven years of exile and imprisonment. The American visit may be recorded as one of the most memorable journeys in religious history. Who was this man with such an enviable hold over the lives of so many people from both the East and the West?

At the age of nine, 'Abdu'l-Bahá recognized in his father the promised one whom the Báb foretold. He was Bahá'u'lláh's first believer. And a lifetime of continuous service and devotion substantiates his unqualified loyalty.

In Bahá'u'lláh's Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was appointed the Center of the Covenant who was designated the only authoritative interpreter of the teachings. This unique document preserved the unity and identity of the faith. At the death of the founder there was no confusion nor uncertainty, and during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry there was an unprecedented growth of the faith throughout the world.

During his many years in prison, 'Abdu'l-Bahá could communicate occasionally with the outside world. When restrictions were relaxed, visitors were permitted. The first American pilgrims arrived at the turn of the century. Others followed, including Jews, Christians, and Muhammadans, sometimes also Zoroastrians, Hindus, and Buddhists. All would listen together, as one family, to the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Every Friday morning he would distribute alms to the poor of 'Akka. About a hundred wretched beggars, half-clothed women, children and cripples, a collection of humanity not unfamiliar to the East, would line up in this strange prison-

city. An eyewitness describes him as "quickly moving from one to another, stopping sometimes to leave a word of sympathy and encouragement, dropping small coins into each eager outstretched palm, touching the face of a child, taking the hand of an old woman who held fast to the hem of his garment as he passed along, speaking words of light to old men with sightless eyes, inquiring after those too feeble and wretched to come for their pittance of help, and sending them their portion with a message of love and uplift."²⁰

'Abdu'l-Bahá led a very simple life. Two meals a day, a plain room, and a few inexpensive garments were the most he wanted. He could not live in luxury with so much misery in the world. Thornton Chase, the first American Bahá'í, returning from 'Akka, wrote: "Five days we remained within those walls, prisoners with him who dwells in that 'Greatest Prison.' It is a prison of peace, of love and service. No wish, no desire is there save the good of mankind, the peace of the world, the acknowledgement of the Fatherhood of God and the mutual rights of men . . . Indeed, the real prison, the suffocating atmosphere . . . is outside of those stone walls . . ."²¹

In 1908, the Young Turks party overthrew the old regime and freed all political and religious prisoners, including 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Shortly afterwards, he undertook his historic journeys to the West.

'Abdu'l-Bahá visited London in 1911 at the request of English friends. He liked the English as he did all people. In one of his letters to a British friend, he wrote: "The English have always been resolute, not swerving in the face of diffi-

²⁰ Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 71.

²¹ Thornton Chase, *In Galilee*, Chicago, Bahá'í Publishing Society, 1908, p. 24.

culties. Having taken up a cause, they are not ready, for trivial reasons, either to leave it or to lose heart and enthusiasm.”²² His hostess, Lady Blomfield, describes him as a “gracious figure, clothed in a simple white garment, over which was a light-coloured Persian ‘abá; on his head he wore a low-crowned táj, round which was folded a small, fine linen turban of purest white; his hair and short beard were of that snowy whiteness which had once been black; his eyes were large, blue-grey with long, black lashes and well-marked eyebrows; his face was a beautiful oval with warm, ivory-coloured skin, a straight, finely-modelled nose, and firm, kind mouth . . . His figure was of such perfect symmetry, and so full of dignity and grace, that the first impression was that of considerable height. He seemed an incarnation of loving understanding, of compassion and power, of wisdom and authority, of strength, and of a buoyant youthfulness, which somehow defied the burden of his years.”²³

Visitors came to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in a constant stream: ministers, scholars, artists, the poor, from every walk of life and every land. He breakfasted with the Lord Mayor. He gave many talks in London, where he addressed the congregations of the Rev. R. J. Campbell at the City Temple, and of Archdeacon Wilberforce at St. John’s, Westminster.

In Paris, while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was walking along the street, a cabman stopped his fiacre, took off his hat, and gazed with amazement and reverence at the majestic figure. Acknowledging this salutation, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed by with that walk which was described as “that of a king or a shepherd.” His

²² Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, London, Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1940, p. 147.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 149.

effect on children is perhaps best summed up by a little girl who whispered on seeing him: "Look, that is Jesus when he was old."

Two months were spent in Paris, and then 'Abdu'l-Bahá went on to meet the German Bahá'ís in Stuttgart. He visited friends in Hungary and Switzerland before returning to Haifa.

When the American Bahá'ís learned that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had accepted their invitation to come to the United States, they subscribed eighteen thousand dollars toward the cost of the journey. 'Abdu'l-Bahá would not accept the money and returned the amount cabled to him, with the request that it should be distributed among the poor. He refused consistently to accept money either for himself or for the faith. On the contrary, he was very generous with his possessions. One night in New York, at the Bowery Mission, he distributed two hundred dollars in silver to the poor.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's journey to America in 1912 lasted nine months and was of national importance. Though sixty-eight years old, he visited Montreal in Canada and some thirty-two cities of the United States from coast to coast. He addressed religious groups of many denominations, several universities, scientific associations, Socialist groups, peace and welfare organizations. He attended banquets of the rich and visited the poor. There is record of at least one hundred and forty-one public lectures, five of which were given in one day in Chicago. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's addresses in America have been published in two volumes under the title *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*.

"In all of my many opportunities of meeting, of listening to and talking with 'Abdu'l-Bahá," writes a former Unitarian minister who was then in charge of a church in Jersey City, "I was impressed . . . with his method of teaching souls. That

is the word. He did not attempt to reach the mind alone. He sought the soul, the reality of every one he met. Oh, he could be logical, even scientific in his presentation of an argument, as he demonstrated constantly in the many addresses I have heard him give and the many more I have read. But it was not the logic of the schoolman, not the science of the classroom. His lightest word, his slightest association with a soul was shot through with an illuminating radiance which lifted the hearer to a higher plane of consciousness. Our hearts burned within us when he spoke. And he never argued, of course. Nor did he press a point. He left one free. There was never an assumption of authority, rather he was ever the personification of humility. He taught 'as if offering a gift to a King.' He never told me what I should do, beyond suggesting that what I was doing was right . . .

"There was a strange, awe-inspiring mingling of humility and majesty, relaxation and power in his slightest word or gesture which made me long to understand its source."²⁴

Soon after his return to Haifa, the first World War broke out, and all communications were suspended. 'Abdu'l-Bahá initiated the cultivation of wheat and other agricultural products to prevent famine among the poor in Haifa and 'Akka during the war years. For these untiring, humanitarian services, he was knighted in 1920 by the British Government.

When people hailed the termination of the war that was to end all wars, and the Pact that was to guarantee justice and an abiding peace, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "Peace, peace, the lips of potentates and peoples unceasingly proclaim, whereas the fire of unquenched hatreds still smoulders in their hearts . . .

²⁴ Howard Colby Ives, *Portals to Freedom*, N. Y., E. P. Dutton, 1937, p. 28.

another war, fiercer than the last, will assuredly break out." Subsequent events have added significance to these words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, written in January, 1920: "The ills from which the world now suffers will multiply; the gloom which envelops it will deepen. The Balkans will remain discontented. Its restlessness will increase. The vanquished Powers will continue to agitate. They will resort to every measure that may rekindle the flame of war. Movements, newly-born and world-wide in their range, will exert their utmost effort for the advancement of their designs. The Movement of the Left will acquire great importance. Its influence will spread."²⁵

The prophecies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá have been very accurate. As a Turkish prisoner he wrote in 1904: "... hardships and misfortunes shall increase day by day, and the people shall be distressed . . . Terrible wars shall happen." In 1912, he said at Sacramento, California: "Today the European continent is like an arsenal, it is a storehouse of explosives, ready for just a spark, and one spark could set aflame the whole of Europe." 'Abdu'l-Bahá's most promising prophecy for this generation indicates the year 1957, when a supranational world organization will have been established, to which the Bahá'ís refer as the "Lesser Peace," when wars will be outlawed and a universal language will be promoted to bring about a better understanding between the nations. By 1963, the one hundredth anniversary of the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh, the foundation of the Bahá'í faith will have been laid throughout the world.²⁶

On Friday, November 25, 1921, 'Abdu'l-Bahá prayed in the Mosque of Haifa and then distributed alms as was his

²⁵ *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 30.

²⁶ See J. E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, pp. 296 to 308.

custom. After lunch he dictated some letters. Later he walked in the garden and had a talk with the gardener. In the evening he gave his blessing and counsel to a newly-married couple and attended a meeting of the friends. On November 28, 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away so peacefully that his two daughters, watching at his bedside, thought he had merely fallen asleep.

The next morning the funeral took place, "the like of which Haifa, nay, Palestine itself, had surely never seen . . . so deep was the feeling that brought so many thousands of mourners together, representative of so many religions, races and tongues.

"The High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, the Governor of Jerusalem, the Governor of Phoenicia, the chief officials of the Government, the Consuls of the various countries, resident in Haifa, the heads of the various religious communities, the notables of Palestine, Jews, Christians, Moslems, Druses, Egyptians, Greeks, Turks, Kurds, and a host of his American, European and native friends, men, women and children, both of high and low degree . . . all, about ten thousand in number, mourning the loss of their beloved one . . . 'O God, our God!' the people wailed with one accord, 'Our father has left us, our father has left us!' . . .

"They slowly wended their way up Mount Carmel, the vineyard of God . . . After two hours' walking, they reached the garden of the Tomb of the Báb . . . As the vast concourse pressed around, representatives of the various denominations, Moslems, Christians, and Jews, all hearts being ablaze with fervent love of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, some on the impulse of the moment, others prepared, raised their voices in eulogy and regret, paying their last homage of farewell to their loved one. So united were they in their acclamation of him, (nine prom-

inent speakers of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities) as the wise educator and reconciler of the human race in this perplexed and sorrowful age, that there seemed to be nothing left for the Bahá'ís to say."²⁷

THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

Since 1844, the followers of the Bahá'í faith have maintained a united world community through devotion to the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. With the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921, this heterogeneous group of people, consisting of many races and temperaments, of various religious traditions and social backgrounds, handicapped by language and custom, exposed to the disruptive forces of the surrounding world, withstood perhaps the severest test of any incipient community.

The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá gives form to a World Order, the substance of which is contained in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Unity within the Bahá'í community is assured through the establishment of the Administrative Order, resting on two pillars: the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. 'Abdu'l-Bahá appointed Shoghi Effendi, the first Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, and in due course, the Bahá'ís will elect the first Universal House of Justice. In the interval, the burden of both these institutions has fallen on the shoulders of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's twenty-five year old grandson who, at the time of his passing, was studying at Oxford.

To appraise the accomplishment of Shoghi Effendi in these last twenty-four years requires a broad perspective. He has set a new standard of leadership that is largely responsible

²⁷ *The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, by Lady Blomfield and Shoghi Effendi.

for the achievements of a widely scattered but closely integrated world community. Only future generations will fully appreciate his labors. This period has witnessed the birth of a divinely conceived structure that, Bahá'ís believe, is destined to formulate the most noble expression of the collective conscience of local, national and world communities. Under the patient guidance of the first Guardian, the nucleus of local and national Houses of Justice has been laid in no less than sixty countries. These instruments will serve as pillars of the Universal House of Justice, to be elected in the not too distant future.

The constant expansion of Bahá'í activities to the farthest corners of the earth has coincided with an internal consolidation which is essential for further growth. Authoritative translations of the more important works of the founder and interpreter of the faith have been made available. An expanding list of Bahá'í publications during the last two decades records the growth of the faith. Shoghi Effendi's own writings, published in several volumes, testify that there is nothing static about this faith and that its method of action is determined by changing requirements, without compromise of its basic tenets.

The World Order letters of Shoghi Effendi imply the abrogation of the commandment "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." These letters reaffirm the necessity for the same exalted standard of individual conduct that has been exemplified by the various founders of religion and, in addition, they contain a plan for a unified world, Bahá'u'lláh's instrument for establishing justice and peace upon the earth.

CHAPTER VII

A World Faith and a World Plan

A NOTEBOOK, written in an awkward hand, was found in the pocket of a dead American soldier. It contained these eloquent thoughts: "This is the time for a new revelation. People don't think much about religion nowadays. But we need a voice from on High, brother, and I don't mean maybe. This thing has got out of human ability to run. I'm no religious fanatic. But we are in a situation where something better than human brains has got to give us advice."

Modern men cannot help but agree with this soldier. We cannot get out of this mess depending solely upon our own resources. That much seems certain. We need help urgently, and we need it "from on High." For we cannot get it from here below as the animals do. That perhaps is the difference between man and the beast. Animals can get all they need and all they can hope for, from their own surroundings. The earth and its possessions can satisfy a cow, a horse, or any other animal, but not man. Man wants more than the earth can give. Its treasures will not satisfy him. Therefore, unlike the animals, he must reach above himself. And only if he reaches hard and long enough, can he find peace within himself and the means to peace with his fellows.

Modern men have forgotten this, relying instead on their own resources and their own brains. So did the German army.

And so do our statesmen now. The soldier who is now dead knew this was all wrong. So do some people now alive. Among them are the Bahá'ís who cannot be overlooked, for their teaching "from on High" is up-to-date. That is what we need now, and that is what the dead soldier meant. Advice from above now, and not advice that was given two thousand years ago. The Bahá'ís have this. Can we blame them for their willingness to die, if necessary, to pass that knowledge on to others?

This conviction explains the confidence of his followers, that what Bahá'u'lláh has to offer to the world now is better than what the human brain can produce. This gives them a sense of security without losing touch with the world. Bahá'ís are of the world and yet of the spirit. The adherents of this faith carry on, conscious of the complexities of the age which philosophers cannot unravel, aware of the economic and political problems which our statesmen leave unsolved, and protected from the confusion of moral values which makes even our cynics cry. Bahá'ís move forward undisturbed on a well-tried path, towards a fully defined goal. They know they cannot fail, though they may be delayed.

Bahá'u'lláh has told them: "The vitality of men's belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it? Is it within human power . . . to effect in the constituent elements of any of the minute and indivisible particles of matter so complete a transformation as to transmute it into purest gold? Perplexing and difficult as this may appear, the still greater task of converting satanic strength into heavenly power is one that we have been empowered to accomplish.

The Force capable of such a transformation transcendeth the potency of the Elixir itself. The Word of God, alone, can claim the distinction of being endowed with the capacity required for so great and farreaching a change.”¹

Faith in God has not moved mountains, but it has changed the lives of many individuals. The renewal of faith by Bahá’u’lláh creates a social experience for the individual. It is a mark of faith for a Bahá’í to face the social problems of life, to assume collective responsibility, and to seek for solutions in the light of the principle: “The world is but one country, and mankind its citizens.”

AMERICA’S RESPONSIBILITY

Persia gave birth to a new world faith; America has afforded it shelter. Wherever in Europe or Asia the Bahá’í Faith attempted to establish itself during its hundred years of checkered history, it met the persecution of both church and state authorities. The old world, dying, was too absorbed in its own past and too jealous of its own tottering institutions to give it a fair trial. America, described by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as, “the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide, and the free assemble,” has been challenged and apparently chosen to design the plans for the world’s spiritual conquest.

Bahá’u’lláh’s followers in Persia had to die for their faith. His American followers have to live for it, which, on occasion, proves just as difficult. It is not easy to espouse a faith whose numerical strength, in an age where greatness is measured by

¹ *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, N. Y., Bahá’í Publishing Committee, 1935, p. 200.

numbers, is unimpressive. The name "Bahá'í" sounds foreign to the American ear, but then the name of Christ was not Anglo-Saxon either. It, too, must have sounded strange at first, but that was a long time ago. Not only is the name alien, but the language, the habits, and the religious background of the founders are also unfamiliar. The center of the faith and the land of its birth, where the mass of its followers live, are far removed from the American scene. Therefore, the appeal now is to genuine seekers fired with imagination and moral courage.

The United States was the first country of the west to answer the call of Bahá'u'lláh. It was also the first to send out pioneers who established the faith in France, in Great Britain, in Germany, in the Far East, in the Balkan and Scandinavian countries, in Latin America, in the Carribean and Pacific Islands, in South Africa and Australia. Americans supplied funds to translate and disseminate Bahá'í literature in forty languages. They were the first to initiate the Administrative Order as laid down in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. While their fellow-believers in the Near and Middle East were bent down by the fanatical clergy of a corrupt state, the American community secured federal and state recognition for its Spiritual Assemblies and national endowments.

The teachings of Christ flowered westward from the place of its birth. So did Islam. We know that the Eastern churches of Jerusalem, of Antioch, and of Alexandria could not match in splendor or effectiveness the Christian institutions of the west. We also know that Islam reached out from an inhospitable homeland to yield its fairest fruit in distant Spain. Might not this be a repetition of history? "From the beginning of time until the present day," wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "the light

of Divine Revelation hath risen in the East and shed its radiance upon the West. The illumination thus shed hath, however, acquired in the West an extraordinary brilliance. Consider the Faith proclaimed by Jesus . . . The day is approaching when ye shall witness how, through the splendor of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, the West will have replaced the East, radiating the light of Divine Guidance.”²

'Abdu'l-Bahá considered the spreading of the faith in America as one of his most important tasks. Early in his ministry he enlisted the first followers of so promising a land and nurtured them with special attention. Soon after his deliverance from prison he visited America. He was present when Bahá'ís laid the corner-stone of the first House of Worship in the west, and it was 'Abdu'l-Bahá who made the momentous statement: “May this American Democracy be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be the first nation to proclaim the unity of mankind. May it be the first to unfurl the Standard of the Most Great Peace . . . The American nation is equipped and empowered to accomplish that which will adorn the pages of history, to become the envy of the world, and be blest in both the East and West for the triumph of its people . . . The American continent gives signs and evidence of very great advancement. Its future is even more promising, for its influence and illumination are far-reaching. It will lead all nations spiritually.”³

In a land known for its comfort and moral laxity, 'Abdu'l-Bahá inspired his American followers to a remarkable degree of self-sacrifice. He induced scores of them to give up the

² Shoghi Effendi, *America and the Most Great Peace*, N. Y., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1933, p. 7.

³ *Ibid*, p. 8.

pleasant surroundings of home, friends, and the security of a position, to settle in distant lands. Not as professional missionaries but as ordinary laymen, they faced the problem of earning a living while serving God by spreading the new faith.

The task of these spiritual pioneers was not easy. To uphold, at the turn of the century, the principle of equality between men and women invited trouble. There are still many countries where this idea is not popular. To think independently, another basic Bahá'í tenet, was also beyond the comprehension of the masses. Traditional religious education was apt to close the mind. The Bahá'í attempt to bring religion and science together frightened the churchman and often made the sceptical scientist even more sceptical. That all men are brothers, was accepted in the abstract, but few could share the actual experience of Bahá'í pioneers. And to believe that all religions are one, that all Prophets speak for the same God, implied surrender of a tradition, long supported by public approval, which few were prepared to relinquish. As to the social teachings of Bahá'u'lláh: education for all, a world language, universal peace, social justice and a world tribunal; these sounded too visionary for the average man, accustomed to a much narrower world, divided by conflicting loyalties.

Undaunted by these ingrained traditional barriers, the American Bahá'ís pushed on, step by step, from state to state, from country to country, across oceans and continents, sometimes beaten back and often halted, but never stopped. They will go on conquering, making spiritual history, as did their ancestors in pushing back the western frontier.

The full impact of Bahá'í ideals on American thought is as yet undisclosed. Wilson's vision of a world tribunal, though rejected, has left its mark. The nation formed in the crucible of so many races offers ideal ground for the application of

Bahá'í principles. The color question, more immediate and pressing on this continent than anywhere else, is a challenge the non-Bahá'í world tries to ignore or postpone, but cannot escape. Bahá'í opportunities in breaking down race prejudice are immense.

There are really two Americas. The older one wants to live for itself. It was cruelly shaken at Pearl Harbor. The younger America is part of the world; it is still unformed. The old and sedate society will cling to old America and will rather die than change. The young and daring, though fewer in number, will try to create a new America that will fit into a new world order. They will need the Bahá'í principles as airplanes need the air.

"The full measure of your success," writes 'Abdu'l-Bahá in one of his letters to the American Bahá'ís, "is as yet unrevealed, its significance still unapprehended . . . I fervently hope that in the near future the whole earth may be stirred and shaken by the results of your achievements . . . Be not concerned with the smallness of your numbers, neither be oppressed by the multitude of an unbelieving world . . . Exert yourselves; your mission is unspeakably glorious . . ."⁴

A NEW RACE OF MEN

It is not easy to attain to the standard of a Bahá'í. The requirements are threefold, namely: a high sense of moral rectitude, chastity in private life, and no discrimination of any form against people of a different race, color, class, or creed.

Each Bahá'í is eligible to, and therefore a potential member of, the House of Justice. By the casting of his vote, each

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Bahá'í becomes an organic and inseparable part of the City of God on earth. He becomes one with the world conscience, a supporting pillar for the guidance of the world. He knows that good thoughts and good deeds will affect not only his children and neighbors, but also society as a whole. For a Bahá'í belongs to the world at large. He has removed the barriers which separate white from yellow, rich from poor, and Jew from Gentile. His sense of moral responsibility includes all. His conscience demands that he identify the problems of others with his own, and understand their point of view as his own. His religion demands instant and uninterrupted action, and his Book tells him how.

"The companions of God are in this day," writes Bahá'u'lláh, "the lump that must leaven the peoples of the world. They must show forth such trustworthiness, such truthfulness and perseverance, such deeds and character that all mankind may profit by their example . . . The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof." And in another passage Bahá'u'lláh promises that "One righteous act . . . can tear every bond asunder, and hath the power to restore the force that hath spent itself and vanished . . . It is through your deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others."⁵

As to the second requirement, a chaste and clean life, Bahá'í conduct, especially that of youth, stands out in a materialistic society whose moral fibre seems to peter out. It is not easy to resist the enervating influence of irreligion, for a Bahá'í does not withdraw from society. He mixes with people and enjoys life. He remains, nevertheless, moderate in a surround-

⁵ Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, N. Y., Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1939, pp. 19-21.

ing which has lost all restraint. His mind must remain clean, his attitude humble, and his intentions sincere. Opium, alcohol, and other habit-forming drugs are forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh. No Bahá'í will share the excesses of a decadent age. The reason for this is not fear of hell but a rational faith in the ultimate decency and spiritual purpose of life. Bahá'u'lláh said: "The world is but a show, vain and empty, a mere nothing, bearing the semblance of reality. Set not your affections upon it. Break not the bond that united you with your Creator, and be not of those that have erred and strayed from His ways. Verily I say, the world is like the vapor in a desert, which the thirsty dreameth to be water and striveth after it with all his might, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it to be mere illusion."⁶

The high moral standard set by Bahá'u'lláh should not be confused with the life of an ascetic or a bigoted puritan. Bahá'ís do not deprive themselves of the good things on earth. They do not underestimate the needs or the importance of the human body. All that is good and beautiful has been created for man to use and enjoy. "Should a man," Bahá'u'lláh assures us, "wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing whatever to intervene between him and God . . . Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed you, and deprive not yourselves from His wondrous bounties. Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are truly thankful."⁷

The third requirement for men of the new age, the total elimination of racial, religious, and social prejudice, becomes

⁶ *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 68.

⁷ Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 28.

easier when we follow 'Abdu'l-Bahá's comparison of the human family with a garden of flowers. "Though differing in kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruit, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color!"

Confusion as to the relative value of country, race, or religion has been compared with a dark room in which a search is made for hidden treasure. Each seeker, having discovered one part of the treasure, believes he has found all and refutes any other claim as false. Without light in the room they have no means to prove the relative value of the possessions they claim to own exclusively. Then, suddenly, light appears, and all recognize and appreciate each others' possession. Before, they quarrelled over possession of the treasure, now they are united in admiring the unique contribution of each.

The world needs such a light, for, deprived of this penetrating light, the world cannot appreciate the priceless contribution of each race, country, and religion. "Close your eyes to racial differences, and welcome all with the light of oneness." And in the *Hidden Words* Bahá'u'lláh writes: "Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost

being, by your deeds and actions the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory."

WORLD FAITH AND A WORLD PLAN

Characteristic of our modern age seems to be the great and complex problem of getting along with people. This difficult question is particularly great today, for never before have we been so dependent on our neighbors. As if to increase our confusion, we have to face people not merely as individuals, but also as nations, races, ethnical groups, trade unions. We are dealing less and less with individuals, and more and more with collective groups.

Good manners and moral behavior, as taught at home and in Sunday schools, have helped in our relationships as individuals, but have little to offer to our collective problems. As a consequence, religion is fading out, since it is geared to the individual and his personal needs, lacking a plan for the world community. Modern man can find neither comfort nor strength in a personal faith, without a faith in the future of the world.

The well-known psychologist and psychiatrist, C. G. Jung, made this observation about modern man: "We are living undeniably in a period of the greatest restlessness, nervous tension, confusion, and disorientation of outlook. Among my patients from many countries, all of them educated persons, there is a considerable number who came to see me, not because they were suffering from a neurosis, but because they could find no meaning in life or were torturing themselves

with questions which neither present-day philosophy nor religion could answer. Some of them perhaps thought that I knew of a magic formula, but I was soon forced to tell them that I too, had no answer to give.”⁸

The rising interest in psychology confirms the restlessness of modern man in his search for a soul. It is noteworthy that, as the influence of religion declined, cases of neuroses grew noticeably more frequent. Jung goes on to make a remarkably interesting statement: “Among all my patients in the second half of life — that is to say, over thirty-five — there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook.”⁹

We know that not only modern man but also modern society is in search of a soul. Society is turning to the economist and the sociologist with the same desperation as the modern individual turns to the psychologist. The answer in both cases is essentially the same: Forget yourself, find interest in others, and work for the whole world. Unless we have faith in God, we lose faith in our fellowmen. The self-sufficient, self-centered nation suffers the same consequences as the egotist who believes himself superior to his kind. A nation surrounded by high protective tariffs, buying its own goods and eating its own food, must feel as does an egocentric individual who, surrounding himself by walls of mirrors, sees only himself.

⁸ C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, N. Y., Harcourt Brace, 1934, pp. 266, 267.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

A friend once wrote to Turgenev: "It seems to me that to put oneself in the second place is the whole significance of life," which is a keen diagnosis of our problems. But Turgenev, searching for the remedy, replied: "It seems to me that to discover what to put before oneself, in the first place, is the whole problem of life." In what or in whom can we place enough faith to put before ourselves? And we must find this faith not only for the individual but also for the nation. For unless we have a common faith, we cannot agree on a common remedy for our common problems.

We need a reorientation of values; for this we need a new faith. Faith in God and in ourselves is not enough. We must also have faith in society. Our reliance on knowledge as opposed to faith is of comparatively recent date. Civilization for the last 3000 years has been shaped by faith in one of its many forms: Hindu, Zoroastrian, Hebrew, Christian, or Muslim. It was faith rather than knowledge that gave each of them vision and shaped their destiny. We forget that, until about two hundred years ago, religious instruction everywhere dominated education. It is only since the beginning of the intellectual revolution, three or four hundred years ago, that faith was displaced by knowledge as a controlling influence. We need faith again, faith in ourselves, and faith in mankind. We must be able to believe that the Negro of the South and the yellow race of the Far East can be as clean, as just, as decent, and as pleasant as ourselves.

Such a faith cannot be obtained from books. There is no prescribed formula for all to follow. And yet, it is the most sustaining and enduring force we know. The way to faith, as to all worthwhile things, is not easy. It requires effort, perseverance, and courage. No human knowledge was ever a

substitute for faith in the founders of religion. The Prophet has always been the link between the known and the unknown, between man and God. His religion gave stability, it built character. We need it again, but this time for the whole world. Humanity is yearning for faith, a world plan, and a world conscience.

There are two worlds of which we are certain, the known and the unknown. That the unknown world exists we can prove, for whenever we make a new discovery, we conquer a part of the unknown. When we learn something new, we enlarge the known at the expense of the unknown. These two worlds can never meet. For the moment the known penetrates the unknown, the latter becomes known.

God belongs to the unknown world. We believe in God because of faith rather than knowledge. Faith in God, His Prophets, and their teachings, are an essential part of our heritage, the backbone of our civilization. This faith in God and in the existence of the unknown impels man to reach beyond the known, to strive, to discover and create, to make known what has been unknown. Since the world of man and the world of God cannot meet, various attempts have been made to establish a bridge between them. So far, the Prophets have been the only satisfactory mediators. They have used faith as the only means to establish the contact.

The great unknown to be conquered in this century is in the realm of social experience. A new pattern-value has to be discovered for the establishment of a representative world government, a planetary welfare economy serving all the people, and a supranational world court to administer justice.

Human knowledge alone cannot take us beyond the present limits of the known world. But faith can, and that is why it

supersedes reason. A man of faith has a greater vision than a man of knowledge. Experience has shown that a man of faith has not only a greater creative power than two men who do not share his faith, but than all men who lack his faith.

Through faith in Bahá'u'lláh, the mediator of God for our time, his followers have faith in a supranational world commonwealth: a world parliament representing all the peoples of the world, a world tribunal with sufficient power to maintain peace, equitable distribution of the resources of the world, a world language, one currency, a world citizenship, and one common faith in one common God. This is the vision of a Prophet of God and his people, and as their number increases, the vision approaches reality. The human mind, with its doubts and hesitation, lacks faith in himself and his fellows, and is deprived of those creative powers essential for the remaking of the world. Faith, today, without a world plan is of little more avail than a plan without faith. We need both: a World Faith and a World Plan.



INDEX

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 26, 104, 106, 118, 119, 129, 132, 150, 151; childhood and youth, 157-158; first believer of Bahá'u'lláh, 158; appointed Center of the Covenant, 158; imprisonment at 'Akka, 158-159; visit to London, 159-160; visit to Paris, 160-161; visit to America, 161-162; prophecies, 162-163; death, 164; 169, 170, 171, 173
- Adams, John, 43
- Airplane, 13, 14
- Ali, 76
- 'Alí-Muhammad, Siyyid (*see* Báb)
- Arabs, 73-75, 83, 86, 87-98 *passim*
- Aristotle, 80, 87
- Arnold, T. W., (quoted) 79
- Articles of Confederation, 42, 43
- Atkins, G. G. and G. S. Braden, (quoted) 92
- Atlantic Charter, 31
- Augustine (Saint), 57, 96
- Báb, the, early years, 136-137; beginning of messianic mission, 137; revelation of the Bayán, 137; imprisonment, 138-140; growth of Bábí following, 140-141; execution, 141-142; comments by Europeans, 142-143; 157, 158, 165
- Bábiism (*see* Bahá'í Faith)
- Bahá'í Faith, 69-72, 101, 103-111, 113-166 *passim*, 168, 173-177; in America, 157, 161, 169-173
- Bahá'u'lláh, 70, 71, 72, 81, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 113, 114, 120-126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 143; early years, 144; accepts Bábí Cause, 145; imprisonment in Tih-rán, 145-147; withdrawal to wilderness, 147; imprisonment in Constantinople, 148; imprisonment at 'Akka, 148-151; visited by Professor Edward G. Browne, 151-153; physical description of, 153; writings, 154-156; death, 156; 158, 165, 168, 170, 174, 175, 181
- Bayán, 137
- Bentham, Jeremy, 5
- Bible, 63, 92, 93, 139
- Blomfield, Lady, (quoted) 160, 165
- Borah, Senator W. E., 45
- Briand, Aristide, 47
- Browne, Edward G., (quoted) 132, 140, 141, 147; visit to Bahá'u'lláh, 151-153
- Calvin, John, 57
- Capitalism, 23
- Carr, E. H., (quoted) 37, 38
- Cartels, 32
- Casanovas, Domingo, 66
- Chakam, Khalif, 82
- Chase, Thornton, (quoted) 159
- Cheyne, T. K., (quoted) 142
- Chiol, Sir Valentine, (quoted) 143
- Christ, 54-64 *passim*, 68, 69, 73, 100, 102, 109, 121, 137, 170
- Christianity, 22, 54-72, 80, 85, 98, 105, 109
- City-state, medieval, 80
- Clovis, 85
- Collective planning, 22-25
- "Collective Security," 30
- "Common man," 31, 32
- Condliffe, J. B., (quoted) 22
- Conscience, 118, 122-123, 125
- Constitutional Convention of 1787, 45
- Continental Congress, 42, 43, 44
- Cook, Thomas I., (quoted) 57, 62
- Corbett, P. E., (quoted) 36, 39
- Cordova, University of, 81
- Corporations, 23
- Crum, W. L., 23

- Crusaders, 85, 87, 105
 Curry, W. B., 49
 Curtis, Lionel, 47
 Curzon, Lord, 135, 136
 Davis, J. Tyssul, (quoted) 108
 Democracy, 112, 126
 Disarmament, 36
 Doukhobors, 59
 Draper, Y. W., (quoted) 85
 Economics, national *vs.* international,
 16-18; power *vs.* welfare, 25, 27
 Effendi, Abbas (*see* 'Abdu'l-Bahá)
 Effendi, Shoghi, (quoted) 27, 69, 111,
 121, 128, 131, 132-133, 137-138,
 171, 174, 175; *Guardian of the*
 Bahá'í Faith, 165-166
 Esslemont, J. E., (quoted) 144, 159,
 163
 "Four Freedoms," 30-31
 France, 25
 Free enterprise, 22-25; (*see also*
 Trade, free)
 Garrison, William Lloyd, 76
 Germany, 25-26
 Gibbon, Edward, (quoted) 86, 95
 Goodwin, Astley J. H., (quoted) 13
 Gorham, Nathaniel, 44
 Gregory (Saint), 57
 Haberler, G., (quoted) 22
 Hague Court (*see* *Permanent Court of*
 International Justice)
 Henry, Patrick, 45
 Heraclius, 83, 85
 House of Justice (Bahá'í), 113, 114,
 117, 120-126, 127, 130
 Housman, Laurence, (quoted) 30
 Huber, Max, (quoted) 59
 Imperialism, 19, 32
 Individualism, 22, 54-55, 57, 59, 61-
 63, 68, 69, 122-123, 124
 Industrial Revolution, 16
 Industries, domestic, 20; export, 20,
 21; subsidized, 21, 25
 International Labor Organization, 34-
 35, 41
 Internationalism, 5; (*see also* *Supra-*
 nationalism and World-federation)
 Irving, Washington, (quoted) 78
 Isidore of Seville (Saint), 57
 Islam, 5, 72, 73-101, 137, 170
 Ives, Howard Colby, (quoted) 162
 Jessup, Henry H., 156
 Jews, 79, 82, 85, 90
 Jung, C. G., 65, 177-178
 Justice, 68, 103, 109, 121, 124-125;
 (*see also* *Social justice*)
 Justinian, 85
 Khadija, 75, 97
 Killough, Hugh B., (quoted) 18
 Koran (*see* *Qur'án*)
Laissez-faire, 22, 24
 League of Nations, 5, 33-39, 41, 51,
 120, 132
 Lee, Richard Henry, 45
 Lenormant, Francois, (quoted) 96
 Love, Christian concept of, 54, 58, 60-
 64, 68-69, 100
 Machiavelli, 80
 Madison, James, 45
 Maimonides, 90
 Margoliouth, D. S., (quoted) 74
 Martin, P. W., (quoted) 24
 Mass-production, 17
 Mennonites, 59
 Michaud, J. F., (quoted) 85, 86
 Mihdí, 149-150
 Minorities, 111, 115, 116
 Mirzá Husayn'Alí (*see* *Bahá'u'lláh*)
 Mohammed Essad Bey, (quoted) 84
 Monogamy, 97, 98
 Moors, in Spain, 81, 82
 Moses, 69, 100, 109, 137
 Muhammad, 72, 73, 75-79, 84, 89,
 91-98
 Muhammadism (*see* *Islam*)
 Muir, Sir William, (quoted) 74, 75,
 78

- Muslim culture, 81, 82, 87-91
 Napoleon III, 155
 Nationalism (*see* Sovereignty, national)
 Nationalism, economic, 18-19, 20, 21, 25-26, 39, 40
 Niebuhr, Reinhold, (quoted) 61, 64
 Ohlin, Bertil, (quoted) 24
 Omar, 85
 Paine, Thomas, 44
 Palmer, E. H., (quoted) 91
 Party politics, 112, 114
 Permanent Court of International Justice, 34, 37, 41
 Persia, 135
 Pitts, John, 67
 Pius XII, Pope, 67
 Political boundaries, problem of, 18-19, 25-26
 Pollock, Sir Frederick, (quoted) 80
 Polygamy, 95-98
 Population, density of, 17
 Postwar world, 28ff.
 Power economy, 25-27
 Prohibition, 73
 Protestantism, 22, 99-100
 Puritans, 55
 Qur'án, 83, 84, 85, 88, 89, 91-95, 97, 98, 139
 Racial equality, 6, 52, 83, 86, 106, 176, 179
 Religion, general discussion of, 64-67, 167, 179-181
 Roman Empire, 80, 83
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 30, 67
 Russell, Bertrand, 54
 Rutter, Owen, (quoted) 93
 Saladin, 85
 Sarton, George, (quoted) 83, 88, 89, 90
 Schurtz, Henry, (quoted) 82
 Seignobos, (quoted) 90
 Shays' Rebellion, 44
 Sheil, Lady, (quoted) 143
 Slavery, 21, 76, 83-84
 Smuts, Gen. Jan C., 38
 Social justice, 57, 58, 62, 63, 68, 113, 172
 Socialism, 22-23, 24, 25
 Sovereignty, national, 25, 35, 39, 40-42, 43, 46, 48
 Soviet Union, 24
 Spain, 81
 Staley, Eugene, (quoted) 15, 16
 Stoicism, 62
 Streit, Clarence K., 41, 44, 47-49
 Subsidies, 21, 25
 Supranationalism, 5, 27, 28, 42, 47, 48, 50-53, 102-134, 181; (*see also* World-federation)
 "Tablets to the Kings" (Bahá'u'lláh), 154, 155
 Talmud, 95
 Tariffs, 19-22, 46, 48, 178
 Ten Commandments, the, 54, 100
 Tolstoy, 59
 Trade, urge to, 14; expansion, 16, 18; international, 16, 17, 18, 22; free, 21, 46; barriers, 14, 18, 20ff., 25, 40, 46, 178 (*see also* Tariffs)
 Travel-time, 13, 14, 15
 Tucker, Josiah, 44
 Turgenev, 178-179
 Undset, Sigrid, (quoted) 60
Union Now, 47, 48
 Victoria, Queen, 131, 155
 Wallace, Henry A., 31, 32
 War, 109, 131
 Welfare economy, 25-27
 William I (German Emperor), 155
 Willkie, Wendell, 32
 Wilson, Woodrow, 34, 172
 World-domination, 28-29
 World-federation, 29ff., 47-53, 126-217, 133; (*see also* Supranationalism)
 Young Turks, 159
 Younghusband, Sir Francis, (quoted) 141, 142