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The following brief

accounts are like gazing at a small portion of the brilliant galaxy of immortal heroines and heroes who devoted their energies, talents, their very lives to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. May the examples of devotion these souls bequeath to us inspire us to love and live the Faith with all the fervor of our hearts.

We

will start by speaking of Thornton Chase:

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Mr.

Chase was a very articulate man, both in speaking and writing. In 1911 he wrote a nineteen verse poem entitled El Abha, an ode to the mysterious spiritual powers of Abdu'l-Bahá, which can be found in Star of the West magazine, volume 3, number 12.

Mr.

Chase made a pilgrimage in April, 1907, to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and attained the presence of Abdu'l-Bahá

who was then a prisoner of the Turkish Empire. Undoubtedly this was the greatest event of his life. He wrote of his experiences there in a booklet called In Galilee. One quote from it refers to Abdu'l-Bahá: "...as each hungry pilgrim comes to that prison house, that banquet hall of heavenly gifts, he takes him in his arms and draws him to his breast with such sincerity and enthusiasm of love that the petty cares ... of the world vanish away, and one is at peace and in happiness because he has reached home and found love there." (Some Early Bahá'ís, p. 6)

Interestingly, the birth day of Thornton Chase was February 22, 1847, which 115 years earlier, was the birthday of President George Washington. His family in Springfield, Massachusetts was Northern Baptist, and he was given the best education possible. His earliest time of manhood found him serving on the Northern forces of the Civil War, becoming a captain. Mr. Chase loved music, had a magnificent singing voice, and was a student of religious thought, searching for a cause that would embody The Day of God. Great expectation of the return of Christ swept the western world in the 1840's. The religious fervor must have made a deep impression on the young Thornton Chase. For some time before he heard of the Bahá'í Faith, he was a follower of the noble and mystical teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. (Some Early Bahá'ís, p. 3).

Mr. Chase was working as an insurance salesman, based in Chicago, when a friend told him what he had learned of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá from Ibrahim Khayrullah, a Syrian believer who emigrated to the United States, not primarily as a Bahá'í teacher but for business ventures. (The Bahá'í Faith in America pages 26 and 30) Ever searching, Mr. Chase entered the classes offered by Khayrullah. However, Khayrullah mixed his own imaginings and doubts about Abdu'l-Bahá into his presentations on the Bahá'í Faith. To counter the effects of this, Abdu'l-Bahá, in 1900 and 1901, sent teachers to America who were completely loyal to the Center of the Covenant and well-informed on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. They were Mirza Abu'l-Fadl and Mirza Asad'u'llah.

Mr. Chase wrote, "With these teachers came the first opportunity for a correct and intimate knowledge of the true Bahá'í teachings ... rather than psychic and occult experiments ... Many persons who had conceived views imbued with imaginations and superstitions fell away

from the Cause - but those who remained discovered such spiritual light,...and power in the teachings, that they were deeply confirmed in their belief, and clung to it..." This is from a short paper entitled A Brief History of the American Development of the Bahá'í Movement, printed in Star of the West, Volume V, number 17. It is fascinating to observe that notwithstanding Mr. Chase's obvious position as one of the greatest pillars of the Bahá'í Community in America, in this paper he makes no reference to himself whatsoever. What an example of self-effacement and humility!

Mr. Chase's business career involved a great deal of travel. In each city he visited, he would introduce the Faith to many people and spend a good deal of time teaching seriously interested individuals. The insurance company he worked for transferred him to Los Angeles, California, by one account about two years before he passed away. (Star of the West, Volume III, number 12) It is reported that the company decided to do this in the hope that once removed from the center of Bahá'í activity in Chicago, he would spend more time working and less time on the Faith. It did not turn out that way. In California, he became a close friend of John David Bosch, whose story will also be told later on.

Thornton

Chase was a very tall and handsome figure whose security and joy in the Faith came through his personality. It is written that a secretary in an office which he visited from time to time, spoke in later years of the electrifying presence of Thornton Chase. She recalled that whenever he came into the room, people felt elated; joy wafted in with him; his face radiated light. (Some Early Bahá'ís of the West, p.8) Others wrote of him that he inspired love and trust, that one never heard a word of condemnation or criticism from him, that he was a man of great loving character, with a heart that drew to him warm friends and a love which seemed to reach out, surround and envelop you. (Star of the West Vol. 3, #12) He wrote many pamphlets to help in teaching the Bahá'í Faith and a book, The Bahá'í Revelation, which filled a great need at that time for a clearly written exposition of the teachings.

1912

was the exciting year of Abdu'l-Bahá's journey through America. The Bahá'ís in California were eagerly anticipating the arrival of Abdu'l-Bahá in October. In September Mr. Chase suffered an illness and never recovered. Abdu'l-Bahá traveled to Los Angeles and visited his grave in Inglewood Cemetery. Standing at the head of the grave, He turned towards the East, raised His hands to heaven and chanted a prayer, then spoke in praise of Mr. Chase, saying "This

is a personage who will not be forgotten. For the present his worth is not known but in the future it will be inestimably dear. His sun will be ever shining, his star will ever bestow the light." At a later meeting, the Master said, "As many times as possible - at least once a year- you should make it a point to visit his tomb, for his spirit will be exhilarated through the loyalty of the friends, and in the world of God will it be happy. The friends of God must be kind to one another, whether it be in life or after death ...I loved Mr. Chase very much indeed. His heart was pure. He had no other aim except service to the Cause ... The Blessed Perfection has invited him to His Kingdom. At this very moment he is submerged in the Sea of His Bounty." (Some Early Bahá'ís of the West, p. 11)

(Reference

sources for the above include God Passes By, Some Early Bahá'ís of the West, The Bahá'í Faith in America, Volume I, Star of the West bound volumes 2 and 4, `Abdu'l-Baha, biography by Balyuzi.)

JOHN
BOSCH

Many of us have heard of and possibly traveled to Bosch Bahá'í School, now located in the redwood-forested hills north of Santa Cruz, California. Do we know it had its beginnings in another location as a gift of land in 1927 from a very generous couple, John David Bosch and his wife Louise. John David Bosch was born in Switzerland in 1855. His family was very religious followers of a Protestant faith. He also knew the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish mystic of the 18th century. In his teens, he left home and went to Germany, France and Spain to study wine-making. When 24 years old, he came to America, first to Nebraska where he worked on railroad construction, then in Oklahoma as a cowboy. These rugged occupations possibly gave him incentive to find a place where he could use his education as a wine-maker, which he did as superintendent of a winery in California. His career was extremely successful and he acquired much land in three California counties. But material success did not deter him from his spiritual quest.

In

1905 as John was traveling by train, he happened to meet an acquaintance who was reading a book called Abbas Effendi, His Life and Teachings. (This refers to Abdu'l-Bahá, whose given name was Abbas.) Just think, in such a moment, his life work which seemed so settled and satisfying was about to be turned to another course.

He wanted to get a copy of the book and the friend referred him to contact Mrs. Helen Goodall of Oakland. He attended meetings at her home which were not totally to his taste as he was the only man in a group of thirty to forty women, in a tea party setting. Yet their focus on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh kept him attending, and that same year he wrote to Abdu'l-Bahá requesting acceptance as a believer.

Before

long came a great test of faith, of detachment and obedience. In 1910 he received a tablet from Abdu'l-Bahá, "According to the texts of the Book of Aqdas both light and strong drinks are prohibited ...I hope thou mayest become exhilarated with the wine of the love of God ... The after-effect of drinking is depression, but the wine of the love of God bestoweth exaltation of the spirit." (World Order, Fall 1971, p. 36) He divested himself of his positions in the wine-making business in obedience to the teachings he loved. What bounties would eventually be showered upon him by Abdu'l-Bahá for giving up a business that he no doubt enjoyed and was a recognized expert, being the supervisor of four wineries.

When

John heard that Abdu'l-Bahá would soon be arriving in America, he simply could not wait for the possibility that Abdu'l-Bahá might be able to come to California. So he took a train bound for the East and arrived at the hotel in New York where the Master was staying. Of his first moments in Abdu'l-Bahá's majestic presence, John reminisced, "I went as a business man. I had some questions to ask. When I saw Him I forgot everything..." Then Abdu'l-Bahá told John all the things he planned to ask. He said to Abdu'l-Bahá, "Oh, Abdu'l-Bahá, I came three thousand miles to see you." Abdu'l-Bahá responded with hearty laughter and said, "I came eight thousand miles to see you!"

An

unexpected privilege soon came to John. Abdu'l-Baha said to him, "You are one of the family,...come...anytime you want to." A tour of New York by car was planned for Abdu'l-Bahá, who made John sit next to Him. As soon as the drive started, John relates that Abdu'l-Bahá sighed deeply, put His head on John's shoulder, close, like a child, and went to sleep.

Can

you imagine the blessed head of Abdu'l-Bahá resting on your shoulder, the touch of His pure white, silky hair and the fragrance of holiness arising to surround you? No wonder John was enthralled and entranced. Abdu'l-Bahá gave John the name Nurani, meaning filled with light. He followed the Master everywhere for about three weeks and then returned to California. He petitioned Abdu'l-Bahá to extend his trip

to California and it was accepted.

John

must have been overjoyed when Thornton Chase moved to California. They became close friends, but sadly, Mr. Chase, who was eight years older than John, passed away suddenly a few days before Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in California. Another good friend of John's was Luther Burbank, horticultural scientist and genius in plant hybridizing, who lived in the same region as the Bosch's. John made Burbank well-acquainted with the Bahá'í teachings and he was favorably impressed.

When

the Tablets of the Divine Plan came from Abdu'l-Bahá, Mr. and Mrs. Bosch eagerly responded by going to Tahiti in 1920. The Tahitians bestowed a title on John meaning "first king of the great family of Bahá'ís arrived among us." In 1921, they embarked on a teaching trip through Europe on their way to Haifa for pilgrimage, arriving mid-November. What joy and happiness to see their beloved Master again after nine years. John was the last Westerner to receive from the hands of Abdu'l-Bahá a fruit from His garden. (The Bahá'í World, Volume XI, p. 492) At that moment, no one could imagine that in three days the Master would be gone. John recalled that the Master walked straight and vigorously like a young man. He looked well and strong. (World Order, Fall 1971 p. 40.)

In

the pre-dawn of November 28, John and Louise were awakened to the stunning and awful word that Abdu'l-Bahá had suddenly passed away. John was asked to help lift the coffin. Except for enemies of the light, Abdu'l-Bahá was adored and revered by high and low in Palestine. It was the Bosch's destiny to witness that adoration by seeing ten thousand mourners following the cortege up Mt. Carmel to the place of interment, in the Shrine of the Báb. (World Order, Fall 1971 p. 44)

The

Greatest Holy Leaf, Abdu'l-Bahá's sister, requested John and Louise to remain in Haifa for the forty days of mourning. During this time, Shoghi Effendi returned from England. He gave them the first copy of the translated Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Baha for the Bahá'ís in America. (The Bahá'í World volume XI p. 492)

Back

home again, they made frequent teaching trips in the west coast States, in the service of the Beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi. In 1927 the National Spiritual Assembly appointed a committee to find a location for a western states Bahá'í summer school. John Bosch was on that committee and recalled that in 1919 he had offered his

Geyserville property to Abdu'l-Bahá to be used for Bahá'í gatherings. This was accepted and the first session opened on his seventy-second birthday. This made the Guardian very happy who wrote that the school would "flourish and attract an increasing number of spiritually-minded, capable souls ... who would reinforce the work that is being achieved for our beloved Cause." (The Bahá'í World Vol. XI p. 493)

John

lived to see twenty sessions at Geyserville Bahá'í Summer School. How happy it must have made them both to see what their gift meant to the spiritual growth of so many Bahá'ís and seekers. Some years later the school was renamed Bosch Bahá'í School and relocated near Santa Cruz, California.

John

passed away July 22, 1946. So loved was he that the village stores closed on the day of his funeral. The Guardian's cablegram read, in part, "Profoundly grieve passing dearly-beloved, great-hearted, high-minded distinguished servant of Bahá'u'lláh, John Bosch. His saintly life, pioneer services, historic contribution of institution of summer school, entitle him to rank among outstanding figures of the closing year of heroic, and opening years of formative age of the Bahá'í Dispensation..." (The Bahá'í World Volume XI, p. 493-4) (Most of above information is taken from The Bahá'í World, Volume XI)

LOUISA

MOORE GETSINGER "LUA"

In

1897 about two years after Thornton Chase was confirmed as a follower of Bahá'u'lláh, another class of Ibrahim Kheiralla's included a young woman who, after her passing, was extolled by the Guardian as the mother-teacher of the West, and as one of the nineteen Disciples of Abdu'l-Bahá and Heralds of the Covenant in the West. (Bahá'í Dictionary, p. 71) What were the events in her short life of only forty-five years that culminated in such a station of greatness.

Louisa

Aurora Moore was born November 1, 1871 into a farm family near the village of Hume in upstate New York. She was an unusually talented child, speaking eloquently and singing beautifully. She was encouraged to develop these talents and chose to study in Chicago instead of the closer and recognized center of theatre arts, New York City. (The Flame, p. 17-1). She may have heard of Kheiralla's classes on the Bahá'í Faith in Chicago from Dr. Chester Thacher, a

Bahá'í, for whom she worked as a housekeeper. Shortly after completing the class she married another student, Dr. Edward Getsinger, who accepted Bahá'u'lláh a few months later. Her zeal and fervor for the newly found Faith were intense as she had been brought up in an atmosphere of great religious excitement about the imminent return of Christ. She returned to New York state to share the new Faith with her family and friends. (The Bahai Faith in America, Volume I, pages 90, 104, 116) Dr. Getsinger and Lua also went to the West Coast upon the invitation of Phoebe Hearst, the wife of California senator George Hearst. According to Dr. Getsinger's memoirs, Mrs. Hearst had read of him in a newspaper in 1897. (Bahá'í World Vol. VI, p. 495).

The Getsingers organized a class to share the Bahá'í teachings, as much as was understood at that time. Mrs. Hearst and many others accepted the Faith. Later in 1898, Mrs. Hearst's butler, Robert Turner also became a believer. He was the first black American (African-American) to have become a Bahá'í. (The Baha'i Faith in America p. 139-140) These new Bahá'ís longed to see Abdu'l-Bahá, the living center of the Faith of His Father.

Mrs. Hearst had a tour of Egypt planned for the fall of 1898. Then it became possible to attain the presence of the Master Abdu'l-Bahá, Who was a prisoner of the Turkish Empire in `Akka, not very far from Egypt. She invited the Getsingers, Robert Turner, and several others to be her guests on this historic first pilgrimage of Western believers. The party broke their journey by stopping at Mrs. Hearst's apartment in Paris. Friends of Mrs. Hearst and two of her nieces were already at the apartment. The friends were May Ellis Bolles, then twenty-eight years old, her mother and brother. The story of May and her husband Sutherland Maxwell will be told next. When May realized there was a religious mission within the travel plans, she became eagerly interested. Lua told her all she knew of the wonders of the new Revelation. May and Mrs. Hearst's nieces became believers in a short time and were invited to join the pilgrimage. (Baha'i Faith in America p. 140-1)

Because of the dangers surrounding Abdu'l-Bahá', only a few could go to Akka at one time. They had to go first to Cairo, Egypt, and await instructions from Abdu'l-Bahá. Dr. and Lua Getsinger were chosen to be the first North American Bahá'ís to attain the presence of the Master. It was December 10, 1898 when they were ushered into His presence, an experience of such spiritual magnitude that their lives

were changed forever. Lua wrote to Thornton Chase, "...When I left America I thought I knew a good deal ... but after seeing the Master ...I am sure I know nothing ... The Face of the Master is gloriously beautiful- His eyes read one's very soul- still they are full of divine love - and fairly melt one's heart!" (Baha'i Faith in America, p. 144-5). Dr. Getsinger wrote, "When I first saw ... the Servant of Baha...in spite of my former belief (atheism) I still had enough spiritual perception...to see at once a holy man, a divine character...a soul that I could not comprehend and at that moment I consecrated my life and all to the principles for which He stands..." (Bahá'í World, Vol. VI, p. 495)

Abdu'l-Bahá

permitted the Getsingers to stay in Akka for five months to learn Persian and to acquire deeper knowledge of the Bahá'í Faith. They found discrepancies between what Kheiralla had taught them and what they were now learning from Abdu'l-Baha Himself, such as reincarnation, which is rejected in the Bahá'í teachings. (Baha'i Faith in America, p. 146).

When

the Getsingers returned to America in May 1899, they had some precious gifts to share with the friends in addition to a greatly expanded and corrected knowledge. The gifts were the first photograph ever taken of Abdu'l-Bahá, this was made in 1868 in Adrianople when Abdu'l-Baha was 24 years old; also a calligraphic design of the Greatest Name/ an Arabic copy of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, and a wax cylinder recording of the chanting of Abdu'l-Bahá. Dr. Getsinger had actually taken a phonograph with him and Abdu'l-Bahá graciously consented to the recording, which exists to this day. Can you imagine the excitement and joy of the American believers to have these infinitely precious things brought to them!

How

many Bahá'ís were there in America in 1899? According to the carefully researched and fascinating book, The Bahá'í Faith in America, Volume I, by Dr. Robert Stockman, membership had grown from 2 believers in 1894, to 1,467 by September 1899. (TBFIA, pages 159, 160, 163).

As

mentioned in the story on Thornton Chase, Ibrahim Kheiralla became proud, and ambitious and was maneuvering to make himself the official leader of the Bahá'ís in America, in direct opposition to the explicit commands of the Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh which

appointed His Son Abdu'l-Bahá as the only authority and interpreter of the Faith. When the Getsingers returned to America, they found the infant Bahá'í community being sorely tried and divided over the issue. (TBFA chapter 12) The Getsingers, among others of capacity, immediately took up the challenge of strengthening the understanding and loyalty of their fellow-believers towards Abdu'l-Bahá.

Lua

made several trips to Akka and served Abdu'l-Bahá in special ways. Once she stayed in Akka for a year and taught English in the household of Abdu'l-Bahá. Abdu'l-Bahá loved to hear her sing. When she sang "Nearer My God to Thee" it would bring tears to His eyes. (Abdu'l-Bahá, by Balyuzi, p. 96-7) Another time when Lua was back in America, she received a stunning letter and command from Abdu'l-Bahá. Enclosed was a letter written by Abdu'l-Bahá to the Shah of Persia, who was in Paris at the time, and Lua was instructed to personally deliver it to the Shah. It was a time of great persecution and killing of Bahá'ís in Persia and Abdu'l-Bahá was petitioning the Shah to stop the shameful and barbaric actions. Lua traveled to Paris in haste only to be turned away because the son of the Prime Minister was very ill and not expected to live. She extracted the promise of an appointment if the child would be healed overnight. Lua united with the Bahá'ís in Paris in an all-night prayer vigil. With no doubt about the outcome, she returned to the Prime Minister's office the next day and was told that the child was recovering. The petition was thus presented to the Shah and for a time the persecution was halted. (The Flame, p. 68-70).

Abdu'l-Bahá's

trip to America in 1912 filled the Bahá'ís with indescribable excitement and joy. Many who would never have been able to go to Akka to attain His presence now found their heart's desire coming to them! Lua was on a speaking tour in California when Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in New York in April. On April 29th He arrived in Chicago and addressed the concluding session of the Bahá'í Temple Unity convention the next day. This is where Lua first saw her beloved Master in America. May 1, 1912, was the very special day when under a large tent, surrounded by the spellbound believers, Abdu'l-Bahá laid the cornerstone for the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, that is House of Worship. After that Abdu'l-Baha returned to New York and Lua followed Him. (The Flame, p. 79; Abdu'l-Bahá, by Balyuzi, p. 185-6).

In

New York, the Bahá'í artist Juliet Thompson had gained the permission of Abdu'l-Baha to paint His portrait. Lua was there also in Juliet's studio. As He sat very still for the painter, He seemed to be going to sleep, but suddenly opened His eyes and addressed the women on the meaning of the Covenant of God with such power that they were

awestruck. Juliet's diary records that it was at that moment that Abdu'l-Bahá spoke directly to Lua and said "I appoint you Lua, as a Herald of the Covenant. Go forth and proclaim this truth." (The Flame, p. 102).

He instructed her to go to California and continue teaching. She was a dynamic speaker and drew large audiences. She very badly wanted to stay near Abdu'l-Bahá and tried some delaying tactics, one was the well-known story of walking in poison ivy. The painful condition was quickly healed with a remedy from the Master. With a new understanding about obedience being the expression of love, she traveled to California where she was blessed by the presence of Abdu'l-Bahá again in the fall. (The Flame, p. 88). He gave her the title, Leva, meaning Banner.

In 1914 Abdu'l-Bahá directed Lua to teach in India, especially to further acquaint the Maharajah of Jalowar with the Bahá'í teachings. The Maharajah had met Abdu'l-Bahá in London and admired Him and the Bahá'í Cause. Lua's health was not very strong. Her husband wrote, "...she never spared herself...in a state of utter exhaustion...she would pull herself together by sheer will power in order to keep her appointments." Upon returning from India she stayed in Haifa with Abdu'l-Bahá's family for seven months. (Star of the West, Vol. VII, No. 4). It was the summer of 1915 and the world war had started. Abdu'l-Bahá told Lua she must return to America as He knew conditions would become very dangerous in Palestine. The ship she took stopped in Cairo and Lua disembarked to see the Bahá'ís there. She became very ill and unable to continue her journey. She was cared for by a Bahá'í family and in times of returning strength was engaged in teaching the Faith and teaching English lessons. On May 2, she passed away from heart failure. (Star of the West, Vol. VII, No. 19). Abdu'l-Bahá wrote a loving tribute and supplication, in part, "O Lord, Grant her a palace in the neighborhood of Thy Most Great Mercy; cause her to dwell in the gardens of Thy paradise, the Most High, illumine her countenance with the effulgence of Thy good-pleasure in the Kingdom of Thy Glory..." (The Flame, p. 139).

A few words about Dr. Edward Getsinger who was born in 1866 in Frankenmuth, Michigan. At age seven, he ran away and was taken into the home of a professor who must have had a great influence on the lad. Edward got a medical education and also was a lifelong student of astronomy and the Bible. He was an atheist before becoming a Bahá'í, finding its clear logic powerful enough to dispel his disbelief in a divine Creator. With the

assistance of Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, he published the first book of Bahá'í holy writings, *The Hidden Words*, in America. He passed away in 1935. (*The Bahá'í World*, Vol. VI, p. 494-6)

When

Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, Lua, and Dr. Getsinger, and others in her company made the historical first pilgrimage of Western believers to see Abdu'l-Bahá in Akka, Palestine in 1898, they stopped en route at Mrs. Hearst's apartment in Paris. Residing there were her two nieces and her friend, Mary Martin Bolles and Mrs. Bolles' adult children, May and Randolph. Who could imagine that the very fragile May who had been almost bedridden for two years would soon become such a stalwart and courageous follower of Bahá'u'lláh that forty--two years later, after ceaseless activity for the Faith, would lay down her life as a martyr in a foreign land.

MAY MAXWELL

May Ellis Bolles was born on January 14, 1870 in Englewood, New Jersey. As a young girl she had very unusual spiritual sensitivity. When she was only eleven, she experienced in a dream a light so brilliant that upon awakening she was blinded for a day. Another time she had a vision of the Master, Abdu'l-Bahá, thinking the identity of the vision was Jesus, until the realization came to her after meeting the Master. She spent eleven years in Paris with her mother and brother who was attending architectural studies.

When

Mrs. Hearst's traveling companions met May for the first time, May sensed something special about Lua Getsinger. When May's inquiries revealed that there was a religious mission to their trip, Lua's explanation of the return of Christ changed the direction of May's life almost in an instant. She always called Lua her spiritual mother and they became closest friends. May and Mrs. Heart's nieces within a short time declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh, and by their earnest desire were invited to join the pilgrimage.

Because

of the restrictions on Abdu'l-Bahá, a prisoner of the Turkish Empire, the pilgrims could not go in one group. May's turn came in February 1899. (*Bahá'í World*, Vol. VIII p. 633). For one so spiritually attuned, the first encounter with Abdu'l-Bahá was almost too powerful. She wrote, "I found myself at His feet, and He gently raised me and seated me beside Him, all the while saying some loving words in Persian in a voice that shook my heart ...I had been carried

suddenly to too great a height; my soul had come in contact with the Divine Spirit; and this force so pure, so holy, so mighty, had overwhelmed me ... To me He said "...You are like the rain upon the earth making it bud and blossom and become fruitful; so shall the Spirit of God descend upon you, filling with fruitfulness and you shall go forth and water His vineyard. Now your troubles are ended and you must wipe away your tears..." (An Early Pilgrimage, p. 12-13)

She

was troubled with illness while on pilgrimage. At one time the Master cancelled a meeting on Mount

Carmel with the pilgrims, saying "...we could not go and leave one of the beloved of God alone and sick. We could none of us be happy unless all the beloved were happy." A little later a three day trip was planned to the shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, but May found herself ill again the night before. Confiding in Lua that she didn't think Abdu'l-Bahá realized she was too weak for the occasion, Lua said, "You will soon realize something of the power of Abdu'l-Bahá." May relates in her record called An Early Pilgrimage, "It was about dawn when I awoke, feeling myself stirred by a breeze. I cannot describe what followed, but through my soul was flowing an essence; a mighty unseen force was penetrating all my being, expanding it with boundless life and love and happiness, lifting and enfolding me in its mighty strength and peace. I knew then it was the Holy Spirit of God and that our Lord was praying for His servants in that blessed dawn ...I arose,...prayed and was quite well." (Early Pilgrimage, p.17)

After experiencing such a spiritual healing, no wonder May's love for the Master was boundless and she eagerly obeyed His bidding. All too soon, the time of departure from His blessed presence was at hand. He comforted the weeping pilgrims with these words,

"Now the time has come when we must part but the separation is only of our bodies, in spirit we are united. Ye are the lights which shall be diffused; ye are the waves of that sea which shall spread and overflow the world ... Another commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another even as I love you ... Look at Me and be as I am; ye must die to yourselves and to the world, so shall ye be born again and enter the Kingdom of Heaven..." (An Early Pilgrimage, p.41-2)

Abdu'l-Bahá

directed May to return to

Paris and teach. Her fellow-pilgrims returned to America. She was the lone Bahá'í on the European continent, but not for long. In four years the Paris group of Bahá'ís numbered between 25 and 30. With her spirit ablaze from the experience of her pilgrimage,

she taught her friends and their friends. The ever widening ripples of interpersonal contact drew in souls of great capacity, such as the first French believer, Hippolyte Dreyfus; the first English believer, Thomas Breakwell; Agnes Alexander who became a Hand of the Cause. This extensive teaching was done with very little literature, only a few prayers and The Hidden Words were available in English. In 1901 the Master sent the great Bahá'í scholar Mirza Abu'l-Fadl with translators to further educate the Paris group.

She became engaged to William Sutherland Maxwell, of Montreal, Canada, an architectural student at the same school her brother attended. They were married in London in May, 1902, and she left the lively group in Paris to begin married life in Montreal, a lone Bahá'í again, not another Bahá'í in all of vast Canada, but not for long. In 1903 her husband entered the Faith, becoming the first Canadian Bahá'í. Their home was a radiant center of hospitality and teaching, from which themselves and many others traveled to all parts of Canada, establishing new Bahá'í groups and Assemblies.

What was her method? It was pure love and patience. From a letter she wrote in 1915, "We must first touch the heart to awaken it, if it opens and responds we must sow the priceless seed...Prepare the soil with the warmth of your love just as the sun prepares the soil in the spring...in a kind way try to remove prejudices...Never oppose people's ideas and statements, but give them a little nobler way of seeing life...My great and wise teacher, Mirza Abu'l-Fadl, laid down these divine principles of teaching...He showed me that it is the Spirit of God that is doing the work; we must wait upon the Spirit and do its bidding only!

Ten years passed and she had the privilege of another pilgrimage, this time with her husband. Their prayer and longing was to be able to have a child, which came true a few years later. Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "Praise be to God that thy prayer is answered and thy desire realized. In the garden of existence a rose has blossomed with the utmost freshness, fragrance and beauty...I beg of God that this little child may become great and wonderful in the Divine Kingdom." They named her Mary. In 1937, the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, chose her for his wife. How perfectly was the prayer of the Master fulfilled for this child. She was elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause in 1952, a talented author, a world-traveler, an eloquent speaker, all for the advancement of the Faith; she is known to us as Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum. (The Priceless Pearl, p. 153, 254)

May

Maxwell was also a civic leader. She supported a Children's Court in Montreal and a milk distribution service for children, started the first Montessori school in Canada. Such was her admirable reputation as a Bahá'í in the city that when the Master came to Montreal in 1912, there was, in His words, "no antagonist and no adversary." What excitement and joy for the believers in Montreal when the Master came. May made the majority of arrangements. `Abdu'l-Bahá gave seven public lectures; at one in a Methodist church there were twelve hundred in attendance. He addressed four meetings in the Maxwell home, which is a Bahá'í sacred place. (The Bahá'í World, p. 637)

The

Maxwells' service on Bahá'í institutions in Canada included years on the Spiritual Assembly of Montreal, the National Spiritual Assembly, plus many other activities for Bahá'í publications, schools, youth and racial unity. Her love for the Master was so deep that His passing away was extremely hard on her. Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyyih Khanum writes, "...she suffered a complete breakdown in health caused by the shock of His death...for a year we did not know if she would live or die...My father felt that the only hope of dispelling the grief...was for her to make the pilgrimage to Haifa again, this time to see the young successor of Abdu'l-Bahá. In April 1923 we arrived in Haifa and it was Shoghi Effendi who literally resurrected a woman who was so ill she could...not walk a step...From that time the love of my mother's heart became entirely centered in the Guardian ... She once more served the Cause very actively." (The Priceless Pearl, p. 150)

In

1935, inspired by the Guardian's appeal for pioneers to go to Europe, she spent two years there, with Mr. Maxwell, their daughter, and two relatives teaching in Germany, Belgium and France, concluding the sojourn with a pilgrimage to the Sacred Shrines. The Maxwells returned to Montreal in fall 1937 but without Mary who then made Haifa her home.

The

Guardian's call for pioneers to go to Central and South America captivated May's restless spirit. With the approval of the Guardian and her husband, May and her niece made the long journey by ship to South America, arriving in Buenos Aires in February, 1940. But her spiritual influence there was destined to be from beyond this world of time and space. Three days after arriving, she suddenly passed away. The

Guardian's tribute entitled her as
Abdu'l-Bahá's beloved handmaid and distinguished disciple and gave
her the priceless
honor of a martyr's crown because she laid down her life in such a
spirit of consecration and self-sacrifice. (Messages to America,
Shoghi Effendi, 1932-1946, p. 38-40)

Some
words of the spiritual attraction she radiated are remarkable.
Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "May Maxwell is really a Bahá'í ... Whosoever
meets her feels from her association the susceptibilities of the
Kingdom. Her company uplifts and develops the soul." Her
daughter wrote, "...I don't think I ever knew anyone who
inspired the love Mother did - so that it was like an event when one
was going to see her. And this I felt all my life...it never became
commonplace!" Juliet Thompson, a close friend, wrote of May
being "so fragile, so luminous...the most delicate, perfect
beauty, flower-like and star-like." (The Bahá'í World, Vol.
VIII, p. 638, 634)

HAND OF THE CAUSE WILLIAM S. MAXWELL

William Sutherland Maxwell
occupies a unique position in Bahá'í history as he became in 1903 the
first Canadian Bahá'í. Thirty-seven years later the Guardian
appointed him to be the architect of the majestic Shrine of the Bab,
and in 1951 he was the first Canadian Bahá'í to be named a Hand of
the Cause. He was born into a distinguished family of
Montreal and studied architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in
Paris. (The Bahá'í World, Vol. VIII, p. 635-6 and Vol. XIII, p. 380)
He became one of the finest architects in Canada and held the
positions of president of the Royal Architectural Institute
of Canada and Vice-President of the Royal Canadian Academy. (George
Townshend, p. 55)

Immediately
after the passing of Mr. Maxwell's wife, the Guardian invited him to
come and reside in Haifa. He became the Guardian's close friend,
trusted and gifted collaborator in designing the superstructure of
white marble over the Shrine of the Báb on Mt. Carmel. After two
years of work on the preparations, on the 100th anniversary of the
Declaration of the Báb, May 22, 1944, the Guardian announced that
the design was chosen. Because of the aftermath of the war years,
actual work on it could not start until 1948.

After
eleven years in Haifa, Mr. Maxwell made a trip to Montreal to visit
relatives. While there, he passed away in March 1952. The Maxwells

had willed their historic home in Montreal to the Canadian National Assembly. (The Priceless Pearl, p. 157-8, 236-246) The Guardian's memorial extolled his saintly life, his services in Canada and pronounced that one of the doors of the Báb's tomb is named after him as tribute to his services. (Messages to the Bahá'í World, p. 132, 169)

THOMAS BREAKWELL

This

is a brief account of Thomas Breakwell, the first English Bahá'í who was mentioned in the story about May Bolles Maxwell. Abdu'l-Bahá refused to give permission for May to leave Paris in the summer of 1901, much to the annoyance of May's mother who wanted her to leave for a vacation place.

The reason for Abdu'l-Bahá's decision soon became apparent when a friend of hers brought a young Englishman to meet May, feeling that he would be interested in hearing about the Bahá'í teachings.

The

following are excerpts from May's memories about Breakwell: "I shall never forget opening the door and seeing him standing there. It was like looking at a veiled light. I saw at once his pure heart, his burning spirit, his thirsty soul...he stayed a short time. As he was leaving, he said that Mrs. Milner told him that I had received some teachings which had a great effect on my life and...he would like to...hear what I could tell him. We made an appointment for the following morning...At the appointed hour...he arrived, his eyes shining, his face illumined, his voice vibrating under the stress of great emotion. He looked at me very intently and then said, 'I have come to you to help me. Yesterday after I left you, I walked alone down the boulevard and suddenly some great force nearly swept me off my feet. I stood still as though awaiting something and a voice announced to me distinctly, 'Christ has come!' Then he said, 'What do you think this means?' Then I gave him the Message and teachings from the beginning...He was like a blazing light. Such was his capacity, that he received the Message in all its fullness and all its strength and beauty within three days and on the third day he wrote his supplication to Abdu'l-Bahá which in its force and simplicity I have never seen equaled..." (Star of the West, Volume 5, number 19.)

The

supplication which Thomas wrote to Abdu'l-Bahá was this: "My Lord! I believe; forgive me, Thy servant, Thomas Breakwell" What is it that he implores forgiveness from the Master? We will learn that in a little while. Thomas now had only one great longing - to meet the Master. May wrote to the Master asking permission for her

young friend to make the pilgrimage and enclosed his supplication. That same day when May went to get her mail, there was a cablegram from Abdu'l-Bahá, it said "You may leave Paris at any time." May joined her mother and brother at the seaside. When her mother learned that Abdu'l-Bahá's permission came the very day that Thomas became confirmed, she burst into tears and exclaimed, "You have indeed a wonderful Master."

May

describes Thomas as being of medium height, slender, erect and graceful with intense eyes and an indescribable charm. She learned that he had an important position in a cotton mill in a southern state of America and usually spent long summer vacations in Europe. Before long, permission came from Abdu'l-Bahá for Thomas to make the pilgrimage. He was the first Englishman to go as a pilgrim. He traveled in the company of another young man, an American Bahá'í. Upon their arrival at the house of Abdu'l-Bahá in Akka, they were ushered into a large room where they expected to find their Master. A group of Eastern men stood at one end of the room. Thomas became distressed and disappointed as he saw no one there who had any effect on him. He was afraid that he had failed to recognize the beloved Master. Suddenly a door opened and he beheld what seemed to him the rising Sun. He sprang to his feet to approach the dazzling splendor and majesty of Abdu'l-Bahá, his despair instantly transformed to indescribable joy. What had troubled Thomas so much that he hoped for the Master's forgiveness? He confided to Abdu'l-Bahá that although he had a high paying position in a cotton mill, he realized that the child labor used there was wrong. Abdu'l-Bahá had three words, "Cable your resignation." Thomas instantly obeyed. Because of restrictions imposed by the civil authorities, Thomas could stay only two days in the prison city, Akka. Dr. Yunis Khan, a secretary for Abdu'l-Bahá, wrote his impressions: "The fervor and the faith of this young man were so sublime in character that his blessed name shall ring throughout centuries, and shall be remembered with deep affection in many chronicles. Verses from the Gospels which attest to the glories of the Kingdom were always on his lips... Whenever he was in the presence of our peerless Master he was rapt in wonderment... The day he left, the Master told him: Stay in Paris. As bidden by the Master, I accompanied him on his return journey to Haifa, the point of embarkation. Away from Akka, it was possible to entertain him for an hour or two in the home of one of the believers before his boat was ready to sail ... we were in a room that looked towards Akka. There he would stand every now and then perfectly still facing Akka in a state of communion. Whilst his eyes welled with tears, his tongue uttered words of supplication... In that state of ecstasy he asked me whether he could correspond with me... My letters in answer to his, he said, would convey to him the fragrances of the effulgent

city of `Akka. We were all in tears when we bade farewell to him."
(`Abdu'l-Bahá by Balyuzi, p. 77).

Back

in Paris, Thomas immediately became engaged in teaching the Cause. May wrote, "He had become the guiding star of our group ... In the meetings he spoke with a simplicity and eloquence which won the hearts and quickened the souls." Whenever he visited May's family, he gave most of his attention to her mother, who had not recognized the station of `Abdu'l-Bahá and was in need of love and kindness. May wrote, "...his kindness and love to my mother during those days in Paris produced a great effect on her ... he was always a joy and a consolation to her ... before she understood the glory of the Cause." (Star of West, Vol. V No. 19).

Dear

listeners, let us pause for a moment's reflection on the example of Breakwell's sensitivity and special kindness to May's mother. How often does it happen that when we are in the company of both believers and those who have not yet been touched, we sometimes ignore the latter because we have many things to talk about with our fellow-Bahá'ís. May we always cause the spouse, the parents, relatives and friends of believers to feel that they are included and loved as deeply as we love our Bahá'í friends.

Thomas's

parents came to see him in Paris. They wanted him to return to London, but he explained to them that he must stay in Paris as the Master had asked him to do so. Thomas led his father into the Cause, and enclosed his father's supplication to Abdu'l-Bahá with his own letter to Dr. Khan, Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary. Abdu'l-Bahá responded with a tablet for Thomas's father.

Then

there was a tragic development. Thomas was in the last stages of tuberculosis and in great pain. He wrote to Dr. Khan that he found the suffering enabled him to draw nearer to his Lord. A few days after receiving this letter, Dr. Khan relates that he was walking with the Master one evening when "He turned to me and said: Have you heard? No, Master, I replied, and He said, "Breakwell has passed away. I am grieved, very grieved. I have written a prayer of visitation for him. It is very moving, so moving that twice I could not withhold my tears when I was writing it. You must translate it well, so that whoever reads it will weep." (Abdu'l-Bahá, by Balyuzi, p.78) Here are some extracts from that eulogy:

“O Breakwell, my beloved! Where is thy beautiful countenance and where is thy eloquent tongue? Where is thy radiant brow and where is thy brilliant face? O my dear, O

Breakwell! Where are thy bright eyes and where are thy smiling lips?
Where are thy gentle cheeks and where is thy graceful stature?
O my dear, O Breakwell! Verily thou hast abandoned this
transitory world and soared upward to the Kingdom, hast attained to
the grace of the Invisible Realm and sacrificed thyself at the
Threshold of the Lord of Might.
O my beloved, O Breakwell! Verily,
thy Lord hath chosen thee for His love, guided thee to the court of
His Holiness, caused thee to enter into the presence of His company
and granted thee to behold His beauty.
O my beloved, O
Breakwell! Thou hast become a star in the most exalted horizon, a
lamp among the angels of heaven, a living spirit in the Supreme
World, and art established upon the throne of Immortality.
O my adored one, O Breakwell! I
mention thy name continually, I never forget thee, I pray for thee
day and night, and I see thee clearly and manifestly, O my adored
one, O Breakwell.”

Dr.

Khan writes that a year later Abdu'l-Bahá picked out an envelope unopened from the day's mail and said to him, "How pleasing is the fragrance that emanates from this envelope. Make haste to open it and see where it comes from." In it there was a postcard colored a beautiful shade and attached to it was one solitary flower ... Written in letters of gold were these words: "He is not dead. He lives on in the Kingdom of God...This flower was picked from Breakwell's grave...Praise be to the Lord that my son left this world for the next with the recognition and love of Abdu'l-Bahá." As soon as Dr. Khan translated it, the Master at once rose up from His seat, took the card, put it on His blessed brow, and tears flowed down His cheeks. (Some Early Bahá'ís of the West, p. 72)

In

a cablegram in 1957, on the passing of Hand of the Cause George Townshend, the Guardian wrote that Thomas Breakwell, along with Mr. Townshend and Dr. Esslemont, were three luminaries shedding brilliant luster on the annals of the Irish, English, and Scottish Bahá'í communities. (Bahá'í World Vol. XIII, p. 845). (Chief reference source - Some Early Bahá'ís of the West by O.Z. Whitehead)

HAND

OF THE CAUSE JOHN E. ESSLEMONT, M.D.

After

Breakwell, the second of the three luminaries of the British Isles is Dr. John Esslemont. The Guardian also designated him as one of the nineteen disciples of `Abdu'l-Bahá. (Bahá'í Dictionary, p. 71) He was the author of Bahá'u'lláh

and the New Era, a book which the Guardian wrote is the textbook of the Faith and would "inspire generations yet unborn to tread the path of truth and service." It was first published in 1923 and has been in print continuously ever since, over seventy-two years at the time of this presentation in 1996; in addition it is translated into numerous languages. Who was this remarkable man? John Esslemont was born in Scotland in 1874 into a very distinguished family. He graduated from a medical school in Scotland with medals and honors, went on to win a research scholarship in pharmacology at a university in Germany. In addition to medical and scientific studies, he investigated many religious beliefs, and was fluent in French, Spanish, German, Esperanto, and Persian. But the tragedy of his life was that he contracted tuberculosis while in college. In 1901 he went to Australia for two years, becoming a hospital staff doctor, also a district surgeon and health officer in Alexander County. While in Australia, he was married briefly. He returned to Scotland, but for a better climate soon proceeded to South Africa and worked there for five years. His next move was to Bournemouth, England where he was the resident medical officer in a sanatorium for patients afflicted with tuberculosis. The treatment of the disease became one of Dr. Esslemont's principal interests. He developed a plan for the eradication of tuberculosis which was presented to the British Medical Association but it was not put into practice by the medical profession and government; however, his research and work in promoting a national health service culminated in the formation of the British National Health Service.

He first heard of the Baha'i Faith in 1914 from the wife of a colleague who had met Abdu'l-Baha in London. He was instantly attracted to the teachings. He wrote "They impressed me as meeting the great needs of the modern world more fully and satisfactorily than any other presentation of religion which I had come across." Dr. Esslemont's enthusiasm and happiness knew no bounds and he quickly became involved in teaching the faith in Bournemouth, in both the sanatorium and the city itself. In 1916 he started writing a book on the Faith.

A friend, Major Tudor Pole, visited Abdu'l-Bahá in 1918, and spoke so highly of Dr. Esslemont's services that Shoghi Effendi commenced a correspondence with him, the beginning of a warm friendship. Dr. Esslemont received a tablet of encouragement and

praise from Abdu'l-Bahá, who also requested to see a copy of his book. In November 1919, Dr. Esslemont arrived in Haifa to visit the Master and brought the almost completed manuscript. At the same time there was also a group of American and Persian pilgrims.

Dr. Esslemont interviewed them all and gained more material for the book. The most important source of information was, of course, the talks of Abdu'l-Bahá to the pilgrims.

Dr.

Esslemont stayed in Haifa for two months, and in that time took Persian language lessons, gave Esperanto lessons, and visited the sacred and historical places. Abdu'l-Bahá discussed his book with him and suggested that it should be shortened. Since he had just acquired a lot of new material from the other pilgrims, he decided to return to England and redo the manuscript. Abdu'l-Baha planned to have it translated into Persian so He could correct and perfect it. It must not be forgotten that during his pilgrimage Dr. Esslemont had the great bounty of meeting his engaging correspondent, the young Shoghi Effendi, and deepening their friendship. By August 1920, Dr. Esslemont sent the new manuscript to Abdu'l-Bahá, writing "I hope the Master will be pleased with it, but the more he alters it the better I shall be pleased, for it is not my own ideas but the Bahá'í Truths that I wish to present..."

The next month Shoghi Effendi visited Dr. Esslemont in Bournemouth. As you recall Shoghi Effendi went to England in 1920 to attend college at Oxford University.

There is a short biography on Dr. Esslemont by Dr. Moojan Momen in which he writes, "To gauge something of the great mental energy of Dr. Esslemont it should be realized that at this time, apart from his full-time work at the sanatorium, he was engaged in Persian studies, local and national Bahá'í work ... Esperanto work and in addition, he had become secretary of the local League of Nations Union where he hoped he might find individuals who would be interested in the Faith."

Because of the ever-increasing work of the Faith, Abdu'l-Bahá was able to correct only three and a half of the chapters of Esslemont's book by the time of His Ascension in

November, 1921. Dr. Esslemont turned with eager devotion to Shoghi Effendi who had to return to Haifa, and who, through the Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá, was called to be the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. He hoped Shoghi Effendi would be able to finish correcting the manuscript, which he did in early 1923, and wrote

"Your book, I am sure, is the finest presentation that has so far been given of the Cause, and I am confident that it will arouse immense interest." It was published in England that same year and in America in 1924.

His biographer writes: "The importance of Esslemont's book at the time ... was monumental. For four decades the Faith had been spreading in the West, being taught by eminent Bahá'ís, each of whom had placed their personal interpretations and understandings upon it ...Esslemont's book, so much more accurate, clearly written and easy to read, was a spark of light coinciding with the commencement of one of the most important periods of Bahá'í history."

Dr.

Esslemont suffered times of incapacity due to poor health, but otherwise served the Cause with all his energy. In 1922, he

became a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles. The next year in April, the first Spiritual

Assembly was formed in Bournemouth, but in the same month, Dr. Esslemont left the city, as the sanatorium where he worked was sold and his position ended. He returned to his native city, Aberdeen, Scotland, for the summer and made several

speaking trips throughout

England and Scotland in 1923 and 1924. His physical condition made it imperative that he should not stay another winter in

Scotland. The Guardian, who was looking for an able assistant, extended him an invitation to come to Haifa,

which he gratefully accepted

and arrived in Haifa in November 1924.

He assisted

the Guardian in the translation of the

Tablet of Ahmad, The Hidden Words and some passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. 1925 found Dr. Esslemont struggling with more severe spells of illness. In November, one year after his arrival in Haifa, he suffered a fatal stroke, a complication of tuberculosis. He was only 51 years old.

Shoghi Effendi stayed up all night with his dying

friend. On Esslemont's finger Shoghi Effendi placed his own Bahá'í ring, and helped carry the casket to the Bahá'í cemetery on

Mount Carmel where it is interred next to a cousin of the Bab.

The
grief-stricken
Guardian wrote to the Bahá'í world, in part: "On
the 22nd November 1925 that memorable and sacred day in which the
Bahá'ís of the Orient celebrated the twin festivals of the Declaration
of the Bab and the birthday of Abdu'l-Bahá, Dr. John E.
Esslemont
passed on to the Abha Kingdom ... With
tearful eyes I
supplicate at the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh...and request you all
to join in my ardent prayers for the fuller unfolding in the realms
beyond of a soul that has already achieved so high a spiritual
standing
in this world. For by the beauty of his character,
by his knowledge of the Cause, by the conspicuous achievements of his
book, he has immortalised his name, and by sheer
merit deserved to rank as one of the Hands of the Cause of God."

(References on Dr.
Esslemont are from Bahá'í Dictionary; Dr. John Ebenezer Esslemont,
by Moojan Momen; The Bahá'í World, Vol.
VIII, pp.929-35.)

HAND OF THE CAUSE GEORGE TOWNSHEND

One
of the three great luminaries of the Bahá'í Faith in the British Isles is
George Townshend
of Ireland. He occupies a unique position in
Bahá'í history as he was the first ordained priest in Christendom to
renounce his vows in order to become a Bahá'í, the first Hand of
the Cause in Europe, called by the Guardian the "pre-eminent Bahá'í
writer"
and "Bahá'u'lláh's chosen instrument." He assisted the
Guardian for many years with English translation of Bahá'í scripture.

The
following account is condensed from the excellent and fascinating
biography written by David Hofman, retired member of the Universal
House of Justice, who knew him
personally.

George Townshend was born on June 14, 1876 in Dublin to an
eminent, wealthy and philanthropic family, one of fourteen children. He
graduated from Hertford College at
Oxford, having studied classic literature and English. A tall fellow, he
excelled in running sports. A literary and administrative talent began to

emerge. Back in Dublin he wrote for The Irish Times and worked in a law firm, earning a law degree, but he became unhappy in this occupation. His generous father offered to support him for two years in any country he would choose. Can you believe he chose Salt Lake City, Utah? What a drastic change from the Emerald Isle! For two years he camped and explored, going on horseback into the Rocky Mountains and to Yellowstone Park, sometimes working as a logger.

During this time, he came across a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, the Holy Book of the Hindu religion. It initiated within him a spiritual longing to know and to serve God. He became active in the church of his family, the Anglican Church, known in America as the Episcopal church. He was ordained as a priest in 1906 in St. Mark's Cathedral, Salt Lake City, and was in charge of a mission to the Mormons and Indians at Provo and Springville, Utah. However, in 1909 he became interested in a mystical, ethical movement called The Great Work, left the ministry, and worked one year teaching in Salt Lake High School.

The next year he met a man from the University of the South, an Episcopalian-owned college in Sewanee, Tennessee, who offered Reverend Townshend a position there, and it was accepted. His life was happily filled with academic accomplishments, both as a special theology student and assistant professor of English. More importantly he found a love; Nellie Roche, a schoolteacher in Nashville. They planned to get married in summer of 1913 at George's family home in Ireland and to return to Sewanee in autumn. George was now an American citizen. He left first to make arrangements, and Nellie was to follow.

The prospect of security in academia and a beautiful, talented bride must have brought him to a pinnacle of joyful anticipation, but bewildering disappointments and defeats were about to break.

In Ireland awaiting the arrival of Nellie, he received a heartbreaking telegram from her. Nellie broke their engagement in order to help a sister who had no one else to turn to but Nellie. George returned to Sewanee and taught there for three more years. Nellie became a successful

life insurance
underwriter in Nashville. She never married.
But don't forget her. Their
paths will cross many years later in a beautiful
way.

Another
crushing disappointment was three years later when the movement,
The Great Work, which he had supported for six years, was
found to be financially fraudulent and fell apart. That summer he
traveled to Ireland and planned to return to Sewanee for the autumn
term. A third blow of suffering, this time physical, was George's
lot. He had been prone to eye trouble in the past and it
came again, causing blindness for several weeks. He cabled his
resignation to the University. As Mr. Hofman wrote, "In one great
wave of calamity, he had lost his bride, his sight, his spiritual
allegiance and his employment." His sight was eventually restored,
but at the age of 41 he had to decide what to do for a livelihood.
His mother encouraged him to return to the work of the
priesthood in the Church of Ireland. While
he was recovering
from blindness in the winter of 1916, he received a little
gift from a friend at Sewanee, a few pamphlets about the Bahá'í
Faith. Ever the truth-seeker, it interested him and he wrote for the books
offered, receiving three volumes of Tablets of
Abdu'l-Bahá.

In
1918 he married Anna Sarah Maxwell, called Nancy, and soon accepted
the position of rector at a small village church in western Ireland.
Son Brian was born in 1920 and daughter Una in 1921. Later
he would be elected a Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin and
Archdeacon of Clonfert. He was suggested for a bishopric but
declined the honor. He
was highly esteemed by his fellow clergymen
and regarded by many as the best preacher in the
Church of
Ireland.

Soon
after settling into the spacious parsonage at Ahascragh, County Galway,
George wrote to Abdu'l-Bahá expressing his attraction to the
Bahá'í teachings and prayers. An extensive and loving reply came from
Abdu'l-Bahá. Before
long, George
wrote again to Abdu'l-Bahá
declaring his belief through a beautiful poem – the first lines "Hail to
Thee, Scion of Glory, Whose utterance poureth abroad the joy of the heavenly

knowledge and the light of the greatest of days!" The loving, encouraging reply from Abdu'l-Bahá promised him the confirmations of the Kingdom of God, and expressed Abdu'l-Bahá's hope that "thy church will come under the Heavenly Jerusalem." This phrase became George's charter of action and for the rest of his life, he struggled to fulfill this hope of Abdu'l-Bahá's.

November

16, 1921, George wrote a long letter to Abdu'l-Bahá of remarkable humility and longing for self-sacrifice. It was received in Haifa on December 8, 1921, ten days after the Ascension of Abdu'l-Bahá. We can feel assured, however, that Abdu'l-Bahá was always totally aware of George's pure heart and great destiny from the very beginning.

George

immediately turned his pure-hearted devotion to Shoghi Effendi, the grandson of Abdu'l-Bahá appointed in His will and testament to be the Guardian of the Cause of God. In 1926 George wrote to the Guardian offering to help him with refining English translations of some of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. The overworked Guardian immediately and warmly welcomed this collaboration which continued for the next eighteen years. The first project was The Hidden Words. For this, and many more after that, the Guardian wrote warm praise "...your excellent judgement, your literary ability and your keen sympathy and devoted care in revising ...passages which I have rendered into English are deeply appreciated by me and I shall make use of your suggestions...I hope to send you some more in future..." In addition, the Guardian asked George to review and edit the manuscripts of God Passes By and The Unfoldment of World Civilization, and to write the introductions to The Dawn-Breakers and God Passes By, plus essays for The Bahá'í World volumes. His essay on The Hidden Words became the introduction to it in some editions.

George's
literary and spiritual

gifts also produced three persuasive books on the Bahá'í Faith for Christian readers which will be briefly described later.

This close collaboration developed into a deep and loving friendship. Over the years, the Guardian invited George five times to come to Haifa as his guest, but poor George was never able to accept. In the years prior to his resignation from the church, his responsibilities as a rector did not allow enough time off, and after his resignation, his restricted financial situation and failing health prevented him.

His assistance to the Guardian afforded George a very thorough Bahá'í education. The flame of his love for Bahá'u'lláh grew more and more consuming, and he began to long for the day when he could find a way to be independent from his ties to the church and devote all his time and strength to the Cause.

Prior to 1926, George believed that by staying as a clergyman and working within the church, he could gradually influence its leaders to bring the whole church into the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. He planned to do this mainly through his writing. His first effort was a book of prayers and meditations emphasizing renewed revelation of truth from God and a new spiritual civilization, but without directly mentioning the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Called *The Altar on the Hearth*, it was popular and sold well. [\[online here\]](#)

For over twenty years George tried to free himself from the church, but two serious obstacles continuously frustrated every effort. The first was the opposition of his wife, who, while having an appreciation for the Bahá'í Faith and George's attachment to it, would not agree to his leaving the priesthood because of the financial difficulties that would result. The thought of poverty and insecurity for herself and the two young children was just more than she could bear. Secondly, any other type of employment he pursued either fell through or offered no real job security.

His anomalous position of being a declared yet unofficial believer puzzled many. The Guardian, always compassionate, wrote to a National Spiritual Assembly in 1946, "...our dear Bahá'í brother, George Townshend, can best serve the Faith at the present time where he is; he is now contacting many high ecclesiastics in his church ... Perhaps in the future the way will open for him to travel and teach..."

George's duties as the rector of a country church fortunately afforded him enough free time for three important things: his work for the Guardian, authoring his own books, and time to spend with his children. Excursions to parks and forests; whimsical stories; producing a children's play replete with leprechauns and fairies, and tender spiritual training were the delight of Brian and Una whose fond memories of him as a wonderful father are recorded in his biography.

His next book after *The Altar on the Hearth* was *The Promise of All Ages*, published in 1934, which forthrightly declared progressive revelation, the mission of Bahá'u'lláh, and the signs Christ gave alluding to this, the Day of God. Fortunately, it is still in print, and translated into many languages. The Guardian was highly pleased with George's literary abilities and said, "He is the best writer we have ... He is the pre-eminent Bahá'í writer." George hoped that *The Promise of All Ages* would open the way for his church to become informed and accept Bahá'u'lláh as Christ returned.

We should appreciate the very great bravery and detachment in George's character to do this bold proclamation. In 1934 the orthodoxy of the church was not to be questioned; anyone doing so

would be thought to be deranged or heretical. George wrote to the Guardian, "...the author ... will very soon lose both his reputation and his livelihood ... The publicity and the controversy which will ensue ... are highly distasteful to me ...I rely on Baha to give me courage and serenity in dealing with the difficulties that will arise." He fully expected to be expelled from the church for proclaiming the Bahá'í Faith, but this did not happen, not even a reprimand.

George's longing to be free from the church prompted him to write to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, offering to sell to them the copyrights to his books. He believed that the proceeds would be sufficient to support his family. The Assembly's response was positive and resulted in the founding of the British Bahá'í Publishing Trust. All business details were worked out with the exception of one, overlooked in all the excitement, and that was the required cooperation of George's wife, Nancy. When she became aware that George planned to suddenly leave the church and rely on the uncertain sale of his writings for a livelihood, she was appalled and threatened to leave him. Realizing that the break-up of his home and marriage would be disastrous for the reputation of the Cause and for himself, he gave up such a plan. Freedom was still ten long years away.

George's next book was The Heart of the Gospel, written in 1938, a brilliant appeal to Christians to hearken to the call of Bahá'u'lláh. It elucidates history as spiritual evolution, man's ultimate destiny, and examines Gospel teachings overlooked by church theology. When it was published in 1939, he sent a copy of it to his Bishop, expecting a negative response, but the Bishop gave it a commendation, and wrote George that he should have told much more about Bahá'u'lláh for His teachings were wonderful!

George

then openly declared to the Bishop his stand, "I have found today no original spiritual leadership ... except in the writings of

Bahá'u'lláh...I have accepted His teachings in their entirety, have identified myself with His Cause and joined the Bahá'í fellowship."

The Bishop ignored this slap at the Establishment, and wrote that he would like to read George's other Bahá'í book, The Promise of All Ages. It

seems that his reputation for solid scholarship, his integrity, his humility would not allow his Bishop nor the majority of his colleagues to label him as deranged or heretical, as he had thought they would. George was really in a dilemma to find a way out of the church. He could not resign because his wife utterly opposed such a step, and he could not get himself dismissed even by the most forthright declaration of belief and fellowship in another religious system.

But

he did not give up. His two goals were to win his wife to complete allegiance

to the Bahá'í Faith, gaining her approval for leaving the church, and to proclaim even more strenuously that the fulfillment of Christianity was to accept Christ's return in the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. He

sent hundreds of copies of his two books to clergymen and laymen in Ireland, and received some favorable reviews in newspapers.

A

fantastic proclamation opportunity occurred when he preached the sermon on June 30, 1940 in the national cathedral, St. Patricks in Dublin. He wrote later, "...I spoke of

harmony and concord as the purpose of Christianity and all true religion, said the religion of Bahá'u'lláh was today the only religion I could find living up to this, and pleaded that we should follow suit, and closed by affirming that the future belongs to the Church that did follow suit ... the Dean of the Cathedral did what he never did to me before-he volunteered how much he liked the sermon and what a change it was from what they had been listening to of late!"

How

sad to realize that in spite of their favorable attitude towards George's

proclamation, not one other clergyman at that time felt moved to enter himself and his congregation into the New Jerusalem.

Let

us go back to two years earlier. In 1938 something totally amazing and undreamed of happened. George received a letter from his former fiancée, Nellie Roche of Tennessee. It was in 1916 that they had last met. George went to Ireland for the summer of 1916, intending to return to the University in Sewanee, Tennessee, but illness and possibly the heartache of the broken engagement decided him to stay in Ireland and start over. Nellie had become a Bahá'í in 1937. George's writings appeared in Bahá'í publications which Nellie saw and, of course, recognized his name as her long-ago love. George's reply brought her up-to-date on all that had transpired in the last twenty-two years, especially his hopes of finding a way to support his family outside of his position in the church. Nellie's response to this was to offer him her newly-received inheritance of \$5,000 as a loan until he could receive steady income. This filled him with hope and happiness.

George

was the lone Bahá'í in the whole of Ireland for many years until his son and daughter were old enough to understand and join him in activity. He would have infrequent visits from traveling Bahá'ís and sometimes travel to London to meet with Bahá'ís. The correspondence with Nellie gave him great spiritual comradeship and encouragement in his isolation. With the safety net of her loan, he resolved to resign as soon as the war was over, move to Dublin and work as a freelance writer. Nancy wavered between cooperating with this and bouts of anxiety. She wrote to Nellie asking her to appeal to George to wait until he reached retirement age in order to receive his pension. Nellie's response was so wise and understanding that Nancy was inspired to host weekly firesides where George taught the Faith to their friends and neighbors. He wrote that the Bahá'í meetings, started in November 1942, were an astonishing success. Shortages caused by the war increased. Kind and generous Nellie sent food parcels to the Townshend family. Nellie passed away in 1958, surviving George by sixteen months.

In 1946, George was filled with happiness and pride because their daughter Una, then 25 years old, became the first pioneer to Dublin.

George sent the Guardian's history of the first hundred years of the Bahá'í Faith, entitled *God Passes By*, with letters proclaiming the return of Christ, to senior clergy in Ireland, no doubt hoping that one of them would take offense and force him out of the church. Finally someone objected to him. In spring 1947, George's Bishop showed him a letter from an Anglican missionary complaining that George's book, *The Promise of All Ages*, exalted Bahá'u'lláh at the expense of Christ. George responded to the Bishop's questioning by plainly declaring his belief in Bahá'u'lláh as the return of Christ. He wrote the Guardian that the Bishop was kind but very narrow and utterly perplexed, and departure from the church appeared to be at hand.

On the advice of the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, George decided to resign from the church in September 1947, and move to Dublin to help establish the first local Bahá'í Assembly in Ireland. The Assembly pledged to assist him financially, and to support Nancy if she would become widowed. All nine National Bahá'í Assemblies in the world at that time felt honored to contribute support. By leaving the church, George forfeited all insurance and pension he had paid into. He was 71 years old and had no real assets other than some royalties from his books. A small house was found in a suburb of Dublin and purchased with the help of Nellie's loan, and they moved in October 1947.

George's resignation was received kindly by his Bishop, who praised him for his character and his many years of faithful and efficient work. To explain his unprecedented act and to promote the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh as the revitalizing, unifying force for all the sects of Christianity, George wrote a clear and beautiful essay called *The Old Churches and the New World Faith*, which can be found in his biography and in Volume XIII of the Bahá'í World.

It is interesting to note the extent of the distribution of copies: British Isles, 8,122; Australia 5,000; United States 2,000; Canada 4,000, plus an unknown

number in Egypt and Germany.

These were sent to the clergy, politicians, professionals and leaders, even to the King of the British Empire who returned an acknowledgement. All nine National Spiritual Assemblies contributed to the effort.

Plans and personnel set up to deal with the expected response proved unnecessary. The response was slight, mostly formal acknowledgements. It must have been a tremendous disappointment to all who worked so hard on the project. The Guardian wrote, "Your challenging letter to the Christians - so well conceived - has shown clearly how deep is the sleep of the heedless these days. It is like knocking on a grave; the dead make no response!"

The sudden change from the spacious country house, the Rectory at Ahascragh with a maid and gardener, to the small home, tiny yard, and no household help was too difficult a change for Nancy. She missed her many friends, knowing no one in Dublin at first. Nevertheless she actually enrolled in the Faith and became a member of the first Spiritual Assembly in Dublin. George was delighted with his wife finally by his side spiritually. They went on teaching trips and attended summer schools. But it was a short-lived event as Nancy never adjusted well to living in Dublin and became withdrawn, refusing to participate in the Bahá'í hospitality and activities which George wanted to do.

When

Adib Taherzadeh, who later became a well-known Bahá'í author and member of the Universal House of Justice, moved to Dublin, George was overjoyed as Adib provided the spiritual companionship and stimulation he needed. George was chairman of the local Assembly and delegate to the national convention, active in all kinds of teaching and study meetings, yet November 1951 found him descending into depression. He wrote to the Guardian deploring his waning enthusiasm, feeling that he had somehow failed to do what the Guardian and Abdu'l-Bahá expected of him. A month passed before he had a reply which, to his utter astonishment, was a personal cable from the Guardian informing him that he was elevated to the rank of a Hand of the Cause of God, the first in Europe.

George

became imbued with a renewed spirit and arose to his new responsibilities with all the fervor of his great, loving heart. In 1953, four Intercontinental Teaching Conferences were held. George, accompanied by Nancy, attended the one in Stockholm, Sweden as a representative of the Guardian. He addressed the conference on "The Sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh and Their Significance," a masterpiece which is reproduced in *The Bahá'í World*, Volumes XII and XVI. As a Hand of the Cause he fostered the spiritual welfare of the Bahá'ís in the British Isles, Norway, Faroe Islands and Iceland. A new force of love and enthusiasm poured forth from him. His great knowledge of the Bahá'í Faith and Christian scriptures confirmed souls beyond number.

In his last days, ill and weak from Parkinson's disease, instead of resting, George gave his utmost exertion to finish a book he had started many years before, called *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh*. Unable to speak or write, he whispered the final pages to his son and daughter. It expounds the vision of history as spiritual evolution and was written explicitly for Christians, clearly explaining how Bahá'u'lláh is Christ returned in the glory of the Father. The Guardian called it George's crowning achievement and urged its use in vigorous teaching and publicity programs in English-speaking countries. David Hofman, his publisher and bio-grapher, calls the book "an epic ... a masterpiece ... indeed a work of genius." Fortunately, it is still in print, and, I feel, essential reading for any thoughtful Christian who is struggling to understand the relationship between Christ and Bahá'u'lláh.

George passed away on March 25, 1957, a few days after his crowning achievement came into print.

Tributes poured in, many from those he had served as a clergyman in Ahascragh. Una wrote, "...a Roman Catholic told us how she and many others went

to him for advice ... they knew he would never breathe a word to anyone. She spoke of his absolute goodness and said the local people all said he was a saint."

George was also deeply mystical and expressed it in thrilling poetry. His poems and prayers of spiritual longing, collected in a book called *The Mission of Bahá'u'lláh*, bring tears to the eyes and joy to the soul.

The tribute from the Guardian called George "dearly loved ... greatly gifted most distinguished collaborator..."his sterling qualities,his scholarship, his challenging writings, his high ecclesiastical position unrivaled any Bahá'í western world, entitle him rank with Thomas Breakwell ,Dr. Esslemont one of three luminaries shedding brilliant luster annals Irish English Scottish Bahá'í communities. His fearless championship Cause he loved so dearly served so valiantly constitutes significant landmark British Bahá'í history.."

HAND OF THE CAUSE HORACE H. HOLLEY

Horace Holley fulfilled an important mission in the establishment of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in the Western world under the direction of the Guardian. For those who have become Bahá'ís in recent years, it is possible that they are not familiar with the self-sacrifice and accomplishments of this great American believer who was elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause in 1951.

While the term Administrative Order might sound less than exciting, let us consider that without proper administration, any great endeavor will break down and dissipate for numerous reasons, such as lack of communication, confusion in line of command, factionalism, and the like. We know that the Bahá'í Administrative Order is not of man-made design, but is firmly based on the revealed word

of Bahá'u'lláh and the authorized interpretations of Abdu'l-Bahá, and after Him, Shoghi Effendi. It is the vehicle by which the world-unifying teachings of Bahá'u'lláh will attain the supremely noble goal, that of unifying the disparate peoples of the world and applying justice.

Horace

Holley became the Guardian's right hand man in America, so completely reliable, efficient and capable was he in implementing the Guardian's directives on the establishment of the Administrative Order.

Horace

Hotchkiss Holley was born in 1887 in Connecticut and his ancestors included many educators and ministers. His major in college was literature. He had a brilliant, analytical mind and also had another side; that of an idealist and mystic. He was a published poet. After college, he went to Europe in 1909. He met a young lady who showed him a book that changed the course of his life. The book was Abbas Effendi, His Life and Teachings.

Mr. Holley wrote that at first he thought it "possible to encompass the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh by reducing it to a formula ...gradually my ventures proved... that I myself was to be encompassed, re-oriented, remoulded in all the realms of my being."

Mr.

Holley married and was living in Italy in 1911 when they heard that Abdu'l-Bahá was in France.

They immediately traveled to attain the presence of the Master.

Horace underwent a kind of instant-aneous spiritual rebirth at his first glimpse of Abdu'l-Bahá at a distance. "My whole body underwent a shock. My heart leapt, my knees weakened, a thrill of acute receptive feeling flowed from head to foot ... While

my own personality was flowing away, a new being, not my own assumed its place. A glory ... poured into me and

I was conscious of a most intense impulse to admire."

From

Italy, Mr. Holley, his wife and little daughter moved to Paris where he operated an art gallery. In 1913 he wrote his first book about the Bahá'í Faith, entitled Bahá'ism-The Modern Social Religion. It was praised by Abdu'l-Bahá. Another move, this time to

New York City in 1914, where he worked for a publishing company and then an advertising agency.

The

first National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada was formed in 1922. The next year Horace was elected a member and was re-elected for a total of thirty-six years. He served as the secretary for thirty-four years. That must be a record!

In 1925 Mr. Holley gave up his personal career to devote his entire time to Bahá'í work. Imagine the sacrifice! To give up a high salary and big city career to work for a religion little known and unappreciated by the world at large with only very modest compensation from the Bahá'í Fund. Don't forget that during those years the pressing need and overwhelming financial responsibility for the Bahá'ís was supporting the construction of the Mother Temple of the West and the superstructure of the Shrine of the Bab. However, Mr. Holley must have found working for the Faith much more satisfying than anything else.

Shoghi

Effendi was extremely appreciative of his efficient service and really wanted and needed Mr. Holley to help him in Haifa, but sacrificed this wish as he realized Horace was indispensable to the fledgling Bahá'í administration in America. The Guardian wrote him,

"My dearest co-worker ... Your personal contribution to so many aspects and phases of the Movement, performed so diligently, so effectively, and so thoroughly are truly a source of joy and inspiration to me. How much I feel the need of a similar worker by my side in Haifa, as competent, as thorough, as methodical, as alert as yourself. You cannot and should not leave your post for the present. Haifa will have to take care of itself for some time. Your grateful brother, Shoghi."

Mr.

Holley's literary talents were given freely in service to the Faith. He wrote two more books plus a book-length collection of his talks and essays. In 1921 he edited the first comprehensive compilation of the words of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá in English. It was later revised and published as Bahá'í World Faith. He wrote for the early Bahá'í magazine Star of the West, was

on the editorial board
and wrote for the publication World Order, and
he was on the
Bahá'í Publishing Committee. Mr. Holley conceived
the idea of a series of books recording the international activities
of the Faith. The Guardian enthusiastically accepted this idea and thus
the volumes called The
Bahá'í World came
into being. Shoghi Effendi acted as the editor-in-chief, and Holley,
the executor. Mr.
Holley wrote the section International Survey of Current Bahá'í Activities
for every volume up to the time of his passing in 1960. It
was he who gave titles to the long general letters from the Guardian,
picking out key phrases that captured
the imagination of
the readers, and put subtitles throughout to facilitate their study.

Mr.

Holley created and the Guardian approved publication of a regular
newsletter for the Bahá'ís nationwide, thus began in 1925 the
magazine Bahá'í News for 65 years, now evolved into the paper called The
American Bahá'í. With
the help of a Bahá'í lawyer, he
wrote the Declaration of Trust of the National Assembly and the
By-laws of a Local Assembly which the Guardian made the pattern for
similar legal
instruments of the Faith in all other countries.

The
National Secretariat was in New York City, naturally, as that was
where the National secretary lived. However,
in 1939 the time
came when Shoghi Effendi wished the secretariat to move to the vicinity of the
Temple in
Wilmette, Illinois so the spiritual and administrative centers in America would
be
fused into one. Another major sacrifice for Mr. Holley to give up all that was
familiar and enjoyable in
New York, and relocate to a small town in the Midwest. This trusted, deeply
devoted servant, of course, realized the needs of the Faith were of greater
importance
than his own.
In Wilmette, he quickly made new friends, was accepted into Rotarians, and
founded the Wilmette
Historical Commission. In addition to his outstanding writing and publishing
abilities, he was a distinguished speaker, giving public lectures and courses
at Bahá'í summer
schools.

December 1951, Shoghi

Effendi announced the appointment of Horace Holley as a Hand of the Cause in America, along with two others, Dorothy Baker and Leroy Ioas. But this rank and honor did not take him from continuing his work as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Did Mr. Holley ever get to meet the Guardian he loved so much? Yes, in 1953 after attending Intercontinental Conferences in Chicago, Europe, Africa and India at the request of the Guardian.

After the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957, Mr. Holley's fellow-Hands desired him to come and serve as one of the nine Hands in the Holy Land; therefore he resigned from the National Assembly in 1959 and arrived in Haifa on the last day of that year. Another sacrificial move as he was then 72 years old, in ill health and very frail. Six months later he passed away. The cablegram, a loving tribute from his fellow-Hands read "Grieved announce passing (in) Haifa much loved distinguished Hand Cause Horace Holley outstanding champion (of the) Faith since days (of the) Master, praised by beloved Guardian for unique contribution (in) development Administrative Order. His indefatigable services (in) protection, teaching, administrative fields, culminating service (in the) Holy Land (is) inspiring example present, future generations Bahá'ís."

Now

almost forty years later, are we not that future generation which is inspired by the example of true devotion, reliability, and detachment from self which Hand of the Cause Horace Holley left as a priceless legacy? (Reference source for above from The Bahá'í World, volume XIII.)

Now

that the accounts of a few dedicated servants of Bahá'u'lláh were related to you, it is timely to contemplate some of the outstanding qualities which made them so unique. Thornton Chase, May Maxwell and George Townshend were for a time the only Bahá'ís in their entire country; Chase in the United States; May, in Europe and later Canada;

and Hand of the Cause Mr. Townshend in Ireland. What steadfastness this takes, to be so firm in conviction that no kind of isolation could discourage! To stand out as different from their unawakened friends and family was not frightening to them. They were the epitome of the words spoken by the Master to May at the close of her pilgrimage in 1899: "And now I give you a commandment which shall be for a covenant between you and Me - that ye have faith, that your faith be steadfast as a rock that no storms can move, that nothing can disturb, and that it endure through all things even to the end ... be not shaken in your faith; for I am with you always, whether living or dead, I am with you to the end. As you have faith so shall your powers and blessings be. This is the balance ... this is the balance..

.this is the balance." (An Early Pilgrimage, p. 40) It's obvious that all these souls had the supreme quality of steadfastness, like a rock that no storms could move, and those who lived to be elderly never became content that they had accomplished enough and settled back for restful inactivity. The early American believers exhibited firmness in their attachment to the Center of the Covenant when confronted with the spirit of rebellion in some contemporaries. John Bosch is an inspiring example of obedience to the law of Bahá'u'lláh by giving up his ties to liquor production. In this Faith, sooner or later we become aware of the bounties and blessings that descend into our lives as an unavoidable consequence of obedience to the sacred laws.

All of them showed great love to all, that kind of love that is born from the words of Abdu'l-Bahá, "Real love is impossible unless one turn his face towards God and be attracted to His beauty." (Bahá'í World Faith, p. 364) And all had innate self-effacement and humility about their considerable accomplishments, feeling themselves to be only instruments for the purposes of the Beloved. Surely, they acutely understood this prayer from Abdu'l-Bahá: "O Sun of Bounty, send down a shaft of light. Grant us pity, grant us grace. By Thy beauty, we come with no provisions but our sins, with

no good deeds to tell of, only hopes." (Selections
Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 7)

3. Image scans of original publication

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