

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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CONVENTION

As previously announced, Convention will be held in London on Saturday and Sunday, April 25th and 26th. A separate circular has already been sent out regarding accommodation, times of meetings, etc.

Although there is a special obligation on delegates to attend, Convention is open to all the believers, who are allowed, with the consent of the chairman, to express their views, make suggestions, etc., and the N.S.A. hopes that all who possibly can will attend.

The programme is as follows:—

Saturday, April 25th:

9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
Lunch.
2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.
Tea.
5 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Supper at the Bahá'í Centre.

Sunday, April 26th:

9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
(Election of N.S.A. at 11 a.m.)
Lunch.
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
4.30 p.m., Unity Feast.

The present N.S.A. will hold its last meeting on Friday evening, April 24th.

New Believers.

We extend a sincere welcome to: Mrs. E. J. Newell, Bournemouth; Miss L. Engler, London; and Mrs. D. G. Holman, Mrs. S. D. Priest-Shanks and Mr. Hugh McKinley (junior member), of Torquay.

SUMMER SCHOOL

It has unfortunately proved impossible to find a place reasonably accessible to everybody—everything in the Midlands or the West of England is full up. The N.S.A. has therefore come to the conclusion that the only possible course is to split the summer school in two parts, and to hold one in the North and one in the South. This does not mean that either summer school will be restricted to friends living in that part of England. On the contrary, every believer will be welcome, and the more we can make each gathering representative of the whole British Bahá'í community, the better. It will, however, obviously be easier for some to attend one rather than the other. We hope all who can will attend both.

The first summer school will be that for the South, which will be held in Whitsun week and will be organised by the Torquay Assembly. The school in the North will be in August Bank Holiday week, and will be arranged by the Manchester Assembly.

Further details will be issued as soon as they are available.

In Memoriam

Grant, O my Lord, that they who have ascended unto Thee may repair unto Him Who is the most exalted Companion, and abide beneath the shadow of the Tabernacle of Thy majesty and the Sanctuary of Thy glory.—Bahá'u'lláh.

BRIDGET HILL, of Amesbury, was killed in an aeroplane crash on Sunday, March 15th, 1942.

We send our very deep sympathy to her parents, General and Mrs. Hill, in their sad loss.

OBEDIENCE TO THE GOVERNMENT

For the guidance and reminder of the believers we repeat below the statement originally issued by the National Spiritual Assembly in June, 1940:—

As the elected representatives of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, and as Trustees for the Bahá'í Faith in the British Isles, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly wish the following facts to be made known to all whom it may concern.

The Bahá'í Faith is not a pacifist movement and has no political or social affiliations. It is a purely religious movement, engaged upon the spreading of its message that divine guidance has once again been given to mankind through the Revelation of its Founder, Bahá'u'lláh, and the interpretation of its Exemplar, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Bahá'ís regard the words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Word of God and therefore it is their religious duty to live in obedience to Their commands. Among these commands none is more emphatic than that which requires loyalty and obedience to government. "In every country or government where any of this community reside, they must behave toward that government with faithfulness, trustfulness and truthfulness." Bahá'ís in all countries obey this command, and although Bahá'u'lláh upholds constitutional monarchy as the ideal pattern. "At present that form of government followed by the British nation seems good; for that nation is illuminated both with the light of kingdom and consultation."

The National Spiritual Assembly has constantly called the attention of the Bahá'ís in the British Isles to this command. In "Bahá'í Journal" No. 23 (a circular letter sent periodically to all Bahá'ís by the National Spiritual Assembly) the following statement appears under the heading "Loyalty To The Country":—"The friends are again reminded of the emphatic command of Bahá'u'lláh to behave with the utmost truthfulness and loyalty to the government of the land." In "Bahá'í Journal" No. 22 the following minute of the N.S.A. was printed:—"It was resolved that every declared Bahá'í under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly should be required to be very strict in their obedience to the principle of the Faith which makes it a moral obligation upon its adherents to be loyal to the government of the country. They should refrain from all action which might hamper the work of the government or be in the least prejudicial to the interests of the state."

At the same time it must be stated, that Bahá'ís, while obeying the government in administrative matters, cannot be compelled to

deny their Faith or to entertain hatred for other peoples. The record of twenty thousand martyrs, and of suppression in non-democratic countries, testifies to this.

"THE GREATEST NAME"

The N.S.A. thinks it desirable to give a short explanation of the two Arabic phrases which we are accustomed to use.

Alláh-u-Abhá: This means "God is the Most Glorious," and is used as a greeting amongst the believers.

Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá: Means "O Glory, The Most Glorious." This is an invocation and should be used in prayers, etc., where the use of the Greatest Name is indicated.

PUBLISHING TRUST

New Scriptures.

Owing to the shortage of paper, we have only been able to obtain half the number ordered. This means that the average cost per copy is correspondingly greater and is considerably above the present price of 5s. We regret, therefore, that after June 1st the price must be raised to 7s. 6d.

We hope eventually to get further supplies of this book, but we must first build up a reserve of paper, which will take some time.

The N.S.A.'s appeal for help in printing the Scriptures has produced so far a sum of £89 4s. 6d.

"The Divine Art of Living."

This book, which is out of print, has recently appeared in instalments in the American periodical "World Order." One of the London believers is binding together the various instalments for use in the London Centre, but four sections are missing, i.e., those which appeared in "World Order" numbers of April and November, 1940, and of January and March, 1941. London would be very grateful if anyone taking this magazine could spare these numbers, so that the compilation can be completed.

Amongst the various places approached in the search for a summer school was a guest house at Crich, near Matlock. They are not taking any large parties during the war, but the proprietor, who is a Quaker, wrote: "I feel it would be a privilege to have any of your members who wished for a country holiday." Any Bahá'í who is interested may obtain particulars from the Secretary of the N.S.A. The food is vegetarian.

International Bahá'í Bureau.

We have received a very interesting report from the International Bureau for the year 1941, of which we give a very brief summary:

They have published a new pamphlet called "The New World Order"; "Some Answered Questions" is being translated into Russian and is nearly finished. The Polish translation of "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era" has been presented to most of the very many Polish internment camps in Switzerland. The friends in Switzerland have been able to visit each other during the year and thereby the scattered group of Bahá'ís in that country have become much more united. They have a new believer and

many fresh contacts, and are hoping to hold a summer school.

The Bureau has had news from friends in Norway, Bulgaria, Belgrade and Budapest, and also from a devoted believer in Unoccupied France, who is struggling amidst very difficult conditions to teach the Cause.

Building Fund.

A sum of money has generously been subscribed by some of the believers for the purpose of buying a building to be used in the service of the Cause. In the present difficult circumstances, the N.S.A. has not considered it advisable to acquire a building, so the money has been invested till such time as it can be used.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

The Integrity of Administrators depends upon the Integrity of the Community.

The right to vote is a symbol of maturity. It is given only when an age is reached at which the individual is considered to be mature, to be able to consciously fulfil his obligations and undertake his responsibilities as a member of society. In the sphere of politics the right to vote implies, speaking very generally, the right to select objectively one of the various social programmes temptingly arrayed before the voter. Whether his choice is motivated by the furtherance of his own interests or those of society as a whole, depends upon the integrity of the voter, but in any case the vast majority of people once having voted, or selected, retire from the field of activity and carry on with their own daily lives, pausing only to praise or criticize, from time to time, those whom they have chosen to govern them.

A Bahá'í has not such a cut and dried choice to make. For him the conflicting interests of society are not represented by groups or parties, but the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, with its infinite perfections, vast, all-embracing and staggeringly great, stretches out before him, far, far into the distant future. He is concerned simply with what material, what human qualities, what channels for the gifts and power of the Spirit, to select, in order that the divine plan may be more and more effectively carried out. According to his own state of development, understanding, maturity, so he selects this material.

The "good" life, so clearly explained by the Manifestations of God, is enjoined upon every Bahá'í not as a goal in itself, but simply so that the individual by following it may become a more effective member of society. According to the state of development of each individual,

so he adds to or takes away from the high quality and standards of human society.

The Bahá'í elections are a recurrent and outstanding proof of the inter-relatedness and inseparability of "politics" and "religion" in the Bahá'í Faith. For when a Bahá'í is faced with the task of selecting the material with which to build the world order of Bahá'u'lláh, he becomes aware that he is searching for the highest expressions of the attributes of God—justice, fidelity, uprightness, truthfulness, intelligence, etc.—in his fellow beings, that he is looking for spiritual qualities, and according to his own state of spiritual development, so he will be able to perceive them. All expert knowledge is acquired only through sheer hard work, and knowledge and insight into the divine attributes of man are attained the same way: "All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth" (Bahá'u'lláh—"Gleanings").

The direction in which to set one's will is clearly indicated by Bahá'u'lláh: "The companions of God are, in this day, the lump that must leaven the peoples of the world. They must show forth such trustworthiness, such truthfulness and perseverance, such deeds and character that all mankind may profit by their example." "I swear by Him Who is the Most Great Ocean! Within the very breath of such souls as are pure and sanctified far-reaching potentialities are hidden. So great are these potentialities that they exercise their influence upon all created things."

Thus the individual makes his selection in the light of his own understanding, which is affected by his way of living, and thus openly and in visible social terms, i.e., in the form of a Spiritual Assembly, gives expression to his own

state of development. A Bahá'ís "political" or administrative functions are thus inevitably bound up with his spiritual life, which for so many constitutes "religion."

It is therefore obvious that in such a vitally important matter he must seek direct enlightenment from Him whose divine plan he, together with the world-wide Bahá'í community, is striving to realize. The importance of prayer and meditation at this time cannot be too strongly emphasized.

The privilege and right to vote as a Bahá'í is a very wonderful thing; let us strive to be worthy of it. Our responsibility is great, but how much greater is the assistance that will be given to a "true believer." Let not the future be permitted to point an accusing finger in our direction.

THE WORDS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

"I give praise to Thee, O my God, that the fragrance of Thy loving-kindness hath enrap-
tured me, and the gentle winds of Thy mercy have inclined me in the direction of Thy boun-
tiful favours. Make me to quaff, O my Lord, from the fingers of Thy bounteousness the liv-
ing waters which have enabled every one that hath partaken of them to rid himself of all attachment to any one save Thee, and to soar into the atmosphere of detachment from all Thy creatures and to fix his gaze upon Thy loving providence and Thy manifold gifts.

"Make me ready, in all circumstances, O my Lord, to serve Thee and to set myself towards the adored sanctuary of Thy Revelation and of Thy Beauty. . . .

"I implore Thee, O my Lord, by Thy name the splendours of which have encompassed the earth and the heavens, to enable me so to sur-
render my will to what Thou hast decreed in Thy Tablets, that I may cease to discover with-
in me any desire except what Thou didst desire through the power of Thy sovereignty, and any will save what Thou didst destine for me by Thy will.

"Whither shall I turn, O my God, powerless as I am to discover any other way except the way Thou didst set before Thy chosen Ones? All the atoms of the earth proclaim Thee to be God, and testify that there is none other God besides Thee. Thou hast from eternity been powerful to do what Thou hast willed, and to ordain what Thou hast pleased.

"Do Thou destine for me, O my God, what will set me, at all time, towards Thee, and enable me to cleave continually to the cord of Thy grace, and to proclaim Thy name, and to look for whatsoever may flow down from Thy

pen. I am poor and desolate, O my Lord, and Thou art the All-Possessing, the Most High. Have pity, then, upon me through the wonders of Thy mercy, and send down upon me, every moment of my life, the things wherewith Thou hast recreated the hearts of all Thy creatures who have recognized Thy unity, and of all Thy people who are wholly devoted to Thee.

"Thou, verily, art the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise." (Prayers and Meditations of Bahá'u'lláh, CL.)

"It is incumbent upon ye that glad tidings and exultation shall be manifest in your faces, so that every soul may find in ye submission and forbearance." (Tablet of Visitation.)

"This is a matchless Day. Matchless must, likewise, be the tongue that celebrateth the praise of the Desire of all nations, and match-
less the deed that aspireth to be acceptable in His sight. The whole human race hath longed for this Day, that perchance it may fulfil that which well beseemeth its station and is worthy of its destiny."

"Say: O people of God! Beware lest the powers of the earth alarm you, or the might of the nations weaken you, or the tumult of the people of discord deter you, or the exponents of earthly glory sadden you. Be ye as a moun-
tain in the Cause of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Unconstrained. Say: Beware, O people of Bahá, lest the strong ones of the earth rob you of your strength, or they who rule the world fill you with fear. Put your trust in God, and commit your affairs to His keeping. He, verily, will, through the power of truth, render you victorious, and He, verily, is powerful to do what He willeth, and in His grasp are the reins of omnipotent might."

"This is the day in which to speak. It is incumbent upon the people of Bahá to strive, with the utmost patience and forbearance, to guide the peoples of the world to the Most Great Horizon. Every body calleth aloud for a soul. Heavenly souls must needs quicken, with the breath of the Word of God, the dead bodies with a fresh spirit. Within every word a new spirit is hidden. Happy is the man that attain-
eth thereunto, and hath arisen to teach the Cause of Him Who is the King of Eternity.

"Say: O servants! The triumph of this Cause hath depended, and will continue to depend, upon the appearance of holy souls, upon the showing forth of goodly deeds, and the revela-
tion of words of consummate wisdom. Centre your energies in the propagation of the Faith of God."

(Quoted by Shoghi Effendi in "The Advent of Divine Justice.")