

... description: 1957, William Allison — The Last Pilgrim  
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### The Last Pilgrim

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#### Notes

Bill has the distinction of being, with his mother, the last Bahá'ís to visit the Beloved Guardian, in Haifa. His mother wanted to do something for our Beloved Guardian, and so went into the kitchen to cook the meals, but she became ill, and then they stayed longer, and Bill had a week alone with the Guardian.

### The Last Pilgrim

William Allison

1957

“Our pilgrimage {{p1}} with the Beloved Guardian revealed these significant insights regarding the world; in a clear and strong voice, the Guardian, on the first evening warned that the distant future of Russia was very bright but that the immediate future was very, very dark. He described her downfall as a result of the injustice of her government and that her entire system of government rested on un-Bahá'í principles. In this regard, he pointed out that industrialization was a permanent feature of civilization while the political order was an ephemeral one. He compared the Western civilization to the Fall of Rome. He pointed out that the Russian (the so-called barbarians) will come to support the Faith just as the Huns had done during the early Christian times.

There is perfect logic to all that the Beloved Guardian does and says. He even provides this logic for the pilgrims in establishing an idea, and suggests they point out the logic and wisdom of the counsels he gives the friends in these matters. For instance, he stressed the ascendancy of the colored races in the affairs of the world and the gradual recession of the white races. Bahá'u'lláh has said that the Faith will represent the majority of mankind and since the

majority is undoubtedly of the brown and black races, it is to these people that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh must find new adherents and teachers. This same logic carries in teaching the Faith with concentration on the Negro in the Southern states in America, since his number is greater in some areas than the whites. In these areas, he said, the spiritual assemblies should represent the majority of the people and, therefore, there should be colored assemblies.

His admonitions regarding the future of America and the friends in this country consumed no small part of our pilgrimage. "Great dangers" were the words he used, "are ahead for the American nation." While he made no mention specifically of the calamity, or form that danger would take, he did stress that America would be held responsible for the perfidious injustices inflicted upon the minorities, Negro and Indian. The severity of this (racial) turmoil at present gives no hint to the pent-up tensions, which the Guardian believes will unleash themselves in a revolution that will originate in deepest Africa and spread a trail of blood and destruction through Western Europe and America.

Two ills afflict the American society, the Guardian asserted — materialism and racialism. Reviewing the history of materialism, the Guardian showed where Western Europe had developed materialism and now America was carrying it to the extreme. With a glint of sarcasm in his voice he denounced the so-called American security of giant skyscrapers and colossal edifices. With a swift movement of his hand, he demonstrated how quickly these institutions could be swept away in seconds. How foolish of the Americans, he stated, for them to regard their security in these "towers of Babel". {{p2}} Indeed, he carried this symbology one step further and called New York, Chicago, and San Francisco "Triple Babylons".

In a grave voice the Beloved Guardian uttered a strong warning to the American friends to disassociate themselves from these rampant evils (materialism and racialism) or be swept away with the rest of the American society which must be held accountable. The Faith in America has not grown, the Guardian pointed out, because it has not been opposed, but met no test, — had any crises. It is the courageous and daring action of the friends that produce these very crises. They have a two-fold effect; on the one hand, they purify the Faith, and on the other hand, they cause the Faith to grow, to catch on fire, push it ahead. By making enemies and conquering enemies, the Faith marches onward.

Without any reservations about the matter, the Guardian regards dispersion and teaching the Cause as the most meritorious task the friends can discharge at this time. He stressed the importance of these regions of the world for Bahá'ís to consider in their plans to disperse. The South Pacific now holds primary importance for the friends. Then comes Africa, Europe with France the most needy, the Western Hemisphere and Alaska. Of primary importance for believers in America are the Negroes and the Catholics. He has given the teaching of the Negro in America priority. In this same light he has emphasized the need to seek out Catholics and concentrate on them. He feels this will bring on opposition and tests which are basically good for the Faith. The friends will

need to demonstrate courage and daringness in their teaching efforts. They must evince a sense of sincerity in promulgating the Cause so as to attract and not to antagonize. He recounted the spirit and ardor of the pioneers in Africa and South Pacific as an outstanding example of the true Bahá'í attitude and the results it achieves.

Notwithstanding the reasons why the Faith has not grown in America, the Guardian was greatly disturbed over the alarming losses in the U.S. Always he had the figures and facts of the ten — year crusade at his fingertips and called off the exact number of believers in all of Africa at the time. He seemed, imperceptibly, to think of the World Crusade as a contest in which these areas of the world were contestants: South Pacific, Africa, America, Europe, etc. He said the children of the mother community, Africa and South Pacific, were rapidly outstripping her for position and rank. He compared the increase in the Bahá'í fold in Africa over the past four years, some 4,000 believers, and in the South Pacific, over 3,500, to the decrease in the American community in the past year from 8,000 to now less than 6,500. In every country except America the Faith is growing, the Guardian worriedly contended, “Now it remains to be seen what will happen in America.”

One evening the Beloved Guardian envisioned the future World Order of Bahá'u'lláh in terms that are difficult to forget. He began by saying that the Báb had announced the “Plan”. Bahá'u'lláh established the laws of the “Plan”. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá laid out the “blue print” for the erection. Now the Bahá'ís are in the formative phase of establishing the administrative order of the “Plan”. He pointed to the establishment of the Divine “Arc” of Salvation being likened to the “Arc” which the Bahá'ís are erecting on Mount Carmel with the Shrine of the Báb, the Archives Building, the House of Justice and the Temple. Outside of this arc the Bahá'ís are carrying out this plan by their widespread teaching activities which is part of this “Arc of Salvation”. Near the end of the formative period the nations will unite of their own volition and with the non-committant expansion of the Cause become merged into the fabric of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. There will be another Manifestation before this will happen.

The Guardian admires the Negro people. He called them sound, sensitive and talented. He said if they had not striven hard and acquired the wealth and power that they possess the whites would have treated them just as they are treating the Indians.

The Guardian said there will be Bahá'í Kings. The Hands of the Cause of God, with their own organization, will be these kings. Their duties, specifically, will be to propagate the Faith and protect it. The Hands of the Cause will outrank the members of the House of Justice.

Huqúq. More will be given on this in later years. It is solely for purification of money and one's income.

The institution of the Guardianship interprets, directs the Hands, heads the

House of Justice and defines their sphere of legislation.

The summer schools are too pointless, too much emphasis on dances, picnics and frivolity. Too much committees, agendas, etc.

He upheld the theory of private property. Many features of capitalism correct and many corrupt. The Most Great Peace will not come until the most Great Justice is established. A long time.

Believers in America have a superficial understanding of their Faith. Whites are too preoccupied, shallow. All should study and read more like the English and Canadians. Many whites are prejudiced and not aware of it. Should search their souls and consciences.

His parting words were to encourage the friends. He seemed to be saying as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá before: “If you are not happy now, when shall you be!”

[END]