

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES
BM/BAHAI, LONDON, W.C.1

No. 118

Bahá'í Year 111

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER, 1954

FOR CHRISTIAN CONTACTS—II

by George Townshend

From this fantastic delusion that Christ Jesus is not only the Son of God but also the Father in heaven has flowed another consequence, not the less mortal, perhaps, because it is often overlooked altogether by both pew and pulpit.

It has secularised human history for centuries past, and has materialised and demoralised the whole atmosphere of Western action.

The way in which such a result has come about is as follows:

The Old Testament reveals human history as being concerned not only with Man but with Man and God too; and with God as no secondary figure. God is the creator, man his creature; God is master and man his servant; God is all dominant, man has to learn to obey and submit.

These two figures are bound together by the terms of an inescapable covenant which really constitutes the shaping, directing, driving force of all history. It enshrines a promise that God will one day give to mankind the supreme blessedness of a redeemer who shall be the everlasting Father, the mighty God, on the performance of certain conditions.

We are shown through the prophets of Israel definite glimpses of what the Kingdom will be like—glimpses of something which has really already happened in the eternal world, but which has not taken form on earth yet. A Bible prophecy (of, say, Isaiah's) is not merely a prediction; it is a true vision of something quite real which the prophet's seership enables him to oversee.

When Jesus, the Son of God, is identified with the Father the Covenant is fulfilled. The Great One promised is come. The Covenant has no longer a place in the progress of mankind. History begins to follow a new principle. In the time of Moses and of Christ there was among all true monotheists only one kind of history. God through His Covenant designed and carried out the destinies of man. Now in this Christian era there appears another kind of history. The dictionary distinguishes 'sacred history', which deals with the events in the Bible narrative, from 'secular history', which deals with events since Bible times. In 'secular history' the Covenant is dropped. God is no longer dominant, acting the major part in the story as all-powerful, the judge and arbiter of men and kings and

nations. God is no longer the omniscient, omnipotent designer of events and of their outcome; He is no longer the jealous, watchful overlord, the King of kings who rewards or punishes his vassals, condemns them or acquits, deposes or exalts according to His own will and determination. On the contrary, events are estimated on a purely human basis. Kings, governments and statesmen no longer seek to act and live according to the Covenant. The fear of God has disappeared as a deterrent from wrong action. The historians of Christendom write on the same basis as did those of Greece and Rome; as Herodotus or Livy or Tacitus, Edward Gibbon and Macaulay, Grote and Lecky and the rest, with the world historians and national historians and continental historians—all treat history as a merely secular affair. None of them is able to see any meaning or plot or pattern in the progress of human happenings. Some of them confess and comment on this inability. 'I can see', says one of the most learned of them all, H. A. L. Fisher, in his *History of Europe*, 'only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave, only one great fact with respect to which there can be no generalisations, only one safe note for the historians; that he should recognise in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen'.

And religious history and church history—are not they from the Covenant point of view, secularised too?

The broad result has been that not only the Covenant but the rôle of God himself has disappeared from modern history. For all who read in schools and college the works of historians, life is secularised.

Meantime, the Covenant of God proceeds upon its course as declared by the Bible. Mankind moves on his appointed road towards the Kingdom. Unseen by the secular historian, and by every reader who accepts his point of view, Jesus Christ is succeeded by Muḥammad, Muḥammad by the Báb, the Báb by the Lord of Hosts, the Everlasting Father himself; and Christendom at last has come to a dead end and finds itself lost. No secular historian can explain the crisis or bring comfort. Sacred history alone can solve the enigma. The Bible holds the key. But the only people who can trace the real course of the Covenant are those who (as the Bahá'ís) have not misidentified

Christ with the Father, but in simple Faith have regarded all history as sacred history, as ruled by the everlasting covenant, as designed, directed and controlled by the changeless will of the one omniscient and omnipotent God who is the creator of all and the Master of all.

THIS GLORIOUS CHALLENGE

We print below an extract from a letter dated July 28th addressed to the American Bahá'í Community by the Guardian. It is to the American Community that the paragraph before the last one refers, but most of this extract has a general application and can be profitably studied by Bahá'ís everywhere.

This challenge, so severe and insistent, and yet so glorious, faces no doubt primarily the individual believer on whom, in the last resort, depends the fate of the entire community. He it is who constitutes the warp and woof on which the quality and pattern of the whole fabric must depend. He it is who acts as one of the countless links in the mighty chain that now girdles the globe. He it is who serves as one of the multitude of bricks which support the structure and insure the stability of the administrative edifice now being raised in every part of the world. Without his support, at once whole-hearted, continuous and generous, every measure adopted, and every plan formulated, by the Body which acts as the national representative of the community to which he belongs, is fore-doomed to failure. The World Centre of the Faith itself is paralyzed if such a support on the part of the rank and file of the community is denied it. The Author of the Divine Plan Himself is impeded in His Purpose if the proper instruments for the execution of His design are lacking. The sustaining strength of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, the Founder of the Faith, will be withheld from every and each individual who fails in the long run to arise and play his part.

The administrative agencies of a divinely conceived Administrative Order, at long last erected and relatively perfected, stand in dire need of the individual believer to come forward and utilize them with undeviating purpose, serene confidence and exemplary dedication. The heart of the Guardian cannot but leap with joy, and his mind derive fresh inspiration, at every evidence testifying to the response of the individual to his allotted task. The unseen legions, standing rank upon rank, and eager to pour forth from the Kingdom on high the full measure of their celestial strength on the individual participants of this incomparably glorious Crusade, are powerless unless and until each potential crusader decides for himself and perseveres in his determination, to rush into the arena of service ready to sacrifice his all for the Cause he is called upon to champion.

It is therefore imperative for the individual American believer, and particularly for the affluent, the independent, the comfort-loving and those obsessed by material pursuits, to step forward, and dedicate their resources, their time, their very lives to a Cause of such transcendence that no human eye can even dimly perceive its glory. Let them resolve, instantly and unhesitatingly, to place, each according to his circumstances, his share on the altar of Bahá'í sacrifice, lest on a sudden, unforeseen calamities rob them of a

considerable portion of the earthly things they have amassed.

Now, if ever, is the time to tread the path which the Dawn-Breakers of a previous age have so magnificently trodden. Now is the time to carry out, in the spirit and in the letter, the fervent wish so pathetically voiced by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who longed, as attested in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, to "travel though on foot and in the utmost poverty" and raise "in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans" the call of "Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá!"

Then, and only then, can the members of this community hasten the advent of the day when, as prophesied by His Pen, "heavenly illumination" will "stream from their country" "to all the peoples of the world". Then, and only then will they find themselves "securely established upon the throne of an everlasting dominion".

That the members of this community, of either sex and of every age, of whatever race or background, however limited in experience, capacity and knowledge, may arise as one man, and seize with both hands the God-given opportunities now presented to them through the dispensations of an all-loving, ever-watchful, ever-sustaining Providence, and lend thereby a tremendous impetus to the propelling forces mysteriously guiding the operations of this newly-launched, unspeakably potent, world-encompassing Crusade, is one of the dearest wishes which a loving and longing heart holds for them at this great turning point in the fortunes of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the American continent.'

BAHÁ'Í MARRIAGE

Certain important points were clarified by the Guardian in a letter through his Secretary dated June 20th, 1954:

The general principle in regard to the marriage of a Bahá'í and a non-Bahá'í is as follows: If a Bahá'í marries a non-Bahá'í who wishes to have the religious ceremony of his own sect carried out, it must be quite clear that, first, the Bahá'í partner is understood to be a Bahá'í by religion and not to accept the religion of the other party to the marriage through having his or her religious ceremony; and, second, the ceremony must be of a nature which does not commit the Bahá'í to any declaration of faith in a religion other than his own.

Under these circumstances, the Bahá'í can partake of the religious ceremony of his non-Bahá'í partner. The Bahá'í should insist on having the Bahá'í ceremony carried out before or after the non-Bahá'í one, on the same day.'

The National Assembly wishes to remind the friends that the consent of all living parents of the couple is essential before a Bahá'í marriage can take place.

Bahá'í Burial

The National Assembly suggests that as well as providing in their Will for Bahá'í burial, friends arrange that if a stone is put on their grave it should have on it some indication they were Bahá'ís. A suitable indication would be a quotation from Bahá'í Scripture. The Guardian does not approve the use of the Greatest Name on tombstones.

THE FRANKFURT CONFERENCE

An Impression by Marion Hofman

In the Conference called by the Hands of the Cause of God in Europe, and held at the national *Hazíratu'l-Quds* of the German Bahá'ís in Frankfurt, October 1st to 3rd, 1954, all who were privileged to attend felt the pulse of a new energy released into the European field. We were enriched by witnessing the birth of a new phase of unified activity amongst all the institutions of the Faith and the believers of Europe. Our hearts were stirred to realise that in this historic meeting, two great powers flowing from the Covenant of God—the one through the National Spiritual Assemblies at work in Europe, the other through the Hands of the Cause of God and their Auxiliary Board—met and were fused in the common task created by our beloved Guardian's mighty vision of the Ten-Year Crusade.

The Conference was called together by the four Hands of the Cause of God in Europe. It was their first meeting with the Auxiliary Board and the first opportunity of consultation between the Hands and the National Spiritual Assemblies. Our dear and honoured Hand of the Cause, Mr. George Townshend, was prevented by illness from attending, but his spirit, which had already been active and successful in his work throughout the British Isles, was felt by us all. At the head of our conference tables, shedding a beneficent and luminous spirit of our proceedings, reflecting to us like mirrors so many aspects of the heart of our beloved Guardian, sat the distinguished Hands of the Cause, Dr. Ugo Giachery, Dr. Hermann Grossmann, and Dr. Adelbert Mühschlegel, who jointly presided over our consultations through the chairmanship of Dr. Giachery.

We who were the official delegates, sat at two long tables joining this head table. There were eight of the nine members of the Auxiliary Board, who had been appointed last *Ridván* in this very room. There were the official representatives of four National Spiritual Assemblies charged with responsibility in the European field, and seventeen N.S.A. members in all, one from the United States, eight from Germany, five from the Italo-Swiss N.S.A., and three from the British Isles. The Conference was especially grateful for the participation of the American N.S.A. representative, Miss Edna True. The European Teaching Committees of the four N.S.A.s were also represented, as well as several National Teaching Committees. Including a few unofficial delegates the Conference numbered just under thirty, with believers present from nine countries.

From the start we were conscious that this Conference—the first European Conference assembled in Frankfurt, the 'heart' of Europe, meeting in the first national *Hazíratu'l-Quds* of Europe, and visiting the site of the first European *Mashriqu'l-Adhikár* at the foot of the Taunus hills—marked the opening of a new stage of growth for the European Bahá'í Community. It was indeed a thrilling moment in Bahá'í history which set all our hearts 'singing and swinging', to borrow the delightful phrase of Dr. Mühschlegel. And he reminded us in his opening remarks before our work began that 'we are placed by Providence in this age, this day, this continent, this Conference. So, over-

whelmed by thankfulness for the bounty of Bahá'u'lláh, we shall take up our tools and work like masons, obedient, thankful, humble, and filled with the love of mankind.' This was in truth the spirit of the Conference, which enabled us to seek out and find the means of co-operation between so many agencies of the Cause, all working in one field, and all henceforth to feel themselves as brothers sharing one cherished task. It was this spirit which, no doubt, attracted as a blessing to our sessions the spirit of unity in such measure as words can never describe. And this unity was in turn crowned with joy. As our Chairman said on the last day, 'It is really a time for rejoicing ... for these last few days have made possible the most wonderful understanding of our common problems.'

The first day of the Conference was devoted almost entirely to a detailed consultation on the way in which the Hands of the Cause and their Auxiliary Board might best co-operate with the National Spiritual Assemblies and their Teaching Committees. In their travels and letters the members of the Board were asked to explain to the friends the understanding which the Conference had gained of our Guardian's instructions on this matter. Recommendations were sent to the five N.S.A.s to suggest the fullest interchange of knowledge of conditions and plans for the growth of the Faith.

Great attention was also paid to the functions of Board members, and many suggestions were set down for their guidance. The Conference realised that the Board is in fact a new reservoir of energy and encouragement for local communities and individual believers, and everything possible was done to clarify the members' tasks and invite their activity. Experiences shared by Dr. Grossmann from his recent travels in Britain pointed a way for Board members in their relations with the friends.

The Conference then spent most of two days examining each goal of the second phase of the Ten-Year Crusade. Reports were made by the N.S.A.s on progress within their areas of responsibility, methods of work were compared, and prayerful thought was given to ways of increasing the tempo of achievement. This part of the Conference was full of interest and mutual help, as it brought to bear on many problems the vision and experience of many workers throughout Europe. This interchange of ideas will surely have fruit, and the desire to find a transcending unity of policy in the European field was evident. Co-operation in the dispersal of news, the publication and distribution of literature, the contribution of funds for the manifold activities of the Faith—in these and many other fields the results of the Conference should be seen in years to come. The first tangible opportunity of co-operation was opened by the Conference, in its call to the European friends to unite on the eve of the Birth of the Báb in a continent-wide prayer for the removal of difficulties in purchasing the Temple lands and *Hazíratu'l-Quds*, which are goals of the Ten-Year Crusade in Europe.

One of the most urgent discussions centred around the need of the Continental Fund, established by the Guardian to 'facilitate the discharge of the functions'

assigned to the Board. As yet almost no contributions have been received except from the beloved Guardian and two or three other contributors. Inspired by the vision of the new impetus which the Hands of the Cause and their Auxiliary Board are ready to bring to the tasks of the Crusade, the Conference gave anxious thought to the fact that, without funds, the work of the Hands and the Board will indeed be paralysed. Believing that this new strength needs only to be demonstrated, in order to win the generous support of the friends, the Conference called upon N.S.A. and Board members alike to waken the friends to the need of the Continental Fund. Part and parcel of this discussion was the consciousness that the Crusade depends upon the unified and unstinting support of all the friends, for the various Funds 'are the life-blood of the Community and work cannot be carried forward unless the life-blood is constantly circulating.' The Conference hoped that the delegates might carry back to their home communities a new vision of this vital and urgent matter.

There were, in addition to these consultations, three memorable events. Our prayers on the site of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, beautifully placed on high ground with the City of Frankfurt at its feet and a lovely semicircle of high hills opposite, filled our eyes with a picture of the future. In the Unity Feast, a banquet exquisitely prepared and served by our dear German friends, we were fed on the elixir of unity and joy, the spirit of this wonderful Conference. Words from Edith Horn, first pioneer to Frankfurt, were a highlight of this radiant night. Finally, we met on the last afternoon with many German believers in a Devotional Programme—eighty of us in all—which crowned these thrilling days and deepened our gratitude and dedication. We knew our solidarity with these dear friends, who had shown us such loving hospitality, and we were reluctant to leave our home in the Hazíratu'l-Quds. Yet we knew we should never leave in spirit, but would go forth into the world, as the Hands counselled us, joyous to take on our shoulders the tasks of the Ten-Year Crusade, conscious that the whole world is like the Hazíra, and that we move through it with a sense of worship, service, and love for all mankind.

EUROPEAN NEWS

NEWS FROM CYPRUS. Jeanne Kranen, our newest pioneer in Cyprus, writes: 'Mrs. McKinley and Hugh are very hospitable and kind to me. Whenever I happen to come to Nicosia I find the table laid and my bed ready. It is so grand to "come home" there. My job here is a light, easy and pleasant one. For about ten days I stayed high in the mountains with my little boy at a beautiful hotel. There I met people from Israel, Egypt and the island, and I had a good chance to speak sometimes about our Cause ... Please will you send our best wishes, warmest greetings and Bahá'í love to all the friends.'

Two American believers have just been in London on their way to Cyprus to try to settle in Famagusta. Of this Hugh McKinley has written: 'Yes, we know the reasons why the Beloved wants a believer from the

City of the Covenant to settle on the unknown resting place of its Arch Breaker. (He's well known there, by the way, and some of his posterity is living in Kyrenia to-day.)'

Hugh also writes of himself and his mother: 'We have permission to make the pilgrimage—we expect next month—and shall surely remember you all there; should conditions make it possible, we'll send something for Teaching Conference resulting from that experience.'

NEWS FROM THE NORTHERN ISLANDS. Charles Dunning, from the Orkneys, says: 'Yes, Summer School was very inspiring; I have attended four different ones, but this one was great. I have got many friends here reading about the Faith, and I have been bombarded with questions.'

Brigitte Hasselblatt writes from the Shetlands: 'I find it almost impossible to convey to you the impact which the visit of Mrs. Marzieh Gail and Harold Gail had on me and the whole island. There seems to be a power released which leaves me breathless, new arenas for teaching have opened up, new souls have been attracted, happiness and security have descended upon me. A new light is diffused which even appears to have a reflection in nature. It is not possible to estimate the state of the souls and their nearness to Bahá'u'lláh but the circle of the love of God has widened and the rays of his love have penetrated into far distant regions. We had our first organised Fireside gathering; there were seven altogether, and Mrs. Gail spoke about the principles and a very lively discussion followed. I think I will try and hold such meetings once every fortnight.'

Brigitte also spent an hour or so with our pioneer from the Faroes, who called at Lerwick on his way to Copenhagen for medical treatment. Of his stay in Denmark Eskil Ljungberg writes: 'The Copenhagen friends wish me to send you their best greetings and love ... I was at the Nineteen Day Feast last Sunday, and it was a wonderful experience. The unity was very great. One could feel it in the air, and that made me very happy. Last Wednesday a wonderful gathering was held at the Centre to meet with Edna True on her way to Germany for the Conference. It was a great evening.' And Eskil goes on to say of the Faroes: 'Saturday I go on board the ship that will take me home to my children and my island. I have been longing for them ever since I got on board to come here—it started even before we left the shore at Thorshavn. And if I had dared I should have stepped ashore again. My contact writes to me here, and says that he is keeping the flame burning. He has people to his home and gives them the message, and teaches them day by day.'

EUROPEAN AND ASIAN TEACHING COMMITTEE

Reviewing Committee

The terms of reference of the Committee have been revised by the addition of the following:

'A Local Spiritual Assembly may review material which is intended solely for local use. Any newspaper which has a considerable circulation outside the town is not considered to be a local paper.'



The building purchased as the National Haziratu'l-Quds
27 Rutland Gate, Westminster, London, S.W.7.

Additions to the Community

Since the last list was published in *Bahá't Journal* registration cards have been received from the following (three are from believers accepted several months ago who failed to receive registration cards through an oversight):

Mary Coombs, Portsmouth
Rosemary Crates, Wellington
Francis Hurt, Sheffield
Ada Waring, Blackburn
Iris Brunt, Blackburn
Lisbeth Greeves, Crawfordsburn
Helen Lim, Liverpool
Clarence Clarke, London
Annie Howes, London
Margaret Traub, London
Louise Martensson, London
Saideh Adlparvar (from Iran), Brighton
Alice Leedham, London
Doris Cano, London

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

The following communities have provided telephone numbers through which the Local Community can be contacted by Bahá'í or other visitors:

Brighton: BRIGHTON 22015 (Mr. L. A. Walker).
Blackburn: BLAKEWATER 42696 (Mrs. T. Scott).
Edinburgh: FOU 1473 (Mr. A. Ketirai).
Liverpool: SEFTON PARK 2757 (Dr. E. Miller) or ROYAL 4030 (Mrs. Pritchard and Miss S. Farnsworth).
London: PROSPECT 8697 (Mr. and Mrs. H. Backwell).
Manchester: SWINTON 2389 (Mrs. P. Senior).

Changes of Address

Blackburn Secretary: Mrs. Scott, 20 Mincing Lane, Blackburn.
Dublin Secretary: Adib Taherzadeh, 8 Eden Park, Dundrum, Co. Dublin.
Glasgow Secretary: Miss A. Williams, 56 Forge-wood Road, Motherwell, Lanarkshire.

THE NOBLEST OBJECTIVE OF THE CRUSADE

(Our beloved Guardian sent the following weighty message dated October 1st, 1954, to the American National Assembly for distribution to the Bahá'í world.)

The opening months of the second phase of the Ten-Year Plan have witnessed, on the American, the European, the African, the Asiatic and the Australian fronts, a succession of victories rivalling, in their variety, rapidity and significance, the prodigious efforts exerted, and the superb exploits achieved, during the first twelve months of the Global Crusade, by the mighty company of the stalwart Knights of Bahá'u'lláh in wellnigh a hundred virgin territories scattered over the face of the planet.

Seven virgin territories have been opened to the Faith since the announcement on the morrow of the Ridván Festival, raising the total number of the Sovereign States and Dependencies enlisted under the banner of the Cause of God to two hundred and thirty-five. The number of the unopened territories outside of the Soviet Orbit has now shrunk to eight, namely: Spitzbergen, Anticosti Island, St. Thomas Island, Nicobar Islands, Cocos Island, Socotra Island, Loyalty Islands, and the Chagos Archipelago. The following pioneers have been inscribed on the Roll of Honour since my last sixth periodic announcement: Elizabeth Stamp, St. Helena; Mr. and Mrs. Harold Fitzner, Portuguese Timor; Elise Schreiber, Spanish Guinea; Violet Hoehnke, Admiralty Islands; Shahpoor Rowhani and Ardeshir Faroodi, Bhutan; Mehraban Sohaili, Comoro Islands; Marcia Atwater, Marshall Islands.

The number of Bahá'í centres scattered over the continents and islands of the globe has now passed the three thousand mark. A contract has been signed for the purchase of a three-acre plot as the site of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Europe, situated on a plateau near the Taunus Hills in the vicinity of the City of Frankfurt. A thirty thousand square metre property located on the banks of the Tigris has been acquired as the site of the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Holy City of Baghdád. A plot lying in the outskirts of New Delhi has been secured at the price of a hundred thousand rupees as the site of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Indian sub-continent. A twelve thousand dollar plot has been bought in Johannesburg as the site of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of South Africa. A five-year Plan has been initiated in Bahá'u'lláh's native land designed to raise twelve million tumans for the projected construction of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the cradle of the Faith. A six thousand dollar plot has been purchased in the vicinity of the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf and registered in the name of the newly established Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles. A property has been acquired opposite the Mother Temple of the West to serve as a possible site for the first Dependency of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Wilmette. A contract has been signed, pending registration of a house valued at ten thousand dollars and situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the Báb's Sepulchre, in the name of the recently established Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the

Bahá'ís of Canada. Preliminary steps have been taken for the acquisition of two plots, the one situated on the ridge of Mt. Carmel, the other to the west of the Báb's resting-place and for their subsequent registration in the name of the Israel Branches of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'ís of Persia and of Australia and New Zealand respectively. A national Hazíratu'l-Quds has been purchased in Kabul and one in Johannesburg. Arrangements will soon be completed for the purchase of a building costing over eighteen thousand dollars for a national Hazíratu'l-Quds in Tunis. Funds totalling over one hundred thousand dollars have been initiated for the purchase of similar institutions in Anchorage, Asuncion, Caracas, Ciudad Trujillo, Colombo, Copenhagen, Guatemala, Havana, Helsingfors, Istanbul, Jakarta, Johannesburg, La Paz, Lima, Lisbon, London, Luxembourg, Madrid, Managua, Mexico City, Montevideo, Oslo, Panama City, Port-au-Prince, Quito, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, San Jose, Santiago, San Salvador, Stockholm, Suva, Tegucigalpa, The Hague, Tokyo, and Vienna, as well as for the acquisition of the Garden of Ridván in Baghdád, the transfer of the remains of the wife of the Báb in Shíráz and for the purchase of the sites associated with Bahá'u'lláh's exile in Istanbul and Adrianople. The initiation of these Funds has been made possible to a notable extent as a result of the successive contributions made by the Hand of the Cause, Amelia Collins, outstanding benefactress of the Faith, for the furtherance of some of the most vital objectives of the Ten-Year Plan. Negotiations are now afoot aiming at the acquisition of the fortress of Chihriq including its precincts involving the expenditure of a sum of over two hundred thousand tumans. Preliminary documents have been signed in connection with the purchase from the Development Authority of the State of Israel of five houses, situated at the foot of Mt. Carmel and adjoining the last terrace of the Báb's Shrine, for a sum of approximately sixty thousand dollars.

The phenomenal progress of the African Campaign, alike in the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í activity, has been maintained, most conspicuously in the heart of that continent, as evidenced by the ever-swelling number of African converts, now numbering over seven hundred, three hundred and eighty of which have been added in the course of a single year. The number of Bahá'í centres now spread over the face of this continent is a hundred and ninety-five. The number of African tribes represented in the Faith in this same continent has reached eighty-five. The African languages into which Bahá'í literature has been translated now number thirty-four, whilst the number of African local spiritual assemblies has swelled to fifty.

I feel the hour is now ripe for the adoption of preliminary measures designed to pave the way for the simultaneous erection during Ridván of 1956 of three pillars of the future Universal House of Justice in the north, the south and the very heart of this long dormant continent. The first of these pillars will be designated the National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa; the second the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa; and the third the National Spiritual Assembly of the

Bahá'ís of North-West Africa. Responsibility for the convocation of the three epoch-making conventions, to be held in Kampala, Johannesburg and Tunis, preparatory to the emergence of these three central administrative institutions of the fast-evolving Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the African Continent will devolve upon the British, the United States and the Egyptian Spiritual Assemblies, respectively.

The jurisdiction of the first Assembly will embrace Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya, the Belgian Congo, Ruanda-Urundi, French Equatorial Africa, Zanzibar, the Comoro Islands and the Seychelles. That of the second will extend over the Union of South Africa, South-West Africa, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola, Bechuanaland, Basutoland, Swaziland, Nyasaland, Zululand, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion Island and St. Helena. That of the third will include Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco (Int. Zone), Spanish Morocco, French Morocco, Spanish Sahara, Rio de Oro, Spanish Guinea, Ashanti Protectorate, French Cameroons, British Cameroons, Northern Territories Protectorate, French Togoland, British Togoland, Gambia, Portuguese Guinea, French West Africa, the Gold Coast, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Madeira, the Canary Islands, Cape Verde Islands, and St. Thomas Island.

Abyssinia, Libya, Eritrea, British, French and Italian Somaliland and Socotra Island will, as of Ridván of that same year fall within the administrative jurisdiction of the Egyptian National Spiritual Assembly which will from then on be designated as the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of North-East Africa. All African territories originally allocated to the United States, the Persian, the Egyptian, the Indian, and the British National Spiritual Assemblies will continue, in the course of the Ten-Year Plan, to benefit from the advantages of sustained assistance by these Assemblies—an assistance that will enable them to assume an ever-increasing share in the steadily expanding activities of the nascent National Spiritual Assemblies.

Only local spiritual assemblies duly constituted during Ridván 1955 will be qualified to elect delegates to these four historic conventions to be convened during the succeeding year.

I call upon the Hand of the Cause, Musa Banani, to act as my representative at each of the three Conventions destined to culminate in the emergence of these three momentous institutions. I moreover invite the Chairmen of the United States, the British and the Egyptian National Spiritual Assemblies to convene the aforementioned Conventions falling within the respective jurisdiction of these Assemblies and urge as many members of the African Auxiliary Board as possible to attend the sessions, and lend their support to the deliberations, of these gatherings. I feel, moreover, moved at this juncture to stress the urgent necessity for all groups established throughout the African continent as well as in the islands situated in its neighbourhood—already four score in number—to seize their present golden opportunity during the fast-fleeting months separating them from next Ridván, and exert every effort to attain assembly status which will enable them to participate in the election of, and contribute to

the broadening of the foundations of the projected National Spiritual Assemblies.

I earnestly appeal to all Bahá'í Communities, and in particular to their national elected representatives in Latin America, Europe, Asia and Australia to brace themselves and vie with one another in emulating the example of their African sister communities ranking among the youngest in the Bahá'í world. I entreat them, through a greater dispersal and an intensification of teaching activity, to lend an unprecedented impetus to the multiplication of local spiritual assemblies in their respective areas, accelerating thereby the dynamic process of the formation of National Spiritual Assemblies—a process destined to usher in the third and most brilliant phase, and constituting unquestionably the noblest objective, of the most stupendous crusade ever launched in the course of eleven decades of Bahá'í history.

Share this message with the Hands of the Cause and the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world.

NEWS FROM AFRICA

KENYA. Thanks to the efforts of African pioneers and the hard work of the Nairobi Community, three new communities are now large enough to form assemblies next Ridván: Eldoret, Kitale and Mombasa. Further there are groups at: Mackinnon Road, Maseno, Kabete and Nyangori, and isolated believers at Kaptaget, Equator, Kital, Kolonde and Ulu. Mr. and Mrs. E. Alai of Persia have arrived in Nairobi, hoping to settle, Mr. E. Zahrai has transferred from Nairobi to Mombasa and Mr. Herbert Ocholo has moved from Kampala, Uganda, to Kolonde, Kenya.

TANGANYIKA. There is good hope of a new assembly next Ridván at Mwanza and the Dar-es-Salaam friends hope to develop one at Morogoro, which they visit every fortnight.

BRITISH CAMEROONS. The Faith is spreading rapidly all over the southern section of this territory, and the believers now number over sixty. Places opened to the Faith are: Victoria and Bota (assembly), Tombel, Moliwe, Tiko, Kumba, Tali, Etam, Etoko, Mamfe, Lobe, Buea.

BRITISH TOGOLAND. There are now three believers at Poase, and one at Ho. Developments are reported at Yendi, which have not been checked yet.

GOLD COAST. We have welcomed a new believer, Mr. Carl Allotey, at Accra, Gold Coast Colony. We also hear there are several new believers in Ashanti, which is a Persian territory.

FRENCH CAMEROONS. Mrs. Mehrangiz Munsiff, who pioneered to this territory from Britain, has had to return on account of ill health. She has left behind her four new believers, who are being helped by her fellow pioneer, Samuel Njiki, from British Cameroons.

UGANDA. Mr. and Mrs. Hassan Sabri, who pioneered to Dar-es-Salaam three years ago, have now moved to Kampala, Uganda, where they intend to settle.

NIGERIA. Margaret Lloyd, formerly of Dar-es-Salaam and at present on leave in England, has obtained a post in Zaria, Northern Nigeria, and will be leaving very soon.

TRANSLATIONS. Four of the translations into African languages have so far been published—Ga (Accra), Malagasy, Shona and Yao. Four more are with the printer—Bemba, Jolof, Pedi, Zulu.

Translators have been found and are working on translations into the following languages: Afrikaans, Chuana, Dagbane, Duala, Grebo, Kpelle, Lingala, Luba, Shangaan, Sobu, Suto, Xosa.

Translators have been found for the following languages, but for various reasons it is not yet certain when the translations will be completed: Mbundo, Nubian, Shilha, Susu.

No progress has so far been made with the following: Baoule, Fon, Jieng, Kongo, Kuanyama, Shilluk, Ruanda.

It will be noted that some of these languages do not appear on the Guardian's original list. These have been substituted for others on the list with the Guardian's permission as reported from time to time in *Bahá'í Journal*.

Bahá'í Publishing Trust

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust has been recognised by the Publishers' Association as a bookseller on the understanding it will sell books relevant to a study of the Bahá'í Faith. This means that the Publishing Trust can receive normal bookseller's discount and will be able to consider stocking such publications as the Everyman edition of the *Qur'án*.

BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST

THE BAHÁ'Í REVELATION

This new long compilation of Bahá'í Holy Writings will be available in January. It has 339 pages including 17 pages of index arranged to facilitate study. The Guardian's translations have been used wherever possible.

Cloth Bound

Expected price 12/6.

FOR MEDITATION

Among the Prophets was Noah. For nine hundred and fifty years He prayerfully exhorted His people and summoned them to the haven of security and peace. None, however, heeded His call. Each day they inflicted on His blessed person such pain and suffering that no one believed He could survive. How frequently they denied Him, how malevolently they hinted their suspicion against Him! Thus it has been revealed: 'And as often as a company of His people passed by Him, they derided Him. To them He said: "Though ye scoff at us now, we will scoff at you hereafter even as ye scoff at us. In the end ye shall know"'. Long afterward, He several times promised victory to His companions and fixed the hour thereof. But when the hour struck, the divine promise was not fulfilled. This caused a few among the small number of His followers to turn away from Him, and to this testify the records of the best-known books. These you must certainly have perused; if not, undoubtedly you will. Finally, as stated in books and traditions, there remained with Him only forty or seventy-two of His followers. At last from the depth of His being He cried aloud: 'Lord! Leave not upon the land a single dweller from among the unbelievers'.

And now, consider and reflect a moment upon the waywardness of this people. What could have been the reason for such denial and avoidance on their part? What could have induced them to refuse to put off the garment of denial, and to adorn themselves with the robe of acceptance? Moreover, what could have caused the nonfulfilment of the divine promise which led the seekers to reject that which they had accepted? Meditate profoundly, that the secret of things unseen may be revealed unto you, that you may inhale the sweetness of a spiritual and imperishable fragrance, and that you may acknowledge the truth that from time immemorial even unto eternity the Almighty hath tried, and will continue to try, His servants, so that light may be distinguished from darkness, truth from falsehood, right from wrong, guidance from error, happiness from misery, and roses from thorns. Even as He has revealed: 'Do men think when they say "We believe" they shall be let alone and not be put to proof?'