

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

issued by

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís
of the

British Isles

46, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1.

No. 4

January 1937.

The Bahá'í Publishing Company

The N.S.A. wishes to make clear, that in prosecuting the plan which was announced in the circular letter headed "A Call to United Sacrifice", there is no intention of setting up in business as publishers and competing in an already crowded field. What the N.S.A. has in mind is the acquiring of copyrights which will become valuable assets to the Faith, and of publishing the works so obtained through one of the established publishing houses.

The whole project will be discussed at the next meeting of the N.S.A. on January 17th, when it is hoped a definite and concrete plan will be adopted. In the meantime the friends are urged to observe the utmost discretion in talking of the matter outside the circle of the Faith. The N.S.A. will circulate the plan of procedure as soon as it has been worked out.

The Manchester Conference

During the week-end of December 20th the N.S.A. held its business meetings in Manchester and made use of the opportunity for meeting the friends there, and from outlying districts, in conference. On the Saturday evening the members of the N.S.A. who had already arrived spent a most enjoyable few hours with the Manchester believers. Many problems arising in the Cause were discussed and a splendid spirit of unity and fellowship prevailed. On Sunday morning the Summer School Committee met and formulated plans which are published elsewhere in this number. In the afternoon the N.S.A. held its first meeting and then adjourned for tea with friends from Manchester and other districts. At one time during the week-end the N.S.A. conferred with the Bradford friends, Mr & Mrs Norton and Mrs Wilkinson, on the possibilities of an intense teaching campaign in that city. On Sunday evening a most enjoyable and profitable conference was held with members of the N.S.A., friends from Manchester, Bradford, Blackburn and Birmingham all taking part. A warm feeling of brotherhood was the keynote of the meeting and fresh inspiration was derived from this contact with fellow Bahá'ís. On Monday evening the N.S.A. held its second business meeting, which lasted far into the night. The whole week-end was not only a rich experience for those taking part, but a significant event in the progress of the Cause in England. A similar occasion is hoped for in London during the week-end of January 17th, when a Unity Feast will be held at the Bahá'í Centre on the Saturday evening and the business meetings will take

place during Sunday. In the evening the members of the N.S.A will attend the regular meeting at the London centre.

THE SUPREME NECESSITY

As humanity penetrates deeper into that circle of gloom which the Guardian has described, so the Faith of God enters an increasingly difficult and critical stage of its career. Our mission - none other than the regeneration of mankind - makes more, and greater demands upon our time, our energy, our resources. As the darkness of the world increases, so must the light shining within the Cause increase. Not only must we protect it from "the winds of despair", but we must increase its brilliance so that it may truly be a beacon, guiding humanity in its night of darkness.

Such a task may well appal us when we consider the smallness of our numbers, our material poverty, the gigantic array of the forces to be overcome. And indeed, were we left to our own devices, who could be sure of victory? But the unique and priceless gift of God to His followers in this day, is the Covenant, a Covenant which the Master has described as "so firm and mighty that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like".

The Covenant of Baha'ú'lláh, of which Abdu'l-Baha is the Centre, is nothing less than a promise that by obedience to the divinely appointed Administrative Order, crowned by the institution of Guardianship, humanity may establish and enjoy the Most Great Peace. The Administrative Order of Baha'ú'lláh is the long awaited Ark of Salvation, the impregnable fortress, "this unique, this wondrous System - the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed". In the Administration lies our sole safeguard, our only assurance of Divine guidance, and the sacred promise of ultimate victory.

Dear Friends; the National Spiritual Assembly urges you, one and all, to ponder this matter deeply. On the one hand there is unlimited opportunity for progress, new undertakings, and the teaching of the Faith in this land... a land which attracts the gaze of the whole world. On the other there is the inevitable disintegration which must follow if we each pursue our own course, dissipating our energies and means in varied enterprises, bereft of the spiritual authority which Baha'ú'lláh has implanted in His Administrative Order. Is there really any choice for the true follower of Baha'ú'lláh? The N.S.A. sends out this urgent call for the full and unstinted co-operation of all the friends, for the subjugation of personal ideas and impulses to the imperative needs of the whole body of the Faith. Unless we act as a united body, how can we take any place in the world wide organism of the Faith?

The success which crowns united effort has already been demonstrated, in a small degree, by the remarkable achievement of the Summer School, a project which, four months before the actual event, was regarded as impossible. Through the proper Administrative channels, using the procedure of consultation, Summer School was planned. Its success is known to all of us.

"Be united! Be united!" was the command of the Master. The Administrative Order is the only means of bringing into harmonious unity and at the same time making use of, all the diverse capacities and talents of the human race. It is the only means by which the servants of Baha'ú'lláh can accomplish their aim.

"So powerful is the light of unity, that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words...."

The Baha'í Journal

The National Spiritual Assembly has requested local Assemblies to arrange for a review of the current number of the Journal at each Nineteen-day Feast. The Journal is the only means of regular communication between the N.S.A and the believers, and its importance cannot be too highly stressed. The friends are urged to study the contents of each number, not only to acquaint themselves with the general activities of the Faith, but to give thought to such matters as messages from the Guardian, from the N.S.A, statements on Teaching or Administration, which appear from time to time.

The Journal is ready to consider occasional works of poetry from the believers and will be glad to receive contributions. They will be printed subject to space and the discretion of the editors.

Paris Convention

The seventh annual convention of Baha'í students was held in Paris during the week-end of January 3rd. Six Baha'is from England were present and a paper from the London Youth Group, dealing with relations within the Baha'í Community, was read. The visitors brought back glowing accounts of the meetings which were attended by people of many countries.

Teaching

The National Teaching Committee reports that successful work has been going on in Devonshire in the neighbourhood of Totnes. Mr. Mark Tobey, who is resident there, has maintained a regular study class. In his work he has been greatly assisted by Mrs Bishop and Mr. Balyuzi. Two people have already declared themselves and the N.S.A extends to them a warm welcome from all the friends.

A weekly meeting is held in Torquay and also in Dartington Hall. Mrs Bishop is now staying in Torquay at the request of the National Spiritual Assembly, and it is hoped that more students will soon accept the Faith.

Summer School 1937

The following plans for this year's Summer School have already received the approval of the N.S.A.

Time:- First three weeks of August.

Procedure:- Two hours in the morning to be given to study.

Occasional talks when opportunity arises by people who have some special interest such as Music, Art, History etc. Attendance at these talks to be voluntary.

No place has, as yet, been decided, but the Committee is making investigations. The following speakers from abroad are to be invited to address the Summer School. Madame Dreyfus-Barney from France and Dr. Muhlschlegel from Germany.

The programme, in outline is as follows:-

1st week. Conception of God throughout the Ages.
The World of Divine Revelation.
The World of Man.

2nd week Periods of Transition:-
Historical
Present Day.

"The Unfoldment of World Civilisation".

3rd week The Creative Word of Baha'u'lláh
The Principle of Guardianship.
The Law of Consultation.
The Law of Federation.
The Bahá'í World of to-day.

It is confidently expected that this year's Summer School will fill the promise of last year and lend an additional impetus to the progress of the Faith. The Guardian's message on this subject is published in No. 3 of the Bahá'í Journal, and the friends are urged to refer to it.

Qualifications of a Believer

On page 81 of Bahá'í Administration, the following qualifications are set forward by Shoghi Effendi as "the principal factors that must be taken into consideration before deciding whether a person be regarded as a true believer or not".

"Full recognition of the station of the Forerunner, the Author, and the True Exemplar of the Bahá'í Cause, as set forth in 'Abdu'l-Baha's Testament; unreserved acceptance of, and submission to, whatsoever has been revealed by their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of our Beloved's sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of the present day Bahá'í administration throughout the world -- these I conceive to be the fundamental and primary considerations that must be fairly, discreetly and thoughtfully ascertained before reaching such a vital decision".

The N.S.A has published this excerpt from the Guardian's writings, in answer to requests from some of the friends whose teaching activities have resulted in the question being asked ... what does one do to become a Bahá'í?

Decisions of the National Spiritual Assembly

The area of jurisdiction of the London Spiritual Assembly has been fixed within a radius of twelve and a half miles from Charing Cross.

Bahá'í Student

Mr. G.H. Mukhless has arrived in England for a period of study. He has brought with him credentials from the N.S.A of Persia. We take this opportunity of welcoming him on behalf of the friends. His address is, The Grove, Ashby Road, Loughborough.

The Bahá'í Fund

The N.S.A. feels the need of calling the attention of the friends to the principle of regular contribution to the Bahá'í Fund. The smallness of the amount should not deter any believer from fulfilling this spiritual duty. If the amount to be contributed is only one penny a week, when given regularly it assures for the giver participation in all the affairs of the Faith. The Fund has been described as the bloodstream of the Cause.....it needs a steady and regular contribution.

.....

"The disciples of Christ forgot themselves and all earthly things, forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion and with absolute detachment scattered far and wide and engaged in calling the peoples of the world to the Divine Guidance, till at last they made the world another world, illumined the surface of the earth and even to their last hour proved self-sacrificing in the pathway of that Beloved One of God. Finally in various lands they suffered glorious martyrdom. Let them that are men of action follow in their footsteps! 'Abdu'l-Baha.