

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES
158a, OLD BROMPTON ROAD, LONDON, S.W.5.

No. 60.

Bahá'í Year 103

March, 1947

FROM THE GUARDIAN

From its December meeting, December 21st-23rd, the N.S.A. cabled:

"Faced serious setbacks prosecution Six Year Plan Assembly felt greater dedication its own members imperative. Believes this now attained. Humbly prays confirmation blessings their ardent desires. Parvin Basil Hall accepts chairmanship Teaching Committee. Two pioneers arrived from America already assigned Blackburn, Edinburgh. Earnestly pray Teaching Conference raise whole community nearer Bahá'u'lláh, closer beloved Guardian. Deepest love."

and also:

"Arthur Norton seriously ill. His withdrawal from Assembly and all Bahá'í work imperative. Marion Norton forced relinquish Chairmanship Teaching Committee to look after him. Six Year Plan has thus met grave setback. Humbly beg prayers Divine intervention early restoration these devoted friends field of service."

The following cable from the Guardian was dated 30th December:—

"Praying fervently removal all obstacles impeding progress Plan and recovery Arthur Norton. Supplicating richest blessings Teaching Conference. Deepest loving appreciation."—Shoghi."

In reply to a cable dated 23rd December from the N.S.A. announcing that we were moving into a small new Centre on 24th December, the Guardian replied:

"Rejoice success. Praying richest blessings—Shoghi."

From Teaching Conference we sent the following cable:

"Dedication to twentyfifth anniversary Guardianship, our rock of strength, source of guidance, raised Teaching Conference fresh heights vision, endeavour. Conference gratefully, joyously, humbly offers beloved Guardian loyal steadfast devotion. Pledges service as never before."

To which the Guardian replied on 12th January:

"Profoundly moved message. Greatly appreciate noble sentiments. Praying depths

grateful heart continued success magnificent collective efforts. Deepest love.—Shoghi."

On 25th January we cabled:

"Joyfully report Joan Giddings offers pioneer Cardiff."

and the Guardian replied on 29th January:

"Assure Joan Giddings deepest loving appreciation.—Shoghi."

On 4th February the following cable was sent:

"Assembly in session sends devoted greetings. Nine believers Nottingham, Birmingham. Two McKinleys offered pioneer, directed continue Torquay help consolidation. Teaching Conference producing heightened service. Increased public interest all goal towns, notably Leeds. More pioneers urgently needed. Beg help your continued prayers."

The reply of the Guardian dated 8th February, was:

"Delighted progress Nottingham, Birmingham, response McKinleys. Urge supreme effort as crucial year draws close ensure attainment objective. Loving ardent prayers.—Shoghi."

Consultation with Delegates.

In response to the following questions:

"Is it advisable for the delegates to consult with their community about the points on the proposed agenda before coming to Convention? If so, are they under an obligation to present to the Convention the views expressed by a majority of the community at such a consultation meeting? Would such meetings, if held, be best arranged for a 19-Day Feast, or should the N.S.A. suggest a special meeting?"

And to an enquiry as to when the number of delegates should be increased to twice nineteen, the Guardian replied by cable on 21st January:

"Consultation between delegates community advisable. Presentation community views to Convention advisable. Manner consultation left discretion N.S.A. Doubling number delegates, conditioned achievement nine Goal towns.—Shoghi."

YOUR SIX YEAR PLAN

Dear Friends,

The Six-Year Plan started in the final year of the War, and was necessarily launched by very few Bahá'ís.

In the year just ended, in response to the Guardian's urgent call, more have come forward to take their share of the work, and eleven pioneers have left their homes to lay the foundations of the Cause in new towns. After the Teaching Conference it was felt that all were beginning to realise that every single Bahá'í in Great Britain has a part to play.

Shoghi Effendi has said: "All must arise," and the time has come for each individual to ask himself or herself: "What contribution am I making, and what more can I do?"

Dear friends, the proof of our love for the Cause, is the extent of the sacrifices we are ready to make for it.

The N.S.A. has recently had to face serious setbacks, and each member has been considering what more he can do to help. Now the Plan is well launched, it is far easier for people to see what they personally can do.

Begin by doing any little Bahá'í job more thoroughly; and if you have none, why not volunteer at once to your Group?

Some friends, as you know, have given up their homes and good jobs to pioneer in new towns, confident that the promised blessing will follow their act of faith; but these have left serious gaps in their Centres. What can we do to fill them?

Again, friends, who do not feel able to open up new ground, may be asked to move to another community to help in the distribution of believers in Goal towns or groups, to bring the number up to that required to form an Assembly before the fixed date. Ask yourself if you can help in this way.

If we are prevented from doing anything else, are we trying to spare a little more for the Fund?

We have been given wonderful help by Pioneers and Visitors from U.S.A., Egypt and Persia, in this last year, it is up to us British Bahá'ís to see that we do our share in our own country.

Let us read and ponder the earnest farewell words of 'Abdul-Bahá when he left this island. (At that time there were few Bahá'ís in the British Isles outside London):

"O ye sons and daughters of the Kingdom. Your letter, which was written by heavenly inspiration has arrived. Its contents are full of interest, and its message expresses the feelings of radiant hearts. Verily the Bahá'ís of London are steadfast believers and faithful in service. They shall not slacken, nor shall their light grow

dim, for they are Bahá'ís; they are children of Heaven. They are of God, surely they will be the means of uplifting God's Word, and of fostering the oneness of the world of humanity. They will proclaim the equality of man, and spread the divine teachings. It is easy to accept the Kingdom of God; to endure therein with steadfastness is difficult, for temptations are great and strong. The English have always been resolute, not swerving in the face of difficulties. Having taken up a Cause, they are not ready for trivial reasons, either to leave it or to lose heart and enthusiasm. Verily in all their undertakings they show firmness. O my friends, though you dwell in the West praise be to God, you have heard the Divine Call from the East, and like Moses and the burning bush, you have become aglow with the fire lighted in the tree of Asia. You have found the Right Path, you have become as shining lamps, and have entered into the Kingdom of God. Now in thanksgiving for this bounty, you have arisen to offer prayers for blessings to fall on mankind: that by the light of the Star of the Kingdom of Abhá, the eyes of all may be opened and their hearts, like unto mirrors, reflect the splendour of the Sun of Truth. This is My hope—that the breath of the Holy Spirit may so inspire your hearts, that your tongues may begin to reveal the mysteries and to expound the truth and meaning of the Holy Books. May the Bahá'ís by the Divine Teachings, become physicians to heal the long-standing infirmities of the World, restore sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead, and to awaken those that sleep. Be assured that the blessings of the Holy Spirit will descend upon you, and that the Hosts of the Kingdom of Abhá will come to your succour.

Upon you be the glory of the Most Glorious."
Let us arise to fulfil the Master's Hopes!

How Can I Help?

The American Bahá'ís are faced with problems in their Seven Year Plan similar to the ones we face in our own Plan. Below is printed an extract from the American "Bahá'í News" for November, 1946, which has equal force when applied to the work being done for the Cause in this country. We have substituted the phrase "Six Year Plan" for the reference in the original to the American "Seven Year Plan."

How can the sum total of our Bahá'í effort be greatly increased—that is, effort expressed in deeds, not words?

The answer is, by employing the full capacity each of us already has—by turning into action the devotion and the knowledge which we actually possess. The intention is mysterious

and profound, but the method of realizing the intention is simple, clear and measurable from day to day. For example:

1. Do I attend the Nineteen Day Feasts regularly? If not, what prevents me?

2.— Am I aware of the definite plans adopted for attaining the objectives of the Six Year Plan? Have I felt that I have no responsibility under the Plan if I am not a member of one of the National Committees?

3. What are the facts about my contributions to the Bahá'í Fund? Have I ever thought through this matter of expressing my faith in terms of sacrifice? Am I donating twice as much as last year?

4. Am I teaching the Faith? If not a lecturer or public speaker, do I find ways to share the teachings with others? Have I taught *myself* to the degree that I begin to express the basic truths and attitudes in my daily life?

5. Do I contribute to the unity and enthusiasm of my community or group? Or am I carried along by the spiritual power generated by others?

6. Am I able and willing to abandon my present way of life and offer to go to some post of difficulty and trial?

7. Do I study the teachings regularly, with others or alone?

The self-examination is the important thing, and not the particular form of questions we ask ourselves. Action today is the sign of faith, and not acceptance of any passive formula which leaves ourselves out of the daily work. Let each of us set a higher standard of Bahá'í work. Living up to a higher standard is the way to grow in strength, integrity, capacity, usefulness, assurance and the joy that nothing can take away.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

"I Swear by My Life! Nothing save that which profiteth them can befall My loved ones. To this testifieth the Pen of God, the Most Powerful, the All Glorious, the Best Beloved."

"O my servants! Sorrow not if, in these days and on this earthly plane, things contrary to your wishes have been ordained and manifested by God, for days of blissful joy, of heavenly delight, are assuredly in store for you. Worlds, holy and spiritually glorious, will be unveiled to your eyes. You are destined by Him, in this world and hereafter, to partake of their benefits, to share in their joys, and to obtain a portion of their sustaining grace. To each and every one of them you will, no doubt, attain."

(THE ADVENT OF DIVINE JUSTICE).

STOP PRESS

The goals of the "crucial year" are in sight.

Doris Gould of Manchester, sails for Dublin on March 17th as a pioneer. This completes the "nucleus" asked for by the Guardian.

John Marshall of Birmingham, will retire and live in Edinburgh as a pioneer before April 21st, thus completing the "nucleus" in Scotland.

Mrs. Jones of Manchester will settle in Blackburn on March 19th.

Mr. and Mrs. Lutch of Manchester have offered to pioneer in Blackburn, and it is hoped to arrange their early settlement.

The projects already reported for Mme. Louisa Charlot and Mrs. Joan Giddings have been worked out, and both pioneers expect to be in their respective posts of Bournemouth and Cardiff by the time this reaches you.

Dear Friends; the "supreme effort" called for by the Guardian is now being made. Your prayers can support pioneers, administrators and teachers alike. Allah-u-Abha.

One declaration has been accepted from Leeds and another is on the way, making nine believers here.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE.

N.S.A. BYE-ELECTION.

Following the resignation of Mr. A. Norton through ill-health, a bye-election for the National Spiritual Assembly became necessary, and Mr. R. H. Backwell was elected in his place after a revote. The voting was:—

R. Backwell—5
L. Rosenfield—5
D. Millar, H. Sabri—2 each
A. Gregory, U. Newman, W. Wilkins—1 each

At the revote, the voting was:—

R. Backwell—10
L. Rosenfield—7

(1 paper was spoilt)

DEFEAT OR VICTORY?

January, ninth month of this crucial year, has seen the fruition of many teaching plans, which in turn are releasing the final impetus for the achievement of our goals by April 21st. Two more goal towns have reached their objective of nine believers. Four additional pioneer settlers have been assigned to their posts. The Teaching Conference has exceeded all past attendance records and created a new spirit of service and dedication. The three virgin territories are becoming the focus of collective effort. The Bahá'í Seminar in Leeds has set a target for all future public meetings. The teaching circuit completed by Miss Honor Kempton has further reinforced our vision of the pioneer call. And from most of the goal towns the reports of progress and public receptivity are truly heartening. As much of this good news as possible is shared in the paragraphs below.

At the same time, however, we must face squarely the distance yet separating us from success, for there is no half-way measure in victory. Battles are won or lost; the issue is decisive; and by the time this Journal appears, the weeks and months of this crucial year will be nearly run out. How, then, do we stand at this moment of writing, only two months from the final hour? The following summary shows:

OUR INCOMPLETED GOALS.

- I.—*Achievement of Assemblies in Five Goal Towns:*
 - Leeds ... 2 believers needed.
 - Blackburn ... 3 believers needed.
- II.—*Formation of Nuclei in Virgin Territories:*
 - Dublin ... 1 believer needed.
 - Edinburgh ... 1 believer needed.
- III.—*Re-establishment of Existing Assemblies:*
 - Bournemouth — 2 believers needed.

Specifically, therefore, our challenge is to provide nine believers in these towns within two months!

Not since the Guardian's cablegram of 7th June, 1946, could anyone be in doubt as to the character of this year's goals. "Present year crucial fortunes Plan," were the Guardian's words which warned us early and unmistakably that the Six Year Plan stands or falls by what we do before April 21st. Since then on many occasions the Guardian has emphasised this fact, setting clearly before us that the standard of victory is our own willingness to sacrifice for the Faith we "believe in and love so dearly." "Urge utmost sacrifice provide requirements goal towns," the Guardian cabled last August; and now on February 8th comes again this moving appeal: "Urge supreme effort as crucial year draws close ensure attainment objective. Loving ardent prayers."

It is important that we be entirely clear about this objective, which as indicated above is a three-fold one: (1) To achieve Spiritual Assemblies in the five goal towns; (2) to form the nuclei of future Assemblies in the virgin territories of Ireland and Scotland; and (3) to re-establish the Bournemouth Assembly and maintain Torquay. These are the tasks given us by the Guardian for this crucial year and it is our clear duty to complete them. The first task, however, is the one by which all future success will be determined, and by which the Plan literally stands or falls.

Dear friends, we have made a sustained effort and won notable successes in these past months. Our work has brought joy to the Guardian's heart, and opened our own eyes to the capacities and powers which as individuals and a national community we are able to tap. Is there one of us willing to forego the fruition of such a thrilling year? Is there one who does not realise the task we face? Or rather, are we not resolved, whatever the price required in the last few weeks and days, to win this victory?

"The English have always been resolute, not swerving in the face of difficulties, having taken up a cause, they are not ready, for trivial reasons, either to leave it or to lose heart and enthusiasm." ('Abdu'l-Bahá).

Teaching Conference.

The dynamic focus of this year's Teaching Conference, January 4th-5th, in Manchester, was the dedication to the 25th Anniversary of the Guardianship. It was a theme which was never out of mind among those present; it opened up new areas of thought and understanding, and its quickening effect can surely not be over-estimated. More than 75 believers from all parts of the British Isles participated in this historic occasion, with 65 present at the largest sessions on Saturday. In many ways the Conference excelled that of last year, the reports from goal towns and communities (all personally represented except St. Ives) proving of great value and stimulus, and the discussions opening the way to many new teaching measures.

Some of the practical steps already adopted as a result of the Conference include the immediate publication by the N.S.A. of Ruhíyyih Khánúm's priceless commentary on the Guardian, preparation of a study course on Bahá'í Administration, development of a plan for Teaching Laboratories in various regions shortly after Convention, appointment of a Contacts representative to carry on correspondence with enquirers living outside communities and goal towns, preparation of a bulletin on teaching methods, and also a bulletin incorporating questions and references on the functioning of

Bahá'í Groups. The needs of the goal towns and our individual responsibility for their maintenance and growth were also deeply impressed. Above all, the Conference was a thrilling demonstration that, during the past twelve months, the British Bahá'í community as a whole has arisen to shoulder the activities of the Six Year Plan with a clear sense of objective and a spirit equal to its far-flung tasks.

News of Progress.

FIVE GOAL TOWNS. Three of the five towns have achieved the required number to elect Spiritual Assemblies on April 21st. Northampton was first to reach this objective last October, in the Guardian's words an "historic accomplishment." In January both Birmingham and Nottingham crossed the goal line. The momentum of teaching effort in all three towns is such that there is great likelihood of further increase of numbers before the end of this Bahá'í year.

PIONEERS. During January four pioneer settlers were assigned to their posts and it is hoped that their moves will be completed before this Journal appears. A nucleus in Wales, third virgin territory for which the Guardian has appealed, will be claimed when Mrs. Joan Giddings of Bradford arrives in Cardiff to join with Mrs. Rose Jones, resident believer, in the formation of the first Bahá'í Group of Wales. Mrs. Giddings' move has been made possible by the co-operation of her husband, who has cabled that he will gladly go there on release from from service to establish his business. Hugh McKinley and Mrs. Violet McKinley, after many months of ardent desire to arise in pioneer service, have at last been freed through Hugh's accident. Their first assignment is to move to Torquay, where they will devote themselves to the speedy consolidation of this community. The decision of these three pioneers has been greatly confirmed by loving messages from Shoghi Effendi. Now comes a fourth offer from Mme. Louisa Charlot, actually the first *new* offer since the Guardian's call of last October, and plans are being consummated for her early settlement for an indefinite time in Bournemouth.

Since our report in Journal No. 58, listing the first pioneer settlements this year, the following have also been carried out:—

- (9) Richard Backwell—Nottingham—
October 9th.
- (10) Sheila Worrall—Bristol—November 28th.
- (11) Prudence George—Blackburn—
November 30th.
- (12) Isobel Locke—Edinburgh—
December 27th.

VIRGIN TERRITORIES. In DUBLIN, Una Townshend has been striving valiantly to introduce the Faith to a people conservative in religious views who, moreover, have not felt the full impact of the war. During December she was joined for two weeks by Ursula Newman

and on the 12th the first fireside was held. This project released new impetus, attracting several valuable contacts and opening the way to regular teaching work. From now on Una feels able to utilise visiting teachers, the second of whom will be Philip Hainsworth for four days in March, when the Feast of 'Ulá will be celebrated and two fireside meetings held. Dublin's need for help is vividly put by Miss Newman: "I am just beginning to realise the magnitude of Una's task and feel that it is *essential* that another Bahá'í should come and live in Dublin just as soon as possible . . . I doubt if anyone . . . can realise the tremendous debt which we owe to Archdeacon Townshend. It is only by mentioning his name that one *can* introduce the Faith."

The presence of Dr. Said in EDINBURGH has been a providential assistance to the inauguration of teaching in this goal town. Through his efforts many fine persons have been attracted to the Faith, and firesides were held in September and December, with Philip Hainsworth and David Hofman as speakers. With the pioneer settlement of Miss Isobel Locke of California, the future is doubly ensured, and we are confident that progress in this city blessed by the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá will be rapid and sound. Early in January a Bahá'í Group was formed, the first in Scotland, and the Guardian has cabled his "loving fervent prayers" for these "historic labours." In April a ten-day visit by Richard Backwell should lend an important stimulus. To maintain the nucleus established, however, a second pioneer is urgently required as Dr. Said's university work is expected to end in March when he will have to leave Edinburgh.

From these reports of the virgin territories, including the pioneer plan for CARDIFF, it will be seen that substantial progress has been made in the three goal towns selected by the National Assembly. It behoves us now to seize these new opportunities and fulfil the Guardian's "longing" for the formation of stable nuclei in each.

LEEDS SEMINAR. A high point in public teaching under the Plan was achieved during the Bahá'í Week in Leeds, January 8th to 14th, when the Group was reinforced by visiting teachers and believers, including Honor Kempton, Hasan Balyuzi, Richard Backwell, Philip Hainsworth, Sam Husdan, Prudence George and Isobel Locke; and by the support of many believers in the area. The campaign opened with a Reception at the Great Northern Hotel, attended by 45, a Brains Trust being held there the following Sunday with the exciting attendance of 110, including 88 non-Bahá'ís. Peter Wilkinson, as Group Chairman, and Mr. Neville Shute, local builder and Chairman of the Leeds Rotary Club, participated in the Trust. In addition there were four study nights and a fireside at the Wilkinson home, with attendance

from 14 to 23 and intense interest was shown by several inquirers, one of whom has since applied for Bahá'í membership.

HONOR KEMPTON CIRCUIT. Between December 12th and January 22nd, our community was privileged to have the help of Miss Honor Kempton, who stopped in England on her way to Luxembourg by the wish of the Guardian. Miss Kempton participated in public meetings, firesides, and Feasts in London, Bristol, Blackburn, Bradford, Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham, Northampton and St. Ives, as well as in the Teaching Conference, bringing stimulation and encouragement to all who met her. Her contribution to the Leeds Seminar was notable, for in addition to three talks she introduced the Faith to eight members of her family and three others, all of whom attended some of the meetings. We feel sure the friends will treasure these impressions of her English visit which Miss Kempton has shared with us:

"It has been a wonderful experience meeting the British Bahá'ís and finding out for myself the fine spirit which animates them and is causing them to sacrifice themselves for the Cause of God . . . There is so much to do in England. My feeling is that the British people are wide open for the Bahá'í teachings. They admit so openly the failure of the churches to give them any spiritual sustenance . . . I do feel that Britain is becoming very active. I know that wherever Bahá'ís rise up to pioneer that in that particular spot there is a tremendous 'stirring.' In most of the places that I have visited Bahá'ís I find evidence of that new life in the whole community. I do wish that all the Bahá'ís everywhere in the world could realise this great confirmation; once they *feel* it, they will never stop pioneering. . . These are hard pioneering days, but as you look back in years to come how precious they will appear in building a firm foundation for our blessed Cause in England."

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE.

FROM HONOR KEMPTON.

While she was in this country Honor Kempton carried out a teaching circuit which involved speaking in a fresh town almost every day. Her tour was of great assistance to the work being done for the Plan and was much appreciated by all the communities she visited. We think that they and the rest of the community will be interested in these extracts from a letter she wrote after the end of her circuit:

"Have just returned from St. Ives and the Teaching Circuit is now over. It has been a wonderful experience meeting the British Bahá'ís and finding out for myself the fine spirit which animates them and is causing them to sacrifice themselves for the Cause of God . . . I do know that whenever a pioneer rises up and goes to a new area there is a stirring in that locality and things happen. That is evident in St. Ives.

This is a direct confirmation. If the body of the Bahá'ís knew this surely they would try more desperately to pioneer. If they would only start out—knowing that the forces on high are also moving with them—then they experience such a joy that nothing can dampen—not the hardest tasks imaginable can take that joy from them."

Towards the end of her tour Honor Kempton, in her own words, "reached a state of complete exhaustion and was no use to anyone." She was forced to rest for a few days and thus missed going to Birmingham and Torquay. However we are glad to say that she was able to visit St. Ives before leaving to take up her post as pioneer in Luxemburg. We feel that her stay here has been a great service to the Cause.

BAHÁ'Í YOUTH BULLETIN.

The Guardian, in congratulating the National Youth Committee on "the excellent first issue" of the Bahá'í Youth Bulletin, writes that: "This is an important new undertaking, and must be established as a firm innovation on the part of the British Bahá'í Community."

The attention of all the friends throughout the country is particularly drawn to these words, and it is to be hoped that they will feel moved to ensure that their demand for and use of the Bulletin is not only maintained but steadily rises, so that it may "gradually become the means of interesting and attracting many new souls to the Faith," to quote again from the Guardian's letter.

The Bahá'í Youth Bulletin is published quarterly, beginning from September 21st, 1946. Its policy is eightfold: to encourage and assist youth to become efficient pioneers and teachers; to emphasise articles dealing with the economic, social and moral aspects of society; to be a medium of self-expression for its readers; to give news of youth successes in other lands; to reproduce excerpts, from the writings of the Faith so as to deepen knowledge of it; to demonstrate the responsibility and privilege of youth, the hope of the Cause; to become the means of interesting and attracting new souls; to be progressive and stimulating with the highest standard consistent with the life and spirit of youth.

Such purposes are of a kind to interest not only the younger members of the community. Much hard work goes into the compilation of the parts of the Bulletin, making a collection that may well save some of their time for those "getting up" a particular subject. Indeed, everyone will find it a mine of lasting value wherein to quarry, and it should have a place in the Bahá'í library of every individual, group and community. The deeper the knowledge of the Faith, the more convincing will be the quality of teaching that all are called upon to display during these formative and critical years.

BAHÁ'Í MARRIAGE.

The National Spiritual Assembly is delighted to reprint from the American Bahá'í News for February, 1947, the following material concerning Bahá'í marriage, which deepens our understanding and prevents formal crystallisation of unauthorised views.

The question of how to conduct a Bahá'í marriage, and what Tablets are to be read, was referred by the American N.S.A. to Shoghi Effendi last summer, and his reply came under date of October 5th, 1946:

"Bahá'í marriages should at present not be pressed into any kind of a uniform mould. What is absolutely essential is what Bahá'u'lláh stipulates in the Aqdas; the friends can add to this selected writings if they please—but the so-called 'Marriage Tablet' (revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá) is not a necessary part of every Bahá'í marriage. In "The Bahá'í World" is a prayer

for marriage incorporated in either the Arabic or Persian text; he suggests Marzieh Gail translate this, and it can be made available to the friends, so that they can use it if they wish to."

What Bahá'u'lláh stipulates in the Aqdas is to be found on page 372 of "Bahá'í World Faith" in the form of a quotation made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The bridegroom must, before the bridesman and a few others, say 'Verily, we are content with the Will of God' and the bride must rejoin, 'Verily, we are satisfied with the Desire of God'."

The prayer for marriage referred to by the Guardian has been translated by Mrs. Marzieh Gail from the Marriage Certificate used by the Assemblies in Persia. The signature "'Ayn-'Ayn" is a signature used by the Master for a certain period. Her translation follows.

"HE IS THE BESTOWER, THE BOUNTEOUS!"

"Praise be to God, the Ancient, the Ever-Abiding, the Changeless, the Eternal! He Who hath testified in His Own Being that verily He is the One, the Single, the Untrammelled, the Exalted. We bear witness that verily there is no God but Him; acknowledging His oneness, confessing His singleness. He hath ever dwelt in approachable heights, in the summits of His loftiness, sanctified from the mention of aught save Himself, free from the description of aught but Him.

"And when He desired to manifest grace and beneficence to men, and to set the world in order, He revealed observances and created laws; among them He established the law of marriage, made it as a fortress for well-being and salvation, and enjoined it upon us in that which was sent down out of the heaven of sanctity in His Most Holy Book. He saith, great is His glory: 'Marry, O people, that from you may appear he who will remember Me amongst My servants; this is one of My commandments unto you; obey it as an assistance to yourselves.'

"And we greet and salute those of Bayán who became the people of Bahá, those who expended their efforts for the upraising of this luminous Faith, and whom the blame of the blamer did not withhold from God.

Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds!

"He is God! O peerless Lord! In Thine almighty wisdom Thou hast enjoined marriage upon the peoples, that the generations of men may succeed one another in this contingent world, and that ever, so long as the world shall last, they may busy themselves at the Threshold of Thy oneness with servitude and worship, with salutation, adoration and praise. 'I have not created spirits and men, but that they should worship Me.'¹ Wherefore, wed Thou in the heaven of Thy mercy these two birds of the nest of Thy love, and make them the means of attracting perpetual grace; that from the union of these two seas of love a wave of tenderness may surge and cast the pearls of pure and goodly issue on the shore of life. 'He hath let loose the two seas, that they meet each other: Between them is a barrier which they overpass not. Which then of the bounties of your Lord will ye deny? From each He bringeth up greater and lesser pearls.'²

O Thou kind Lord! Make Thou this marriage to bring forth coral and pearls. Thou art verily the All-Powerful, the Most Great, the Ever-Forgiving."

(Signed) AYN-AYN.

1 Qur'án 51: 56.

2 Qur'án 55: 9-22.

Correspondence with the Guardian.

The National Assembly wishes to make it clear that it approves of local assemblies, groups and isolated believers communicating with the Guardian about their intentions, sending greetings, or asking his prayers for specific problems, but matters whose announcement requires consultation, or reports of goals reached in the Plan should be sent by the National Assembly.

National Lending Library.

Mr. and Mrs. Stone of Bradford have donated to the National Lending Library copies in Braille of "The Hidden Words," "The Bahá'í Faith" (American pamphlet), and a book of "Bahá'í Prayers." These are a most valuable addition to our newly founded Braille library. Anyone wishing to borrow them should apply to the National Secretary.

BAHÁ'Í CONVENTION

On May 29th last the Guardian wrote "What is needed is a planned and consistent form of teaching and administrative support of the activities your assembly is inaugurating." At the forthcoming Convention we shall be able to assess the progress that has been made in carrying out this instruction of the Guardian.

Convention is the time of the election of the National Spiritual Assembly, but also of consultation between the incoming and outgoing Assemblies and the elected delegates of the local communities. The importance attaching to it is clearly indicated by the Guardian's statement that it is the sacred responsibility of each delegate "to attend if possible in person the sessions of the Convention, to take an active part in all its proceedings, and to acquaint his fellow workers on his return with the accomplishments, the decisions and the aspirations of the assembled delegates."

TWOFOLD PURPOSE.

A number of years ago, when Bahá'í Administration was only beginning to be developed, the Guardian wrote the American believers: "And now regarding the forthcoming Convention, I feel that the dominating purpose inspiring the assembled friends, delegates and visitors alike, should be a twofold one. The first is a challenge to the individual, the second a collective responsibility. The one seeks to reinforce the motive power of our spiritual activities, the second aims at raising the standard of administrative efficiency so vitally needed at this advanced stage of our work."

The quotations from the Guardian's writings may be found in Section III. of the old edition of "Bahá'í Procedure," or in Section IV. of the current edition.

A first step towards administrative efficiency is to have a Convention which is properly organised in accordance with the guidance given us by the Guardian. A summary of the proper manner of organising Convention was published by the American National Spiritual Assembly in April, 1935, about which the Guardian wrote: "Your statement on the Convention is admirable. The Guardian fully endorses it and wishes you to send as promptly as you can a copy of it to the Persian N.S.A. for their instruction and guidance." This statement is reproduced verbatim below and the National Assembly recommends all members of the community, especially those elected delegates, to study it carefully.

SUGGESTIONS FROM NON-DELEGATES.

Convention is intended primarily for the delegates and in order to assist these to fulfil their responsibility to the community, the Assembly is sending each one a special statement about Convention. But non-delegates have also

a part to play. Their attendance is both a powerful benefit to themselves and their communities, and in addition reinforces the spiritual vigour of the Convention itself. The Guardian has clarified their role in the following passage: "Non-delegates, however, according to the Guardian's considered opinion, should not be given the right to intervene directly during the sessions of the Convention. Only through an accredited delegate they should be given indirectly the chance to voice their sentiments and to participate in the deliberations of the Convention. Much confusion and complications must inevitably result in the days to come, if such restrictions be not imposed on a gathering which is primarily intended for the accredited delegates of the Bahá'í Communities. Bearing this restriction in mind, it is the duty of the N.S.A. to devise ways and means which would enable them to obtain valuable suggestions, not only from the total body of the elected delegates, but from as large a body of their fellow-workers as is humanly possible."

A NEW DEPARTURE.

This year, with the Guardian's approval, Consultation Meetings will be held between the delegates and the Community, and the delegates will present to the Convention, the considered views of these Consultation Meetings. This gives a greater chance to the members of the Communities to acquaint themselves with the problems that will come before the Convention, and express their views regarding them. It is another important step in the path of Consultation. However this new departure will not mean that the delegates can be instructed by the Community how to act and vote at Convention. Delegates retain their full freedom. Such notions as instructing the delegates are totally alien to the spirit as well as the provisions of an administrative order. What this new departure means is more frank and free Consultation.

PROPOSED AGENDA.

In order to carry out more fully the various instructions of the Guardian, the National Assembly intends to submit to the delegates at this year's Convention a proposed agenda which the delegates will be free to accept or alter as they think fit. Anyone in the community, whether elected a delegate or not, is free to suggest to the N.S.A. or to a delegate subjects and proposals he would like discussed at Convention. From these suggestions and from their own experience of the problems facing the community, the N.S.A. will draw up the proposed agenda. Should a suggestion be omitted, any delegate may move at the Convention that it

be included and it is for the Convention to decide whether or not to discuss it. Suggestions should reach the National Secretary not later than April 12th, so that the agenda may be compiled and circulated to the delegates a week before Convention.

A NEW PHASE.

Dear friends! The Guardian's letter of May 29th promised us "England now stands . . . on the brink of a new phase of its Bahá'í life." Let us all, delegates, non-delegates and National Assembly members, do our utmost to speed the development of this new phase by making the forthcoming Convention a means of reinforcing "the motive power of our spiritual activities" and "raising the standard of administrative efficiency" without which the new phase can surely never be inaugurated.

Statement by the American N.S.A.

1. The Annual Bahá'í Convention has two unique functions to fulfill, discussion of current Bahá'í matters and the election of the National Spiritual Assembly. The discussion should be free and untrammelled, the election carried on in that spirit of prayer and meditation in which alone every delegate can render obedience to the Guardian's expressed wish. After the Convention is convened by the Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly, and after the roll call is read by the Secretary of the Assembly, the Convention proceeds to the election of its chairman and secretary by secret ballot and without advance nomination, according to the standard set for all Bahá'í elections.

2. Non-delegates may not participate in Convention discussion. All members of the National Spiritual Assembly may participate in the discussion, but only those members who have been elected delegates may vote on any matter brought up for vote during the proceedings.

3. The outgoing National Spiritual Assembly is responsible for rendering reports of its own activities and of those carried on by the committees during the past year. The annual election is to be held at a point midway during the Convention sessions, so that the incoming Assembly may consult with the delegates.

The Convention is free to discuss any Bahá'í matter, in addition to those treated in the annual reports. The Convention is responsible for making its own rules of procedure controlling discussions; for example, concerning any limitation the delegates may find it necessary to impose upon the time allotted to or claimed by any one delegate. The National Assembly will maintain the rights of the delegates to confer freely and fully, free from any restricted pressure, in the exercise of their function.

5. The Convention as an organic body is limited to the actual Convention period. It has no function to discharge after the close of the sessions except that of electing a member or

members to fill any vacancy that might arise in the membership of the National Spiritual Assembly during the year.

6. The Convention while in session has no independent legislative, executive or judicial function. Aside from its action in electing the National Spiritual Assembly, its discussions do not represent actions but recommendations which shall, according to the Guardian's instructions, be given conscientious consideration by the National Assembly.

7. The National Spiritual Assembly is the supreme Bahá'í administrative body within the American Bahá'í community, and its jurisdiction continues without interruption, during the Convention period as during the remainder of the year, and independently of the individuals composing its membership. Any matter requiring action of legislative, executive or judicial nature, whether arising during the Convention period or at any other time, is to be referred to the National Spiritual Assembly. The National Assembly is responsible for upholding the administrative principles applying to the holding of the Annual Convention as it is for upholding all other administrative principles. If, therefore, a Convention departs from the principles laid down for Conventions by the Guardian, and exceeds the limitation of function imposed upon it, in that case and in that case alone, the National Spiritual Assembly can and must intervene. It is the National Spiritual Assembly and not the Convention, which is authorised to decide when and why such intervention is required.

The National Spiritual Assembly feels that it owes a real duty to the delegates, and to the entire body of believers, in presenting any and all facts that may be required in order to clarify matters discussed at the Convention. There can be no true Bahá'í consultation at this important meeting if any incomplete or erroneous view should prevail.

9.—The National Assembly in adopting and issuing this statement, does so in the sincere effort to assure the constitutional freedom of the Convention to fulfill its high mission. The path of true freedom lies in knowing and obeying the general principles given to all Bahá'ís for the proper conduct of their collective affairs. While the entire world plunges forward to destruction, it is the responsibility of the National Spiritual Assembly to uphold that Order on which peace and security solely depends.

NEW PUBLICATION.

Some Christian Subjects. This is a reprint of the Second Section of "Some Answered Questions" with an introduction by George Townshend. It should be a most useful addition to the literature available both for teaching purposes and for study. Paper covers, 2/6.

THE GUARDIAN.

In this year following the 25th anniversary of the Guardianship, we feel that the friends may find this article by MARION HOFMAN both inspiring and instructive.

On January 6th, 1947, the World Community of the Most Great Name attained a landmark in its progress, a moment of destiny imprinted upon all hearts, an hour of consciousness which must leave us forever changed. The 25th Anniversary of the Guardianship has inaugurated a new chapter in the history of the Faith, for it has disclosed to our eyes as never before the brilliance and power of that "Light that after my passing shineth from the Dayspring of Divine Guidance." To Ruhíyyih Khánum, who has penned a precious document about our Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, we are profoundly indebted. But to the event itself, by us in Britain first assimilated throughout two days of Teaching Conference, we must ascribe the chief effect.

As we meditate upon this stirring event, and seek to probe the new meanings which it generates, we are struck by two facts. The enlightenment we have felt was always closely at hand, implicit—no rather, vividly explicit in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, manifest from year to year in the writings of Shoghi Effendi. And secondly, this evidence has been within our grasp, unseized by most, for a full quarter of a century—a period almost as long as the entire ministry of the Master Himself!

To what shall we ascribe this blindness which veiled us for so long from the Guardian? Were these indeed the "veils of light"? For the words were plain to all eyes. Let us recall only a few phrases of the Master's Will:

"It is incumbent . . . to turn unto Shoghi Effendi . . . as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch. . . Whoso obeyeth him not . . . hath not obeyed God . . . The mighty stronghold shall remain impregnable and safe through obedience to him who is the guardian of the Cause of God . . . It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi . . . that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature. . . For behold! he is the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees . . . the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the twin surging seas . . . It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice, . . . the Hands of the Cause of God to show their obedience, submissiveness and subordination unto the guardian of the Cause of God, to turn unto him and be lowly before him. . . Well is it with him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind . . . For it is the light of Divine Guidance that causeth all the universe to be illumined."

From the earliest days of Shoghi Effendi's appointment there have been a few who recognised his station. Of these the Greatest Holy Leaf was pre-eminent, a fact which may easily be verified in two letters from her pen, one on the very morrow of the Master's passing, a second written in 1924 at the time of the Guardian's third retirement, enforced upon "his tender heart" by the opposition of foes and the much more affecting disunity of the friends. To the Greatest Holy Leaf he gave "headship" of the Cause in those days, and perhaps because alone of mortals she knew him truly and clearly, and loved and cherished him as the Master had begged us to do—perhaps for this reason more than any other she inspired those imperishable words of his last tribute. "Dearly-beloved Greatest Holy Leaf! . . . The memory of the ineffable beauty of thy smile shall ever continue to cheer and hearten me in the thorny path I am destined to pursue. The remembrance of the touch of thine hand shall spur me on to follow steadfastly in thy way. The sweet magic of thy voice shall remind me, when the hour of adversity is at its darkest, to hold fast to the rope thou didst seize so firmly all the days of thy life."

To read the whole of this tribute, and to turn from it to other memorable passages in the Guardian's early letters, as published in "Bahá'í Administration," is to be overwhelmed with a new sense of the Guardian—a passionate awareness of the depth and wonder of his nature, the sharpness and poignancy of his feelings, the weight of his inconceivable burden, his sufferings, his sacrifice, the fullness and magnitude of his dedication. And suddenly there breaks in upon one the recollection of a phrase of the Master written in the Tablet to Canada: "*One pearl is better than a thousand wildernesses of sand* . . ."

It is in such moments of awareness that we in Britain must feel a fresh gratitude for the blessing which has come to our land through the presence of Shoghi Effendi in his student days. How vivid the memory of his visits in some of our communities! Has he not himself spoken of the "dearly beloved English believers"? Did he not show in the war years a concern and solicitude for this community which must surely betoken a precious bond?

Yet let us not for one moment misconceive our privilege. The bond with Shoghi Effendi is the bond with the Guardian. It is our relation to the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Cause. As the strength of his own station consists in the power and confirmation bestowed by Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, so does our well-being and benefit derive from the same Divine Source. It is our privilege, through tender associations in the past, but most particularly through our clear perception of opportunity and duty in the present, to flourish through that bond and to realise the blessings of that relationship.

For the working of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh through the person of the Guardian is a miracle of guidance in these shepherdless and chaotic days. Around us humanity struggles from blow to blow. Within the Cause, and *only* within the Cause, are sure leadership, undeviating judgment, far-reaching vision. Through the Guardian pulsates this marvel and bounty: the unique and continuous manifestations of Divine Guidance from its appointed Dayspring. The role of the Guardian is to lead. The role of the friends is to turn with humility and devotion, and to respond and follow with gladness and ever-increasing power.

We stand now at a cross-roads in our personal and community life. By our own free act we chose to be the first Bahá'í community to embark on a collective enterprise in the second century. The confirmation of the Guardian rests on that choice. We have richly profited by his guidance. We are forewarned in this crucial year by his knowledge that we cannot and dare not fail, that the task we have so freely chosen is pivotal to the whole future of the Faith in Britain, to the very future of the nation itself.

Indeed, we begin to see an even larger perspective. For is not our Six Year Plan but one flank in a wider campaign, a mighty endeavour for the "spiritual regeneration" of Europe? It is a struggle already engaging the believers of both hemispheres. For us in Britain, advancing on a major sector under the soundly-based leadership of one of the two National Spiritual Assemblies of Europe, it is a thrilling and glorious hour.

As our forces consolidate and move forward in unison, do we not all secretly rejoice? Do we not welcome with eagerness the favour of God? Do we not cherish in our hearts as never before "*the power of the Covenant*," which like "*the heat of the sun . . . quickeneth and promoteth the development of all created things on earth*"?

CREDENTIALS AND TRANSFERS.

The National Assembly has adopted the following resolutions regarding credentials and transfers.

"Resolved to adopt the following procedure for transfer of believers within the British community and travelling abroad:—

(1) FROM A COMMUNITY TO A COMMUNITY. When a believer moves from a town which has a Spiritual Assembly to another town which also has an Assembly, the local Assembly of the town he is leaving should give him a letter addressed to the Spiritual Assembly of the town where he is establishing his residence, certifying that he has been a voting member of that community. This letter enables the Spiritual Assembly in the town of his new residence to enrol him as a voting member without questioning his Bahá'í

status. Both the Assemblies concerned in such transfers should report them to the National Assembly.

(2) FROM A COMMUNITY TO THE ISOLATED LIST. When a believer moves from a town which has a Spiritual Assembly to a town which has no Assembly, his Assembly should report this fact to the National Assembly, and give the believer's new permanent address. The N.S.A. then enrolls him on the list of isolated believers.

(3) FROM THE ISOLATED LIST TO A COMMUNITY. Any believer moving into a town which has a Spiritual Assembly, should apply to the National Assembly for a letter certifying that he has been enrolled as an isolated believer, and this letter when presented to the local Assembly will enable the Assembly to enrol the believer as a voting member of the community without questioning his Bahá'í status. The local Assembly is to report this transfer to the National Assembly.

(4) ALL BRITISH BAHÁ'ÍS WHO TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE BRITISH ISLES should have credentials from the N.S.A."

"Resolved that ANY VISITING BAHÁ'Í FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY should present credentials from a properly accredited Bahá'í Assembly to the British National Assembly. This National Assembly will then issue him temporary credentials for use in the British Isles. Any local assembly or individual believer should ask for these credentials before accepting him as a Bahá'í. It is perfectly proper however for a local assembly or individual believer to accept a visiting Bahá'í from outside the country if he presents proper credentials from his home country, if it has not been possible to contact the N.S.A. first, but the matter should immediately be reported to the N.S.A."

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY.

"BLESSED IS THE SPOT, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made, and His praise glorified."

"I SWEAR BY GOD! So great are the things ordained for the steadfast that were they, so much as the eye of a needle, to be disclosed, all who are in heaven and on earth would be dumbfounded, except such as God, the Lord of all Worlds, hath willed to exempt."

(THE ADVENT OF DIVINE JUSTICE).

An Acknowledgement.

Mr and Mrs. Norton have asked us to express their grateful thanks for the many loving letters they have received from the friends throughout the country, enquiring about Mr. Norton's health. These have been a source of great strength to them both.

NATIONAL TREASURER.

Following Arthur Norton's resignation, Dorothy Ferraby has been elected National Treasurer. Donations and correspondence should be sent to her at 35, Thornton Avenue, London, S.W.2.

Recording Secretary.

The National Assembly has decided to take advantage of an offer from Betty Reed to devote her week ends to the service of the Cause by appointing her recording secretary to the National Assembly, in order to take the minutes of the meetings of the Assembly.

Bahá'í News.

Very few people have responded to the request in the last two numbers of this Journal that those wanting to receive Bahá'í News should send their name to the National Secretary. It has therefore been decided to divide the available copies between assemblies and groups, leaving it to them to circulate the copies among their community. Isolated believers will also be placed on a circulation list when more copies can be obtained from America. Those who have hitherto had a copy for themselves will not in future receive this, as there are not enough available.

THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. In a letter last May, the Guardian called on them to inaugurate a plan and fix immediate objectives, similar to those embarked upon by the U.S.A., India and by the British Isles. "The hour is very pressing. There is no time to lose. The masses . . . hunger for the Message of the New Day, and will, if properly approached and appealed to, embrace the great verities it enshrines." They start with 4 L.S.A.'s and 5 Groups.

A three month teaching campaign in Brisbane was undertaken by Miss Gretta Lamprill. Industrial troubles were inconvenient, but, in spite of them, six associations were personally approached, 35 old contacts were re-contacted and 45 new ones made, including 22 persons of prominence in the city, a public meeting was held and a study group started.

DENMARK has been recently settled by Mr. and Mrs. Nielson, pioneers from California.

EUROPEAN TEACHING COMMITTEE. 11 Pioneers are in position or on the way. The first departure to take up a post was on September 7th.

GERMANY. 68 Esslingen friends gathered for the occasion of Bahá'u'lláh's birthday. A youth rally held at Neckargemund on Boxing Day attracted some 70 youths from North and West Germany. Hamburg resumed its weekly meetings and Nineteen Day Feasts in July. Rostock and Warnemunde were to reconstitute their Bahá'í community on January 1st. An isolated believer in a prison camp in France apologised for messy writing due to his straw pen. Neither literature nor food parcels have got through to him.

HOLLAND has two pioneers. Miss Rita von Sombeek and Mrs. Jetty Straub, who are re-translating the "New Era" into Dutch. They meet Arnold van Ogtrop at Nineteen Day Feasts.

INDIA AND BURMA are confident that a further 8 centres will be enabled to reach assembly status at Ridwan, making 12 since the start of their Plan in January, 1945. In Burma in October, five members, including president and vice-

president, of one L.S.A., went to a selected locality, Kyigon, with the decision to settle there for six months and turn that centre into an assembly. Individual believers in all parts of the country have been requested to write to All India Radio at Delhi and in their own province to ask that Bahá'í material be broadcast. It has been resolved to start a Teacher Training Class with ten students for six months. A mailing list of 5,000 addresses is being maintained to include the most eminent men in the country, and over 7,000 pamphlets and books were distributed or sold during the three months ending in July. Articles have appeared on 61 different occasions in the Journals of the country during the same period.

IRAN. A vast teaching campaign, to last 45 Bahá'í months and embrace the neighbouring countries of Iraq, Afghanistan Baluchistan and India, is to be launched.

LUXEMBURG. Miss Honor Kempton left England on February 1st to take up her pioneering post there.

NORWAY. Mrs. S. Corbit has settled in Oslo as pioneer and formed a group with Miss Johanna Schubarth, an old believer there. They have a weekly study group attended by several young people.

PANAMA. The Faith is actively promulgated by radio, press and public meeting in the Canal Zone. At a meeting held on December 15th in Government Building, Colon, there were six speakers, three each in Spanish and English, and the Governor of the Province attended.

SPAIN. Miss Virginia Orbison flew from Rio to Lisbon on December 23rd, and is now at her pioneering post in Madrid.

SWITZERLAND. A long article covering half a page, entitled "L'Appel Mondial de Bahá'u'lláh," has been published in a Geneva paper, and a notice inserted announcing the opening of the European office of the European Teaching Committee. In Geneva also, Mrs. Graeffe has started a weekly study class in French for young people.