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Tiberias, Sea of Galilee
— Syria

June 6th 1914

Dear friends!

An editorial in the recent issue of ^{the} Christian Commonwealth entitled "The Challenge to the Ministry" was read to Abdul Baha as he walked along the shore of the Sea of Galilee — on the very ground that Christ walked and taught his humble disciples 1900 years ago. Did ever Christ realize that almost 2000 yrs after him the whole Western world ~~would~~ ^{would} worship at his feet and upraise his simple name to the highest pinnacle of heaven? It looked to me most significant as I translated sentence by sentence this illumined Editorial to One who embodies in his life and teachings the highest ideals of ^{the} Christ — life. "The task confronting the Church," ^{the Editorial remarks} "was never more far-reaching; it creates a demand for an order of life and a scale of sacrifice to which there has been no parallel since the days of the apostles That the challenge of today has been heard is in itself a hopeful sign. Numbers of men are grouping themselves together to this problem in the right spirit The Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod, Rev. J. R. Gillies, M. A. speaks

last week of the need of sacrifice as a principle of the Kingdom of God which must be expressed through Christians - sacrifice which would give all for God - went on to say :-

'The ministers must lead here. The day cannot be far off when we shall be ashamed to draw large stipends, or, at least, to spend them on ourselves - to be rich while the Cause of Christ is poor; to be at ease while others suffer stint. Then our congregations will follow. The pagan ideal of self-development will yield to the Christian ideal of self-sacrifice all round.' We want a new kind of ministry today, a prophetic remnant of men who will embrace with eagerness and joy the simplicities and rigours of the Kingdom of God. Not that men are unwilling to shoulder the cross, but that cross should not be of man's appointing'. Every man who would go out in response to the call of the world in need would come to feel thankfully and gladly that the only peace to which he has the least right is the peace of God in the midst of the sins and sorrows of life. " That the Master listened to such and other pregnant passages goes without saying and I waited eagerly to hear his commentary on the subject. Continuing his walk and looking over the waters

of the sacred Lake he said: - "These are the harbingers of the ^{coming of the} spiritual springtime; the foreshadowings of the appearance of the Kingdom of God; the certain promises for the dawn of the Sun of Reality and the struggling voices ^{that} for ushering in the era of human and celestial brotherhood.

Discarding all the accumulated dogmas and pagan rituals of the past ages we must return to the fountain head of the Teachings of Christ as he uttered them here many generations ago. This is the only way. A whole-hearted surrender of our will to the Will of God, a degree of self-sacrifice as manifested in the lives of the saints and the martyrs, a spiritual enthusiasm and attraction capable to disregard all the world's hardships and persecutions, a complete self-surrender to the influx of the Holy Spirit and a holy dedication of one's entire forces to the service of humanity will establish the Kingdom of God in the hearts of all men. Our deeds must conform ^{to} with our professions. The disciples of Christ lived the life of Christ; they ~~were~~ "ravenous wolves" in "sheep's clothing"; the trees of their lives yielded good fruit; upon them was "great power" and "great grace" encircled them; they did not receive any stipends but sold every thing they had and went out

to preach the Gospel of the Lord. "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." The apostles labored and gained the means ^{for} of their livelihood and supported themselves, so that they might not be a charge to those who believed in Christ. They were the patterns of sanctity and holiness. "For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: Nor of men sought we glory; neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not ~~the~~ gospel of God only, but also our own soul, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto ^{any of} you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God. ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves

among you that believe." In short, such was the life and the manner of living of the Apostles. Are the Christian Ministers capable ^{of living} to live according to this standard? Have they faith enough to work and preach and not receive ^a any large salary? If they have made up their minds to walk in the footsteps of Christ and his apostles, this is the path. (Read Matt Chapter 6. v. 24/34.) If they do not live according to these clear injunctions, all the lectures, articles and talks will bring no results. "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Many such Ministers mean well, but they have not the resolution to practice what they preach. It is easily stated, but not just as easily performed. Who is amongst them who will be glad at least to face persecution, ridicule, scoffing, derision, imprisonment and martyrdom for the sake of Christ? Are there many, very many or few, very few? This is the test. If one of their fingers is wounded with the point of a needle their cry will reach to heaven and they will run hurriedly to the Doctor for prompt treatment. What relation between Christ and his self-sacrificing apostles

and these modern preachers of the Gospel? They have brought down the name of Christ and put in its place church service, Anathesian Creeds, liturgy, denominational rivalries, bitter controversies, factional spirit, etc etc. Where are the spirituality, the charity, the tolerance, the lovingkindness of Apostles? Many of such Ministers, priests and clergy are unable to breathe ^{even} one breath ^{like unto} of the disciples, how much more to walk in their footsteps. Only the Bahais in this age have fulfilled all the requirements of the Apostleship of Christ. They have suffered infinite hardships, were starved, ~~hailed~~ tortured and persecutions, carried their cross on their shoulders and under the most trying circumstances taught the Gospel of the Kingdom. Like unto the early christians more than 20,000 of them suffered martyrdom with serene joy and innate happiness.

X Once a Mohammodan Mullah thought that one of his fingers had become impure, because he had touched an unclean article and consequently he thought that it must be cut off. Passing by the butcher's shop he stopped and asked ^{the butcher} him to cut ^{it} his finger. The butcher was astonished and refused. The Mullah

explained his reason and persisted in his extraordinary demand. "All right" said the butcher at last "put thy hand on this block of wood and I will cut thy finger."

Then taking his large, cutting knife, he brought down with apparent force, its blunt side on the hand of the Mullah. No sooner ^{had} he felt the harmless pain, ^{than} he ^{pulled} ~~pushed~~ away his hand, while

crying and cursing the butcher for his merciless, cruel heart. 'Oh thou tyrant! What have I done to thee, ^{that thou wilt} thus to cut my hand'

he bemoaned. The butcher realizing the utter weakness of the Mullah laughingly said: 'Go to, I did not harm thy hand. Thou coward, I just tested thee to see whether thou

art made of heroic stuff.' X Many people think it is easy to walk in the footsteps of the Apostles, but it is most difficult, it is the task of the superman. Only those are able to do this who are awakened with the outpourings of the New Spiritual consciousness in this age.

During the last 30 years many societies and individuals have attempted in certain parts of Europe and America to live according to the lives of the Apostles and bring in the old simplicity and rigours, but they did not accomplish their object and failed; because they could not interpret the Will of God according to the need of modern life."

Today three believers from Alexandrette with their
 wives and children arrived from Haifa and will stay
 two days. In the morning the Beloved received several
 strangers, spoke in detail with each and then went out
 to call on his friends. In the evening he sat for nearly
 three hours on the porch, watching the memorial
 Lake and ^{the} reflection of the full moon ~~on its surface~~
^{like} as a wonderful pillar of light, ^{on its surface}. He talked with our
 new pilgrims and inquired about the health of all the
 believers in Alexandrette. He said in part: - "The firm and
 steadfast believers living in a city will become the means
 of its ultimate illumination and will assist the inha-
 bitants to advance and progress in all the departments of
 life. Consider how the Arabian desert, a wilderness of
 sand, dried mountains, hot climate, ~~uncultivable~~
^{not possible of cultivation} ground, savage, primitive inhabitants, the country
 situated near the Equator - through the appearance
 of Mahammad and his disciples - became the
 mother of all the countries, the Kaaba ^{for} millions
 of souls and the object of veneration by all
 mankind. This is ^{through} the influence of the word of
 God."