



stated that Sydney Sprague, as he neared the end of his life, would return to the Bahá'í Faith. The friends were happy to realize the fulfillment of this prophecy. They were appreciative of the fact that those last days of Sydney Sprague's Bahá'í life were to be spent in Los Angeles.

How glad the friends were to visit their dear brother. They found him like a thirsty traveller newly rescued from a desert. He drank in, through his eager questioning, the facts which brought him up to date in his knowledge of what had occurred in the Faith of God in the years intervening since his own close association with its dramatic history. In this effort also, he was best assisted by reading the "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh," pamphlets by Shoghi Effendi. These formed the best bridge by which he could cross over the gap between the days of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the heroic age of the Faith, and the present transitional period of the Guardianship, in which the Bahá'í Administrative Order becomes the "cradle" for the future, spiritual Bahá'í commonwealth.

The believers, in their turn, also learned from Sydney Sprague. They heard from his own lips the story of how he fell ill from fever while traveling for the Faith in India; of how he lay helpless in bed in that far-off country, and of how an Oriental Bahá'í came to nurse him. This Oriental, spiritual brother remained faithfully with Mr. Sprague until he recovered. But, in the meantime, the fever had passed from the patient to his nurse and the nurse failed

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to withstand its attack. When the nurse died, Mr. Sprague became the first Occidental Bahá'í for whom an Oriental Bahá'í had sacrificed his life.

After his own passing, the press of Los Angeles carried items concerning Sydney Sprague that its world of readers would most likely be interested in noting—that world which, for the most part, is so heedless of spiritual truth, a fact to which His Holiness Jesus testified when He said: "Let the dead bury their dead."

There was no mention in the newspapers of the happiness that came to Sydney Sprague when he returned to the Bahá'í Faith and thus to that eternal spiritual life which is theirs who accept the Manifestation of God in the Day of His Dispensation. These papers wrote that Sydney Sprague had been an author, lecturer, and composer. They stated that, at twenty-three, he had studied at the Sorbonne, Paris, France; that he was at one time a "free lance" writer, and, as such, "covered," in France, the trial of Captain Dreyfus, and the funeral of Emile Zola. The press also stated that in Persia Mr. Sprague had taught music to the daughters of the ruling Shah; that he is credited with having later introduced Persian music to the Occident.

Since every useful work that one does is acceptable to God, in its fullest sense, only after the individual has achieved faith in his Creator and the knowledge and love of God, these deeds of Sydney Sprague now weigh heavily in his credit. As Jesus stated: "But rather seek ye the Kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The newspapers had not stated how difficult affairs had gradually become for Sydney Sprague, during his period of absence from his Faith. They passed by his financial losses in his attempt to become a producer of plays. They said nothing of his being swept into failure and into debt. They failed to remark on his being afflicted with apoplexy. They did not mention his ever growing yearning to return to the Bahá'í Faith, the proof of his understanding of the purpose and work of all of the

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Prophets of God Who had preceded the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh. But to the Bahá'ís, this intense longing to return had become known and was understood. They encouraged it.

There came a day when the power of his innermost heart longing surmounted some difficulties. In 1931, Sydney Sprague appeared at the home of this writer in the city of Los Angeles. He introduced himself, he stated his wish to return to the Bahá'í Cause. He was advised to get in touch with the Guardian of the Faith, as his was an internationally known case. This action, after 10 years more of troubles, Sydney Sprague succeeded in accomplishing. He expressed to the Guardian his acceptance of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, of the Guardianship, and of the spiritual Bahá'í Administrative Order.

The repentance of Sydney Sprague was sincere; it was accepted. Word of it was sent to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

The news that he was to be readmitted was conveyed to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the City of Los Angeles, California. Sydney Sprague, to the joy of those concerned, was reinstated by this Spiritual Assembly to full membership in the Los Angeles Bahá'í community, with the approval of the National Spiritual Assembly, in the year 1941. This was the 47th year of the Bahá'í classes in America. It was the 97th year of the Bahá'í Revelation in the world.

His Holiness Jesus recited to His disciples the parable of the man who had two sons, the younger of whom became a prodigal.

He departed from the homestead, while the older son remained at home. When the prodigal repented, it was for him that the father killed the fatted calf. The elder son had always had the companionship of the father, an all-sufficient recompense. The prodigal son had been lost. He had been counted as one dead. This prodigal had returned. He was as one resurrected from a tomb.

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh once wrote: "How often hath a sinner, at the hour of death, attained to the essence of faith, and, quaffing the immortal draught, hath taken his flight unto the celestial Concourse. And how often hath a devout believer, at the hour of his soul's ascension, been so changed as to fall into the nethermost fire."

Sydney Sprague, who had gone out from the "impregnable fortress" of the home,

or Faith, of the divine Father, had returned to the Cause of God over two years before he passed through the portals of earthly death. He is now in the realms of eternal, spiritual life. Having died firm in his Faith, he is happy in the certainty of Divine forgiveness. "He hath taken his flight unto the celestial Concourse." "All praise be to Thee, O God, my Lord, the most glorious."

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