

The Baha'i Spiritual Assembly,
London, ENGLAND.

Nov - 19th 1924.

To

2d Letter

Dear Baha'i Friends,

Since the last Circular Letter the thoughts and activities of the friends in England have been centered on preparations for the presentation of the Baha'i Message on Sept. 26th at the "Conference of Some Living Religions within the British Empire" which was held at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, London, (instead of at the Wembley Exhibition Conference Hall as first planned) - from Sept. 22nd to Oct. 3rd inclusive.

The first address of the opening session was given by Col. Sir Francis Younghusband, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., and struck the keynote of the Conference, in its breadth of vision and presentation of this sacred opportunity for clearer understanding of the basis of varying religious faiths. Sir Dennison Ross, C.I.E., Ph. D., in the Chair.

In response to expressions of loyalty which had been sent to King George, gracious acknowledgment was made to the members of the Conference through His Majesty's Secretary, and read from the Chair, as was also an appreciative Message from the British Premier.

Under the auspices of the School of Oriental Studies, (University of London) and the Sociological Society, the Programme consisted of two parts.

Part I. was devoted to a series of papers on the Oriental Religions and various Modern Movements arising out of them. Each paper was contributed by a scholarly adherent, the purpose of the Conference being to present a descriptive picture of the leading Oriental Faiths as they appear to their adherents. In most cases the papers were read by their authors, or their authors were present. All speakers from the Platform were accorded an equal status, and it was planned that there should be no controversy, either religious or political, and no debate. The purpose of the Conference being to familiarize those attending with Living Religions less well known in England, it was not deemed necessary to include Judaism or Christianity in the Programme. The Religions presented were:-

Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and their chief sects; Jainism, The Parsis; The Sikhs; The Sufis; The Brahmo Somaj; The Baha'i Message; The Chinese Religions - Taoism, Confucianism; The Primitive Religions of Africa - East and West; including The Bantu Beliefs; and the Beliefs of the Maoris, New Zealand.

Part II. Psychology and Sociology of Religions, consisted of a series of papers by specialists who expounded the religious process and its mode of expression and purpose as it had come under their observation, viz.- Man and Nature; Animate Nature; Its Harmonies and Disharmonies; The Primitive Occupations, their Ideals and Temptations; Holy Ways and Holy Places; The Sacred City; Religion and the Life of Civilization; The Ideal Man; Religion on the Map of Life.

Bookstalls were arranged with the literature regarding each of the Religions represented on the Programme. The Baha'i Bookstall, through the co-operation of the Friends and the untiring services of Mrs. George and Mr. Simpson and their helpers, was most attractive and a centre of much interest and inquiry.

The power of united prayer and the spiritual unity of the Friends all over the world were never more apparent than on the 26th. A Cablegram from Shoghi Effendi to the Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly opened the session devoted to the Baha'i Message. It was as follows:-

"May Wembley fulfil your fondest hopes. Pray convey authorities my sincere regret at inability to be present. I wish them all success in their noble endeavours."

Shoghi"

The paper which presented the Baha'i Message was the product of consultation and co-operation, and was read by Mr. Mountfort Mills, the Delegate from the Canadian Baha'is, in clear and reverent tones reaching every part of the large Hall, and was listened to with rapt attention. Through the guidance of Abdu'l-Baha the text was clearly inspired by His Spirit, which was felt by all believers.

Mr. Ruhi Afnan then spoke in faith and wisdom, his youth and enthusiasm winning all hearts to a close attention to the Baha'i Teachings he gave with sincerity and conviction.

The power of the spiritual Presence on the 26th was like a baptism. We felt the outpouring which Abdu'l-Baha foretold would awaken the world with the Divine Message, and this must have been reflected in all hearts who were praying with us for the illumination of the world on that day of great opportunity.

The Proceedings of the Conference are to be printed in two Volumes. The price of each Volume will be 12/6, for the two ordered together, 25/-. To be obtained from "The Secretaries", 17 Mecklenburgh Square, London, W.C.1., England.

The text of the two Baha'i Papers cannot be given out until these volumes are published. This was agreed to by all who participated in the Conference, and endorsed, on the behalf of the Baha'is by the Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly.

An Abstract of the Baha'i Papers read on Sept. 26th was given out by the Secretaries of the Conference, and by agreement with the London Spiritual Assembly forwarded to the different Baha'i Magazines. No printed page, however, can give the Spirit which seemed to make every word uttered about The Cause a living reality.

Throughout the Conference, tolerance of each other's views not only developed into sympathetic consideration, but for many of those present must have resulted in the realization of the Declaration of Baha'u'llah that - "The foundation of the Religion of God is one".

On the 27th, Lady Blomfield as a Baha'i, gave a reception at Claridge's Hotel to all the delegates of the different religions attending the Conference. It was a notable gathering, and the spirit of friendliness manifested between the representatives of different races and religions made it more than a social function, for it was as though Abdu'l-Baha was the Host, and the Glory of Baha'u'llah lighted each heart in that happy company. All the believers of the world seemed present in that unity, as the Baha'is moved about in joyful faith.

Another outcome of the Conference was a Sermon preached by Dr. Walsh on the Baha'i Message at the Steinway Hall, the Sunday following the 25th. News of this will reach the Friends through Baha'i Magazines.

On Oct. 7th and 13th, Baha'i Public Meetings were held in the Caxton Hall, Westminster. Mr. Mills speaking on both occasions with whole hearted sincerity. Great interest was manifested by a number of strangers present.

The regular Wednesday Meetings at Lindsay Hall have begun, and those attracted, rejoice the Friends by their earnest seeking for knowledge of the Cause.

Mr. and Mrs. French, of California, were present at the Conference and were warmly welcomed by the Friends. Also Mrs. Wilkins and other friends from Australia, who had first heard of the Message from Mr. and Mrs. Dunn. Mrs. Wilkins has opened her Australian home for the Baha'i Meetings, and on her return hopes to gather there all who desire to know of the Baha'i Teachings.

The waves of God's Mercy are successive and continuous!

Allah'u'Abha!

With Baha'i faith and love,

Your co-workers in the Cause of God,

Correspondence Committee for -
The London Spiritual Assembly.

(Signed)

Ethel L. Rosenberg

Secretary.

