

**The Beginning
of
the Bahá'í Cause
in
Manchester**

Passed for Publication by the National Bahá'í Assembly
Published by the Manchester Bahá'í Assembly.
March 1925.

Tablet from Bahá'u'lláh to Abdu'l Bahá



In the name of God!

O Most Mighty Branch!

On Wednesday two written leaflets have been received from thee and every letter thereof testified unto the Unity of the Divine Essence and the Sanctity of God, the True One, above all resemblance and likeness. Blessed be thy pen, thine ink, and the scroll that beareth thy remembrance.

I pray that by thee He may graciously enable His servants to sound the inmost depths of the Ocean of Divine Unity, that through thy remembrance He may aid them to drink deep from the Streams of Everlasting Life, that through thine utterance He may cause them to quaff the mystic wine of the Knowledge of God, that He may assist thee to triumph by the Hosts of understanding and wisdom in suchwise that by thee He may gloriously conquer the citadels of worlds and of hearts! There is none other God but He, the Gracious, the Beloved!

O thou that art the apple of mine eye! My Glory rest upon thee! Mine ocean of loving kindness, the Day-Star of My Grace, the heavens of My Mercy be upon thee! We pray unto God that He may illumine all mankind with the light of thy knowledge and wisdom; that He may ordain for thee that which may gladden thy heart and solace thine eyes. Mighty and Powerful over all things is He! Glory, mercy and praise rest upon thee and upon whomsoever circleth around thee!

Foreword

The fragrant and sweet influences of the Bahá'í Cause (the Cause of Re-assurance, Peace and Reconciliation) are wafting into all countries in the world, to help them to attain their holiest and most cherished ideals.

Love is the highest honour of each person and of the whole human race; therefore in the Unity of world-fellowship will be found the realisation of all our purest ideals. For if a student goes carefully into the highest ideals of each and all countries, he finds that the very highest ideal of them all is the Kingdom of God upon earth. Their truest, noblest, most beautiful aspirations resolve themselves into that: the world-family of the loving heavenly Father. Who amongst us is satisfied with anything less than the very highest ideal?

When the first breaths of Bahá'í fragrance reached us in Manchester from the Holy Land, we, being English people, remembered that in a century long ago, when our ancestors were heathens and had but lately settled in this beautiful (and now renowned) island, a Saint of Rome, beholding with kindly admiration and pity the fair faces of some English children in the Roman slave-market, was touched by the Holy Spirit to send teachers to this country, charged with the noble mission of illuminating the minds of the people of England with the Light of the Gospel, which they themselves had received from the Holy Land. We remembered, that, Christianized, the various races which came into England gradually blended and finally became one in soul, with a Parliament; spread the Divine Gospel in every land and abolished slavery wherever they ruled; and it did not seem to us unreasonable to see, in the appeal for World-fellowship and Unity from Abdu'l Bahá in the Holy Land, another wonderful step in the spiritual course of events.

Abdu'l Bahá said that

... this is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons are luminous and the world

will become as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of the unity of the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes. The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of the world of humanity, and of the fundamental oneness of the religions of the world. These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars will pass away, and by the Will of God the Most Great Peace shall come. Then the world will be seen as a new world and all men will be as brothers.

Was it by chance, or was it by the power of God that the English people, seeing the sincere and beautiful character of Abdu'l Bahá, knighted him through their noble King? As for us, we saw the perfect reasonableness of this next step on the part of England, that, as of old the races in this land became united, we should now stand for a greater unity that of the world; for all people are the children of God!

Will not our power in this direction be greater if we realise that the various sections of Religion in this country have each their peculiar value and all have the same ideal—the Kingdom of God upon earth? It cannot be unreasonable for each sect to acknowledge the virtues and the usefulness of the others; or to acknowledge that there is nothing so perfect that it cannot be improved upon? And once having rid ourselves of prejudice and opened our mouths to sincerely give honour wherever honour is due, shall we not be happier and stronger in the endeavour to bring about (with Divine Assistance) the World-Fellowship—“The Most Great Peace?”

To help to remove prejudices, to give honour where honour is due, to love people everywhere, is the task of the Bahá'ís. In this spirit we began and in this spirit we shall continue (by God's sweet mercy) in this city.

From the commencement of the Bahá'í Movement in Manchester to the end of the Great War

Of spare but hardy build was the little elderly woman Miss Sarah Ann Ridgeway—the first to stand solely and

purely for the Bahá'í Cause in the neighbourhood of Manchester. A native of Pendleton, a working-class district, she had been brought up to the craft of silk-weaving. The best of her years had been spent abroad in various States of America. By the year 1906 she was again in England—residing at 16 Smith Street, Pendleton—for on November 10th of that year, Mr Mason Remey wrote to her from Washington, USA, enclosing with his letter a printed copy of a beautiful tablet from Abdu'l Bahá to “The Beloved of God of the Occident”. Her name appears in the long list of names of those who had sent a supplication from the West to the Master in Acca, Palestine, earlier in the year.

While residing in her humble little cottage, a spinster and very careful of habit, obtaining her living by working at the loom in a neighbouring factory, she occupied her spare time by attending meetings and religious Services here and there; also in corresponding with her various friends, to some of whom she wrote in French; taking every opportunity to spread the Glad Tidings and the Principles of the Bahá'í Movement. Never attempting to gather around her a group of believers, she simply gave the Light by example in the factory, or by conversation after meetings and Services such as she attended in the city. By nature gentle and intellectual, she would have been, if not animated by the Bahá'í faith, of a retiring disposition. Her Pendleton friends were all of the humble and unassuming type, good working women like herself—unpretentious. Her teaching seemed a little too unusual to their minds, but they trusted and admired her good qualities.

It was in November 1910, that Mr E. T. Hall became acquainted with her—Miss Ridgeway being at this date about sixty-two years of age, a little, industrious, grey-haired lady, while he was a traveller in oils, a man of thirty years of age with a wife and two children. The acquaintanceship began in this way:

Mr Hall's mind was turning in the direction of World Fellowship and a world-religion, but he was still unsatis-

fled, having as yet found no congenial society. Although an omnivorous reader and a continual searcher, he had never yet heard of the Bahá'í Movement. Towards the end of Oct. 1910, however, after reading a letter from the pen of Mr Tudor Pole (Bristol), which appeared in the columns of the "Christian Commonwealth," he (Mr Hall) wrote to Mr Pole asking for further information. This soon came in a package of literature from Miss E. J. Rosenberg, with whom Mr Pole had been in communication.

After reading this literature, Mr Hall and his dear wife became very interested in the Movement and immediately passed the papers to Mr and Mrs John C. Craven, near relatives, who in like manner at once became interested. They made inquiry as to other Bahá'ís in the Manchester district, but Miss Rosenberg knew only of Miss Ridgeway—the lady in Pendleton. Miss Rosenberg communicated with her, and Miss Ridgeway then wrote to Mr Hall, in a letter dated November 12th 1910, saying how pleased she was to hear of his interest in the Movement; that she had been a Bahá'í eleven years, having taken lessons in Baltimore (Maryland) in 1899. She wrote "I see the beauties of ceasing wars, of the dawn of Universal Peace; of the Unity of Religions. I hope you will find that which you need in its teaching—the conditions to live the Kingdom upon earth." So the acquaintanceship began.

The friends could meet but seldom, but Miss Ridgeway lent them several books relating to the Cause and others were purchased. In January, 1911, Miss Rosenberg came to this city and stayed several days, teaching the new friends the principles and the fascinating history of the Cause; also addressing a full meeting of Theosophists whilst in Manchester. During 1911, several people felt attracted, but preferred to suspend judgment. Other people, when they heard of this Movement for Peace and Reconciliation, with its Glad Tidings, became quite hostile at once, being prejudiced. Meanwhile the true friends continued their studies. A glimpse at this time into Miss Ridgeway's little front room may not be amiss. One would find a warm fire burning brightly; a vase of

daffodils upon the table and near it several Bahá'í books, including an American book of coloured views of Acca and Haifa. Over the fire, upon the front of the light-brown coloured mantelpiece, were several geometrical figures which possessed, to her, mystical meanings—the central figure being a square, painted in neat black lines. One day, when Mrs Hall asked her what this figure signified, she replied with a smile that she had painted it there so that, whenever she looked in that direction, she would be reminded to meet life “four-square”. Her life was just like that.

In September, 1911, information arrived that Abdul Bahá was in London. Miss Ridgeway journeyed thither to meet him. While there, she met a spiritual Bahá'í from St. Ives in Cornwall, named Daniel Jenkyn, who would be twenty-seven years of age at that time. She felt that this young man would make a good friend for Mr Craven and Mr Hall and upon her return she informed them that Mr Jenkyn had promised to write them. Thereupon Mr Hall wrote to the young man of St. Ives saying he trusted the friends in Manchester would soon hear from him. Mr Jenkyn replied with his first inspiring letter—dated October 1st. Then followed, during 1912, a powerful spiritual correspondence between Mr Jenkyn and the Manchester friends.

These latter were active in approaching various people to interest them in the Cause, but seemed to make little progress. Many said that the principles were good and beautiful, but they felt that Christianity was sufficient for all they needed (quite forgetting the rest of the world) whilst others were frankly sceptical about the prospects of such a Movement making headway in England, which, they felt, was too materialistic a country for such a spiritual cause. Meanwhile Abdu'l Bahá had been travelling in the United States and was expected to visit England again in December, 1912, on his return journey to the Holy Land.

Mr Jenkyn, whom Abdu'l Bahá greatly loved, wrote urging the Manchester friends to go and see the Master when he should arrive in Liverpool on December 13th.

Taking his advice, Mr Craven and Mr Hall (together with their friend Mr John Downs of Leeds, who, a few years later, fell fighting for this country in Flanders) went to Liverpool upon that date and towards night, in company with nine other friends from London and Liverpool, had the inestimable privilege of seeing the Master.

It was an unforgettable incident—the coming of the Beloved to Liverpool! The great vessel on which he sailed (the S.S. *Celtic*) looming up out of the mist and rain and slowly coming alongside the well-lit landing-stage; high up on one of the decks, the Oriental, picturesque and venerable figure of the lover of mankind, the head of the Movement of Peace and Reconciliation; then the touch of his kindly hand and the sound of his sweet voice; then, after a brief half-hour in his blessed presence, the last glimpse of him as he sat with M. Dreyfus in the coach, bending his head slightly over a lovely red rose—given to him by Miss Herrick—inhalings its fragrance. One priceless glimpse for the Manchester brethren—to last them all their lives and to grow ever more valuable in their estimation! This incident intensified their interest in the Movement. (Miss Ridgeway went to Liverpool the next day to meet the Master, as it was impossible for her to go on the Friday).

In April, 1913, business taking Mr Hall down to Cornwall (amongst the tin mines) he was invited by Mr Jenkyn to stay with him in St. Ives for a week and they spent a very happy time together. The bedroom allotted to Mr Hall (at 3 Bowling Green) overlooked the little harbour, the quaint roofs, the blue and green water on which floated the fishing smacks. Sometimes the friends strolled along the shores and over Tren Crom, or visited Mr & Mrs Wright, of whom mention will be made again; while upon one memorable evening they celebrated the Bahá'í Feast of Ridván in company with Mrs Vesel and the Wrights (this was on Monday, April 21st, 1913) at the apartments of the former lady, who was a Spiritualist by faith, broadminded, tolerant, and attracted by the Bahá'í teaching. This lady prepared a feast in her large drawing

room, about which were scattered many of her beautiful paintings, while upon the table were vases of lovely fragrant flowers. After the repast, beautiful Tablets and sayings of the Holy Ones were read, and then Mr Wright prayed for a blessing upon us all from “Bahá’u’lláh”—the Persian name for the Christ-Spirit. Through the open window came the pure, healthy breeze and the sound of the sea—unforgettable are such moments! St. Ives in Cornwall is forever holy.

But a little later in the same year (upon May 11th, 1913) the pure soul of Miss Ridgeway suddenly passed away out of this world, and one day about a fortnight Bahá’í books to Mr & Mrs Hall, saying that, unfortunately, their address had but just been discovered or they would have received earlier information regarding the death of Miss Ridgeway—“Would they care to have her books?” Thus her books and her string of beads came to the friends without their asking for them—while Mr Craven and Mr Hall were sitting in the front room of 1 Norton Street, Higher Broughton, conversing about the Cause. The first and best amongst the friends was gone—or was she nearer still?

About five months after the death of that pure-hearted one, Miss Ridgeway, a beautiful Tablet came to Mr Hall, reaching him on October 6th, 1913, and saying:

O honourable person!

A thousand times thanks be unto God that thou art athirst for the sea of Reality and seeketh for the secrets of the Kingdom of God.

“This thirst will take thee to the spring of the Water of Life, and this search will guide thee to the Sun of Reality. Increase day by day thy thirst, so that the Grace of God be continuous, the Breath of the Holy Spirit reach thee continually, and the Eternal Life be granted. Increase also thine efforts, and day by day settle more in the Kingdom, and be nearer to God, till love may surge within thee every minute

and may take thee to whatever is the desire of the near ones.

Signed: Abdu'l Bahá Abbás

Revealed in Ramleh, Egypt. Translated by Dr Lotfullah.

On the very next day, Mr Daniel Jenkyn arrived in Manchester to spend a week amongst the friends. They gathered at the Halls and at the Cravens and at the home of Mrs Dean in Harpurhey. This pure-hearted lady was one of the seven Theosophists who founded the Manchester Theosophical Lodge, and it was in her home that Mr Hall happened to read Mr Tudor Pole's letter in the pages of the "Christian Commonwealth"—the letter which led him to the Bahá'í Movement. Mrs Dean was ever afterwards extremely sympathetic towards it, often speaking of its lofty ideals to her Theosophical friends. When Daniel Jenkyn visited her on this special Bahá'í evening, there was present a friend named Mr W. J. Lewis, who was at that date the president of the Manchester Branch of the Esperanto Society. He was a temperance lecturer and a local preacher, very interested in the message of universal love and had read several important Bahá'í books. This gentleman afterwards gave an address before the Salem P.S.A. (Higher Broughton) strongly drawing attention to the Bahá'í Cause and actually holding a picture of Abdu'l Bahá over the pulpit from which he was speaking; for the large audience to see. This was upon a Sunday early in December, 1913.

From Manchester Daniel Jenkyn went to Holland—the first Bahá'í to take the message there. These were blessed times and very happy. By January, 1914, Mr & Mrs Chessel and Mr Treuber (a German) had associated themselves with the Movement; Mr Chessel becoming a very sincere and active sower of the seed of brotherhood and unity amongst his fellow-workmen.

About this time there sprang up an interesting interchange of books and a correspondence between Mr Jenkyn, Mr Craven, Mr Hashmatullah (who was then at

college at Oxford) and Dr T. K. Cheyne, DD of Oxford, wherein the latter stated why he was a Bahá'í. The following words occur in a letter from Dr Cheyne to Mr Craven dated January 31st, 1914—"Alláh-u-Abhá! Dear Bahá'í Brother ____ I am not orthodox about the prophecies, the meaning of which concerns special Bible scholars, and orthodoxy is, I think, erroneous. Why I am a Bahá'í is a large question, but the perfection of the character of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l Bahá is perhaps the chief reason. I am one of the Bahá'ís who remain within their mother church. Indeed, I wish to join one or two other churches as fraternities, if that be possible. But of that, no more now. I hope that you will derive infinite help and strength in and through the Manifestation of El Abhá. Yours in the Infinite Glory. (signed) T. K. Cheyne.

In May, 1914, Mr Hall spent another week with Mr Jenkyn in St. Ives. It was while on this visit, that, after a long healthy ramble from St. Ives through Zennor to Gurnard's Head, Daniel gave him the cornelian Bahá'í ring—out there amidst those great rocks, green carpeted with grass here, gaunt rugged and primeval there, overlooking the far-spreading restless Atlantic ocean.

Daniel was a true friend in many ways to the Manchester brethren, always inspiring and encouraging them. He was above medium height, slender of build, rather handsome and pleasant featured; kindly, courteous, and well-bred. Upon hearing the Bahá'í Message from Miss Dorothy Hodgson, about the middle of 1910, he began to study the history and principles of the Cause. Then he met Dr Lotfullah S. Hakim and other London friends and began to earnestly spread the Bahá'í teachings. On one of his holidays (from a shipping office in St. Ives) he actually walked the greater part of the distance between St. Ives and Liverpool, speaking of the Cause to anyone willing to listen. (That was in the summer of 1911). He told Mr Hall the story of how he had found his friend and Bahá'í fellow-worker Mr R. Wright, the fisherman of St. Ives. Strolling along by the harbour, he had noticed this fisherman standing watching the smacks being overhauled in the cool evening. It was Daniel's habit to begin a casual little conversation

upon things in general—which always somehow led to a few words about the Cause. Daniel, during this conversation happened to mention the Báb and the Babists [Bábís]—the forerunners in Persia, of the Bahá'ís. At once, the tall, slender, weather-hardened, grey-bearded fisherman asked Daniel to tell him more about the Movement, saying he had desired to know all about it for quite a long time. He then explained that a considerable time before this, he had bought an odd and cheap volume of an old encyclopaedia in which was an article upon the Báb and the Babists, and since reading this he had longed to hear how matters went on after the martyrdom of the Báb. He became exceedingly happy when Daniel had narrated the remainder of the History of the Cause; and the fisherman's little home in the row of cottages called The Warren, the rear windows of which overlook the sea, became a Bahá'í haunt which should not be forgotten.

In July, (1914) the friends were blessed by the visit of two American Bahá'ís, Mr C. Mason Remey and Mr G. Latimer. At a meeting held in the home of Mr Craven (then living in Stretford), seventeen people of various denominations and nationalities were present. Great cheerfulness was manifested because interest in the Bahá'í Movement was growing—and this visit was wonderfully fragrant. Soon afterwards (in August) Mr Craven was the happy recipient of a Tablet from the Master which ran as follows:

O thou man of the Kingdom

Thy letter was received. Praise be to God that in Manchester the fire of the Love of God is ignited, the Sun of Reality has cast a penetrating splendour, the Breeze of Divine Providence wafted, and the Call of the Kingdom reached your ears. Hence, immediately I started to answer your letter. I hope that you may become baptized with the Fire of the Love of God and the Water of the Holy Spirit, and that each one of you may become a divine farmer and sow in the farm of the world of humanity the seeds of reality, irrigating them with the water of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, so that the Light of Truth may illumine that

country. Convey to all the believers of God, the wonderful Abhá greeting.

Signed: Abdu'l Bahá Abbás

Revealed on Mount Carmel, July 30th, 1914.

Translated by Dr Lotfullah.

Now, however, England was already plunged into the terrible ferment of the World-War and in our own little degree we suffered—for the Manchester Bahá'í group was split up; the Treubers being finally sent to Germany (as aliens); the Chessel family removing to work on munitions in Erith (Kent); Mr Hall being sent into the Army in France. Amidst all the turmoil—at the end of December—Daniel Jenkyn died at his home in St. Ives. Sorrow overwhelmed the Manchester friends for a time, but during 1915, propaganda literature was printed and distributed in a last final effort to awaken interest. It seemed of no avail. In 1916, amidst the turmoil, Dr Esslemont paid a visit to this city, but nothing (however cheering it might be to the Craven and Hall families) could revive the Cause in this city, or build up a new group just then—such was the uncertainty of things for everybody. By February, 1917, with Mr Hall's departure for France, all concerted Bahá'í action in Manchester ceased. The War had seemingly killed the tender little plant which had been planted here.

We had done our utmost during those six years—visited one another in families; received visitors, attended Meetings and religious services; bought and lent and given Bahá'í books and pamphlets and leaflets; corresponded with friends abroad and read letters from those friends to people evincing interest. We had studied, to understand more of the Cause and to enable us to answer questions of all kinds; and we had made various sacrifices. Then, just as we were feeling that progress, slow but sure, was being made—this seeming calamity (the War) overwhelmed us and obliterated the group.

However, instead of this being a calamity, it was but a test; although the brethren were thus separated, the hearts became more assured and stronger; the faith of

each became brighter. Mr Chessel, working in a great engineering shop in Erith, Kent, lived surrounded by a little garden he had cultivated, in the midst of far better and healthier surroundings than Manchester. Mr Craven, working in the great Linotype Engineering Works near Altrincham, was in peace and was able to help the Treubers while they remained in England, and even when they had returned to Germany. Mr Hall was marvellously protected whilst in the War zone and spent seven months of his service in the fine forest of Blavincourt in Northern France.

Trials and troubles we all had, to be sure, but we were well protected throughout the Great War. Nor did we cease, each in his own peculiar sphere, to make mention of the Cause we loved. Our wives were heroic, and our children were growing up with the thoughts of love instilled in them by the devotion of their mothers. All things were working together for good, though at times the Vision seemed a trifle obscured and the heart cried to God for reassurance. We would not pass on to post-war events without mentioning (with those already mentioned) the happy and useful visits of Miss Marian Jack, John Marshall, Hashmatullah, Mrs Maud M. Holbach and Miss Annie Campbell—during the years 1913, 1914, and 1915. Wherever they may now be, we salute them with the brilliant Abhá greeting!

**The Bahá'í Movement in Manchester,
from the end of the Great War to the
passing of Abdu'l Bahá**

A wonderful thing happened while the Bahá'í group was being dispersed during the War. Even while the breaking-up process was beginning, the Good Spirit was preparing the way for the future reunion; a strong centre of attraction was being fixed in Manchester. This was a young merchant who had come to this city about the commencement of the war (in 1914) and who had then still to

make a business for himself. He was quite unaware of any other Bahá'ís being in this city, and he felt as a stranger in a strange land. The son of an honoured Jewish gentleman in Persia, he had travelled all the way to England to make his living, without knowing a word of the English tongue; but his was no ordinary mind, for whilst still a youth in Persia, an uncle had taught him the Bahá'í principles of religious tolerance, brotherhood with all men, and World Peace.

Before the War came to an end Mr Hall was home again and he and Mr Craven were introduced to Mr Jacob Joseph, the above-mentioned merchant, through letters from Dr Lotfullah S. Hakim. Mr Joseph was by now doing well in his business and was happy to know them. He explained that after four years of strenuous work he had got a business together and that he hoped to be able to assist the Cause in Manchester. This was the man to whom the friends would gravitate, but he was so humble, cheerful and kindly, that his strength of character was veiled, and we simply drew to him as a brother.

In the first part of 1920 we had the brotherly help of Mr Jalal Bakeroff, whom we all loved for his sweet disposition and real desire to help us with the Cause here. If this history should ever reach his hands we would wish him to accept this brief but hearty appreciation of his services.

By the middle of 1920, new interest had been stirred, several people being attracted to the Cause. Mr Joseph, Mr Craven, and Mr Hall had been joined by Mr and Mrs Birch and Mr Heald. Then Mr & Mrs Chessel returned to Manchester from Kent. Meanwhile three beautiful tablets had reached us from Abdu'l Bahá which encouraged and wonderfully guided us. They reveal beautifully the spirit of our aims and activities during the period from our meeting with Mr Joseph on October 11th 1918, to the real beginning of our Assembly in his office in Mosley Street on August 7th, 1920—the beginning of the regular Saturday evening meetings. The tablets were as follows:

To Mr Hall: *"O well wisher of all humanity!*

The poem entitled "The Woods of Blavincourt" has been perused. It was eloquent and consummate. Its perusal deeply moved the heart, and set forth the evils of war and of conflict in the world of existence. When that spot is gazed at attentively, the breasts of the oppressed will be revealed which have acted as targets to darts and arrows; the blood of the afflicted ones will be seen which has coloured red the ground, and the sighs and wails of orphans will be heard that reach the summit of heaven. The cries and groans of mothers that mourn the loss of their children, surge like unto the billows of the sea, and the moans and lamentations of fathers, distressed at the loss of their children, grieve and wound the hearts.

Reflect ye, how disastrous are the consequences of war; while contrariwise, when the period of peace and reconciliation is prolonged, every babe at the breast attains maturity and establishes a family; devastated countries are repaired; the banner of tranquility and comfort is unfurled; wealth increases day by day; great enterprises are undertaken; every wandering and distressed person secures a shelter and every afflicted soul a remedy; and the virtues of mankind and the Bounty of God will be made resplendent.

Such is the difference between peace and war. That is why the herald of the Kingdom has raised, fifty years ago, the call of universal peace; has promulgated the oneness of the world of humanity; has caused the foundation of religious and racial prejudice to quake; and has summoned everyone to the oneness of mankind; so that amity and unity may be promoted amongst men and estrangement may vanish; that enmity and alienation may be abrogated and love and harmony may be legalised.

At present this poem of yours is an exposition of these heavenly instructions, and a reminder of Divine Counsels and admonitions. I hope that it may help to promote Universal Peace. With those to whom

you have spoken upon Universal Peace, the oneness of mankind, the abandonment of ignorant prejudice, I hope that those souls will be awakened, will be made aware, will investigate truth, and will be freed from these ignorant superstitions.

Convey the utmost kindness to Mr John Craven, his wife and family; to Joseph, the merchant in Manchester; and to thy wife and family.

Signed: Abdu'l Bahá Abbás

Revealed on Carmel, May 21st, 1919.

Translated by Dr Lotfullah S. Hakim.

To Mr Craven:

O thou who art attracted to the Kingdom of God!

The letter which thou hast written to Mirza Lotfullah was perused. I became much delighted with its contents, for thou hast written that thou art striving to produce harmony and concord between Capital and Labour. This is an excellent ambition which thou possessest. My hope is such that thou mayest succeed. The Capitalists must be kind toward the labourers (the workers) and treat them with justice and fairness; and they should appreciate the value of their labour, because labourers are serving the Capitalists. In the same way the labourers (the workers) ought to be pleased and grateful to the Capitalists, because their means of subsistence and comfort depend upon the help of Capitalists. If there were no Capitalists the labourers would be extremely distressed. Briefly both sides must act with reciprocity of justice and equity, so that all may live in the utmost happiness. The heavenly teachings solve all these difficulties. Then strive as far as thou canst to spread the Divine Principles."

Signed: Abdul Bahá Abbás

Revealed on Carmel, August 15th, 1919.

Translated by Dr Lotfullah.

To Mr Hall.

O thou attracted to the Word of God and Herald to the Kingdom of God!

Two letters have been received from you. Their contents have produced excessive joy, for they are indicative of this, that thou hast arisen in Manchester with a firm purpose, a superior power and a peaceful intention and desiring, to form a luminous meeting so that they (the friends) may gather together.

The manna which came down from Heaven for the Disciples was neither cress nor onions, nor lentil, garlic and leek. It was Bounty and Knowledge; Faith and Assurance, Love and Attraction; attachment and Enkindlement by the Fire of the Love of God. These Spiritual meals were present upon that Table. As the Disciples ate from these Bounties of His Holiness Christ, they became filled with the love of Christ; they hastened to all parts of the world and heralded the Kingdom of God. My hope from the unlimited Grace is that that gathering may also eat from this Manna and these Bounties.

Convey this message on my behalf to Mr and Mrs Chessel:—"O ye two birds of the gardens of the Kingdom! Make a nest and dwelling, like unto birds, upon the Tree of Life which is the Heavenly Teachings, and raise in a variety of tunes, melodious songs in the gardens of the Kingdom."

Convey loving greetings to Mr Joseph and say:—"As the Joseph of Egypt possessed real beauty and knowledge, he was in great demand in the Egyptian market. Although he was a stranger and abject, yet, as he had this splendour, he became then the Beloved of the Divine Egypt; attained eternal glory, and was addressed by his brothers "Verily, God hath given thee precedence over us." Now, thou bearest the same name. Strive in the path of the Kingdom so that thou mayest be addressed by all the friends with such suitable address."

Convey on my behalf the utmost respect to Mr and Mrs Craven and say:—"O ye two faithful souls! If ye announce the advent of the Kingdom and become the exhibition of Divine happiness and Heavenly exaltation, no doubt ye will become two luminous candles and loved souls in that gathering."

Convey to Mr and Mrs Birch (my) profound Abhá greeting and say:—"This is the Century of Lights, and the age of the unfurling of the mysteries. All the existing beings are in growth and progress, and the realities of things sing the songs of praise and glorification to the Lord of Hosts, because the Sun of Reality hath shone in this Century at the Zenith and energised all existence. This is why you observe every day some new discovery, and superb lights appear in the stage of visibility."

Signed: Abdu'l Bahá Abbás

Revealed on Carmel, February 12th, 1920.

Translated by Dr Lotfullah.

Hitherto, our little meetings had been held in the homes of the various friends, but now we began to gather every Saturday evening in the office of Mr Joseph's warehouse in Mosley Street—about half-way down the street and on the same side as the Art Gallery. The office was of fair size, would hold about twenty-five people (indeed, thirty people could be found room in it if necessary) and was a comfortable little spot. Mr Joseph would place rolls of cloth all round the room for the friends to sit on, as there were not many chairs, and this arrangement proved very comfortable. It was electrically lit and an electric stove kept it warm. Many a happy gathering and many a cheerful festival took place in that little room to which we had to descend down some steps from the level of Mosley Street. It has disappeared now and a great new building of warehouses and offices stands where we once met and chanted the Tablets of Abhá. It is symbolical of the new great edifice which will some day rise upon our efforts. About fourteen friends met together on that

memorable occasion—the first central meeting in Mosley Street (August 7th).

The system adopted was to commence the meeting with a prayer, after which there were a few moments of silence. Then one would read letters from friends abroad, after which would be read a paper dealing with something from the History, Tablets, or Principles of the Cause. Then would follow considerable discussion and also questions would be answered. The meeting would end with a prayer and benediction from the Bahá'í prayer-book. Each had a copy of the "Hidden Words"; those wonderful expressions of Love and Truth from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh. All was carried through with a happy sense of fellowship and very often the discussion turned to good-humoured laughter.

To these meetings in 1920—towards the end of the year—came Miss Jarvis and Mr Jarvis and Mr Joseph's two brothers, Ibrahim and Shaban; whilst occasionally Mrs Dean, Mrs Lucy Sugar, Mr J. Hazlehurst, Mr King and others would attend. On the evening of September 11th, Mr Joseph's uncle—Hadji Youseph Mottahedeh—came amongst us with the interpreter Dr D'Arab Khan, and explained to us many things about Bahá'í work and life in Persia. Then we received another beautiful Tablet to guide us, which ran as follows:

To Mr Hall:

O thou spiritual son!

The letter of September 8th, which thou didst write to Mirza Lotfullah has been received. Praise be unto God that that city (Manchester) has become blessed, and Mr Joseph has proved the centre of hospitality. Although this gathering is small, yet in future it will develop greatly. His Holiness Christ says that children are the people of the kingdom—being pure and innocent. Verily, verily, Mr Joseph has made an effort and certainly will become a manifestation of Divine Confirmation. This effort which he has made is like unto the seed which a farmer sows. That seed will surely receive the benefit of a blessing and thus will form harvests.

His (Mr Joseph's) brother Ibrahim, is an illumined youth. I pray to God that he may receive everlasting blessing, and that he may be able to solve difficult problems.

Strive as much as you can in explaining the Heavenly Teachings to every seeker, so that that city (Manchester) may be illumined with the Light of the Kingdom. All your talks must be confined to the spreading of the Divine Principles and not about your religious belief, because the people are still weak. Show the utmost love and affection to each other to such an extent that each can be both a lover and beloved.

At all times I beseech and lament at the Threshold of God, and implore boundless grace and bounty unto ye.

(Signed) Abdu'l Bahá Abbás

Revealed on Mount Carmel, October, 1920.

Translated by Dr Lotfullah S. Hakim.

The year 1921 saw us continuing, under the sweet and kindly influences of several visitors; Kaushal K. Bhargava of Surat (India); Mr Mason Remey, of Washington (USA); Dr J. E. Esslemont, of Bournemouth; Ziaoullah Asgarzadeh and Shoghi Effendi. These names are in the order of the coming of these noble souls. The homes of the friends were visited and fine meetings were held at Mr Joseph's office; Mr Craven's home in Altrincham; Mr Heald's home in Miles Platting; and at Mr Hall's home.

Our largest meeting up to that date was held by Mr Bhargava in Mr Joseph's office. Nineteen people were present, and it was at this meeting on April 2nd that we received the ill-tidings of the martyrdom of Joseph's uncle, Mr Jacob Mottahedeh. The poignant moments were spiritualised by Bhargava's beautiful translation of one of the poems by Nabil, beginning "Though the night of parting endless seem, as thy night black hair, Bahá, Bahá"—

and by his sweet chanting of the prayers and supplications. These moments may not quickly be forgotten. Mr Bhargava was with us all through that sunny Easter time, with a sunshine equal to it!

On May 1st, there was an incident well worth recording; for on that Sunday, at the evening Service in Cross Street Chapel (in the very centre of Manchester) the Rev H. H. Johnson gave an address upon the Bahá'í Movement, allowing Mr Hall to answer all questions after the Service. About 200 people stayed behind in the Chapel to hear what might be said further,—some of them to ask questions. For an hour (from 8 till 9 o'clock) Mr Hall was able to answer many questions and also set forth the spiritual side of the Bahá'í Cause, as Mr Johnson could only deal with the History of the Movement. Mr Johnson was not aware that there were any people interested in the Cause in Manchester; but he had become acquainted with the Movement when the Master was in London (in 1911) at a time when religion was not really inspiring him. He saw a new light through reading the Bahá'í Books and meeting the Master, then wrote a long article upon the Bahá'í Movement which he submitted to the Master, after which it appeared in the "Times Supplement". It was through this inspiration that he decided to become a religious minister, and, having attained to this, he obtained the pulpit of Cross Street Chapel. These things he told Mr Hall, Shoghi Effendi, Avareh, and Dr Esslement—at the various times when they were in this city.

The Manchester Bahá'ís have a great respect for this powerful preacher who is inspired by the heroism of the Babists and Bahá'ís.

On Tuesday, May 24th, a meeting was addressed by Mr Mason Remey, in the Raglan Cafe (Mosley Street). This was attended by thirty-one people, most of whom were friendly to the Cause, and resulted in a lady, named Mrs Crossley, coming into the group. Mr and Mrs Hoferer were also present. Mr Joseph Hoferer had met Mr Remey in Germany a considerable time before this and was attracted by the glad tidings. The good soul has

passed away but we do not forget him. Manchester was the last Bahá'í group in Mr Remey's vast circuit, for he was homeward bound (to the United States). Mr Joseph and Mr Hall saw the dear brother on to his ship in Liverpool, lunched with him at his invitation, and stayed with him as the great vessel slowly moved down the river till she stood off New Brighton, whence they would return on a tender to Liverpool. Just before they parted, Mr Hall jokingly said that he (Mr Remey) would soon now be left in peace; to which he replied in his quiet, musing way—"Where Bahá'ís are, there is always peace." It is well worth remembering; and with that fragrant breath, he returned to his home and they to theirs.

In June, Mr Bhargava was with us again, and both he and Mr Hall addressed the large brotherhood meeting held in the Union Chapel, Oxford Road, where Mr Bhargava was listened to with profound attention. After the meeting, Mr Hall (as Mr Bhargava was only paying Manchester a brief visit) was asked to speak at the Gorton Adult School, which he did on Sunday, July 10th, and several times afterwards. It was from this meeting place that Mr F. Roberts (its best worker) joined us.

It was at this time that Mrs Crossley, grateful for the kindness shown her by the friends, and wishful to help the fund being raised for the building of the Chicago Bahá'í Temple, yet not having any means at the time, sold her beautiful hair and gave the proceeds to the Temple fund. This act touched everybody and when the Beloved Master heard of it, he wrote her this tender and beautiful Tablet:

To Mrs Norah Crossley:

O thou my dear heavenly daughter!

The letter written by thee to Dr Esslemont was sent by him to the Desired (Holy) Land. I perused that letter deliberately. On the one hand I was much touched, because thou didst cut those beautiful hairs with the scissors of detachment-from-the-world, and self-sacrifice in the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, I became very glad that that dear daughter is

so sacrificing, that she has sacrificed the most precious part of her body in the Path of the Cause of God.

If thou hadst asked my opinion, I would never have consented that thou shouldst cut a single hair from those fine and beautiful locks, and I would have contributed on thy behalf to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. But this action of thine is a great proof of (thine) utmost sacrifice. Verily, thou hast sacrificed thy life and wilt obtain great spiritual results thereof. Be assured that thou wilt progress day by day and that thou wilt increase thy firmness and steadfastness.

The Bounties of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh will envelope thee, and the invisible Glad-Tidings will consecutively reach thee. Although thou hast sacrificed thy hair, thou wilt find Spirit. Although thou hast given up thy perishable thing in the Divine path, thou wilt find Divine bestowal. Thou wilt attain to Heavenly beauty; thou wilt reach to endless glory, and thou wilt find everlasting life.

Signed: Abdu'l Bahá Abbás.

Revealed on Carmel, August 20th, 1921.

The Master also mentioned the matter in a splendid Tablet to the Bahá'í Assembly in Najafabad (Persia).

In the latter half of August, Dr Esslemont was in Manchester and told us that Shoghi Effendi (who at that time was studying in Oxford) intended to pay the group a visit soon, which made us all very happy indeed. This he did in October, arriving in this city on the first day of the month and leaving us on the sixth.

Shoghi Effendi

On the evening of his arrival (Saturday, October 1st) the friends were gathered together in Mr Joseph's office, in a curious state of expectancy, when Shoghi Effendi and Mr Joseph came in, with smiling faces and cheery greetings. At once, all were in a state of animation, yet Shoghi,

with all his alertness, somehow made everyone feel at ease, His eyes were bright, his voice re-assuring, his manners perfect, his features beautiful. He was as one, who, having control of himself, would therefore be able to control others. He commanded respect without seeming to know it. His youthfulness attracted us and the brightness of his thoughts called out our admiration. We all became very happy, and led him to the principle chair, and, as he wished to tell us about the Master's pleasure at Mrs Crossley's action, we placed her in the chair next to his. He read to us the splendid tablet to Najafabad. There were nineteen in all in the room, Shoghi Effendi making the nineteenth. The next day in the afternoon, we all met again in the office (Ziaoullah Asgarzadeh being with us this time), and in the evening gathered in the front room of the home of Mr and Mrs Heald, in Miles Platting. Shoghi was especially interested in our hymn-singing, and told us how the Master would ask Lua Getsinger to go out on the terrace of the house at Haifa, in the cool fragrant night when everything was clear in the moon's light, and sing the hymn which always pleased him—"Nearer my God to Thee". Her voice, Shoghi said, would rise and fall clear as a nightingale's, to the joy of the Master. Oh, the excellency of Carmel!

On the Monday, (October 3rd) Shoghi and Ziaoullah visited the house of Mr and Mrs Hall, taking them a beautiful picture of the Master, at the foot of which Shoghi had written a few words of esteem. Mr Hall guided them to the home of the Rev H. H. Johnson, in Cheetham Hill, for an appointment had been made. After this visit we all assembled again in the evening at the office in Mosley Street, Shoghi Effendi purchasing a quantity of purple grapes at a fruiterers on the way. At eight o'clock, twenty-three persons had assembled, and Shoghi chanted a prayer. He then said that he would endeavour to give us an idea of the meetings in Haifa and in the East, and, saying this, he proceeded to divide the grapes and hand them out—a quantity to each—telling us to think of our brethren in all lands as we consumed this "fruit of the Vine". This little incident caused some cheerfulness amongst the friends and much smiling—yet underlying the material side of it, we knew

that there was the sweet and profound inner meaning of the Vine fruit of Life and the new Communion. Some of us were strangely moved, though we smiled. He had been sitting down a little while after distributing the grapes, but now he rose from his chair again and showed us a small bottle of Attar of Roses. This, he told us, had been given him by Abdu'l Bahá's sister—the Greatest Holy Leaf—and when she gave it to him she expressed the wish that he would use it for enfragrancing an assembly, only when he felt that the right spiritual atmosphere prevailed and his heart was moved to use it. He said that, amongst us, he was strongly moved to use it and he would now enfragrance us. He asked us each to hold out a hand, palm upwards, and as he passed round the room he placed a little of this quintessence of rose-fragrance upon it; then we each, following the example of Joseph and Ziaoullah, rubbed our hands together and stroked our palms over our hair and forehead, until ourselves and the whole atmosphere were deliciously fragrant. Then he told us beautiful things of the great Fellowship and tender things of the Holy places, until we were no longer in Manchester, but rather in the spirit in the Holy Land. Then we knew that the Breath of the Holy Spirit had been upon us, and that we had passed through a natural, and yet wonderfully spiritual, Confirmation Service. Our hearts rejoiced in the thought of it, and the joy will not die out. It was on this day, too, that a Supplication was penned to the Master and signed by twenty-four people, asking him to pray for us that we might become more and more worthy, and stronger in spirit. The Master's answer to this, was the Holy Assurance of God's Love, in the Tablet to THE BELOVED OF THE LORD IN THE CITY OF MANCHESTER—a Tablet now well known.

The next day (Tuesday, October 4th) Mr Craven caused Shoghi to be shown through the great Linotype Works at Broadheath, the Management of which was very sympathetic towards Bahá'í aims; and in the evening he met some friends and attracted ones in Mr Craven's front room (in Altrincham). On Wednesday (October 5th) all the friends gathered again in the office (Mosley Street) at about seven o'clock, as it had been decided that a photo-

graph should be taken of the whole assembly. Whilst in the office, Ziaoullah distributed silk handkerchiefs and cornelian stones amongst the friends: also enfragrancing them again with scent from Haifa (Mount Carmel), and at eight o'clock we all strolled off to Van Ralty, the Photographer in Oldham Street, who took an excellent picture of the group—twenty-six persons appearing on it.

The next day, before noon, Shoghi Effendi and Ziaoulluh left Manchester and a very remarkable visit was finished. In connection with it, Mr Joseph is worthy of all our gratitude, and our love will ever go out to Shoghi Effendi and Ziaoullah. We are also grateful to the ladies at all times, for their innumerable and ever willing services to the Cause.

Following Shoghi Effendi's visit and reports to the beloved Abdu'l Bahá, five more Tablets came to various friends in Manchester—one each to Mr Joseph, Mr Heald, Mrs Crossley, Mr Hall, and one to the whole group. They were as follows:

To Mr Jacob Joseph and his brother Ibrahim:—

O ye that stand fast and firm in the Covenant!

The faithful servant of the Ever-Blest Beauty, Shoghi Effendi, hath written a letter, and therein hath praised you most highly, namely, that these blessed souls are true Bahá'ís, are verily self-sacrificing, burn brightly, even as twin candles, with the Light of Guidance, serve with heart and soul the Cause of God, succour the needy amongst the faithful, and seek fellowship with the poor.

Such praise as this hath indeed caused the greatest pleasure. It is my hope that through the late and present mercies of the Lord, the All-Glorious, the Grace of God, the Kindly, the All-Knowing, may be wholly vouchsafed unto you, and that ye may obtain your most cherished desire. Wherefore, turn ye your eyes, even as Abdu'l Bahá, towards the Blessed Beauty, and implore His aid and succour. Loosen then your

tongues and the Breaths of the Holy Spirit shall in truth graciously aid you.

Signed: Abdu'l Bahá Abbás

Revealed on Carmel, October 20th, 1921.

Translated by Shoghi Effendi, at Oxford.

To Mr S. Heald:

O son of the Kingdom of God!

Praised be the Lord, thou hast rent asunder the veil of the Pharisees and winged thy flight unto the Kingdom of God. Thou hast accepted the Teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh and been drawn unto the Holy Spirit. In truth, thy faith is now sincere and thou hast come to know Jesus Christ the better.

The Pharisees, sunk in their idle fancies and imaginings, have been thereby prevented from believing in Him, and have been cast out for evermore. Yet thou, all praise unto the Lord, hast walked in the footsteps of Peter and hast attained unto perfect faith. It is incumbent upon thee, however, to act with the utmost discretion, for men are ignorant and prejudiced, and seek to stir sedition and mischief. Wherefore, saith Christ in the Gospel—"Tell not the Pharisees and inform them not."

Consider! Christ proclaimed the Glory of Moses and spread His fame far and wide throughout the East and throughout the West. He propounded the basic principles of His Divine Law, and though the Torah was, before Christ, confined to Palestine, yet by the Grace of Jesus, it hath now spread to the uttermost parts of the earth, whilst the fame of Moses and of the prophets of Israel hath become renowned throughout the world. Manifest indeed, is the Spirit of Love that Christ hath thus shown for Moses! Yet, notwithstanding this, the Pharisees fancied that Christ was an enemy of Moses; that he destroyed His Law, and overthrew the edifice thereof. Ponder and reflect how unjust they were, how grievously they misjudged Him! Now, too, His Holiness, Bahá'u'lláh, hath far

and wide proclaimed the Splendour, the Glory, the Majesty of Christ, and yet the unjust still believe it not! The Lord be praised, thou believest.

Signed: Abdu'l Bahá Abbás

Revealed on Carmel, October 20th, 1921.

Translated by Shoghi Effendi, at Oxford.

(31/10/21)

To Mrs Norah Crossley:

O dearly-beloved hand-maid of the Lord!

Thou art indeed well-favoured in the Kingdom of God, and in the eyes of Abdu'l Bahá highly praiseworthy. In the Path of the Holy Spirit, thou art, in truth, self-sacrificing, while thine heart and soul shine with the Light of Divine Guidance. It is incumbent upon thee, however, to forbear with thine husband, to do thine utmost to please him, and show unto him the utmost respect, that he may see how the Teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh have raised the husband in the sight of his wife, and how thy faith hath conduced to a still greater love and regard for him.

Signed: Abdu'l Bahá Abbás

Revealed on Carmel, October 20th, 1921.

Translated by Shoghi Effendi, at Oxford.

To Mr Hall:

O thou venerated dear one!

The letter which thou didst write to Mirza Lotfullah has been read by me. Praise be to God, it was a great indication of (thy) obedience to the Threshold of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. The utmost desire of Abdu'l Bahá, before his return to the Abhá Kingdom, is that he should see some souls who are active soldiers of the Kingdom of Abhá; that from the ancient Bounty they have received some fruit; that they are kindled lamps of the Love of God; and that they give light to all the world. This is a great question which in appearance seems impossible. But from the favours of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh a fragment becomes a mountain; a weak shrub becomes a blessed

tree; a small bird soars to the highest zenith; a drop becomes an ocean; a seed brings forth a crop; the poor find an abundant fortune; darkness becomes changed to light; a blind man receives sight and a dead man revives. Therefore our hope is from His Grace and Bounty, not from our own ability and worthiness.

When we look to our own capacity we become helpless, and when we see the waves of the sea of His Grace we become hopeful. Therefore His Holiness Christ says: "Blessed are the children for verily of them is the Kingdom of God!"

But thou didst write "how can the body of Abdu'l Bahá bear these adversities and troubles." This being, the body and spirit of Abdu'l Bahá, exists to become annihilated and destroyed in the Path of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. If it were not so, what would be the fruit of existence? Certainly, non-existence would be better than existence. This self-sacrifice is real love. It is annihilation in the Path of God. O thou spiritual friend! Thy services at the Holy Threshold (of Bahá'u'lláh) are clear, attested and praised. It is my hope that they may become even more evident and apparent day by day.

Praise be to God, that on his arrival in Manchester, Shoghi Effendi found the friends in utmost affection and love. Praise be to God that all your gatherings have the desire to lay an everlasting foundation for this baseless world, and to found an everlasting life in this limited world. Thou didst write that the night ye were at Mr Joseph's office ye were not in Manchester; ye were on Carmel. This saying became the cause of happiness (for my heart and soul). Verily, the spiritual attachments are a thousand times greater than the physical. Spiritual presence is greater than physical presence. Praise be to God, that those friends are present at the tomb of the Báb, and at the Holy Shrine of the Abhá. Beauty in heart and soul, and not in water and earth.

Praise be to God that Shoghi Effendi and Aga Mirza Ziaoullah returned from Manchester with utmost happiness. Both speak very highly of the friends of God. It is our hope that in future this kind of love, attraction to the Breaths of God and the flame of the Fire of the Love of God, may become evident. The blessed leaf, the Greatest Holy Leaf conveys her utmost love to ye. It is certain that God hath blessed ye and made ye of the chosen, and not merely the called. In short, convey to all the friends utmost longing on my behalf.

(Sealed by the Greatest Holy Leaf
with the Master's Seal).

Revealed on Carmel, November 14th, 1921.

Translated by Dr Lotfullah.

This Tablet was found unsigned amongst other writings under the pillow of the Master's couch, after he had ascended to "the Abhá Kingdom". It was addressed to Mr Hall, of Manchester, but unsigned because it was not the Master's habit to sign a Tablet until it was translated and everything completed. The Master's life was rapidly drawing to a close and he could do no more. The Greatest Holy Leaf caused it to be translated and posted to Mr Hall, for which kindness he is eternally grateful.

To The Beloved of the Lord in the city of Manchester:

In the name of God.

O ye beloved of the Lord!

Your letter hath been received, and the contents thereof have imparted the utmost joy and gladness. Praised be the Lord, ye have eyes that see and ears that hear. Ye behold the Light of Truth and are accounted, even as Christ hath said, among the Chosen rather than among the Called.

In these days the world suffereth from unrest and turmoil, from contention and conflict, and mankind is convulsed and stricken, and yet Christ bade Peter sheathe his sword. And though He declared that he

that draweth his sword shall by the sword be brought into account, yet, notwithstanding, the sword hath been drawn, and the peoples of the world are engaged in conflict.

The people of Bahá, praised be the Lord, have returned the sword unto its scabbard and strive to promote love, harmony and union, that thereby the kindreds and peoples of the world may be reconciled. For among the Teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh (may my life be offered up as a sacrifice unto Him) it is written: all mankind is but one fold, and God the Kindly Shepherd, loving unto all of them. For if he loved them not, he would have created them not, neither provided for them, nor protected them, nor even nurtured them. For inasmuch as He has vouchsafed all these blessings unto them, He, of a certainty, loveth them, one and all.

This is but truth itself, manifest even as the Sun, the light whereof none can deny. This is verily the Way of God, and there is no way greater than His Way. It behoveth us, one and all, to walk in His Ways, and not in the ways of men.

Wherefore, praise ye the Lord, that in the lamp of your hearts the Flame of Divine Guidance is kindled and ye have entered the Kingdom of God. It is incumbent upon you, however, to act with the utmost discretion and not rend the veil asunder, for the enemy, though he be near or afar, lieth in wait and stirreth the negligent to arise against His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. Be ye prudent; be ye discreet.

Signed: Abdu'l Bahá Abbás

Revealed on Carmel, October 18th, 1921.

Translated by Shoghi Effendi, at Oxford, (England).

Fortunate indeed were the friends in Manchester to receive these words of love, affection, esteem, and guidance from the Beloved; fortunate in the encouragement and fortunate in calling forth such a fountain of inspiration for the people of the future. It is to them, as much as to

us, that the Tablets are addressed; Shoghi Effendi's visit was fraught with rich blessing and wonderful significance. The Rainbow of the Covenant had spanned the city of Manchester—in the fiery rays of the setting sun of the earthly life of the great "Servant of God". Nor is this a vain saying, for the truth of it was revealed in a peculiarly powerful manner to Mr Hall, eighteen days before the passing of the Master.

In this very brief account of the beginning of the Bahá'í Movement in Manchester, we have now reached the indescribable moment when the news reached us (30/11/21) that the beloved Abdu'l Bahá was gone from this material world! (He had passed away early in the morning of Monday, November 28th: and then we recollected that on that day Mr Craven had come all the way from Altrincham to Mr Hall's house, to spend a few hours with him and to chat about the Cause; and that late that evening Mr Hall's sister visited him to tell him that she (Mrs Lucy Sugar) had at last decided to join the group and become a Bahá'í). The effect of the news upon all the friends was as though a loving father had passed away. Grief and sorrow were visible in the demeanour of them all. We did not feel dispirited or troubled about the Cause or what would happen through his departure—rather, the life seemed to have ebbed out of us, so stunned were we. Then we considered and reflected that human life is but a transitory thing, and the inevitable had happened. So we gathered together whenever possible and Mirza Ziaoullah and Mr Fayazoff came up from London to cheer us. So far as outward appearances went, the Manchester Bahá'ís were proceeding as usual, thankful to have had the blessed privilege of knowing and serving the Servant of God in His Day.

The Spirit of Abdu'l Bahá is in all the earth and in heaven, but the hand that signed our beautiful Tablets is at rest and his dust sleeps with that of the Blessed Báb in the shrine on the northern slope of Mount Carmel, overlooking the Bay of Haifa and the holy ground of Bahá'u'lláh—and the hills of Galilee. When Bahá'u'lláh had passed as an exile and a prisoner from Persia to Baghdad and from thence to Constantinople, Adrianople and the

Holy Land, he, having come at last to Mount Carmel, wrote these wonderful words in a Tablet to his son, Abdu'l Bahá:

O Carmel! Rejoice! For the face of God hath advanced toward thee. Blessed art thou, for on this day God hath made thee the Throne of His Temple, the dawning place of His verses, and the Orient of His proofs. ... Ere long the ships of God will advance toward thee and the people of Bahá who were mentioned in the Book of Names will appear in thy midst!"

Abdu'l Bahá, also, said: *"This mountain (Carmel) is a holy mountain: it has always been sanctified. The prophets have always loved it. Christ has trodden on its paths; Elijah lived upon it. The wind is sweet on it, the flowers are many, the view is wonderful. When you come up the mountain many fragrances reach you; the pure air gladdens you; the beauty refreshes you. So the mind is made single, the thoughts are purified; the spirit turns to God."* *"Here will be the eternal pilgrimage of the world."*

The significance of these words enfrances the Tablets which we received from thence; and whosoever reads them with understanding cannot but inhale from them the rose-fragrance of Immortality.

The Bahá'í Movement in Manchester—From the passing of the Master to the organisation of the Assembly

With what joy did we learn (on February 7th, 1922) that Shoghi Effendi was appointed Guardian of the Bahá'í Movement and that he was taking the first steps towards its organisation as a whole—according to the plan laid down in the Master's Will. Mr Hall was chosen to represent the group in Manchester, while Dr Esslemont would represent the Bournemouth Group, so that these groups might work harmoniously with the London groups which had elected in all seven representatives towards the

same end. These nine representatives formed the first all-England Bahá'í Council, the first meeting of which was held in London at the home of Mrs Thornborough Cropper (Westminster) on June 6th, 1922—Mr G. P. Simpson being elected chairman. Mr Hall was present at that interesting meeting, and again he attended one at the home of Mrs George (Chelsea) on October 7th, 1922. He will never forget the kindness of the Persian friend, Mr Fazlollah Benan, who was at that time staying in London; the blessed moments spent with Mrs George and Miss Nancy Musgrave in the lovely rose-garden across the Thames from Chelsea—in Battersea Park; nor a beautiful evening spent in the company of Miss Rosenberg, who, at his request, read extracts from her many Tablets and described interesting incidents which occurred during her visits to Acca and Haifa in the Holy Land.

During all that year we were quietly continuing our meetings in Mr Joseph's office in Mosley Street, and spreading the Glad Tidings whenever a listener was found. When Mr and Mrs Stanwood Cobb (Washington, USA) arrived in Manchester from Ambleside and Grasmere—en route to Haifa—a special meeting was called and on Wednesday, July 5th, Mr Cobb addressed a happy and interested group—there being in all twenty-seven people in the office. These friends (Mr and Mrs Cobb) were the only visitors during all that year; but the beautiful spirit they left with us did us all immense good and we shall always be grateful to them for coming. Another meeting should be remembered—the first meeting held at the home of Mr and Mrs Sugar (Crumpsall) on the evening of November 25th—when there was a good attendance of twenty-one friends. The children's party, given by Miss Lucy Hall at her home (1 Norton Street) on December 30th, 1922, when nineteen friends and children attended, was very jolly indeed. It impressed us with the fact that the children were becoming an important factor in our social gatherings. They were becoming a little group—a little "Garden" soon to be called "The Garden of Glad Tidings". Nothing in particular transpired after this, until the beginning of March 1923. Then came Avareh at the invitation of Mr Joseph

and the bidding of Shoghi Effendi, accompanied by the beloved Dr Lotfullah S. Hakim as interpreter, and Mr and Mrs Ziaoullah Asgarzadeh. They stayed for nine days at a house in Ashbourne Grove, Higher Broughton, close to the Hall's in Norton Street. What animation; what joy; what meetings with friends in their various homes in Manchester and Altrincham! Humour, brilliance, playfulness, and considerable reporting, filled up the spare time between the various meetings.

On Saturday evening (March 3rd) a good meeting was held at 1 Norton Street, when Avareh addressed twenty friends, on the best method of teaching people about the Cause and showing them its Truth; also about the new Spiritual Springtime.

On Sunday afternoon (March 4th) Avareh addressed the men's class at Dunham Road Unitarian School, Altrincham. In the evening, he addressed the congregation of the Unitarian Chapel from the pulpit—it was a great joy to hear Dr Lotfullah translate the beautiful prayer and the masterly Bahá'í address which the Persian Scholar delivered. After this service, about fifty people from the congregation gathered in the School-room to ask questions. Avareh dealt convincingly with all their questions—all appertaining to the History and Principles of the Cause of Peace and Reconciliation. Here we wish to record our appreciation of the love and many kindnesses of the Rev A. H. Biggs, the Unitarian minister of Altrincham, whose eloquence has been used, like that of the Rev H. H. Johnson, strongly and sympathetically on behalf, of the Bahá'ís. Our love and respect for Mr Biggs is too great to omit of mention and we have cause to be grateful to him.

On Tuesday (March 6th) there was an interview with the Rev H. H. Johnson at his house. Avareh carefully explained the Bahá'í principle of a World-Council for the purpose of preserving peace in the world. Mr Johnson was greatly interested.

On Wednesday (March 7th) Avareh addressed another meeting at Mr Hall's home, thirty-two friends being

present. He spoke eloquently upon the life of Qurratu'l-'Ayn, the beautiful Persian poetess, who became a martyr to the Bahá'í Cause. He brought out masterly thoughts showing how all creation is built up by the wonderful power of love; and how, if love were withdrawn, Creation would collapse. It was that love which glorified Christ and Bahá'u'lláh. How earnestly and beautifully Dr Lotfullah translated it for him—neither ever pausing for a word.

On Friday (March 9th) the visitors, by Mr Craven's arrangement, were taken through the Linotype works at Broadheath and partook of lunch with two superintendents. In the evening Avareh gave an illuminating talk on "The Spiritual Springtimes" (the rise of prophet after prophet amongst mankind to enlighten and elevate the race) to some friends in Mr Craven's front room.

On Saturday evening (March 10th) he addressed yet another meeting at 1 Norton Street—concluding the story of Qurratu'l-'Ayn and her martyrdom. The twenty-five friends who were present marvelled at the courage of that noble pioneer of woman's emancipation in the East. It was at this meeting that Avareh suggested that a council of five Bahá'ís should be elected as early as possible to conduct the Movement in Manchester. It was agreed that this would be a wise course and we promised to elect the five within the month.

On Sunday (March 11th) Avareh addressed fifty people at the Gorton Adult School in the afternoon, his subject being "Science and Religion must be in accord". He showed that Science and Knowledge are good when in conjunction with the Prophet's teachings. In the evening (between 8 and 9 o'clock) he addressed a very large audience, perhaps three hundred people, in Cross Street Chapel in the very heart of Manchester. Again could be noticed the beautiful harmony between Avareh and Dr Lotfullah, the one gravely and clearly giving out the Bahá'í Principles of World-Fellowship, the other clearly and beautifully translating from the Persian to the English. The finest point was reached when, after showing

how people to-day were in the dark, yet hoping for the light which had been promised to them, the words rang clearly to all ears,

“The light has come; and that light is Bahá’u’lláh!”

The truth had been clearly uttered from the very centre of Manchester, with unsurpassed sweetness.

On March 24th, 1923, twelve days after the departure of Jenabi Avareh, Dr Lotfullah and the other dear friends, the group elected a council of five members, but for various reasons we thought it best to consult Avareh, and after some correspondence he came up again from London to meet us all and assist us with advice—Dr Lotfullah accompanying him again to our great joy and satisfaction. In the evening of Friday (which happened to be Good Friday) March 30th, the friends assembled at 1 Norton Street, and, under the kindly eyes of Avareh and Dr Lotfullah, our first local council of nine members was formed, Mr Joseph being the chairman, Mr Heald the vice-chairman, Mr Hall the secretary, and Mr Craven the treasurer; the remaining members of the Council being Mrs Sugar, Mrs Crossley, Mr Chessel, Mr Ibrahim Joseph, and Mr H. Jarvis.

Thus the Cause was slowly but surely growing and taking definite form in Manchester; nor was its fragrance confined to a very limited area, for its correspondence and literature went far abroad to the East and the West, as from the uttermost parts of the earth letters came to it with joyful news—showing world-wide progress. When we began, the Cause was unknown in Manchester, or at least no one had the courage to declare themselves of the Bahá’í Faith. There was at last a settled group of the Faithful, doing good work, becoming well-known, whilst prejudice was proportionately disappearing. All righteous people were with us in our endeavours, and if the workers were few, there was an ever-growing girdle of well-wishers around the Group.

We were not alarmed by the slowness of our growth. No one was ever pressed to join the Movement; the

majority of us had belonged to no church or chapel for many years. We were attracted by the glorious ideal of Abdu'l Bahá. With study of the Bahá'í Cause had come an awakening to spiritual things and change of heart began to take place. Becoming enlightened, we worked to a great end—the Kingdom of God upon earth (the World Fellowship)—in a world not yet awake to its glorious possibilities.

WE GAINED FAITH IN GOD, FAITH IN THE REAL NATURE OF MAN AND ASSURANCE THAT THE LOVING HEAVENLY FATHER'S WORD IS TRUE AND THAT IN GOOD TIME THE MOST GREAT PEACE WILL COME.

Such is the general history to the formation of the Council—written to fulfil the request made to all assemblies by the Teheran Bahá'í Assembly, which has the loving assent of Shoghi Effendi. For information regarding further developments and advances the Minute Book of the Assembly may be consulted. Meanwhile, preparations for a further report, extending to the present date are being made by the Council. We sincerely thank the President (Mr G. P. Simpson) for his assistance in the publication of this narrative and for the many other services which he has so kindly rendered; also Mr J. Joseph (our worthy Chairman) and his brother Ibrahim for their generous help.

E. T. H. for the Manchester Bahá'í Assembly.
Passed by Council, February 27th; by Assembly, March 7th, 1925.
(Approved by the National Bahá'í Assembly, March 28th, 1925).



Extract from the Tablet of "The Branch".
(From the Supreme Pen of Bahá'ú'lláh)
("A Branch" signifies Abdu'l Bahá)



O people, praise ye God for its manifestation (The Branch), for verily It (The Branch) is the Most Great Favour upon you and the Most Perfect Blessing upon you; and through Him every mouldering bone is quickened. Whosoever turns to Him hath surely turned unto God and whosoever turneth away from Him hath turned away from My Beauty, denied My Proof and is of those who transgress. Verily, He is the Remembrance of God amongst you and His Trust within you and His Manifestation unto you and His Appearance among the servants who are nigh. Thus have I been commanded to convey to you the Message of God, your Creator; and I have delivered to you that of which I was commanded. Whereupon, thereunto testifieth God, then His angels, then His messengers, and then His holy servants.

Inhale the fragrances of the Rizwan from His roses and be not of those who are deprived. Appreciate the Bounty of God upon you and be not veiled therefrom—and verily We have sent Him forth in the temple of man. Thus praise ye the Lord, the Originator of whatsoever He willeth through His wise and inviolable command!"

February 27th, 1925

Members of the Spiritual Council (*), The Assembly, and
The Garden of Glad Tidings.

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mrs Jessie Birch | Miss Mabel Chessel* |
| Mrs Mary Chessel | Miss Lucy E. Hall* |
| Mrs Hester Craven | Master Ronald Craven |
| Mrs Norah Crossley | Master Norman L. Craven |
| Mrs Rebecca P. Hall | Master Edward R. Hall |
| Mrs May Heald | Master John B. Sugar |
| Mrs E. Lucy Sugar* | Master Edward M. Sugar |
| Miss May Allen | (Miss) Helen Chessel |
| Miss Marian Carruthers | (Miss) Annie Birch |
| Miss Marian Corns | |
| Miss O. M. Jarvis | |
| Miss E. Jones | |
| Mr James Birch | |
| Mr James Chessel* | |
| Mr James Hazelhurst | |
| Mr Samuel Heald | |
| Mr H. Jarvis | |
| Mr Ibrahim Joseph* | Friends of the Cause |
| Mr H. King. | Mrs Annie Dean. |
| Mr Alfred Sugar | Rev H. H. Johnson. |
| Mr J. Woffington* | Rev A. H. Biggs. |
| Master Walter Jackson | Alderman James Johnston. |

Chairman
Mr Jacob Joseph*

| | |
|--|---|
| Secretary | Treasurer |
| Mr E. T. HALL* | Mr J. C. CRAVEN* |
| 1 Norton Street, Broughton, Manchester. | 27 Darby Street, Altrincham, Cheshire. |