

Continuation of “The Baha’i Dawn: Manchester”

by E. T. Hall (November 1933)

This narrative continues the history of the Baha’i Cause in Manchester (England) from the date of the formation of the first local Spiritual Assembly in March 1923. The history up to that date was written and issued under the title of “The Baha’i Dawn: Manchester”, by the Assembly in March 1925. This continuation is in obedience to a request made by the National Spiritual Assembly which requires that each locality’s history may be written in order that, from them all, a general history of the Baha’i Cause in Britain may be compiled.

During the year 1923 the Cause in England was organized and the Local Assemblies and the National Spiritual Assembly came into being. The nine members composing the latter were elected in such a manner as to represent the groups proportionally and this arrangement permitted two representatives from Manchester to sit in the National Spiritual Assembly; in fact, the two Manchester representatives sat in the NSA in October 1923 when the first chairman of that highest Council was elected to Office.

1923

All that year was occupied by the Manchester friends in deepening the sense of the Cause in the Group and in making efforts to spread the glad tidings and the principles of Baha’u’llah’s teachings, principally by holding nucleus meetings in the homes of the Hall’s, the Craven’s and the Sugar’s (Higher Broughton, Altrincham and Crumpsall respectively) and by the giving of talks to various denominational classes such as at Gorton Adult School, the Pendleton Quaker’s Meeting Place, Cross Street Chapel, Church and Chapel classes, the Theosophical Centre in Deansgate, the Esperantist Centre and the Altrincham Unitarian Chapel School. Baha’i literature was given to people and many letters were written explaining the Baha’i Cause to inquirers. In November and December a series of special Addresses concerning the universal principles of Baha’u’llah, World Unity, Esperanto, Biblical Symbology, fulfilments of Scripture Prophecies and the history of the Baha’i Movement, were given to people gathered by Mr J. C. Craven in the Altrincham Unitarian Chapel Schoolroom, Dr J. E. Esslemont and Mr E. T. Hall being the speakers.

1924

During the next year, 1924, activities proceeded, augmented by the appearance of Dr Esslemont’s new pamphlet, “Baha’u’llah and His Message”. This production was initiated by the Manchester friends. A representative took a sum of £10 to the National Spiritual Assembly requesting that a booklet concerning ‘Abdu’l-Baha and His teachings should be issued for propaganda purposes in Lancashire. The NSA deemed it better to publish a booklet upon the general history and principles of the Cause, for general use—especially for use upon the book-stall at the Wembley Exhibition. To this the Manchester Assembly agreed and dispatched another £2 to aid in the publication of the same, Dr Esslemont’s pamphlet, “Baha’u’llah and His Message” was the result and copies were distributed from the Baha’i Centres in every direction.

At this period a little class of children (amongst whom were John and Edward Sugar, Mabel Chessell, Ronald and Norman Craven and Edward R. Hall), was being taught the Baha’i elements by Miss Lucy Hall at her home in Higher Broughton,

During this year Baha’i Books and Booklets were purchased from London and America for distribution; correspondence with friends abroad was maintained; and happy social evenings (besides the regular meetings) helped to enliven and brighten the time. Meetings averaged in attendance about fourteen people, but now and again much larger audiences were addressed by Baha’i speakers, one such audience being the Sunday Afternoon Brotherhood of the Swedenborgian Church in Radcliffe.

The Lanchester friends were privileged by receiving visits from Mrs Amy Wilkins of Sydney in June; Mrs Louise Gregory of the United States in July; Mirza Ahmad Yazdi of Port Said in August; Mr and Mrs Mountford Mills of USA in October. The friends gathered to meet them at one and another of the homes and great cheerfulness resulted from both the fellowship and the inspiration of these meetings.

1925

During the following year, 1925, in response to a call from the Teheran Spiritual Assembly, for local histories, the Manchester Spiritual Assembly published a small edition of one hundred copies of their history under the title of “The Baha’i Dawn: Manchester”. (E. T. Hall).

In May a copy was despatched to Teheran and other copies were sent to the American Baha’i Archives to be preserved, as they contained full translations of the beautiful and encouraging Tablets written to the Manchester friends by the beloved Master, ‘Abdu’l-Baha.

It was at this time that the Manchester group took quick and energetic steps to stop false accusations made by a certain Liverpool clergyman against the Baha’i Movement. This clergyman had prepared for publication an attack upon the Cause, wholly based upon prejudice, and, in most subtle manner, connecting the Cause with devil-worship in London. He had given permission for a most cruel interview to be published in the *Empire News*, far too dangerous to be “beneath contempt”. Letters passed between the Secretary of the Manchester Spiritual Assembly, the clergyman and the editor of the *Empire News*, and in the end (after a very business-like and interesting interview between the Secretary (E. T. Hall) of the group, the Editor, and the journalist responsible for the article in the newspaper) truth came uppermost. At the end of May there were published in the columns of that newspaper the clergyman’s apology and a letter giving the real nature of the Baha’i teachings and Baha’i character.

In the month of May, too, Mr Seigfried Shopflocher of Montreal and, a few days later, Mr Ruhi Afnan and Mr Kamaloff of Tashkent, visited the friends in Manchester; whilst in July came again Mr Mason Ramey—just finishing another European tour. The latter, after describing his journey and encouraging the friends, remarked that he was “so glad that the friends had kept the cause pure in Manchester.” This he repeated ere he departed.

In October came the visit of Dr Youness Khan and Dr Arastoo Hakim, learned friends from Teheran, Persia. Through all these visitors the friends in this city learned news of the Movement’s activities, in a manner inspiring and entrancing.

Meanwhile (to go back a little) in August the centre of gravity which for two and a half years had been in Higher Broughton was transferred to Altrincham for temporary economic reasons. Good work followed, many meetings being held in Altrincham.

1926

During 1926 efforts to maintain activities continued in both Manchester and Altrincham. In Manchester about seventy new people were circularised three separate times with Baha’i literature and this resulted in several persons becoming interested, amongst them being Mr A. Robinson of Chorlton, Mr Ed. E. Coleman of Sale and Mr Bernard Ingleby also of Sale.

Altrincham meetings were likewise successful.

Then Hiss Martha Root’s visit to Manchester in August also produced good results eventually, as Miss Bunn and Miss Deakin (both of Pendleton) became actively interested in the Cause.

Meanwhile, brother Chessell of East Didsbury had interested Mr and Mrs Jones, a young couple living on the slopes of a green hill called Werneth Low on the outskirts of Hyde. All these new friends began to attend Baha’i Meetings and read the matters pertaining to the Glorious Cause.

1927

In April 1927 the Altrincham friends felt strong enough to form their own Local Spiritual Assembly and therefore became (organically) independent of Manchester. The Manchester friends re-organized minus the Altrincham friends, the centre of gravity being once more in Higher Broughton, with excellent support from Crumpsall. The weight of the work fell upon the Hall’s and Sugar’s, so far as the home gatherings were concerned. This year was marked by wonderfully cheerful, ardent and blessed meetings averaging in attendance about fourteen souls. The “Unveiling of the Divine Plan”, the “Seven Valleys”, the glorious “Carmel Tablet”, were meditatively studied. Devotional meetings were held. The friends sought to understand the inner significance of the Divine Revelation. The year

marked also by a greater attempt than ever before (in Manchester) to diffuse the fragrances of Knowledge of the Cause far and wide beyond Manchester. In June, on behalf of the Local Spiritual Assembly, a pamphlet by E. T. Hall entitled "The Universal Religion" was written and printed for propaganda work in three regions. Three thousand copies were printed and at the end of August and during September some one thousand two hundred addresses in the British Isles were reached, amongst which were the addresses of the editors of about three hundred and forty journals and newspapers and the librarians of the universities. Short reviews of the pamphlet appeared in the *Derbyshire Advertiser*, the *Harrogate Herald*, the *Harrogate Advertiser*, the *John O'Groat Journal* of Wick (Caithness) and one or two other journals.

Following this, a friendly and most interesting correspondence developed between one of the Manchester friends (E. T. Hall) and Mr R. J. G. Millar, the editor of the *John O'Groat Journal*.

Soon Dr Esslemont's book *Baha'u'llah and the New Era* was added to the books upon the editor's book-shelf and he was receiving month by month the *Baha'i Magazine*. At fairly regular intervals since then the good editor has reviewed the magazines, in his columns, bringing the history and the principles of the Baha'i Movement before his readers in the north of Scotland and in the Colonies, for the journal goes far abroad.

1928

Throughout the year 1928 meetings continued, now at the Hall's and now at the Sugar's homes, in Higher Broughton and Crumpsall, the aim being to deepen rather than extend the Cause. Besides the spoken addresses, the studies, the discussions, three special essays by E. T. Hall were typed and circulated amongst the friends.

In April the *Rizwan Address*; in August one concerning Baha'u'llah's arrival in the Holy Land at the end of August 1868; and in December an essay showing the relationship between certain Bible sayings and the Baha'i Revelation, matters concerning fulfilment of Scriptures. Sixty copies of each essay were circulated and the next year all three essays appeared, each in a separate issue of the New Zealand Baha'i Magazine, *The Herald of the South*.

In October of this year the dear friends, Miss Bunn and Miss Deakin, left Manchester to live in Perth, Western Australia. On their way to Perth they stayed a few hours in Port Said and were treated most affectionately and hospitably by the Baha'i friends of that city who had received word of the coming of the young women.

Letters received by Manchester friends (soon afterwards) expresses Miss Bunn's and Miss Deakin's deep and happy appreciation of all the kindness shown to them in Port Said. These two lovers of the Baha'i Cause left amongst us three good friends, namely, Miss Alice Williams, who afterwards served the Assembly as its secretary (during the months from March 1932 to March 1933) and Mr and Mrs Bradshaw who showed many kindnesses and much love for the Cause. These new friends were of Old Trafford and Ashton-under-Lyne.

1929

Throughout 1929, encouraged by letters from the beloved Guardian of the Cause, Shoghi Effendi, the work continued in Manchester. A very vigorous activity continued from January to October, during which period two more special circulations of Baha'i Literature took place.

In April the Assembly issued a booklet containing an appeal to English people to give ear to the Baha'i Teachings as they are for the unification and happiness of all the people of the world; "The Isles" especially mentioned in the prophecies are the British Isles, of which it was said that they (the Isles) "shall wait for His Law"—meaning the full law of the Kingdom of God. A thousand copies of the booklet were printed and copies were sent to addresses of certain people living in the towns of the Ribble Valley and others to people living in the Lune Valley and others to people living by the coasts and in the adjacent islands, even to Anglesey, Man, the Hebrides, Orkneys and Shetlands, and the Irish Coast and to the islands in the English Channel. Copies were also sent to addresses in Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cumbria and Caithness. This booklet-essay, like the three essays before it, appeared in one of the 1929 issues of the New Zealand *Herald of the South*.

The second circularization took place in June, the main item in each packet of Baha'i Literature being a folded leaflet, prepared in Manchester, entitled "The True Spirit". This folded leaflet drew attention to the beautiful and lofty aims of the Baha'i Cause. The circularization touched the same addresses as were reached by the Ribble Essay of April.

In June also appeared the first issue of the *British Baha'i News Letter*, a production initiated by the Manchester Spiritual Assembly and carried into effect by special efforts in January and in May. The issue of the *News Letter* by the NSA has been regular and fairly useful and the necessity for such a medium is now fully recognized.

In the Summer-time a Mohammedan gentleman from-Hyderabad, Deccan, was staying in Manchester. He came in contact with the friends, attended Baha'i meetings, went [on] rambles and outings, became interested and read several important books. This gentleman (Mr M. Carim) returned to India in August, bearing with him Dr Esslemont's book *Baha'u'llah and the New Era* and other Baha'i Literature.

In October Dr Youness Khan of Teheran visited Manchester again, encouraging and interesting the friends with an account of his very useful tour in Europe. The several days of his visit were truly fragrant with his kindly advice and patient presence.

In December one hundred and sixty prominent people of Manchester and Salford were circularized with Baha'i Literature and this evoked several interesting and very amiable replies, correspondence following.

1930

In January 1930 two hundred and fifty alderman and councillors of Manchester, Salford, Eccles and Stretford, were likewise circularized. In February it was learned that the friendly editor of the *John O'Groat Journal* of Wick was preparing to make a tour of the United States and Canada in order to visit the various branches of the wide-spread Caithness Association. This seemed a good opportunity for Mr Millar to come in contact with prominent Baha'i friends in the West, especially those in Chicago where the Temple was in course of erection. With Mr Millar's consent letters of introduction were sent by Mr E. T. Hall from Manchester and in due course Mr Millar met several friends-in Chicago and was shown over the great unfinished Temple and was made acquainted with the wonderful symbolical and artistic details by the architect of the Temple himself. The good editor gave a beautiful, account of it in the 29 August issue of the *John O'Groat Journal*.

It was in the month of April 1930 that the centre of gravity changed from Higher Broughton to Crumpsall, Mr A. Sugar feeling moved by the Spirit to shepherd the group by keeping in touch with the friends and holding regular meetings at his home. Mr Hall had found it impossible to continue them at his home.

Splendid service followed, the group being held together, the fragrances of Abba being diffused, whilst likewise through Mr Sugar's efforts, a little group of interested friends came into existence in Bradford, Yorkshire.

1931

Throughout the year 1931 the good work continued, all the general-meetings, save a very few, being held as in 1930 in the home of Mr and Mrs Sugar in Crumpsall. Three meetings during this year stand out in memory—not more happily than usually, but very prominently. One was the Rizwan meeting in April when the friends gathered at the home of Miss Alice Williams in Old Trafford, about thirty-six adults and children being present. Hospitality, love, service, and rich and deep mentionings of the Cause of El Abha marked the day of Festivity. Another was on the date of the Declaration of the Bab in May when the friends gathered in the home of Mr and Mrs Jones of Werneth Low. A certain sweetness prevailed in the homeliness of it all. A very gentle and pleasant twittering of the canary and a sound of softly dropping rain upon the leaves of the trees, just outside of the open window, accompanied the reading of the intense narrative of the renowned "Evening of the Bab's Declaration of His Mission" (as described in *Nabil's Narrative*). A little black cat dozed peacefully by the warm fireside, and the room was full of adults and children intently listening.

A poem entitled “Werneth Low” (by E. T. Hall) written for the occasion, was read by the speaker, and this poem was afterwards seen in the Indian *Baha’i Weekly* and in the New Zealand *Herald of the South*.

The third most interesting meeting was held at the home of the Chessell’s in Green End, Didsbury, when the question of politics arose (amongst other things discussed by the older Baha’is and two new-comers still dominated by un-Baha’i views). It came out in full force that Baha’i friends could never descend to party-politics, as these are, by their nature, breeders of mistrust, jealousy, disunity, and narrowness of thought, whereas the nature of the administration of the Kingdom of God upon earth (for which the Baha’i friends stand) is loving, universal, bent upon justice to all, self-sacrificing rather than self-seeking or self-promoting. Put into a few words, the outcome of the discussion that evening was the decisive and definite view that **the grand policy of the Kingdom is universal in its principles**, and no Baha’i could ever lower himself or herself to such a level as to adopt a merely sectional attitude. Since that evening, as never before, the group has been determined to keep clear of party-politics and has spoken more and more clearly and strongly about the universality and the oneness of the Kingdom for which the friends are organizing in all parts of the world.

It was during this year that Mr and Mrs Collinge of Middleton (Manchester) joined the Cause.

1932

In January 1932, after these fine efforts to hold the Cause and give forth the message of Baha’u’llah, Mr Sugar became seriously ill through over-strain (for he had been continually at work for the Cause after his long hours of business) and Mrs Sugar was also unwell. It therefore became necessary to hold the meetings elsewhere and once again the centre of gravity became Higher Broughton, pending a settlement in a public room somewhere convenient to all. A very serious change took place all round to meet the new situation, but the meetings were regularly held at the house of the Hall’s.

At length arrangements were made to hold the general meetings every Sunday evening in a room over the Blackley Co-operative Society’s shop at 17 Queens Road, Harpurhey, and a contract was signed which covered the use of the room for twelve months. Fifty-three meetings were held there during the period from 19 June 1932 to 18 June 1933. In some respects this effort was the greatest since the Cause began in Manchester—Circumstances had arisen which placed the responsibility for the financial maintenance of the Cause, locally, solely upon the wage-earning section of the friends. These friends rose to the necessity of the occasion cheerfully, and in the spirit of true sacrifice they gave their utmost. When the contract ended it was seen that instead of having any debts the group treasurer had still a little money in hand. Rent of ten shillings per week, cost of hymn books and the printing of Baha’i Hymn leaflets, harmonium repairing, a notice board for the front door, Baha’i literature for sale and distribution, and other extra but necessary expenses,—all were met successfully and the friends were as free when they had finished the experiment as when they commenced; and this in spite of several being unemployed and others unwell.

1933

Mr Hall’s summary of the effort, entered in his dairy on 24 June 1933, was as follows: “The Queens Road Room was a large upper room, warm, and being full of light. At one end of the room was a table upon which we placed a dark-red embroidered cloth, the gift of Fuad Rouhani of Teheran to Lucy Hall. In the centre of this was always a large and pretty glass vase filled with beautiful flowers—in the summer and autumn there were fragrant roses and stocks from Mr Chessell’s garden and in the winter and spring daffodils, narcissi and wallflowers brought by Mrs Hall. The services were all arranged and guided by brother Collinge of Riddleton, at the express wish of the Assembly, he having had much experience in such matters. At each meeting three friends sat at the table before the audience, the chairman in the centre, the speaker to right and the reader to his left, leaving the Persian embroidery and the flowers in view. Near the table in a corner of the room, stood the harmonium which had been left for our use by Miss Bunn and Miss Deakin when they went to Australia. Miss Lucy Hall played this instrument each Sunday evening, accompanying the friends in their singing—several hymns and Shahnaz Waite’s “Benediction” being sung with pleasant and inspiring effect.

Wonderfully tender and beautiful was the Benediction at the close of the simple service everyone loving the words and the music. The readings were from the “Baha’i Scriptures” and “Hidden Words”; and the addresses were upon the Principles, History, Biography and Philosophy of the Baha’i Cause—the Spirit of it all being glad tidings of the coming of a new World Order in which righteousness, justice and the Glory of God shall prevail. The various speakers during the twelve months were: Mr A. Collinge, who gave able addresses quite a number of times; Mr A. Sugar, whose addresses are always masterly, eloquent and persuasive; Mr E. T. Hall; Mr. Edward Sugar; Mr Brady; Mr Ray; Mr John Craven; Mr Bernard Ingleby; Mr E. E. Coleman; and Miss Julia Goldman of Honolulu. The friends came to these meetings from Hyde, Altrincham and Middleton besides from various quarters of Manchester, Selford and Sale. In general the attendances numbered seventeen and eighteen people and twenty four attended Miss Goldman’s meeting. The literature upon the table was composed of copies of Dr Esslemont’s *Baha’u’llah and the New Era*, Thornton Chase’s *In Galilee*, E. T. Hall’s “The Universal Religion”, booklets of Vital Baha’i Principles, and [a] folded leaflet entitled “The true Spirit” and latterly, a booklet of extracts from the beautiful reviews of Baha’i Magazines which have from time to time appeared in the *John O’Groat Journal*. The whole effect of the services was unifying, the friends becoming used to combined effort. Strangers sometimes dropped in and caught a sense of the universal spirit of the Cause. The services were but an experiment.

A thousand copies of the booklet of *John O’Groat Journal* Review Extracts had been printed in Manchester, Mr Millar, the Editor, kindly contributing towards the expenses.

On 18 June 1933 was held the last meeting at the room and that meeting was typical of them all. Eighteen persons attended. Mr Joe Lee occupied the chair, giving out the hymns during the evening. One was the grand hymn of the reformers, the last verse of which runs as follows:-

“Oh Earth, thy future shall be great and glorious,
With its reformers toiling in the van,
Till truth and love shall reign o’er all victorious,
And earth be given to freedom and to man.”

Another was the tender and heart-reaching Baha’i hymn “Softly His Voice is calling now”. The last hymn was the renowned:-

“These things shall be! A loftier race
Than e’er the world hath known shall rise,
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes.”

Edward Sugar was the reader, the selections being from the Baha’i Scriptures concerning love and the doing of good deeds even to our enemies, and from “Hidden Words” amongst which were these:-

“Sow the seeds of My Divine Wisdom in the pure soil of the heart and water them with the water of certitude that the hyacinths of Knowledge and wisdom may spring verdantly from the holy city of the heart—How long wilt thou, soar in the realms of passion? Wings have I bestowed upon thee, that thou mayest fly to the realms of mystic holiness and not to the regions of satanic fancy. The comb, too, have I given thee that thou mayest tend My raven locks and not to wound My throat—O My servants! Ye are the trees of My Garden, Ye Must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom.”

Mr Collinge was the speaker, his beautiful address being upon the Bab, Baha’u’llah and ‘Abdu’l-Baha; their great and wonderful missions; the new spiritual springtime; man’s evolution or unfolding ever towards the Kingdom of God, ever towards world harmony in the Glory of God.

He showed the trend of creation from the fire-mists and nebulousness of the beginning to this age of education and invention in which has come the call of Baha’u’llah for the Unity of the World—the call for co-operation and peace.

On the table, by the speaker, was a vase of beautiful flowers, pink and red Sweet William, blue lupins, sprays of delicate white flowers—in the still brilliant evening sunshine. This last Service at the Room came to a close with the Benediction, which was ever so sweetly and lovingly sung.”

Since then, the general meetings have been held again in the home of Mr and Mrs Hall in Higher Broughton. Nabil's Narrative—*The Dawn-Breakers*—has occupied the minds of the friends, a copy of that great work having been lent to the Manchester Assembly by Mrs E. P. Kenworthy of York. Tremendous and soul-stirring are the episodes narrated in that book, and through and through the soul goes the line of the Babi chant sung in the forest of Mazanderan in the days ending at Shaykh Tabarsi—that line of exultant praise of the Holy One, "Lord of the angels and the Spirit".

Two Baha'i visitors from abroad met several of the friends at the home of Mr and Mrs Sugar—Mr Sharma Baboo of Rangoon in September and Mr Emeric Sala [1906–190] of Montreal in October. At a meeting of the friends in Higher Broughton (sixteen being present) on Tuesday evening, 10 October, Mr Sala gave a very beautiful and quiet talk, the spirit of which was this, that it is beginning to dawn upon people that the Baha'i Cause is not a, new religion but the arrival of a new World Order—the World Order fulfilling Religion since the world began. In the past, he said, the individual had learned that he must not kill, steal or be unjust but this did not extend to nations, peoples and races. They still fight and destroy one another; they still rob each other to build up Empires; they still treat each other meanly and unjustly. But now, through the Teachings of Baha'u'llah, the same laws which bind individuals will become the universal social laws binding all the nations and peoples and races of the world.

In the discussion following Mr Sala's talk all thoughts were turned towards the establishment of a Universal House of Justice—the Parliament of Man. During this year (1933) in the weeks prior to the closing of the meetings at the Queen's Road Room, several of the young friends decided that the time had come for them to form a Youth Group apart from the General Meetings in which the elders were dominant, in fact, independent of the general meetings though under the Local Spiritual Assembly.

This inspired move met with the hearty approval of all the friends and was officially sanctioned by the Local Spiritual Council, receiving the affectionate blessing of all. The members of the Youth Group as first formed were: Alice Williams, Mabel Chessell, Elsie Richbell, Pauline Freitag (later to become Mesdames A. Parkinson, Ed. R. Hall, Joseph Lee, Frank Senior, respectively), Lucy Hall, Elsie Gibbs, Joseph Lee, John Sugar, Edward Sugar and Edward Hall. Their meetings were held variously at one Baha'i home or another—at the Sugar's, Hall's, Lee's, Chessell's, Freitag's and Richbell's. One of these happy weekly meetings was held on 3 September in the verdant country about Hathersage in Derbyshire. Mr Lee took them thither in his car and some good photographs were taken by John Sugar.

At the date of this compilation (November 1933) the activities of the friends fall into three phases, namely: Monthly general meetings; weekly Esperantist classes; and weekly Youth Group classes. The Esperantist class is cheerfully and brilliantly led by Edward Sugar. All the meetings are full of good fellowship and spirituality. The group is represented in the Joint Disarmament Council.

The Manchester Baha'i Assembly or Council, consists of nine members, namely:- Mr E. T. Hall, Chairman; Mr J. Lee, Secretary; Mr J. Chessell, Treasurer; Mr A. Sugar; Mr. A. Collinge; Mr Edward Sugar; Miss Mabel Chessell; Miss Lucy Hall; and Miss Alice Williams, foreign correspondent.

The main intentions of this Assembly, looking forward, are, to start again in a centrally situated public Room and to gather together a children's class.

With warm appreciation it remembers the loving visits of Lady Blomfield, Mrs Slade and Miss Isobel Rives.

This brings the general history of the Manchester Baha'i Group to the present date and only a few remarks and tender thoughts remain to be noted.

No proselytising has ever been done. The teachings of El Abha, like fragrance, have spread from each Baha'i to other people and who can record the mystery and the results of these spiritual emanations and influences? Souls have been reached in Manchester and far beyond, by word of mouth, letters, and by posted literature—souls living in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cheshire and Westmorland; in the valleys of Mersey, Ribble, Lune and Kent; by the lakes amidst the Cumbrian Mountains; by the shores of the Irish Sea; and among the vales and uplands of the Pennines; yea, and far beyond these, in the outer world. The first washes have been put by the Great Artist upon the canvas of Reality and the first washes seen to be faint and all but unrecognisable to all but the artist. Yet they are the fundamental necessity and as the Master said, "nothing is ever lost".

Amongst the friends themselves (assisted by prayers the Guidance and the loving encouragement of the Guardian of the Cause, Shoghi Effendi, by loving and inspiring letters from friends abroad, and by the fragrant visits of friends from other Baha'i centres) faithfulness has prevailed. Though the whole Manchester Baha'i community may not exceed thirty souls, it has come through all tests as splendidly as many great and powerful organizations, after making sacrifices worthy of its existence. The love of Baha'u'llah has been strong—very strong; the fellowship very sincere; incidents have occurred of a nature both gratifying and charming. The Spiritual confirmations have been many and wonderful. War, illness, poverty, have not quenched the Spirit; nor have apathy, indifference, wrong mindedness and even opposition of the people, deterred too much the determination of the friends to push on with the Cause. On the contrary, the Spirit has overcome all that could be set against it from without and within.

The homes of the Baha'i friends have been blessed points of light set in many districts, witnessing to the Truth—little centres of sincere love and hospitality, vibrant with the praise of El Abha, the Most glorious Spirit of the Kingdoms. The home of the Jones', set in its little garden upon the lower slopes of Werneth Low, so green and leafy; the home of the Chessell's at Green End, Didsbury, set in the lovely garden with its young apple trees, honeysuckle and roses, which brother Chessell cultivates so energetically and carefully for the pleasure of Baha'i friends when they visit him; the home of the Collinges in Middleton where the good friends keep pretty birds in a cage which fills a whole room—poetry and sincerity are in the very atmosphere of this house so near to the lovely park at the foot of the old church; the home of the Sugars in Crumpsall, eternally at the service of the Cause and full of the inspired mentionings of the Master and His teachings; the home of Mrs Dean, Mrs Birch, and Annie in Harpurhey, full of blessed memories of encouragement and cheerful hospitality; the home of the Halls in Higher Broughton with brother Mason Remey's great picture of the Greatest Name, like a standard of the Cause, always hanging on the eastern wall of the front room, so full of light; the home of the Williams (now in Stretford) with its atmosphere of friendliness and Art, and other homes—all rendered peculiarly lovable because of the Faith.

Of such as these is the Kingdom of God, sweet with selfless love; the homes of true-hearted people who look steadfastly towards a future Universal House of Justice and who are doing their best to assist in bringing it into reality in this world of unrest, anxiety and care (due to Mankind's lack of generous unity and right administration). If such an effort may appear infinitesimal in such a vast world, it is, after all none the less worthy, and, therefore, better recorded than left unmentioned.

Stretch, March 1969

The Mesdames Chessell, Craven, Sugar and Hall were firm believers and supported her husbands wholeheartedly, but quietly, in the background. The Joseph Brothers were omitted from this History at their own specific request.

Thanks are due to Mr Albert Joseph for having this History typed and to Mrs Pauline Senior for helping with the correcting.

Lucy E. Hall