

# BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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## THOUGHT ON THE COVENANT

**T**HE National Assembly offers you to ponder over, some thoughts on the Covenant.

In each of the phases of the development of the Faith, firmness in the Covenant has called for love, loyalty and obedience, and although in some instances the same response has been called for from age to age, a special challenge has faced the believers at each stage of the unfoldment of the Faith.

In the lifetimes of the Manifestations of God, the believers expressed their love for The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, and their loyalty to the Covenant, by unhesitatingly sacrificing their lives. They drank deep of the Cup of Martyrdom rather than deny their Lord, and this they did as an act of pure love, for they knew nothing of the world-encircling events that were to follow. Even as recently as 1963 some of our Bahá'í brothers in Morocco demonstrated that firmness in the Covenant may still require an individual Bahá'í to be willing to die for that Covenant, but in the early days of the Faith almost every Bahá'í faced that test.

In the lifetime of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the believers demonstrated their firmness in the Covenant by rallying to the Master—Who had been appointed by Bahá'u'lláh as the Centre of the Covenant — and standing firmly in the face of the onslaught of the Covenant-breakers. In His Will & Testament and also in His last Tablet to America (both are given in full in "The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh," recently re-issued by the Publishing Trust), 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes of those times when "severe winds . . . surrounded the Lamp of the Covenant, hoping that this brilliant Light may be extinguished, and this Tree of Life may be uprooted . . ." The believers of those days knew little about the Administrative Order, a handful of Local Spiritual Assemblies were scattered throughout the world, but National Assemblies were not yet heard of and the Universal House of Justice did not yet exist.

In the lifetime of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi—appointed to that Station by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will & Testament — firmness in the

Covenant meant loyalty to the Guardianship, and the Bahá'ís of those days expressed their love for and obedience to Bahá'u'lláh by responding to the challenge of laying the foundations of the Administrative Order, building Local and National Assemblies, guided and directed by the beloved Guardian. And in their day too, the believers stood firm in the face of those who attacked the Tree of Life, the Covenant-breakers; they stood solidly behind the Hands of the Cause of God, who for almost six years after the passing of Shoghi Effendi in November 1957, piloted the ship of the Cause steadily on the route the Guardian had mapped out for it. Designated by Shoghi Effendi in his last letter to the "Bahá'í World," dated October 1957 ("Messages to the Bahá'í World," p. 127) as the "Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth," the Hands of the Cause guarded their Trust, until at Ridván 1963, they handed over the reins of affairs to the Universal House of Justice, with the beloved Guardian's Ten Year Crusade victoriously completed and the Bahá'í World pure and strong.

So we come to our own times. What does firmness in the Covenant mean to-day? How do we express our love for and loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh? To whom should we be obedient? The answer is to the Bahá'í Institutions. To the Universal House of Justice, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in The Eighth Ishraq, the Tablet which He says is " . . . accounted of the Book of Aqdas," and in which, writing of the Universal House of Justice, He says, "Those souls . . . shall be inspired by the invisible Inspiration of God;" the Universal House of Justice, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will & Testament emphasises " . . . God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error . . ." And to the National Assembly instituted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will & Testament, which Shoghi Effendi wrote, " . . . obviously assumes grave responsibilities, for it has to exercise full authority over all the local assemblies in its province, and will have to direct the activities of

the friends, guard vigilantly the Cause of God, and control and supervise the affairs of the Movement in general" (pp. 85/86, "Principles of Bahá'í Administration"). And to the Local Assemblies, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, where He says, "The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Bahá . . . It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth . . ." (quoted in "Principles of Bahá'í Administration," p. 50).

In his last letter to the British Bahá'í Community, dated August 30th, 1957, Shoghi Effendi urged upon us especially " . . . a firmer grasp of the essential verities of the Faith; a more profound study of its history and a deeper understanding of the genesis, the significance, the workings, and the present status and achievements of its embryonic World Order and of the Covenant to which it owes its birth and vitality." These he said were among the "rock bottom requirements which alone can guarantee the opening and hasten the advent of that blissful era which every British Bahá'í heart so eagerly anticipates, and the glories of which can, at present, be but dimly discerned." This passage prompted the National Assembly to share with all our Local Assemblies these thoughts on the unfolding of the Covenant.

A mighty challenge faces every one of us when we think of the goals to be achieved in the Nine Year Plan, and it may help us all if we realise that firmness in the Covenant, far from being a 'foggy feeling' is something rooted in the core of our being and is expressed in all our actions. In our day love for Bahá'u'lláh and firmness in the Covenant are expressed particularly through loyalty and obedience to the Administrative Institutions, which are themselves an organic part of the unfolding Covenant of God.

(Extracted by permission from recent N.S.A. letter to all Local Spiritual Assemblies).



## TEACHING CONFERENCE

ABOUT 180 friends gathered in the now familiar setting of the Midland Hotel, Manchester, for the 1965 Teaching Conference which lasted from 2.30 p.m. on Saturday 2nd to 4.30 p.m. on Sunday 3rd January. After a devotional programme on theme of teaching and pioneering prepared by the Malta friends, Hand of the Cause John Ferraby opened the Conference, which carried the keynote and title of 'Universal Participation.'

The first session was the presentation of the goals of the Nine Year Plan, and achievements to date, by representatives of the eight Overseas and Home Front Committees charged with their own specific share and area. It was exhilarating to learn of the progress achieved on almost every front in the first few months of the world-encircling projects assigned to the British believers. The acquisition of the Hazíratu'l-Quds in Dublin, the impending departure of pioneers for jobs in Rodríguez Island, the pioneers who were actively opening new towns in one or other of the homeland territories, the contacts made with other N.S.A.'s assigned for assistance or whom we have to assist, the growth of the group in Malta, the opening of Guernsey to the Faith, the change in goal from opening to consolidating the Line Islands in mid-Pacific, the active search for a Temple site in British Guiana—these things cheered our hearts.

The Saturday evening session was devoted to the Covenant and the Administrative Order. The N.S.A. Secretary, Betty Reed, spoke on the spiritual basis of that Order and its origins in the divine writings, stressing the idea that unity is a spiritual law which transcends mere correctness. Charles Macdonald, the National Treasurer, spoke on the practicalities for the individual and took the opportunity to announce the munificent donation by the Manchester Assembly of £450 for the Overseas Projects Fund.

On Sunday morning the Youth Committees provided a note of vivacity and hope, filling us all with admiration at the way the Bahá'í Youth are succeeding in demonstrating high standards and attracting new souls despite the prevailing moralities and attitudes of the age. We heard about the youth magazine 'Zenith,' the declaration at 3 a.m. of a youth after the York Winter School and a party at Burnley, the teaching approach through hiking holidays, the steadily growing integration of

effort of the 185 youth in South England and the wonderful week-end when 70 youth were entertained by the Cardells at their farm near St. Neots.

The last session was devoted to urgent appeals for pioneers, to fill the gaps that had developed to an unprecedented extent on the Home Front and to supplement efforts being made at much sacrifice in the new areas. The Conference, memorable for being the first of the new plan and for the spirit and strength of purpose, then closed with some challenging and inspiring words from John Ferraby, Hand of the Cause of God.

An excellent sales display of books, photographs, cards and calendars supplemented the occasion.

English Teaching Committee.

## THOUGHTS ON A NINETEEN DAY FEAST

By Lisbeth Greeves

THE gathering of the friends without any sense of haste (almost to a fault!)—greetings and enquiries are about the others—the handing out of the readings as in due course a circle of chairs is formed and we settle ready for worship. There are moments of stillness and silence as the host or hostess prepares to welcome us all to this Heavenly Feast—these words from Heaven—the healing prayer—the praise and exaltation as the voices change: as one reader ends in silence, like the vibrations after the first movement of a symphony—and another begins.

The deep creative silence that follows the chant prepares our hearts and minds for the precious time of consultation when plans are made and the community shares in all the work of the L.S.A., and new ideas and suggestions are welcomed, as ideas flow in free discussion—'Out of the clash of opinions comes the spark of truth'—Then, how good the sounds of the kettle boiling and the time has come for the Heavenly Wine of Fellowship and the breaking of bread together. The Concourse on High are very near—more plans are made together—more often: our sorrows and joys are shared, as indeed we are a family united with bonds of Light and Love.

Then home to a deep sleep and a new inspiration for the coming days until we meet again in His Love.

## The Challenge of the next 9 weeks

IN days gone by, when a challenge was made to a man of chivalry, no stone was left unturned until the challenge was accepted, the swords drawn, and honour defended until victory was assured.

To-day—in the British Isles—the challenge goes forth to 27 believers in Bahá'u'lláh to draw the sword of Faith and arise to defend the weakened fortress Cities of these Islands (which have been so laboriously won) in order that none may be lost at Ridván—the time when the warriors of His cause are called together to maintain their Cities for Him.

Let us all carry with us in our hearts the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—the first among the believers in Bahá'u'lláh—who, when he was freed from prison, travelled thousands of miles in the West to establish believers for the very first fortress Cities in our Islands.

It was He who said while He was teaching in Paris in 1912:

"Doubt not that God is with us, on our right hand and on our left, that day by day He will cause our numbers to increase, and that our meetings will grow in strength and usefulness.

It is my dearest hope that you may give sight to the spiritually blind, hearing to the spiritually deaf and life to those who are dead in sin. WORK! WORK with all your strength, spread the Cause of the Kingdom among men: teach the self-sufficient to turn humbly towards God . . .

Love and obey your Heavenly Father, and rest assured that Divine help is yours. VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU THAT YOU SHALL INDEED CONQUER THE WORLD!

Only have faith, patience and courage—this is but the beginning, but SURELY YOU WILL SUCCEED, FOR GOD IS WITH YOU!"

With those loving and resounding assurances from 'Abdu'l-Bahá ringing in our ears, how can we fail to accept the Challenge to maintain our fifty Local Spiritual assemblies by Ridván 1965? It is but the first stage of fulfilment of the promise of the Master that we 'SHALL INDEED CONQUER THE WORLD!'

IF YOU ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE, please write, or telephone to the Secretary of the Pioneer Committee, Barnet 4232 (Night and Day service!), 14 Northumberland Road, New Barnet, Herts.





BAHA'I TEACHING CONFERENCE 1965

Photo by Rohy

#### PUBLISHING TRUST CATALOGUE FOR ENQUIRERS

The National Assembly urges everybody to make sure that all individuals who enquire about the Faith are given a copy of the Publishing Trust's catalogue, so that they know about the Bahá'í books that are available. Copies of the catalogue can be obtained free of charge from Mr. R. C. Coulson, 37 Westbury Road, H. Crumpsall, Manchester 8, for this purpose. Local Assemblies are asked to distribute the Trust's catalogue in this way too. Useful persons to whom to present a copy of this catalogue are the Chief Librarians of your City and County Libraries.

#### REGISTRATION OF BAHÁ'I CHILDREN

Children of Bahá'ís may be registered as Bahá'í children, if the child wishes it and the parents request it. A simple registration form is being prepared and will shortly be available from the National Office. Each child registered will receive a letter of welcome from the National Assembly. It will still be necessary for the child to identify himself as a Bahá'í, if he wishes to do so, at the age of 15 by signing a declaration card, and he will cease to be recognised as a Bahá'í unless he does so.

#### LEICESTER ONE-DAY SCHOOLS

Two one-day Schools are announced by Leicester to take place on 11th April and 26th September, 1965.

#### CARLISLE BAHÁ'I CENTRE

Carlisle announce the opening of their Bahá'í Centre on 21st March, 1965.

#### PENDRELL HALL, CODSHALL WOOD, NEAR WOLVERHAMPTON

Minimum age 15 years. Charge for whole week-end meals is £2-5-0. A reduced charge for those friends attending Sunday only. All meals must be booked in advance.

Programme commences 11.30 Saturday morning. Last session, 3.45 Sunday afternoon.

Speakers include Arnold Pitt, Malcolm Lee, John Morley. Hand of the Cause John Ferraby will attend the School.

Bookings to: Mr. Kenneth Goode, 8 Knowle Road, Weeping Cross, Stafford.  
Tel. Milford 2157.

School planned by the Birmingham L.S.A., FEBRUARY 27th and 28th, 1965.

#### Results of December 1964 By-election

**M**EMBERS of the Auxiliary Boards are precluded from service on Bahá'í administrative bodies and when Richard Backwell was appointed by the Hands of the Cause of God in Europe to serve on their Auxiliary Board for the Propagation of the Faith, it became necessary for Dick to resign from the National Spiritual Assembly. In the by-election held in December, Joe Jameson of Newcastle was elected to fill the vacancy on the N.S.A.

Sixty-nine of the seventy-two delegates eligible to take part in the by-election voted; four other delegates (making the total of seventy-six) had left the country and were therefore no longer eligible to vote. Votes were cast as follows:— Joe Jameson 14, Abbas Afnan 13, Gloria Faizi 4, Eric Hellicar 3, Bill Hellaby 3. Six other friends had 2 votes each; and twenty others 1 vote each.

#### PRAYERS AND MEDITATION ERRATUM

December 1964 Journal, Page 7—  
First paragraph, last sentence should read:

'Summoning their aid vitalising influence "Prayers and Meditations" which Author their Faith Himself revealed let them...draw nigh unto Bahá'u'lláh that He may draw nigh unto them.'



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## INDIA

Many of the teachers go on foot. They carry a little cloth bag with just a sheet in it to cover themselves at night, plenty of literature and declaration forms. Some travel on bikes. One is a cripple who gets about mostly alone. We have had some opposition from people called the Arya Samagists. They follow our teachers and where they go, they go in and try to frighten the people if all else fails they tell the people that our teachers are British agents who are trying to take independence away from them! One time one of their members, a station master, asked the crippled Bahá'í to come to him. The station master is very important there and so the Bahá'í was brought. The station master tried to talk him into recanting. He said, "We will pay you more than the Bahá'ís." He was very surprised when the teacher said the Bahá'ís did not pay him at all. He offered him a job with the station but the Bahá'í stood firm and stayed overnight in the village when he had been warned off. He said to the station master, "You can't intimidate me. The most you can do is kill me. You cannot withstand this revelation. Kings have opposed it—and in vain. Who are you to oppose it?"

## BRAZIL

Since a successful teaching campaign by the Porto Allegro friends there have been forty declarations.

## REPORT FROM MALAYA

During the past year twenty-one conferences have been held in different parts of Malaya with the aim of increasing the number of believers to 2000 and of spreading the Cause in the towns and villages. Following these conferences the number of L.S.A.'s functioning in Malaya has increased from 44 to 60.

Firesides have been held every week in more than 50 virgin territories and through these meetings many believers have already been enrolled.

The N.S.A. has now finalised plans for the establishment of a National Bahá'í Institute at Malacca. The plans have been submitted to the government for approval.

A Haziratu'l-Quds has been acquired as an endowment by the N.S.A. of Malaysia at Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaysia.

Teachers have gone travelling all over Malaya. The N.S.A. and N.T.C. members have gone on teaching trips to several places in Malaysia and many more centres are expected to be opened.

An active Youth Committee is en-

gaged in carrying out the plans, goals and teaching projects of the L.S.As in Malaysia.

From a report by Mamato Paul Malacca

## FRANCE

Bahá'ís passing through Dordogne (France), which is on the direct route to Spain, would be very welcome at the home of Roger and Geneviève Le. This Bahá'í family were, until recently, in Dahomey, West Africa, which is one of the goals we in the British Isles are concerned with. Their address is: 55 Rue Anatole France, Bergerac 24, Dordogne, France.

## AUSTRALIA

Members of the Tamworth Group, New South Wales, recently attended a lecture sponsored by the University of New England, Armidale; the guest speaker, Dr. E. G. Parrinder, Reader in the Study of Comparative Religions, University of London, gave a very interesting talk on "Christian Theology and Two Asian Faiths."

At the end of question time a Presbyterian minister in the audience asked Dr. Parrinder if he could tell them about these Bahá'ís they had been hearing so much about lately, to which the speaker replied, "I've been waiting for someone to bring this up. In England we don't hear very much of the Bahá'ís but everywhere I have been in Australia, the subject of the Bahá'í Faith is very interesting and we are hearing more about it every day. The Bahá'ís have a certain attraction towards unity."

Of course the Bahá'ís there were thrilled and after the talk told Dr. Parrinder there were Bahá'ís in the audience.

From the Australian Bahá'í Bulletin, October, 1964.

## ECUADOR

During July and August nineteen new L.S.A.'s were formed in Ecuador necessitating a great deal of walking by ten selfless souls from one Indian's hut to another's.

## NATAL

Bertha Mkize reports that two new groups have been opened in this area; one in Inanda and the other at Mbonambi. A few declarations were received here and many more are expected soon.

## PHILIPPINES

The following reports are taken from the October-November Philippine Bahá'í News, "Tidal Wave."

"Baltazar Mariano visited the Mati, Davao area and now reports that he and Datu Muncay also went to the Bagobo and Ata areas and relate heartwarming successes and new enrollments . . . The Bilaan new

Bahá'ís of Colonsabat, Davao, are building their own Bahá'í Centre."

Many new believers and the opening of several new centres are also reported from these islands.

## SOMALIA

The eighth Bahá'í Summer School of Somalia was held from 10th—20th July. There were nine sessions held during eight days and it was generally accepted that this was one of the best schools ever held in Somalia.

From Bahá'í News Bulletin of N.E. Africa.

## UGANDA

At a series of meetings held in the National Theatre, Uganda, the following subjects were discussed: "Bahá'í, the Faith for World Unity," "A World Without Fear," "Religion Must Bring Unity," and "The Bahá'í Faith, its History and Tenets."

♦ \* ♦

The following two articles are excerpts from a talk by Sheriar Nooreyzeidan printed in the Bahá'í News of South and Central Africa.

## Samoa Chief's Son was Chairman at Haifa Conference Session

Steve Percival is a massive, popular Samoan, and a marvellous chairman, firm, friendly and humorous. At first, however, he was a little worried and anxious to do his best at this most historic conference. He said: "Friends, I am a bit stage fright. I am from the South Pacific. Since a Christian community came to us thirty years ago, we have no place anywhere and we were told that if we question them, we go to hell. In the Bahá'í Faith we find the true love. I cannot find words for it. My heart rules me. Whatever my heart tells me, that I will say to-night. I thank the pioneers who brought the Manifestation to us, the Hands and the Universal House of Justice and all the Bahá'ís who have come to conquer the world. Now we can really get going. I have a Christian background. All my life, I dreamt to take part in God's work. Sometimes I say "I wish I was in Christ's time to do his work." Now I have been given the chance and we all have been given the chance."

25th January, 1965

## LADY CHURCHILL

28 Hyde Park Gate,  
London, S.W. 7

THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'IS OF THE BRITISH ISLES ON BEHALF OF THE BAHÁ'IS OF THE WORLD WISHES TO CONVEY TO YOUR LADYSHIP AND YOUR FAMILY DEEPEST SYMPATHY AT THE PASSING OF SIR WINSTON



# NEWS FROM WALES

**A**BERYSTWYTH, a goal town, has been the scene of much activity in recent months. On 14th November a Public Meeting was held at the University, when David Lewis of Cardiff addressed a gathering of about 40 people, supported by friends from many parts of Wales. A further Meeting is arranged for 30th January when Betty Reed will be the speaker, and it is hoped that as many as possible of the Welsh friends will be able to support the event.

We are grateful that Beatrice Newman has offered to stay in Aberystwyth for a time to support the work. Arising from the teaching in Aberystwyth the BBC Welsh Television became interested and contacted Mrs. Nora Maude to make enquiries about the Faith.

This sparked off further interest and the result was that within a few days a Magazine Programme "Heddiw" (To-day) included a long item on the Bahá'í Faith. This showed Nora and her family at her home in Borth, an interview with a local Minister and the Bishop of St. David's, and ended with an excellent interview in which Bahá'í Mrs. Weevy Jones answered several questions on the Faith. We wish to thank her most warmly for her courage in undertaking this service, in the Welsh language, at such short notice. We also wish to thank Nora for so ably carrying out all the arrangements.

In Swansea a very successful One Day School was held in the adjoining homes of Mrs. Dewar and the Foxes. About 35 Bahá'ís and

friends thoroughly enjoyed the excellent talks and discussions, the happy fellowship and the picnic lunch.

In December we had much pleasure in welcoming Hand of the Cause, Mr. John Ferraby, to Wales. He stayed for a week and in that time visited the Swansea, Pontypridd and Cardiff communities, and met the friends on six occasions. Indeed, a week to remember, and we are all very grateful for his inspiration, encouragement and advice.

Cardiff continues to hold regular monthly Public Meetings and they are planned as follows:— January 27, Dr. Ernest Miller; February 24, Mrs. Mehrangiz Munsiff; March 31, Mrs. Betty Goode.

The local UNA branch has been invited to share the platform for the World Religion Day Meeting, as United Nations has declared 1965 to be World Co-operation Year. While the UNA speaker will illustrate how the UN are taking steps to deal with immediate world problems, the Bahá'í speaker will illustrate how the Faith is dealing with their deep underlying spiritual causes.

## F I J I

**T**HE Crown Colony of Fijí, which has a land area of just over 7,000 sq. miles (nearly the size of Wales), is actually a group of more than 500 islands. 100 of these islands are inhabited, but the two largest, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, comprise 87 per cent. of the total land. Although only about 1200 miles from the Equator, the climate is a pleasant one, with the temperature rarely rising above 95 per cent. and the sun tempered by cooling breezes from the Pacific Ocean.

Although most of our territories in the Pacific are coral atolls and flat, Fijí is mountainous; Viti Levu and Vanua Levu have (inactive) volcanic mountain ranges, surrounded by coastal fertile plains which are protected seawards by extensive coral reefs. Swaying coconut palms, miles of coral sands and breaking surf under clear skies, conjure up classic pictures of South Sea Islands dreaming in the sun, but Suva, the capital of Fijí, hums with bustle and industry. It makes Viti Levu the focal point of the whole of the South Pacific area, being the Headquarters of British Administration, the seat of the Western Pacific High Commission and the chief trading centre for the area. As well as being the centre of education and agricultural, industrial and medical training, the international airport and modern seaport facilities make this island also the hub of communications.

Of the total population of the Colony of some 430,000, almost 50 per cent are Indian; something over 41.5 per cent. are Fijians of Melanesian origin, and the remainder are Europeans, Chinese and

other Pacific Islanders. The two main groups of people, the Indians and Fijians, have developed amicably side by side since the early days when the Indians came to Fijí to work in the sugar plantations. Now almost all the Fijians are engaged in agriculture and the Indians are predominantly tenant farmers and storekeepers. The Administration's policy is to train local people to manage the Colony's own affairs; and to help to prepare Fijí for the next stage of its development, the Government has introduced the protective measure of immigration restrictions.

The British Community's goal in the Nine Year Plan is to assist the N.S.A. of the South Pacific Ocean to consolidate Fijí. We have heard from the Universal House of Justice that the early formation of the new National Assemblies in the South Pacific may depend upon the progress of the consolidation work in Fijí, and the Universal House of Justice regards it as particularly urgent that effective pioneer couples be encouraged to settle in Fijí. Any pioneer who is an expert in agriculture, medicine (including nursing) or education, could offer a particularly great service at this time to Fijí. The strong development of the Faith there would ensure a balance between material and spiritual progress.

Pacific Committee

## PUBLICITY

Excellent TV publicity was given to the Faith in a fifteen-minute programme in Welsh, transmitted live by B.B.C.'s Cardiff transmitters at lunchtime on Friday, December 4th, and again at 6.30 p.m. that day when the recording of it was transmitted. The correspondence column of the Orkney Press carried a long and well-disposed letter about the Faith; correspondence has again been exchanged by a local Baptist Minister and the Inverness L.S.A. in the "Inverness Courier" and news items about the Faith have been carried by that paper and also the "Highland News." The article published in the May, 1964 issue of the national magazine "Courier" has been reproduced in a local magazine in Oxford, and also in "Braille Digest," which prompted an enquiry about the Faith from a Blind Institute in the Philippines.

## OVERSEAS CAPITAL FUND

Amount donated in last two months—£450



# NEWS of the Communities

## World Religion Day in BARROW

WAY back in September we began to think about celebrating this event and felt that we didn't know enough people to be able to do more than the very simplest. We decided to pray for guidance as to how we should celebrate it, and also for more people to invite, to make it worth while. From then on it seemed to grow and develop and the result on January 19th was really wonderful. We first invited the Vicar to take part, but he declined; we found another friend to read from the New Testament; Dr. Vaidya, who had already had contact with Bahá'ís in Bombay and in Burnley, read from the Hindu Scriptures, choosing his own readings; Cynthia MacDonald's husband Peter read from the Old Testament and the three Bahá'ís covered the Buddhist, Islamic and Bahá'í Scriptures between them. We chose the readings to illustrate the theme "The Oneness of Mankind." The meeting was held in the home of Bill and Madeline Hellaby.

After the readings there were refreshments and then we showed slides of the Holy Land: places sacred to the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Bahá'í Faiths. We borrowed a projector and obtained the slides from several places: the Israel Government Tourist Office, and two Bahá'ís.

We put a large advertisement in the weekly paper and despatched a total of three dozen written invitations and several verbal ones. We invited the Editor of the Barrow News but he did not come. A nicely-written advert was displayed by a Newsagent, right in the middle of the door where everyone going in would see it. The day of the meeting we received a letter of good wishes from a complete stranger living near Cynthia, who was unable to come but would have done if he could. Two friends whom we didn't really expect turned up and were very interested. But the most unexpected of all was the arrival of two assistants from the Boots book department, whose head had been given an invitation and would also have come if she could.

## BELFAST World Religion Day

"Readings from the World's Scriptures" was the way in which the Belfast community organised this year's World Religion Day. The passages, selected from the sacred writings of eight different faiths, designed to show the essential unity of these faiths, was held

in one of Belfast's top hotels, situated in the city centre. Of the people reading, seven were actual representatives of their respective faiths, only the Buddhist had to be substituted by a Bahá'í. This was, we felt, quite an achievement for a not particularly international city such as ours. The attendance of sixty people, including the manager of the hotel, was considered a very reasonable response to the modest publicity outlay of 200 invitation cards and a short newspaper announcement.

## LONDON World Religion Day, 1965

ONCE again, the London Community took advantage of the opportunity offered by this annual occasion to gain good publicity for the Faith, by holding a large and well-advertised meeting in Kensington library, with distinguished guest speakers.

The theme of the meeting was "The gateway to universal peace," and after the reading of a prayer by Bahá'u'lláh, Donald Millar, as Chairman of the London Community, welcomed the guest speakers, who represented all the major Religions of the world, with the exception of Buddhism, whose representative was unable to attend this year. The religions were taken in chronological order, and each speaker was allowed a maximum of seven minutes.

Representative of the oldest religion to have survived, the High Priest of the Hindu Association, Shri Usher Budha-Arya recited a brief prayer, from his Faith, and then dealt with the Hindu emphasis on the need for the individual to find harmony within himself in order to establish peaceful relations with his fellow men, and to realise that the "I" within each one of us had nothing to do with age, sex, or personality, and was the same in all of us.

The Rev. Isaac Livingstone, Minister Emeritus of Golders Green Synagogue, said that the theme running through the whole of the Old Testament, was the need for Peace, above all. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth peace." He said that the Jewish greeting, even today, is "Shalom," meaning "peace". The teachings of Zarathustra on this same theme, were expounded by Dr. Sohrab Kutar, the High Priest of the Zoroastrians of the British Isles, who also prefaced his talk with the Zoroastrian greeting, and ended it with one of their own prayers.

Unlike the speakers who had just preceded him, the representative of the Church of England, the Arch-

deacon of London, the Rev. Martin G. Sullivan (whom believers with TV sets may have noticed at the funeral in St. Pauls, of Sir Winston Churchill) spoke entirely extempore, and quite spontaneously and forcefully. He paid warm tribute to the preceding speakers, who, he said, had taught him a great deal, and in the course of his own talk, he made an astonishing statement, "... that the Prince of Peace, whether we call Him Christ, or Bahá'u'lláh, or Buddha; whatever we call Him ... the Prince of Peace might rule ...". These words indicate that he is a man of progressive outlook, and a possible ally.

So far, the feeling of unity had been very apparent, but the next speaker introduced the first note of discord.

Maulvi 'Abdu'l, Majid, editor of the Islamic Review, and Imam of the mosque at Woking, felt outraged at having been introduced as the speaker for "Mohammedanism", and protested very strongly, making his points, all the way through his talk, with forceful waving of his notes, rather like a stick, as he said that the whole object of Islam was peace. He did, however, make a very good point when he said that Islam recognised no barriers of race, whereas we, in a so-called Christian country, were increasingly conscious of a colour problem, and that Islam practised its belief in the brotherhood of man. Some of us felt somewhat disturbed at his manner of speaking, but, strangely enough, some of the non-Bahá'í visitors were impressed by his very forcefulness.

Hugh McKinley speaking for us, stressed the fact that our world community is constantly gaining new adherents, anxious to work for the furtherance of Bahá'u'lláh's ideals, without attempting in any way to belittle the ideals of other faiths.

To round off the views expressed by these speakers, there was a contribution from the Rev. W. W. Simpson, Chairman of the Religious Organisations Committee of the U.N.A. in London, who said that the spirit of cordiality and spiritual harmony which had been so evident on this occasion, amongst the representatives of the varied beliefs of the peoples of the world, gave great hope for the future of mankind, and he was ready to support any organisation that worked for unity and peace in this way.

After the chairman's concluding prayer, Meherangiz Munsiff thanked all the guest speakers, and expressed her impression that if the speakers had been hidden behind the curtains, one could have imagined that there was only one voice speaking with different accents, so unanimous were the sentiments uttered by all. Before leaving, each speaker was presented with a Bahá'í book inscribed suitably.



# KNOW YOUR BAHÁ'Í LITERATURE

## KITAB-I-IQAN or THE BOOK OF CERTITUDE

By Baha'u'llah. Translated by Shoghi Effendi

"ALL the Scriptures and the mysteries thereof are condensed into this brief account" are Bahá'u'lláh's own words (p. 237) about the Kitáb-i-Iqán concerning which Shoghi Effendi wrote, "Well may it be claimed that of all the books revealed by the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation, this Book alone, by sweeping away the age-long barriers that have so insurmountably separated the great religions of the world, has laid down a broad and unassailable foundation for the complete and permanent reconciliation of their followers" (God Passes By, p. 138).

Familiarity with the Book of Certitude is thus clearly of first importance to all believers who are seeking to discharge their obligation to teach the Cause effectively and with knowledge and understanding.

In this same passage (G.P.B. pp. 138-9) Shoghi Effendi provides a special study outline of 15 sections comprising no fewer than 50 themes that are treated with authority by Bahá'u'lláh in this great work. Like all works of revelation the Kitáb-i-Iqán pulsates like a fountain, so to speak; yet, although it cannot accurately be described as a treatise and although some of the various themes recur in many places, it is clearly one complete organic whole in itself.

Revealed in defence of the Bábí Revelation (G.P.B. p. 172) the book was written down by Bahá'u'lláh in two days and nights in 1858 while He yet lived in Baghdad as a Bábí exile and before His public proclamation. It was given in answer to a brother of the Báb's mother, father of the Great Afán.

The two parts of the work are each prefaced by a quotation from the Bayán, quotations which provide their keynote, true understanding and true or spiritual sovereignty respectively.

The first part may be said to treat of four main topics: (i) To attain to the knowledge of God one must put one's trust in Him and disregard the standards of men (pp. 3-14). (ii) The reasons for failure to recognise and accept a Prophet are many (pp. 14-89). (iii) In this age the story of past Revelations is being repeated (pp. 13-83 passim). (iv) The people of the Bayán should take warning not to forget the wishes and admonitions of their own Holy Book, lest they in turn inflict upon a new

Manifestation what was inflicted upon the former (pp. 92-3).

The second and longer part seems to have eleven main subjects: (i) The Manifestations reveal an all-compelling power (pp. 97-139). (ii) The greatest of all blessings is to attain to the presence of the Manifestation in the Day of Resurrection (pp. 139-147). (iii) In each Dispensation occurs a return of the qualities exhibited in earlier Dispensations (pp. 148-161). (iv) All the Manifestations are at the same time the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (pp. 161-175). (v) The Manifestations of God have each a twofold station (pp. 152-154, 176-181). (vi) The seeker after divine knowledge must turn to the Prophets and to the illuminated in heart (pp. 182-191). (vii) The requirements for one who seeks the knowledge of God (pp. 192-195). (viii) The seeker thus endowed and cleansed of all impeding attachments will be transformed (pp. 196-199). (ix) By the 'City of Certitude' is meant the Word of God, which is the greatest proof of the Manifestation (pp. 199-211). (x) Every Dispensation "afflicted with the same spiritual disease" (p. 213) has believed its Prophet to be the final Manifestation of God (pp. 135-137, 213-221). (xi) There are many proofs of the truth of the New Revelation (pp. 221-257).

This outline offers only one of several possible frameworks of study. Others can be based on the symbolic terms used in Scripture, or on the proofs of the validity of a Manifestation of God, or on revealed truth and interpretation, or on divine tests.

As in all the works of Bahá'u'lláh there occur phrases, sentences, paragraphs that seem to be especially memorable. Each reader makes his own selection as they affect him at different times. Shoghi Effendi selected 23 passages comprising about 50 pages from this work when he compiled "Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh" and put them together in six sections (Nos. 13, 19, 22, 90, 91, 125).

Perhaps especially noteworthy are the 'purposes' of nine things that are given (1) God's tests (p. 8). (2) Creation (p. 29). (3) Symbolic terms (p. 49). (4) Changes of ordinance (p. 52). (5) Manifestation (p. 97). (6) The Prophets of God (p. 120). (7) Learning (p. 145). (8) Reading Scripture (p. 172). (9) Revelation (p. 240).







For many people the most memorable passage is that which is sometimes called the Seeker Passage (pp. 192-200). Others like to recall the two places where Bahá'u'lláh Himself illustrates teaching method (pp. 40 and 173). Others again remember Bahá'u'lláh's tribute to the Báb and His followers (pp. 224-228, 236) or His indication of the Báb's rank (pp. 243-244).

"O brother! Kindle with the oil of wisdom the lamp of the spirit within the innermost chamber of thy heart and guard it with the globe of understanding." (p. 61).

## Income from Donations

AS expected, donations fell away over the Christmas period and the gap increased by about £200. The challenge now facing this community is formidable; 27 pioneers needed by Ridván to maintain the Assemblies; our income from donations over £600 behind target; a call from the Universal House of Justice to support the increased needs of the European Continental Fund; and above all the urgent and imperative needs of the European Temple, which must be completed without further delay, so that its light can shine with full intensity on the spiritually starved and dark continent. All these call for a sustained outpouring of our resources of money and manpower, and yet we have been able to transmit in the past two months only £50 to the Mother Temple. The beloved Guardian held this community in high esteem and expected great things from it. Surely the British Bahá'ís will arise to meet the challenge.

Donations for all the funds can be sent to the National Treasurer, Charles Macdonald, 75 Eglantine Avenue, Belfast, 9.

Budget		Actual To Date
£7,000		£7,000
£6,000		£6,000
£5,564		£5,000
£5,000		£4,951
£4,000		£4,000
£3,000		£3,000
£2,000		£2,000
£1,000		£1,000
Gap £613		



# NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY'S NEWS LETTER

## THE FAST, MARCH 2nd-20th

The month of 'Alá (Loftiness) is the month of Fasting. It begins on March 2nd and ends after sunset on March 20th. During that period Bahá'ís all over the world between the ages of 15 and 70 (those over 70 who want to keep the Fast and are strong enough, are free to do so) abstain completely from food and drink from sunrise to sunset. Travellers are exempt from fasting, but if they want to fast while travelling are free to do so.

In the Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh has written, "We have commanded you to pray and fast from the beginning of maturity; this is ordained by God..." Shoghi Effendi, writing of the Fast, said, "It is essentially a period of meditation and prayer, of spiritual recuperation, during which the believer must strive to make the necessary readjustments in his inner life, and to refresh and reinvigorate the spiritual forces latent in his soul. Its significance and purposes are, therefore, fundamentally spiritual in character. Fasting is symbolic, and a reminder of abstinence from selfish and carnal desires."

It is a wonderful experience to keep the Fast. As the dawn breaks on each new day and we use the prayers and meditations which Bahá'u'lláh revealed specially for this time, we become more and more aware of what it means to be a Bahá'í. This is the time to centre

our thoughts specially on the World Centre, to turn to the Qiblih — the point of Adoration — which is Bahá'u'lláh Himself at Bahjí on the Plain of 'Akká. Then our thoughts can travel on, across the nine miles of the sparkling Bay, to Haifa and Mount Carmel, where the Universal House of Justice meet every day for prayer in the Shrine of the Báb. In our own prayers we can remember the Universal House of Justice, the Hands of the Cause of God, the national assemblies, local assemblies, pioneers and believers throughout the world. With our hearts filled with a new spaciousness and our souls stirred by the radiant light of dawn in the Holy Land, we can bring our thoughts once more to the British Isles, and pray for the spread of the Faith here. The National Assembly urges everyone to pray with a new intensity and longing for the filling of all the gaps and the strengthening of our fifty local assemblies; for the opening of the goal towns; and the rapid expansion of the Faith through teaching and new declarations.

This is the first Fast of the Nine Year Plan, the first Plan of the Universal House of Justice. In two years' time there is to be a great, world-wide proclamation of the Faith. The National Assembly offers to every believer for meditation at this time some words of 'Abdu'lBahá "All the prophets were sent, all the books were revealed, that the law of love might be pro-

moted. Let us have love and more love, a love that melts all opposition, that sweeps away all barriers, that conquers all foes, a love that boundeth in charity, large-heartedness, tolerance, and noble striving, a love that triumphs over all obstacles, a boundless, an irresistible, sweeping love."

## DECLARATIONS

We are delighted to welcome to the Faith Mrs. Lily Tingle of Harrogate; Quentin S. Lewis (Youth) of Southsea; Mrs. Rina Pearson of Clatford, Nr. Andover; Mr. John C. Hollis of Ludgershall, Andover; Mrs. Mildred Unwin of Sheffield; Miss Afshar Mojdeh (Youth) of Bournemouth; Mrs. Christabel K. Welham of Norwich; and Hossein Achtehi of Birmingham, Bahá'í youth claiming voting rights.

## SLIDES, TAPES AND RECORDS OF WORLD CONGRESS AND HAIFA CONVENTION

Miss Mary Prince, who is Secretary of the Committee responsible for the distribution of the slides, tapes and L.P. records, has moved from 12 Elms Road, Leicester, to 4 Barrington Road, Leicester, and all orders and enquiries should be sent to her new address. Please note that an increase in tax and the new 15% import duty make it necessary for the cost of these items to be increased to £3-5-0 for the slides and £5-0-0 for the slides and L.P. record or tape. We are just negotiating with the Board of Trade to see whether any concession can be granted to local assemblies, who will be using these items for the advancement of religious knowledge.

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE No. 1 A/C.

30th November, 1964—5th January, 1965 (incl.)

INCOME				EXPENDITURE			
Donations :—				N.S.A.			
L.S.A.'s and Groups	...	...	£186 13 9 (30)*	Travel	...	...	£77 9 6
Individuals	...	...	380 10 4 (77)	Office	...	...	163 9 11
				Tel. & Cables	...	...	16 6
			£567 4 1	Postage & Stationery	...	...	26 10 7
Less Payments against Covenants			22 2 2	Gouldens	...	...	26 5 0
				Journal	...	...	6 10 0
			£545 1 11	e.t.c.	...	...	73 10 1
Interest and Dividends	...	...	91 11 2	Other Home Committees	...	...	30 14 0
Lodged in error (No. 2/3 A/C)	...	...	60 7 8	Overseas Committees	...	...	13 2 2
Refunds to us :—				Pioneer Committees	...	...	220 8 3
Tax	...	...	18 4 3	Other Committees	...	...	10 0 0
Sundry	...	...	7 3 2	Extraordinary	...	...	50 4 0
Excess exp. over income	...	...	159 11 10	Monthly Transfers:—			
				H.Q.—Rprs. & Dec.	...	...	35 0 0
				—Running	...	...	100 0 0
				Donations	...	...	48 0 0
			£882 0 0				£882 0 0

\* Communities contributing:—Bangor, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Brighton Children, Brize Norton, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Eccles, Edinburgh, Exeter, Jersey, Inverness, Leicester, London, Malta, Manchester, Motherwell & Bellshill, Newcastle, Norwich, Nottingham, Peterboro', Reading, Romford, Salisbury, Sheffield, Sutton Coldfield, Swansea, Watford.