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SILENCE

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Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.

—Article I, *Bill of Rights*.

Adopted by the Congress of the United States of America. December 15, 1791.

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

The Bahai Cause had its inception in Persia, being inaugurated in 1844 with the declaration of the Bab (Arabic word for *gate*) which was to the effect: that a New Era had dawned, and that he, the Bab, was the Announcer of the imminent appearance of a World Teacher whose Message was to revolutionize the concepts of men and nations. The ministry of the Bab was of short duration, terminating in martyrdom—historic fate of the Forerunner. Meanwhile Baha-O-Llah, scion of a noble house of Persia, had renounced his position and estates to cast his lot in with the followers of the Bab (known as Babis). Persecution and death were the price paid by these devoted men for faith in a new Cause of human brotherhood, and Baha-O-Llah was imprisoned with the rest. It was at this time, in an underground dungeon in Teheran, that he received the revelation that he himself was the One whose coming had been foretold by the Bab; it was here that he was commissioned with the task of making out of the old barbaric world a *New World* of reason and justice.

Baha-O-Llah was not intended to die at the birth of the movement. More than twenty thousand persons who believed in the Bab, and later in him, sacrificed their lives for their Faith; but he, safeguarded by fate, was, with his family, banished to Turkey and then to Palestine. There, the prison walls of Acca, which, in their twenty foot depth, had withstood the cannon of Napoleon, crumbled, figura-

BROKEN SILENCE

The Story of Today's Struggle
for Religious Freedom

by

MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Heart Phantasies

The New Humanity

Abdul Baha in Egypt

Renaissance

The Song of the Caravan

Living Pictures (Co-author, Julie Chanler)

I Heard Him Say

Silver Sun (Co-author, Julie Chanler)

The Bible of Mankind

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Religion is a subject on which I have ever been most scrupulously reserved. I have considered it a matter between every man and his Maker, in which no other, and far less the public, has a right to intermeddle.

—THOMAS JEFFERSON.

The love of religious liberty is a stronger sentiment than an attachment to civil or political freedom. That freedom which the conscience demands, and which men feel bound by their hopes of salvation to contend for, can hardly fail to be attained. Conscience in the cause of religion, and the worship of Deity, prepares the mind to act and suffer beyond almost all other causes.

History instructs us that this love of religious liberty, a compound sentiment in the breast of men, made up of the dearest sense of right and the highest conviction of duty, is able to look the sternest despotism in the face.

—DANIEL WEBSTER.

The Way of Freedom is opened! Hasten ye! The Fountain of Knowledge is gushing! Drink ye! Say, O Friends: 'The Tabernacle of Oneness is raised; look not upon each other with the eye of strangeness. Ye are all the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch.

Truly, I say: whatever lessens ignorance and increases knowledge, that has been, is and shall be accepted by the Creator.

—BAHA-O-LLAH: *Bahai Scriptures*,
Pages 132, 133.

Praise be to God! you are living upon the great continent of the west enjoying the perfect liberty, security and peace of this just government . . . for in this human world there is no greater blessing than liberty. You do not know. I who for forty years have been a prisoner, do know. I do know the value and blessing of liberty. For you have been and are now living in freedom and you have no fear of anybody. Is there a greater blessing than this? Freedom! Liberty! Security! These are the great bestowals of God. Therefore praise ye God!

—*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
Vol. I, page 49.

Words of ABDUL BAHA from an address delivered before the Metropolitan African Methodist Church, M Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., April 23, 1912.

THE TRUMPET LIES IN THE DUST

The trumpet lies in the dust.

The wind is weary, the light is dead.

Ah, the evil day!

Come, fighters carrying your flags, and singers, with your
war-songs!

Come, pilgrims of the march, hurrying on your journey!

The trumpet lies in the dust waiting for us.

I was on my way to the temple with my evening offerings, seeking for a place of rest after the day's dusty toil: hoping my hurts would be healed and the stains in my garment washed white, when I found thy trumpet lying in the dust.

Was it not the hour for me to light my evening lamp?

Had not the night sung its lullaby to the stars?

O thou blood-red rose, my poppies of sleep have paled
and faded!

I was certain my wanderings were over and my debts
all paid, when suddenly I came upon thy trumpet lying in
the dust.

Strike my drowsy heart with thy spell of youth!
Let my joy in life blaze up in fire.
Let the shafts of awakening fly through the heart of night,
and a thrill of dread shake blindness and palsy.
I have come to raise thy trumpet from the dust.

Sleep is no more for me—my walk shall be through
showers of arrows.
Some shall run out of their houses and come to my side—
some shall weep.
Some in their beds shall toss and groan in dire dreams,
For to-night thy trumpet shall be sounded.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE,
from Fruit-Gathering.

FOREWORD

This is an amazing book even for our amazing generation which has become shock-proof. The strident march of totalitarian modes of thinking, here as well as abroad, has so changed the shape of the world we used to know that a momentous invention of science leaves us indifferent and the assailing of man's cherished liberties creates but a ripple of stir and commotion.

It is fitting and proper that citizens of a self-governing State voluntarily impose upon themselves certain restraints in the exercise of political rights when a crisis is impending. One may or may not agree that the crisis facing the United States of America has been serious enough to necessitate the introduction of peace-time conscription. One may or may not agree that preparedness for violent offense and defense is the best way to meet the worldwide crisis. But no one can question the right of the American State—which is but another term for the American people banded together for political purposes—no one can question the right of the American State to impose upon its citizens certain denials of freedom involved in conscription.

Political rights—rights to life, liberty, property and the pursuit of happiness—are derived from the State. They are conferred upon the citizens by the State. But there are *certain rights that inhere in man as man*—rights that are not subject to the jurisdiction of the State, rights that de-

rive from an authority higher than the State, from the dictates of one's conscience; from the still small voice within, which is the voice of the Most High.

Let us then distinguish between the *political rights of man* and the *human rights of man*. Political rights are conferred upon the citizen by the State and may be withheld from him by the State; but human rights can neither be conferred upon man nor withheld from him by the State. Limitations upon human rights are imposed by the State at its own peril. And the history of man testifies to the fact that *in every combat the State has had to give way ultimately before human rights*. The most striking illustration is the triumph of the Christian Church over the Roman State.

What the State cannot do in the matter of curtailing *human rights* no man or association of men is competent to do. For, the State, by definition, is an association of all "members" who become citizens by the fact of association for political purposes. The State, in other words, is the most inclusive and the most powerful association in every human society.

Every State, tyrannical, oligarchic, absolutist, dictatorial or democratic, of necessity comprehends within itself various associations for the enrichment of man's enjoyment—politically, economically, physically, intellectually, socially, spiritually. The characteristic of a democratic State is that it encourages all types of voluntary associations whereas the other forms of State merely tolerate voluntary associations—and that, too, on condition that their functioning does not undermine the authority of the State.

Among the most cherished human rights are:

- (1) Freedom of Conscience;
- (2) Freedom to Seek Truth;
- (3) Freedom to Experiment with Truth;
- (4) Freedom to Follow the Inner Light;
- (5) Freedom to Give Allegiance, unto Death, to whatever Cause one's Conscience Believes to be Right;
- (6) Freedom to Worship God in one's own Way.

Religious associations and institutions—churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, hierarchies, congregations, parishes—arise to help man in the enjoyment of his basic human right, namely, freedom to worship God in his own way, in terms of his inner light. Unfortunately, even religious associations and institutions, creations as they are of human beings, tend to go the way of all flesh; in course of time they develop their peculiar rites and rituals and prescribe structuralized forms of behavior, rendered hallowed by time and tradition.

Institutions are accepted ways of doing things—with a tendency toward structuralization. Man cannot live without institutions, neither can he live with institutions. An institution arises as an instrumentality to subserve a given end. Soon the end becomes subordinated to the maintenance of the institution. This then is the supreme dilemma of the human race: Man unknown to institutions is less than human; man dominated by institutions is also less than human; and yet, man eternally strives, as he must,

by means of institutions, to realize his worth as a citizen, his dignity as a child of God.

Eternal vigilance, it has been said, is the price of political freedom. Eternal vigilance, it may be said, is also the price of freedom from the tyranny of institutionalism. I venture to submit that every generation of free men is called upon to be on the alert in evaluating whether an institution is functioning as what it was intended to be, namely, as an instrumentality, or whether it has arrogated unto itself the role of the end. And if the generation as a whole is incompetent, as it may well be, to make proper evaluation, it is imperative that each generation be blessed with free souls, with men and women of vision and courage, who shall proclaim: "The Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

Democracy, broadbased upon the Bill of Rights, not only guarantees political rights but also very wisely makes ample provision for full enjoyment of human rights. The U. S. Constitution most explicitly guarantees freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, and in no uncertain terms restrains Congress from "prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The Courts have faithfully safeguarded the rights embodied in the Bill of Rights. And the Executive branch of the U. S. Government, far from interfering with freedom of religion, has from time to time championed freedom of conscience and religion for all mankind.

So long as the U. S. Constitution remains vital in the affairs of this nation, so long is the enjoyment of human as well as political rights of man assured. Indeed, this living example of the virtues of American democracy should act as a beacon-light to the rest of mankind.

II

In this book we have an interesting case history of man versus institution. The facts in the case are simple. In the last century there arose in Iran (Persia) three modern Prophets of the new dispensation—The Bab (1819-1850), Baha-O-Llah (1817-1892), Abdul Baha (1844-1921).

Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha taught, among other things:

- (1) Oneness of mankind—no racial prejudice;
- (2) Harmony of all religions—each religion is a divine revelation and, therefore, worthy of respect;
- (3) Reconciliation between science and religion;
- (4) Universal religion—to foster appreciation of all faiths;
- (5) Universal peace—through the establishment of a World Organization, through international arbitration and an international Parliament, through the removal of artificial customs barriers, through universal disarmament;
- (6) An international (auxiliary) language, to be created and adopted for international communication.
- (7) Independent investigation of truth;
- (8) Non-institutionalism;
- (9) Universalism.

"You cannot organize the Bahai Cause," said Abdul Baha. Bahaism, literally the Religion of Light, is meant to act as a leaven that leaveneth the whole lump. It is intended to reinforce and reinvigorate the eternal truths and ancient wisdoms embodied in the different religions of mankind. The Bahai teaching is, in a sense, a new tool of spritual insight, calculated to help humanity realize the age-old hope of peace on earth and goodwill among men.

Along with his own teachings and his vital interpretations of the message of Baha-O-Llah, Abdul Baha left a Will appointing his grandson Shoghi Effendi as the "Guardian" of the Bahai Cause and leaving directions for the election of an International Council which should in the future guide the development of the movement and co-ordinate the activities of its followers in accordance with the principles of Baha-O-Llah.

The four thousand odd followers of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha in the United States and Canada and some thousands of others scattered abroad seized upon Abdul Baha's Will as their fulcrum around which to organize the activities of the new cause, which was meant to be universal in scope and non-institutional in character. At once Bahai Assemblies, here as well as abroad, became like unto fraternal orders if not like unto secret societies with their unique rituals and paraphernalia.

The guardian, hierarchies, assemblies, rituals, taboos, rules for membership, approved forms of behavior, committees on publications, boards of censors, causes for excommunication—all the elaborate ramifications of the institutional pattern conspired to banish the soul of universalism from the Bahai teachings.

Professing Bahais soon became the prisoners of their own institutions. Against this travesty of the universalism of the Founders, against this imprisonment of the spirits of these great Prophets of our age, a few brave souls, devoted disciples and true, raised their protest. Among these protestant voices the most effective have been those of the author of this book, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, and of his co-worker, Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler. They have been insistently calling upon the Bahais to go back to the original, pure teachings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha—indeed, to the original, pure teachings of all the Teachers of mankind.

And the high priests of Bahai institutionalism have rewarded these two free souls with excommunication. It is a strange story—one could hardly believe such sacerdotal authoritarianism would be exercised or accepted by any group of persons in the twentieth century. And yet, enlightened American citizens have been accomplices in this nefarious business!

The story of man versus institution, of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab versus the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, finally culminates in a lawsuit. Excommunication on the religious plane was now to be buttressed with political and civil disability, with a restraint to Sohrab and his co-workers from the very use of the word Bahai!

The clear-cut judgment of the United States Courts in favor of man as against the institution heartens every champion of freedom of conscience.

This fresh triumph of the human rights of man over

the organizational rights of hierarchies should lead all free spirits the world over to offer their thanks to the Most High from whom derive the human rights of man. This judicial vindication should encourage our generation to cherish all the more reverently the political as well as the human rights of man.

HARIDAS T. MUZUMDAR.

New York City
Sept. 25, 1941.

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

The Bahai Cause had its inception in Persia, being inaugurated in 1844 with the declaration of the Bab (Arabic word for *gate*) which was to the effect: that a New Era had dawned, and that he, the Bab, was the Announcer of the imminent appearance of a World Teacher whose Message was to revolutionize the concepts of men and nations. The ministry of the Bab was of short duration, terminating in martyrdom—historic fate of the Forerunner. Meanwhile Baha-O-Llah, scion of a noble house of Persia, had renounced his position and estates to cast his lot in with the followers of the Bab (known as Babis). Persecution and death were the price paid by these devoted men for faith in a new Cause of human brotherhood, and Baha-O-Llah was imprisoned with the rest. It was at this time, in an underground dungeon in Teheran, that he received the revelation that he himself was the One whose coming had been foretold by the Bab; it was here that he was commissioned with the task of making out of the old barbaric world a *New World* of reason and justice.

Baha-O-Llah was not intended to die at the birth of the movement. More than twenty thousand persons who believed in the Bab, and later in him, sacrificed their lives for their Faith; but he, safeguarded by fate, was, with his family, banished to Turkey and then to Palestine. There, the prison walls of Acca, which, in their twenty foot depth, had withstood the cannon of Napoleon, crumbled, figura-

tively speaking, before his dynamic Message. To all parts the Word went, East and West, North and South, and when, at an advanced age, Baha-O-Llah departed from this life, the Cause was already firmly established in countless loyal hearts throughout the Orient.

Abdul Baha was nine years old when he went into exile with his illustrious father, Baha-O-Llah. Release came to him at the age of sixty-four when, in 1908, the Young Turks overthrew the Ottoman Empire; and he immediately made use of his freedom by setting out on a journey, which led him throughout Europe and North America, to deliver the Message to the Occident. In 1921, he passed into the world beyond from his home in Haifa, Palestine, leaving behind a Will and Testament in which his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, was designated as Guardian of the Cause.

II

Here, I wish to affirm my conviction that the Will of Abdul Baha is valid and that his appointment of Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Bahai Cause is unchallengeable. Nevertheless, I take exception to certain policies and methods initiated by Shoghi Effendi and the Bahai Administration established under his leadership.

The teachings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha are liberal to the nth degree, and broad beyond the outposts of human thought. It was the intention of the Founders to establish an unorganized movement, so all-inclusive and free as to be immune to the natural proclivities of men to restrict and limit. The fact that restriction and limitation

have already set in and are fast gaining ground, at this date, only twenty years after the removal from our midst of Abdul Baha, is a matter of profound concern to all those who, labels apart, believe in promoting Universal Religion.

The Bahai Cause, as founded by Baha-O-Llah nearly a century ago and as interpreted by his son Abdul Baha, was and still is a **UNIVERSAL RELIGION**. Its principles were intended to safeguard the conscience of man from interference by any hierarchical organization; to spiritualize society and to socialize religion; to unify the fundamental ideals of the World Faiths; to bestow upon every child of God the precious gift of liberty and to harmonize the conflicting interests of nations, races and peoples of the earth with the power of spirit. However, the present day Bahai Administration under the title of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada has, through its dogmas and creeds, frustrated the aims of the Founders of the Bahai Faith.

For over twelve years, I have followed the advice of philosophers and poets who eulogized silence, and held my tongue and pen in leash, the while witnessing the daily crucifixion of the movement which I love and believe in. At the same time, I continued to spread the Bahai Teachings through the medium of The New History Society, which I had formed for that purpose in conjunction with Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler. Then suddenly, the Bahai authorities brought suit against me and Mrs. Chanler on the ground that the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada had made a trade-mark of the word *Bahai* and that conse-

quently this name was their exclusive property. The legal action broke the chains of silence and resulted in a frank setting forth of the issues involved.

Thus, while the litigation was under way, *Broken Silence*, little by little, came into being. Appearing in the form of articles, published consecutively in *New History*, monthly magazine of The New History Society, it became the expression of innermost thoughts, pent up and stored away during the passage of years. I had never expected to strip my mind publicly; I had not dreamed and, especially, I had not wished to share my anxieties with others. I had meant to proceed on my own way, serving the Cause of Baha-O-Llah according to my light, the while leaving a clear passage for the Bahai Administration to do likewise.

This course of action came to a full stop with the institution of court proceedings. Overnight, the matter, which for so long had been treated with the utmost discretion, was brought into the public domain, and the time for ignoring the fundamental differences that existed between the liberal Bahais and the National Spiritual Assembly was at an end. Consequently, *Broken Silence* represents the lifting, under duress, of self-imposed restraint.

With the appearance of the first article in *New History*, copies of this little magazine were mailed to all the Bahais listed in the office of the Society. This was done, partly, because it was certain that the Bahai authorities would not give a full account of the legal proceedings to its membership; and, partly, because discussion of the lawsuit led to discussion of the Administration as it stands today, and

this, now that the barriers were down, seemed to be in order.

Personally, I value the democratic principle, being assured that affairs are safest in the hands of the people; therefore, I felt that I was not overstepping the lines of propriety in making available to my fellow Bahais the conclusions which I had reached, supported as they were, in every instance, with documentation. Neither I nor my associate, Mrs. Chanler, was perturbed at being, from time to time, pictured in Bahai publications as *enemies, adversaries, foes, betrayers and covenant-breakers*, for these were only opinions, or simulated opinions; and we felt that there were links yet unbroken between the body of the believers and ourselves. We thought it possible that, on the whole, we were being given credit for sincerity; even as we gave credit on this score to the majority of the Bahais.

In order to cope with the disturbance created in the minds of Bahais by the challenging articles appearing monthly in *New History*, the National Spiritual Assembly advised its membership as follows:—

In response to inquiries from many believers who wish to know what they should do with the literature received unsolicited from The New History Society, the National Assembly advises the friends to mark the envelopes "refused" and drop them in the nearest post box or post office for return to the sender.

—Bahai News, May, 1941, Page 6.

When the returned magazines were received at the office,

the names appearing on the envelopes were removed from the files, and no further literature was sent.

In a letter from the Guardian's secretary, appearing in the July 1941 issue of *Bahai News*, which is addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly, reference is made to the fact that Shoghi Effendi *has received the material sent to him regarding the legal action taken against The New History Society, as well as copies of their monthly publication*. Actually, ever since this problem was first dealt with, the editors of *New History*, on their own part, sent to the Guardian every issue of their magazine. We believed that this was the just thing to do and considered that, in a controversy which had entered the realm of the courts, the subject-matter should be at the disposal of both the authorities and the people.

Abdul Baha taught that everyone should work out things for himself. He said:—

God has given man the eye of investigation, by which he may see and recognize truth. He has endowed man with ears, that he may hear the message of reality and conferred upon him the gift of reason, by which he may discover things for himself. This is his endowment and equipment for the investigation of reality. Man is not intended to see through the eye of another, hear through another's ears nor comprehend with another's brain . . . Therefore depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of your own investigation; otherwise, you will be utterly submerged in the sea of ignorance and deprived of all the bounties of God.

—*Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
Vol. II, page 287.

III

To the students of the origin and growth of religion, *Broken Silence* puts a number of searching questions:—

Can religion become a dominant factor in the lives of the people without the paraphernalia of creeds and dogmas?

Is it possible to preserve in religion the essential simplicity of the spirit with the emergence of a monopolistic, ecclesiastical order?

Can true spiritual democracy function alongside of a totalitarian hierarchy?

Which should become the test of fellowship: moral, ethical principles or theological, sectarian doctrines?

Is religion a quickening, an illumination, a fraternity, or is it a close corporation with exclusive privileges?

Can every man approach his Maker directly, or is it necessary to do so through the intermediation of authorities approved by a constitution and by-laws, together with various other fetters forged upon the anvil of commercial greed and priestly ambition?

Is religion freedom of conscience, or is it subservience to any individual or group of individuals, no matter how highly placed and outwardly respected?

What is religion? Is it communion with the soul of the universe, or strict adherence to fossilized and crystallized theologies? Is it the trumpet of the spirit, or the voice of materialism? Is it the Infinite Heaven and the expanse of the earth, or a temple built in a certain locality? Is it the leadership of God or the domination of man?

Is religion the lifting of the standard of universal brotherhood, the unveiling of the mysteries of cosmic consciousness, or is it the maintenance of a clan and of tribal consciousness?

What is the mission of religion in our modern age? The Prophets have postulated a world community—undogmatic, super-racial and non-partisan. Do we find it in our hearts and minds to take them seriously?

Is it our task to carry out their intention?

IV

In a letter recently received from a prominent Bahai of long standing, I come across these lines:—*For a believer like you to differ with Shoghi Effendi is a great sin, an unpardonable sin.*

This dogmatic assertion of my fellow Bahai brings to my memory experiences of long ago which apply to the same subject—difference of opinion; and I will close this introduction with a little story about Abdul Baha which I herewith relate for the first time.

Once in a while, I disagreed with the Master. In such instances, he would sit and listen to my arguments on some project or other and, after ten or fifteen minutes, would rise to his feet. I also would be standing. Then, he would twist one of my ears, slap me forcibly on the cheek, and thunder:—

Mirza Ahmad, you have courage! We shall do as you suggest.

Occasionally, having started to move away, he would turn around and, with a twinkle in his eye, would add:—

Mirza Ahmad! Next time, display more courage.

Impressed, bewildered, I would be left alone to marvel at the human and divine miracle that was Abdul Baha.

In these pages certain Persian words and names will be found spelled in more ways than one—Bahai, Baha'i; Baha-O-Llah, Baha-U-Llah, Baha'u'llah; Abdul Baha, 'Abdu'l-Baha, etc.

When Bahai writings were first translated into English, Baha-O-Llah's name was, for instance, spelled as Baha-O-Llah. Later, the central letter O was replaced by U, making Baha-U-Llah. Again, in these latter years, The New History Society found it advisable to return to the original spelling because it produces a more correct pronunciation of the word.

In the publications of the "Guardian" and the Bahai Administration certain apostrophes are used as well. These are in accordance with the rules established by the Orientalists of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, England.

Throughout this book, the quoted extracts carry the spelling exactly as adopted by an author or editor at the given time.

In Bahai literature, letters and communications from Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha are referred to as Tablets.

MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB.

New York City

Sept. 24, 1941.

PART ONE

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

1. I Am A Bahai

2. Bahai Odyssey

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills
from whence cometh my help.*

—Psalms, Chapter 121, Verse 1



POST

CORRESPONDENCE

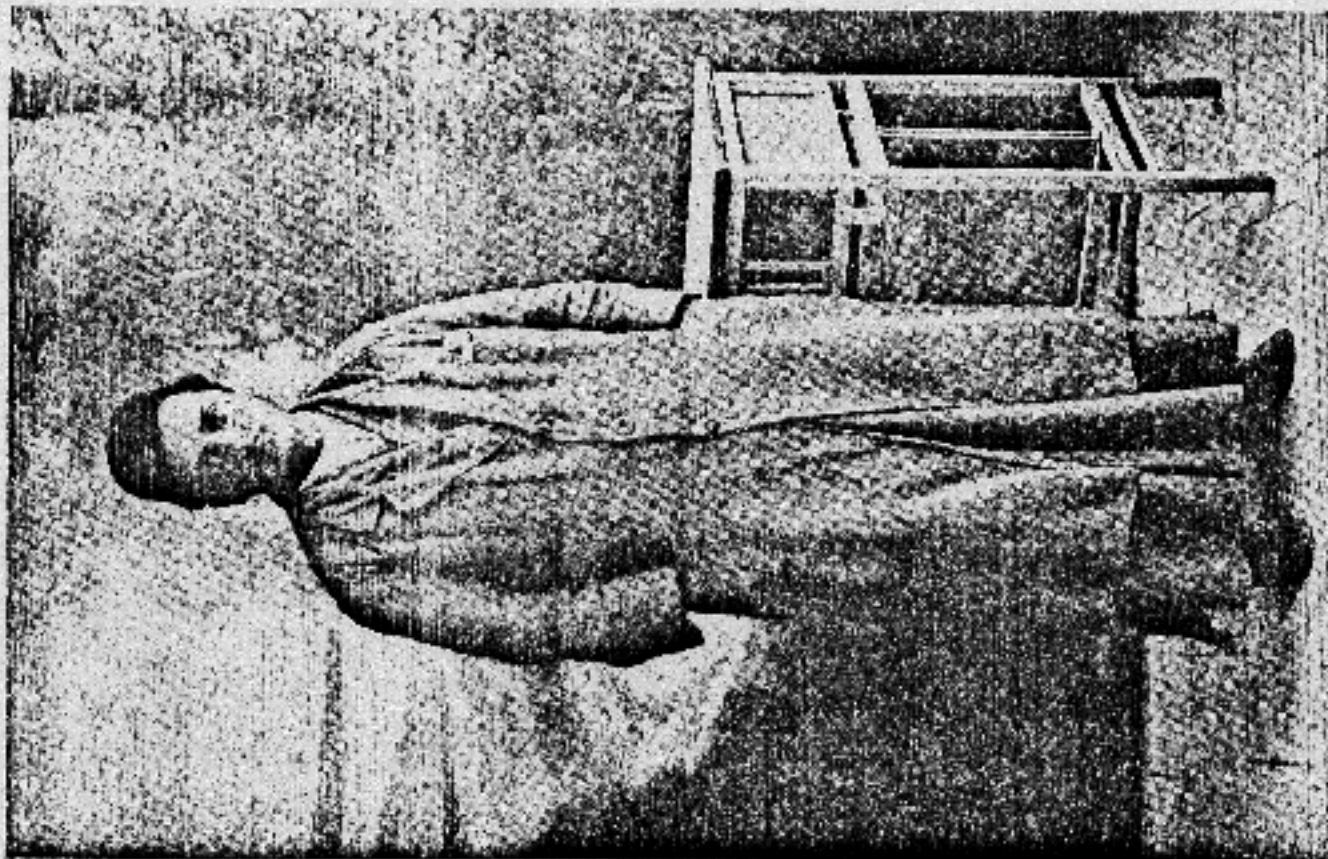
Mirza July 13. 1919
Dear Ahmad!



Sending greetings! The friends
all tenderly
remember you at the
sumptuous feasts & ban-
quets that are being
held on Mount Carmel!
Beloved is in excellent
condition. awaiting
your news personal & general. Shoghi

Mirza Ahmad Sohrab
to Mr. Geo. Hamner
1252 - 8th St. N.W.
Washington
D.C.
U.S.A.

Letter to Mirza Ahmad Sohrab written by Shoghi Effendi on reverse side of postcard.



Postcard picture of Shoghi Effendi, grandson of Abdul Baha, taken in 1919. At present, Guardian of the Bahai Cause.

CHAPTER I

I AM A BAHAI

My Home in Esphahan

I am a Bahai. My grandmother, my mother, my two maternal uncles and my brother were Bahais. From the earliest days, our home in Esphahan was a center for the promotion of Bahai teachings and, although the activities of my family were conducted in secret, as far as was possible, the hour arrived when it became a target for the fanatical fury of the Mohammedan Mullahs. I well remember the last meeting held in our garden; the familiar group, the peaceful chanting of Tablets; then suddenly, the muffled sound of advancing feet, the dispersion of the guests to safety and the violent intrusion.

My uncle Haji Seyyed Zeinel-Abedin, poet-philosopher and a very rare and powerful personality, was the chief prize to be gained by this raid; but he managed to make his escape although at the price of a broken leg, and the intruders, after pillaging the house and stables to their hearts' content, took me off as their only captive.

My retention among the enemies of our Faith was a brief one. A few questions as to the names and whereabouts of our Bahai friends were addressed to me. These were accentuated by the powerful persuasion of the bastinado but, fortunately, I made no revelations. Then, my unconscious body was carried back and left at the door of our dismantled house.

A few days later, in the early morning, my uncle and I, both well bandaged up, were lifted to the back of a very

small donkey, and I turned and looked for the last time at my childhood's home. For some weeks, we hid and wandered among the hills, bearing southward, and on reaching Shiraz my uncle placed me in the care of a travelling Bahai teacher named Seyyed Assadollah, and we separated from each other. So, the tutelage of the philosopher of Esphahan was exchanged for the tutelage of a devoted personal follower of Abdul Baha; and in the company of Seyyed Assadollah I journeyed, by way of India, to Palestine.

I was about twelve years of age when I passed through the gates of Acca and came into the glorious presence of Abdul Baha, and I felt then, as I know now, that I was standing before the first of all teachers and the best of all masters. After that meeting I dedicated myself to his service for the duration of my life.

I Go to Work

When, after a short 35 days' stay in his household, Abdul Baha sent me to Ahmad Yazdi, at Port Said, Egypt, my heart had already become a garden in which the flowers of his love grew and flourished. As he embraced me at the hour of departure, he placed in my hand a letter. It was my first Tablet from him, written by his own blessed hand. After boarding the steamer, I opened the envelope. The words danced before my eyes. It is only now that I partially understand their meaning, but certainly those radiant words were an inspiration, and acted as an impetus to me as I started off on my uncharted future. Let me share with the reader a section of that Tablet.

Two Tablets from Abdul Baha

O thou heavenly youth! Although in the path of the True One, thou art homeless and a wanderer, nevertheless put thy trust in Him and seek His Confirmation. Ponder over the affairs and reflect . . . Because thou art at the Threshold of thy growth and development, thou must acquire poise and assurance, and gain firmness and steadfastness.

In Port Said, I worked in daytime as salesman in Ahmad Yazdi's store, and in the evenings I sat at the feet of Mirza Abul Fazl, foremost among Bahai Teachers, learning from him the spiritual lessons that caused me to *ponder over the affairs and reflect*, that made available the master-key to *poise and assurance* and disclosed the secret of *firmness and steadfastness*.

While I was thus working and studying, Abdul Baha did not forget me, for after a few months I received my second Tablet from him. He wrote:—

O thou my perpetual companion! I beg of God that in the spiritual rose-garden thou mayst become a merciful tree, conducive to the joy, exhilaration, attraction and happiness of the heart of humanity; that thou mayst become a most great gift to all the nations and a high bounty to all people.

Spiritual Apprenticeship

From that moment, I did not try to plan my life, for I realized that there was *One*, endowed with heavenly wisdom who was planning it for me. Each event led to another and, after the passing of about three years, I

حساب زردی کا سرچشمہ، صفحہ ۱۵۱

۲۰

در حلقهٔ حرب و سربازان
و در دود و آتش و زخم و جراحت
چون به این شوق و اشتیاق
بسیار است که در راه جان فدا
و بی فکر و حساب و حساب
و طبع روح پاک و پیرایه
منصور گوید تا مراد مدد نماید

found myself in Washington, D. C., serving Mirza Abul Fazl. On the return of this beloved teacher to the Orient, I took up work in the Persian Legation as secretary to the Minister. When, in 1912, Abdul Baha paid his historic visit to the United States and Canada, I became part of his entourage, travelling with him, and translating his words. This American tour having terminated, I continued with him as he journeyed, disseminating the ideals of Baha-O-Llah, through England, Scotland, France, Austria-Hungary and Germany. From Europe we sailed to Egypt and finally reached home in Palestine. During the World War, I was beside the Master by day and by night, and it was at that period that he dictated to me the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* which, at his bidding, I carried to the United States on a Japanese cargo boat, shortly after the close of hostilities. These Tablets were unveiled and read before the Eleventh Annual Bahai Convention at Hotel McAlpin, New York, in April 1919.

Thus, in the course of those many years of priceless opportunity, I tried to assimilate in my mental and spiritual consciousness as much of the spirit of Abdul Baha's teachings as was possible to me. I not only listened to his words but also took them down at formal times and at informal times, and these words and the intention back of them became part of me, closer than the breath of life.

My Treasure

During my long association with the Bahai Cause, whether in the immediate vicinity of the Master or at a physical distance from him, I did my very best to serve the Bahais throughout the world; and Abdul Baha re-

warded me with his confidence and with the blessings of numerous Tablets. These latter are my treasure and my stronghold, for which I would not accept the wealth of empires.

Ere I bring to a close this personal recital (the object of which is to establish my identity, for whatever it is worth), I will reproduce herein, in all humility and gratitude, the contents of yet another Tablet from Abdul Baha written to me in about 1910.

My Spiritual Charter

Oh Thou who dost attract the hearts of the favored ones toward the Manifest Horizon!

Verily Thou art witness to the fire which is ablaze in the breasts, to the tears which are streaming from the eyes, and Thou knowest that the period of patience and silence has come to an end. The sight of the dear ones, Oh my God, is dimmed with weeping; the hearts of the yearning ones, Oh my Beloved, are wandering in the desert of Thy mercy; the souls of the attracted ones, Oh my Desire, are parched with longing for Thee.

Verily, Oh God, they have heard Thy universal proclamation, and that which Thou hast revealed in the Koran: "*Travel ye over the earth so that ye may behold the signs of the mercy of God.*" Thereupon, after Thine ascension, the people of faith have arisen, voyaging to distant lands, and hastening to remote regions to cry out Thy Name; to remind the souls of the arrival of Thy days; to lead the minds to the fountain of Thy signs; to show to all humanity Thy truth and Thy faith; to guide the seekers to the right path, and to indicate to the workers the straight highway.

اللهم باعده غلب الغر من اني الا من اسبى الكفاية لري
 ما صغر من النار في الصدور واسم الله سوع والصرم الصر والسكر
 من راحة ما الهى فاجد ما لمراس غلبت شيا من يا محسن يا
 في العلوات وبقدر المسح بن ما مقصودي وانتم من العرفان في السكوت
 قد سموا حطامك يا الهى ومما ابرته في القرائن غلبت سردي الا براس
 ما طرد الى آثار حرارة عه ذلك فام اهل الوفاء واغزو اعد
 الضود الى سائر الاكار وسرعو الى اقاليم شاسعة الارحاء لبادوا
 اسكت وذكروا التوسر ما بانك وذكروا القول الى اباك و
 منة الكل البوي محكم ورايك وهدوا الطالبين الى الصراط المستقيم
 وذكروا المحادين الى المسح القوم وسمهم عذبة اناس على اعمده
 اغدبهم المختب من اهل الحكيم النار من ما صبين المزعج من صها
 طاعة من الكاسر ان بن لعدرك الموطن وودع الاقارب
 وودع الزانية والرعاء واحار النسا والضرأ وسرع الى عرشه
 القوي منصرفا اليك منوكلها عليك ساديا يا صمكت منة كراة كرك
 منة الى ممالك منة انجات قد سك ما طفا فباك ساديا
 اسكت منة عليك سبنا لبر ماك مبعنا سحكت القاطنة موصفا
 لراحتك القاطنة مجا لكل سائل سبنا لكل ذاهل رات
 انة قد تحمل كل منة في سسلك وصر على النسا والضرأ في سحكت
 وما الله يصبر ولا دعه يصر ولا يملن ولا يملن في الله تعالى

انك كلنك العلب اسبح الكرم ماشك النجوم سراغا والثرى هادنا ليعول
 طمانا نوح به ارفع صبحه في الحامل وبلو نداء في المحاسن فاطنا لول
 البرهرون والمستطرون الى صين سباز سرعون به ابا الهى صفتك و
 حودك واحسانك والظانك رت اهد ملاك كنقر بن واهل بن
 من الملا اهل بن العالمين واحل مصباح الهدى في ملك الله واهل بن
 دكوب الزهرة الزهر آ في سطح الوفا حتى يحم غنة قدسك وكن وجه
 على الزراب ساعد اشكر العسلك واكرامك حامد المواهبك مشدود
 الاذ على مدسك قوتى الطهر على عبادتك رب رب قدره
 كل جبرى ملكك واجلا آية المواب بن طلعك وارمى وارمى
 واكرم لى وارمى سبنار فى مدانه وشه نكار فى صدمانه وابنا
 روى ملوانه انك انت المودة الموفق العزيز الكرم المستر
 الرؤف الزمى مع

A SPIRITUAL CHARTER

Tablet from Abdul Baha to Mirza Ahmad Sohrab

Among these is Thy servant Ahmad, who is firm in the Ancient Covenant, fleeing from the people of darkness, drinking from the water of eternal life, intoxicated with the wine that is overflowing from the divine cup. In truth, he has left his home, waved the hand of farewell to his relatives, and, forsaking ease and comfort, has turned his face toward unknown lands, accepting adversity and hardship while heralding Thy Name and commemorating Thy glory. Attracted to Thy beauty, stirred by the perfume of Thy holiness, he speaks Thy praises, proclaims Thy Cause, guiding men to Thee, proving Thy religion, demonstrating Thy irrefutable truth, and so becoming an answerer to each questioning one and a guide to each straying one.

Oh my Lord! Oh my Lord! Verily he has endured every affliction in Thy path, and patiently has borne every difficulty for Thy love. A breath of rest has he not breathed, nor has he sought any habitation or favor in this world. Rather he has walked in the footsteps of Christ, Thy most exalted Word, taking the earth as his bed, the herbs as his food and the stars as his lamps. Notwithstanding, his cry was raised in the assemblies and his voice was heard in the meetings. The seekers surrounded him and the thirsty ones drank of the water of his utterance. Oh my God! This indeed is through Thy generosity, Thy beneficence, Thy mercy and Thy favor. Oh my God! Help him with the hosts of Thine approximate Angels; support him, amid Thy creatures, with the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse; make of him, in that distant land, a lamp of guidance and a sparkling luminary from the dawning-place of faith, so that he may serve Thy holy threshold, falling prostrate on the ground, thanking and praising Thee

for Thy liberality to him; girding up, in Thy service, the loins of endeavor, and becoming reinforced and empowered in adoration of Thee.

Oh my Lord! Oh my Lord! Assign for him every bounty and suffer him to become the sign of Thy gifts among Thy people. Then have pity upon me, forgive me, show me Thy mercy—make me a sharer in his service, a partner in his adversity and a companion in his loneliness.

Verily, Thou art the Confirmer, the Helper, the Mighty, the Generous, the Compassionate!

—A translation of this Tablet was published by Bahai Publishing Committee, New York, 1930. It is to be found in "Tablets of Abdul Baha," Vol. III, pages 485-7. .

Ascension of Abdul Baha

In November 1921, while I was living in Los Angeles, California, the Bahai world received the overwhelming news that Abdul Baha had departed from this life. It was a stunning blow to all those who had loved and served him, but to me, especially, it was catastrophic. For days I sat lifeless, in an agony of despair. Then, with this new baptism of desolation, I began to re-read his words and, as I did so, I felt clearly that I was encompassed by the spirit of the Beloved and realized that now, more than at any other time, I must arise to magnify his Cause and strive to fulfill his promises, all the while demonstrating that *poise and assurance, firmness and steadfastness* which he, in his first Tablet, had enjoined upon me to acquire in my boyhood.

Will and Testament of Abdul Baha

Abdul Baha left behind him his Will and Testament, in his own handwriting. The authenticity of this document is beyond the shadow of doubt. In it, he appointed his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, as the Guardian of the Cause.

The transference of leadership is always a test, and especially must this be so when the first leader is incomparable in every respect; nevertheless, the Bahais rallied gallantly to the call of the Master, giving their whole-hearted allegiance to the newly appointed Guardian. I will quote from a talk delivered by myself at a conference held from November 24th to 26th, 1922, in San Francisco, California. A report of the conference, which I made at the time and which included my address, was entitled *A Bird's Eye View of the First Teaching Conference of the Western States*. It was later circulated among the Bahais in type-written form. A copy was sent to Shoghi Effendi. This talk shows my ardent desire, expressed in terms of very youthful enthusiasm, to serve the young Guardian.

Extract from My Talk at the Conference

The Youths of Baha were summoned to enlist in the army of the new General of the Kingdom, the Guardian of the Cause. There is a new spiritual King sitting at the head of "the Round Table." This is the age of heavenly chivalry. The Call is sent forth for a celestial tournament. The valiant Knights and the fair ladies are being invited from the four corners of the earth. The bugle is blowing and the flag is unfurled. It is the

time when the Bahai Knighthood might blossom and be adorned with the flowers of service and sacrifice. Where are the undaunted heroes to pledge themselves to the New King and then to go forth to redeem the wrong and gain victories deathless?

It is the day of Youth, of energy, initiative and fearlessness. The significant fact that the New King of the Kingdom of Abha is young, of the same age as the Bab—must fire the imagination of the youths of Baha all over the world. It is their day, their opportunity. They must rise in concert and assist their youthful General with every means at their disposal. There is no other salvation for the Bahai Cause save through this unanimity of thoughts and opinions.

A new order is issued from the general headquarters of the Kingdom of Abha. It calls to the young blood to arise and register their names in the new book. Recruiting stations are being opened in every corner of the earth. Lo and behold, we must muster a new Army—boys and girls—full of hope, aspiration, intrepidity and grit. Let them enter the training camps, take intellectual and spiritual exercises and, when fit and hardy soldiers and soldierettes, go out into the world and fight the good old fight against sham, hypocrisy, intolerance and prejudices. A new battle cry was raised and from that banquet, it was sent out over the wires ringing round the world to echo and re-echo in the halls of memory for all the succeeding ages and cycles. What was that battle cry? Here it is—*To Beheyeh Khanoum [Sister of Abdul Baha], Haija, Palestine, Love, Greetings, Western States Teaching Conference affirm loyalty Shoghi Effendi. Beg divine confirmations.*

Reference to this talk was made in the following words

by the late Mrs. Shahnaz Waite of Los Angeles, California, in her report of the Teaching Conference.

Next, our brother Ahmad spoke, and he called upon all the Juniors and young married Bahais to arise, and they did so with joyous faces. After they were seated, Ahmad drew a wonderful picture of our Juniors, as a band headed by their Young Captain—Shoghi Effendi—marching onward to Victory. He said that you Juniors were the Celestial Army that must carry on the work—the Great Work of spreading the New Civilization throughout the world. It was a most inspiring moment, and we older ones felt the deep significance of it all. We could see a mighty Army, headed by this Divine Youth—the Standard bearer of GOD'S Cause today, and so appointed by the Center of the Covenant, Abdul Baha—and we could hear with the mind's ear the songs of Peace and Love which you were singing as you went marching on. GOD speed you on your way—you the "Children of the Kingdom" of EL ABHA.

An Old Accusation

Practically, from the departure of the Master from this life until today, it has been charged against me by the Bahai Organization and by the members of the Community that I deny the Will of Abdul Baha and refuse to accept Shoghi Effendi as Guardian. Therefore, I take this opportunity to make a plain and unequivocal statement: Never in thought, word or writing have I questioned the authenticity of the Will, nor denied the validity of the appointment of Shoghi Effendi. Let us now hope that, once and for all time, this fact has been made clear and manifest.

Association with Shoghi Effendi

Let me state also that for several years (1913-1919), while acting as secretary and interpreter to Abdul Baha, I associated with Shoghi Effendi in Haifa and in the University of Beirut. We worked together; we served the same Master, he as a member of the family and I as a devoted follower; we discussed frankly and joyfully the past, present and future affairs of the Cause and in time, so far as I could judge, a genuine friendship was established between us. This friendship was continued, for when, in December 1918, Abdul Baha sent me to the United States with the Tablets of the Divine Plan, I requested Shoghi Effendi to take up the work which I had carried on for about seven years, that of reporting, in Diary Letters, accounts of the daily activities and of the talks given by the Master. Through these Diary Letters, the Bahai world would be kept fully informed, as it had been in the past, of what was going on in the life and in the vicinity of Abdul Baha. Consequently, beginning with December 23rd, 1918 (the very day that I left Haifa), Shoghi Effendi started to write interesting Diary Letters, describing the daily life of Abdul Baha and quoting from his conversations with guests and pilgrims. These were mailed to me regularly. Besides the letters, I received from him numerous postal cards giving lovely little glimpses of his own life. These Diary Letters and post cards I have treasured all these years as tokens of a friendship founded on the love of the Master.

The Diary Letters of Shoghi Effendi were at that time copied and distributed among some of the members of the Bahai Assemblies and a few of them were published in

The Star of the West (see Bound Volumes of *Star of the West*, Vol. X, pages 216-220 and Vol. XI, pages 48-52). Incidentally, the very first photograph of Shoghi Effendi that reached the United States was on the back of a post card addressed to me and dated July 13, 1919, which photograph I sent to the editors of *The Star of the West*. It is reproduced in Vol. X, page 210, with the following caption: *Shoghi Effendi, Grandson of Abdul Baha, Translator of recent Tablets to, and letters from, Bahais of the United States and Canada. Writer of Diary Letters beginning in this issue of The Star of the West.*

Rules, Regulations and a Lawsuit

After the ascension of Abdul Baha in 1921, certain reactionary and dogmatic forces began to make their appearance in the Cause. Almost unnoticeable at first, they, little by little, gained ground until at present, this movement, which was the most universal and liberal of all movements, past and present, has been reduced to a sect, while its spirit is all but extinguished. The principles of Baha-O-Llah are forgotten and in their stead we see nothing but a mass of rules and regulations that duplicate, to say the least, the ecclesiastical paraphernalia of previous organized religions.

Realizing the state of affairs and my inability to alter it, for years I kept clear from involvement with the organizational aspect of the Cause. At the same time, I gave my services whenever they were wanted and, more often, offered them when they were not wanted. Later, I associated myself with Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and founded The New History Society. Through

this medium I have been enabled, during more than eleven years, to disseminate the Bahai teachings in their purity, as I had learned them from Abdul Baha.

The story is a long and diversified one—human and dramatic—which culminated in court proceedings brought by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada against Mrs. Chanler and myself. In the application for an injunction, which was served on April 27th, 1940, following some legal correspondence which took place in December 1939 and January 1940, appeal was made to the court to prevent Mrs. Chanler and me from teaching the Bahai Cause and using the Bahai name.

A Reversal of Attitude

This bringing before the public of a controversy, which on our side had always been kept strictly to ourselves, has forced me to reverse my attitude on the whole issue. Seeing that matters had reached this point, reserve was no longer appropriate. I therefore resolved to review the activities of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada. If, in the course of my writing, I have occasionally disagreed with the policies of Shoghi Effendi, it is not because I, in the least, contest the genuineness of the Will of Abdul Baha or question the appointment of Shoghi Effendi to the Guardianship, but because, as a Bahai, I maintain my freedom of conscience and hold to the injunction of Baha-O-Llah: *Independent investigation of Truth*. Citizens of the United States feel themselves at liberty to freely discuss, to agree or disagree with the policies of the President.

This does not imply that they question his right to occupy the White House, nor that they are planning to overthrow the government. On the contrary, it is an expression of their love for this country and of their desire to contribute toward its safety and betterment.

I believe that things should be reasoned out. In the Old Testament this question is very well emphasized: *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.* (Isaiah, Chapter I, 18). Now, if God invites us to *reason* with Him, it seems that reasoning with Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada should not be completely out of place.

In my discussion of the topics to be dealt with, I shall try my best to be fair and sane. I will be scrupulously fearless. I will not make statements without proving them. The Teachings of Baha-O-Llah, Abdul Baha, the letters of Shoghi Effendi, the writings of Bahai teachers, *Bahai News*, Bahai publications, and the laws and legislative procedure laid down by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada will be the sources of my authority. I will give exact references to pages in books, magazines, pamphlets, etc., put out by the Bahai Publishing Committee. I will show from the writings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha that the Cause that they had envisaged and for which they suffered is quite different and totally at variance with the one that is being taught today. One is divine revelation, the other is human authority; one is universal and all-inclusive, the other is restricted and separative; one is dignity and freedom of conscience, the other is subserviency and blind loyalty; one is wings outstretched, the other is feet enchained.

A Voice in the Wilderness

In assuming this rather unwelcome task, I hope to render a distinct service to the Cause in which I was brought up, in which I will die, and for which I would at any time make any sacrifice. I do not claim to be a leader. I do not seek followers. I have no wish that my name should be even remembered. I am simply a voice in the wilderness. Lastly, farthest of all from my thoughts is the idea of being destructive, for my aim is to re-discover the original spiritual teachings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, which were and are for the establishment of a divine civilization. Should I succeed in this, I know that my Master's smiles will be upon me.

CHAPTER II

BAHAI ODYSSEY

It all happened like this:

1919

Bearing the Tablets of the Divine Plan, revealed by Abdul Baha in Palestine during the World War, I landed in New York on March 18, 1919, from the S. S. Yeboshi Maru, after an adventurous trip through the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean. At the 11th Annual International Bahai Congress which was held in the McAlpin Hotel, from April 26th to 30th, the above Tablets were successively unveiled and read, copies of the same in a booklet of 82 pages, entitled *Unveiling of the Divine Plan*, being distributed at the last session among the delegates and guests.

1919-20

Immediately after the close of the Bahai Congress, I made an extensive tour throughout the United States and Canada, speaking before churches, schools, colleges, universities, clubs, numerous civic institutions and Bahai Assemblies. These lectures were principally on the Cause and on the implications of the Divine Plan; some of them related to my seven years' sojourn in Palestine in the service of Abdul Baha.

I was back in New York by April 1920 and spoke at the Twelfth Annual Bahai Congress and Convention held in the Aldine Club from the 24th to 28th of the same month.

1920-21

Here, in New York, at the Bahai Congress, I was most happy to meet for the first time Janabe Fazel Mazandrani, a Persian Bahai teacher and philosopher sent to America to promote the principles of Baha-O-Llah.

Then, after a few days, I received the following cablegram from Abdul Baha:

Haifa, June 21st, 1920

Be in important cities with Fazel.

Abbas.

Likewise, in a Tablet from Haifa, written June 25th, Abdul Baha wrote to me, giving further instructions on a lecture trip in which I was to accompany Janabe Fazel. Having just returned from my own tour, during which I had established many valuable connections both with the public and the press, I was in a position to help with the program and get it into fairly good shape without loss of time. Then we started off.

During our pilgrimage, which lasted nearly sixteen months, Janabe Fazel and I visited practically all the important cities of the United States, travelling as far as Seattle and Portland. A complete record of this journey is available in a collection of newspaper clippings; in my *Diary Letters*, published and circulated by the Bahai Teaching Committee of Washington, D. C.; in a series of articles written by myself under the title *Persian Pilgrim's Pen Pictures*, published weekly in a newspaper of Portsmouth, N. H., and in a large volume which embodies some of the lectures delivered by this brilliant teacher.



ABDUL BAHÁ

1922-23

After Janabe Fazel had sailed homeward, I returned to Los Angeles, where, in order to become self-supporting, I set myself to the preparing of a number of lectures on Persian poetry and the great Faiths of the East. My studies having been completed, I had two leaflets printed, the first on literary and religious subjects, the other on the Bahai Cause, this latter to be given free and without charge. When these circulars had been distributed, I found that the churches, societies and clubs in the vicinity showed especial interest in the second circular, and I was kept busy delivering lectures on the Cause. This circumstance made me very happy, but did not add to my income; and my condition became distinctly precarious, as my audiences were scattered far and wide and I was forced to walk for miles in order to appear before them. I will here mention the fact that the allowance which Abdul Baha had provided for me since my arrival in this country had now stopped, owing to the departure of the Master from this life. Therefore, living as I did in the vicinity of Hollywood, I was tempted to visit the Studios, and presently I was working as *extra* or *atmosphere* in this or that picture. This industry fascinated me and through it I met many delightful people; so, while in the day time I portrayed pirates, or Oriental princes or beggars, at night time, dressed in my Persian robes and turreted with a gorgeous turban, I lectured on the Bahai Cause before distinguished and urbane audiences or recited the quatrains of Omar Khayyam for the relaxation of actors, artists, scenario-weavers and playwrights. In this way, I drifted into the founding of *Firdousi Salon*, a Wednesday evening



JANABE FAZEL MAZANDRANI
Bahai philosopher and teacher sent by Abdul Baha to the
United States.

club attended by a colorful non-descript crowd, which developed into a center of considerable notoriety.

By this time I had become barely self-supporting, although I still chiefly engaged myself in activities, such as scenario and playwriting and amateur clubs, which led me nowhere. Then, out of a clear blue sky, I received a cablegram from Haifa, dated April 11, 1923. It read:

Sohrab

Your active collaboration with Fazel at convention and teaching heartily desired.

Shoghi

In this manner, and through subsequent letters from New York and Boston, I was apprised of the fact that Janabe Fazel had returned from the East for another teaching campaign and that he was awaiting me in Washington, D. C. So, I set aside my lecture engagements and multifarious forms of relaxation and took the train for the nation's capital.

Once more we started off on a tour, which this time led us through the cities and towns of the Middle West. Everywhere the much loved teacher was greeted by friends, old and new, and noticeable interest in the Cause was engendered. Then, when the tour was brought to a conclusion I turned my steps once more toward my adopted home, Los Angeles.

During the years of 1922-23 I did a prodigious amount of work, writing, lecturing, acting as extra and running the *Firdousi Salon*. As I now look back upon those years, from March 18, 1919, when I landed in New York to January 16, 1924, I literally gasp at the mileage that I

covered, the number of Bahai and non-Bahai lectures that I delivered, the amount of writing that I both used and discarded and the variety of occupations that kept me on the jump from morning to night. But, why do I stop at January 16, 1924? Because, on that day something happened that turned the current of my life from one direction to another. Because, on that day, through a chance circumstance (and I have to wonder if it really was a chance circumstance) I took hold of a chain of events which ultimately led to the establishment of The New History Society and to my expulsion from the organized aspect of The Bahai Cause.

January 16, 1924

On the evening of this day, I was speaking before the Bahais of Los Angeles on the life of Abdul Baha and, in the course of my talk, I brought in some stories about Mary Magdalene as I had heard them from the Master, himself. At the close of the lecture, a tall and very striking woman approached me and, without any preliminaries, asked: *Can you write me a scenario on the life of Mary Magdalene?* Of course, I answered. *I certainly can. Then meet me tomorrow at the Biltmore Hotel and we will discuss the details at lunch. Whom shall I ask for?* I stuttered weakly. Oh, and a twinkle came into her eyes, *ask for Valeska Surratt.*

Now, on Broadway this had been a name to conjure with, but to me, poor Bahai teacher and moving picture extra that I was, it meant nothing. Nevertheless, a meal at the Biltmore was not to be scoffed at, so the next day found me in a very luxurious dining room seated across

the table from a lady, as glamorous as any I had ever seen, even from a distance. That I didn't do the courtly thing and pay for the lunch goes without saying, for I had at that moment exactly fifteen cents in my pocket, this sum representing my worldly possessions in their entirety; but, just the same, I managed to hold the interest of my companion to the extent that, when I returned to my little room in about three hours' time, I was carrying a contract for the writing of a scenario on Mary Magdalene together with advance payment in the form of a single bill of \$100. That night, about thirty of my cronies, extras and vagabonds of various descriptions, had a feast, the like of which they had seen only in pictures.

Valeska Surratt left Los Angeles the next day, but during six months she regularly sent me \$150 a month and many kind letters, while I, as an initial step in my task, made a coast to coast trip to study, in the main libraries of the country, whatever material was available on the subject of the proposed scenario; after which, having retired to a cabin in a secluded canyon about thirty miles from Los Angeles, I devoted myself to reflection and composition on the life of the great woman whose love had played no small part in the founding of Christianity. On June 19th, five months after the signing of the contract, I mailed to Miss Surratt in New York the typewritten manuscript of Mary Magdalene in 443 pages.

1927

This scenario went through many vicissitudes, and did not reach the screen, although I still consider it one of the best pieces of work that I have done; and it happened

that in the early part of 1927 I was sent for to come to New York in connection with some complications that had arisen concerning it. On the night of my arrival, Miss Surratt took me to dine with Mrs. Raymond Little, and it was there that I met Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler.

Now, Mrs. Chanler was a Bahai of but two years' standing and very deeply in love with the Cause. She had just completed a translation of Baha-O-Llah's *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* from the French of Hyppolite Dreyfus and was ardently hoping to find some other avenue of service. Therefore, at this meeting, which I owe exclusively to Valeska Surratt, the idea came to Mrs. Chanler that my talents, as she graciously called them, could be put to better use in New York than in Hollywood; and a day or so later Mr. and Mrs. Chanler proposed that I should deliver a series of lectures at their house the following winter. The lectures were to be on Persian poetry and literature and would serve as a means of support until something else developed. Being a vagabond by nature and always ready to try something new, I accepted this offer; and the next autumn, having meanwhile returned to California for the summer, I opened a course of afternoon lectures in Mrs. Chanler's drawing-room before a group of her friends.

1928

This series of lectures led to others, and toward the middle of the winter it was arranged that I should speak every Wednesday evening for twelve weeks at the Bahai Center. Mrs. Chanler rejoiced exceedingly over this plan and the meetings started out very successfully, drawing

large numbers of people which increased week by week. Now, as a result of my sometimes casual and unorganized way of speaking, in the middle of the seventh lecture I digressed from the subject, which was *A Universal Bible*, and started to philosophize on the attitude that would be shown to Christ were he to come to New York during these days. He would certainly not be welcomed or appreciated; in fact, I continued rather facetiously, he would probably be arrested under the Volstead Act for turning water into wine. Now, it happened that a newspaperman, whom Mrs. Chanler had arranged to have present, reported the meeting in the next day's paper, featuring that single phrase out of my whole talk; and this article brought about my downfall from the platform of the Bahai Center. The following Wednesday evening, my place was taken by another speaker.

1928-29

Toward the close of that year, Mrs. Chanler made arrangements for me to give a series of eight studies on the vital and mystic problems of modern life. These took place on Sunday evenings, from November 18, 1928, to January 6, 1929, at the little Florentine Room in the Park Lane Hotel, the course ticket of admission being \$25.

It was a difficult step for Mrs. Chanler to take, because she had never sponsored anything in a public sense; and she was at this time pretty much alone as her intimates among her Bahai friends had drifted away after the fiasco at the Center. However, fortune favored us and we were able to carry on during the eight weeks of these philosophical lectures, speaking to audiences that filled our miniature hall to capacity.

Toward the end of this series of meetings at the Park Lane Hotel, Mrs. Chanler decided to take me into her confidence. *The people are asking for more spiritual food than you are giving them*, she said, *they want the source of your teachings*, and then she went on to suggest that, on the closing date, we announce three lectures on the Bahai Cause to be held in the same place and without charge.

What innocence, I thought to myself! Does she really imagine that I, as an individual, could teach the Bahai Cause, unmolested, in New York City or anywhere else for that matter! I did not give voice to this thought, believing that it would be difficult for her to understand it; so, in order to hide my embarrassment, I answered as lightly as I could, saying that the time had not yet come to teach the Cause in public.

While making this lame excuse, I caught a glimpse of Mrs. Chanler's stricken face and felt anything but comfortable. Who knew better than I that her sole object, during these two seasons of intense exertion, had been to establish me in New York so that I could apply myself to my Master's work in this city? And here I was letting her down in this ungrateful and brutal manner! My spirit was at a very low ebb as I sought my bed that night; yet I was convinced that I was acting in her interest as well as my own, and I laid my head on the pillow determined to return to Hollywood as soon as my departure could be arranged.

That night in a dream, I found myself in a little room in the hotel at Tiberias where I had often been with Abdul Baha. I was turning over the pages of my diary

and, as I did so, I noticed a fragrance coming in through the window. The Master must be near, I said to myself and I went out, continuing in my mind: I will look for his footsteps in the sand and if I find them, I will place my own feet into them. I walked by the Sea of Galilee which was in a state of great commotion, and rising from the waves, I saw Abdul Baha in white turban and gown, which were wet as were his hair and beard; and Abdul Baha advanced over the water and joined me, standing at my side, and his hair and beard had become dry.

The Master said: *Khayli Khoub, Mirza Ahmad*, and slapped me on both cheeks, as he used to do; then, *We will walk together*. We began to walk, and the Master asked, *Are you happy? Very happy*, I answered. He went on: *This will be a most significant year for you. You have much for which to be grateful to Baha-O-Llah; and to show your gratitude, you must do what she wants, you must teach the Cause. Great blessings will follow*. He then withdrew over the sea, which had become as smooth as glass, and disappeared in the waters.

Next day, when I informed Mrs. Chanler that I had received my orders and was ready, I was surprised to learn that she also had had a dream that night. This was her dream as she related it to me:

She was in mid-sky, climbing upward on a slippery pole; and her endurance was ebbing fast. On her shoulder, warm and light, she felt the presence of her daughter, Elsie; and she realized that if she should fall, her daughter would fall with her. (Incidentally, Mrs. Chanler often told me that Elsie was a tower of strength to her during that difficult period, and that without her, she hardly knew how

she would have gotten through.) As she clung with hands and body to the pole, in a state of complete exhaustion, she observed that, just above her, the pole was no longer perpendicular but made a complete loop; and she realized that, in order to continue, she must depend on her hands alone. This is too much for me, she thought; and yet she attempted it, swinging out into the air—and then, a sense of great ease possessed her, and a power supported her, lifting her around the loop to safety at the top.

We taught the Bahai Cause in the Florentine room on eight Sunday evenings to very interested audiences. Many Bahais came and took satisfaction in the work; Miss Bertha Herklotz, secretary of the New York Assembly, sold the standard Bahai literature at an improvised book table. Others, however, notably some members of the Local Center, were in a state of considerable unrest over the whole proceeding, and conditions became so difficult that Mrs. Chanler conceived an idea of serving the Cause in a manner that would be less controversial. So, at her request, I wrote to Shoghi Effendi concerning her plan, which was to the effect that I should leave immediately for the Orient, there to make research on the personal life of Baha-O-Llah on the terrain of Persia. I hoped, during the period of a year or two, to gather material and to prepare a book that would be unique and most useful for the furtherance of the Cause. Our thoughts were, therefore, running in this direction when I received the following cablegram from Haifa, dated March 7, 1929:

Teheran undertaking official history. Your travel East unnecessary.

Shoghi.

This cablegram was supplemented by a letter from the Guardian's secretary, dated the same day, in which he wrote: *Shoghi Effendi would prefer to see you active in the field of service, teaching the Cause.*

This decision, coming from Haifa, was a great disappointment to both Mrs. Chanler and me; but I immediately relinquished all thought of the proposed journey and made up my mind to remain in New York. The lectures had, by this time, been transferred to Mrs. Chanler's house, and there, when the close of the season had arrived, a handful of persons, from among the many that had listened to the Teachings, asked if they might form a group so that they could hold together during the summer months. We readily complied and arranged for a meeting to take place on April 5, 1929. When the guests arrived on that night, a name for the group had not yet been chosen. Mrs. Chanler wanted it to be The New History Society; I had another idea. Finally, at the very last moment, we agreed on the name; and The New History Society was founded then and there with a membership of twenty-eight men and women, which number comprised several Bahais of long standing.

Our public work had, since the very beginning, been looked upon with suspicion both by the Bahai officials and by various members of the Bahai community and, upon the founding of The New History Society, the opposition became very threatening. My policy, which I have held to throughout our Bahai partnership, was to let Mrs. Chanler reason things out by herself. I had my own conviction, which was a simple one—namely: that each Bahai was under definite obligations to Baha-O-Llah to teach the

Cause; and that he must have freedom, and be unhampered in so doing. With the exception of my uncompromising attitude on this one point, I was ready to fall in, to co-operate with any group of Bahais, to receive advice, to talk things over, in other words to work in common. This of course was not sufficient, and Mrs. Chanler was subjected to an argument which lasted day in and day out, year in and year out, and which was extremely wearing to everyone concerned. All the while, as I mentioned before, I did not try to guide her, but left her free to make up her mind for herself as to the direction in which Truth lay.

I will not dwell on the methods that were used by individuals to try to break up my association with Mr. and Mrs. Chanler. I was called a charlatan, a money-grabber, a traitor to Abdul Baha. It was even said that I was afflicted with a disease, loathsome and infectious, which made of me a menace to society. Mrs. Chanler considered all these accusations, made up her mind as to their validity and went on with her work. Then, as the barrage of official communications began to descend upon her, she faced the opposition, met it and fought it with such faith and determination, such vision and spiritual logic, that I wondered then, as I wonder even now, at her courage and endurance. It would have thrilled the heart of any experienced spiritual warrior to note the supreme firmness and insouciance with which she held her ground, all the while suffering very deeply under this gallant exterior; but that is another story, and her own.

During that time, a great deal of correspondence was carried on between Shoghi Effendi and Mrs. Chanler. His sympathy regarding her work was, at the outset, most marked; and his consideration of her was expressed in very

generous terms up to August 1930. Since that date, no letters have passed between the Guardian and Mrs. Chanler.

PART TWO

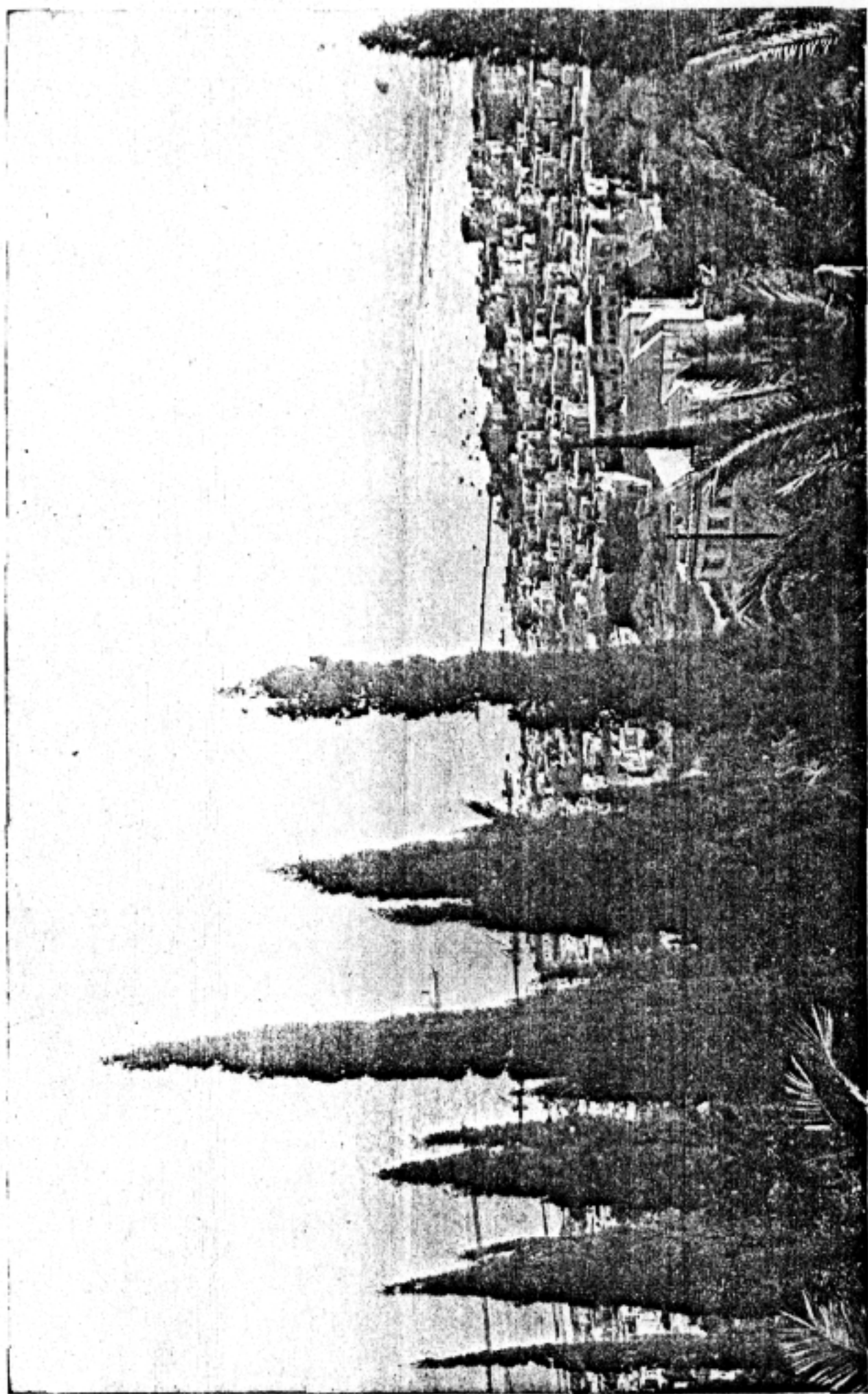
THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

3. A Danger Signal

4. At the Fork of the Road

*For the day of the Lord is near in the
valley of decision.*

—Joel, Chapter 3, Verse 14



Haifa. View taken in the direction of Acca from the slope of Mount Carmel.

CHAPTER III

A DANGER SIGNAL

Conservatism and Liberalism

The history of mankind has been dominated by two forces—conservatism and liberalism. These have played their parts side by side, in politics, in education, in the arts and in religious practice, producing the illogical civilization that is apparent today. Traditions, folklore, customs and the instinct for self-preservation, all have co-operated toward placing the institutions of our society in the camp of the conservatives; and these have taken advantage of our weaknesses to consolidate their privileges and establish themselves on the throne of impeccable authority. Having on their side the solemnities of inherited sanctions and controlling the machinery of civilization, they have, through the centuries, made practice of *stilling the voice of the liberals*, of banishing them beyond the pale of society, of incarcerating them in prisons, of destroying their lives and, finally, when it was all but too late, of incorporating in their systems some of the ideals and principles that had been made available at so high a price to others. Thus, the vested interests of conservatism have ever been challenged in spite of perils; they are being challenged now, and will continue so to be, as long as the world remains imperfect and man aspires to something better than has yet been known and practiced.

A Strange Occurrence

Baha-O-Llah was the great spiritual and political revolutionary of the 19th century. His teachings tolled the death-knell of conservatism in these two domains. Consequently, when Abdul Baha, rising with unexampled majesty and power, dispensed his Father's message of liberty to the four corners of the globe, the reactionaries of all classes ridiculed this new system of thought and took violent exception to it. Then, a very strange thing occurred. A handful of men and women, from among these very reactionaries, took it into their heads to file into the precincts of the Cause. It was not the Teachings that moved them to acceptance; far from it! It was the personality of Abdul Baha that impressed and drew them irresistibly. So, these persons from the opposite camp, having penetrated the ranks of the rising rival movement and taken possession of its key positions, functioned as if in a dream during the lifetime of the Master, until, at the stroke of 1921 when Abdul Baha was removed from their midst, they suddenly awoke from the spell, rallied their forces and hoisted their old standard of staid conservatism above the unsuspecting forces of the insurgent Bahai Movement.

The Point under Discussion

The appearance of The New History Society on the Bahai horizon, in 1929, constituted a danger signal in the eyes of the conservatives within the movement, the more so in that a large percentage of their own membership looked with favor and much hope on this new effort to teach the Cause. This latter group, which included a number of the finest and most responsible of the older Bahais, saw in

The New History Society a means whereby to combat the reactionary tendencies *within* the organization, and during two years they championed our effort with great courage and determination. So, a flood of letters, coming from both camps, was let loose upon the Guardian of the Cause in Haifa; and Shoghi Effendi considered these conflicting views with a great deal of patience and made continuous attempts to bring harmony and unity into the feverish New York Center.

The point under discussion was a very clear cut one. The Local Assembly of this city wished to supervise our activities. I, on the other hand, owing to long experience with the Assemblies, was convinced that such supervision implied a complete domination and would lead to the total destruction of the work itself. We looked upon The New History Society as an independent effort to teach the principles of the Cause, and we needed freedom in so doing. Afterwards, when the initial interest had been created, we were ready to guide our new found friends to the Center, to arrange classes under the direction of its own Bahai teachers and to strive in every way toward the co-operation of the two groups. Such a plan was not too inconsistent with my principles, because at that time the Administration, while it manifested an exaggerated sense of authority, had not yet encumbered itself with many of the limitations that restrict it today. In fact, my personal opinion is that The New History Society, itself, is largely responsible for this accumulation of rules and regulations, for, as we continued to function in liberty, more and more did the National Spiritual Assembly wish to set itself up as something totally different, with the result that this body

has grown out of all resemblance to the Bahai order as envisioned by Baha-O-Llah.

Bahai Meetings

During the winter of 1929-30 we held Bahai Meetings in the Oak Room of the Ritz Carlton Hotel. The lecturers in the first series were alternately Mr. Solon Fieldman, a good Bahai friend from Chicago, and myself. In the second series, we presented as our weekly speaker Mrs. Beulah Storrs Lewis, an experienced Bahai lecturer from Los Angeles. These remarkably well-attended meetings constituted our public work; while, at the same time we carried on Bahai classes, one group at Mrs. Chanler's house being under the direction of Mrs. May Maxwell, and a larger one in the Park Central Hotel, conducted in conjunction with Mrs. Maxwell, which was under the direction of Mr. Edward J. Kinney. In March 1930, we ventured again within the precincts of the Bahai Center taking with us our own new, yet fairly well-knit group, but at the close of this series of lectures we were not permitted to continue, as we would have liked to do, on account of a newspaper article that had appeared, regarding an imaginary building for our youth group *The Caravan*, which by this time had come into being.

Invitations which were Declined

The season of which I speak was packed full of activities, and very fruitful ones too; while simultaneously the undercurrent of argument with the Assemblies was going on at full tilt. It was repeatedly required of me that I should appear before the Local Assembly of New York

and the National Spiritual Assembly, but I looked on these bodies as Religious Tribunals (which appellation they themselves did not use at the time but have used since) and believed that I would be trapped into making admissions, regarding my opinion of the organization, which would be used against me. Consequently, while I was at all times willing to discuss any and all matters with individual members of the Assemblies, I consistently refused to appear before their official groups.

The Final Word

These things are now long passed and one can look back to them with equanimity, but at the time they were harrowing in full measure. The question was this: Would Shoghi Effendi yield to the importunities of the National Spiritual Assembly and disown us, or would he, as Mrs. Chanler so ardently hoped, give us a chance to be useful? The axe was poised above our heads, held by a thread.

The whole story can be told best through extracts from the correspondence between Mrs. Chanler on the one hand and Shoghi Effendi and the National and Local Assemblies on the other; the correspondence, in typewritten form, is contained in a book entitled *The New History Society and the Bahai Administration*.

Plans for First Series of Bahai Lectures

To Shoghi Effendi from Mrs. Chanler, dated December 24, 1928.

. . . We have rented the room for eight more meetings. We are planning to send many, many announce-



MRS. LEWIS STUYVESANT CHANLER
in 1932

ments and to advertise in the papers. I know that we must do this thing, and we will do it to our utmost ability. Whether that ability is sufficient to make a mark in New York I cannot say, but everything in us both will go towards doing it well, and one thing is certain—the Bahai Cause will be spoken of in New York publicly, not behind closed doors. This will be good. . . .

I wouldn't take your time on such a long letter were it not that I wished for your sympathy in what we are trying to do. I want to assure you of Ahmad's and my love for you and tell you that our lives are concentrated in an effort to serve you.

Answer from Ruhi Afnan, dated January 19, 1929.

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your very kind letter dated December 24th, 1928. He was very glad to hear that Mr. Sohrab is doing good service in New York in the way of public speaking. He surely knows the Cause very well, being for such a long time with the Master, translating his letters and talks. All those who have been with the Beloved during his lifetime should feel the responsibility they bear and do their utmost, shouldering it, especially those who were, we may say, nurtured by him. . . .

Shoghi Effendi very much appreciates the wonderful service you have rendered the Cause and is always waiting to see what the next will be. . . .

Postscript added by Shoghi Effendi:

My dear and precious co-worker:

I wish to add a few words in person as a token of my keen appreciation of your past services and of my fervent hope and prayer for the future extension of

your manifold activities. I welcome Mirza Ahmad's collaboration with you, in such an open and direct manner, for a wider diffusion and a better understanding of the purpose and the principles of the Bahai Faith.

I will pray for the success of your efforts from the depths of my heart.

Account of First Series of Bahai Lectures

To Shoghi Effendi from Mrs. Chanler, dated March 4, 1929.

. . . Ahmad put his whole heart into this work. I can say that at the lectures and in the time intervening, he has consecrated himself wholly and he has always spoken beautifully. I think the people have been impressed with his modesty and simplicity and his real depth of feeling, and he has made something of a name for himself, but this is only incidental. . . .

It will take time to show if we have really taken a step forward, but I think that we have, and the word "Bahai", as I wrote you in the beginning, is really known in New York very, very much more than before. . . .

Now that the lectures are over, I can just thank God that they went through without any hitch. Mrs. Maxwell has been very kind and encouraging and Juliet Thompson has surrounded me with an ocean of love. . . .

When I realize how much there is to be done, I think that we have accomplished almost nothing, but this year's experience will help us in the future, I am sure, and Abdul Baha knows how much I long to serve Him.

Answer from Soheil Afuan, dated March 28.

I am directed by Shoghi Effendi to thank you very

much for your letter of March 4th with enclosure.

He is indeed very much pleased to learn that your meetings at the Hotel have been successful, and if they at least directed the thought of the better classes in New York to the teachings of the Movement and a study of its writings, it is in itself a great service.

He wishes me, however, to assure you that no matter what measure of success attends your efforts, he feels he must express his deep appreciation of your eagerness to cooperate with him in the service of the Cause, and of the sincere spirit that has animated your endeavors. Indeed, were you to do what a New York paper alleged, namely, "to make God fashionable," you would not only be conferring a blessing to the fashionable, but a great service to all those who follow the fashionable. . . .

Postscript added by Shoghi Effendi:

My dear and precious co-worker:

Your manifold services, past and present, are truly worthy of praise and admiration. I deeply appreciate your high endeavors and will continue to supplicate for you at the holy Shrine. . . .

The National Spiritual Assembly Expresses Itself

During this time, the National Spiritual Assembly was watching our activities very closely, and now the first letter from this body was sent to Mrs. Chanler, the theme of which was an offer of co-operation.

March 25, 1929.

. . . The National Assembly, therefore, is anxious to make it clear to you that its members unreservedly desire to assist and cooperate in every possible way to as-

sure the complete success of the public meetings held under your auspices and announced as Bahai meetings.

We realize of course that you have not requested this cooperation, but this very fact makes it the more essential that we offer you at this time an explanation of what we conceive to be, from the writings of Abdul Baha as well as from the letters of Shoghi Effendi, the conditions essential to successful Bahai service in the teaching field. . . .

Thus, to take a specific instance, when an individual Bahai desires to serve the Cause by holding public meetings under the Bahai name, the general plan and arrangements are reported to the local or National Assembly beforehand. . . . The local or National Spiritual Assembly is only concerned with two facts: whether the meetings in question give the Bahai teachings correctly, and whether the meetings involve any conditions that might detract from the dignity, nobility and sacred character of the Cause. . . .

Our hope, therefore, is that you will consult personally or enter into communication with the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of New York in the matter of your present and future plans which involve the Bahai name and teachings, in order that these activities may be blessed with the confirmation of Abdul Baha, spread in this city, which He termed "The City of the Covenant," the very essence of the teachings of Baha-U-Llah, and create for you an honor and glory that will endure in the history of the Cause.

Now, Mrs. Chanler knew that *co-operation* meant supervision of our programs and of everything that was said on our platform. It implied endless discussions and certain interruptions of the work. We felt that we could not risk

it; so, in answering this letter, Mrs. Chanler merely invoked the universality of the Cause in general terms.

April 3, 1929.

The National Spiritual Assembly

Dear Mr. Holley:

I would like to thank you for your letter and answer it in a spirit of sincerity.

Two thousand years ago, in an age of ignorance and servitude, the Word of God appeared upon the earth, and the Word was free. Now in these enlightened times, when liberty is the heritage of all men, (when incidentally they exact it) the Word of God returns to them without limitations.

I believe this, because I consider the Bahai Cause to be no less universal than was Christianity.

I appreciate your offer of cooperation and thank you for any kindness which you may feel towards my work. I have already availed myself many times of Mrs. Maxwell's wisdom and friendship and I hope to have often the opportunity of doing so again.

For the present, I am thinking of just one thing:

Jesus said to his disciples—"Go ye unto all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" and Abdul Baha said to Ahmad Sohrab—"Go and teach."

I am going to try to help him.

This letter of Mrs. Chanler's was answered by Mr. Horace Holley before it was presented to the National Spiritual Assembly.

Your letter will be presented at our next meeting, but meanwhile I am sure that I express the attitude of all the members when I say that your letter will cause

surprise and real disappointment. It really seems inexplicable that any devoted and sincere student of the teachings of Baha-U-Llah and Abdul Baha should claim for the Bahai Cause a universality, in terms of complete freedom of action for individuals, in direct contradiction to the teachings themselves. The National Assembly would fail in its loyalty to you as well as in its responsibility for upholding the Cause if we did not emphasize this essential point. . . .

As I tried to make clear before, the anxiety of the National Assembly to see your Bahai services established upon a firm and enduring foundation is not an expression of any claim to arbitrary authority on the part of the Assembly, but is entirely a matter of obedience to the authentic Bahai writings.

An Appeal for Protection

After midnight, on April 5th, Mrs. Chanler wrote to Shoghi Effendi giving a description of the founding of The New History Society at her house, at 132 East 65th Street. She realized that something of importance had just occurred, and she looked overseas to Haifa for the safeguarding of this new-born effort to serve the Cause.

April 6th

. . . I have just passed an evening that has made me very happy. The people have gone home only a little while ago. We have been having meetings here, as I wrote you; meetings which had a wonderful spirit. They numbered about forty-five or fifty people, the last three times.

Lately, we decided to draw up a plan of Universal

Ideals for those who wished to subscribe to them, and who would in this way bind themselves together and so prevent a scattering during the summer. I am sending you the Plan which Ahmad drew up. We called it "The New History Society."

Just as from the lectures of the Park Lane a cream arose to the surface which enrolled in "The New History Society," so, a cream will rise to the surface of this society which will become Bahais. . . .

Tonight, twenty-eight people enrolled and some asked time to think it over and to enroll later. Ahmad had given a talk about the disciples of Christ, and those who wished to, went into the other room and signed their names and then came back and shook hands with all those who had already signed. It was pouring outside, thunder and lightning, and something was happening in the room,—I believe something wonderful. You see, a very few of us knew each other, because the meetings have been large, and it is hard to remember faces and names, but in that handclasp something was broken down and, after a short prayer, the rain stopped and LOVE appeared in the room. I have never in all my life seen such happy, moved faces and I believe all those people went home on wings. Many of them seemed to think that they had joined the Bahai Cause and came to me with plans for spreading it. A man from Cornell College, who had come only to one meeting before tonight, said to me that he had found what he had been looking for, and that he knew many to whom he would offer what he had found. Another man "has been looking everywhere, but has now found the Highest." Many women said things of the same kind. Mr. Senitha, who has been with us almost from the start, said: "This ball

is rolling now. It will grow very large," and I, who seldom dare to be hopeful, believe that a wonderful CHILD has been born.

Beloved Guardian, I place it under your protection!

Mrs. Chanler's Right to Vote Questioned

Letter from the Local Assembly of New York to Mrs. Chanler, dated April 15, 1929.

Wishing to inform us of the status of your teaching work, the National Spiritual Assembly has spread before us the joint correspondence covering this point. Although the question has passed to a higher administrative division of the Cause and your answer has been directed to them rather than to your Local Assembly, as suggested in their letter of March 25th, nevertheless, the vital question of your voting in the Cause must be settled through the Assembly in your Community.

Will you kindly let us know, so that our records may be accurate and correct, whether you wish—in the words of Abdul Baha—to "obey with heart and soul" the bidding of the Assembly "and be submissive unto it," or wish to withdraw from its divinely appointed authority.

In deep earnestness we pray that your really great activities, so sincerely appreciated not only by the members of your local group but by our dear Guardian, will be pursued as directed by him in his latest published letter and also as requested of you by the National Spiritual Assembly. . . .

Will you kindly let us know as soon as possible what status you choose?

Mrs. Chanler was conscious of the fact that she would be lost if she answered this question directly. She was now sparring for time. Her reply was as follows:—

April 17, 1929.

. . . In my service this winter, I have made use of an instrument prepared for this work by the Master himself. In view of the fact that when this instrument was in their hands, the Local Assembly did not find it in their hearts to allow the Cause to profit by it, and being convinced that it should be used, at this time when instruments are few, I, with the help of God only, brought the Bahai Cause before the public of New York with an effectiveness unequalled since the days of Abdul Baha.

Now, since these services have, in the estimation of the Local Board, made me undesirable as a voter, I will, in conformance with their suggestion, absent myself for the present from the Bahai Center.

A second letter to Mrs. Chanler from the Local Assembly of New York continues:

April 19, 1929.

Every member of this Spiritual Assembly hopes, desires and prays that you may continue as a voting member of this Cause, but the principles of Bahai Administration are clear as to the qualifications of a voter. . . .

The question already submitted to you in our previous letter is whether or not, according to the qualifications quoted above, you consider yourself a member of this Assembly and are willing to comply with these requirements. This is a choice *you alone* can make, you cannot shift the responsibility of making this choice to the local Spiritual Assembly.

On the day of election, Mrs. Chanler, wishing to demonstrate the fact that, as far as she was concerned, she still was a member of the Bahai Assembly, presented her vote at the Center, by proxy, through Mrs. Margueritta Smythe. Her vote was refused.

Problems

Now, Shoghi Effendi wrote to Mrs. Chanler, through his secretary, on the problem which the founding of The New History Society had brought into the Cause.

April 30, 1929.

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your very interesting and kind letter dated April 6th. I cannot say that it is an easy task to comment upon such a letter, for one is inevitably caught between two difficult problems, neither of which can be overlooked.

This last year, it has been a source of delight for Shoghi Effendi to see you come to the front, earnestly and courageously advocating the Cause and its principles. . . . The work you have been able to do, he hopes, will, through God's help, bear abundant fruit. He conceives it therefore a crime to throw cold water on such a burning zeal which may be a part of God's plan in spreading the Cause in America. In fact, he wishes me to assure you of his prayers and best wishes that you may succeed in your ardent labors. .

On the other hand, he feels the responsibility of suggesting to you certain points that may ultimately add to your success and meantime be more conformant with the wishes of the Master.

The objective of the Cause, as explained by the Master, is unity. What then would happen with the Cause

if, from its earliest days, different groups and societies are created within it. No matter with what spirit a certain group may come together, once it tries to create an independent identity for itself, it immediately becomes an organism seeking its own individual growth. This organism can never again merge itself with the mother organism. . . .

Perhaps by not labeling yourself as a separate group and cooperating more fully with the Assemblies you could teach the Cause and also obviate these difficulties that may ensue. . . .

The present Assemblies are surely imperfect, but they are the seeds from which this great administrative body is to grow. . . .

From Paris, Mrs. Chanler wrote to the Guardian giving a resumé of the situation.

May 11, 1929.

It is a grief to me that my attempts to serve the Cause should have brought this controversy before you and taken any of your time. Even now I am going to write about inharmonious things. I am sorry.

You know that I brought Ahmad back to the Organization last year. He had resisted my desires for weeks, but when he came to them, he came with his whole heart and like a child. They knew that they needed him, yet, in spite of this, they gave no friendliness, no cooperation. I saw many instances of this. Life is a game and they have backed him to lose, and by now it is a question of pride. You remember when he was in the West, occupying himself with his own interests, they said that he was faithless to the Cause; when he worked in the Organization last year, they expelled him, and

when he works outside the Organization, they are dissatisfied. So, if he doesn't work for the Cause, if he works in the Cause, or if he works outside the Cause for the Cause, all are wrong. There seems to be no way out, and this is a devoted servant who has proved himself useful. I don't understand it, but it must be for a reason—beautiful things happen too that one doesn't understand. . . .

The Organization in New York has had a long opportunity to serve. Someone brought me the list of members the night that my vote was rejected. It numbered 179 people. This is the result of all these years and of much money. I think that they don't know how to teach the Cause. They talk of commands, submission, autocracy. They don't talk of love. I don't think that they know what love is. If someone were lucky enough to bring in new members of capacity, I believe that they would consider it an intrusion, and would fear that the comfort of their little club might be threatened. Abdul Baha said that the Cause might become extinct in America. I think that these people can't save it. . . .

I would like, under the auspices of The New History Society, to teach the Bahai Cause publicly next winter. I may, by that time, be able to get other speakers too. We would not be breaking the rules of the Organization if we were separate. I think that it would look so well on invitations and announcements to say: "The New History Society presents So and So, speaking on the Bahai Cause." As time goes on, I would make an effort to influence those who accept the Faith to identify themselves with the Organization.

Let us try to serve you in this way. I can answer for our loyalty if for nothing else. I would like to work

under your protection, but if this is too much, then I ask you to withhold your condemnation. Give us a chance to be useful, and if at the end of a year or two you are pleased, then perhaps you will give us your approval. . . .

In the autumn of 1929, we made arrangements for the activities of the winter, and Mrs. Chanler wrote to Shoghi Effendi regarding our program, which included Mr. Solon Fieldman of Chicago.

October 26, 1929.

I enclose to you our program for the coming winter and you will see that there are now three of us engaged in your service. . . .

I pray that this combination will be blessed. We are all three beginning the winter's work with much love and confidence in each other and looking to Baha-U-Llah for his presence and his help. It is in the hands of God.

Answer from Ruhi Afnan:

December 21, 1929.

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your very kind letter dated October 26th. He fully appreciates the earnest spirit and deep conviction that you have put in your work and sincerely prays for the realization of your ideal. But he cannot consider the work of The New History Society except as another experiment to spread the movement. May God make it successful and of a brilliant future! To him you, with your devotion, sacrifice and perseverance mean more than any such society. His interest in it is only to see

the way your noble qualities are going to find an expression in its working.

We have lately heard from New York that soon absolute unity will be established and full cooperation between the Assembly and yourself will be obtained. Shoghi Effendi hopes that this is true and that you will not deprive your society of the inspiration that such a unity will bring to it. Such a unity, however, should not be by winning them to your cause, but rather by raising its banner on your front.

Shoghi Effendi, in his moments of prayer, will remember you and ask for you divine guidance. He wishes me to assure you of all his interest in your work, of all his appreciation for your endeavors, and of all his hope that you will attain your ideal and goal, namely, the service of the Cause and the spread of the Divine message of Baha-U-Llah.

CHAPTER IV

AT THE FORK OF THE ROAD

A Bahai Trio

The meetings of 1929-1930, conducted in the Oak Room of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, were very successful. Mr. Solon Fieldman and I alternately held the platform and, as we were very different types, the audience found much interest in comparing our approaches to the Bahai teachings. Mr. Fieldman was an orator of the old school, very dramatic and impassioned, while I am apt to speak in a more matter of fact way. We believed that we made a good team and when, in midwinter, Mrs. Beulah Storrs Lewis, a beautiful and expert teacher, travelled all the way from Los Angeles to take part in our work, we were conscious of the fact that we were offering to the New York public a presentation of the Cause that was very colorful indeed. Throughout these meetings, we sold a great deal of literature provided by the Bahai Center, and the Message of Baha-O-Llah penetrated to many circles and touched countless hearts.

A Recruiting Station

By this time, large numbers of the members of the Bahai organization had actually joined The New History Society. This membership with us in no wise affected their loyalty to the Center, for all of us looked on the new movement as a sort of recruiting station, and we often termed it as such.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Roy Wilhelm, member of the National Spiritual Assembly, Mrs. Chanler brought up this point and stressed the urgent need of teaching the Cause without loss of time.

Feb. 11, 1930.

I myself have not the conviction that the Bahai Cause will be accepted by the world. Its principles and ideals will be; already they are spreading far and wide, but will the name of Baha-U-Llah go with them? This to me is uncertain.

I believe that Christ would not have been called the *Man of Sorrows*, if his greatest suffering had not been concern over the success of his mission, and that Abdul Baha would not have labored so unceasingly, if his accomplishment had been beyond the realm of doubt. Also, I think the burden of Shoghi Effendi would be lighter, if the establishment of the Kingdom of Baha-U-Llah were unquestionable. I know that in this I differ from many, but I believe that the WORD which God gives is dependent upon the people who receive it for its ultimate realization.

Feeling as I do, I don't want to waste any time. The Cause has had a start in New York and *I will not abandon IT*.

Ahmad and I alone came before the public last year. The Bahais weren't with us, neither were my own friends, yet the results were miraculous; for God worked through us to His own ends.

Now that I see how much the people want this Cause *I cannot refuse it to them, but will go on teaching*; and if you want us to work for you, we will do so with all our hearts. We will send people to the Center hoping

that they will be well received. We wish to be a Recruiting Station for you. . . .

As no answer to this letter was received, it is legitimate to try to imagine the reaction that it caused. *We wish to be a recruiting station for you.* This phrase brings up a picture of what might have happened if Mrs. Chanler's plea had been granted, namely: The New History Society, from time to time, opening its flood-gates and allowing a stream of immature Bahais to filter into the precincts of the Assembly. So far so good; but how about the voting season? Would it not be likely that these fresh, untrammelled minds would pick out some *new* officers to represent them, and that within a few years a large part of the administrative personnel would be changed? This supposition brings up a serious point, applying to both National and Local Assemblies, the former having been functioning since time out of mind with practically no change of officers.

An Occasion for Rejoicing

Toward the middle of the winter, Mrs. Chanler conceived the idea of conducting our group to the Center and of teaching from there, in an effort toward reconciliation. She discussed this plan with Mrs. Maxwell and Mr. and Mrs. Kinney, and these friends of ours enthusiastically agreed to do all in their power to bring it into effect. Consequently, through their good offices, we were enabled to start a course of lectures at the Center, with Mr. Solon Fieldman and myself speaking alternately as we had done at the Ritz.

The opening evening was an occasion for much rejoicing

to all those who had wished to bring about unity between the two groups. Mrs. Chanler described the meeting to Ruhi Afnan, Secretary to the Guardian, in the following letter.

March 6, 1930.

Last night, Ahmad took a considerable part of The New History Society to the Bahai Center and there, after my husband had left, presided over the rest of the evening with much love and sweetness. There was a radiancy of happiness there and a gratitude to God, on the part of many, too deep for words.

Ahmad has proved himself a power of inestimable value to the Cause, as I saw in the beginning without need for proof; and now we are looking to a future full of promise, with a rapt hope.

It is needless to dwell on how much we have suffered during these two years. Our nerves are nearly broken and some of us are ill. Our darling Juliet Thompson couldn't be present last night as her health has been affected, following the long strain.

In answering, Ruhi Afnan says:

March 26, 1930.

I had already heard through Mrs. Harris of the wonderful spirit that prevailed at the meeting that The New History Society had held at the Bahai Center. Shoghi Effendi sincerely hopes and prays that this friendship will wax stronger every day and that the petty differences and misunderstandings will fade away.

Through the circular letters of Ahmad and the various other channels, I have been following up the

work of The New History Society with great interest, and even though I objected to various things I could not but admire some of the work achieved.

A Ghost in the Attic

It will be noted that throughout this correspondence, I figure as a strange character, sometimes praised but for the most part ignored. I am a sort of skeleton in the cupboard or ghost in the attic, casting a baneful influence on the thoughts of everybody, yet unmentionable, as far as possible, to the truly well-bred. Mrs. Chanler assumed full responsibility as defendant of The New History Society, using the pronoun *I* pretty consistently. Knowing, as she did only too well, that I was distrusted by the Administration, she felt that the work would have a better chance to get by if she claimed it as her own exclusively. In the following cablegram, sent to Shoghi Effendi, when The New History Society was just one year old, I affix my signature for the first time.

Cablegram

We, The New History Society, with a membership of 341, are celebrating, this April 5th, our First Anniversary Festival in the Persian Garden of Ritz Carlton.

We send you our heartfelt love and devotion.

We beg you to supplicate for our confirmation in the service of mankind at hallowed shrines of the Bah, Baha-U-Llah and Abdul Baha—the three Great Lights of the age.

Pray for us that, with the increase of our membership, we may add to our zeal in freeing our fellowmen



BERTHALIN LEXOW

At present Mrs. Frederick Allien, taken in the days of Abdul Baha.

from the chains of past prejudices and fanaticism, and upraise the flag of the Oneness of the World of Humanity in the kingdoms of the hearts.

The New History Society,
Julie Chanler
Ahmad Sohrab.

Aftermath

On the morning following this birthday celebration, one of the New York papers gave much space to The New History Society, featuring in flamboyant terms a building which our youth group, The Caravan, hoped to build in the far-flung future. We did not have one cent reserved for this project, yet the reporter devoted almost a column to a description of the *idea*; at the same time, four hundred thousand dollars had just been raised for the construction of the Bahai Temple near Chicago and the *actual news* pertaining to this enterprise, as contained in a release put out by Mr. Holley, was included in this article, compressed into a few lines.

This publicity did not in the least please us; in fact, it caused us much distress, but by this time we knew enough about newspaper methods to realize that their writers featured what they wished, and that there was nothing to be done about it.

On the same day, Mrs. Chanler wrote to the Local Assembly expressing her thanks for the hospitality that had been accorded our group during the preceding weeks, and asking permission to continue the meetings at the Center one night a month throughout the spring and summer. This request was refused on account of the above

mentioned publicity. Thus, our second attempt to work at the Center was brought to a sudden halt in exactly the same manner as the first one had been—through a newspaper article. These two incidents show, as well as anything could, the fate that would have befallen The New History Society had it been irrevocably delivered into the hands of the Assemblies.

Cablegram

On April 9, 1930, The New History Society received an answer to its cablegram addressed to the Guardian:

My prayer at holy shrines for History Society is that its members may increasingly realize that the efficacy and permanence of their endeavors lie in unreserved acceptance of teaching of Baha-U-Llah and Abdul Baha. May they be blessed and guided to identify themselves wholly with the Faith. Reciprocate your loving greetings.

Shoghi.

Ordeal by Fire and Firecrackers

During the progress of her public work, Mrs. Chanler had formed many new friendships in the Bahai Community, and these associates had given her great moral support throughout the long encounter with the Assemblies. All the while, the point at issue was: What would be the ultimate decision of Shoghi Effendi? Should he throw in his weight against The New History Society, these Bahai sympathizers would be forced to accept his verdict and sever their connection with us; on the other hand, should he, as they so earnestly hoped, give wings to this experi-

ment, it was certain that a new era of enthusiasm and activity in the Cause would ensue. The period of uncertainty was very trying, bringing nerves to a breaking point and, as signs became more and more ominous, insistent pressure was brought upon us to make some sort of compromise.

I remember an amusing incident which took place at that time. One of the older Bahais, who had never met Mrs. Chanler, came to call and, when the visit was drawing to a close, this lady presented her hostess with a lovely white rose, saying that it was her custom to give white roses to all persons who were ill. Mrs. Chanler was about to protest that she was in perfect health, when she suddenly realized that the implication was on the grounds of *spiritual illness*; so she simply thanked her guest with a smile.

Another humorous experience returns to my mind. There was a Bahai from New Zealand, spending some weeks in New York, who used to drop in at our meetings from time to time. One evening, learning that he was in a bad state financially, I took him to my room to spend the night. Then, in the morning he speeded to the Center, and this is the story that he told:—

After some hours of rest, he had awakened and, looking over at me, had seen me lying in the unconsciousness of sleep, revealed in my true colors:—two horns had made their appearance on my forehead!

This account of my night with the New Zealander circulated among the Bahais, some of whom believed that this young man had had a flash of second sight; while I, when it finally came to my ears, only wished that the season had been summer when no blankets are used, for in that

case, the story would doubtless have culminated in a long, sleek, curling tail!

Representative members of the Bahai organization did their utmost to make us understand the laws of the Administration. Out of the goodness of their hearts and in their devotion to the Guardian, they explained the importance of obedience to the Central Authority but, although we would have liked to meet them more than half way, we were convinced that this young movement would not long survive the ministrations of the Assemblies. Mrs. Chanler's soul questionings during that winter were continuous and intense, for they centered around the possibility of doing permanent injury to the Cause. She was in a state close to collapse when she sailed for Europe in the spring of 1930.

Little Regiment for Shoghi Effendi

Before her departure, classes for The New History Society under the direction of Mr. Edward J. Kinney had been opened at the Park Central Hotel. Mrs. Chanler expected that this teaching work would bear fruit. In the month of June she sent a cablegram to Mr. Kinney.

Overjoyed wonderful meetings. Believe you will collect little regiment for Shoghi Effendi. May the Master help you.

One More Chance

In July, I received a visit from Mr. Alfred Lunt, member of the National Spiritual Assembly, who carried in his pocket the draft of an article destined to appear in *Bahai News* of the following month. In this statement, The New

History Society was disowned by the authorities, and it constituted, therefore, the long dreaded break with the Administration.

I read the typewritten pages very carefully, realizing that I was being given one more chance, and then I told Mr. Lunt that, as far as I was concerned, the paper could go to press. *However, I continued, if you put your signature to this, the day will come when you will wish that you had cut off your right hand instead.*

This prophecy of mine was never fulfilled, for a few years later Alfred Lunt died, to the grief of the Bahai community. He was a talented and warm-hearted man, a devoted servant of the Cause and a definitely liberalizing influence on the National Spiritual Assembly.

A Thunder Clap

And now the inevitable, which had been warded off for so long, happened. It electrified the Bahai community in this city; while The New History Society, which had always been kept in utter innocence of what was going on regarding it, went on its own light-hearted way in complete unconcern.

The first pronouncement against The New History Society was published in the pages of *Bahai News* of August 1930 under the ominous title: *The Case of Ahmad Sohrab and The New History Society*. Here are a few quotations:

The National Spiritual Assembly finds it necessary to make a definite statement to the Bahais of the United States and Canada concerning the relations of The New History Society and the Cause.

This Society was started in New York City early in 1929 by Ahmad Sohrab, one of its avowed purposes being to spread the Bahai teachings. Neither the Local nor the National Assembly was consulted in the matter, and the meetings and activities of The New History Society have been maintained apart from the principles of consultation and Assembly supervision which today, under the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha, form the basis of Bahai unity and protection of the Cause. . . .

Under these conditions it becomes the obvious responsibility of the National Spiritual Assembly to inform the friends that the activities conducted by Ahmad Sohrab, through The New History Society, are to be considered as entirely independent of the Cause; as outside the jurisdiction of the Local and National Assembly, and hence in no wise entitled to the cooperation of Bahais. . . .

In clarifying this difficult situation for the body of believers, the National Assembly urges an attitude which shall express full loyalty to Bahai administration and also unfailing kindness and good will to individuals. . . .

Every believer must take to heart this lesson, that individual Bahai effort, without due consultation, is foredoomed to failure.

A Volunteer

When Mr. and Mrs. Chanler received the news, in Paris, that The New History Society had been severed root and branch from the parent tree, they were not shaken in the least. Even now, I smile as I recall Mr. Chanler's cablegram to me. In it, he offered to open the lectures himself during the coming winter, speaking on the Twelve Bahai Principles.

Now, in the past, Mr. Chanler had been a speaker of note, having been Lieut.-Governor of New York State and a distinguished criminal lawyer; but he had retired long ago, and besides he had never studied the Bahai teachings. This generous suggestion, therefore, implied a great effort on his part, but he was willing to make it, in order to stand by the work; and I accepted his offer gratefully and without a qualm.

In the Hands of the Master

In the year 1926, shortly after she had come into the Cause, Mrs. Chanler had made a pilgrimage to Haifa, Palestine, to visit the Holy Shrines. There she had the inestimable happiness of spending an hour with The Greatest Holy Leaf, daughter of Baha-O-Llah, and the ladies of the household. It happened that Shoghi Effendi was not feeling well that day, so she did not have the privilege of meeting him.

I believe that Mrs. Chanler's reaction to the break with the Bahai Administration could be no better described than in a letter written by her, at the time, to Rouha Khanoum, daughter of Abdul Baha. It reads as follows:

September 8, 1930.

The evening before I left Paris, your letter came to me and I took it out to Versailles where we were going, and there I read it many times. As I looked at the beautiful trees and listened to the orchestra, my eyes were full of tears, and my heart full of love for you and infinite gratitude. This message of friendship, coming at a time when my life had so changed, affected me very much, and I felt that on this new path I was taking a

jewel of your giving; and even if I do not see you again, and even if you feel you cannot write to me again, I will always count on your love and every day give you mine.

I have never talked to you about the trouble which has passed, but today I will say a few words about it. Often in the past, I have heard the Bahais say (Mr. Mills, Mr. Holley and others): "If only a way could be found to spread the Cause!" Just by chance, because the Organization would not use Ahmad, we stumbled on the method of The New History Society. This has proved a very effective one, and the chief reason for its success has been that it was *free*. Here, without obligation to any one, the people hear about the Bahai Cause and gradually absorb it.

We cannot, with a free conscience, sell these people behind their backs to *any* Organization, much less to an Organization, orthodox, cruel and unsuccessful. Just the same, we tried to serve this Organization. We never spoke against them. We brought them the results of our efforts. When I left for Europe, Ahmad, with all his resourcefulness and enthusiasm, was directing the course of The New History Society straight toward the Administration. Surely many, many dozens would have joined then; and they would have set a precedent which would have been followed by the very best souls in their ranks, month by month, year by year.

The Bahai Cause is almost dead in America; what is left of it is pitiful and ignoble. I believe that Abdul Baha is tired of this situation, and before him I say that I believe that he is using us to start the Cause once more. Where he will lead us, I don't know. The National Assembly has turned the course of The New History Society away from the Administration, and it

would seem just about impossible to turn it back. We are in the hands of the Master and we are not a bit afraid. Wonderful Berthalin is with us. It makes a lot of difference.

Beloved Rouha Khanoum, every hour I turn my face to the Master and I do not feel his displeasure. I only feel his love and I am very happy.

A Higher Court

When Mr. and Mrs. Chanler reached New York in the early autumn, they learned that the Guardian had endorsed the action of the National Spiritual Assembly through the following cablegram, published in *Bahai News* of September 1930.

Approve action regarding History Society. Deeply appreciate loyalty (of) believers.

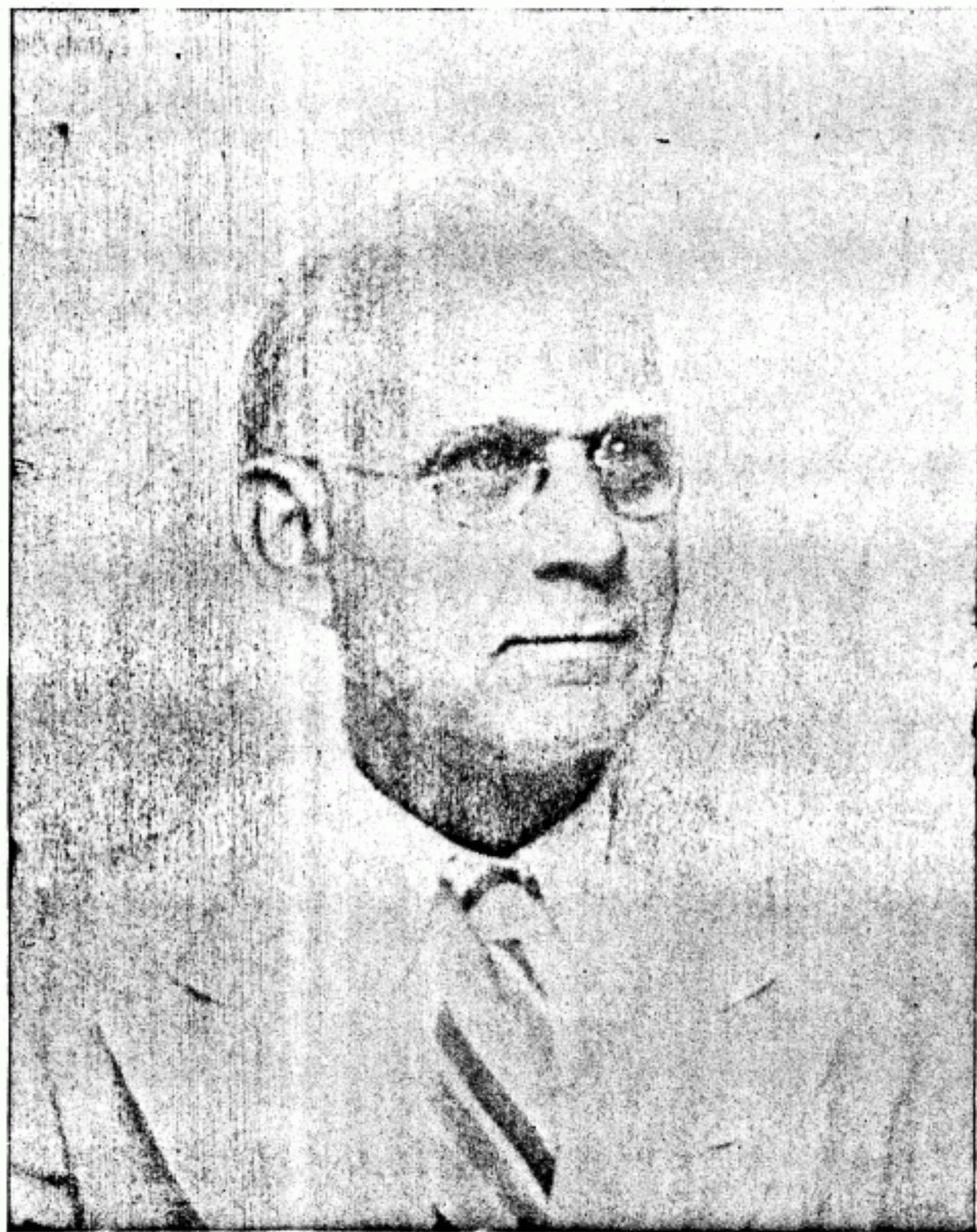
Shoghi.

Then, a few days after their arrival, Mr. and Mrs. Chanler, to their surprise, received a communication from the National Spiritual Assembly:

September 25, 1930.

The National Assembly is meeting in West Englewood, N. J. on October 10th, 11th and 12th, 1930. They would like very much if you both could accept their warm invitation to meet with them informally and talk over the various matters which are common to our hearts.

They feel that association and a better understanding of each other and the welding of acquaintance and friendship will be of the greatest value in forwarding



MR. O. J. HANKO
A Bahai of the days of Abdul Baha.

and advancing the ideals and purposes for which we are all striving.

They sincerely hope you will accept this sincere invitation in the spirit of love and friendship in which it is sent.

Anytime convenient for you can be arranged for—whether during the sessions or dinner or lunch.

Looking forward to the happiness of meeting you.

It may be remembered that in the National Spiritual Assembly's pronouncement against The New History Society my name alone was mentioned. Therefore, without much reading between the lines, one can judge that the purpose of the above letter was to dissociate Mr. and Mrs. Chanler from a lost cause—in other words, it implied a suggestion to leave the sinking ship.

It took next to no time for Mrs. Chanler to answer this invitation and, within a few hours, her letter was on its way. To my mind, this is a great document, and posterity can judge its contents according to its own standard:

Dear Friends in the Cause of Baha-U-Llah:

I was touched by your kind letter of September 25th which I received this morning and I believe with you that a sincere friendship between us all would not be impossible, even after the difficulties which have passed. I do not feel any pride or any stubbornness, and if you will allow me to say so, I have a little love for all of you, which may or may not be acceptable.

Last year, although I jealously guarded this work of ours, my purpose was only, and entirely, to bring the fruit of it to your doors. I would not have liked to miss one sincere soul among our members, but wanted to

bring all of them to strengthen your forces at your center. This was my heart's desire, and without this aim I would have had no inspiration in the work. Nevertheless, circumstances were against us and the tide of The New History Society was turned afield. Neither Ahmad nor I could turn it back now, because the people have lost confidence.

I have always believed in the unification of forces and I do believe in an Administration, although I cannot make of it an article of faith. I think that the guidance of the Assemblies should be something to be desired, not something to be submitted to, and that the sanction of the Publishing Committee should be an asset to be intensely hoped for, not an obligation.

Last summer, I found myself unexpectedly in Rouen and there I visited the tower room where, in the year 1431, Jeanne d'Arc was tried. As I leaned against those very walls where she had leaned, and as the questions and answers of her trial which were hung up on the wall, were read to me, my eyes filled with tears for her, and my heart with grief. She had been asked to believe in the row of priests before her as instruments of God to be submitted to, and when, after repeated questioning, she still insisted that she could not, they declared her to be outside of the Church and sentenced her to what they called the minimum penalty, which was only burning. Two Members of the Court went on record as thinking the punishment too lenient. So, forsaken by her King, whom she had served for nearly two years and loved so much, but with her confidence in her God and in her Cause undiminished, she gave up her life on the market place and withdrew to her eternal glory.

Today, it is not a woman, but a man who stands be-

fore the Bar of the Church, and after the passing of exactly five centuries to the very year, the question asked is still the same.

I myself am nothing in this, except that I see Truth in this man, as I believe that I would have seen it in Jeanne d'Arc, had I been there.

That same day in Rouen, I visited the Shrine where her memory is glorified by the same Church which condemned her, and I lit a candle before that Shrine, for the Cause of Baha-U-Llah.

After nearly two years, the question of The New History Society has passed out of your hands and out of ours. The Guardian has confirmed your action and there the matter must rest.

In a letter received (*by a mutual friend*) two days ago from Ruhi Effendi, post-scripted by the Guardian, he says:

"Anyhow, by the attitude the National Spiritual Assembly has taken considering the History Society outside the Cause, and the advice they have given the friends to dissociate themselves from it, we hope that the problem is solved." And again in the same letter—"Anyhow, thank God that the die is cast and the final decision is taken."

The problem which has absorbed too much time already has been decided by a higher Court. I cannot question that decision. Therefore, a meeting between us, even though unofficial as you so considerately suggested, would be useless. The whole matter is now disposed of and we must all accept.

I want to thank you many times and send you all my best wishes. It is possible that in the future we may meet in a personal way. I should be most pleased,

Continued Unrest

It appears that the article concerning The New History Society, as published in *Bahai News* of August 1930, and the later cablegram from the Guardian were not sufficient to allay the unrest in the Bahai Community. The anxiety and dissatisfaction continued unabated, the reason being that many looked upon our work as the only hope of freeing the Cause from the reactionary influences that had oppressed it for so long. Therefore, *Bahai News* allotted more than three pages in its November issue to a further discussion of the problem, in a section entitled *The Principle of Bahai Freedom. A Statement Concerning the Episode of The New History Society*. I will give a few extracts:—

Because of certain misunderstandings that still prevail among a few believers, the National Spiritual Assembly feels it advisable to issue this further statement, supplementing and confirming the statement published in *Bahai News* for August 1930, regarding the episode of The New History Society.

The desire of the National Assembly is to so clarify the matter by recording the various steps leading to the adoption of the previous statement that no doubts may remain in a single Bahai heart. It will be understood by every believer that the following quotations and brief explanatory remarks are intended to deepen our collective unity within the institutions of the Cause, and The New History Society is referred to merely as an episode in our Bahai experience.

It is devoutly believed that careful consideration of the matter as here presented will remove these definite

sources of misunderstanding and, consequently, sources of disunity among the believers. The New History Society itself is relative to the discussion only as having occasioned a temporary test to a number of Bahais. The definite sources of misunderstanding to be removed are, first, that the Guardian has ever or will ever sanction any activity as "Bahai" which stands in opposition or indifference to the permanent general principles of administration given us under the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha; second, that the Guardian could ever conceivably be so misled by false or inaccurate communications from any source that his instructions are subject to personal interpretation; and third, that the guidance or inspiration felt by any group of believers possesses a superior spiritual validity to the deliberations of a duly elected Spiritual Assembly and thus justifies opposition to the Assembly in relation to any given situation.

Cablegram from Shoghi Effendi included in above article:

Feel strongly Ahmad Sohrab should uphold unconditionally authority Local and National Assembly.

Quotations from letters written by Shoghi Effendi included in above article:

Attendance Ahmad meeting conditioned upon Ahmad's unquestioned acceptance to conduct meetings on lines fully sanctioned by National Spiritual Assembly. True unity can only be preserved by maintenance paramount position National Spiritual Assembly.

Ahmad Sohrab's activities should be watched carefully, lest a weak handling of this extremely delicate situation may confuse the minds of the friends and

cause a split in the Cause. The Cause has already triumphed over such cases which flare up for a time, then recede into the shadows of oblivion and are thought of no more. The case of Khyrullah, Fareed, Dyer, Mrs. White and others testify to this truth.

Quotations from two letters written by Ruhi Effendi, Shoghi Effendi's secretary, included in the same article:

In none of the Guardian's letters to Mrs. Chanler has Shoghi Effendi approved of her attitude toward the Local and National Assemblies. One of those who was over-zealous about The New History Society wrote Shoghi Effendi that the members of the New York Assembly are gradually becoming milder and perhaps drawn to the History Society. This is to solve the problem in the wrong way. It is not the Assembly that has to be won to the cause of some rebellious person, but that person brought back under the authority of the Assembly.

Some persons in the (United) States feel that the History Society was badly represented to Shoghi Effendi. The source of all our information is the writings of Ahmad and the publications of that group. In all his circular letters he harped on the note of freedom and denounced the red tape that characterizes organizations.

I have to thank Ruhi Effendi for so concisely summing up my characteristics in the above statement. I could not have done it better myself. An almost religious belief in freedom for all men, and a dislike for the red tape that applies to organizations (especially supposedly spiritual ones) are strongly developed in my consciousness. On this basis, I have always functioned and always will.

Tainted Money

The main activity of the Bahai Administration has been, and still is, centered about the building of a great Temple in Wilmette, Illinois. In 1929, Mr. Chanler made a considerably large contribution to the Temple Fund, which was graciously accepted; and again on January 2, 1930, Mr. and Mrs. Chanler and I sent in comparatively modest donations for the same purpose. Now, one of the fixed rules of the Administration is that no money may be accepted from non-Bahais for the building of the Temple. Therefore, these latter checks were retained uncashed in the administrative files for more than ten months, and on November 6, 1930, after my expulsion from the organization, a letter was written by Mr. Alfred Lunt to Mr. and Mrs. Chanler stating that the checks could be *used for Bahai purposes in the discretion of the National Assembly* and asking that they be made payable to the National Bahai Fund instead of to the Temple Fund.

The mystery of this double standard, regarding moneys received from Bahais and non-Bahais, struck Mrs. Chanler as too complicated for her to deal with, so she asked me to answer in her place. I did so to the best of my ability, closing as follows:

. . . If the money of a man who served Abdul Baha for eight years and who is giving the last drop of his blood to spread this Cause, and if the money of Mr. and Mrs. Chanler, who are devoting *all* their energies in the same direction, is not good enough for the Temple, then, I believe, and I assert before the world, that all the hundreds of thousands of dollars that have been given by others have been given uselessly.

I lament and weep over the conditions of today. Not only do I do so, but Baha-U-Llah himself, and Abdul Baha himself lament and weep for that which, within a few short years, has been done to their universal spiritual Cause.

In your official pronunciamento of August of this year, you state emphatically that the activities conducted by Ahmad Sohrab are in no wise entitled to the cooperation of Bahais. How can this statement be squared with this recent communication that you are willing to accept money for *Bahai Activities* from a man whom you have publicly repudiated? Is this consistent? Or, has one standard been chosen for the National Assembly and another for the poor Bahais, standing as so many pawns on their chessboard?

Mrs. Chanler wished to answer your letter to her, but she found that she could not.

The Last Letter

During the winding up of the year 1930, the agitation in the Bahai Community persisted. Although Mrs. Chanler had accepted the decision of the Guardian without hesitancy or question, many of the well-wishers of The New History Society could not bring themselves to look upon the matter as closed. Consequently, as this tempestuous year drew to an end, Mrs. Chanler, with a view to protect these friends of hers from further distress, wrote a final letter to Mr. Alfred Lunt, the one member of the National Spiritual Assembly who had been sympathetic to her work. I reproduce it in full.

December 28, 1930.

In these last days of 1930, I feel that I must make a resolution, difficult as it is, for the New Year.

You, and many of our dear beloved friends, have suffered enough on our account. You have risked your own comfort, you have tried to protect us, you have loved us and showered us with kindness.

Now we want to thank you for all this and to withdraw from your lives. We think this is the wisest thing to do and we beg you to agree with us.

If, at some future date, God wishes to bring us together, He will do it; and in the meantime we will all work for His Cause according to the light that we have, and I am sure, with great understanding of each other.

As Bahais, we know a place to meet that is not in the physical world but somewhere in the presence of the Master, and in these meetings, we will draw great strength and comfort.

I have thought of writing this for a long time and now I know that the moment has come.

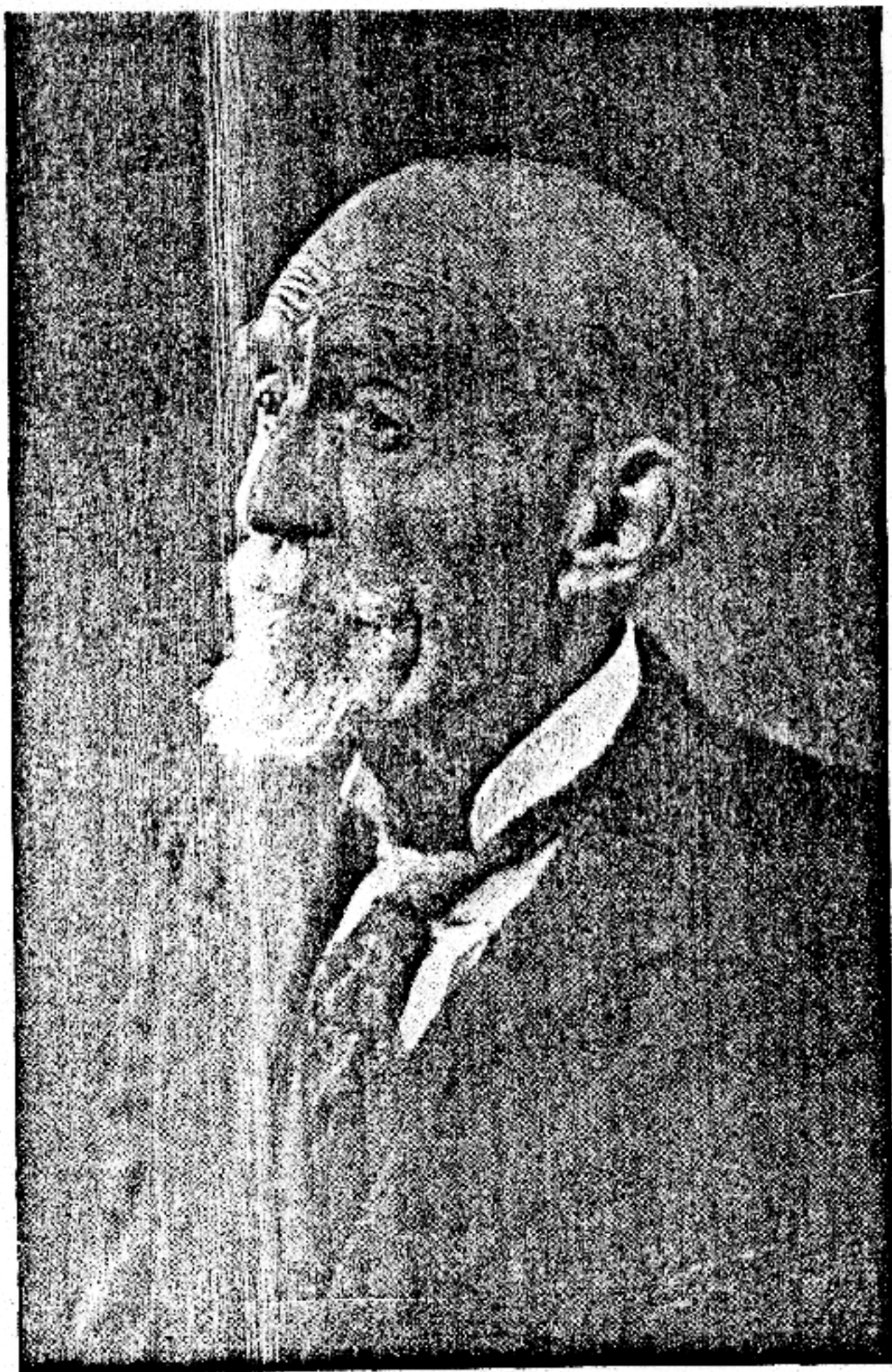
Don't make yourself sad by answering, I will always love you.

P. S. I am sending the same letter to nine of our friends.

The above communication was addressed to:

Mrs. Edward J. Kinney	Mrs. May Maxwell
Miss Juliet Thompson	Miss Jean Silver
Mrs. Audrey Foster	Miss Mae Seabeck
Mrs. Margueritta Smythe	Mrs. Frances Fales

In spite of this letter, our connections with many of the Bahais continued, the affection on both sides being too great to be set aside. Later, however, an order originating either in Haifa or with the National Spiritual Assembly



MAJOR JOSEPH HONORÉ JAXON
One of the earliest pioneers of the Bahai Cause in America.

(which, I do not actually know), brought all association to an end. There was a single exception made to this ruling and, for years, Mrs. Chanler had the joy of seeing her closest friend in the Cause; but, with the institution of the lawsuit, this especial dispensation was cancelled. Thus, the only remaining link between ourselves and the adherents of the Administration was broken.

On the other hand, a few Bahais have openly stood by our work, regardless of consequences. Conspicuous among these is Mr. O. J. Hanko, who has been in the Cause for about thirty years. He was a charter member of The New History Society, and, although he lives out of town, he is ever ready with encouragement and assistance. Also, there are Miss Jane Durand, of Asbury Park, New Jersey, whose kindness has never failed us, and Major Joseph Honoré Jaxon, eighty years old, one of the few remaining pioneers of the Cause in America.

Another, among the earliest Bahais in this country, is Mrs. Frederick Allen, the former Berthelin Lexow. Mrs. Allen has, through the years, identified herself with the work of The New History Society in a very notable way, and has been an example of courage and self-sacrifice.

A Cardinal Principle

The official and unofficial records, contained in the type-written book entitled *The New History Society and the Bahai Organization*, cover a period from December 24, 1928, to November 21, 1931. From many of these letters and statements, I have quoted only a part; from some communications from Haifa, which were addressed to others besides ourselves, I have not felt at liberty to quote at all.

However, through the extracts used, I believe that the points of difference between the Assemblies and The New History Society have been made clear. Throughout those three years, the Bahai Administration made its claims, which undoubtedly it thought just, and tried to impose them; and throughout the same period of time, The New History Society, with at least equal earnestness, struggled to maintain its integrity so that it could look the world square in the face. Here there is a difference in point of view, so fundamental, that no words and no effort can change it, at least as far as mortal vision can perceive. For ourselves, we shall continue along the path that we have chosen so deliberately; we shall teach freedom of conscience, respect for the convictions of others and co-operation between men and women of all systems of thought tending toward a true comradeship of human beings, born and unborn. Then, shall we teach religious liberty? To ask the question is to answer it. The aspiration toward religious liberty has always existed in the consciousness of mankind. It lives in Hindu hearts, in Jewish hearts, in Christian hearts, in Islamic hearts and, after its long leap from the heart of *The Most Great Prisoner in Acca*, it lives in the hearts of people everywhere.

This is a cardinal principle of the New World Order.

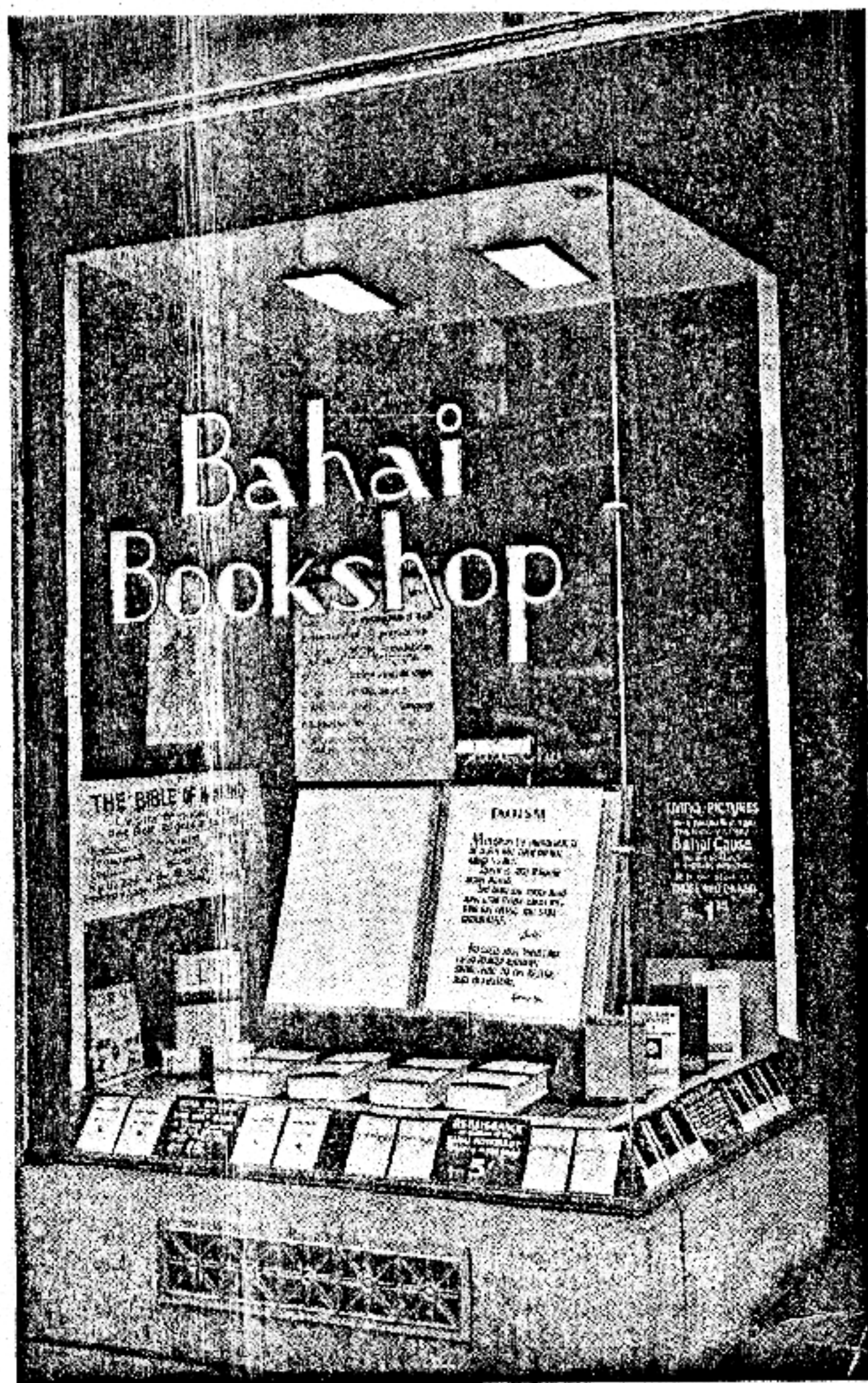
P A R T T H R E E

BAHAI LAWSUIT

5. The Trade-mark
6. The Decision
7. The Name
8. The Appeal

*So speak ye, and so do, as they that
shall be judged by the law of liberty.*

—James, Chapter 2, Verse 12



BAHAI BOOKSHOP

CHAPTER V

THE TRADE-MARK

The New History Society

The movement which was inaugurated in 1929, under the name of The New History Society, had for its object the promulgation of the constructive and universal principles of Baha-O-Llah. This movement came into being and has been supported and sustained up to this date through the initiative and devotion of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler. My part in helping the growth and progress of this work has been a humble one. I claim nothing for myself, but I claim everything for these two servants of Baha-O-Llah.

During the last eleven years, through the channel of 'The New History Society, the name and fame of the Cause of Baha-O-Llah have penetrated to the four corners of the earth. By means of public meetings, at which a succession of the intellectual and spiritual leaders of humanity (both Americans and distinguished visitors from abroad) have delivered their messages; through annual Prize Competitions on topics of world peace, world religion, world reconstruction, racial amity, etc.; through the publication of books and leaflets (some of which have been translated into 30 languages); through its monthly and quarterly organs respectively *New History* and *The Children's Caravan*; through 'The Caravan, a young people's movement, with more than 200 Chapters in 27 countries; through the

holding of classes and numerous other methods, these two souls have rendered unparalleled services to the Cause of Baha-O-Llah.

The annals of Bahai history in the Western world contain few records of such personal dedication. Mr. and Mrs. Chanler have consecrated everything—their name, their house, their possessions and, last but not least, their privacy to hold aloft the sacred name of Baha-O-Llah and to make his teachings better known to young and old in the continents of Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South and Central America, Canada, Mexico and the Islands of the Seas. Seldom has such a missionary work been undertaken; seldom has it been formulated and carried into execution with such enthusiasm, energy, forethought and utter disregard to personal comfort and rest.

Their Reward

And now comes recognition from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada! But, before I mention this recognition, let me state that during the last eleven years this body of men and women have set themselves to oppose the work of The New History Society, to attribute to its founders and members all sorts of unworthy motives; to publish in *Bahai News* articles of a most crude character and to countenance stories and rumors that have no foundation in fact and no relation to reality. In taking this attitude and in systematically following a course of enmity and persecution, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada have been free and untrammelled; one may assert that they have used (or in my

opinion have abused) their constitutional right of free press, free speech and free assembly. I am the last man to blame them for what they have written! Praise be to God that in these United States the citizens are free to relieve themselves of their opinions about any one, be he a humble laborer, a political leader or a one-time friend.

But, all I have to state here is this: For eleven years Mr. and Mrs. Chanler have kept a dignified silence; for eleven years they have never, on the platform nor in print, met these attacks, and for eleven years, serene and undisturbed, they have heeded the advice of the Great Teacher by meeting evil with good.

Serene and undisturbed! I am probably exaggerating a little, for there were times when the darts of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada and the Local Assembly of New York did hurt; yet one glance backward to the martyrdoms of the early Babis and Bahais who suffered at the hands of the enemies of freedom and progress was sufficient to restore their equanimity and their confidence.

This radiant acquiescence would unquestionably have continued for the rest of their lives had the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada confined themselves to periodic insinuations in *Bahai News* and to the setting afloat of their fanciful stories and rumors; but something happened that has made the writing of this book imperative.

In 1939, The New History Society exhibited its works and literature in Science and Education Building at the New York World's Fair, and during these months an idea came to the mind of Mrs. Frederick Allen, one of the first

Bahais in this country, who had been called *Berthalin* by Abdul Baha and who has used this name ever since. The idea was that it would be a valuable service to the Cause if, after the closing of the Fair, our exhibit could be transported to the city. After some consultation, it was decided to take this step as a purely temporary activity, and on November 7th, 1939, *Bahai Bookshop* was opened at 828 Lexington Avenue, a lease having been signed for the duration of six months. I admit that we were fully conscious that, in all probability, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada would resent this further heralding of the Bahai name and teachings. However, we were prepared, as in the past, to meet opposition in silence.

Then—

On December 5, 1939, the postman delivered the following letter to Bahai Bookshop:

(Letterhead of)

WATSON, BRISTOL, JOHNSON & LEAVENWORTH
6 East 45th Street
New York

December 5, 1939.

By registered mail to
Mrs. Julie Chanler,
Bahai Bookshop,
828 Lexington Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Madam:

We are instructed by our client, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Can-

ada, to communicate with you with reference to your unauthorized use of the trademark BAHAI in the trade name BAHAI BOOKSHOP, and on books, leaflets and advertisements which are not published by our client.

The word BAHAI has been used for about forty years by our client and its predecessors as a trademark for magazines, printed books, and other publications, and is registered in the United States Patent Office in the name of our client, registration No. 245,271. The word BAHAI is substantially the same as the registered trademark BAHAI, and your use of the former in the ways we have mentioned constitutes trademark infringement and unfair competition.

Probably you were not informed as to the trademark situation and it will not be necessary for our client to do more than bring the facts to your attention. In order to comply with the formalities, however, we must and do demand on behalf of National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada that you discontinue immediately the use of the word BAHAI in the name under which you are conducting a book shop, and upon books and other publications not published by our client, and we hereby notify you that upon your failure to do so our client will hold you responsible for profits, damages and costs of litigation.

Will you please give the matter immediate consideration and advise us of your decision.

Yours truly,

(Sgd.) Watson, Bristol, Johnson
& Leavenworth.

A few days after the receipt of this letter, Mrs. Chanler placed the matter in the hands of Mr. Fred J. Bechert,

of the firm Mitchell & Bechert, and the following correspondence ensued.

(Letterhead of)
MITCHELL & BECHERT
420 Lexington Avenue
New York, N. Y.

December 21, 1939.

Messrs. Watson, Bristol, Johnson
& Leavenworth,
6 East 45th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Re: Bahai Book Shop

Gentlemen:

This is in reply to your letter of December 5th, receipt of which we acknowledged under date of December 12th.

We have conferred with Mrs. Chanler and examined a great deal of literature relating to the Bahai Cause. Through our investigation, we have learned that in about the year 1863 Mirza Hossain Ali, a Persian nobleman, felt that he was inspired by God and that it was his duty to bring a message of light and glory to a harassed world. He adopted as a spiritual name "Baha-U-Llah". This name was to signify the "light" or "glory" of God. Prior to 1863, there were followers of the Bab and the individual followers were known as Babis. The Babis later became followers of Baha-U-Llah, who carried on the cause, and the followers of Baha-U-Llah became known as Bahais. Long prior to the year 1900, the word "Bahai" had become a well known descriptive word to identify a follower of Baha-

U-Llah in precisely the same way as "Christian" would describe a follower of Christ.

It is our opinion, therefore, and we have so advised Mrs. Chanler, that Bahai, long prior to the year 1900, became and now is a word of common speech necessary for use in aptly describing a follower of Baha-U-Llah. In our opinion, therefore, the word "Bahai" cannot legally be exclusively appropriated by your client.

Mrs. Chanler advises us that she is a Bahai, and that her Bahai Book Shop specializes in Bahai books, pamphlets, and literature in general for the dissemination of the Bahai teachings.

It is our understanding that Mrs. Chanler, far from competing unfairly with your client, is engaged in the work of furthering and spreading the Bahai cause, which, we take it, is also the purpose and effort of your client.

Yours very truly,

B/S

Mitchell & Bechert.

(Letterhead of)

WATSON, BRISTOL, JOHNSON &
LEAVENWORTH
6 East 45th Street
New York

December 22, 1939.

Re: Bahai Bookshop

Messrs. Mitchell & Bechert,
420 Lexington Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Dear Sirs:

We are in receipt of your letter of December 21 in answer to ours of December 5.

You state that in your opinion the word Bahai "is a

word of common speech necessary for use in aptly describing a follower of Baha-U-Llah." You do not state, however, that the word is descriptive of the goods on which our client uses it as a trademark, namely, magazines, printed books, and other publications, and it is obvious that such is not the case. The use of this word by your client on publications not published by our client and in the trade name Bahai Bookshop constitutes trademark infringement and unfair competition.

Moreover, the use by your client of the trade name Bahai Bookshop is a misrepresentation and a deceptive use because it gives the erroneous impression that the book shop is operated or sponsored by our client, the official Bahai religious organization, and the use of the name Bahai Bookshop without our client's authority and consent also infringes our client's property right in the name Bahai.

We believe you may want to reconsider your opinion in this matter, and request that you do so.

Yours truly,

(Sgd.) Watson, Bristol, Johnson
& Leavenworth.

(Letterhead of)

MITCHELL & BECHERT

420 Lexington Avenue New York, N. Y.

January 2, 1940.

Messrs. Watson, Bristol, Johnson
& Leavenworth,

6 East 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

Re: Bahai Book Shop

Gentlemen:

This is in reply to your letter of December 22, 1939.

We regret that our letter of December 21st did not make our client's position entirely clear.

It is our opinion that "Bahai" is a descriptive word for aptly describing a follower of the Bahai teachings and, furthermore, that the word "Bahai", whether or not used as a trade-mark, if it is applied on Bahai literature is descriptive of that literature. If your client is in the general publishing business and applies the word "Bahai" to books and periodicals having nothing to do with Bahai teachings, then the mark would not be descriptive of such books and periodicals.

Our client uses the word "Bahai" in the title of its Bahai Bookshop in a descriptive sense to identify it as a book shop specializing in Bahai literature.

Our client denies that the use of the trade name "Bahai Bookshop" is either a misrepresentation or a deceptive use. As stated, the Bahai Bookshop represents that it specializes in Bahai literature and, as a matter of fact, Mrs. Chanler is herself a Bahai.

Our client further denies that the use of the trade name "Bahai Bookshop" gives any erroneous impression that the shop is operated or sponsored by your client, since your client, in our judgment, has no exclusive right to the name "Bahai" to describe a follower of the Bahai teachings or to identify those teachings in book form or otherwise.

We must therefore repeat that, in our opinion, our client is not infringing any rights of your client and is not unfairly competing with your client.

Yours very truly,

Mitchell & Bechert.

Points Involved and My Reactions to Them

A partial study of the contents of the above correspondence between the two attorneys-at-law will reveal several interesting facts:

1. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada have made a trademark of the name *Bahai*.
2. According to the text of application filed March 10, 1928, Serial No. 262,923 the Bahai Organization is a corporation.
3. The word *Bahai* is a *trademark* as actually used by applicant upon *goods*, and requests that the same be registered in the United States Patent Office. . . . The trade-mark has been continuously used and applied to said goods in applicant's business since 1900.
4. The goods or merchandise that the applicant sells and which are protected by a trade-mark are the words of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha.
5. Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha lived in prison, suffered and gave their teachings *free* for the religious unification of mankind in order that, in 1928, these spiritual heavenly teachings be monopolized, and sold under trade-mark to an unsuspecting public as so much *goods*, similar to *Blue Sunoco*, *G. Washington coffee*, *Twenty Mule Team Boraxo* or the new, blended with *Havana*, *White Owl Cigar* (it's milder)!
6. The members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, like their expanding sister monopolists, are reaching out to stifle all *unfair competition*, holding Bahai Bookshop re-

sponsible for profits to which, incidentally, they are welcome if they are willing to meet the losses as well.

7. The Bahai organization is not a religion, nor a spiritual renaissance, nor the spirit of the age, but is a full-fledged corporation which, while it engages itself in marketing the principles of Baha-O-Llah for the establishment of Universal Peace, through its various branches in the United States, Canada and in other parts of the world, has protected these goods by taking out a trade-mark on the very name which more than twenty thousand Persian men and women claimed at the price of their lives. This is the first instance in the history of religion where the privilege of calling oneself a follower of a certain Prophet, were he Buddha or Christ, or Mohaminad or any other, has been involved with the interests of a trust or corporation.

What, for instance would have happened to Christianity if, added to the difficulties of establishing a new religion, the early Christians had had to contend with property rights on the name and teachings that they were ready to die for? It is certain that such a liability would have stifled the movement in its infancy and that, before the passing of a hundred years, the words of Jesus would have been heard of no more. The Cause of Baha-O-Llah is no different. Strong as it is, commercial interests and the lust for power are stronger yet if allowed to operate unopposed; and this new-born child, the hope of the ages, will unquestionably cease to breathe if its neck continues to be weighted with the steel links of an international chain store.

Back to The New History Society

General membership in The New History Society is free. Sustaining membership consists simply of subscription to our monthly magazine, *New History*. The society is composed of a band of volunteers and free souls who have come together with the desire to help in the formation of the *new history* of the world and to promulgate the constructive and universal principles of Baha-O-Allah. These men and women are not tied to any formula. They are the children of the New Age and the heralds of the New Civilization.

More than 99 per cent of all expenses of The New History Society and its manifold activities have, during the past eleven years, been paid quietly and unassumingly by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler.

Bahai News

The Feb. 1940 issue of *Bahai News* on page 3, in an article signed by the National Spiritual Assembly under the title of *Vigor and Spiritual Health of the Community*, directs its attack, without mentioning any name, to Mr. and Mrs. Chanler, The New History Society and Bahai Bookshop. We quote:

The believers in all lands are under the supreme favor of guidance from on High. They strive to uphold, day by day, ideals and principles which relate to their own development and the illumination and harmony of mankind. But on the other hand, to aid the endeavors of those who outwardly claim allegiance but secretly try to destroy the Divine Edifice through enmity to its leader, would manifestly be the most grievous of errors.

Historically such disloyalty, synchronizing with the expansion of the Faith, had its appearance when some who were professedly loyal to the Bab, disobeyed His Covenant by refusing to accept Baha'u'llah as the expected One of the *Beyan*. They were urged on by a sordid ambition which brought them ignominy, oblivion and loss. Later the same condition became apparent after the ascension of Baha'u'llah when a few corrupt people violated His solemn Covenant by refusing to accept its Center, Abdu'l-Baha. Again, a diminishing few, urged on by vaulting ambition and an obvious desire to organize within the Cause a group that would circle around themselves, have refused to acknowledge the station of our beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, and the New World Order of administration called into being by the Will of Abdu'l-Baha.

Under the authority of the Guardian, the time has now come to act against these "insidious adversaries" who have even gone so far as to flout the Beloved's Will and Testament, the very pillar of our unity, by claiming the right to use the term "Baha'i" to designate their personal activities. The matter is therefore being taken to the courts, and as soon as possible their excuses will be made a matter of public record. It will be seen whether the present enemies of the Faith can succeed any better than those enemies who have preceded them: Subhi-Ezel, Mohamet Ali, Kheirella and their like, whose denial of the Truth became historic facts beyond recall.

In connection with this legal action, we have this message from Shoghi Effendi in his cablegram of January 23: "Praying victory similar (to the) one recently won (over) Covenant-breakers (in) Holy Land be achieved

by American believers over insidious adversaries (in) City (of the) Covenant."

For Bahais Only

Before answering some of the accusations contained in the above extract, I will point out one peculiar aspect of *Bahai News*. Every copy, in recent times, carries on its front page the inscription: *For Bahais Only*. Why for Bahais only, if the Bahai Cause is intended for the whole world? Why for Bahais only, if there is nothing to hide? Why for Bahais only, if this periodical is a credit to those who prepare it? Abdul Baha on many occasions said that in the Bahai Cause there is no secret doctrine, and that there should be no secret society nor secret meetings. He never thought of specifying the point that there should be no secret publication: *For men only, For members of the Klan only, For Bahais Only*.

Referring to Mr. and Mrs. Chanler and the members of The New History Society, the article states that a *diminishing few urged by vaulting ambition and an obvious desire to organize within the cause a group that would circle around themselves. . . .* At this point, I am close to becoming profane, but I will continue to hold the reins of my patience as far as I am able. The above statement is a mendacious falsehood, and the fraudulency of it is as evident to those who wrote it as it is to those of whom it was written.

Vaulting ambition! My soul! A man and woman giving their hearts, minds and all that they possess in this world to spread an unwanted, though much-needed, cause!

Vaulting ambition! Two persons bidding farewell to

their associates and friends to champion a movement that had been dragged, by its votaries, to the level of a narrow sect!

Vaulting ambition! What did Mr. and Mrs. Chanler have to gain! They had everything to lose. Yet in spite of all kinds of obstacles, laid by their fellow Bahais and others, they arose with such power and self-sacrifice to spread the Cause of Baha-O-Ilah that it is difficult to measure or comprehend the height and depth of their love and devotion.

I praise heaven that I was allowed the privilege of assisting them in their disinterested enterprise; and so, I doubt not, do those who have held by them through thick and thin and who thus have exposed themselves to this dishonest attack.

Insidious adversaries! The insidious adversaries are those who hold office in the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada. They are the ones who, through their legalistic verbiage, have stopped the circulation of the blood of life through the arteries of mankind; they are the ones who have banished love from their midst and enthroned the Veiled Hatred which is more dreadful than the unveiled one; they are the ones who have spread the pall of subtle fear and suspicion over the Bahai Community, exiling confidence and self-respect; they are the ones who, through political manipulations before and during annual Bahai Conventions, are re-elected to the same offices year after year—thus, keeping a stranglehold on the activities of the Cause and directing those activities according to their own good-pleasure.

The founders of The New History Society never, dur-

ing the eleven years of the existence of the movement, have tried to *organize within the Cause a group that would circle around themselves*. Those who are within the Bahai administrative structure have been emasculated to the point where they are not worth organizing; and then, The New History Society is not an organization. It sees the result of these tactics, and it remembers that the Bahai Cause was not intended to be an organization.

The New History Society has marched across the longitude and latitude of the earth, sowing the seeds of the creative words of Baha-O-Llah without let or hindrance, and it has not withheld those who love organization to follow organization. In other words: *Let the dead bury the dead!*

The writer of the article in *Bahai News* reaches the height of his slanderous vilification when he likens Mr. and Mrs. Chanler and their Bahai friends to *those enemies that preceded them: Subhi-Ezel, Mohamet Ali, Kheirella and their like*. God Almighty! Is it possible that a human mind could have framed this sentence! Is it conceivable that a community, calling itself Bahai, can allow it to go unchallenged!

I address the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, and ask: How did you dare, in the presence of Baha-O-Llah, to print such blasphemies upon the pages of *Bahai News*? Who drew up this article, and how did it come about that you put your signature to it?

This you call *Bahai News*! It is a yellow sheet, a scandalous germ carrier! No wonder that it is *For Bahais Only*!

Construction of the Word "Baha-O-Llah"

Baha-O-Llah is a compound Arabic word consisting of Baha and Allah, literally meaning the *light* or the *glory* of God. Baha is an ordinary Arabic word which has been used in the literature and poetry of Arabia for innumerable centuries, and, of course, the word Allah is as ancient as Arabia itself. The word Baha is so well established that, when the Arabic translators of the Old Testament came to certain passages in that book, they rendered the words *glory of God* as *Baha-O-Llah*, and *the glory of Carmel* as *the Baha of Carmel*. See Isaiah, Chapter 35, verse 2; likewise Isaiah, Chapter 40, verse 5; where *the glory of Carmel* is translated into *the Baha of Carmel*, and *the glory of our Lord* is rendered into *the Baha of our Lord*. This can be verified by reference to any Arabic translation of the Old Testament.

From this point of view, any Arab, knowing nothing of the Bahai Cause, can open a shop under the name: *Bahai Foodshop* or *Bahai Drug Store* or *Bahai Bookshop*, because the words *light* and *glory* are current words in his language and he is at liberty to use them as have been his ancestors for centuries past.

Historical Origin of the Name Bahai

The Bahai Cause, as the movement is known today, was inaugurated in 1844 by Mirza Ali Mohammad, who adopted the title of the *Bab*, an Arabic word meaning *gate*, by which he implied that the gate to a new civilization was opened wide. A follower of his became known as a Babi, the addition of the letter *i* signifying in Persian

being of, or adhering to. Just as a native of the city of Tabriz is called Tabrizi or a native of Esphahan is called Esphahani, so an adherent of the Bab was called Babi.

When Mirza Hossein Ali, a disciple of the Bab, realized that he was inspired by God and that he must bring the message of *light and glory* to a harassed world, he adopted the title of *Baha-O-Llah*, by which he implied that the age of darkness, superstition, prejudice and ignorance was about to pass away and that a new era of understanding, harmony and union was dawning. The spiritual power of Baha-O-Llah was so tremendous that the majority of the Babis at once recognized in him the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Bab, which were to the effect that after him a yet greater personality would arise and take leadership. Therefore, these disciples gave their allegiance to Baha (Baha-O-Llah often in his writings refers to himself simply as Baha) and automatically they became Bahais. Likewise, the Babi Movement, from this time on, more and more became known as the Bahai Movement.

The Bahai Cause Is Not an Organization

Many years ago, when the Bahai Cause was guided by Abdul Baha, the great son of Baha-O-Llah, it was taught as a free, non-sectarian Revelation, its door open to all mankind.

The earlier Bahai booklets, now out of circulation but still to be found in the Public Library of New York, 5th Ave. and 42nd Street, carried a significant statement made by Abdul Baha. This statement may be found in a booklet entitled *No. 9*, which was widely circulated in former years.

Now, this statement was so significant and far-reaching in its implications that it was continuously referred to by the Bahais in their speeches and writings; and today there are many yet alive who, on numerous occasions, have heard Abdul Baha himself repeat it. Let us listen to the Master as he spoke:

The Bahai Movement is not an organization. You cannot organize the Bahai Movement. The Bahai Movement is the spirit of the age. It is the essence of all the highest ideals of this century. The Bahai Cause is an inclusive movement. The teachings of all religions and societies are found here. Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Mohammadans, Zoroastrians, Theosophists, Freemasons, Spiritualists, etc., find their highest aims in this Cause, Socialists and philosophers find their theories fully developed in this movement.

Mr. Horace Holley

Mr. Horace Holley learned of the Cause during the lifetime of the Master; after a meeting with Abdul Baha in Switzerland and a deep study of the teachings, he applied himself to the service of this nascent movement. His writings, work of those early years, present the Bahai Cause in a masterful and moving manner, and his later monumental tome *Bahai Scriptures*, published by Brentano's in 1923 (at present out of circulation), is an invaluable compilation. Likewise, the successive year books, entitled *The Bahai World*, prepared under his direction, and containing a wealth of interesting material to be found nowhere else, bear witness to his remarkable editorial talents.

Since the departure from this life of Abdul Baha in

1921, Mr. Horace Holley has been the most dominant and outspoken champion of the Bahai Administration; step by step, he has developed and refined this organism to the point where he now holds in his hand the threads of all the activities of the Cause in the East and in the West. Since 1921, with the exception of a single year, if my memory serves me right, he has been elected year after year as the all-powerful secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada. I can call to mind but a single other instance where the occupant of so unpretentious an office as that of secretary maintained supreme and undisputed sway over the minds and lives of his community. This was in the case of Joseph Stalin, who also heads a movement which likewise is supposed to stand for social reform, and who, at the very pinnacle of power, retained the modest title of Secretary of the Communist Party.

Mr. Horace Holley is a most efficient organizer; he has been, and still is, the editor of various Bahai publications and as such he charts and canalizes the mental and spiritual life of the Bahai Community. As an influential member of the Bahai Reviewing Committee, he censors the writings of the Bahais and sees to it that no liberal or anti-organizational ideas penetrate the minds of the members of the various committees. In the exercise of this function, he always has the right and apt quotations, gathered here and there from the writings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, (writings which had been given out by these Great Teachers during an approximate period of sixty-five years and which applied to every condition imaginable, both universal and local) and that is enough to prevent any objec-

tion or discussion. Under such circumstances, thought is paralyzed and no one dares to follow Baha-O-Llah's injunction, ever repeated by Abdul Baha: *Independent Investigation of Truth*.

Going back to the early years, we find a book, entitled: *Bahai—The Spirit of the Age*, written by Mr. Horace Holley and published by Brentano's in 1921. Abdul Baha was still in our midst and, although the forces of organization were gathering and the thin clouds of recurrent ecclesiasticism were becoming visible on the horizon of the Bahai Cause, these were not ominous. Mr. Horace Holley was slightly affected, but he was as yet a free soul—the charm and vision of Abdul Baha still held sway over his writings, as can be seen in the introduction to the above-mentioned book where he gives six remarkable interpretations of the word *Bahai*. Let us for a moment commune with the departed spirit of Mr. Horace Holley:—

The new translation of an ancient classic contains one very significant change. A prophetic passage formerly interpreted "the end of the world" reads now "the end of the age."

In this sense, the world has indeed come to an end in our day—the foundations of a new age, a new civilization, a new science and a new faith have visibly been laid. The inspiration of this new age, for many people in all parts of the world, has one source, one password, one mystery: the name Bahai.

The word Bahai is like a jewel with many facets, a fountain with many pitchers, a mansion with many rooms.

For some, it means a set of principles necessary for

the peace of the world, for economic stability, for the true progress of the sciences and the arts.

For others, Bahai means the privilege of belonging to an active movement already spread throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and large portions of the East; a movement spreading the ideals of fellowship and service irrespective of race, creed, nationality and class.

Still others feel in the word Bahai the reality, the consummation of the Sermon on the Mount, the return of the Divine Love for the purpose of raising mankind from its animal condition to the level of conscious spirituality.

Behind this word for many there stands also a glorious Presence, a Divine Being whose title this word is: The Glory of God. These persons feel this Presence as the controlling force behind every event of this time. Thus is Bahai the cause of a new spirit of reverence and devotion, written as it is upon a Bible, a World Bible, revealed in cosmic utterances which gather together those who seem to be a nucleus of the future spiritual race.

Still others, having heard Abdul Baha during his travels through Europe and America immediately preceding the War, see the word Bahai in terms of his wisdom, his graciousness, his untiring efforts to awaken the slumbering soul to realize the opportunities and responsibilities of life in this age.

Behind this word Bahai, finally, there is one of the most astonishing chapters History has ever had occasion to record. From its beginnings in the glorious Bahi martyrdoms which occurred in Persia only about eighty years ago; to that forty-year exile and imprisonment

suffered by Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, with seventy faithful followers; witnessing then the renaissance of the Holy Land as the "Mount of Revelation," and arriving at the present hour with Abdul Baha's unique mission made fruitful by the commencement of work on the Bahai Temple at Chicago, by the deeper comprehension of the meaning of this Cause awakened by the nationwide journey of the "Great Teacher," Jenabe Fazel Mazandarani, and the rapid spread of the Bahai Message throughout the East—the historic importance of these events can only be judged at some later date, when from this seed the fruitful tree shall have grown to its maturity.

This was in 1921.

Seven years have rolled into the lap of eternity.

The curtain is lifted on 1928.

The stage is set!

There is our old friend Mr. Horace Holley, urbane, subtle, conscious of his powers—the arbiter and controller of the destiny of the Bahai Organization and Bahai Communities throughout the world. Yes, yes, he has done a good job! With evident satisfaction he displays some papers. What are they? Let us approach and examine them. Our attention is caught by one paper—is riveted on it. We read:

Registered Aug. 7, 1928

Trade-Mark 254,271

United States Patent Office

**National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the
United States and Canada of New York, N. Y.**

Application filed March 10, 1928. Serial No. 262,923.

B A H A ' I STATEMENT

To the Commissioner of Patents:

*National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the
United States and Canada, a common-law corporation,
organized and operated under declaration of trust and
doing business at . . .*

As we read and re-read the statement, we are lost in a sea of amazement. We rub our eyes, we fidget, we feel restless; we wonder whether all this is not a nightmare—impossible, incredible. We stagger, and search in our consciousness for an explanation; then, completely baffled, we look up into the face of Mr. Horace Holley. Maybe he will tell us what this means! He smiles, triumphantly pointing to the signature, and we read:

National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the
United States and Canada

by HORACE HOLLEY,
Secretary.

And as we turn our eyes from this document, we glimpse Mr. Horace Holley's fingers still tenderly patting his own signature!

Well, friends! It is accomplished!

There is a stake on the *source* of the Bahai Cause and its owner-proprietor is the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada.

The *password* given to mankind by Baha-O-Llah, to be used for the regeneration of nations, is in the possession of the Bahai administrators.

No one on the face of the earth can fathom the *mystery* latent in the name *Bahai* except these interpreters of the law, these esteemed members of the all-powerful Bahai hierarchy.

The *jewel with many facets* is boxed and locked, and the key is in the velvet pocket of Mr. Horace Holley.

A concrete wall is raised around the *fountain with many pitchers*. Who cares? Let the world die of thirst.

The door of the *mansion with many rooms* is closed! What if the children of God knock and knock! What if they perish from punishing cold and hunger; *I*, Mr. Horace Holley; *we*, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada; *we* who follow the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, *we, we, we* are living in the mansion of Baha-O-Llah; we partake of his delectable food and roam in his spiritual garden.

The *set of principles necessary for the peace of the world, for economic stability, for the true progress of sciences and arts* are registered and trade-marked, and woe unto those who dare to speak or write on these subjects!

The remedy given by the Great Physician for the healing of the sick body of the world has been made up into a patent medicine, and no one is allowed to avail himself of its restorative powers except by permission of these parochial pharmacologists.

We, the members of the Bahai Organization, have a priority right on *the ideals of fellowship and service irrespective of race, creed, nationality and class*, and those who put these principles into practice are our *insidious enemies*.

Let the whole world know that we are the custodians of *the reality, the consummation of the Sermon on the Mount*. It is, of course, true that the Apostles of Christ did not copyright the Sermon on the Mount; but, in those days, America was as yet undiscovered and there was no Commissioner of Patents in Jerusalem. It is likewise true that the later Christians did not copyright the Sermon on the Mount, but in our opinion, some of them might have had the foresight to do it, thus preventing its circulation throughout the world except through authorized channels. Man lives and learns! This word *Bahai* is *the reality, the consummation of the Sermon on the Mount*, and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada are heirs to it; they possess it, they have seignioral rights over it.

Let us go back again to the early years, just for a breath of fresh air! In another part of the already-mentioned book, *Bahai—the Spirit of the Age*, Mr. Horace Holley writes as follows on pages 27-28:—

The slightest appreciation of this Revelation, however, leads one to realize that the spirit of the age cannot be thus conveniently confined. The slight Bahai Organization which exists is, in comparison with the Revelation itself, only as body in comparison to soul. Obviously, the cosmically conscious person of today cannot accept any arbitrary limiting classification. The basic principle of Abdul Baha's teaching is: This is the century of spiritual Illumination. Its basic application is: Investigate Truth, Promote Peace, Proclaim the Oneness of Mankind.

As a footnote to page 28, Mr. Horace Holley quotes

these words of Abdul Baha: *The Bahai Movement is not an organization. You cannot organize the Bahai Movement . . . The Bahai Movement is the spirit of this age.*—Abdul Baha.

The above masterful statement of Mr. Horace Holley was the expression of his faith in the Bahai Cause in 1921. It happens to be the expression of my faith in 1941, with one exception. He refers to *slight Bahai Organization*. Apparently, in spite of the clear statement of Abdul Baha that *you cannot organize the Bahai Movement*, he and his associates had already introduced a *slight* organization and then, with the departure of the Master, the steam-roller began to move, gaining momentum year by year—until now . . . (Additional material regarding the Bahai movement, as taught in former years, and the early appearance of orthodoxy and organizational ideas is given in a supplement at the end of this chapter, under the heading: *The Building of Bahai Organization*.)

My Faith

The founders of the religions of mankind, including the Bahai Cause, never intended their teachings to be cornered by a group, a church, a synagogue, a mosque, a temple or an administration. The burden of their message was the abolition of the religious hierarchies of their times. They preached simplicity of faith and the abrogation of all ritual and credal distinctions; but, invariably and without exception, the followers of the Masters fell into the same ditch, one by one.

Baha-O-Llah wished his movement to be inclusive; it was supposed to serve as a golden thread on which the

spiritual jewels of all religions were to be strung. He did not want to establish a new religion, to form another organization. He did not plan to forge another chain, to fabricate another creed, to build another jail.

I was born in a Bahai family; the home of my uncle, in which I was reared from the age of three months, was surrounded by the enemies of our Faith. In time, our house was pillaged and we were forced to leave Persia. Since my boyhood I have been a wanderer, a dervish, a vagabond. I own nothing, I possess no property, I have no bank account. The source of my wealth is my adoration for Baha-O-Llah; the capital of my life is my devotion to Abdul Baha and this capital, no one, mark well, no one, no matter how protected, and no group, no matter how well organized, and no system, no matter how efficiently administered, can lessen or curtail.

I served my master Abdul Baha for eight years in America and Canada, in Europe, Egypt and Palestine. I also served, and served well, the Bahais throughout the world, including those who today have the arrogance and insolence to classify me as an enemy. I have no apologies to offer to these self-styled Bahais. They cannot hurt me. My bones and my flesh are composed of the love of Abdul Baha, and through my veins and arteries the blood of the Bahai Cause runs red. I make no claim for myself; I possess no title and hold no position. I am but a thrall at the Threshold of my Master; and this servitude, pure and simple, is my claim to life and immortality.

I know that Baha-O-Llah is the protector of his own Cause. He guards over the treasures of his teachings. He does not need a board of trustees to administer his prin-

ciples nor to dispense his faith. His arms are outstretched over the wide universe and his spirit penetrates all things. Baha-O-Llah is my portion; organization is the portion of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada. I am satisfied with my portion; I hope that they are satisfied with theirs!

Yes, I and thousands of others have *inherited* the universal, all-inclusive teachings of Baha-O-Llah and we proudly bear his name. These teachings and this name are available to all who wish to use them, and Baha-O-Llah, from the Kingdom, smiles upon these children of his and is glad.

These children of Baha, who are dedicated to his Cause, are like candles of guidance and wisdom which will burn but the brighter, surrounded as they are with a mesmeric *gloom exorcised over the horizon by the waving of wands* and the incantations of administrative soothsayers and magicians. The soft, lambent rays of these excommunicated souls will, in time, banish the darkness of the *Abra-cadabra* and *Mumbo-jumbo*, chaunted by weird sorcerers, cabalistic necromancers, sanctimonious Shamans, puritan witch-hunters, figure-flinger Cagliostros and fee-faw-fum medicine-men.

Unique Distinction of the Bahai Cause

The Bahai Cause, like all the great religions, contains a set of moral and ethical ideals for the spiritualizing of the life of mankind; but, added to this and unlike other religions, Baha-O-Llah has given us clear and distinct principles for the radical improvement of the social, economic, political and educational conditions of our civiliza-

tion. In other words, the Founder of the Baháí Cause was not only a prophet, preaching and reiterating the absolute moral concepts of former dispensations, but was also an *inspired statesman*.

We know that the major changes in our world have been brought about through the application of the three following methods:

1st. Spiritual education. This has been the method of all the prophets, including Baha-O-Llah. The introduction of ballot box and of voting does not belong to this category of teaching.

2nd. Recurrent violent and bloody revolutions.

3rd. Non-violent revolutions and change, through the adoption of the democratic way: ballot box and vote.

The spiritual genius of Baha-O-Llah emphasized the first method; rejected the second and accepted the third, recognizing its supreme value in our modern world.

When we read his writings and those of his son, Abdul Baha, this point comes out very clearly. For instance, in regard to the exercise of our political rights, *through voting*, Abdul Baha says:

Thou hast asked regarding the political affairs. In the United States it is necessary that the citizens shall take part in elections. This is a necessary matter and no excuse from it is possible. . . . As the government of America is a republican form of government, it is necessary that all the citizens shall take part in the affairs of the Republic.

—From the Book: "Tablets of Abdul Baha

3. Recognized Bahais must not vote in any election based upon a party system.
4. Recognized Bahais must abstain from association with movements advocating social changes that presume partisan political action.
5. *Recognized Bahais who speak on Bahai platforms* must abstain from making any critical statements about any particular government or national policy.
6. Every Local Bahai Center must be responsible for the carrying out of the above laws by the Bahais in their respective communities. Local membership must include only the names of those who faithfully obey these regulations.
7. Recognized Bahais must not retain or apply for membership in any church or religious group.
8. Bahais failing to give unreserved obedience to the above regulations and to numerous others which are constantly legislated, and month after month spread on the pages of *Bahai News* by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, are expelled or excommunicated from the Cause, and the Bahais are not permitted to associate with these expelled or excommunicated ones, regardless of friendship, no matter of how long standing nor of the depth of their affection or love.

In the light of the above rules, it is not difficult to picture the kind of society that would be ours if the Bahai community becomes widespread under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada. Any dictator who might arise in this

country, of whatsoever political hue, red, brown, black or yellow, would take to his heart and cherish these deaf, dumb and blind subjects, utterly servile and subservient, who would never oppose him nor resist his most cruel laws or indeed his slightest whim. The citizenry of these proud United States would become a race of automata, a chain-gang; and our fair democracy would have been converted into a nightmare, more gruesome and frightful than could be imagined by any H. G. Wells in his most despondent mood. All this, in case the affairs of this country are influenced according to the ideology of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada.

(For the details of above regulations from Nos. 1 to 7 read "Bahai News," December 1932 and July 1933. For item No. 8 read article entitled "The Determination of Membership" on page 3, January 1940 issue of "Bahai News.")

The Alternative

My personal opinion is that if some effectual means be not presently adopted to disperse this sacrosanct hierarchy, to nullify its power and destroy its authority, it will ere long reduce the Bahai Cause to the status of a sect, seeing that it has now waxed so exceedingly puffed up with pride as to attack anyone who, before the face of his Maker, calls himself a Bahai. If a method be not devised to check the inordinate ambitions of these administrators of the Bahai Cause, they will, for the establishment of their own un-American, un-democratic ideology, so limit the spiritual potency of the words of Baha-O-Llah that the effect of these words on the hearts of men will be reduced to a whisper.

There are, indeed, men and women within the Bahai Organization, who had the privilege of listening to Abdul Baha and who are fully aware of the changed atmosphere and of the freezing of all spiritual life; but the continuous droning of the black wings of organization and the undulations of the Administrative Python have paralyzed and incapacitated them.

Bandar-log, said the voice of Kaa, at last (according to Kipling), *Can ye stir foot or hand without my orders? Speak!*

Without thy order, we cannot stir foot or hand, O Kaa! Good! Come all one pace nearer to me.

The lines of the monkeys swayed forward, helplessly.

Nearer! hissed Kaa, and they all moved again.

Even so has the incorporated Kaa made *soft, oozy triangles that melted into five sided figures and coiled mounds, never resting, never hurrying*, while his fascinated audience, fearful of excommunication, have listened with rapt attention to every note of his low humming song.

Excommunicated from what? Is the earth indeed flat that they can be pushed off its surface? Is the dominion of Baha-O-Llah so small that it can be reserved for a handful of *respectable* tenants? Let these people awake and realize that humanity is encompassed with the vitalizing breezes of the New Day which refresh and bring joy to all who have love in their hearts!

When this knowledge dawns upon their consciousness, they will once and forever cast away the shackles of slavery and subserviency, and claiming again the Universal Teachings of Baha-O-Ilah, will take their places in the vanguard of freedom and progress, crying out:

Ya Baha El Abha!

as if for the first time.

On the other hand, if this group is left to continue in its course of every day devising a new lock, of forging a new chain, of fashioning a new whip for application on the fair body of the Cause, then, I swear by the Almighty that Baha-O-Llah himself will arise in his Supreme Power and shatter these fetters to a thousand pieces, thus freeing his Message and setting it again to flow, like a tumultuous cyclone, through the wide avenues of life!

What Is the Bahai Cause?

The Bahai Cause is a free spiritual Revelation. Baha-O-Llah, as its Founder, prayed that all men may partake of the inestimable blessings of his Message. This Message, in its essence, belongs to humanity, and no individual, no group of individuals, no church, no state, no organization, no administration can lay an exclusive claim to it. It cannot be trade-marked, and it cannot be patented.

The song of the nightingale and the perfume of the rose defy the authority of a monopolistic junta.

The rays of the stars cannot be harnessed to the *throb-throb* of a powerhouse.

The words of God are independent of the sponsorship of a corporation.

The wind of the heavens bloweth where it listeth. It has neither a trade-name nor a trade-mark. It does not belong to a trade-union. It does not lend itself to trading, for it has no trading-post; nor can it be discovered on the card-files of a trade-school. It is nameless and tradeless. Its

traces are lost in the cerulean sky and its traditions go back to the foundation of creation.

The Bahai Cause is a summons to freedom in the realm of spirit. It is a clarion-call for the emancipation of all men from the limitations of the past. It is a lordly invitation to join in the march of the New Civilization.

The Sea of Truth

Like children of a day, we stand in awe and wonder before the boundless sea of the Cause of Baha-O-Llah, and we fill our small pitchers and are glad that God has made us witness to His measureless ocean of Truth. We pass by. Age after age, cycle after cycle, the children of other times and other climes shall stand before the same sea. They also fill their pitchers and pass by. The procession continues, yes, my dear Bahai friends, yes, my dear Bahai administrators, the procession continues on and on, century after century, throughout the eternity of time and space, until all the pitchers of all the children as yet asleep on the lap of God are filled to overflowing, yet the sea, ah me, the sea—the limitless sea of the Truth of Baha-O-Llah—will still be there, untouched and undisturbed, mirroring on its marmorial surface the effulgence of the sun of Truth stationed at the meridian of its glory, and pouring its rays upon a world, the similitude of which cannot be realized by any living soul today.

In the light of the above explanation we dimly, very dimly understand the meaning of the words of Abdul Baha: *The Bahai Cause is the Spirit of the Age.*

Let us then close this chapter with his words which to me are words of truth:—

Attach your hearts to Baha-O-Llah. He is the eternal Glory of God. Then from day to day, you will become more enlightened; day by day your power will increase; day by day your work will become more universal, and day by day your horizon will broaden, until in the end it will embrace the universe.

—*Bahai* by Horace Holley, pages 144-5.

Supplement

THE BUILDING OF BAHAI ORGANIZATION

Abdul Baha's Definition of What is a Bahai?

When asked on one occasion: "What is a Bahai?" Abdul Baha replied: "To be a Bahai means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood." On another occasion he defined a Bahai as "one endowed with the perfections of man in activity." In one of his London talks he said that a man may be a Bahai even if he has never heard the name of Baha-O-Llah. He added: "The man who lives the life according to the teachings of Baha-O-Llah is already a Bahai. On the other hand, a man may call himself a Bahai for fifty years, and if he does not live the life he is not a Bahai. An ugly man may call himself handsome, but he deceives no one."

—From the Book *Baha-U-Llah and the New Era* by J. E. Esselmont, Published by Brentano's, New York.

(Mr. Esselmont spent two months and a half as the guest of Abdul Baha in Haifa in the winter of 1919-20. His book is well written and one of the few that is still current and distributed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada.)

The late Mr. Myron H. Phelps, one of the early American pilgrims to Acca, writes in 1903:

The characteristic of Abbas Effendi, (Abdul Baha), regarded as a religious leader, which is at once the most striking, the most attractive, and the most impressive, is his generous and tolerant liberality. It is disappointing to find that narrowness and intolerance have already shown themselves in the teachings of some of his followers—a perversion and degradation of true religion which is seen to be an almost inevitable tendency of human nature in all ages of the world, and which most religions have suffered in the hands of their adherents. The chief glory of Bahaism is that its true spirit, as exemplified in its Great Apostle, is utterly free from it.

—From the book *Abbas Effendi, His Life and Teachings* by Myron H. Phelps, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, N. Y., 1903.

Mr. Charles Mason Remey, Bahai teacher and world traveler, writes in 1912:

The method of Bahai teaching is constructive, in every sense . . . argument and dispute have no place in this cause. . .

In order to combat evil the soul should be filled with love and truth. Fear, together with all its attending destructive forces, disappears in the presence of *faith and assurance*. . . .

Having no organization, no ritual, or priesthood after the manner of other religions, the Bahais are opposing the work of no other religious bodies. It is a worldwide movement, the spirit of which is working unhindered

and unbound by confines and barriers of sect and ism. The Bahais see and recognize truth and spiritual beauty wherever found, and through this attitude of love and tolerance for all, they find at every hand, among the people of other religious bodies, the opportunity of sharing the spirit of their faith. . . .

Often people inquire whether affiliation with the Bahai Cause necessitates the giving up of church membership. The advice is always that no human or religious relations should be severed, but that these relations should become as avenues for giving forth the message and the spirit of the Bahai faith. People having church relations continue to mingle with church people. . . .

—From the book *The Bahai Movement* by Mr. Charles Mason Remey published by J. D. Milans and Sons, Washington, D. C., 1912. Mr. Remey is one of the earliest and most distinguished Bahai teachers and writers, and one who met Abdul Baha in person and received these principles from its fountain head.

The above extracts from a most interesting chapter of his book show clearly and most truly the underlying ideals of tolerance and universality that inspired him and others to labor for the Cause of Baha-O-Llah.

The late Mr. Alfred W. Martin, of the Ethical Culture Society, an admirer of the Bahai Cause, writes in 1926:

It is the crowning glory of the Bahai Movement that while depreciating sectarianism in its preaching, it has faithfully practiced what it preached by refraining from becoming itself a sect. Far from endeavoring to convert

all outside its fellowship to such doctrines as are generally held by the members—whether of “theism,” or of “revelation,” or of “intuition” as a criterion of truth—it has assiduously sought to help men and women of all persuasions to realize the highest ideals of religion. Nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of this movement or further from its purpose than the attempt to displace all existing religions by itself. It frowns upon the notion that any one of the existing great religions will ever triumph over all the rest. And, far from bidding any one sever his connection with the religion he has inherited or adopted, the Bahai Movement bids him cling to it, so long as reason and conscience sanction his allegiance. Thus in the best sense of the word it is a missionary movement. Its representatives do not attempt to impose any beliefs upon others, whether by argument or by bribery; rather do they seek to put beliefs that have illumined their own lives within the reach of those who feel they need illumination. No, not a sect, not a part of humanity cut off from all the rest, living for itself and aiming to convert all the rest into material for its own growth; no, not that, but a *leaven*, causing spiritual fermentation in all religions, quickening them with the spirit of catholicity and fraternalism—such I take it is the essence of the Bahai Movement.

Clearly, then, we are dealing with a fellowship, an influence, a leaven, a movement that fights shy of sectarian enthusiasms, that abhors the formation of a close corporation with exclusive privileges, for that has been a greater obstruction to brotherhood than either kingly ambition or commercial greed. This movement has no priesthood, no college, no ecclesiastical hier-

archy, but, on the contrary, is conspicuous for its distrust of organization, constitutions, by-laws, and other familiar fetters of the western world. But I see foreboding signs, I hear disquieting rumors of a tendency among some within this movement to have it crystallized within a sectarian mold, to have it stand explicitly for a certain set of theological ideas, and then make this the test of fellowship. No more serious or fateful calamity could befall this movement than to have it relegated to the limbo of sectarianism. Let it hold fast to its distrust of organization . . . and not only will there lie before it an ever increasing field of usefulness but, forfeiting none of its beneficent power, it will go on from strength to strength in the fulfillment of its invaluable and indispensable mission.

—*Comparative Religion and the Religion of the Future*, by Alfred W. Martin, published by D. Appleton and Co., New York, 1926.

CHAPTER VI

THE DECISION

ALLEN B. MCDANIEL, HORACE HOLLEY, ROY C. WILHELM, DOROTHY BAKER, AMELIA COLLINS, LOUIS GREGORY, LEROY C. IOAS, HARLAN OBER and SIEGFRIED SCHOPFLOCHER, as members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada, and THE SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHAI'S OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, a religious corporation,

Plaintiffs,

against

MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB AND JULIE CHANLER,
Defendants.

The Morning of April 1st 1941

On April 1st, I as usual left my room at an early hour and, after a walk through Central Park, arrived at the office at 8:30. Presently Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, my partner in the work of The New History Society, took her place on the opposite side of the desk and we both set ourselves to examining our mail.

At 9:30 the telephone rang. In routine fashion, I lifted up the receiver: "Hello!"



GORDON S. P. KLEEBERG
Kleeberg & Greenwald, Counsellors at Law.

"Mrs. Chanler, please!" It was a masculine voice.

"Who is calling?"

"This is Greenwald, of Kleeberg & Greenwald."

With a slight tremor of excitement, I pushed the telephone over to Mrs. Chanler and narrowly watched her as she took up the conversation.

"No!" A smile had broken over her face. "Is it really true? . . . Really?" . . . Her eyes sought mine and she whispered *Allah-O-Abha!*; then she continued: "Naturally, we'll come down. . . . How could it be any trouble? . . . Haven't we been waiting for this news long enough? . . . Yes, in twenty minutes, and thank you a thousand times."

She put down the receiver and remained silent for a moment. I waited. Finally: "The Court has decided in our favor." Her eyes were shining; mine were already wet with tears. Across the desk, our hands met and gripped each other and I broke out: "Thank God! Baha-O-Llah has freed his Cause!" Meanwhile our secretary, Miss Lilyan Tannen, had stopped her work to listen. No one knew better than Miss Tannen the various stages in the proceedings which had led to this outcome. Hadn't she been sitting in that very place sixteen months before, when we had been served with papers; and, during the long course of litigation, hadn't she felt, as had all our friends, that there couldn't be any other decision? Just the same, confidence and certainty are vastly different. We knew it then; and we were three very happy people on that morning of April 1st, 1941.

Before leaving the house, we shared our news with Mr. Chanler who was very delighted, although he insisted on taking it as a matter of course; then, merrily we started off

New York Law Journal

NO. 7 NEW YORK, TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 1941 FORTY-THREE PAGES PRICE

BY MR. JUSTICE VALENTE.

McDaniel v. Mirza Ahmad Sohrab

—This is a motion for judgment on the pleadings, dismissing the amended complaint as supplemented by the bills of particulars as insufficient in law. ¶The individual plaintiffs sue as members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada. The Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is of the City of New York, a religious corporation, is a coplaintiff. ¶The complaint alleges that the name "Baha'i" denotes a religion identified with the name of the founder "Baha." The plaintiffs claim to be the authorized representatives of all of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada. They allege that they are publishing books and other publications which teach Baha'i religion. They charge that the defendants, who were members prior to April 5, 1929, of the Baha'i Congregation of the City of New York, have been conducting, without the authority of plaintiffs, meetings, lectures, classes, social gatherings and other activities, and announcing and advertising the same as Baha'i meetings, lectures, classes, &c." They complain that the defendants have been giving these meetings, lectures, &c., a Baha'i appearance and atmosphere by teaching, in connection therewith, a religion described as the Baha'i religion and that they have created an erroneous impression that they are connected with and authorized to represent the Baha'i religion and to solicit contributions therefor. In addition, plaintiffs complain of the opening of a book shop by the defendants under the name of "Bahai Book Shop" and of the listing of the shop in the telephone directory under that name, immediately over the name of "Baha'i Center," which represents the listing of plaintiffs' New York office and book shop. ¶In the court's opinion the complaint fails to state a good cause of action. The plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion in connection with their own meetings, lectures, classes and other activities. No facts are alleged in the complaint to indicate that the defendants have been guilty of any act intended or calculated to deceive the public into believing that their meetings,

lectures or book shop are identified with or affiliated with the meetings, lectures, &c., and book shop of the plaintiffs. Defendants have the absolute right to practice Baha'ism, to conduct meetings, collect funds and sell literature in connection therewith, and to conduct a book shop under the title "Bahai Book Shop." ¶The bills of particulars furnished by the plaintiffs admit that the allegations, that the defendants created the erroneous impression that they were connected with the plaintiffs and led the public to believe that their book shop was connected with the plaintiffs, were not based upon any acts of the defendants other than their conducting meetings, lectures, classes and other activities under the name of "Bahai" and their operation of a book shop under that name: listed in the telephone directory immediately above the name of plaintiffs' book shop. The position of the listing is, of course, due to the fact that the telephone directory is arranged alphabetically, so that the name "Bahai Book Shop" naturally precedes the name "Baha'i Center." ¶The motion to dismiss the amended complaint is granted, with leave to serve a further amended complaint within ten days from the service of a copy of this order, with notice of entry. Order signed.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 1941

down Lexington Avenue where, adepts at the subway as we are, we took the wrong line, and emerged at Times Square instead of at the Grand Central. We put this slip down to pardonable bewilderment and did our best to catch up for lost time, arriving a little breathless at the offices of Kleeberg & Greenwald, Counsellors at Law, 300 Madison Avenue, at exactly quarter past ten. Mr. Greenwald, who had argued the case in court, was awaiting us and he, most sympathetically, spread before our eyes the *New York Law Journal* of that morning which carried the decision handed down by Justice Louis A. Valente in the Supreme Court, New York, on the suit brought by the Bahai Administration against ourselves. While we were reading the clear-cut findings of the Judge, Mr. Kleeberg looked in and we had the opportunity of thanking our two lawyers who were so well qualified to handle a case of this unusual type; and all the time we were conscious of the fact that we were living a momentous hour—one never to be forgotten in the records of Bahai history.

On the way back, Mrs. Chanler and I, still in a state of pardonable bewilderment, lost each other and we returned by different routes.

The Complaint

On December 5, 1939, Allen B. McDaniel, Horace Holley, Roy C. Wilhelm, Dorothy Baker, Amelia Collins, Louis Gregory, Leroy C. Ioas, Harlan Ober and Siegfried Schopflocher, as the nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly and the Trustees of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, together with the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the City of New York, a religious cor-

poration, brought a lawsuit against Mrs. Chanler and myself. The primary object of this proceeding was to prevent us from using the word Bahá'í in connection with a Book Shop and to restrain us and the group formed under the name of *The New History Society* from holding any meetings in the name of the Bahai Cause or for the purpose of teaching the principles of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha. This action was based on the grounds that the National Spiritual Assembly had registered the word *Bahai* as a *trade-mark* in the United States Patent Office, Washington, D. C.

The Complaint, served on April 25th; the Amended Complaint, presented on June 7th; the Bill of Particulars, produced on August 27th; the Supplemental Bill of Particulars, added on October 30th, and the final Memorandum, submitted to the Court on December 27, 1940, by an array of attorneys, namely: Watson, Bristol, Johnson and Leavenworth of 6 East 45th St., New York, display a shifting of attitude very perplexing to the student of these documents. The lawsuit started out on the basis of the trade-mark held on the word *Bahá'í*, but this definite claim was dropped in the *Amended Complaint* and in all subsequent Papers. The same process of elimination on other claims is followed, more or less regularly, in the series of briefs, showing that the plaintiffs were laboring under confusion of thought and purpose. Baseless assertions and fantastic allegations were advanced as facts; but no proofs were offered. The officers of the National Spiritual Assembly and of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the City of New York, who were intimately acquainted with the questions involved, were able to swear the following before Notary Publics: *I have read the*

foregoing Complaint (or Amended Complaint) and know the contents thereof, and the same is true of my own knowledge except as to the matters therein stated to be alleged upon information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true; yet hundreds of New York's public, knowing the situation but slightly, would have been willing to go on record, stating that some of these charges were obviously not true. At any rate, according to the Court no facts were ever produced and no good cause of action was ever advanced.

As one studies these documents, one comes to the realization that the plaintiffs are obsessed with a single thought and purpose, namely: that Baha-O-Llah came to earth to form an organization and that his teachings are to be monopolized by them. This line of argument, like the ominous undertone of a Greek tragedy, runs throughout all their demands. They believe that our *unlawful* public teaching of the Bahai Cause is *trespassing* upon their rights and privileges and works to their *damage and injury*; and they consider that, if we are permitted to *continue* in these *unlawful acts*, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada and the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the City of New York *will suffer irreparable injury*.

Spiritual and Material Monopoly

To illustrate this point I will quote one from among their many demands of the Court, which is embodied in the Amended Complaint:—

WHEREFORE plaintiffs demand judgment as follows:

(1) That the defendants and each of them, their agents, servants, employees, associates, and each of them be enjoined and restrained, during the pendency of this action and thereafter perpetually.

a. From using, or participating directly or indirectly in the use of, the word Baha'i, or any word deceptively similar thereto, as the name or a part of the name of any meeting, lecture, class or social gathering or as the name or title or a part of the name or title of any book, magazine, or other publication, or as the name or a part of the name under which any book shop or other business is conducted.

b. From representing in any way that either of the defendants is connected with or authorized to represent the plaintiffs or the Baha'i religion or Cause.

c. From soliciting or receiving any form of financial contribution to the Baha'i religion or Cause.

(2) That the defendants and each of them be directed to account for, and pay over to the plaintiffs, the sums received by the defendants, the profits realized by the defendants and the damages suffered by the plaintiffs as the result of the wrongful acts herein alleged, together with plaintiffs' costs herein.

(3) That plaintiffs have such other and further relief as may be equitable.

Here, we have a clear example of both spiritual and material monopoly. The plaintiffs were determined to deprive us (and humanity at large) of claiming to be followers of Baha-O-Llah; they wished to close the doors

of our meetings, to scatter our members and friends, to silence our voices, to haul down our flag, and then to receive, as balm for their feelings, whatever contributions we had received and whatever profits we had made, together with *further relief as may be equitable*.

Off the Record

At this point, I will make a statement which was not included in our defense before the court: The New History Society is not a commercial organization; it is not even a practical organization; neither Mrs. Chanler nor myself are fitted by temperament to conduct a movement based on the material support of its membership or the public. This is a weakness on our part of which I am not proud, but it is a fact, nevertheless. During the eleven years of the existence of The New History Society and the ten years of the existence of The Caravan (its affiliated youth movement), Mr. and Mrs. Chanler have poured in their money freely, joyously, as grist to the mill of their endeavor. Small contributions to the work came in now and then, from our members, some books were sold and the proceeds added to the budget, but ninety-nine and three-quarters percent of the total expended on the maintenance of the work came from the one source—Mr. and Mrs. Chanler. Everybody knows this; and yet the plaintiffs claim *that we have made profits, and diverted to ourselves contributions to the Bahai Cause* which otherwise would have been received by them. All these allegations were under oath. Here, one cannot help wondering at the mental processes which make such claims and oaths possible.

The fact that we never did make money or profits was not made use of in our defense before the Court. Instead, our lawyers claimed for us the right to collect funds for Bahai work, and this claim was granted in the decision.

So, the Court did not confer upon the plaintiffs a spiritual and material monopoly on the Bahai Teachings: the Cause, for which we are ready to sacrifice our lives, was not taken away from us, nor were our possessions (incidentally, mine are nil) confiscated under the guise of *profits, damages, cost of litigation and further relief as may be equitable.*

Complete Assurance

A most incomprehensible aspect of the design of the National Spiritual Assembly was utter confidence in the justice of its plan and complete assurance of victory.

One reason for this apparent confidence was, I suspect, the small weight which its members placed on the guarantee of religious liberty in this country as set forth in the Bill of Rights, together with a minimizing of the effect which this law of tolerance had had on the consciousness of the American people. Even if they were aware of the implications of this principle, they, in all probability, imagined that it could be brushed aside in their case by reason of the authority of the Guardian; and here we come to the basis of their assurance. Believing as they do in the infallibility of Shoghi Effendi, and having pinned all their faith on the validity of his judgment and the efficacy of



JACOB GREENWALD
Kleeberg & Greenwald, Counsellors at Law

his prayers, the cabled messages sent by him in this connection constituted their safeguard.

Here are the texts of the cablegrams:—

Received December 13, 1939,

Praying (for) success (of) legal measures taken by Assembly.

Received January 18, 1940,

Sleepless vigilance (to) ward off subtle attacks (of) enemies (is) first prerequisite (to) sound unfoldment (of the) process (of the) enterprise already operating.

Received January 23, 1940,

Praying victory similar (to the) one recently won (over) covenant-breakers (in) Holy Land be achieved by American believers over insidious adversaries (in) City of (the) Covenant (i. e., New York).

(The above three cablegrams are quoted in the Bill of Particulars in order to prove the fact that the suit had been brought with the approval and authorization of Shoghi Effendi.)

Further, in a letter written from Haifa, Palestine, on April 15th and published in *Bahai News*, June 1940, the Guardian has this to say about Mrs. Chanler and myself:

The subtle and contemptible machinations by which the puny adversaries of the Faith, jealous of its consolidating power and perturbed by the compelling evidences of its conspicuous victories, have sought to challenge the validity and misrepresent the character of the Administrative Order embedded in its teachings, have

galvanized the swelling army of its defenders to arise and arraign the usurpers of their sacred rights and to defend the long-standing strongholds of the institutions of their Faith in their home country.

I don't feel that I can make comment on the above paragraph other than to address myself to the adjective *puny*, which is a quaint word of early English flavor. In looking it up, I find that it signifies *imperfectly developed*, *pigmy*, *shrimp*, *small fry*. Now, I know that Mrs. Chantler, in her modesty, would accept all these terms as descriptive of her, in her service to the Cause, but neither she nor I agree to them in regard to our worth as opponents to the system which thinks to be the *unique repository* of the Word of God in this day. Probably, the attorneys of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada give us credit for being adversaries (in a purely legal way), at least, worthy of their steel.

Reasons for Bringing Suit

Shortly after the institution of legal proceedings, the National Spiritual Assembly explains its reasons for bringing action against us, stating that this step represents *a culmination of one aspect of the evolution of the Faith*. I do think that they were right in this respect.

Under the authority of the Guardian, the time has now come to act against these "insidious adversaries" who have even gone so far as to flout the Beloved's Will and Testament, the very pillar of our unity, by claiming the right to use the term Baha'i to designate their personal activities.

The matter is therefore being taken to the courts, and as soon as possible their excuses will be made a matter of public record. It will be seen whether the present enemies of the Faith can succeed any better than those enemies who have preceded them. (Signed) National Spiritual Assembly. *Bahai News*, Feb. 1940, No. 133

The decision to take legal action for the protection of the Sacred right of the Baha'i community represents a culmination of one aspect of the evolution of the Faith in recent years which the newer believers have had little occasion to consider or understand. To the older Baha'is, however, the preservation of the basis of the unity and integrity of the community is a matter vital to faith and inseparable from the experience of loyalty and service to the Cause. For they have witnessed actual efforts to deny the validity of Abdu'l-Baha's mission and question the authority of His station. They have realized vividly and poignantly how the very existence of the Faith depends on loyalty to whosoever has received appointment from the Manifestation. They have experienced the necessity of gathering their forces in order to assert the truth and preserve the community from destruction. Such an experience is forever unforgettable, for it means that conscious choice has been made between light and darkness in the spiritual world. . . .

The occasion for the legal action is definite and clear: the claim on the part of non-Baha'is that there are no qualifications of faith in this Cause, but any one is a Baha'i who asserts that he is; and that there is no criterion by which to distinguish between authentic Baha'i literature and literature which some one assumes is

Baha'i; and that there is no basis nor foundation in the Revelation of Baha'u'llah for the Baha'i community, with its institutions, its functions and its collective powers and responsibilities grounded in authentic Books and Tablets. In brief, the situation which has arisen is that persons who formerly were believers but who withdrew from the Cause have denied the authority of the Master's Will and Testament. On no other grounds than denial of that mighty Testament can their actions be understood. No compromise is possible. The Baha'i community will assert the truth, and the issue can be left to God. The Will and Testament itself is a victory over those who violated the Covenant in the Master's lifetime, and the Will and Testament invokes divine wrath upon all who seek to destroy what He sacrificed His entire life and being to build.

(Signed) National Spiritual Assembly.

From *Annual Reports*—National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada, 1939-1940.

Actions taken at the meeting of the National Assembly held immediately prior to the Convention include authorizations for continuance of Temple work . . . and approval of the brief prepared by the attorney in connection with the legal suit against the parties misusing the name Baha'i.

The friends are urged to give their careful attention to the passages in which the Guardian refers to the nature of attacks against the Master and His Will and Testament appearing on pages 89 and 90 of the World Order of Baha'u'llah. Here we find the clearest statement in the writings for discussion of the New History publication dated April, 1940, with new believers and

with those attracted to the Faith who have not yet gained the background of understanding and experience to discern the hollowness of any argument and claim based upon the failure to accept the Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Baha. The matter will soon come to trial, and the friends can rest assured that the true nature of the Baha'i Faith and of its Administrative Order will be established in accordance with the power and scope of the written and authentic Teachings.

(Signed) National Spiritual Assembly.

—Bahai News, June 1940, No. 136

Significance of Justice Valente's Decision

The decision handed down in the Supreme Court of New York by Justice Louis A. Valente on April 1, 1941, *is an epoch-making document for, although it refers specifically to the Bahai Administration and The New History Society, its contents have universal application. Eloquent-ly and definitely, Judge Valente has reaffirmed the validity of the Bill of Rights. In the case under review, he denies to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada and the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the City of New York a monopoly on the word Bahai, thus constituting, in the name of the latest revealed religion, a charter of freedom which shall stand as long as this nation retains the character conferred upon it by its founders. I think that will be always—in spite of the perils that menace liberty in these sad times.*

Thus, from now on, any sincere seeker after truth, who has realized his highest aspirations in the Bahai Cause, can term himself a follower of Baha-O-Llah and use his

name without let or hindrance. No one can molest him or try to undermine his service in the movement.

With this decision, the Cause of the Most Great Prisoner of Acca, which, even as he, was always free in spite of appearances, has broken through the walls of material confinement, and emerged as a spirit, a leaven, a consciousness—a gift, free and untrammelled, offered by God to every man on earth. *Affairs are dependent upon means*, said Baha-O-Llah. Through this decision of Judge Valente, the Bahai Cause has been reconferred upon mankind.

Not of Our Own Choosing

Now that the case has been argued before the Supreme Court of New York and a decision arrived at, let it be remembered, as this incident takes its place in the annals of Bahai history, that Mrs. Chanler and I did not seek this lawsuit nor was it instituted by us. The differences of opinion between the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada together with the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the City of New York and ourselves, were brought before the public and inserted in legal records through no desire on our part. It was a test placed in our path. We faced it with some diffidence, albeit, light-heartedly; and surmounted it with a sigh of relief and a deep sense of gratitude.

A Victory for All

The minister of a New York church strikes a universal note in a letter to us:—

I feel that this is a victory for us all, since it involves

the great principle of freedom of religion. Imagine any group arrogantly claiming a monopoly in this great field!

The Editor of a publication in Chicago, Ill., touches on the same theme:—

We rejoice with you at the recent ruling of the Court, for while we see it as a victory giving you further freedom, we recognize that your case involved many more groups and individuals than your own.

The science editor of a New York daily expresses himself as follows:—

I know that the winning of the suit will remove the last shred of hesitation, and that you will launch new efforts for man's enlightenment.

From a lecturer and writer in Chicago comes this comment:—

My most sincere congratulations. I am proud that you had a judge with sufficient wisdom and width of vision to give such a fair judgment.

A Bahai of long standing writes:—

It is not only a triumph and vindication . . . but the great victory for us all is to know that the principles of our beloved Cause are also vindicated and able to function in the future, free of the dogmatic domination of a few fanatics.

A *recognized* Bahai sends us a few lines:—

Just received the good news concerning Justice Valente's decision. I could hardly hold back my tears.



(By courtesy of Wide World Photos)

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE LOUIS A. VAENTE

Decision Rendered by Justice Valente

THE AMENDED COMPLAINTS, SUPPLEMENTED BY BILLS OF PARTICULARS, ARE DISMISSED AS INSUFFICIENT IN LAW.

Statements made by plaintiffs

1. The individual plaintiffs sue, as members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Bahais of the United States and Canada. The Spiritual Assembly of Bahais of the City of New York, a religious corporation, is a co-plaintiff.

The complaint alleges that the name Baha'i denotes a religion identified with the name of the founder *Baha*.

2. The plaintiffs claim to be the authorized representatives of all of the Bahais of the United States and Canada.

3. They allege that they are publishing books and other publications which teach *Bahai religion*.

4. They charge that the defendants, who were members prior to April 5, 1929, of the Bahai Congregation of the City of New York, have been conducting, without the authority of plaintiffs, meetings, lectures, classes, social gatherings and other activities, and announcing and advertising the same as Bahai meetings, lectures, classes, etc.

5. They complain that the defendants have been giving these meetings, lectures, etc., a Bahai appearance and atmosphere by teaching, in connection therewith, a religion described as the Bahai religion and that they have created an erroneous impression that they are connected with and authorized to represent the Bahai religion and to solicit contributions therefor.

6. In addition, plaintiffs complain of the opening of a book shop by the defendants under the name of "Bahai Book Shop" and of the listing of the shop in the telephone directory under the name, immediately over the name of "Baha'i Center" which represents the listing of plaintiffs' New York office and book shop.

The Court's Opinion:

1. In the Court's opinion, the complaint fails to state a good cause of action. The plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion.

2. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion in connection with their own meetings, lectures, classes and other activities.

3. No facts are alleged in the complaint to indicate that the defendants have been guilty of any act intended or calculated to deceive the public into believing that their meetings, lectures or book shop are identified with or affiliated with the meetings, lectures, etc., and book shop of the plaintiffs.

The Five Freedoms

4. (a) Defendants have the absolute right to practice Bahaism,
- (b) to conduct meetings,
- (c) to collect funds,
- (d) to sell literature in connection therewith,
and
- (e) to conduct a book shop under the title of "Bahai Book Shop."

5. The bills of particulars furnished by the plaintiffs, stating that the defendants created the erroneous impression that they were connected with the plaintiffs and led the public to believe that their book shop was connected with the plaintiffs, were not based upon any acts of the defendants other than their conducting meetings, lectures, classes and other activities under the name of Bahai and their operation of a book shop under that name listed in the telephone directory immediately above the name of the plaintiff's book shop.

6. The position of the listing is, of course, due to the fact that the telephone directory is arranged alphabetically, so that the name "Bahai Book Shop" naturally precedes the name "Baha'i Center."

7. The motion to dismiss the amended complaint is granted, with leave to serve a further amended complaint within ten days from the service of a copy of this order, with notice of entry.

Order Signed.

The Most Important Point

Although, in its original Complaint, the National Spiritual Assembly asserted that it was the authorized representative of *all* the Bahais in the United States and Canada, this claim was denied by our attorneys in their first Memorandum, and their denial was sustained by the Court. Justice Valente ruled that *the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion. The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion in connection with their own meetings, lectures, classes and other activities.*

This is the most important point in question; for, henceforth the National Spiritual Assembly cannot claim, as it has up to this time, that it is the sole representative of all the Bahais in the land. There are now, and will be in increasing numbers, Bahais who would not think it appropriate to be represented by the National Spiritual Assembly, and whom the National Spiritual Assembly would not think it appropriate to represent. The laws of this nation will be the practical guarantee of such Bahais, who will turn their hearts to God in the service of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, without benefit of clergy.

A Matter of A. B. C.

A subject, which for a whole year has puzzled those interested in the case from this end, has been the strange claim by the plaintiffs, that we *caused* the name *Bahai Book Shop* to be listed in the telephone directory of the Borough of Manhattan, New York City, directly *over* the name *Bahai Center*. This assertion seemed to imply that we had used undue influence with the compilers of this volume, or else that we had selected the appellation Book Shop quite arbitrarily, and for the simple purpose of listing ourselves according to the dictation of our fancy. They apparently overlooked the fact that we actually *were* selling books, and that it would have been unfitting to name our shop, let us say: Bahai Delicatessen or Bahai Dental Supplies, which naming would have placed us under the letter D, and below Bahai Center, but would not have described the contents of the shop.

At the same time, the queerest part of this charge is that, study the telephone book as you will, you can find no

listing of Bahai Center. The headquarters of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the City of New York goes under the title *Bahai Assembly*, and so it appears in the telephone book. Consequently, Bahai Book Shop was, from the beginning, and still is listed in its proper place among the B's, following the A's. This mistake, which was included in the original Complaint, was pointed out by our lawyers in their first Memorandum, yet, for reasons which seem inexplicable, the error was repeated in all the subsequent legal papers coming from the plaintiffs, so that the Court had to deal with it in its decision.

In the Memorandum of our attorneys the subject was explained as follows:—

Before closing, however, we should like to point out with regard to the complaint, that defendants listed "Bahai Bookshop" in the telephone directory over the name of "Baha'i Center;" that not only had they an absolute right to do this, but that as a matter of actual fact, the complaint is in error, for in the telephone book, there is no "Baha'i Center." What we do find is "Baha'i Assembly"; and this appears above and not below "Bahai Bookshop." So that it is not even possible to contend that defendants adopted their title with any view of having it placed before plaintiffs' listing in the telephone book. Assuming the fact of paragraph 16 (referring to the *Amended Complaint of the plaintiffs*), it is absurd to contend that there was anything deliberate about the listing, for obviously "Bahai Bookshop" would come in no other place than just before "Bahai Center," if alphabetical arrangement is to be preserved.

This matter is a detail and far from important, yet it indicates a type of careless thinking and planning which is

unbecoming at all times, and especially so in a court of law. The National Spiritual Assembly sets itself up to represent the conscience and the mind of its followers in all affairs, great and small; therefore, an instance of glaring inefficiency such as this is less excusable in this body than it would be in persons of more modest claim. We see a picture of the poor Bahais, who had been instructed by Abdul Baha to avoid all lawsuits, being catapulted into the courts, under a leadership which did not even know the name of its own headquarters and was too listless to check on it when its error was pointed out.

Not a Religion

In studying the Complaint, the Amended Complaint, the Bill of Particulars, the Supplemental Bill of Particulars and the final Memorandum, one comes to the conclusion that the plaintiffs are solely preoccupied with the consolidation of their privileges as a *corporation*. They are deeply concerned over the possible diversion from them of contributions and the making, by others, of profits which might have accrued to their budget. They enlarge on the subjects of unfair competition, pecuniary advantages and injury to business, and let loose shafts of accusation on charges of trespassing. It is clear that the Bahai Administration is not a religion, but a great corporation, having *more than one hundred* subsidiary corporations operating in various parts of the United States and Canada. Before the Court, it announces that it is the trustee and custodian of a variety of properties, including a temple under construction at Wilmette, Illinois, upon which more than a million dollars has been expended, to date. Likewise, there

is a trust fund under its control as well as a publishing concern. All these material advantages are possessed by the Bahai Administration, and no competition shall be allowed in the Bahai name and teachings which are the source of its wealth! No, the Bahai Administration is not a religion. The Bahai Cause, from which it derives, was such; but that was long ago. The members of the National Spiritual Assembly, doubtless, feel a warming of the heart, at times, when memories become vivid again, but these emotions must be discouraged and minimized because a New Order has been established in the movement—an order that is altogether different!

Cases in Point?

In attempting to prove their rights of monopoly on the Bahai Cause, the National Spiritual Assembly and the Spiritual Assembly of New York cited a number of cases, in most of which the courts had decided in favor of the complainants whose rights had been trespassed upon. In listing them here, I raise the question as to whether or not these instances are applicable to a religious theme.

American Fire P. Bureau v. Rockwood S. Co.

Rosenblum v. Manufacturers Trust Co.

Lewis v. City of Lockport.

Society of the War of 1812 v. Society of the War of 1812 in the State of New York.

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks v. Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

Thaddeus Davids Co. v. Davids Manufacturing Co.

Waterman Co. v. Modern Pen Co.

Westphal v. Westphal World's Best Corporation.

In this case, New York Courts enjoined Paul Westphal from using the name of Westphal in any way whatsoever on hair tonic.

Dupont Cellophane Co. v. Waxed Products Co.

In this case, the disagreement between the two companies was on the word "cellophane."

Bayer Co. v. United Drug Co.

In this case, the reason for the lawsuit was the word "aspirin."

Kellogg Co. v. National Biscuit Co.

In this case, the cause of contention was the word "Shredded Wheat."

Long's Hat Stores Corporation v. Long's Clothes, Inc.

In this case, one company sold hats; another company by the same name, "Long" sold clothes. There was a disagreement over the name "Long."

Tiffany & Co. v. Tiffany Productions Inc.

In this case, a firm of jewelers—Tiffany & Co.—was granted an injunction restraining a Motion Picture Producing Co. — Tiffany Production Inc. — from using the word "Tiffany" in its advertisement.

Wall v. Rolls-Royce of America.

In this case, an automobile Co. obtained an injunction against Wall for using the name "Rolls-Royce" on Radio tubes.

Vogue Co. v. Thompson-Hudson Co.

In this case, the publisher of a magazine obtained an injunction against use on hats of the so-called "Vogue-girl" trade-mark.

To Which Category?

Now, I venture to ask:—Does the Bahai Cause parallel the Society of the War of 1812; or is it in direct line with the Heroes of 1844?

Is the Bahai Cause similar to a bottle of aspirin, manufactured by either Bayer Co. or United Drug Co., which drives away headache or neuralgia as fast as you want it; or is it the Divine Remedy for the healing of nations?

Is the Bahai Cause like unto a package of Shredded Wheat, tempting and nutritious; or is it the Bread of Life that has come down from heaven?

Is the Bahai Cause comparable to an emporium stocked with suits and hats; a show-window for the display of jewels; a factory for the production of motor cars, or a news-stand heaped with fashion magazines, embellished with the glamorous trade-mark, Vogue Girl?

Where shall we place the Bahai Cause?

Has it properties such as hair tonic, some of which, (according to Gabriel Heater) cause luxuriant hair to grow on a tired scalp; or is it the Truth that vitalizes and sustains the minds of men?

Is it like a piece of cellophane, covering and preserving a package of Lucky Strike cigarettes; or is it, in *itself* the Preserved Tablet on which the fingers of the Almighty have traced eternal words?

Are its goods in the nature of Waterman Fountain Pens or Modern Fountain Pens; or is its treasure the *Supreme Pen* of Baha-O-Ilah, from which the gems of wisdom and utterance, and the arts of the contingent beings have appeared and become manifest?

In which of these two departments of enterprise can the Bahai Cause be classified? Kleeberg & Greenwald, our attorneys, expressed themselves on this point in their Memorandum before the Court:—

Most respectfully, we submit that all the cases cited by plaintiffs are immaterial and beside the point.

The Thought of Abdul Baha

In the Defendants' Memorandum, Kleeberg & Greenwald stated:—

Accordingly, plaintiffs, however magnificent and extensive their organization, have no greater claim than defendants, to dominate, supervise or control the Baha'i faith, practices or name. Since defendants are not of their organization, they have no right whatsoever to dominate, supervise or control them. Since religious freedom is a corner-stone of our libertarian concept and fundamental laws, they have no right to say whether defendants are Baha'is or are not Baha'is, nor whether defendants may or may not call themselves Baha'is, nor whether defendants may or may not practice Baha'ism. These questions are not for the plaintiffs . . . The individual and his conscience are supreme in this field.

As was said in *City of Cincinnati vs. Minor*:

Let the state not only keep its own hands off but let it also see to it that religious sects keep their hands off each other. Let religious doctrine have a fair field, and a free, intellectual, moral and spiritual conflict . . . Among the many forms of stating this truth . . . to my mind it is nowhere more fairly and beautifully set forth than in our own constitution . . . It is the true republican doc-

trine . . . It means that a man's right to his own religious convictions, and to impart them to his own children, and his and their right to engage, in conformity thereto, in harmless acts of worship toward the Almighty, are as sacred in the eye of the law as his rights of person or property . . . And although in the minority, he shall be protected in the full and unrestricted enjoyment thereof . . . Constitutions are enacted for the very purpose of protecting the weak against the strong; the few against the many.

And so, on the basis of the above presentation, Justice Louis A. Valente decided to protect the weak against the strong, the few against the many. In so doing, he encircled the Cause of Baha-O-Llah with the protective arm of the *United States of America*, re-affirming the thought of Abdul Baha, expressed before the Central Congregational Church in Brooklyn, N. Y. on June 15, 1912:—

Just as in the world of politics there is need for free thought, likewise in the world of religion there should be the right of unrestricted individual belief. Consider what a vast difference exists between modern democracy and the old forms of despotism. Under an autocratic government the opinions of men are not free, and development is stifled whereas in democracy, because thought and speech are not restricted the greatest progress is witnessed. It is likewise true in the world of religion. When freedom of conscience, liberty of thought and right of speech prevail, that is to say, when every man according to his own idealization may give expression to his beliefs, development and growth are inevitable.

—*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Vol. I, page 192

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 1941

Monopoly on Name Denied to Baha'i Group

Can't Keep Religion From Rivals, Court Rules, Dismissing Complaint

In a decision handed down in the Supreme Court today Justice A. Valente ruled that he could not grant a monopoly of the name of a religion. He also held that he couldn't stop anyone from practicing a religion merely because the organized practitioners of the religion objected.

The decision delighted Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanled, the society woman who has been a leader of a group of Baha'i followers in New York and a sponsor of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, a Persian poet, who inspired her to take up the work.

'Erroneous Impression.'

Justice Valente's decision dismissed a complaint brought against Mr. Sohrab and his group, which was a little formal organization, by the organized Baha'is, who sued as members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada in the Spiritual Assembly of Baha's of the City of New York.

The organized Baha'is complained that the unorganized Baha'is were giving an erroneous impression that they were authoritative Baha'is by conducting what purported to be Baha's meetings, lectures, classes, social gatherings, etc., by soliciting contributions with use of the Baha'i name and by listing the Baha'i Book Shop in the telephone book directory over the name of the Baha'i Center, which is the office and book shop of the organized Baha'is.

Equal Rights Upheld.

"In the court's opinion," said Justice Valente, "the complaint

fails to state a good cause of action. The plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion.

"The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion in connection with their own meetings, lectures, classes and other activities. No facts are alleged in the complaint to indicate that the defendants have been guilty of any act intended or calculated to deceive the public into believing that their meetings, lectures or book shop are identified with the meetings, lectures, etc., and the book shop of the plaintiffs.

Listing Doesn't Enter.

"Defendants have the absolute right to practice Baha'ism, to conduct meetings, collect funds and sell literature in connection therewith, and to conduct a book shop under the title 'Baha'i Book Shop.'"

As far as the listing of the book shop in the telephone directory was concerned, the justice said, that was merely an alphabetical and not a legal matter, for it was a well accepted fact that the letter "B" preceded the letter "C" in the alphabet and therefore the telephone company was quite right in listing the "Baha'i Book Shop" ahead of the "Baha'i Center."

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 1941

Court Rules Against Monopoly Of the Name of Any Religion

Justice Valente Rejects Suit of Organized Baha'is Against Baha'i Group Headed by Persian Poet; Says Purported Members Can Practice Faith

Justice Louis A. Valente ruled yesterday in Supreme Court that no one had a right to monopolize the name of a religion and that followers of a religion could not be restrained from practicing their beliefs because of the objections of organized practitioners of the same faith.

Justice Valente's decision dismissed a complaint brought by organized Baha'is, who brought suit as members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the United States and Canada, and members of the Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is in New York, against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Persian poet, who is director of the New History Society, and his group.

The organized Baha'is contended that they were the truly authorized followers of Baha-O-Llah, Persian prophet who founded an order nearly a century ago with international peace as its principal aim. They asserted that Mr. Sohrab's group was conveying an erroneous impression to the public by conducting meetings, lectures and other activities in a bona fide Baha'i setting and soliciting contributions as organized Baha'is.

Moreover, the so-called authorized Baha'is complained that the others opened a book store under the name of Bahai (without the apostrophe) Book Shop, and that the listing of the shop in the telephone directory was immediately over that of the Baha'i Center, the office and book shop of the organized Baha'is.

Justice Valente held, however, that "in the court's opinion, the complaint fails to state a good cause of action."

"The plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion," his opinion continued. "The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an

equal right to use the name of the religion in connection with their own meetings, lectures and other activities.

"No facts are alleged in the complaint to indicate that the defendants have been guilty of any act intended or calculated to deceive the public into believing that their meetings, lectures or book shop are identified or affiliated with the meetings, lectures and book shop of the plaintiff."

Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, wife of the former Lieutenant Governor of New York under Charles Evans Hughes, and founder and sponsor of the New History Society, said last night that Justice Valente's decision "upholds our guarantee of religious freedom." Mrs. Chanler formed the society after she broke with the organized Baha'is twelve years ago.

"Mr. Sohrab and I started our group after we parted from the other Baha'is on good terms," Mrs. Chanler explained. "We broke away because we felt that they were limiting the movement. But time was short and we felt that the world should hear the principles laid down by Baha-O-Llah."

Mrs. Chanler expanded on her theme, saying that according to the teachings of Baha-O-Llah, "there shouldn't be any organization." However, she added, "Americans love organizations, and little by little the teachings of Baha-O-Llah were being restricted to a choice few." Baha-O-Llah, she said, espoused the principle of "unity pervading all things."

Mrs. Chanler also explained that the organized Baha'is took out a trademark on the name "Baha'i," but that she felt that Baha'is "should not be restricted by a trademark."

The organized Baha'is have ten days to serve an amended complaint.

CHAPTER VII

THE NAME

The Incommunicable Name

The Prophets of every religion have turned to the *Name*, as constituting the chalice of Divinity on this plane. Whether the *Name* was Brahman or Ahura Mazda, Jehovah, the Father or Allah, it was held by the faithful as the ineffable Mystery and the awesome approach to the Most High.

In Judaism, the four consonants, variously written, IHVH, JHVH, YHWH represented the Supreme Being. Each one of these letters was a treasure-house of significance and, when put together, they formed and were referred to as the *incommunicable Name*. The actual pronunciation of the four mysterious consonants was never freely transmitted, and its esoteric meaning was imparted by the teacher only to qualified disciples. Likewise, during the reading of the Old Testament, the *Name* was automatically substituted by the word Adonai, another Hebrew appellation for God.

The Mishnah so severely prohibits the public utterance of the four consonants or *Tetragrammaton* that the pronouncer of it risked exclusion from a portion of the world to come. Consequently, in the early Hebrew religion, substitutes, other than Adonai, for the *incommunicable Name* became current. *Magam*, meaning Place, was used; also *Merciful*, and the *Holy One*.

The *Name* of God, associated as it was with the *being* of God, held transforming powers. The Prophet, who had attained miraculous vision and knowledge, was called *Master of the Name*; while in the older sacred literature of the East, God is Himself referred to as the *Name*. The *Name* was the corner-stone of the Hebrew Faith and of Hebrew morality. To do an act for the *sake of the Name* was to serve without ulterior thought of self-profit; similarly, it was a practice to set slaves at liberty *in the Name of Freedom*—thus from earliest times, *selflessness* and *freedom* were taught as the two essential attributes of the *being* of God.

The Prophets not only emphasized the sanctity of the *Name*, but called on the people to pattern themselves on the *Power* that was back of the *Name*. Hence, we have the text:—

Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. (Leviticus, Ch. 19, Verse 2.) This injunction had for meaning: Seek to imitate God, be like God. As he is gracious and merciful, so be thou.

Therefore, it was man's highest duty to honor the *Name* and to reflect it in his life; on the other hand, any word or act of irreverence toward the *Name* was held as the most heinous of sins. It was commonly stated that men whose conduct belied their professions were the profaners of the *Name*, and that the hypocrites must be exposed because they profaned the *Name*.

The saints of ancient days realized, through their own intuition, that there were two aspects of sin—the one *personal*, the other *communal*. He, who offended in regard to the *Name*, sinned, not only against his own con-

science, which was the personal sin, but against the public conscience, which was the communal sin. Therefore, from every standpoint, regard for the *Name* was synonymous with the nobility of individual and group.

The Complete Name

From a mystical point of view, the name *Baha* embodies the mysteries of spiritual life; it is the heaven of revelation, the blue expanse of which is studded with the bright stars of knowledge and significance; it is the ocean of divinity, in the depth of which wait the priceless pearls of universal instruction. *Baha*, which word is to be found in the ancient Scriptures, implying Light or Glory, is the *last* name in the succession of the Most Holy *Names*. Including within itself the power of those which have gone before, it is the Alpha and Omega of creation. The letters of the written word and the vibrations of the spoken word—*Baha*—symbolize the *Nameless* and the *Unknown God* whose altar in Athens, with its well-known inscription, was found and witnessed by St. Paul.

In numerical value, the name *Baha*, according to the Arabic Science of numerology, is 9; 9 being the final digit, the greatest and most complete number. The units end at 9; therefore 9 is the total which includes all other numbers. Likewise, in the dispensation of *Baha*, we have the complete revelation which includes all other revelations.

As a personality, Baha-O-Llah is the outward manifestation of the glory of the Supreme Being. He is the *Focus* of the spiritual ideals of past and present and the clear mirror, reflecting the rays of the luminary of Reality. His many titles afford us a key as to his great mission. He was

referred to as *the Blessed Beauty, the Ancient Beauty, the Blessed Perfection, the Manifestation, the Desired One of all Nations, the Sun of Truth*, all of which mean one and the same thing: We have in him the universal and cosmic interpreter of the Spirit of God in this age.

Thus, the names *Baha* and *Baha-O-Llah* and, to an even greater extent, the sacred invocation *Ya Baha-El-Abha!* signify, to an ever-increasing number of men and women in all parts of the world, certain definite and transcendental concepts, certain moral and cultural values, which are within reach of mankind—these concepts foreshadowing a synthesis of the religious aspirations and scientific findings of the Prophets and pioneers of the race. They do not belong to one nation nor to one group; but are legacies of the Supreme Being to all nations and to all groups.

The Treasure Ineffable

As we look back and study the Great Religions, one by one, we realize that, in all of them, the *Name* was held holy. The true followers considered it as the divine Talisman, the highest Point, the Treasure ineffable. Their minds and hearts turned to the *Name* as pilgrims approach a shrine. It was the best Gift of God proffered to the best in man, and available to rich and poor, to wise and foolish, to saint and sinner. Even the beasts of the forest and the birds of the heavens, in their own ways, vibrated to the *Name*. All the roads led to the fountain of the *Name*, and all the wayfarers had the privilege of refreshing themselves at its cool margin.

A Desecration Without Parallel

While individuals, here and there, through ignorance or for various motives, have profaned the *Name*; while, with the passing of time, religious hierarchies have, in its regard, developed systems which led to misuse and abuse; it was left to the Bahai Administration to go on record, in cold blood and in the youth of the movement, with an official act of desecration applying to the latest *Name*.

On August 7, 1928, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada registered the word Bahai—the name of the Cause brought to earth by Baha-O-Llah—as a trade-mark for business purposes.

On August 28, 1934, this same body took out a trade-mark on the symbol, *Ya Baha-El-Abha*—the Most Great Name, the Supreme Invocation.

Thus, a desecration without parallel and the culmination of crime in the annals of religion was perpetrated by the leaders of the Bahai Administration, without qualm and without regret. In this Twentieth Century, those who considered themselves to be the Vice-Gerents of the Most High registered the *Name* of Him they claim to serve, as a *trade-mark that has been continuously used and applied to . . . goods*.

A Charge of Poaching

The Bahai authorities, having raided the Kingdom of Baha and carried off the *Name*; having built high fences around it, displaying placards inscribed with the words: Private Property, No Trespassing! Verboten!, continued for nearly twelve years, and thought to continue forever

in legalized ownership of illegal booty. They had noted, it is true, that their assumption of monopoly was ignored by some, but, feeling that their intrenchment was impregnable, they did not take this fact over-seriously; nevertheless, the day came, when it was considered advisable to bring the matter to an issue, once and for all. Consequently, the persons in question were hailed to court on a charge of poaching.

The first communication sent by the attorneys of the National Spiritual Assembly to Mrs. Chanler, and dated December 5th, 1939, was in the nature of a warning. It read:—

Probably you were not informed as to the trademark situation and it will not be necessary for our client to do more than bring the facts to your attention. In order to comply with the formalities, however, we must and do demand on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada that you discontinue immediately the use of the word Bahai . . . and we hereby notify you that upon your failure to do so our client will hold you responsible for profits, damages and costs of litigation. Will you please give the matter immediate consideration and advise us of your decision.

In this manner, and out of a clear sky, was the proposition put up to us: Would we, or would we not defend the *Name* of Baha-O-Allah? Naturally, we did not hesitate; and, without loss of time, our case was placed in the hands of Michtell & Bechert, Trade-mark Lawyers, of 420 Lexington Ave., New York. In their preliminary answer to the attorneys of the National Spiritual Assembly, Mitchell & Bechert stated plainly:—

It is our opinion . . . that Bahai, long prior to the year 1900, became and now is a word of common speech necessary for use in aptly describing a follower of Baha-O-Llah. In our opinion, therefore, the word "Bahai" cannot legally be exclusively appropriated by your client.

Again, Mitchell & Bechert wrote:—

It is our opinion that "Bahai" is a descriptive word for aptly describing a follower of the Bahai teachings and furthermore, that the word "Bahai" . . . if it is applied on Bahai literature is descriptive of that literature. . . . We must therefore repeat that, in our opinion, our client is not infringing any rights of your client and is not unfairly competing with your client.

The preliminary skirmishes in the shape of correspondence lasted almost five months and finally it became clear that no amount of logical reasoning could induce the National Spiritual Assembly to withdraw the suit. Then, on April 25, 1940, Mrs. Chanler and I were served with the original complaint—an elaborate document consisting of 12 pages.

The Papers having been officially served, we entered on the second stage of the lawsuit. There was no withdrawal in sight. We faced a real battle; for the forces of opposition were gathering their strength to strike, and strike hard. To the first and single charge—the unlawful use of the word Bahai—other charges, too numerous to catalogue, were presently added, and we realized that this was a fight to the finish and there was to be no turning to the left nor to the right until a final decision had been reached. Therefore Mr. and Mrs. Chanler and I held a conference with Mr. Robert C. Bechert to map out our future plans.

Inasmuch as the case, in the light of the actual Complaint, had branched out from the domain of the trade-mark into a larger field involving the fundamental rights of religious freedom, Mr. Bechert advised us to call into consultation the firm of Kleberg & Greenwald, Counselors-at-law; and at our first meeting with these attorneys, it became evident that the defense of the Cause was in expert hands. From that day on, the combined legal, intellectual and spiritual resources of Mitchell & Bechert and Kleberg & Greenwald were directed to the upholding of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, i.e.:—*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.*

Going back to the claim of the National Spiritual Assembly that it held an exclusive trade-mark on the name Bahai, Kleberg & Greenwald, in their first Memorandum, made the following wise declaration:—

It is important to observe however . . . that the word "Baha'i" is the title of a religious group, of a religion and of a follower of that religion. It is like the words Christian, Jew, Mohammadan, Protestant, Methodist, Catholic, Christian Scientist or any one of hundreds of similar designations. When used upon the magazines and printed books of the plaintiffs, it is descriptive of the contents of those magazines and printed books. It states positively and eloquently in effect: "The within publication is a discourse upon the Baha'i faith or some phase or incident of it." . . . Precisely for this reason, the word Baha'i was not susceptible of registration and cannot be the object of private appropriation. . . . Obviously, in view of what we have said . . . the plaintiffs



HON. LEWIS STUYVESANT CHANLER
As Lieutenant-Governor of New York State, in 1905.

are not the only ones who may issue Baha'i literature. The defendants may do that. Anyone in the world may.

To speak of a publication as being a Baha'i publication, is to give no hint as to its source. . . . A re-examination of all of the authorities cited and referred to in this point, will show that the fact that the plaintiffs have succeeded in registering the word Baha'i as their trademark, does not help them at all, since the word was not susceptible of private appropriation, since it belonged in the public domain in the first place, being the name of a religion and lastly, since it is descriptive of the material upon which it is used, it could not be registered, and if it was registered, the registration was meaningless.

An Abandoned Claim

After the masterly Memorandum containing the above statement had been submitted to the Court, and the attorneys of the National Spiritual Assembly had had a chance to digest its contents, they no doubt felt that the monopoly, so far as the trade-mark on the word Bahai was concerned, could not be maintained, and it is probable that they, then and there, persuaded the members of the National Spiritual Assembly to abandon this claim. However that may be, the *Amended Complaint*, which shortly followed and was presented long before the case came up before Justice Valente, was devoid of all reference to the trade-mark on the word Bahai.

Thus, The New History Society won its first battle out of court; and the name Bahai, after an imprisonment of nearly twelve years in a registration dungeon, passed into

the open—free to make its permanent abode in the hearts and lives of all who hold it in love and reverence.

In their final Memorandum presented to the Supreme Court, Kleeberg & Greenwald refer, in passing, to the abandoned claim.

In their original complaint, as a separate cause of action, they (The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada) sought to enjoin the use of the word Baha'i, in connection with defendants' literature by claiming that they had registered in the United States Patent Office, the trade-mark "Baha'i."

In the Amended complaint, this claim is abandoned. And for good reason.

The above slight reference to the question of trade-mark on the name Bahai, which had originally been the object of the lawsuit, must have made our opponents feel somewhat uncomfortable; for, having relinquished their claim, they did not wish to be even reminded of it. Suddenly, the subject had become taboo; and although the attorneys of the National Spiritual Assembly replied to our own attorneys in a measured legalistic manner, they seemed to question the good taste of dragging this skeleton out of the closet in the presence of the august tribunal.

This is my own psychological deduction, so I shall quote the actual words spoken in this reference by the attorneys of the National Spiritual Assembly in their Memorandum delivered before Justice Valente:—

It is true as defendants state that the original complaint pleaded registration and infringement of the

word Baha'i as a trade-mark . . . but no such question is raised by the amended complaint.

In this remarkable manner did the claim of trade-mark on the word Bahai go by default!

Misrepresentation

An interesting sidelight is contained in a Report of Mr. Martin T. Fisher of Washington, D. C., who made an exhaustive investigation of the trade-mark on the word Baha'i. The Report, which is dated December 8, 1939, includes the following extracts:—

Re: "Baha'i" Trade-Mark Registration No. 245,271.

Trade-Mark registration 245,271 is for the word "Bahai." The mark was registered under the 1905 Act as a non-descriptive mark on August 7, 1928. It was registered by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada of New York, New York, a common law corporation. The goods covered by the registration are magazines and printed books. Use of the mark is claimed since 1900. . . .

The mark was registered in 1928. I talked with one of the Examiners in the Trade-Mark Division about the situation and he said that there is considerable doubt whether, under the present practice, the mark would be registered. Probably the Examiner who allowed the mark in 1928 did not know that there was such a thing as a Bahai religion. He said that under the present practice, it probably would not be registered because descriptive. Furthermore, if the founder of the religion is named Baha, it could not be registered under 1905 Act. . . .

Certainly the use of the name "Bahai Book Store" on a book store is not infringement of the registration, because a book store, first of all, is not an article of merchandise, and even if it was, it is merchandise of different descriptive properties from the goods covered by the registration, namely magazines and printed books.

In substantiation of the point that the word is merely descriptive, I call your attention to Webster's New International Dictionary, 1925 Edition, in the "Addenda" in the first part of the dictionary, under "Bahai" there appears this:—

"A member of the sect of the Babis consisting of the adherents of Baha (Mirza Hussain Ali, 1817-1892), entitled "Baha'u'llah" or "the Splendor of God" . . . Baha in 1863 declared himself the supreme prophet of the sect, and became its recognized head."

In making a close study of the application for trade-mark on the word Bahai, one finds in it no reference to religion; it simply is a commercial enterprise doing business at the old stand. The Commissioner of Patents is given to understand that the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada is a *common-law corporation*, organized and operated under declaration of trust and doing business at . . . and that it *has adopted and used the trade-mark . . . on magazines and printed books . . . and presents herewith five specimens showing the trade-mark as actually used by applicant upon the goods. . . . The trade-mark has been continually used and applied to said goods in applicant's business since 1900. The trade-mark is applied or affixed to the goods by printing the same thereon.*

Now, I believe that no one can deny the assumption that the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, when they applied in 1928 for registration of the word Baha'i, knew the elementary truth that the Bahai Cause is a religion and that the word Baha'i is *descriptive*, and therefore not registerable. Then why, in the face of this knowledge, did they permit themselves to go ahead with their plan? One sentence in Mr. Martin Fisher's Report sheds a flood of light on this point. He says:—

Probably the Examiner who allowed the mark in 1928 did not know that there was such a thing as a Bahai religion.

We can imagine the Examiner thinking that Bahai was an exotic Oriental word, concocted, after some research on the part of these American *merchants* in order to label their goods and wares. This is current procedure in the business world; yet, by no stretch of imagination can we invest the members of the National Spiritual Assembly with the same innocence regarding the point involved. Then, why did they allow themselves to perpetrate the unethical act of concealing from the Commissioner of the United States Patent Office the fact that the word Bahai was derived from the name *Baha*, and that *Baha* was a person, and more, that he was the founder of a Universal Religion? The answer is of course plain. In such case, they would have been refused the trade-mark!

Victory on Three Counts

The proceedings brought by the National Spiritual Assembly against Mrs. Chanler and myself can be divided into two parts:

1. The original Complaint, which was instituted on the grounds of trade-mark on the word Bahai.

This claim was dropped; it went by default and, to all intents and purposes, the stigma of trade-mark has been lifted from the word Bahai.

2. The Amended Complaint, which applied to the teaching of the Bahai Cause, to holding meetings in the Bahai name, to publishing and distributing Bahai literature and to the collecting of money for the movement, etc.

This complaint came up before the Court and was set aside as invalid.

Thus, a victory was gained right down the line; and this victory included a *third* count which, although never mentioned or referred to in any complaint or in any brief, is closely involved with the whole proceeding. This third count is on the *MOST GREAT NAME*.

The Most Great Name



When, in 1934, the National Spiritual Assembly registered the symbol, *Ya Baha-El-Abha* as a trade-mark, it perpetrated a sacrilege too awful to contemplate. This phrase, in Arabic lettering, which has come down through the ages, and which was specified by Baha-O-Illah as constituting the highest vibration in all language, represents to the Bahai mind the ultimate degree of sanctity. The Bahai who, in his rapt moments, pronounces the *MOST*

GREAT NAME, realizes that he is penetrating to the realm of Divinity. He enters the Holy of Holies and, in so doing, he leaves behind the shoes of mortal considerations. The very angels might fear to tread in the sanctuary of the *MOST GREAT NAME*, but he who draws near in love and detachment may pronounce these syllables to the healing of his soul.

In speaking of the *MOST GREAT NAME*, Baha-O-Llah tells us to relinquish all else; for this word, *per se*, is our supreme possession. He says:—

In this day, neither knowledge nor art, neither wealth nor honor will enrich you. Cast them aside, and turn toward the MOST GREAT NAME, by which the Psalms, the holy Pages and this Book are sponsored.

—Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Pages 76-77.

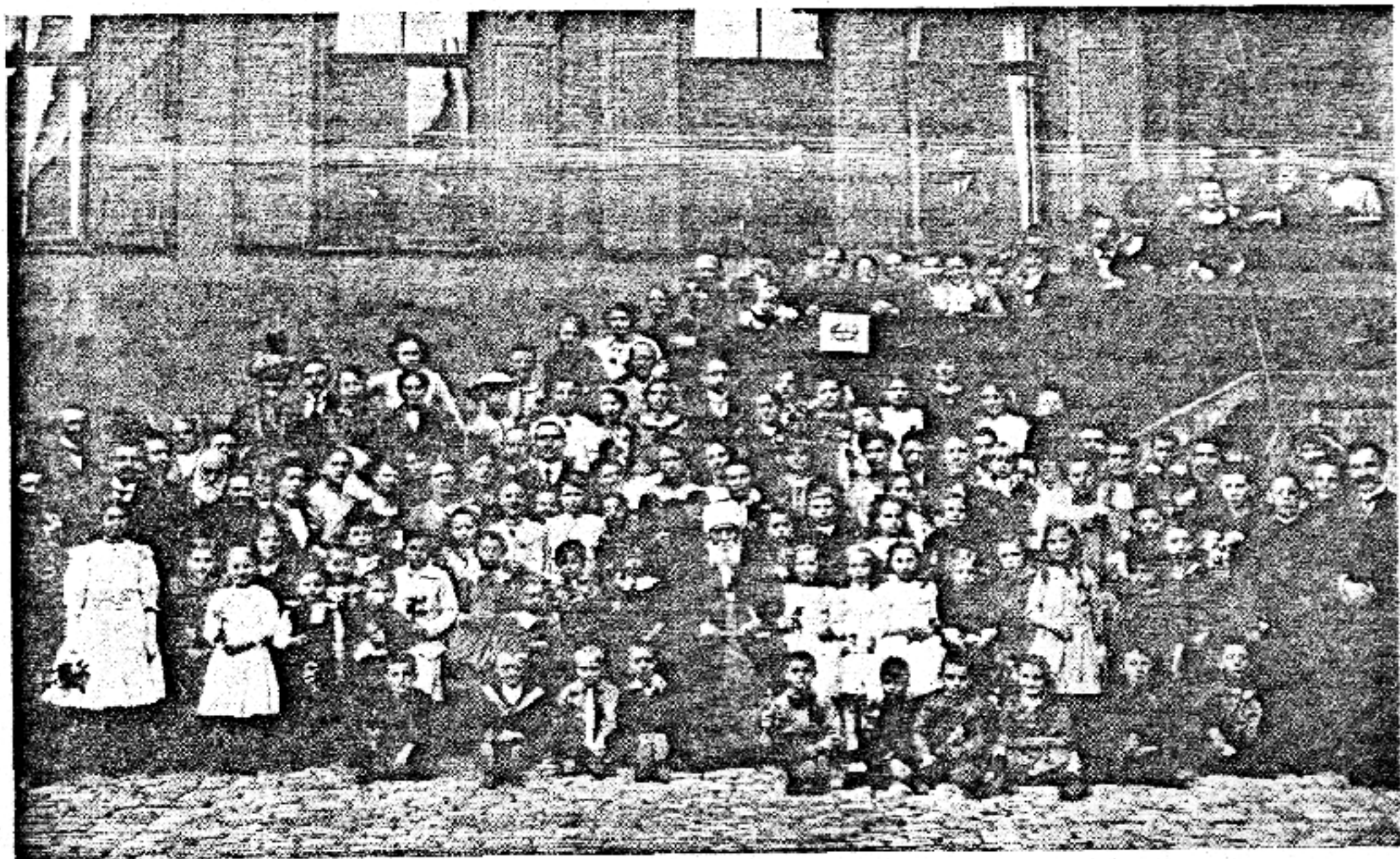
Again, Baha-O-Llah tells us that in this Day God has conferred upon humanity the treasure ineffable, once hidden and now revealed by himself:—

O peoples of the world! The Ancient King has sent the MOST GREAT NAME, and has given to men the glad-tidings of this Manifestation, which, once hidden in the world, and conserved among the protected treasures, is now revealed by the Supreme Pen upon the pages of God.

—Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, page 98.

In referring to this celestial invocation, Abdul Baha said:—

In this century of the latter times Baha-U-Llah has appeared and so resuscitated spirits that they have manifested powers more than human. Thousands of



GERMAN BAHAI CHILDREN
Group taken with Abdul Baha in Stuttgart in 1913.

His followers have given their lives and while under the sword, shedding their blood, they have proclaimed:—
“Ya Baha-El-Abha!”

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 368.

Often, in the watches of the night, I have heard the voice of Abdul Baha sounding out the *MOST GREAT NAME*, Ya Baha-El-Abha, over and over again; and my spirit would be caught up by the rhythm of those accents and the power of those tones, and spun toward the Garden of Reality. I have waited at those garden gates, while my Master walked therein among the roses and hyacinths of significance; and I have remembered.

The Sign of the Cross

It might be useful to pause here, in an attempt to realize what has been done; and, in order to get a quicker reaction, we will make a parallel of the most sacred symbol in a given religion. Let us choose Christianity.

From earliest times, the followers of Jesus have held to the Sign of the Cross. This sign typifies, in conjunction: sacrifice and redemption. It is the emblem of the little personal calvary, sanctified through the great universal Calvary; it is the vision of mercy and promise, glorifying the path that leads toward the Kingdom of Heaven.

The tiny shrine by the hillside, the simple chapel in the village street, the magnificent cathedral on the square of the metropolis carry the Sign of the Cross. The poor man and the rich man, the sinner and the saint, fix their eyes on the Cross. The gesture of the Cross is made on the newborn infant and over the sick-bed of him who prepares for his eternal rest. The Cross hangs on the rosary and, when

the beads of prayer and life are told, the suppliant, severed from the bonds of earth, presses his lips to the Cross.

Shall we continue our effort to make a parallel? Is it possible to imagine a registration in the United States Patent Office, or in the Patent Office of Rome or of any other locality, on the Sign of the Cross? Can we conceive of any group of hierarchs holding this symbol as a *trade-mark* to be *used upon goods* in the pursuance of business? No! The task is beyond us. We cannot think of the unimaginable, nor imagine the unthinkable. We are just where we started off—paralyzed before an actuality, the implications of which stagger the mind.

A Trade-Mark on Goods and Wares

The symbol of the *MOST GREAT NAME* was registered in the United States Patent Office on August 28, 1934, by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, as a *trade-mark . . . actually used by applicant upon goods*, with serial No. 316,444 (see *The Bahai World*, Vol. VI, 1934-1936, page 350). It was registered in the Dominion of Canada, by the Canadian Assembly, as an *Arabic symbol* on January 4, 1935, with serial No. 165,527. The registration in Canada on the word Bahai, of same date, carries the serial No. 165,526 (see *The Bahai World*, Vol. VI, 1934-1936, pages 351-357).

In the applications, presented to the Commissioner of Patents of the Dominion of Canada, it is stated that the *applicants have used the said mark . . . ("Baha'i" or the "Arabic symbol") on wares ordinarily and commercially described by the applicants as periodical literature and*

printed books. . . . The applicants are commercially concerned with wares ordinarily and commercially described as. . . . They were and are entitled to adopt and use the mark in Canada in association with the wares which they have used.

At a time when they were well under way toward completion of this campaign of trade-mark on the word Baha'i and on the holiest of all symbols, *Ya Baha-El-Abha*, both in the United States and in Canada, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly prepared to herald these glorious achievements to the Bahai world, and receive the approbation of their followers. Let us listen to the proclamation:—

The friends will be happy to learn that the use of this Symbol is now legally protected for proper Baha'i use under the trade-mark registration recently made by the National Spiritual Assembly through the U. S. Patent Office.

—Bahai News, No. 87, September 1934, page 2.

And again:—

The Symbol of the Greatest Name is now legally protected for proper use under trade-mark registration recently made by the National Assembly through the United States Patent Office. Action has also been taken to obtain similar protection in Canada. . . . The word "Baha'i" was legally protected several years ago.

—Bahai News, No. 91, April 1935, page 9.

In this manner was the *incommunicable Name* stolen from the temple and set up in the market place. This invocation, the last sound to issue from the throats of the

martyrs, this beatific vision, this hallowed call, this clysian aspiration, this supernal chant, this omnipotent orison, this majestic paeon, this redemptive breathing, this voice of conscience, this creative prayer, this angelic adoration—this *Ya Baha-Et-Abha* which has come down through the ages, was indexed, card-filed and catalogued by order of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada as a trade-mark to be applied to *goods* in pursuance of *business*. No words are strong enough, in this regard; no tears are warm enough; no blush is deep enough! The supreme sacrilege has been committed and inscribed on the record—and the record stands.

Hence, the trade-mark on the symbol of the *MOST GREAT NAME*, the application for which was signed by Mr. Horace Holley, Secretary, constitutes the rock-bottom of infidelity in the annals of the Bahai Administration. No further act, however black, can rival this one. The National Spiritual Assembly has a clear running—it can only move upward, after this!

CHAPTER VIII

THE APPEAL

The American Ideal

The American ideal of religious liberty as embodied in the Bill of Rights has, during one hundred and sixty-five years, shone like a brilliant star on the horizon of our cultural and intellectual institutions. It has inspired the leaders of men in the council chambers of the nation, in the courts of law and in the Halls of Congress.

Daniel Webster, champion of freedom for whites and blacks long before the Civil War, spoke often and passionately on the subject of *religious and civil liberty*. He said:—

If the true spark of religious and civil liberty is kindled, it will burn. Human agency cannot extinguish it. Like the earth's central fire, it may be smothered for a time; the ocean may overwhelm it; the mountains may press it down; but its inherent and unconquerable force will heave both the ocean and the land, and at some time or other, in some place or other, the volcano will break out and flame up to heaven.

President Roosevelt, in his epochal speech before Congress, delivered in January 1941, propounded his *Four Freedoms* as follows:—

In future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want, which, translated into world terms, means economic understanding which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.

Fourth is freedom from fear, which, translated into world terms, means world-wide reduction of armaments, to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for the kind of a world attainable in our time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called New Order tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb. To that new order we oppose the greater conception—moral order.

Freedom of worship, this most cherished ideal of the founders of the Republic, was brought again to the forefront of public discussion when Mr. Sumner Welles, Acting Secretary of State, issued a Statement to the country in regard to the fundamental policy of the United States government. It was published in the New York Times of June 24th. Mr. Welles said in part:—

This government often has stated, and in many of his public statements the President has declared, that the United States maintains that freedom to worship God as their conscience dictates is the great and funda-

mental right of all people. . . . To the people of the United States this and other principles and doctrines of communistic dictatorship are as intolerable and as alien to their beliefs as are the principles and doctrines of Nazi dictatorship. Neither kind of imposed overlordship can have, or will have, any support or any sway in the mode of life, or in the system of government of American people.

Turning to the educational field, let us now listen to Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, New York, as he spoke at Commencement Day on June 3rd, 1941:—

Are we, then, of this twentieth century and of this still free and independent land, to lose heart and to yield to the despair which is becoming so widespread in countries other than ours? Not for one moment will we yield our faith or our courage! We may well repeat once more the words of Abraham Lincoln: "Most governments have been based on the denial of the equal rights of men; ours began by affirming those rights. We made the experiment, and the fruit is before us. Look at it—think of it!" However dark the skies may seem now, however violent and apparently irresistible are the savage attacks being made with barbarous brutality upon innocent women and children and non-combatant men, upon hospitals and institutions for the care of the aged and dependent, upon cathedrals and churches, upon libraries and galleries of the world's art, upon classic monuments which record the architectural achievements of centuries—we must not despair. Our spirit of faith in the ultimate rule of the moral ideal and in the permanent establishment of liberty of thought, of

speech, of worship and of government will not, and must not, be permitted to weaken or to lose control of our mind and our action.

This ideal of religious liberty, so firmly established in the American mind and in the American way of life, is here to stay so long as our democracy endures; and should any individual or group of individuals, native or foreign, no matter how mighty or resourceful, scheme to minimize its influence and bedim its glory—the entire population of the nation would rise as one man and, like a giant cyclone, crush and scatter that sinister force into a thousand, nay into a million, pieces. Verily, the people of the United States can be counted upon to protect their chosen, their hard-won and most cherished principle—liberty.

When, in the Supreme Court of New York, Justice Louis A. Valente dismissed the Amended Complaint of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, brought against Mrs. Chanler and myself, as insufficient in law and laid down the decision that *the plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion*, he simply implemented once more the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, together with the wise utterances of Daniel Webster, President Roosevelt, the Acting Secretary of State, the President of the Columbia University and of a host of statesmen, educators and leaders of thought, past and present.

Nevertheless, the Bahai authorities could not or would not decipher the bold handwriting on the walls of our American institutions, so they carried the case to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, taking exception to

each and every part of Justice Valente's decision. They asked that:—

The judgment and order appealed from should be reversed and the motion for judgment on the pleadings denied with costs to appellants.

For Consumption Abroad and at Home

The National Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada has two faces—liberal and orthodox; democratic and totalitarian; and these faces are mirrored on the pages of their twin publications, entitled *World Order* and *Bahai News*. The former, which is intended for the public, reflects broad modern ideas; the latter, published for *Bahais Only*, presents articles and news designed to bolster up and maintain a despotic and illogical system. The material in both magazines is edited by the same hand.

Let us glance at the opening paragraph in a leading editorial, entitled *The Universal and the Sectarian*, which appeared in the May, 1941 issue of *World Order*; and as we read, we might try to realize that this article was signed by the National Spiritual Assembly at the very time it was bringing suit against us for holding Bahai meetings. I, myself, think that it is a splendid bit of writing, and believe that if Mr. Greenwald had seen it in time, he might have been inspired by it to a yet higher pitch of liberality, if that were humanly possible. Here is the extract:—

Religious controversy, it has been said, is not a quality of America. Here, for the first time in history, a great and varied population has been assured freedom of conscience and the individual right to worship God according to any practice not contravening the moral

code or attacking the authority of the civil state. Here, likewise, such opportunity has, until recent years at least, been offered for material advancement that most of the social energy has spent itself in effort to achieve personal fulfillment. The climate of tolerance and the season of fruitfulness are not conducive to the rancor of theological struggle.

Here we see that, while the National Spiritual Assembly asserts that religious controversy is not a quality of America, it allows itself the very un-American action of dragging its fellow-believers into the law-courts over nothing more nor less than a *religious controversy*. While it states that in this country a varied population has been assured freedom of conscience and the individual right to worship God according to any practice, it exerts itself to deprive the members of The New History Society and all liberal Bahais of this very *individual right to worship* God according to their convictions and beliefs. While it speaks of the *climate of tolerance*, it disseminates among its communities the poison of theological controversy and, without mercy or let-up, persecutes the liberal elements within its own ranks. But then, this piece of writing is for the public, while the actual doctrines of the Bahai Administration may be studied by the elect within the pages of the *Bahai News*.

Complexes

It is true that the National Spiritual Assembly, once in a while before its own membership, pretends to value the assets conferred by these United States. In a letter dated February 15, 1941, and addressed to *Bahai Friends*, it questions mournfully:—

In our favored country we are still in possession of our freedom, our possessions, our liberty of thought—how long will they last?

Indeed, not long if this institution has its way! The present day Bahai organization is the model upon which an alleged world order is to be fashioned; and what a world order it will be, judging from the pattern! The individual is not allowed to use his conscience, but must adhere to the rulings of his superiors without regard to modern social issues or humanitarian inclinations; above all, without regard to the Bahai teachings. Under these conditions, the better elements in the group are forced to maintain a painful silence, leaving the conduct of affairs to those of less sensitive fibre. It is largely for this reason that the Bahais keep themselves aloof from current affairs. They function on a basis that is untenable; consequently, they cannot look the world eye to eye. I have heard more than one of their leaders speaking on public platforms in Geneva, Switzerland, at times when that city was the hub of advanced thought, and these outstanding Bahais could not bring themselves to the point of pronouncing the name of Baha-O-Llah. Why this? Simply because the Bahai Administration has produced a complex among its advocates. The Guardian himself never ventures into the public.

Efficiency!

After April 1st, 1941, on which date Justice Valente had handed down his decision on our case, I immediately arranged for the making of a photostat which showed the court decision according to the New York Law Journal, together with newspaper articles from two metropolitan

dailies. Copies of this photostat were mailed on April 5th to all the Bahais on our list throughout the United States and Canada. I, then, applied myself to the writing of an article setting forth the facts involved in this court procedure. This article appeared in the May issue of *New History* and was distributed throughout the country about April 18th.

Now, it happened that the Bahai Convention opened in Chicago on April 24th and the Annual Report, 1940-1941, published by the National Spiritual Assembly for this occasion, was circulated among the delegates and others attending the Convention. It is interesting to study the section of this report appearing on page 2, which deals with the lawsuit, the more so when it is borne in mind that many of the Bahais who read it were already fully informed, by means of the photostat page and *New History*, on the outcome of the case. We wonder what these persons thought of the sentence: *At the moment of writing this report, the fundamental issues involved have not been determined by the court.* If these Bahai readers took this statement on its face value, we hope, at least, that they gave us credit for efficiency and reliable editing, in comparison with the cumbersome Bahai Administration which with all its fanfare about organization; with the vast sums expended on the greasing of its machinery; with its impressive secretariat, a building on the Temple grounds at Wilmette, Ill., going under the name: Haziratu'l-Quds or Island of Paradise, was yet unable to present to the delegates at its convention an up-to-date report. Be that as it may, we will now examine the statement on the lawsuit:—

2. The National Assembly, representing the American Baha'i community, is engaged in a legal action

before the Supreme Court of the State of New York for the purpose of preventing the public misuse of the name "Baha'i" in connection with activities under conditions which represent a clear betrayal of the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha, repudiation of His station as Center of Baha'u'llah's text, the definite disobedience to Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Faith, as well as to the recognized administrative institutions of the Faith in America. At the moment of writing this report, the fundamental issues involved have not been determined by the court. The Baha'i issues and principles, however, are truths which stand steadfast beyond compromise or corruption in the souls of the followers of Baha'u'llah . . .

No human being can alter or pervert or exploit a revealed truth. The realm of Revelation is raised high above the reach of hostile human influence. The issue in these cases is not one in which a Divine Faith subjects its vital truths to decision by any court. . . . But the community of believers at any given time represents many different stages of development, and the hostility of the betrayer and the foe comes as a necessary and helpful test of the individual believer's understanding and firmness. That is all, except for the further consideration that the Faith acquires public influence and esteem through the dramatization of its vital principles under onslaught or denial.

The Dear Old Fox

In the study of the above piece of writing, one sentence strikes us forcibly. It reads as follows:—*The issue in these cases is not one in which a Divine Faith subjects its vital truths to decision by any court.*

Here a sneaking suspicion creeps into the mind. Could it be that we underestimated the efficiency of our opponent in having presented to the Convention a report that was way behind the times? It is possible that the Bahai authorities did not wish the lawsuit which had miscarried to be discussed on the floor of the Convention; they may have decided that it were far better to leave the whole thing *in the air*, at the same time putting out the thought that a court decision was, after all, of no importance. I do not like to be crassly obvious, but here I cannot help recalling the dear old fox who would have found the grapes very palatable, indeed, if only he could have set his teeth into them. Yes! If Justice Valente's decision had been in favor of our opponents, it is more than probable that the Administration would have lifted his words to an altitude close to Baha-O-Llah's own and himself to the station of sainthood.

In a mimeographed copy of the Financial Report of the Bahai Administration for the year ending February 28, 1941, we find, included in the list of expenses, the sum of \$5,914.24 paid for legal services. Now, as the legal procedure against us has continued since that time, a second hearing having taken place before the Appellate Division the following June, we surmise that another item of \$19,000, bracketed for *contingent and unforeseen items* (*Bahai News*, May 1941) may be drawn upon for legal services to be rendered later. A good deal of money is entailed here; money contributed by sincere Bahais who doubtless were under the impression that the whole unpleasant business was worthwhile. Actually, I consider it inappropriate for a plaintiff to turn up his nose at law courts. No one invited him there; certainly not the poor defendant

who was jostled out of the mild tenor of daily life to meet his good pleasure. In our case, however, the Guardian of the Bahai Cause seems to place the agitation that was stirred up at our door, for, incorporated in a cablegram dated April 23rd which was addressed to the 33rd Annual Bahai Convention, we find the following:—

Scornful (of the) agitation stirred up by (their) adversaries, (the) breakers (of the) Covenant; the resolute upholders (of the) Divine Plan will, indeed cannot but, persist (in their) ordained task (to) propagate (the) flame, enlarge (the) administrative limits, (and) strike deeper roots (of the) world-encircling, world-redeeming Faith (of) Baha-U-Llah.

My opinion is that, at whatsoever door the agitation may justly be laid, a law court is at no time a fit place for controversy among the followers of Abdul Baha.

Appeal to a Higher Court

The friends are informed that with the Guardian's approval an appeal has been taken on the decision made by a judge of the New York Supreme Court on April 1st and the matter is therefore still in process of settlement.

—Bahai News, May 1941, page 6.

In the above statement, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada apprised their communities of the fact that the lawsuit which had been brought against Mrs. Chanler and myself had failed in its purpose, and that the decision of Justice Valente was being contested.

The legal season was now drawing to an end and there were many cases on the calendar; consequently it was a question as to whether or not ours would come up before the Court adjourned for the summer. It looked pretty doubtful, but both Mrs. Chanler and I hoped that the matter would be disposed of this spring; also we were interested in hearing the argument, as an experience, for we had been absent when the case was tried for the first time before Justice Valente. We therefore watched the calendar as our name crept toward the top, and on Thursday, June 5th, Mr. and Mrs. Chanler and I entered the Court House of the Appellate Division, First Department, Supreme Court, New York, on Madison Square at 25th Street. It was the closing day.

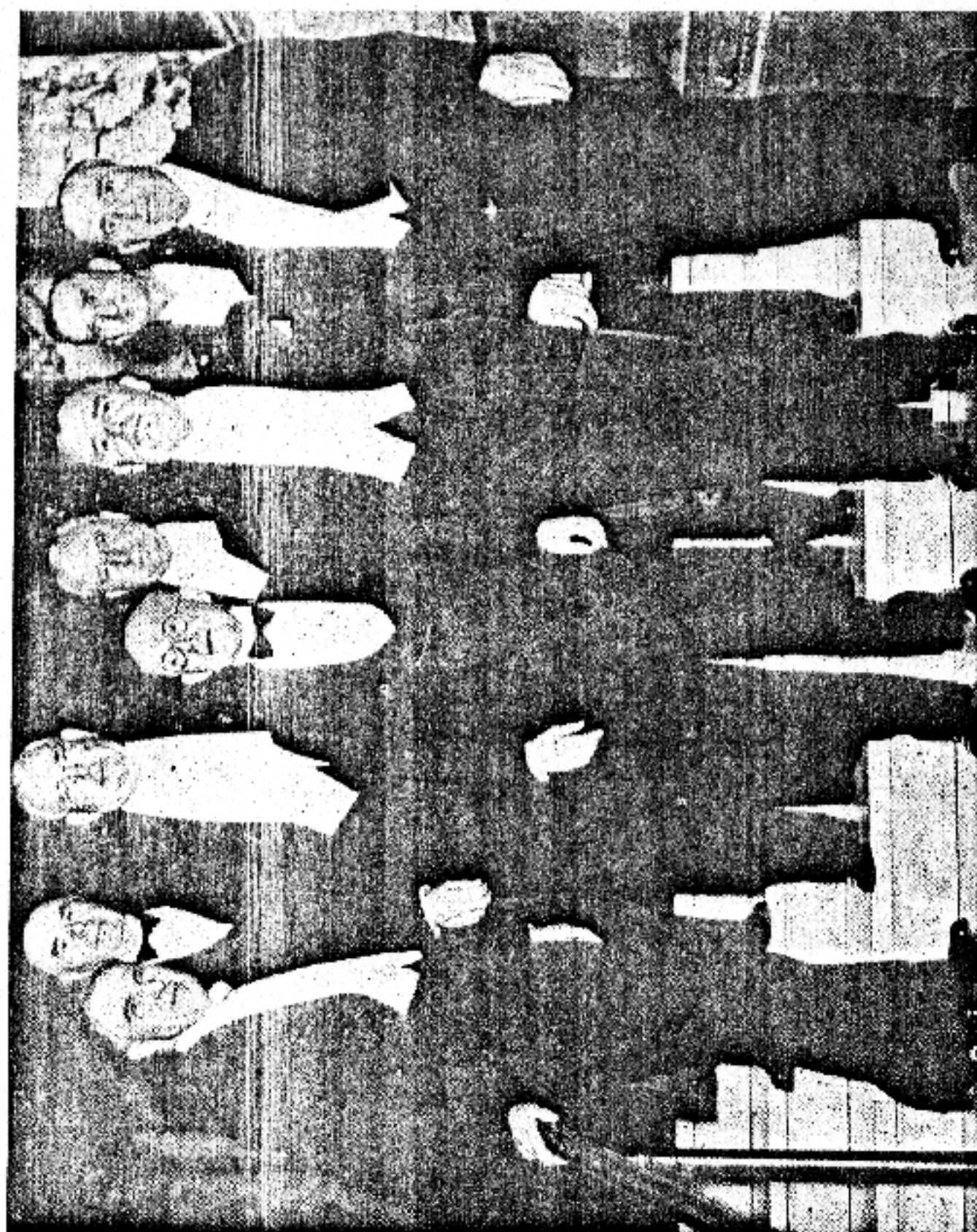
As we stood in the lobby, our attorney, Mr. Kleeberg, joined us and handed me the list of cases. I counted them; there were eighteen, ours being the eighth. It looked as if ours would not be reached, as the court sits from two to six P.M. and the sessions end promptly; so, Mr. Kleeberg wished us happy holidays and, leaving us in the hands of Mr. Greenwald, went back to his office.

We slipped into the court room and seated ourselves at the side. A case was in process of being argued and, by a strange coincidence, it happened to be one in which the City of New York was plaintiff, being represented by the Corporation Counsel, William C. Chanler; so our time of waiting was very well spent. Mr. Chanler had the unexpected pleasure of listening to an argument delivered by his son and all of us had the privilege of being present at a very interesting and important hearing, which, incidentally, consumed two hours.

When the case was disposed of, we realized that ours could not possibly come up in the short time remaining before six o'clock; and then the Presiding Judge made an unprecedented announcement. He said that an hour's recess would be allowed for dinner, after which the Court would hold an evening session. This decision came as a bombshell to the ears of the tired attorneys who had been waiting about all the afternoon on the chance of being called; but, needless to say, it delighted our trio of Bahai defendants. We were not to be disappointed after all and, as the lawyers filed out of the court room and gathered in groups in the lobby, we joined Mr. Greenwald who was distinctly in need of consolation at the prospect of having to argue a case after dinner.

It was at this time that Mr. Ellis W. Leavenworth, counsel for the National Spiritual Assembly passed by, and Mr. Greenwald, acting in true Bahai spirit, called him over. Then, Mr. Leavenworth, himself responding in like Bahai spirit, shook hands with all of us and we had the opportunity of exchanging a few words with our opponent, just before the battle. We appreciated this little incident and found that the plaintiff's lawyer had a very charming personality, seeming to be of the calibre that was accustomed to winning cases—not considering this one, of course. It is a fact that lawyers are very much like cooks: They cannot produce a satisfactory result if you have nothing but dry bones and bitter herbs in your market basket.

A walk in the rain to a near-by cafeteria, a little relaxation over coffee and sandwiches, and the hour's recess was over. We returned to the classical, but compact little building of the Appellate Division and took our places in the



(By courtesy of Wide World Photos)

Justices of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the State of New York at a dinner given in their honor by the Bar Association. Left to right:—Justice Joseph M. Callahan; Charles H. Strong, Esq., Secretary of the Association; Hon. Francis Martin, Presiding Justice; Hon. Clarence J. Shearn, President of the Association; Justice Irwin Untermyer; Justice Edward Glennon; Justice Albert Cohn and Justice Edward S. Dore.

The justices of the Appellate Division who heard the case brought by the Bahai Administration were Justice Callahan, Presiding Justice Francis Martin, Justice Glennon and Justice Dore. The picture of Justice Townley, which does not appear in the above group, is to be found in a succeeding page in this chapter.

discreetly lighted court room. From the walls on either side of the benches and behind them, the faces of former Justices looked down, from within their gilt frames; while raised on a dais before us were the five Justices who, either by a majority vote or unanimously, were to decide for or against us in this case that was all important in our eyes. During the arguments that preceded ours, I examined their features, from left to right: the Honorables Edward S. Dore, Alfred H. Townley, Francis Martin, Presiding Justice, Edward J. Glennon and Joseph M. Callahan, and was deep in this psychological study when, at exactly 8:15 o'clock, the Presiding Justice proclaimed: *Allen B. McDaniel versus Mirza Ahmad Sohrab*, and I came to myself with a start.

Responding to this summons Mr. Leavenworth, counsel for the National Spiritual Assembly, rose to his feet and opened his argument. He stated that the Bahai Cause originated in Persia, having been founded by Baha-O-Llah (here a wave of emotion passed over me, for it was the first time, to my knowledge, that this name had been pronounced in an occidental court room); he then went on to say that the Cause was little known in America, and that he, himself, had heard of it for the first time when the case was placed in his hands.

Continuing, Mr. Leavenworth said that the subject of religious freedom had been much accentuated by the defense; actually, Justice Valente had rendered his decision on this ground, while as a matter of fact, this issue was not involved.

Here, Justice Dore leaned forward and asked: *Is not this case a question of religion, at least in part?*

No, your Honor! Mr. Leavenworth answered, *It is purely commercial.*

Completely nonplussed, I turned toward Mrs. Chanler to see her reaction. Her eyes were opened wide. Neither of us could believe our ears; but, we had another shock coming, for, at that moment, Mr. Leavenworth was asserting that his clients had never objected to our use of the word *Bahai*.

Mrs. Chanler and I settled back in our chairs. This evidently was to be a Comedy of Errors, and we might as well take it as such; also, we realized that the material upon which Justice Valente had based his opinion was actually in the hands of the Court.

The Bahai case afforded a period of relaxation in this session of unusual length. As soon as the word had been pronounced, all those present dropped the business attitude; the judges bent forward, some of the spectators tittered and many faces bore smiles. When the Master's name was mentioned, Justice Townley recollected that Abdul Baha had visited this country in 1915. While we made a mental correction of 1912, his associate judges looked at him quizzically and asked a few questions in undertones. Thus, the whole proceeding was carried out in comparatively informal vein, although the Court gave minute attention to the points presented.

When Mr. Leavenworth referred to the long-standing establishment of the Bahai organization in this country and said that the existence of the Bahai Bookshop led to misunderstanding, Justice Dore asked of our attorney:—*Why then do you not write under the name of your society or bookshop: "Not connected with the Bahai Assembly."*

Here, like a shot out of a gun, Mr. Greenwald flashed back: *Why shouldn't they write under the name of the National Spiritual Assembly: "Not connected with The New History Society or the Bahai Bookshop."* At this, Judge Townley remarked that it seemed to him that the names of the two groups were already well defined: the one functioning under the name Bahai Assembly, and the other under Bahai Bookshop.

In his argument, Mr. Greenwald emphasized the fact that the case, actually was *nothing* but religious; that it involved the fundamental principle of religious liberty; that Baha-O-Llah was the founder of a religion and a *Bahai* is one who follows his teachings; therefore, that the name was descriptive and could not be appropriated by any group or by any individual. He continued to speak along these lines, finally quoting Justice Valente's decision which held that the defendants, as Bahais, have the absolute right to practice Bahaism, to hold meetings, to publish books and receive contributions for their religious activities; for all these functions are the inalienable rights of every religious group. Then, he mentioned the fact that one of the two defendants was secretary to Abdul Baha up to two years before the latter's departure from this life. It was here that Justice Townley surprised everyone by showing that he also knew something about Abdul Baha.

Mr. Leavenworth and Mr. Greenwald took but ten minutes each to present their cases; consequently, the claims of both sides were offered in a sketchy fashion. It is to be remembered, however, that the full texts of the series of complaints and of the defense, in printed form, had already been submitted to the Court, to be studied at its leisure.



(By courtesy of Wide World Photos)

HON. ALFRED H. TOWNLEY

Justice of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court
of the State of New York.

Somersaults and other Agilities

A most striking point in the new brief presented to the Appellate Division by the National Spiritual Assembly is the assertion that this body had never attempted to prevent Mrs. Chanler and me from using the word *Bahai*; in fact, the plaintiffs concede that we are entitled to the use of the word. The new brief states:—

It is not the use of the word Baha'i but the manner of use that is the grounds of complaint. Defendants are entitled to make lawful use of the word, but have no right to use it as an instrument of deception. Nor is any question of religious freedom involved. Defendants are not charged with practicing Baha'ism. No question is raised as to what is or is not the true Bahai religion.

The above is a prestidigitatorial somersault; it is a complete reversal of that which was claimed by the plaintiffs in their original and Amended Complaints. A comparison between the documents presented to Justice Valente and the brief prepared for the Appellate Division makes us marvel at the bland manner in which the National Assembly travels from the north pole of error to the south pole of truth and vice versa without the slightest display of embarrassment. Let us place the following clause taken from the latest brief:—

Defendants are entitled to make lawful use of the word (Bahai)

side by side with an extract taken from an earlier brief:—

That the defendants and each of them, their agents, servants, employees, associates and each of them, be

enjoined and restrained, during the pendency of this action, and thereafter perpetually:

From using, or participating directly or indirectly in the use of, the word Baha'i, or any word deceptively similar thereto, as the name or a part of the name of any meeting, lecture, class or social gathering, or as the name or title or a part of the name or title of any book, magazine, or other publication, or as the name or a part of the name under which any bookshop or other business is conducted.

Kleeberg & Greenwald, in their answering argument, point out the somersault that was being made by the National Spiritual Assembly, who in

. . . their brief say with some emphasis that plaintiffs claim no monopoly of the word "Baha'i," and no question of religious freedom is involved. The former of the two questions is novel, constitutes a recession from a position taken in the court below and, we respectfully submit, belied by the language and the purport of the amended complaint. The latter of the two assertions, we take firm and somewhat indignant exception to.

This litigation does involve nothing else than religious freedom and the remarks of Mr. Justice Valente that "plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion" and "defendants have the absolute right to practice Baha'ism" are well justified.

Of what were the members of the National Spiritual Assembly really thinking when they made this sudden reversal; or did they think at all? Could they have imagined that the Justices of the Appellate Division would be taken in by their innocent attitude and decide in their favor with-

out reading the contents of their Amended Complaint, in which the sacrilegious claim of ownership over the word *Bahai* had been made? At any rate, Kleeberg & Greenwald were little impressed by the display of agility that was taking place. With stern gesture, they halted the performers, as it were in mid-air, stating:—

Whatever plaintiffs may say in their brief about religious freedom not being involved here, we respectfully submit that the clear objective of their cause of action is the restraining of defendants from the practice of their faith. It is an attempt to compel defendants to recognize and yield to plaintiffs' authority and organization. And it is an arrogant attempt.

To succeed, plaintiffs must force facts into the molds of legal formulae. If they succeed in this, they succeed in consolidating their powers, in foisting their unwelcome paternity upon defendants, and incidentally their followers who, attending their lectures, etc., and reading their literature, may be assumed to also be Baha'is (the Baha'i membership of The New History Society, whom defendants represent). That they have not succeeded in meeting legal formulae, we will demonstrate. . . . Whatever may have been plaintiffs' contention in the court below, it is clear that at least now, belatedly, they concede that plaintiffs claim no monopoly of the word "Baha'i." Indeed, it is inconceivable that any other position could have been taken by plaintiffs for the name of a religion is clearly in the public domain.

As can be seen in the above passage, our attorneys, more than any others, have divined the sinister motive of the National Spiritual Assembly, screened as it was under much backing and filling. They have unmasked a deep-

laid scheme, the purport of which was none other than to shape their monopolistic demands into *legal formulae*, thus inscribing their unjust pretensions on the statute books, for all time to come. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Kleeberg & Greenwald for their powers of penetration as well as for their gift of expression, for they have brought to light a plot which, had it been successful, would have totally nullified the objects and aims of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha.

In the course of the proceeding, a point was made of lawful use of the word Bahai, the plaintiffs asserting that:—

The fact that the name of a religion is a part of the language and open to public use does not give defendants the right to make deceptive use of it.

Here, Kleeberg & Greenwald answered:—

It is incidentally a complete retreat from the position taken in the complaint and in the court below where they asserted their right to ban absolutely the use of the word "Baha'i" by any one other than themselves or those acting under their authority.

In closing their argument the members of the National Spiritual Assembly cast their last die in the gamble for the retention of some sort of *authority* and *power* over The New History Society. On bended knee, figuratively speaking, they prayed to the Appellate Division to grant them something, no matter what—just a tiny something, in order to save their faces before the Bahai world! They were even willing—wonder of wonders! to concede to us the use of the name Bahai—but with a reservation, if

they could receive some kind of *relief* to which they felt entitled! They ask:—

Although plaintiffs pray for an unconditional injunction as is customary in such cases, the relief to which plaintiffs are entitled is measured by plaintiffs' right to prevent deception. If it is possible for the defendants to use the name Bahai in a way that does not cause deception, they are entitled to do so.

It is here that our attorney draws the sword of righteous indignation and in words that shall echo and re-echo through the corridors of time cries out:—

But are not plaintiffs being too smug and patronizing toward defendants? What greater right have they to say how defendants shall use the word "Bahai" than defendants have to say how plaintiffs shall use the word "Bahai"?

Actually it is not Funny

It was stated by the plaintiffs that the case brought against us was purely commercial; therefore, on this ground, our right to accept contributions toward our work in the Cause was contested. The fact that we never did receive contributions for Bahai purposes and never asked for such; that the tiny sums which were given to us were added to the Caravan Foundation Fund (an account reserved, untouched, for a club-house in the far-flung future) or else were donations toward our competitions and the exhibit at the World's Fair, were not taken into consideration. We took in payments for subscriptions to our magazine *New History* and *The Children's Caravan*, for books,

and again, for war-relief societies. Our Caravan Hall, where admission fees are paid to our dances, is still deeply in the red—all these things were not weighed by our opponents; naturally, they did not know of them in detail. However, the plaintiffs, under oath, charge that:—

Upon information and belief, defendants have solicited and received payments of money as contributions to the Bahai religion or cause at numerous times which are unknown to the plaintiffs, and such payments were solicited by each of the defendants personally.

I should think that the phrase: *at numerous times which are unknown to the plaintiffs*, would bring a smile to the face of a waxen image. If our sins (if sins they be) are known only to ourselves, why accuse us of them in court? The outcome of this charge was the same as that of all the other charges: it fell to the ground because it was totally unsubstantiated. All this is funny, in a sense; and yet actually, it is not funny that those who signed this document should so lend themselves to deception and untruth.

Priority

A most striking assertion made by the National Spiritual Assembly in its brief before the Appellate Division dealt with the subject of priority: Because this body and its predecessors have existed for more than forty consecutive years, administering the affairs of the Bahai community, acting as the custodians of multifarious Bahai properties, incorporating the Bahai Assemblies, publishing books and magazines and holding meetings, lectures, classes, social

gatherings and other activities—therefore, this priority in the field of service entitled the plaintiffs to an exclusive right over the Bahai Cause.

Now I, personally, do not believe in priority. The vineyard of the Lord is extensive; and the Lord wants the ground tilled. There is a parable in the New Testament in which the eleventh hour workers were rewarded even as the first; and some complained: *Saying, these last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. And the Lord answered: Take that thine is, and go thy way. I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.* (St. Matthew, Chapter 20, Verses 12 and 14.)

Naturally, I deny the validity of priority as such, but I will now set forth a few claims of my own in contradistinction to those made by the National Spiritual Assembly on the basis of their forty years of executive work:—

I am by birth a Persian, of the same nationality as the Bab, Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha; of the same nationality as the Babi and Bahai heroes, saints and martyrs.

My grandmother, as a girl, saw the Bab in her native city of Esphahan, and talked with him. She became one of his followers, and later brought up her family in the Faith.

Our house in Esphahan became the center and meeting-ground for all the Bahais in those parts. Here, my noble uncle Haji Sayyed Zeinel-Abedin, poet, philosopher and teacher, presided over a group of devoted enthusiasts, which held together in the midst of danger.

Finally our house was attacked and pillaged by the mob, led by the Mohammedan clergy. As a child, I suffered the



Left to right:—Haji Niaz, one of the foremost disciples of Baha-O-Llah; Mirza Ahmad Sohrab and Ahmad Yazdi, son-in-law of Abdul Baha.

This picture was taken in Port Said while the author was working as salesman in the department store of Ahmad Yazdi,

indignities of the bastinado, and had the honor of shedding a few drops of blood for the Cause.

For eight years, as secretary and interpreter, I served Abdul Baha in the East and in the West. I also served his followers. Long before many of the present members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada and their predecessors had even heard the name of the Cause, I was working to the best of my ability along the lines laid out for me by my Master.

These are my credentials, and I believe that Abdul Baha would endorse them; yet after all, personal credentials or group credentials are of small account when one considers the vast significance of the Cause.

Long before the Spiritual Assembly of New York City was turned into a religious corporation in 1932; before the word Bahai was trademarked in 1928; before the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada wrote its Constitution and By-laws in 1926; before the Tablets of the Divine Plan were unveiled in New York in 1918; before the foundations of the Temple were laid in Wilmette, Ill., in 1912; before the Bahai Authorities became trustees of properties and valuable holdings; before the Bahai Cause was established as a political organization, weighted down by parliamentary rules and procedures; before the Bahai Groups had become conscious of their existence and inaugurated their annual Conventions in 1907-08; before the present Bahai Spiritual Assemblies in various cities of the United States were evolved out of small working Committees during the period, 1894-1906; before the Bahai Movement was intro-

duced to America at the World Congress of Religions, in 1893; even before the emergence of Bahai Communities in Iran, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and other countries of Asia, from 1844 on—long before all these happenings, the Bahai Cause lived and vibrated in the hearts of the Bab Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha.

Indeed, prior to the appearance in Iran of this mighty trio, the ideals of the Bahai Cause had shone forth from the minds of Mohammad, Jesus, Moses, Confucius, Laotze, Buddha, Zoroaster and the Rishis of India; even as they had shimmered and twinkled in the consciousness of saints, seers, poets and philosophers, back through the ages.

We follow the clue, penetrating yet further into the abyss of time: Long before these Prophets, Avatars and Manifestations had been incarnated on this globe, the Bahai Cause, as a Cosmic Energy, was moving and flashing in illimitable space.

The Bahai Cause was *publici juris* long before the foundations of the world were laid; long before the creation of the heavens and the earth; even at the time when God said: *Let there be light, and there was light, and God saw the light (Baha) and the light was good!*

And now in this year of 1941 the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada have claimed a priority of *more than forty years'* standing on the Light of the World—the Cause of Baha-O-Llah!

The Decision

In concluding its brief before the Appellate Division,

the National Spiritual Assembly demanded that:—

The judgment and order appealed from should be reversed and the motion for judgment on the pleadings denied with costs to the appellants.

Kleeberg and Greenwald closed with:—

Lastly, it is respectfully submitted that the order and judgment appealed from should be affirmed with costs.

The case was argued before the Justices of the Appellate Division on June 5th. On June 19th, the New York Law Journal carried the brief but significant notice:—

McDaniel et al., v. Sohrab, &c., res—Judgment and order unanimously affirmed, with costs. No opinion. Order filed.

In journalistic language, according to the New York World-Telegram of the same day, this meant that:—

BAHA'I IS PLACED IN PUBLIC DOMAIN

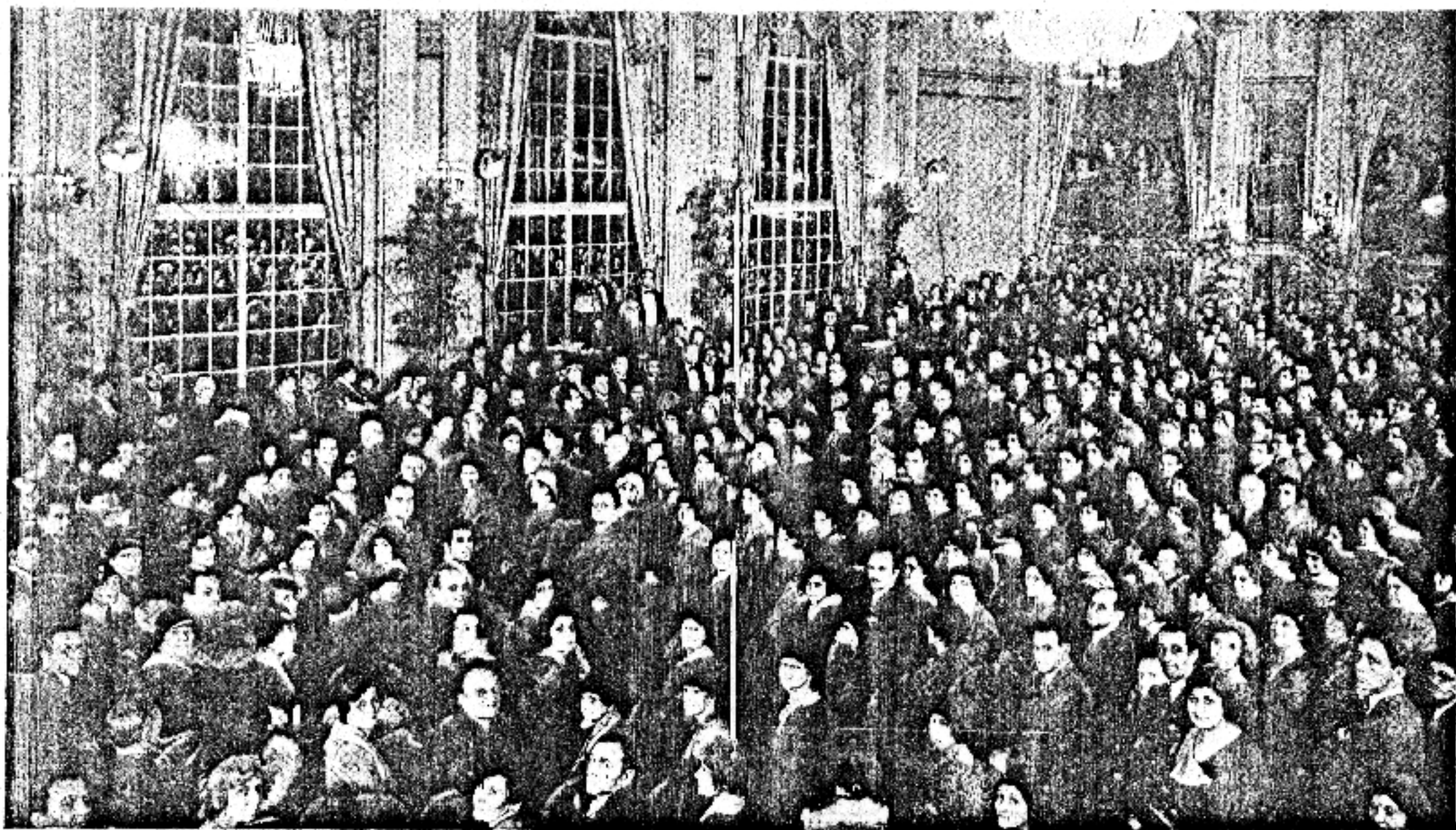
The Appellate Division today unanimously upheld the ruling of a Supreme Court Justice that no one could monopolize the name of a religion.

The Herald-Tribune on June 20th head-lined its article with:—

APPELLATE COURT REJECTS BAHAI PETITION ON NAME

Affirms Refusal to Restrict Use of Sect's Designation.

The Appellate Division affirmed unanimously yesterday a previous Supreme Court ruling that no one has a



A meeting in honor of Rabindranath Tagore, held
Carlton Hotel, New York, under the

on December 7, 1930, in the ballroom of the Ritz-
auspices of The New History Society.

Closing words in the address of Rabindranath Tagore, given on December 7, 1930, before The New History Society:—

In the human world the great truth of unity was also at first realized as a power residing in the community, comprehending and transcending all individuals. This mysterious power according to the primitive people was magical, and they symbolized it in their totems and tried to invoke and propitiate it with their magical rites.

This was the first great discovery of man—the mysterious spirit of unity which was beyond the bounds of quantity that can be measured, and this is religion. But, as I have already suggested, religion in its first appearance had the aspect of power, which, though it gave unity to the tribe itself, created a strong division outside of it; for power is exclusive, and the tribe claimed its God as the source of all powers for its own benefit.

So long as God remained as thus divided, religion became cruel and terribly unjust, creating more mischief in this world than any passion that is criminal. Even today, when God is no longer believed to be specially belonging to the tribe, he is fenced in by secretarianism which gives rise to a fierce spirit of dissension and egotistical boastfulness. Truth, when tortured and mutilated, becomes more heinous than untruth; and therefore, when unbelievers bring proofs of the harm that religion has done to man we cannot but remain silent.

It is the mission of all great Prophets to see that religion, which is to give us spiritual emancipation, should not itself be made a fetter to immure our souls in a dungeon of dogma and formalism, giving rise to sectarian vanity that obscures our vision of the spiritual unity of man.

The first Prophet whom we know in the history of man was Zoroaster, who preached God as the universal truth of unity, the eternal source of goodness and love; and it is significant that on the same soil of Persia, which gave birth to him, arose the other great Prophet of the modern age, Baha-O-Llah, who also preached God as profoundly one, in all races, tribes and sects, the true worship of whom consists in service that has reason for its guide, and goodness and love for its inner motive principle.

We are here tonight to offer our homage to Baha-O-Llah. He is the latest Prophet to come out of Asia. His life is certainly a glorious record of unflinching human search after truth; and his message is of great importance for the progress of civilization. It makes me happy indeed to see that The New History Society is doing such splendid work for the propagation of the message of Baha-O-Llah.

right to monopolize the name of a religion and that followers of a religion cannot be restrained from practicing their beliefs because of the objections of organized practitioners of the same faith.

Thus was the opinion of Justice Valente, of the Supreme Court, New York County, unanimously affirmed by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court; and, to repeat the well-chosen words of the World-Telegram:

BAHA'I IS PLACED IN PUBLIC DOMAIN.

SUPPLEMENT

Pen Pictures

As this book goes to press, two publications are brought to my attention: the one a pamphlet dated April, 1941, put out by The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, entitled *The Bahai Case against Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab*, and the other, *Bahai News* of October, 1941.

This literature is well suited for analysis and would have been examined in detail had time allowed; however, I believe that in some cases comments are superfluous. Therefore, I content myself with taking a short extract from each publication and placing these side by side to serve as portraits of the two personalities who acted as defendants in the legal proceedings initiated by the Bahai Administration in 1939 and brought to a conclusion in 1941.

*Pen Picture of Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler,
drawn by The National Spiritual Assembly of
the Bahais of the United States and Canada*

After quoting from the reply sent by Mrs. Chanler's attorneys to the attorneys of The National Spiritual Assembly at the very outset of the legal proceedings, the writer of the pamphlet continues:

Read as an ordinary letter from a lawyer engaged to handle a legal problem for a client, this communication would indicate that this attorney, after making a serious study of the Baha'i literature and teachings, had advised his client that by his interpretation she is within her rights to use the word "Baha'i" in connection with any book or pamphlet which she, claiming to be herself a Baha'i, thinks is helpful to her conception of the Baha'i Cause. That is, technical questions being involved, Mrs. Chanler consults an attorney and accepts his opinion and acts upon it. But when we bear in mind the simple fact that all questions of Baha'i right or wrong, as to knowledge, faith or action, can be determined only by reference to the Baha'i teachings themselves or to the appointed Interpreters of these teachings, this recourse to an agency outside the Faith for a vindication of an attitude taken in defiance of the Baha'i teachings and Baha'i administrative bodies, as well as in denial of both Abdul'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi, successively the sole Interpreter of the Baha'i literature, means that Mrs. Chanler, needing a weapon for attacking and wounding the sacred unity of the Faith of Baha'u'llah, seeks her sharpened blade in the realm of a legality developed for dealing with questions of property and neither intended nor adapted to

realize and apply the spiritual truths of a revealed religion. As the persecutors of the Babis and the early Buha'is in Iran seized torch, sword, rope and gun to inflict injury upon the innocent bodies of their victims, so now we have a similar motive and instinct expressed, however, in conformity with very different social conditions.

*Pen Picture of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, drawn by
Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Bahai Cause.*

And now more particularly concerning the prime mover of this latest agitation, which, whatever its immediate consequences, will sooner or later come to be regarded as merely one more of those ugly and abortive attempts designed to undermine the foundation, and obscure the purpose, of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Baha'u'llah. Obscure in his origin, ambitious of leadership, untaught by the lesson of such as have erred before him, odious in the hopes he nurses, contemptible in the methods he pursues, shameless in his deliberate distortions of truth he has long since ceased to believe in, ludicrous in his present isolation and helplessness, wounded and exasperated by the downfall which his own folly has precipitated, he, the latest protagonist of a spurious cause, cannot but in the end be subjected, as remorselessly as his infamous predecessors, to the fate which they invariably have suffered.

4aifa 19.1.29

Dear Mrs Chanler:

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your very kind letter dated Dec. 24th 1928. He was very glad to hear that Mr. Sodrah - a very good service in New York in the way of public speaking. He surely knows the Cause very well, being for such a long time with the Master, translating his letters & talks to those who have been with the Beloved during his life. Time should feel the responsibility they bear & do their utmost in shouldering it. Especially those who were, we may say, nurtured by him. Shoghi Effendi hopes that all this work that he is doing will more & more bring him into an active participation with his friends for his services in the way of

teaching a great

The news that we every now
& then obtain concerning the condition in
New York is surely most encouraging
Thogbi Jffendi hopes that the unity will
daily increase & unite the friends com-
pletely. Unity at any expense should be
their motto. And the Master has, I believe
promised us that when true unity will
be obtained in New York it will spread
all over the country.

Thogbi Jffendi very much appre-
ciates the wonderful services you have
rendered the Cause & is always waiting
to see what the next will be. Your trans-
lation of the Epistle to the Son of the Storm
was only an example, & we hope only
a beginning.

Will you please extend to all

the friends Shoghi Effendi's loving greetings
especially to your daughter & Ahmed.

Please also add to that my kindest re-
gards. I hope Elsie is doing well with
her Arabic this year. Does she find it
very difficult? Once she masters her
Persian & she becomes capable of reading
the writings of Baha'u'llah, she will
 ~~reap~~ fully the fruit of her troubles.

Yours ever sincerely

V Bahi Effendi

My dear & trusted co-workers.

I wish to add a few words in person
as a token of my kin appreciation of your
past service & of my fervent hope & prayer for
the future extension of your manifold activities.
I welcome Mirza Ahmad's collaboration with
you, in such an open & direct manner, for
a wider diffusion & a better understanding of
the purpose & the principles of the Baha'i Faith.

I will pray for the success of your efforts
from the depths of my heart. Your
true & grateful brother,
Shoghi Effendi

PART FOUR

RELIGION IN STRAITJACKET

9. Bahai Creed makes its Bow
10. Beginnings of the Bahai Organization
11. Development of the Bahai Organization
12. Establishment of Bahai Administration
13. Administrative Frills and Furbelows

*Woe unto him that saith to the wood:
Awake! To the dumb stone: Arise! It
shall teach! Behold! it is laid over
with gold and silver, and there is no
breath at all in the midst of it.*

—Habakkuk, Chapter 2, Verse 19

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE

FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 1941

Appellate Court Rejects Baha'i Petition on Name

Affirms Refusal to Restrict Use of Sect's Designation

The Appellate Division affirmed unanimously yesterday a previous Supreme Court ruling that no one has a right to monopolize the name of a religion and that followers of a religion can not be restrained from practicing their beliefs because of the objections of organized practitioners of the same faith.

The Assembly and seven trustees of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada and the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of New York brought action originally in Supreme Court in an effort to enjoin Mirza Ahmad Schrab, Persian poet and director of the New History Society, and Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, wife of the former Lieutenant Governor of New York, founder of the society, from using the word Baha'i in connection with the sales of books, and in meetings or classes. Mr. Schrab and Mrs. Chanler also operate a book store under the name of Bahai Book Shop, at 828 Lexington Avenue.

Mrs. Chanler formed the New History Society after she broke with the so-called authorized Baha'is twelve years ago. The Baha'i religion was founded nearly a century ago by Baha-O-Llah, a Persian prophet, with international peace as its principal aim. Justice Louis A. Valente dismissed the original complaint in Supreme Court.

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 1941

Baha'i Is Placed In Public Domain

The Appellate Division today unanimously upheld the ruling of a Supreme Court justice that no one could monopolize the name of a religion.

Without handing down an opinion, the division indorsed the action of Justice Louis A. Valente in dismissing a complaint made by the National Spiritual Assembly and others against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab and Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, society woman, who are doing business under the name of the Baha'i Book Shop, 828 Lexington Ave.

The assembly and seven trustees of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada, and the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of this city sought to restrain the defendants from using the word Baha'i in their business. Justice Valente held that the plaintiffs "have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion."

New York Law Journal

THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 1941

19529. *McDaniel et al., ap, v. Sohrab, &c.*, res—Judgment and order unanimously affirmed, with costs. No opinion. Order filed.

CHAPTER IX

BAHAI CREED MAKES ITS BOW

Creed Builders

None of the Founders of the Great Religions were creed-builders. They taught principles of spiritual life, morality and ethics. Their whole being was suffused with the rays of the Sun of Reality and they summoned all men to band together in the service of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Creeds and articles of faith were formulated by succeeding generations of theologians, men who had lost the vision of the Prophets and were wandering in the waste desert of metaphysical speculations. This is what happened to Christianity. It is happening to the Bahai Cause today—with only a difference of terminology: The Bahai theologians call themselves Administrators.

During a brief period of three years, as he travelled from town to town, from village to village, Christ taught certain spiritual maxims and simple rules for the conduct of life. He never expected that those maxims and rules would become the foundation of mighty, theological institutions nor foresaw that, for ages, the minds of his followers would be occupied with the creation, and obsessed with the enforcement, of dogmas, articles of faith and creeds. Thus, within the span of two centuries, a catechist at Rome produced the famous outline of the *Apostles' Creed*, which undoubtedly lies at the root of all the similar

creeds which flowered into a thousand branches at various church Councils and Synods. Here is the form of this *Old Roman Creed*—the fountain-head of all Christian theology, the starting-point of all strifes, divisions and sects, and the origin of all orthodoxies, heresies and ecclesiastical anathemas.

The Old Roman Creed

- I. 1. I believe in God, Father Almighty;
- II. 2. and in Christ, His only son, our Lord,
3. who was born of the Holy Ghost and the
Virgin Mary.
4. Crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried.
5. The third day He rose from the dead.
6. He ascended into heaven.
7. Sitteth at the right hand of the Father,
8. thence He shall come to judge living and dead.
- III. 9. And in the Holy Ghost
10. (the) Holy Church
11. (the) remission of sins
12. (the) resurrection of the flesh.

—“Creeds and Articles,” *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. III and IV, Page 237.

Precautions Taken by the Founders

It was too much to expect that the Bahai Cause would be immune to this process of stratification, but both Baha-O'llah and Abdul Baha did their very best to avoid such a

calamity. Through continuous explanations, they made vivid this danger in order that the Bahai Movement might be fore-armed and protected from the errors of the previous religions. They were most emphatic on the points that this Cause is universal and all-inclusive; that it does not lend itself to the creation of an hierarchial order; that its fundamental basis is unity and not ecclesiastical distinctions; that it is essentially a spiritual fellowship and not a sectarian corporation with exclusive privileges; that its charter is freedom from worldly and material constitutions, and that its greatness depends upon non-crystallization and open portals.

The Breath of God is diffused throughout the world, asserted Baha-O-Llah. (*Bahai Scriptures*, page 98.)

The Fragrances of the Merciful have spread their sweet odors over all beings. (*Bahai Scriptures*, page 106.)

Good Character and Universal Service

It behooveth the people of El-Abha to assist the Lord through their utterance, and to preach unto the world through their deeds and good morals. The effect of deeds is greater than the effect of words (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 41).

In this Day the hosts which assist the Cause are (good) deeds and (good) morals (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 26).

O people of Baha! Adorn your temples with the mantle of trustworthiness and integrity; then assist your Lord with the hosts of (good) deeds and morals (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 119).

O people of God! Be not occupied with yourselves.

Be intent on the betterment of the world and the training of nations. The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and excellent deeds and well-approved and agreeable conduct. The helper of the Cause is Deeds and its assistant is Good Character (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 25).

The above shows the emphasis that Baha-O-Llah placed on conduct, and on activity in the path of God. Morality and not creeds; deeds and not words; service and not articles of faith.

Following in the footsteps of his Father, Abdul Baha accentuated the importance of appreciation for all men, and of love and service without compromise and without distinctions. Pointing to the disciples of the Christ as the supreme archetypes of free and untrammelled teachers, he advised the Bahais:

With hearts set aglow by the fire of the love of God and souls refreshed by the food of the Heavenly Spirit, you must go forth as the disciples, nineteen hundred years ago, quickening the hearts of men by the call of Glad-Tidings; the light of God in your faces; severed from everything save God (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Vol. 1, page 6).

Therefore, we must make no distinctions between individual members of the human family. We must not consider any soul as barren or deprived (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Vol. 1, page 12).

What is a Bahai? To be a Bahai simply means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood (*Baha-O-Llah and the New Era*, page 90).

Declaration of Trust and By-Laws

It took almost two centuries for Christian theologians to formulate *The Old Roman Creed* and thus insert in the pure Faith a yard-stick and a bludgeon. In this instance, however, it took only a few years for *Bahai theologians*, under the more modern title of *Bahai Administrators*, to set up *The Bahai Creed* which, reducing the Cause from spirit to matter, has already become more authoritative and binding than *all* the teachings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha.

On Monday, November 28, 1921, at 1:30 A. M., in Haifa, Palestine, Abdul Baha ascended to the life beyond.

On May 27, 1927, Shoghi Effendi, in a letter to the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, acknowledges the receipt of the Declaration of Trust, and in another letter dated October 18th, of the same year, he states: *I have read and re-read most carefully the final draft of the By-Laws.* (*Bahai Administration*, pages 124 and 132).

Thus, within the narrow limits of less than six years after the departure of Abdul Baha, a few American Bahais wrote the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws, submitted them to Shoghi Effendi and received his sanction. In this manner, the young Cause, so lately deprived of its great Protector, was, without loss of time, shoved into an institution—a mere waif, the latest one to enter the dark edifice of Religious Organization. No starving Oliver Twist, symbol of maltreated childhood, holding out his plate and asking for *more*, is pitiful to a greater extent than is the pallid Bahai Cause as it pants for breath under the cold stare of its inflexible trustees.



Meeting held in New York, in honor of Mirabehn (Madeleine Slade) spiritual daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, on October 20, 1934, under the auspices of The New History Society.

Platform group, from left to right:—Dr. H. T. Mazumdar,

Slade) spiritual daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, on October of The New History Society.

Mirabehn, M. A. Sohrab and Hon. Lewis Stuyvesant Chandler,

When this instrument of tyranny was mailed to Shoghi Effendi he, unfortunately, did not see it as a terrible weapon wherewith to stultify the Cause that had been confided to his keeping, and so he gave it his blessing and placed on it his seal of approval.

Here are his exact words in a letter dated May 27, 1927:

The Declaration of Trust, the provisions of which you have so splendidly conceived and formulated with such assiduous care, marks yet another milestone on the road of progress along which you are patiently and determinedly advancing. Clear and concise in its wording, sound in principle and complete in its affirmations of the fundamentals of Bahai administration, it stands in its final form as a worthy and faithful exposition of the constitutional basis of Bahai communities in every land, foreshadowing the final emergence of the world Bahai Commonwealth of the future. This document, when correlated and combined with the set of by-laws which I trust are soon forthcoming, will serve as a pattern to every National Bahai Assembly, be it in the East or in the West. . . .

I eagerly await the receipt of the complete set of the contemplated by-laws, the purpose of which should be to supplement the provisions, clarify the purpose; and explain more fully the working of the principle underlying the above-mentioned Declaration (*Bahai Administration*, pages 124-125)..

Having received the By-Laws, Shoghi Effendi writes again in his letter dated October 18, 1927:

. . . I have read and re-read most carefully the final

draft of the By-Laws drawn up by that highly-talented, much-loved servant of Baha-U-Llah, Mountfort Mills, and feel I have nothing substantial to add to this first and very creditable attempt at codifying the principles of general Bahai administration. I heartily and unhesitatingly commend it to the earnest perusal of, and its loyal adoption by, every National Bahai Spiritual Assembly, whether constituted in the East or in the West. I would ask you particularly to send copies of the text of this document of fundamental importance accompanied by copies of the Declaration of Trust and the text of the Indenture of Trust, to every existing National Spiritual Assembly, with my insistent request to study the provisions, comprehend its implications, and endeavor to incorporate it, to the extent that their own circumstances permit, within the framework of their own national activities. . . .

I would specifically remind you that, in the text of the said By-Laws, which to the outside world represents the expression of the aspirations, the motives and objects that animate the collective responsibilities of Bahai Fellowship, due emphasis should not be placed only on the concentrated authority, the rights, the privileges and prerogatives enjoyed by the elected national representatives of the believers, but that special stress be laid also on their responsibilities as willing ministers, faithful stewards and loyal trustees to those who have chosen them. (*Bahai Administration*, pages 132-133.)

The Bahai Creed according to the National Spiritual Assembly

And now let us examine the Bahai Creed which is contained in the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of the

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada:

The Bahais of the United States and Canada . . . shall consist of all persons . . . who are *recognized* by the National Spiritual Assembly as having fulfilled the requirements of voting membership in a local Bahai Community. To become a voting member of a Bahai Community a person shall

- a. **Be a resident of the locality defined by the area of jurisdiction of the local Spiritual Assembly, as provided by Article VII, Section 12, of this instrument.**
- b. **Have attained the age of 21 years.**
- c. **Have established to the satisfaction of the local Spiritual Assembly, subject to the approval of the National Assembly, that he possesses the qualifications of Bahai faith and practice required under the following standard:**

Full recognition of the station of the Forerunner (the Bab), the Author (Baha-U-Llah) and Abdul Baha the True Exemplar of the Bahai Cause; unreserved acceptance of, and submission to, whatever has been revealed by their pen;

Loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of Abdul Baha's sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of present-day Bahai administration throughout the world. (*Bahai Administration*, page 146.)

The above articles of Bahai Creed and Confession demonstrate that, notwithstanding the warnings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, their Cause is today as handi-

capped and circumscribed as are any of the institutionalized religions; at the same time it must be realized that, while the organizations of the former religions are laden with the sanctity and tradition of antiquity, the organization of the Bahai Cause has none of those hallmarks and is only a pseudo-imitation of those hoary and superannuated institutions.

Early Days in Bahai Administration

In order to corroborate my claim that, from the very start, overlordship was apparent in the Spiritual Assemblies, I will give extracts from a letter, (which is one among countless others on the same subject), written to me in 1923 by one who today is very close to the top of the administrative ladder. Although, in these articles, I am documenting the quotations used, in this case, for obvious reasons, I refrain from including the name of my correspondent. The letter follows:—

The people in the West live in a different world from their brothers and sisters in the East. This is due to the natural instinct of the overshadowing group soul. We must try to eliminate cliques and be more universally detached. As it is, we mostly travel in herds like sheep. How I wish I might have a heart to heart talk with you about these Spiritual Assemblies. There is a frightful lot of organization in this Cause which is supposed to be free from all such things, and democratic. I believe the trouble between the American believers is due to the manner in which the Spiritual Assemblies function. They carry things with a very high hand and mostly, instead of representing the group in each Assembly they sit and make laws without any

consideration of the souls whom they are supposed to represent. . . . This is the day of deeds not words; but it seems very difficult to convince some of the dead leaves. . . . They have gotten used to blowing around the tree of life, and they do nothing but blow. . . . Everything was in awful shape after Mrs. — got through with the first meeting. I just sat down and refused to work under the arrangements as laid down by the Assembly of Nine. . . . Do write me about this matter and don't start in telling me about *Obedience* and the absolute *Control* of said Assemblies. We are all sick of being reminded, every time we have a suggestion to make which did not originate in the minds of the Spiritual Nine, that we must leave that to the decision of the Spiritual Assembly.

Bahai Obscurantism

These articles of the Bahai Creed are the harbingers to an era of obscurantism in this glorious movement. They are compounded of bigotry in all its gruesome forms and pave the way to moral darkness. 'This desire for concentrated authority is in direct opposition to inquiry and enlightenment. It is a mediaevalizing tendency. In the Middle Ages we had dry scholasticism; in the Bahai Cause we have arid administrative legalism. The Bahai Administration is the progeny of religious intolerance, obviously injurious to spiritual freedom and ethical emancipation. The Articles of Creed as quoted are implements of torture in the hands of a Bahai Administrative Obscurantist. According to his standard, the Bahai Cause is to be run, not by the fresh springs of inspiration, but by the elixir distilled from the withered flowers of administrative theology.

The Bahai Obscurantists have deified the Bab, Baha-Ollah and Abdul Baha, but they have crucified their Cause.

The impulse to Bahai Obscurantism, or to any other form of obscurantism, arises from a deeply rooted, if not an inherent, tendency in human nature to distrust free inquiry. This tendency becomes aggravated when it operates in the sphere of religion. An uneasy suspicion of knowledge and its results; a dislike for a liberal and inquisitive mind, and a feeling of fear in regard to independent investigation of truth as for something not wholly good for any one—these sentiments have contributed to the evolution of Bahai Obscurantism, which is the herald of professional or class exclusiveness in the Cause as exemplified by the National Spiritual Assembly, and the local assemblies. Thus considered, it is the weakness of a select body which, I hope, and believe, stands in no relation to the common conscience of the rank and file of the Bahai communities.

One observes the distortion of truth on the part of the Bahai Obscurantists by their unwholesome preference for that which is secondary and derivative, as contrasted with that which is primary and fundamental; by their leanings toward the accretions and embellishments of administration, as contrasted with the sources of inspiration; toward the peculiarities of theories and creeds, as contrasted with the Bahai obligations which are universally binding.

The dislike of the sophisticated, intellectualized Americans, like some of the Bahai administrators, for those common, simple, universal realities of the Bahai Cause, which are the very soul of this movement, has taken practical effect in the substitution of mechanistic, legalistic,

administrative and organized authority for the seeing eye and illumined heart—and the result has been a gradual diminishing of reliance on the spiritual teachings of the Cause and a total absence of enthusiasm on its behalf.

However, it is not an idle word to say that, while Obscurantism has entrenched itself in the Bahai Cause, a strong reaction has, at the same time, been provoked against this entrenchment. This is not a negative reaction, not merely a sense of dissatisfaction, a state of unrest, but a positive anxiety and sense of responsibility, coupled with wistful remembrance of better days.

'The Clay-pieces of the World

Therefore, in the spirit of those to whom the teachings of Abdul Baha are ever alive, I will recall the admonitions of the Master regarding *verbal confessions, acknowledgments, literal faith and external relations*.

In this cycle of Baha-O-Llah, verbal confessions and acknowledgments, literal faith and certainty and external relations are of no avail. Nay, rather, the beloved of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful must manifest such *attributes and ethical conduct* as to embody and personify the teachings of Baha-O-Llah. They must promulgate the law of the Kingdom with deeds and not words.

Thus may they become the quintessence of being, the signs of the Kingdom of God and the standards of the Supreme Concurrence.

—Bahai News, later renamed *Star of the West*,
Vol. 1, No. 4, May 17, 1910, pages 8-9.

Further, in regard to appellation and encumbrances, Baha-O-Llah says:

This Cause has crossed the gulf of words, and pitched its tent on the shores of the Sea of Detachment.

—*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 58.

And again, from Baha-O-Llah, the call to serenity and the reminder that the purely material is not formidable:

Oh men! Why fear, and whom do you dread? These clay-pieces of the world shall be disintegrated by a slight moisture.

—*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 23.

CHAPTER X

BEGINNINGS OF THE BAHAI ORGANIZATION

The Ancient Path

The Bahai Cause is a Renaissance of the spirit and the appearance of a vital energy, pouring its divine potencies into the affairs of men. It is:

that which was revealed from the source of Majesty, through the tongue of power and strength, through the prophets of the past. We have taken of its essences and clothed it with the garment of brevity (Baha-O-Llah—*Hidden Words* page 1).

The Bahai Cause is a summons to unity on the material and spiritual planes:—

By sending you the prophets and in revealing the books, it was intended that men should attain unto the knowledge of God and become united and agreed (Baha-O-Llah—*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 10).

Abdul Baha was asked: *What is the essence of the Bahai message?* He answered:

The Bahai message is a call to religious unity and not an invitation to a new religion, not a new path to immortality. God forbid! It is the ancient path cleared of the debris of imaginations and superstitions of men, of the debris of strife and misunderstanding, and is

again made a clear path to the sincere seeker, that he may enter therein in assurance and find that the word of God is one word, though the speakers were many. (From a Booklet No. 9, published under the supervision of the American National Spiritual Assembly).

When a *seeker* wrote to him, asking practically the same question, he replied:

The Cause of Baha-U-Llah is the same as the Cause of Christ. It is the same temple and the same foundation. Both of these are spiritual springtimes, and seasons of the soul-refreshing awakening and the cause of the renovation of the life of mankind. The spring of this year is the same as the spring of last year. The origins and ends are the same. The sun of today is the sun of yesterday. In the coming of Christ, the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Baha-U-Llah have the same basic principles, but are according to the stage of the maturity of the world and the requirements of this illumined age. (*Tablets of Abdul Baha*, Vol. III, page 535.)

Concerning the work that the Bahais are commanded to do, Abdul Baha said:—

We are commanded to quicken the souls, to train the characters, to illumine the realm of man, to guide all the inhabitants of the earth, to create concord and unity among all men and to lead the world of humanity to the fountain of the everlasting Glory. The reformation of one Empire is not our aim; nay rather we invoke God that all the regions of the world be reformed and cultivated, the republics of men become the manifestors

of the bounty of the most glorious Lord, the East and the West be brought nearer together . . . in brief, all the nations and peoples of the world become as one soul and one spirit, in order that strife and warfare be entirely removed and rancor and hostility disappear, so that all become as the waves of one ocean, the drops of one sea, the flowers of one rose-garden, the trees of one orchard, the grains of one harvest and the plants of one meadow. (*Tablets of Abdul Baha*, Vol. III, page 490.)

Thus, it is evident that the Bahai Cause is a system of spiritual ethics and divine morality made imminent and compelling by the mighty personalities of Baha-O-Allah and Abdul Baha. This practical aspect of the movement becomes apparent as we read these words:—

To be no cause of grief to any one.

To be kind to all people and to love them with a pure spirit.

To look always at the good and not at the bad. If a man has ten good qualities and one bad one, look at the ten and forget the one. And if a man has ten bad qualities and one good one, to look at the one and forget the ten.

To be as one soul in many bodies; for the more we love each other, the nearer we shall be to God.

—Words of Abdul Baha from a booklet *No. 9*, published under the supervision of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

No Organization for the Bahai Cause

The Bahai Cause is not in opposition to any religion, nor is it a movement to organize the spiritual susceptibilities of

men. It offers us the Scriptures of the World's Faiths but, at the same time, it reminds us that the religions that have grown around these Holy Words must be purified of the man-made paraphernalia which cloak and obscure them. If we throw away the shell—organization—at the very core we shall find the kernel—Love—in all its splendor and simplicity—and that Love will make us free!

Throughout his life, Abdul Baha was most emphatic on this subject: No organization, no ecclesiasticism and theology, no limitations and restrictions in the Bahai Cause. On this tree, all the birds are invited to build their nests and raise their broods. Toward this heaven, they all can soar and flood the earth with their golden songs. In order to engrave the vital principle of non-organization upon the minds of the Bahais, East and West, North and South, Abdul Baha often spoke on this subject, with power and authority:—

The Bahai Movement is not an organization. You cannot organize the Bahai Movement. The Bahai Movement is the spirit of the age. It is the essence of all the highest ideals of this century. The Bahai Cause is an inclusive movement. The teachings of all religions and societies are found here. Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians, Theosophists, Freemasons, Spiritualists, etc., find their highest aims in this Cause. Socialists and philosophers find their theories fully developed in this movement.

—From a booklet *No. 9.*

A Desire to Organize

The above clear and emphatic words of Abdul Baha were used in the course of public addresses as one of the

most characteristic teachings of the Cause. They were quoted over and over again in numerous articles and sundry publications. Abdul Baha had sounded the clarion-call: No Organization in the Bahai Cause; and the echo of this order reverberated through the corridors of the minds and spirits, for a time—and then it died away.

Let us then acknowledge the fact that the very tissue of the Occidental nature is interpenetrated with the belief that organization is the basis of every successful undertaking, whether material or spiritual. Consequently, quite a large number of the early American Bahais found it difficult to reconcile themselves to Abdul Baha's views on the matter; yet, the magnetic personality of the Master held them in a trance, his utterances overawed them and they repeated his teachings, trying to convince themselves that they believed in them. All the while, however, doubts and objections were rising in their hearts: How, and by what mysterious methods could the Bahai Cause establish itself in the Western world without the prop of organization? Not comprehending the A.B.C. of a free spiritual movement, they did not have sufficient confidence to sincerely try out the plan in order to see whether or not it would work.

First Organized Unit

The impulse on the American continent to organize the Bahai Cause manifested itself as far back as 1900-03, when reports reached this country of the first *Mashreq-Ul-Azkar* (Bahai Temple of Worship) erected in Ishkabad, Russia. At this time, the members of a *Spiritual Committee* in Chicago requested Abdul Baha to grant them per-

mission to construct the second *Mashreq-Ul-Azkar* in the United States.

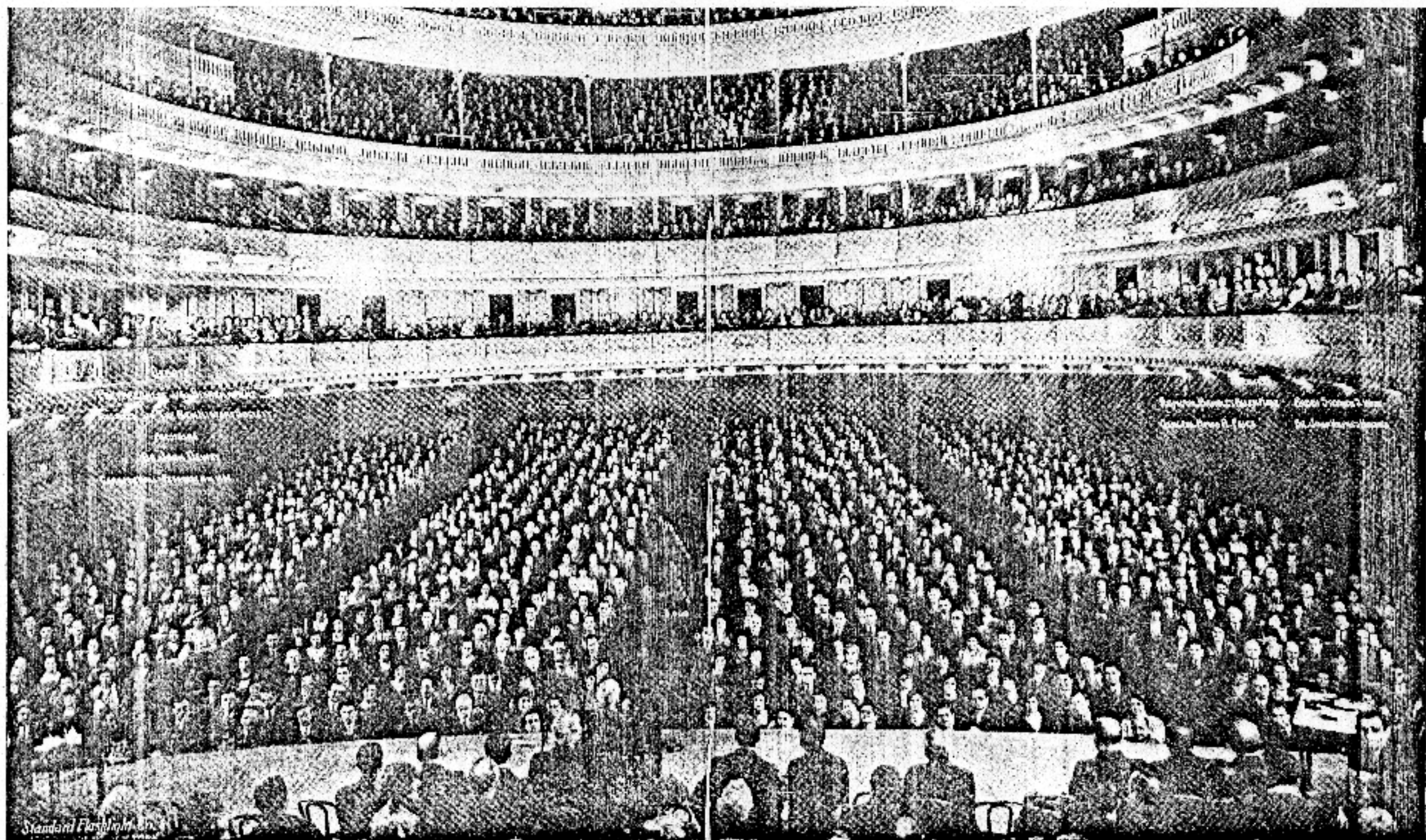
Baha-O-Llah in the Book of Aqdas had left this instruction:—

O concourse of creation! O people of God! Construct homes or houses in the most beautiful fashion possible, in every city, in every land, in the name of the Lord of religions. Adorn them with that which becometh them, not with pictures or paintings. Then commemorate thy Lord, the Merciful, the Clement, in spirit and fragrance. Verily, by His mention, by this commemoration, the breasts shall be dilated, the eyes illumined, the hearts gladdened; and thus shall you pray to the orient of praises, in the Mashreq-Ul-Azkar.

Here then was a problem. How could an unorganized spiritual group build a Temple? This was quite a legitimate question, possibly a difficult one to answer; yet, it would have been wise to find out how, and by what methods the Temple at Ishkabad had been built. Possibly the right solution lay there. At any rate, on November 26, 1907, the first Convention was called; it was attended by nine delegates, and they assembled the rudiments of the machinery to be used, had the news broadcast throughout the country and arranged for the reception of contributions from various Bahai groups and individuals.

The second Convention which met on March 22nd and 23rd, 1909, was attended by 36 delegates, and a more thorough and elaborate business foundation was laid. It resulted in the appearance of

The Bahai Temple Unity, as an organization, with



The Audience at a Debate held in February, 1932, at Carnegie Hall,
a view of the platform,

New York, under the auspices of The New History Society. For
see pages 296-7.

See page 280

full power and authority to provide ways and means for the erection of the Mashreq-Ul-Azkar. A constitution was presented and adopted, and the first executive board of Bahai Temple Unity composed of nine members was elected and authorized by the Convention to close and complete the purchase of the land, recommended by the first Convention. (Read *Brief History of the Mashreq-Ul-Azkar in America* by Mrs. Corinne True, *Star of the West*, Vol. VI, June 24, 1916, No. 6, page 52.)

The *Constitution* adopted at the second Convention, under the name of *The Bahai Temple Unity*, is a very simple document. It consists of a short preamble and ten brief articles, and it has *no* By-laws. It is democratic in that: *the powers of this Unity shall abide in the several Bahai Assemblies* (Article 4). It opens with the statement: *He is God*—the way Abdul Baha commenced his letters to his correspondents, and this unusual, Oriental manner of starting an American constitution is proof enough to me that its framers were single-purposed and sincere, and that it was composed in a sweet informal atmosphere of spiritual spontaneity. As described in the preamble, its only aim was to build the Bahai Temple:—

We, the Bahai Assemblies of North America, in unity convened at the City of Chicago, to the end that we may advance the Cause of God in this Western hemisphere by the founding and erection of a Temple with service accessories dedicated to His Holy Name, and devoted in His love to the service of mankind, do hereby adopt the following Constitution:

Article I: We acknowledge God as the source and

preserver of our Unity, revealed to us through the Manifestation of His Glory in Baha-U-Llah in this day, and declared by the beloved Servant of God and man, Abdul Baha.

—(Read *Star of the West*, Vol. IV, August 1, 1913, No. 8, page 140).

For seven years the *Bahai Temple Unity* labored, held annual conventions, published literature, collected funds, increased its powers and waxed strong under the above Constitution.

The 12th Annual Mashreq-Ul-Azkar Convention was held in New York, April 26-29, 1920. The *Star of the West*, Vol. XI, September 27, 1920, No. 11, gives us a Report of this Convention and, in the course of this Report the *Constitution and By-laws* of the *Bahai Temple Unity* is published for the second time. Here we find the preamble and the ten articles practically unchanged, except for a few words added here and there, but *Five* brand new Articles on By-laws have been added. Through them, we glimpse a gathering of the forces of organization and receive the impression that something new and slightly alarming is under way.

It remains a tragic commentary on the undeveloped nature of the American Bahais that the institution of the Mashreq-Ul-Azkar (literally: the dawning-place of the mentionings of God), the erection of which was intended to create centers of divine emotions, actually became the mainspring for the organizing of a spiritual cause and was the origin of the reduction of this movement to the status of an ecclesiastical order.

A Sublime Record

At this point in my narrative, I will retrace my steps to the year 1911, when Mr. Horace Holley visited Abdul Baha in Switzerland. The impressions which he received on this occasion were later published in a Booklet entitled, *A Pilgrimage to Thonon*. Now, I lived with Abdul Baha for eight years; I have written extensively on his personality and on his teachings, and have read practically everything that has been recorded about him by those who came in contact with him, but I have yet to find any description of a meeting with the Master that matches this one in sublimity of feeling and expression. Let us then read the words of Mr. Horace Holley as he wrote them on September 3, 1911, in Quattro Torri, Sienna. He has a beautiful message for us, which will do us a great deal of good if we can sense it as he, himself, did at the time:—

The Hotel du Parc lies in the midst of sweeping lawns. Groups of people were walking quietly about under the trees or seated at small tables in the open air. An orchestra played from a near-by pavilion. My wife caught sight of M. Dreyfus conversing with others, and pressed my arm. I looked up quickly. M. Dreyfus had recognized us at the same time, and as the party rose I saw among them a stately old man, robed in a cream-coloured gown, his white hair and beard shining in the sun. He displayed a beauty of stature, an inevitable harmony of attitude and dress I had never seen nor thought of in men. Without having ever visualized the Master, I knew that this was he. My whole body underwent a shock. My heart leaped, my knees weakened, a thrill of acute, receptive feeling flowed from head to foot. I seemed to have turned into some

most sensitive sense-organ, as if eyes and ears were not enough for this sublime impression. In every part of me I stood aware of Abdu'l Baha's presence. From sheer happiness I wanted to cry—it seemed the most suitable form of self-expression at my command. While my own personality was flowing away; even while I exhibited a state of complete humility, a new being not my own *assumed its place*. A glory, as it were, from the summits of human nature poured into me, and I was conscious of a most intense impulse to admire. In Abdu'l Baha I felt the awful presence of Baha'u'llah, and as my thoughts returned to activity I realized that I had thus drawn as near as man now may to pure Spirit and pure Being. This wonderful experience came to me beyond my own volition. I had entered the Master's presence and become the servant of a higher will for its own purpose. *Even my memory of that temporary change of being bears strange authority over me. I know what men can become; and that single over-charged moment, shining out from the dark mountain mass of all past time, reflects like a mirror I can turn upon all circumstances to consider their worth by an intelligence purer than my own.*

After what seemed a cycle of existence, this state passed with a deep sigh, and I advanced to accept Abdu'l Baha's hearty welcome.

Today, as Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, Mr. Horace Holley is the chief exponent and custodian of the Bahai Administration. More than any person, living or dead, he is responsible for the existence of this institution in which he lives and moves and has his being; yet this

same man has known the life of the spirit better than most of us. In my opinion, he was close to a mystic. I wish that he had not let *this state pass with a deep sigh*.

Early Services

A later book of Mr. Horace Holley, written in Paris and published in 1913 by Sigwick and Jackson Ltd., London, is entitled *The Modern Social Religion*. A copy was sent to Abdul Baha in the East. I distinctly remember the occasion when this book was received. The Master was sitting in a rose-garden, where he was accustomed to spend the cool of the day, dictating letters addressed to his friends. A package was brought; I opened it and placed the volume in his hands. He examined it, turning over a few pages and recalling the while, in very affectionate terms, Mr. Holley's visit to him in Thonon. Then, he asked me to translate the first chapter, which was headed *The Outlook*. With closed eyes he listened, and, when I had ended he smiled and said: *Khaily-Khoub! Khaily-Khoub! Marhaba! Marhaba!* (Well done! Well done! Bravo! Bravo!). Then, he dictated a Tablet of appreciation to the author. This Tablet, with a brief review of the book is published in the *Star of the West*, Vol. IV, December 31, 1913, No. 16, page 273.

The next time we come across Mr. Horace Holley is at the 9th Mashreq-ul-Azkar Convention held in Boston, Mass., April 29th to May 2nd, 1917. *Among the speakers were Mr. Horace Holley. . . .* He had come to the United States, and was associating with the Bahais and taking his preliminary steps in the service of the Cause. I do not find his name listed among the delegates and therefore must

conclude that he attended the Convention merely as a visitor and as the distinguished author of *A Pilgrimage to Thonon* and *The Modern Social Religion*.

The *Star of the West*, Vol. VIII, August 20, 1917, No. 9, presents a varied and interesting Report of the Convention including extracts from the speeches. Page 118 is devoted to Mr. Horace Holley's address on the subject of *The Oneness of Mankind*. It is a scholarly talk, the keynote of which is struck on a very high plane. Undoubtedly, it impressed the delegates as it later impressed me when I read it. Mr. Holley began:—

We live today in an organized, developed society, among the accumulated resources of the past. The youthful mind, feeling its own solitary weakness in the presence of so much authority and power, tends to discredit its own resources and its own power, and early becomes susceptible to the all-pervading influences of materialism. For, in the broad view of things, materialism is simply the preponderance of external influences over the innate quality of the individual spiritual life. The ordinary mind, therefore, learns to develop its imitative, memorizing qualities at the expense of its creative, independent attributes. It locates authority in institutions, and traditional customs and beliefs rather than in spiritual impulse. In all activities, however, the creative work is done by minds which use accumulated knowledge, tradition and customs as fuel to their own vision. Without such minds in art, science, politics and philosophy—to say nothing of religion—the world would rapidly become stagnant, the slave of material doctrines. The vision of the few keeps alive the faith that the ultimate authority is really invested in the individual soul, for every new advance, every improve-

ment, comes from some soul's independent activity. The spirit creates all things, and without spiritual activity thoughts decay. . . .

These noble thoughts expressing with such irrefutable logic, that the ultimate authority is really invested in the individual soul and that every new advance, every new improvement, comes from some soul's independent activity, convinced a number of liberal Bahais that they had found in Mr. Horace Holley a protagonist of the liberty of conscience, one who would help them extricate the Cause from the fetters that were fast accumulating about it. Mr. Horace Holley was living in New York, and, although engaged in business, he little by little had become active in the Cause, beginning to write interesting studies on the Bahai teachings; these were periodically published in the *Star of the West* (see *The Writings of Baha-U-Llah* by Horace Holley, *Star of the West*, Vol. 13, August 1922, No. 5, page 105 and *The Spirit of Abdul Baha*, in two parts, in Vol. 13, No. 6 and 7).

Wire Pulling

The fifteenth Annual Bahai Convention was held in the Auditorium Hotel, Chicago, during April, 1923. A full account of it appears in the *Star of the West*, Vol. 14, No. 3, June 1923, pages 64-82. As is usual, a chief duty of the delegates was the election of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly for the coming year, and around this election a plot was hatched, in which I took part together with Janabe Fazel Mazandrani and Prof. M. R. Shirazi. Naturally we, three itinerant Bahai teach-

ers, had no political inclinations, but in this one instance we had set our hearts on a certain personality which we felt would be an inestimable asset on the National Board, and although we had not taken our chosen candidate into our confidence, we allowed ourselves to pull every string at our disposal in order to bring his name before the delegates.

How well I remember those days, and the fervor that animated me! Now, I was speaking with groups around lunch or dinner tables, again I was sitting behind closed doors in committee rooms until the wee hours of the morning. I stressed our need for an unorthodox and liberal influence in the Cause; I asserted my conviction that our chosen candidate was the man that we had been waiting for, and, in order to prove that my estimate of him was correct, on all occasions I carried his writings with me. Through the reading of certain passages in this, my campaign literature, tears were brought to the eyes of many a delegate.

In this way, we prepared the ground for the election, and finally, in the open meeting, I took my place on the platform with the other speakers.

After seventeen years, I do not remember what I said at that hour or how long I spoke, but thanks to the Report published in the *Star of the West* I can quote a paragraph concerning my address, which evidently was given in true Oriental style:—

Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, in a talk . . . gave a picturesque description of what he thought the new National Assembly, soon to be elected, should be. It should be like a rose, exhaling perfume; like a star, shedding lustre;

like a rain-laden cloud, with life-giving moisture; like a nightingale, sweetly singing; like a well in the oasis of the desert, refreshing the thirsty; like a shady tree, protecting man and beast; like pearls and diamonds, decorating the necks of all humanity; like a searchlight, illuminating the dark places and pointing the goal.

As I read the above words, spread before my eyes in cold, black ink, I see myself as I was then, eager, emotional, an optimist of the most incurable type, and perhaps a convincing one as the record seems to show; for the result of the election was the appointment to office of our chosen candidate—Mr. Horace Holley. Here is the list as printed on the record:—

The Convention after mature deliberation elected the following as the National Spiritual Assembly for the ensuing year: William H. Randall, Alfred E. Lunt, Horace Holley, Roy C. Wilhelm, Louis G. Gregory, Mrs. Corinne True, Mrs. Ella G. Cooper, Mrs. Agnes S. Parsons, Charles Mason Remey.

Consequences

The consequences of this action are a matter of Bahai history. Mr. Horace Holley became a permanent member of the National Spiritual Assembly; in the seventeen Conventions that have followed, he has been re-elected annually, being chosen as Secretary for practically all of this period.

Thus, a Persian trio, Janabe Fazel Mazandrani, Prof. M. R. Shirazi and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab presented Mr. Horace Holley to the Bahai world. Of the three, Prof.

Shirazi has passed from this mortal life; Janabe Fazel is far removed from us in Teheran, and as for Mirza Ahmad Sohrab—well, he pleads guilty before the bar of public opinion and Bahai opinion for having helped to the seat of absolute power a man who has seen fit to alter the Bahai consciousness to a degree which no mind is keen enough to measure and no heart sensitive enough to sufficiently deplore.

The tendency toward organization had, from the very beginning, existed among the American Bahais, but it remained for Mr. Holley to develop it, to officialize it, to make it obligatory and to place the details of Bahai housekeeping (and not very good housekeeping at that) on a level with the Teachings of the Revelator of the Modern Age.

A Social Order for Free Beings

In explanation of my action, I would like to refer to Mr. Holley's book, *The Modern Social Religion*, approved by Abdul Baha, which book I carried with me for many years and from which I drew much confidence and inspiration. As I write, my old copy, well marked, is beside me on the desk. I will here quote some of the passages which at the time I loved and depended on and which, in the light of later developments, I now think very striking.

On page 171, Mr. Horace Holley writes:—

Since Baha-O-Llah's death in 1892, Abdul Baha, *the perfect Bahai*, has not only personified Bahaism as the new relationship of man to society, as well as its emphasis of the Christian relationship of man to God, but

he has effectively spread the Bahai message through Asia, Europe and America. It is difficult to realize at first how this could be done by a prisoner without money, political influence or an ecclesiastical organization.

Then Mr. Holley goes on in a masterful fashion, pointing out the spiritual methods that Abdul Baha used in the promotion of the Cause, and demonstrating that it is possible to serve the Cause without an *ecclesiastical organization*. Again, on page 188:—

If Bahaism represented any such tendency toward disruption and division, it would be no more than another sect struggling for existence and survival in the merciless jungle of society; but its purpose and method of operation combine to render further disintegration impossible. Its purpose is to effect the complete ultimate reconciliation of every existing social fragment, both religious and political, and its method of operation consists in taking its stand within the institution, not outside, and pointing out the true road of development along which the institution, by its own doctrines, if religious, or responsibility, if political, is committed to go. It is, therefore, not hostile to any creed, sect or nation; but is hostile only to that fatal prejudice, bigotry and blindness which prevents creeds, sects and nations from realizing the purpose of their own origin. Bahaism is not the enemy of any Church, for its ideals of human unity and co-operation places its hostages in every race, Church and nation on earth.

On page 189:—

To the Christian, accordingly, the Bahai teaching

brings an obligation to remain within the Church and to obey more fully, not less fully, the Gospel of Christ. . . . The existing religious situation attempts to confine eternal forces to narrow social areas; but Bahaism breaks down the frontiers that cut off one area from another.

On page 191:—

Self-expression, accordingly, represents the supreme obligation and privilege; and God has not given His precious marble of opportunity to the Michael Angelo alone. Life offers every personality the means of beautiful expression, in noble conduct, great thought, or inspiring art. In this individual potentiality and impulse toward self-expression, all men are created free and equal. It is not too much to aver that the greater the mind and spirit, the greater the tendency to respect and admire other personalities, however they may be rated by the world; and the inability to recognize a transcendent and incomparable possibility in every person, must be accepted as the stigma of spiritual insufficiency. Those distinctions, classifications, and judgments which separate society into unsympathetic fragments, proceed from the intellect alone; but intellect itself, when enlightened and vitalized by spirit, gladly perceives and adores the personality latent within all. Upon the individual, then, Bahaism enjoins his spiritual development as the purpose, and hence the supreme obligation of life. For Baha-O-Llah, also, came not to destroy but to fulfill.

On page 194:—

Bahaism is equally explicit concerning the relation-

ship of the individual to society . . . he must bring new enthusiasm and faith to every necessary or constructive relationship, and to existing responsibilities bring a deeper vision of their significance. He must not withdraw from present religious organizations, but reinterpret their function in the light of evolution, endeavor to vitalize their activity, and remove the prejudice and ignorance walling them off from the social unity. . . . He must labor to unite minor organizations in order to make them effective, and to transfer the circumference of social consciousness from the city to the province, the province to the state, the state to the continent, and from the continent to the world.

To render himself effective, he must study the social problem through the most advanced ideas of science, economics and government; and no duty is so important for the believer as to create for his own mind a living, passionate, social ideal—a picture of the divine civilization described by Baha-O-Llah—and Abdul Baha—toward which his purpose may direct its activity and from which his will may be strengthened and revived.

On page 198:—

To sum up what I have termed its morality for institutions, Bahaism teaches that the prosperity and permanence of any religious or political organization is not the end for our personal loyalty; that we should be indifferent to the welfare of mere institutions, creeds, stone walls and iron conventions; but that our most vigorous and devoted loyalty belongs to the cause of humanity as represented by the needs of every environment.

And the last quotation from page 206:—

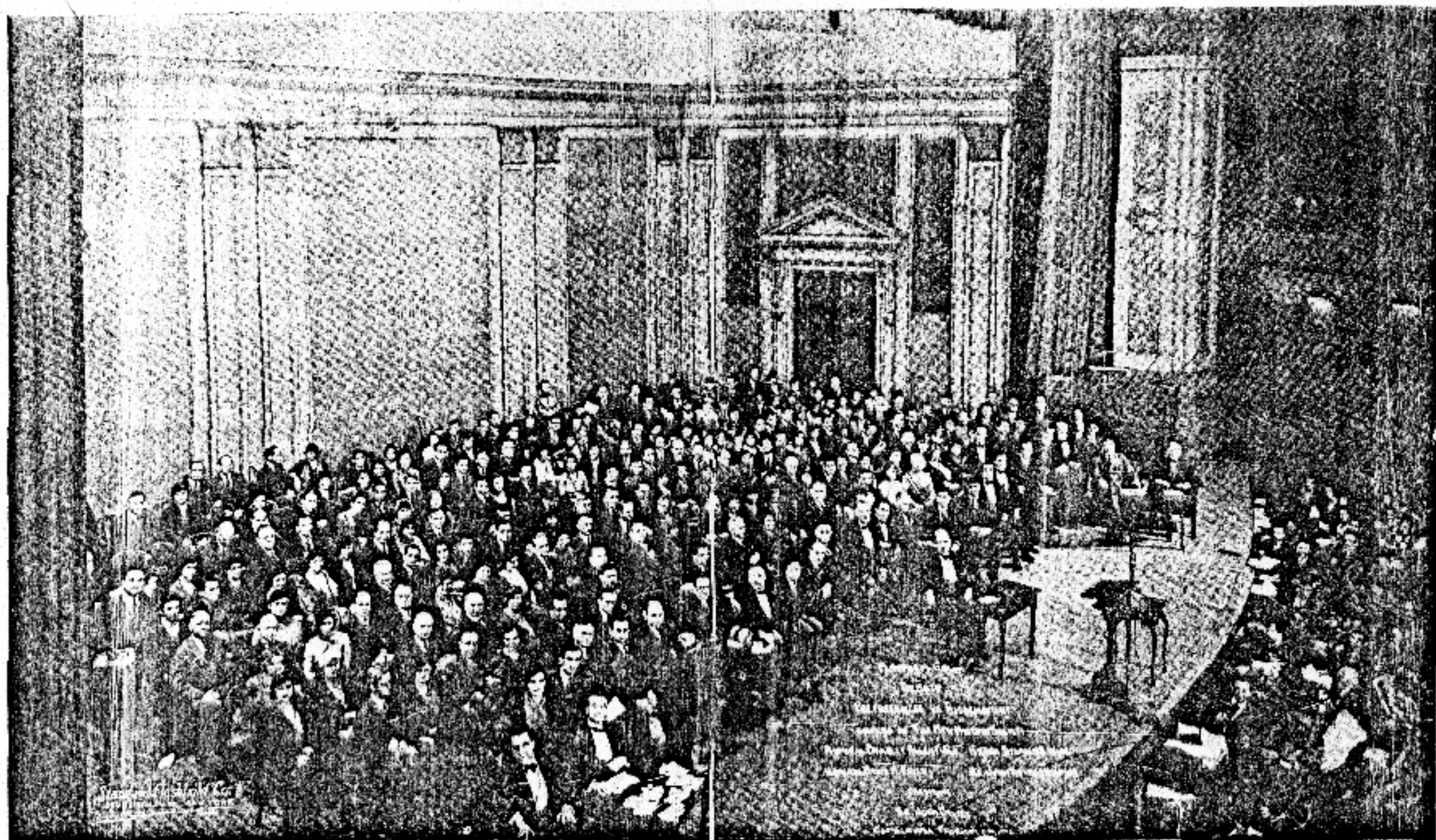
Bahaism desires a new social order in which the development of spiritualized men and women shall be the primary purpose; not supermen whose nature is essentially hostile to the many, but that order of free beings representing our own ideals achieved in daily life and common things. To such an order we already potentially belong, and the highest human fellowship the earth will ever contain will not be otherwise than our own kind, released and inspired by participation in a co-operative society.

On the basis of the above Bahai principles, to which I subscribed then and which I still support, Mr. Horace Holley was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly in 1923. Should he, however, advocate this same teaching in 1942, it is certain that he would not be re-elected to office; nay, rather I have no doubt but that Shoghi Effendi himself, as Guardian of the Cause, would expel him for disseminating doctrines that are totally at variance with the standards of present-day Bahai Administration.

We live and learn, and sometimes we live and forget; so, I would like to close this chapter by repeating the words of Mr. Horace Holley that we should be *indifferent to the welfare of mere institutions : . . that our most vigorous and devoted loyalty belongs to the cause of humanity as represented* (note well the elasticity of the sentiment) *by the needs of every environment.*

CARNEGIE HALL PLATFORM

The Platform at a Debate held in February, 1932, at Carnegie Hall, New York, under the auspices of The New History Society.



Debate under the auspices of The New History Society, held in Carnegie Hall, New York, on February 8, 1932.

Subject: Resolved that Continuous Preparedness is Necessary for the United States.

Affirmative: Admiral Bradley A. Fisk and General Amos A. Fries.

Negative: Rabbi Stephen S. Wise and Rev. John Haynes Holmes.

Chairman
Prof. John Dewey

See page 296

CHAPTER XI

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BAHAI ORGANIZATION

The Divine Plan

During World War I, while all communications between Palestine and the outside world were cut off, Abdul Baha was not inactive. As a patriarch, he guided the affairs of the communities in Haifa, Acca and Tiberias, supervised extensive works of agriculture through which the monster of starvation was kept under control, and last, but far from least, revealed the mighty document known as the Divine Plan. It was as messenger of the Master that, shortly after the close of hostilities, I sailed for the United States bearing with me these incomparable Tablets.

Map of Bahai Unity

The Tablets were unveiled at the Eleventh Bahai Convention in New York, from April 26th to April 30th, 1919, unfolding a new conception for the promotion of the Bahai principles around the earth. Among the different committees that prepared the program of the Convention, that of Publicity was naturally one of the most important. Mr. Horace Holley served on this committee and, doubtless, his imagination was stirred, as was that of everybody, by the dramatic Tablets of Abdul Baha. Consequently, on February 15, 1921, he circulated among the Bahais a mimeographed pamphlet of twelve pages, en-

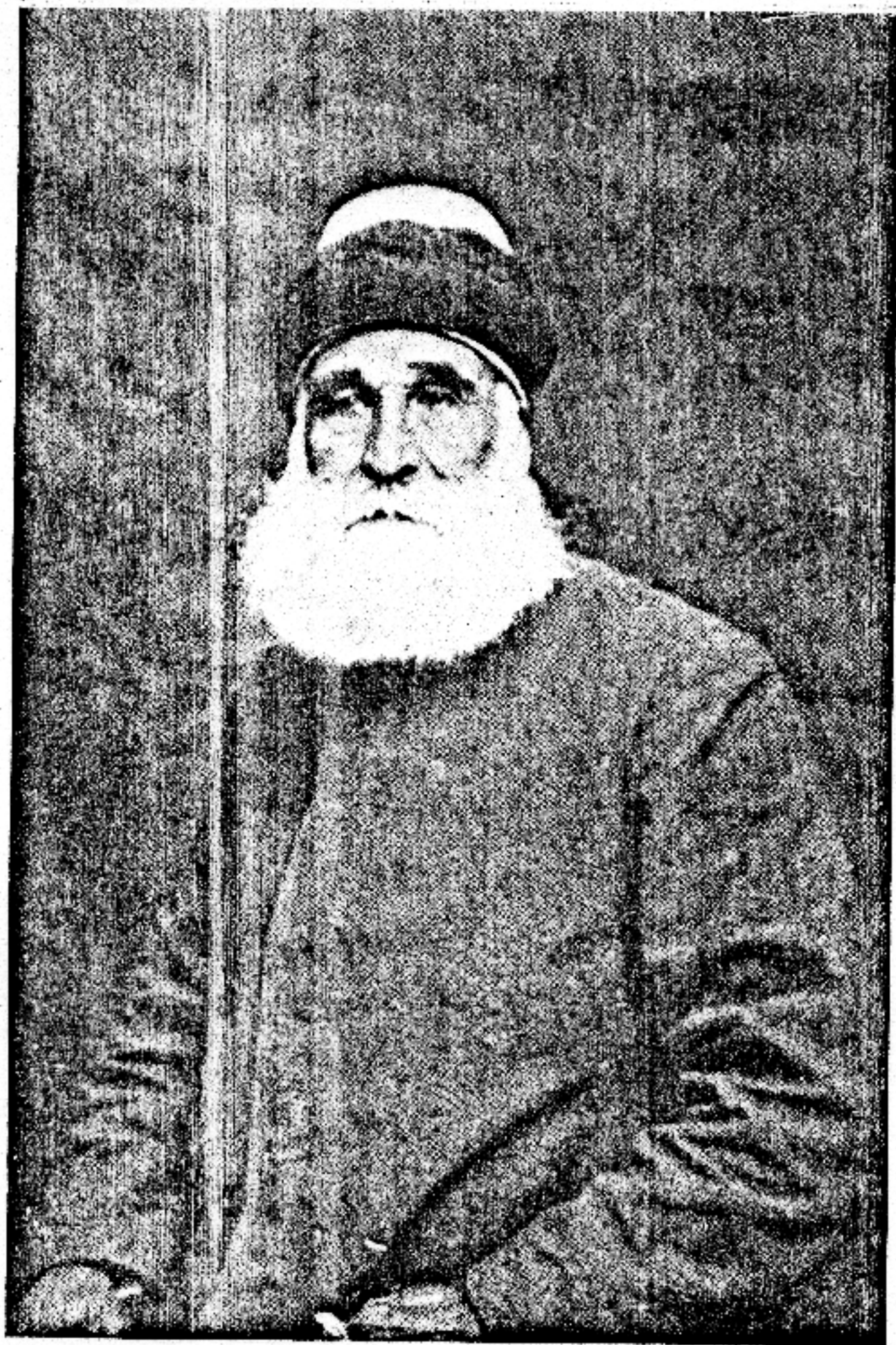
titled: *Map of Bahai Unity in North America*. The following description was incorporated therein: *Mutualizing the efforts of believers throughout Canada and the United States to fulfill the principles as set forth by Abdul Baha in the Divine Plan*.

Now, it would have been inappropriate to distrust an innocent *map* which was to *mutualize* (a nice word, by the way!) the efforts of the believers. The truth is that I fell into the trap. Who knew the significance of the Divine Plan better than I? Abdul Baha had dictated it to me, word by word; he had, on numerous occasions, discussed its contents with me, and I had kept notes in my diary of all that he had said; more than that, at his command I had committed to memory all those Tablets, so that in case the originals should either be confiscated at the frontiers or else lost during my long journey from Palestine to the United States, I would be in a position to reproduce them in their entirety after my landing in New York. With book in hand, he often had made me recite them to him from beginning to end, checking mistakes, correcting lapses of memory, until every sentence shone like a jewel in the chamber of my mind.

Well, that is a story in itself, but the point is that I would have welcomed any map that had power to put in motion the plan of Abdul Baha. Consequently, Mr. Holley's map fascinated me, and I was especially pleased because the booklet was headed with Abdul Baha's classic remark: *The Bahai Cause is not an Organization*.

The article later continues:—

Heeding the words of Abdul Baha, that the Bahai



SEYYED ASSADOLLAH, disciple of Baha-O-Llah, itinerant Bahai teacher, and travelling companion of Abdul Baha during the latter's visit to the United States.

Movement is not an organization, but on the contrary the Spirit of Organization, the Map is based not upon the factor of authority but upon that of the various services which the Divine Plan calls upon all the friends of God to perform. These services are analyzed in the form they have been performed in the past, and no new elements have been introduced except such as more closely knit together the different Assemblies, and the different National Committees in one active fellowship

Two Mystifying Points

Even in 1921, two points in this *map* mystified me.

FIRST: If the Bahai Movement is not an organization, how could it be the *spirit* of organization? If a glass be not full, how can it be the *spirit* of fullness? If a shoe be not comfortable, how can it be the *spirit* of comfort? If a statesman be not liberal, how can he be the *spirit* of liberalism? This argument seemed like sophistry, but the mass of the Bahais, and this includes myself, were very simple folk, ready to approve anything that promised to further the interests of the Cause they loved so much.

SECOND: The assurance that the *Map is based not upon the factor of authority*. Here, I sensed something foreign, but could not place my finger on it. The Map and its charts on page 4 gave unmistakable evidences of a concentration of authority in the various agencies that were to be set up; but inasmuch as this *authority* was rather well concealed, one could not very well yield oneself up to suspicion.

Be that as it may, I now consider this *Map of Bahai Unity in North America*, drawn up and elaborated by Mr.



MIRZA ABUL FAZL, Dean of the University of Hakim-Hashem in Teheran, Persia, in 1873. Disciple of Baha-O-Llah; Bahai historian and philosopher; author of *The Bahai Proofs*, and greatest of Bahai teachers.

Horace Holley, as a most important contributory document to the unification and vocalization of the reactionary desires of those whose aim it was to listen for the thunder of external authority rather than to the still small voice, and who placed the resourcefulness of the material mind above the effulgent rays of the heavenly consciousness.

The Bahais of the United States and Canada had by this time, by means of successive conventions, organized their material resources for the building of a *Temple of stone in Chicago*, as Mr. Horace Holley aptly describes it in his *Map of Bahai Unity in North America*. On the other hand, the *Temple of hearts* (which also is Mr. Holley's term) was left free and unorganized. Then lo and behold! Mr. Holley suddenly burst upon the scene with a proposed *working model* for the regimentation of that very *Temple of hearts*, even as we already have a *model to guide us in building the Temple of stone*, and we, all trustingly, offered our poor hearts, (which were soon to sustain the equivalent of finger-printing and card filing) thereby relinquishing our Bahai birthright. *Where there is no vision the people perish!*

I hope that I will be excused if I take the liberty of paraphrasing the 11th and 12th verses of I Kings, Chapter XIX, with application to the subject at hand:

And Abdul Baha said: Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Word. And, behold, the Divine Plan passed by; and a great and strong wind (*Bahai organization*) rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Divine Plan, but the Divine Plan was not in the wind: and after the wind, an earthquake (*Map of Bahai Unity in North America*); but the Divine Plan was not

in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, a fire (*Bahai Administration*); but the Divine Plan was not in the fire; and after the fire, a still small voice. And it was so: the Divine Plan with its multitude of stars was still shining!

I will now recapitulate, and summarize the steps on which depended

The Evolution of the Bahai Organization

FIRST: On March 22nd and 23rd, 1909, an organization was formed under the name of *The Bahai Temple Unity*. A simple constitution having ten brief articles and no By-laws was adopted. In print, it took less than a page of the *Star of the West*.

SECOND: On April 26, 1920, the same constitution, with the addition of a few words here and there and five Articles on By-laws, was adopted for the second time. It still carried the title, *The Bahai Temple Unity* and in print, it takes a little less than two pages of the *Star of the West*. The object of the Bahai Temple Unity, armed with its two Constitutions, was the building of a *Temple of stone*.

THIRD: On February 15, 1921, Mr. Horace Holley promulgated the *Map of Bahai Unity in North America*, or the organization of the *Temple of hearts*, which was the counterpart of the Constitutions of the *Temple of stone*. In mimeograph form it takes 12 pages, 8½ by 11 size, to outline the Map.

FOURTH: On May 2, 1926, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada (note: no longer *The Bahai Temple Unity*), composed

of nine persons: *establish a Trust as hereinafter set forth, hereby declare that from this date the powers, responsibilities, rights, privileges and obligations . . . shall be exercised, administered and carried on by the above-named National Spiritual Assembly and their duly qualified successors under this Declaration of Trust.* It selects for itself the designation of *Trustees of the Bahais of the United States and Canada.* The spirituality that one could somehow feel in the two previous constitutions is utterly missing in this portentous and formidable Declaration of Trust. It is an ice-bound, juridical document. Its articles are like hailstones that pierce and cut into the heart of the reader; its phrases are so wind-laden that they transform the balmy atmosphere of the Paradise of Abha into the frigid immensities of Nova Zembla; it is the apotheosis of an inflexible organization, the hypostasis of the machine; it is the Bastille of Paris, the Tower of London and the Concentration Camp of the Third Reich all rolled into one, and striking terror into the soul of a most hardy champion of freedom of conscience! This Document of *Declaration of Trust* consists of thirteen printed pages, nine pages of which are devoted to the enumeration of 12 Articles of By-laws, some running into 12 and 13 Sections (*Bahai Administration*, pages 141-153).

The Framers of the Declaration of Trust

The above declaration of Trust and By-laws is the Magna Charta of the present-day Bahai Administration. Therefore, it is important to try to discover its original framers. A close study of the letters of Shoghi Effendi gives us some very interesting clues. Our preliminary find-

ing is that this document was prepared in two sections. The first is called *Declaration of Trust*; the second, *By-Laws of the National Spiritual Assembly*.

We are able to dispose of the second section very quickly, for Shoghi Effendi, himself, in his letter written from Haifa, Palestine, on October 18, 1927, acknowledges that it was: *drawn up by that highly-talented, much-beloved servant of Baha-U-Idah, Mountfort Mills*. So, it is quite evident that an American attorney wrote the By-laws. There can be no doubt about that. It is the brainchild of a single person, and is fully endorsed by Shoghi Effendi.

In seeking the framer or framers of the *Declaration of Trust*, our task is a little more difficult. We are therefore entitled to guess, and I hope that the reader will allow me a margin of error which I will be glad to fill in with any corrections.

At the very start, let us clearly understand that Mr. Horace Holley, as Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, is the main official channel of communication between Shoghi Effendi and the American and Canadian Bahais. Shoghi Effendi writes occasional letters to individuals through his secretary, but wide and indiscriminate correspondence with him is definitely discouraged, and even the local assemblies and national committees are forbidden to mail their letters directly to the Guardian, but must send them through the National Spiritual Assembly (See *Bahai Procedure*, Section II, Sheet 20).

This close supervision of correspondence between Shoghi Effendi and the Bahais gives the National Spiritual Assembly paramount censorial rights and privileges. As secretary, Mr. Holley writes *all* the letters that are sent to

Shoghi Effendi on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly; likewise, Shoghi Effendi's letters to the Assembly are received first by him. The Guardian holds Mr. Holley in high esteem as is shown by his letters to the National Spiritual Assembly, some of which are contained in *Bahai Administration*, published on November 30, 1927. These communications usually open with a phrase expressing appreciation of Mr. Holley, such as: *The letters which our able and devoted Mr. Horace Holley has addressed in your behalf. Or, the three communications . . . which I have received from that indefatigable servant of Baha-U-Llah, my esteemed spiritual brother Mr. Holley, have given me great satisfaction and have cheered and sustained me in my work. Or, I have perused your recent communication dated . . . and signed on your behalf by your vigilant and capable secretary; or again: The first printed issue of the National Spiritual Assembly's News Letter prepared and signed on behalf of the Assembly by its able secretary stands as a bright and eloquent testimony of his thoroughness, his industry, his conspicuous ability, his undoubted sacrifice.*

I have quoted the above to show the confidence in Mr. Holley that is expressed by the Guardian, and now I come to my point, namely: to try to identify the author of the *Declaration of Trust* of the Bahai Administration. My personal belief is that it was written by Mr. Horace Holley, either alone or else with the assistance of a very few close associates, and possibly of a jurist or two for the legal phrasing of its contents. At any rate, Mr. Horace Holley had a part in its composition and a very conspicuous one; of that I have no doubt.

That my guess may not be far from the truth is shown in the text of Shoghi Effendi's letter written on the receipt of the *Declaration of Trust* and dated May 27, 1927. He says: *The Declaration of Trust, the provisions of which you have so splendidly conceived, and formulated with such assiduous care, marks yet another milestone on the road of progress along which you are patiently and determinedly advancing.* The letter, of course, is addressed to the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, but one wonders who is this *you* that *conceived* and *formulated* the *Declaration of Trust*? Is it a singular or a collective you? Yet, of one thing we are sure: It is an *American* you and not a *Persian* you. Like the *By-laws*, it was originated and given currency in these United States; and the point that I want to establish and which I believe is already proven beyond a shadow of doubt, is that the *Declaration of Trust* and *By-laws* originated in the brain of an American, or in the brains of Americans and that the Bab, Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha had nothing to do with it.

Essential Uniformity

Somehow or other, through a process that I could never understand, Shoghi Effendi, from the very beginning, was attracted to this *Declaration of Trust* and *By-laws* and, in time, he came to consider it as the handiwork of God. So enamored with it was he that he caused the formation of National Spiritual Assemblies in Egypt, Persia, India, Iraq, England, Australia, etc.—East and West—with the injunction that all must adopt this very *Declaration of Trust* and *By-laws* as principles of *their own* Bahai Ad-

ministration. In this manner, he has introduced into the bubbling, effervescent, joyous and free Bahai Cause *such a* deadening uniformity that one cannot find its like even in the antiquated and dying religions. Here is the order of the Guardian in regard to the Egyptian Bahais:

I have insisted that the provisions of their constitution should, in all its details, conform to the text of the Declaration of Trust and By-laws which you have established, endeavoring thereby to preserve the uniformity which I feel is essential in all Bahai National Constitutions. I would like, in this connection to request of you, what I have already intimated to them, that whatever amendments you may decide to introduce in the text of the Declaration and By-laws, should be duly communicated to me, that I may take the necessary steps for the introduction of similar changes in the text of all other National Bahai Constitutions.

—World Order of Baha-U-Llah, page 11.

I can well imagine the state of mind of the Eastern Bahais, who are accustomed to soar in the boundless atmosphere of love and spirituality, when they were presented with this harsh and legalistic Constitution and told that they must adopt it, in all its details, without the least allowance being made for *their own mode of thought and life*; together with the further requirement that, whenever their American masters chose to introduce any amendments to this Constitution, they, the poor, dumb, Oriental Bahais, must slavishly add the same amendments to their own copies, whether applicable or not. I can picture the consternation and disquietude that gripped the souls of

those tried and true Bahais when they received this document and were asked to sign on the dotted line.

These spiritual stalwarts of Baha-O-Llah, these brilliant scholars of Abdul Baha, who had cast a commotion through the pillars of the earth by their subtle philosophical thinking and daring example, were treated as regiments of robots to be moved hither and thither by the legislations of a few shrewd American benchers, neat-handed pleaders and deft draftsmen. They were no longer expected to think or to retain a single idea in their minds. With the acceptance of the *Declaration of Trust* and *By-laws* concocted in the United States, their subjection and vassalage was sealed from everlasting to everlasting by the order from Shoghi Effendi that: *no departure from these cardinal and clearly enunciated principles, embodied and preserved in Bahai National and local constitutions . . . can under any circumstances be tolerated.* (*The Advent of Divine Justice*, page 52.)

Divine Origin

It took the Christians several centuries to deprive Jesus of the dignity of normal birth and foist super-human parentage upon him, but it took the Bahais only the twinkling of an eye to discount the material origin of the Administration and to set it up as divinely conceived. Let us note the words of Shoghi Effendi:

A word should now be said regarding the theory on which this Administrative Order is based and the principle that must govern the operation of its chief institutions. It would be utterly misleading to attempt a comparison between this unique, this divinely-con-

ceived order and any of the diverse systems which the minds of men, at various periods of their history, have contrived for the government of human institutions.

—*World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 152.

Thus, divine origin was conferred upon the Administration, but it seems that this was not sufficiently specific. A more definite source should be pointed to and this was found in no less a person than Baha-O-Llah himself. Shoghi Effendi declares:—

Let no one, while this system is still in its infancy, misconceive its character, belittle its significance or misrepresent its purpose. The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day. The Source from which it derives its inspiration is no less than Baha-U-Llah Himself. Its shield and defender are the embattled hosts of the Abha Kingdom. Its seed is the blood of no less than 20,000 martyrs who have offered up their lives that it may be born and flourish.

—*World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 156.

I myself cannot help wondering what the poor martyrs would have thought, if they had known that they were giving up their lives for an American *corporation* instead of for a Persian *Cause*!

Even as he had claimed divine origin for the *Declaration of Trust* and *By-laws* of the Administration, Shoghi Effendi gives a high station to its framers. He writes:—

Few, if any, I venture to assert, among these privileged framers and custodians of the constitution of the Faith of Baha-U-Llah are even dimly aware of the preponderating role which the North American continent

is destined to play in the future orientation of their world-embracing Cause. Nor does any appreciable number among them seem sufficiently conscious of the decisive influence which they already exercise in the direction and management of its affairs.

—*World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 53.

Having to the best of my ability shown the origin, growth and development of the Bahai Organization, which record will not, I hope, embitter nor discourage us, I will return to the life-imparting words of Abdul Baha, which are addressed to all:—

Be ye not seated and silent! Diffuse the glad-tidings of the Kingdom far and wide to the ears, promulgate the Word of God . . . that is, arise ye with such qualities and attributes that ye may continually bestow life to the body of the world, and nurse the infants of the universe up to the station of maturity and perfection. Enkindle with all your might in every meeting the light of the love of God, gladden and cheer every heart with the utmost loving-kindness, show forth your love to the strangers just as you show forth to your relations. If a soul is seeking to quarrel, ask ye for reconciliation; if he blame ye, praise (him); if he give you a deadly poison, bestow ye an all-healing antidote; if he createth death, administer ye eternal life; if he becometh a thorn, change ye into roses and hyacinths. Perchance, through such deeds and words, this darkened world will become illuminated, this terrestrial universe will become transformed into a heavenly realm, and this satanic prison become a divine court; warfare and bloodshed be annihilated, and love and faithfulness hoist the tent of unity upon the apex of the world.

—*Tablets of Abdul Baha*, Vol. III, pages 503, 504.

UNITED STATES



Leonard L. Kimball
University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor,
Michigan

FIRST PRIZE
WINNERS
IN FIVE
COMPETITIONS

EUROPE



Russell M. Cooper
American, studying at
L'Institut Universitaire
de Hautes Etudes Inter-
national, Geneva, Switz-
erland

LATIN AMERICA



Celso Frota Pessoa
Polytechnic School of
the University of Rio
de Janeiro, Brazil

ASIA



Louise Pin Yen Chang
Chow Yang University,
Peiping, China

AFRICA, AUSTRALIA
CANADA
NEW ZEALAND



Wycliffe Mlungisi Tsotsi
Blythwood Institution,
Butterworth, S. Africa

EIGHT COMPETITIONS OF THE NEW HISTORY SOCIETY

Conscious of the approaching storm that was threatening our civilization during the fateful Thirties, The New History Society felt impelled to spread throughout the world, as far as was possible, the principles which must form the basis of a New Society. Therefore, from the year 1931 on through 1939, its main activity consisted in the conducting of eight Annual Prize Competitions, offered successively to the youth of the five continents and the inhabitants of the world on various international topics. By this means, the knowledge of the Bahai Cause and its principles was actually disseminated in all avenues of life in practically every country, and an unprecedented volume of correspondence was initiated with thousands of inquirers in every part of the earth.

The labor involved in the undertaking was great and, as it was largely contributed, this went far toward lessening the total cost. Nevertheless, the expenses of the Seven Regional Competitions together with the World Competition passed the figure of One Hundred Thousand Dollars, this including the First, Second, Third and Special Prizes, the translating and printing of the Conditions and of leaflets in eleven languages, the mailing, secretarial work and other items.

The originals of *all* the Papers submitted by the contestants in the eight Competitions were bound in 75 large volumes and placed in the library of The New History Society. These have been and still are available to the students of human thought and to those who are interested in learning of the ideas which were uppermost in the minds of the youth of the world as well as of its elders during the crucial years—1931-1939.

The Competitions offered, year by year, were on the following subjects:—

FIRST COMPETITION

Offered to the Youth of the United States of America, in 1931.

Subject: *How Can the Colleges Promote World Peace?*

* * *

SECOND COMPETITION

Offered to the Youth of Europe, in 1932.

Subject: *How Can the Youth of the Universities and Schools Contribute to the Realization of a United States of the World?*

THIRD COMPETITION

Offered to the Youth of South and Central America, Mexico, the West Indies and adjacent Islands, in 1933.

Subject: *How Can the Youth of the Universities and Professional Schools Contribute to the Reconstruction of the Human Commonwealth?*

* * *

FOURTH COMPETITION

Offered to the Youth of Asia, in 1934.

Subject: *How Can Youth Contribute to the Realization of a Universal Religion?*

* * *

FIFTH COMPETITION

Offered to the Youth of Africa, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, in 1935.

Subject: *How Can Youth Develop Co-operative and Harmonious Relations Among the Races of the Earth?*

* * *

SIXTH COMPETITION

Offered to the Population of the World, in 1936-1937.

Subject: *How Can the People of the World Achieve Universal Disarmament?*

* * *

SEVENTH COMPETITION

Offered to the People of the United States and its Outlying Possessions and Territories, in 1938.

Subject: *How Can Cultural and Social Values of Racial Minorities in the United States and its Outlying Possessions and Territories be Adjusted and Harmonized?*

* * *

EIGHTH COMPETITION

Offered to the Visitors at the New York World's Fair and the Inhabitants of the United States and Canada, 1939.

Subject: *What Influence Would a Bible of Mankind Exert on the World of Tomorrow?*

CHAPTER XII

ESTABLISHMENT OF BAHAI ADMINISTRATION

A Great Asset

Abdul Baha said: *The Bahai Cause is not an organization*; and, because this rule made of the movement something altogether new in the world of religion, something provocative and fascinating, the Bahais took it up with enthusiasm and featured it on all occasions.

Now, it was a good advertising phrase too; the public liked it, and the intelligentsia looked upon the Cause with favor on account of this very principle. Everybody, therefore, who was at all familiar with the Bahai Teachings, became accustomed to stress the point and to consider it as a great asset.

Unexpected Opportunities

Time passed; the World War, with separation from the Master even through correspondence, gave the Bahai leaders unexpected opportunities to leave their imprint on the affairs of the Cause. They were not without ideas of their own, and so they began to set these forth in articles. In one instance, the services of Mr. Charles Mason Remey were called for, and his statement *written at the request of several friends* appears in the *Star of the West*, Vol. 12, No. 9, August 20, 1921, under the title *Bahai Organization*. The author of this commentary begins cautiously, not so much disputing the authenticity of the words of Abdul

Baha: *The Bahai Cause can never be organized*, but, stating that: *from one short excerpt from the holy words, separated from its context, erroneous meanings may be obtained*. In this, however, Mr. Remey is wrong, because Abdul Baha's statement on the non-organization of the Bahai Cause consists of a compact closely-knit paragraph, one phrase leading to another.

Again, Mr. Remey writes:—

Some of the friends of the Bahai Cause have been a little confused regarding the organization of the holy Cause because of the wide circulation of some words, to the effect that this Cause should never be organized—thus some have imagined that no form of Bahai organization should exist. Now of late, we are informed by pilgrims returning to their homes from Palestine that Abdul Baha has explained that these words, circulated to the effect that the Cause should never be organized, give an impression very different from the reality of his teachings.

Mr. Remey refers to a *little* confusion among *some* of the friends. Here, he underestimates, for there was a *big* confusion; and not only that, there was a mortal struggle going on among *all* the friends regarding this, which was considered a fundamental issue: Spiritual Liberty versus Ecclesiastical Authority.

A more official attempt to defeat the forces of liberalism in the Cause was made a little later when the National Spiritual Assembly appointed a committee of three to prepare and submit a Report on Bahai Organization. This document, which bears close reading, is published in the

Star of the West, Vol. XIII, No. 12, March 1923, page 323. It opens:—

Organization in the Bahai Movement rests upon the sure foundation of the Word of God.

and later in the same document:—

At Haifa, Syria, in 1920, the following question was asked Abdul Baha by some American pilgrims:—

“It is misleading, is it not, to say that the Bahai Cause cannot be organized?” Abdul Baha replied: “How is it possible that there should be no organization?”

The so-called pilgrims who put the above question must have been a group of tricky and astute lawyers, very much like the Pharisees who tried to catch Jesus with the question: *Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?*; but even the Pharisees did not make use of the suggestive negative, saying. It is not lawful, is it, to give tribute to Caesar? At any rate, this informal oral answer to the pilgrim's question was made full use of, and by the time that Abdul Baha had departed from this life, affairs were shaping themselves according to American standards.

What's in a Name?

The officials now began to soft-pedal the phrase: *The Bahai Cause is not an organization*, and to remove it, little by little, from conspicuous places in their literature; yet, to their discomfiture, the words remained engraven on the minds of the people. What was to be done? The leaders wondered and then, possibly remembering Juliet's desire for a Romeo who would not be called Romeo, re-

peated to themselves her words, or others to the same effect: *What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet*, and presto, the answer was found! The Bahai Cause was not an organization, but it could well be the *spirit* of organization under another name. Names were numerous; and so the fond parents picked out a word, perhaps from the dictionary, called in their friends and a little christening party was held at which the *organization* became the *Administration*.

The first issue of *Bahai News* to be reserved for the affairs of the Administration made its appearance in December, 1924; and from then on this publication, more or less regularly, printed editorials on Bahai Administration and its principles. One of the most subtle moves was made as far back as 1927 when a writer, in an editorial, tried to identify *administrative success* with *moral success*. Quite a clever bit of propaganda! He says:—

Because in the Bahai Faith this perfect correspondence exists between spiritual and social laws, let us ever bear in mind that *administrative success*, for Bahais, is identical with moral success.

—Bahai News, May 1927, Special Number.

Thus, the campaign developed, increasing in momentum and presently *all* reports, programs, lectures, publicity, radio broadcasts, annual Conventions, youth activities, membership, elections became *colored* with expressions becoming to the Administration; until finally in 1928, a book containing the early letters of Shoghi Effendi was published under the title *Bahai Administration*. This book, with the authority back of it, crystallized the plan and made the name permanent.

Consolidation

The process of educating the Bahais in the laws of the Administration continued year by year, without let or hindrance. *Bahai News*, January, 1930, No. 37, carries a front page editorial on Bahai Administration. It states that, at a recent meeting, the National Spiritual Assembly voted to request the local Assemblies to arrange classes for the study of Bahai Administration, and that the character of Bahai Administration is such that its full power and significance can only be manifest when the believers are not only thoroughly informed, but imbued with its power. The writer goes on to explain in detail why there was no administration in the days of Abdul Baha and then in a very few significant lines gives himself away:—

The years since November 28, 1921 (the day of the departure of Abdul Baha) have, consequently, been largely devoted to the elimination of any *non-Bahai* views which might exist and to our re-education in Bahai Administration by the Guardian.

Only the old Bahais can appreciate what the writer means by *the elimination of any non-Bahai views*. It was no gentle elimination, but actually a Hitlerian purge conducted with full present-day Nazi efficiency. And as to *re-education!* That is where the *give-away* comes in; for in that period, which the writer frankly designates as dating from the departure of the Master, the poor simple Bahais were educated along totally different lines from those which they knew and loved, and which they believed to be the *Cause*.

In the course of time, *Bahai Administration* by Shoghi

Effendi became a textbook, a sacred scripture to be read in meetings and at Conventions, and to be studied in classes.

The special value of Bahai Administration, the need of training in it and its exercise in a way that will keep all the people of a community busy received much emphasis from the delegates in conference.

—Bahai News, May 1931, No. 52.

Its precepts had to be followed by all the Local Bahai Communities:

Permit no circumstance, however grievous, to lead you astray from the firm highway of the administrative order. In your local communities follow its precepts.

—Bahai News, May 1932, No. 62, page 6.

To determine whether a soul was qualified for Bahai membership, the laws of Administration had to be consulted like a book of oracle. At various Conventions, this subject was brought up and much time was consumed in such momentous discussion:—

A great many delegates spoke of the grave responsibility which rests upon Local Spiritual Assemblies in determining whether or not a soul is qualified for Bahai Membership, and here again the importance of careful study of Bahai Administration was stressed.

—Bahai News, July 1933, No. 75, page 5.

In *Bahai News*, November, 1933, No. 79, page 10, the Guardian reminds the friends, more fully than before, that the cardinal principle of the Bahai Administration is *the supreme and unchallengeable authority of the National Spiritual Assembly in national affairs.*

The root principle of Bahai Administration is the *undisputed authority of America's supreme administrative body*. No departure from this established tenet is contemplated and it must be maintained unreservedly (*Bahai News*, November, 1933, No. 79).

Shoghi Effendi has certainly invested the National Spiritual Assembly with undreamed-of dictatorial power and autocratic control over all the affairs of the Cause in North America.

Nothing can be clearer than the following quotations:—

Haifa, May 19, 1934. As to the problem which has arisen in connection with the News Letter published and circulated by the Boston Assembly, the Guardian has already written about it to your National Spiritual Assembly, expressing the view that under no circumstances should any local Assembly be given the right to criticize and much less oppose, the policy duly adopted and approved by the National Spiritual Assembly. It is his hope that henceforth the problem of the relationship between the National Spiritual Assembly and the local Assemblies in matters of this nature will, in the light of his instructions, be carefully understood by individuals and Assemblies alike.

Haifa, June 11, 1934. The Guardian wishes me to again affirm his view that the authority of the National Spiritual Assembly is undivided and unchallengeable in all matters pertaining to the administration of the Faith throughout the United States and Canada, and that, therefore, the obedience of individual Bahais, delegates, groups and Assemblies to that authority is imperative and should be wholehearted and unqualified. He is convinced that the unreserved acceptance and

complete application of this vital provision of the Administration is essential to the maintenance of the highest degree of unity among the believers, and is indispensable to the effective working of the administrative machinery of the Faith in every country.

As though all the above instructions through his secretary were not sufficiently lucid, Shoghi Effendi writes the following in his own hand:—

I wish to re-affirm, in clear and categorical language, the principle already enunciated upholding the supreme authority of the National Assembly in all matters that affect the interests of the Faith in that land. There can be no conflict of authority, no duality under any form or circumstances in any sphere of Bahai jurisdiction, whether local, national or international.

—The above three quotations are from *Bahai News*, July 1934, No. 85, page 2.

Here then, in plain language, we have nine Hitlers, or nine Mussolinis, or nine Stalins, all rolled into one; or probably we have a few of each species, combining their authority over, not 80 million Germans and more than 100 million conquered peoples, 45 million Italians and 175 million Russians, but over the conscience and activities of 2584 plain, simple, folksy, democratic Americans. With such paraphernalia to hold them in order, these American Bahais must indeed be the most unruly and rebellious people on the face of the earth!

Religious Isolation

Is the Bahai Cause, under the Administration, a progressive religious movement?

Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha taught their followers to associate with the devotees of all religions. This we know; but the Bahai Administration demands that the Bahais renounce their membership in other religious organizations, for: *to be a Bahai and at the same time accept membership in another religious body is an act of contradiction that no sincere and logically-minded person can possibly accept.* Thus, spiritual fellowship with other faiths is prohibited and the imparting by the Bahais of the universal religious conceptions of Baha-O-Llah, in the congregations of which they were part, is an act of disobedience.

In an article under the title: *Membership in other Organizations* published in *Bahai News*, No. 134, March, 1940, we read the following:—

The National Spiritual Assembly asks the friends to give careful and prayerful thought about their connection with non-Bahai Organizations, and endeavor, each for himself, to make any adjustment necessary in order to consolidate his spiritual and social life in the New World Order of Baha-U-Llah. For as the Guardian has instructed in recent years, it is not merely ecclesiastical or political organizations from which Bahais are to withdraw, but also any other type of organization whose aim and influence are incompatible with the nature of the Faith.

(For further reference read: *Association with the World Fellowship of Faiths*, *Bahai News*, No. 76, August, 1933; *Membership in Non-Bahai Association*, *Bahai News*, No. 93, July, 1935; *Concerning Membership in Non-Bahai Religious Organizations*, *Bahai News*, No. 98,

March, 1936; *Membership in Other Organizations, Bahai Procedure*, Section One, Sheet 7; and *Concerning Membership in Non-Bahai Religious Organizations, Bahai Procedure*, Section One, Sheets 8, 9, 10, 11.)

Abdul Baha told his followers that the Bahai Cause was not a *new* religion, and that it was their mission to carry the leaven of tolerance into all circles, thus little by little, demolishing sectarian lines of demarcation; yet the Administration has adopted a policy of complete RELIGIOUS ISOLATION, raising such iron-clad frontiers around their constituents that none of them can overstep them or presume to adhere to the injunction of Baha-O-Llah: *Associate with the people of all religions with joy and fragrance.*

Social Isolation

Is the Bahai Cause under the Administration a progressive social movement?

It is most evident from the writings of Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly that their organization has nothing to do with civic, national or international affairs. The Bahais are warned over and over again not to affiliate themselves with any political parties; not to run for any political offices nor to cast their votes for the election of candidates when these candidates are nominated by two parties. (Read *The World Order of Baha-U-Llah* by Shoghi Effendi, pages 64 and 153; "The Non-Political Character of the Bahai Cause," *Bahai News*, No. 69, December, 1932; "Non-Political Character of the Bahai Faith", *Bahai News*, No. 80, January, 1934, and "The Non-Political Character of the Bahai Faith," *Bahai Procedure*, Section One, Sheet 13.)

Thus, it is clear that the Bahai Administration commands its followers to *refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the politics of their governments and the schemes and programs of parties*, yet, at the same time it claims leadership in the New World Order that is to be, as can be judged from its monthly publication appearing under the name *World Order* and from Shoghi Effendi's book entitled *The World Order*. Now, there never can be a World Order unless the fundamentals of world politics are changed, and if the Bahais hold themselves aloof from national and international politics, they not only will forego leadership in the New World Order, but will have no share in it whatsoever. They can reiterate their assertions, they can even trade-mark the name *World Order* (which they have done, see *Bahai World*, 1936-1938, Vol. VII, pages 415-416) and possibly follow it up with lawsuits as they did in connection with their trade-mark on the name *Bahai*, but when the great reconstruction takes shape, this will be owing to those who have worked for it and taken enormous risks for it, and not to those who have discreetly kept under cover while the mighty struggle was going on. (Incidentally, I cannot refrain from remarking that Mr. H. G. Wells in his publication of 1940, entitled *The New World Order* has come very close to infringement on the property rights held by the Bahai Administration on the words *World Order*, for, in the litigation brought against Mrs. Chanler and myself, this body requested that we be enjoined from using the name of their trade-mark *Bahai* or any word *deceptively similar thereto*!)

Added to its program of exclusiveness toward any and all political activities, the Administration prevents its followers from affiliation with any movements or societies, the policies of which are not in *strict conformity with the tenets of the Faith*. This exclusion act was made as watertight as possible, for it is evident that no societies come up to this requirement; consequently, the Bahais are prevented from taking part in any and all the progressive movements that are operative today.

In this manner has the Administration adopted a policy of SOCIAL ISOLATION, impossible to reconcile with the contents of most of the addresses delivered by Abdul Baha in Europe and America, for these deal with the abolition of political boundaries, the eradication of social limitations, the ensuring of the economic prosperity of mankind and the establishment of a new commonwealth of humanity based on freedom, justice and peace. And again, as our minds dwell on the Teachings, now so completely obscured, we come with a shock on the words of Baha-O-Llah: *Oh people . . . be intent on the betterment of the world and the training of nations.*

Divine Politics

I have, in this article, used the word *constituents*, which is an unusual term to be connected with a religious organization, but the fact of the matter is that, while the Administration takes no part in national politics, it is in itself a thorough-going political institution.

The Bahai Administration is composed of less than a hundred local Assemblies, scattered throughout the United States and Canada, having a total membership amounting

to 2584 persons. (*The World Almanac*, 1941, page 859.) It holds Annual Conventions, which are attended by delegates from the local Assemblies who elect nine persons to serve for the coming year on the National Spiritual Assembly, which body, in turn, nominates all the committees and is the paramount authority of the Cause in North America. The authority of this body is superseded only by the Guardian, operating from Palestine.

In 1938 and 1939 the second and third books of Shoghi Effendi were published under the titles: *The World Order of Baha-U-Llah* and *The Advent of Divine Justice*; and, with the appearance of this literature, the Administration was brought out of the human realm and raised to a station, incomparable, unassailable and divine.

Shoghi Effendi says:

It should be remembered by every follower of the Cause that the system of Bahai Administration is not an innovation imposed arbitrarily upon the Bahais of the world since the Master's passing, but derives its authority from the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha.

—*World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 5.

Again, delving further in history, he claims that:—

In the blood of the unnumbered martyrs of Persia lay the seed of the Divinely-appointed administration which, though transplanted from its native soil, is now budding out, under your loving care, into a new order, destined to overshadow all mankind.

—*World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 52.

Now, with sledge-hammer blows, Shoghi Effendi pushes forward, and presently the *Administration* has passed all bounds of human frailties and become *infallible*:—

Out of the pangs of anguish which His bereaved followers have suffered, amid the heat and dust which the attacks launched by a sleepless enemy had precipitated, the Administration of Baha-U-Llah's invincible Faith was born. The potent energies released through the ascension of the centre of His Covenant crystallized into this supreme, this infallible Organ, for the accomplishment of a Divine Purpose.

—*World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 89.

Again:—

The Administrative Order which ever since Abdu'l Baha's ascension has evolved and is taking shape under our very eyes in no fewer than forty countries of the world, may be considered as the framework of the Will itself, the inviolable stronghold wherein this new-born child is being nurtured and developed. This Administrative Order, as it expands and consolidates itself, will no doubt manifest the potentialities and reveal the full implications of this momentous Document . . . It will, as its component parts, its organic institutions, begin to function with efficiency and vigor, assert its claim and demonstrate its capacity to be regarded not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind.

—*The World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 144.

As we continue to study this book, we find even more

WINNER OF WORLD COMPETITION



MME. CATHERINE LYDIA DE LIGT-VAN ROSSEM

Native of Holland—Resident of Switzerland

WINNER OF FIRST PRIZE IN
SEVENTH COMPETITION



RABBI JACOB J. WEINSTEIN

Director of the School of Jewish
Studies in San Francisco, Calif.

WINNER OF FIRST PRIZE IN
EIGHTH COMPETITION



CORNELIUS LACEY GOLIGHTLY

University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor, Michigan.

studendous claims being put forward for this Administration, although the author on page 91 of the same volume had conceded that it was born in the United States. He now says:—

The Bahai Commonwealth of the future, of which this vast Administrative Order is the sole frame-work, is, both in theory and practice, not only unique in the entire history of political institutions, but can find no parallel in the annals of any of the world's recognized religious systems . . . This new-born Administrative Order incorporates within its structure certain elements which are to be found in each of the three recognized forms of secular government, without being in any sense a mere replica of any one of them, and without introducing within its machinery any of the objectionable features which they inherently possess.

—*The World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 152.

It would have been an interesting experience if one could have looked upon the glowing faces of the American framers of the Constitution and By-laws of the Administration when they read the above encomium about their brain-child!

An Unparalleled Order

There is one point on which I profoundly disagree with Shoghi Effendi, namely, in his interpretation that, in time, this Administration will develop into the House of Justice mentioned by Baha-O-Llah in the book of Aqdas. These two institutions, the one functioning at present, while the other still in the womb of futurity, are as dissimilar as are night and day. A bitter tree will not yield sweet fruits;

the buzzing of a cricket will never evolve into the song of the nightingale, and a totally exclusive and reactionary system cannot develop into a world government—the dream of all liberals.

Baha-O-Llah (in the book of Aqdas) advises the members of the House of Justice:—

to regard themselves as trustees and representatives of God in the created world . . . and strive to fulfill for the good of the public the trust placed in them for the sake of God, as though they were managing their own affairs and choosing that which is best.

Here Shoghi Effendi draws the conclusion that:—

the Administrative Order of the Faith of Baha-U-Llah must in no wise be regarded as purely democratic in character inasmuch as the basic assumption which requires all democracies to depend fundamentally upon getting their mandate from the people is altogether lacking in this Dispensation.

—*The World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 153.

Why? To my mind, the argument is untenable. The fact that the members of the future House of Justice must regard themselves as trustees and representatives of God in the created world, should not, and must not exclude them from considering themselves, at one and the same time, the elected representatives of men, devoted to the interests of their constituents.

Shoghi Effendi further elucidates:—

In the conduct of the administrative affairs of the

Faith, in the enactment of the legislation necessary to supplement the laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, the members of the Universal House of Justice, it should be borne in mind, are not, as Baha-U-Llah's utterances clearly imply, responsible to those whom they represent, nor are they allowed to be governed by the feelings, the general opinion, and even the convictions of the mass of the faithful, or of those who directly elect them. They are to follow in a prayerful attitude the dictates and promptings of their conscience . . . "*God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth,*" is Baha-U-Llah's incontrovertible assurance. They, and not the body of those who either directly or indirectly elect them, have thus been made the recipients of the divine guidance.

—*The World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 153.

This is the building up of a theocratic order, so intransigent, so frightful, that nothing hitherto imagined can match it. Shoghi Effendi is indeed correct in saying that his system is unique and has no parallel in all the annals of history!

In Italics

An integral part of an organization is *funds* and *fund raising*, and from this dreary aspect of concerted effort the Bahai Administration is not exempt; in fact, the National Spiritual Assembly has so accentuated the subject of contributions that *money* ranks alongside of *authority* as the second feature in italics of the Cause as it stands today.

A *Plan of Unified Action* drawn up by the National Spiritual Assembly and submitted in December, 1925, to the Bahai community of the United States and Canada

had for object the raising of an average yearly amount of \$150,000. This Plan was approved by the Guardian in the following cablegram, dated January, 1926:—

Congratulate National Assembly on Plan. Noble in conception, sound in method, forceful in its appeal. Fully endorse it. Commend it to every declared believer. Shoghi.

—*Bahai News*, March 1930, No. 39, page 4.

As later events showed, it was most difficult to raise this annual religious taxation and the Plan would have failed, had it not been for the flooding of the country with high pressure appeals, cables, letters, bulletins, articles and especial calls. Shoghi Effendi writes:—

We must continually repeat, appeal and urge them to realize afresh the vital urgency of the task before them.

Again he says:—

It is my earnest hope and prayer that the friends will more universally, substantially and regularly contribute to this Plan.

Again:—

I would be grieved to learn that any believer would ever attempt to support an activity that lies outside the province of the Plan, and would neglect thereby his sacred obligation toward the Budget.

—Above quotations from *Bahai News*,
January, 1928, No. 21.

By means of such calls, the Bahais nobly rose to the occasion, and the obligations of the Plan have been substantially fulfilled.

It must be remembered that the Administration has set itself to the almost superhuman task of building a magnificent Temple in the vicinity of Chicago, which, up to this time, has cost more than a million dollars, and that this tremendous obligation necessarily dominates its horizon. Added to this are the very large expenses involved in the maintenance of the National Spiritual Assembly, amounting to \$35,000 annually, (which sum does not include the expenses of any local assemblies), together with a lesser amount (small in the past, but increasing lately) which is expended on teaching. I personally consider that the huge sum of money raised yearly from just a handful of men and women represents a miracle of devotion and self-sacrifice which it would be almost impossible to parallel. It certainly is a commentary on the love which the Cause inspires in the hearts of the people. On the other hand, the continuous drive for money, which feature is never absent from the Guardian's letters, acts as a depressant on the minds of all. Here is a sample of the Guardian's appeal: *Contributions to this Fund constitute in addition a practical and effective way whereby each believer can test the measure and character of his faith.*

From this state of affairs, a conclusion may here be drawn and it is this: Everybody who accepts the Faith at the hands of the Administration places himself or herself under the severe obligation of contributing funds to the movement, while those who acquire the Teachings through other channels undergo no taxation whatsoever. It is evi-

dent that the Administration, having in mind the dream of world dominion (which dream seems to include one of universal taxation), would consider such independent individuals or groups as a menace to its plan for temporal power, and this undoubtedly explains, in part, the disfavor in which The New History Society is held. However that may be, I believe that a great Cause, such as that conferred upon humanity by Baha-O-Allah, would do well to accept the words of Christ as its standard for contributions: *Freely you have received, freely give*. I admit that, in such case, the monetary harvest would be smaller, but something else would be gained—something that is important also.

My Object

I have herein outlined the circumstances which led to the founding, development and establishment of the Bahai Administration, an institution which by this time has so identified itself with the Cause that the large majority of Bahais feel that this universal movement, born in Persia, is unauthentic without the trade-mark: *Made in the United States*. Like an octopus, this sinister organism has wound itself about its victim, while the *faithful*, ever obedient to authority and power, stifle whatsoever instincts of responsibility that yet remain in their hearts. Now, I do not flatter myself with the hope of making even a dent on the consciousness of those who follow the Administration; such is not my object in writing this book. I merely wish to set down, as a record for the future, a few notes of historic importance, believing that no one else is possessed of the knowledge, the documentation and the *will* to do so.

In addition, I am inserting the views of an individual who loves the Cause devotedly and who believes that he understands, in some measure, the liberal and lofty intentions of Abdul Baha. Perhaps, some day, when mankind has learned much through suffering, a few scholars will look through these pages and gain a new impression of the movement. But, this is for the future and what the future holds, no man knows. At present, we can only be sincere and do our utmost, leaving the rest to God and to His Destiny, the plans of which cannot be forestalled.

Unheeded Words

Wishing to close this chapter on a high note and yet hold to the general subject that has been treated, I find that I can do no better than quote the words of Shoghi Effendi himself:—

The call of Baha-U-Llah is primarily directed against all forms of provincialism, all insularities and prejudices. If long-cherished ideals and time-honored institutions, if certain social assumptions and religious formulae have ceased to promote the welfare of the generality of mankind, if they no longer minister to the needs of a continually evolving humanity, let them be swept away and relegated to the limbo of obsolescent and forgotten doctrines. Why should these, in a world subject to the immutable law of change and decay, be exempt from the deterioration that must needs overtake every human institution? For legal standards, political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interests of humanity as a whole, and not humanity

to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine.

--*World Order of Baha-U-Llah*, page 42.

It is to be regretted that this phase of the Guardian's recommendations has not been taken seriously; had it been so, I would not have had occasion to write this book.

CHAPTER XIII

ADMINISTRATIVE FRILLS AND FURBELOWS

Early Misgivings

In 1926, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada promulgated: *Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of the National Spiritual Assembly*, incorporating the Bahai Cause and assuming an alleged proprietorship and trusteeship over this universal movement. Unfortunately Shoghi Effendi, as the Guardian, approved every step thus taken, although there have been instances when he warned his representatives against concentrating too much on the less important aspects of the movement. As early as 1924, he held up the finger of caution:

But let us be on our guard . . . lest too much concern in that which is secondary in importance, and too long a preoccupation with the details of our affairs and activities, make us neglectful of the most essential, the most urgent of all our obligations, namely, to bury our cares and teach the Cause.

—*Bahai Administration*, page 37.

That the warnings of Shoghi Effendi were justified and that the National Spiritual Assembly itself came to realize the fact that a sense of anxiety and unrest existed among its members is evidenced by the following admission on its part:—

There seems to be a growing feeling among a rela-

tively few of the believers that the Administration of the Cause in America is developing into a hard and inflexible machine and that there is a tendency to restrict individual effort and stifle individual initiative and enterprise.

—*Bahai News*, No. 77, Sept. 1933.

Under the present order of Bahai organization, the National Spiritual Assembly is the supreme authority (*Bahai News*, No. 63, June 1932); all the local assemblies are to adhere to its dicta, while the people must obey the local assemblies. (*Bahai News*, No. 62, May 1932.) At one time, however, it seems that the National Spiritual Assembly, in its turn, felt that Shoghi Effendi's standard was a little uncompromising, for it states: *It is evident that if the Guardian's standard is too rigidly applied a community will be choked and stifled . . . for some months the members of the National Assembly have given special thought to this subject. . . .*

Administrative Structure Takes Shape

Membership: The considerations involved in joining the Bahai Organization are so complicated and detailed that Shoghi Effendi states: *I cannot in this connection emphasize too strongly the supreme necessity for the exercise of the utmost discretion, caution and tact* (*Bahai News*, No. 65, August 1932, page 3) and the *Bahai News*, in numerous issues, again and again comes back to the subject. One of the suggestions advanced is to make the applicant sign a blank which sets forth the exact qualifications required; another is *to lay down a definite period of time—for ex-*

ample, a year, before an assembly can act upon an application after it is received. For those who are interested in partially understanding the complications attendant upon the acceptance of a new member, I suggest the study of a long article from which I have just quoted and also the four Sections of *Bahai Procedure* issued by Bahai Publishing Committee, 1937.

Minority rights: A distinctly dictatorial touch is applied to the deliberations of the Bahai council: *the teachings recognize no minority rights whatever within the body of an Assembly. Every decision made by a Spiritual Assembly is binding upon each and all its members alike, whatever their personal views* (*Bahai News*, No. 87, Sept. 1934, page 3) and, *There is no place in Bahai Administration for minority action or reports. How often have we heard in Assemblies' deliberations the expressed wish of one or more members to be recorded as voting in opposition to the action of the majority. Such an expressed wish manifests the ego of our human nature.* (*Bahai News*, No. 77, Sept. 1933, page 2.)

Infallibility of the Assembly: Although the members of the National Spiritual Assembly are elected annually by the representatives of the Bahai Assemblies of the United States and Canada in convention assembled, and owe their continuation in office to those electors, it is asserted: *that the Spiritual Assembly is not a body created by the believers, even though by their votes at elections they determine its membership. . . . A spiritual Assembly rests upon sanctions higher than that of the voting community. Its functions and powers are unalterable. The responsibility of its members is not to the electorate but to the*

higher authority resident in the Cause. (Bahai News, No. 87, Sept. 1934, page 2.) Infallibility is actually attached to the National Spiritual Assembly in the following words of the Guardian: *The potent energies released through the ascension of the Center of His Covenant (Abdul Baha) crystallized into this supreme, this infallible Organ for the accomplishment of a Divine Purpose. (World Order of Baha-O-Ilah by Shoghi Effendi, page 89.)*

Teaching: Now, in regard to teaching: *to achieve complete success, every teacher should work directly under the supervision and recognition of his or her Spiritual Assembly. (Bahai News, No. 64, July 1932, page 3.)* One definition of a qualified teacher is a Bahai who adheres implicitly to the Bahai Administration and is in accord with the National Spiritual Assembly and with the local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahai Community to which he belongs. *(Bahai News, No. 49, March 1931, page 6.)*

Twenty Lessons in Bahai Administration

Inasmuch as the teaching of the accumulated rules and laws of the National Spiritual Assembly became the be-all and end-all of the Bahai Organization, it was decided to issue a booklet in mimeograph form entitled *Twenty Lessons in Bahai Administration*. This was prepared by the Study Outline Committee, approved by the Bahai Reviewing Committee in 1935 and distributed by Bahai Publishing Committee, P. O. Box 348, Grand Central Annex, New York, N. Y. This booklet contains twenty lessons, and the student, under the direction of an approved teacher, is supposed to study one lesson a week—in a period

approximately measured at five months. This amazing document, in itself, is a convincing proof that the glorious teachings of Baha-O-Ilah and Abdul Baha are totally forgotten. Indeed, not one trace of them is left. Here is a supreme tragedy, a cause for lamentation and an occasion for mourning! The Bahai Faith is buried under the debris of these regulations—all of which tend to obscure, in the consciousness of the student, the pure and majestic conception of the Cause which is his by right. Imagine spending five months filling one's mind and heart with such childish, legalistic twiddle-dum and twiddle-dee! Then, having waded through these muddy waters and stagnant pools, the student is expected to answer a number of questions, some of which are reproduced herewith:—

Test Questions

What is the foundation of the Bahai Administrative Order and what is the watchword?

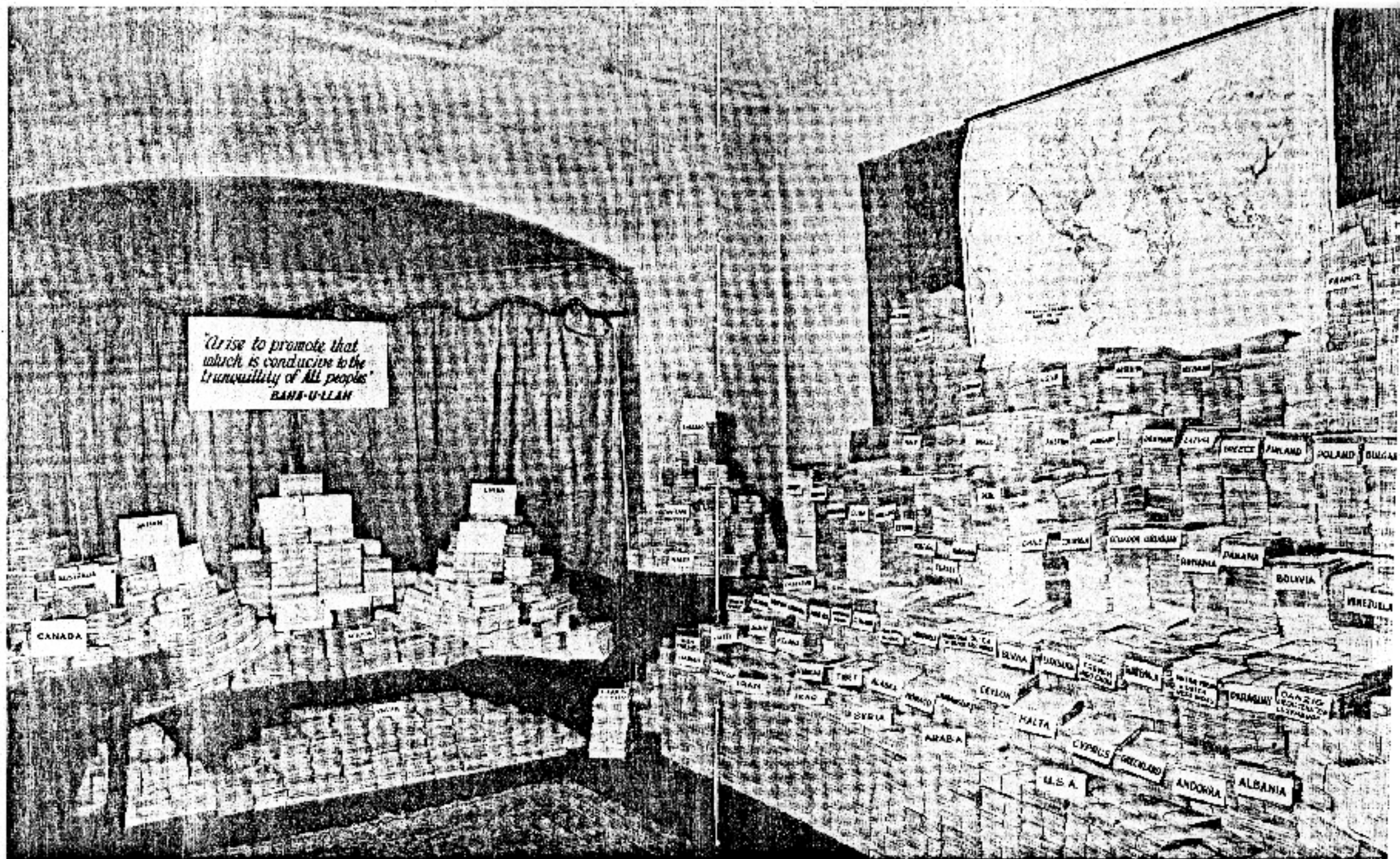
Why does the authority in the Bahai Administrative Order command complete allegiance?

Discuss the balance between the final authority of the National Assembly and the purely consultative function of the National Convention.

Discuss the jurisdiction, duties and powers of the National Spiritual Assembly.

What position has the National Assembly taken regarding acting as administrator of estates or as guardian for children, and also regarding gifts of property?

In what matters does the Guardian declare the authority of the National Spiritual Assembly to be "undivided and unchallengeable"?



Exhibition of Mail, held at the Headquarters of The New History
the World Competition, printed in eleven languages, to the

Society in October, 1936, on the eve of posting the Conditions of
five continents and the Islands of the Seas.

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How would you answer an inquiry as to how a Guardian differs from a Pope?

In what respect does the Universal House of Justice differ from the House of Cardinals?

What is the residential qualification for a voting believer?

What are the more fundamental qualifications for voting believers?

Note the distinction between believers and those who consider themselves Bahais but do not accept the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha.

Are people who accept the Cause with reservations to consider themselves Bahais?

Under what conditions may a believer be removed from the voting list of a Bahai Community? What body makes the final decision?

Discuss the function of the Local Spiritual Assembly in passing upon the qualifications of a new believer.

What standard exists for legal incorporation of a local Spiritual Assembly?

Does a Local Spiritual Assembly have the authority to criticize a policy duly adopted by the National Spiritual Assembly?

What is the function of Bahai News and to whom should it be given?

Are the Nineteen Day Feasts open to non-believers?

What is the practice about securing credentials when visiting other Bahai Communities?

What is the rule about admitting Orientals to Bahai Communities?

What is the relation of the National Assembly to institutions outside the Bahai Organization?

With what kind of groups may Bahais associate themselves and what kind are they not to join?

What reasons do you see for the stand taken against adherence to a political party?

What are Shoghi Effendi's instructions concerning church membership?

Why are contributions to the Bahai Fund a measure of the faith of a believer?

Problems in Bahai Administration

His ability having been tested by the above questions and many more, the student is now up for a second gruelling examination, this time on *Problems in Bahai Administration* (a section incorporated in The Booklet of Twenty Lessons). In order to study these enigmas with befitting attention, one runs the risk of losing either one's reason or one's sense of humor—probably both. What have such childish fancies to do with the Cause of Baha-O-Llah, the aim of which is the spiritual regeneration of the world and the glorification of mankind? However, my readers may be more expert at puzzles than I am (it is likely that some of them are adepts at the Prof. Quiz radio hour), so I will give them the chance to solve some of them. Here they are:—

Mr. S. finds that he could visit a number of communities in connection with a business trip and is qualified to contribute toward meeting programs or to help in any teaching projects. What steps should he take (a) before leaving home and (b) in introducing himself to each new Local Assembly?

Mrs. A., a member of the New York Baha'i community, expects to spend the winter in Miami and would like to join in their community activities. What steps should be taken toward this end before she leaves home? If Mrs. A. neglects this step before making contact with the Miami Baha'is, what should the Miami Spiritual Assembly do about it?

Miss G. is trying gradually to interest a group of her friends in the Baha'i Faith through informal discussion of general subjects from the Baha'i point of view. Other Baha'is criticize her for working alone in the teaching project. Which attitude do you think Shoghi Effendi would approve of? What should be the relationship of Miss G. and the Local Spiritual Assembly in her project?

Mrs. X. is an old believer whose faith centers around her personal experiences with Abdul Baha and she understands neither the authority of Shoghi Effendi nor the significance of Baha'i Administration. What could the Local Assembly do to help her make that necessary transition? What is the difference between Mrs. X.'s position and that of a person who actively opposes Shoghi Effendi and Baha'i Administration?

Mr. E. has always been an active Democrat in his city and neither wants to break his connection with the Democratic party nor understands why he should do so. What arguments would you use to convince him that as a Baha'i he must give up all political affiliations? What would be the result if he refuses to see the point and accepts election to a government office of some kind?

Miss A. has attended four Baha'i meetings and is much attracted to the teachings. An over-enthusiastic be-

liever asks her if she would like to join the Baha'is and takes her to the next nineteen day feast. In how many ways did the believer show her ignorance of Baha'i administration? How should the Local Spiritual Assembly handle this delicate situation?

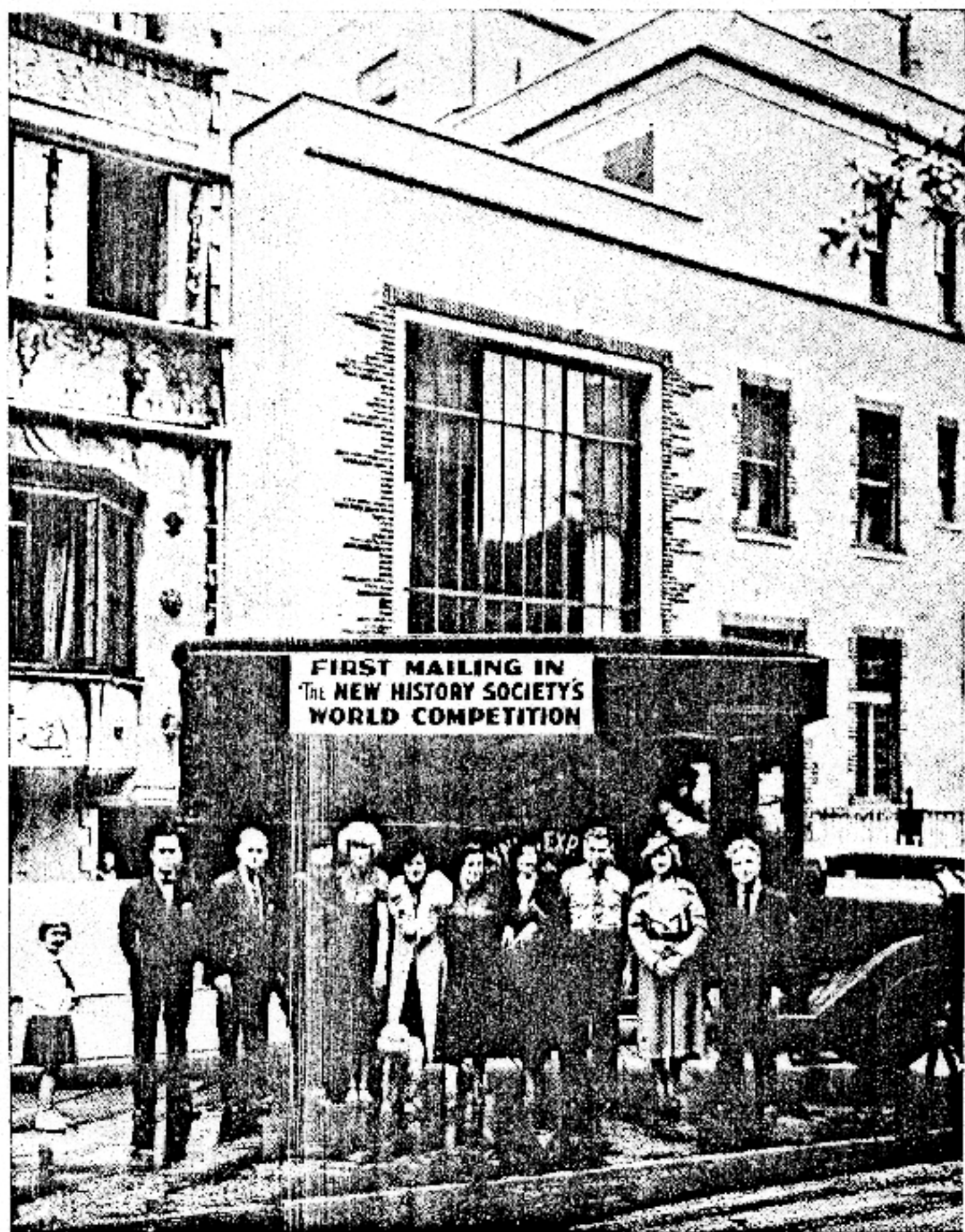
Mr. X. has been attending Baha'i meetings occasionally for ten years and has just expressed a desire to associate himself with the Baha'is. Does this fact necessarily mean that he is qualified to become a voting member of the community? How should you ascertain his eligibility?

A member of a community interests individuals in the Baha'i Faith and contributes regularly but does not attend Nineteen-Day Feasts or other meetings. How should the Spiritual Assembly handle this problem?

The above portentous problems on Bahai Administration (which I admit are baffling to my type of mentality) carry me back to my childhood days when my teacher used to present to the class certain oral and written exercises, on which I spent hours, but from which I seldom came out victorious. With pain and anguish I still remember some of them. For instance:—

A cellar is 15 ft. long and 12 ft. wide. What is the area of the floor? If the cellar is 8 ft. deep, how many cubic feet does it contain?

A kite string was broken, and four parts were saved. The first part of the string was $75\frac{1}{4}$ ft. long, the second part $127\frac{1}{4}$ ft., the third part 261 ft., and the fourth part $891\frac{1}{4}$ ft. Allowing 1 ft. for tying, how long was the string when all four were tied together?



Van ready to leave for U. S. Post Office on October 7, 1936. Members of staff and volunteers who prepared 75,000 pieces of mail for World Competition.

From left to right:—Mr. Felix Ramos, Mr. O. J. Hanko, Mrs. Frederick Allien, Mrs. L. S. Chanler, Miss Chancy Carro, Mrs. Gemma Mannini, Miss Lilyan Tannen, Mr. Louis J. Meisler, Miss Eleanor Hoagland and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab.

The main difference between the problems of the arithmetic book and those of the Bahai Administration is that with the former we can find a definite solution while answers to the latter, even though satisfactory to the examiners, may still remain questionable to many an earnest mind.

While reading this remarkable booklet, and selecting a few *Questions* for use in this article, I was trying in all fairness to discover a relationship, no matter how remote, between this literature and the Cause of Baha-O-Llah. Does the faith of an individual who has responded to the Bahai Revelation really and truly depend upon a mastery of these questions? And supposing an inquirer, in all enthusiasm, takes up this course of instruction and comes through it with flying colors, has he at the end gained an understanding which will be of use to him in promulgating the fundamental principles of the Cause? Has he become a more illumined servant of the world of humanity? Was it to him that Baha-O-Llah spoke: *Be the deliverer of the Cause of God in such wise that through thine utterances, the tree will be set on fire?* (Baha-O-Llah—*Bahai Scriptures*, p. 193.) Is he able to *destroy the abodes of neglect by the hands of power and composure, and build the chambers of knowledge in the hearts?* (Baha-O-Llah—*Bahai Scriptures*, p. 98.) Is he fitted to *take possession of the cities of hearts by the swords of wisdom and of explanation?* (Baha-O-Llah—*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 43.) Has he gained wings that he may *Walk above the world by the power of the Greatest Name and see the secrets of Pre-Existence and know that which none knew of?* (Baha-O-Llah—*Bahai Scriptures*, p. 193.) Is he now like a well-cultivated garden wherein the roses and varie-

gated flowers of heaven are growing in fragrance and beauty? (Abdul Baha—*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Vol. I, p. 21.) Can he honestly claim that he is now in a better position to become *a breath of life, a banner of salvation and a manifest sign . . . a lamp of reconciliation and peace, a standard of love and attraction, a star of guidance among mankind?* (*Tablets of Abdul Baha*, Vol. III, p. 712.)

I may be mistaken, but in my estimation these *Twenty Lessons in Bahai Administration* are like unto a mirage which has the show of water. The thirsty ones make abundant efforts in their search, but, when reaching it, remain deprived and portionless. Or . . . like unto the image of a loved one which is destitute of life and soul. When the lover reaches it, he finds it of no worth and value, and finds no gain save great pain and despondency. (Baha-O-Llah—*Bahai Scriptures*, p. 224.)

Regarding the student of these *Twenty Lessons in Bahai Administration*, ambitious as he undoubtedly is, and sincere in his purpose, I make bold to offer a graphic and most striking utterance of the Revelator himself:—

Ye are in likeness as a bird, which with all joy and fragrance soars in the utmost security in the cheerful air of the Praised One; then in the imaginary hope of grains, it inclines toward the mud and water of the earth, and with all eagerness, besmeurs itself with mud and mire; and when it attempts to re-ascend, it finds itself unable and a captive, forasmuch as wings besmeared with water and clay are not capable of flight. At that time, that bird of the exalted heaven finds itself a dweller in the mortal earth.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 223.

PART FIVE

CAPRICE, INC.

14. The Double Mask

15. Thought Control

For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. Now, the Lord is that spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

*—Epistle of Paul, II Corinthians,
Chapter 3, Verses 6 and 17*

CHAPTER XIV

THE DOUBLE MASK

The Bill of Rights

Immediately following the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, on September 17, 1789, a number of safeguarding amendments were drawn up, and, when the First Congress met at its initial session in the City of New York, on September 25th, of the same year, it was voted to submit these to the States for ratification. The Amendments, 12 in number, were properly called: A Bill of Rights; ten of them were ratified within the next two years.

The *First* Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and the most important and far-reaching, reads as follows:—

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press.

The greatness of the United States and the intrinsic superiority of its civilization to all others lies within these twenty-six simple words. I venture to assert that no other sentence has exercised such epoch-making influence over the destiny of any nation, ancient or modern. These twenty-six words are the origin of the religious, cultural, scientific, industrial, economic and literary progress of the nation.

It is claimed that language is not expected to convey all

the delicate shades of meaning or the inner states of mind, but, inasmuch as facts must be described in some way, words are used—always with a latent consciousness of their inadequacy. However, regarding these twenty-six immortal words, no such apology is appropriate, for like giant searchlights they have guided and are guiding the lost mariners on the tempestuous sea of thought to the course of enlightenment and the harbor of universal tolerance.

Freedom in Truth

Since the dawn of Christianity, men have been taught by Church and State: *Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free* (St. John 8:32). Nevertheless, the brand of truth that was dogmatically taught by these institutions did not make them free, but rather enslaved their minds, and tortured and murdered their bodies. Man was told that he was created in the image of God and that he shared in the divine nature, but the Great Model was banished from human society and imprisoned in civic dungeons, while poor humanity was set to imitate the satanic model and develop its lower nature. Liberty, as a religious experience, was unknown except to a few daring thinkers, and the exercise of conscience was a transgression to be frowned upon by the law-abiding.

Now, for over a hundred and fifty years the United States has *put into practice* the words of its First Amendment, and during that time a civilization has applied itself to the truth and has sought to know it.

Had it not been for the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights we, in all probability, would have a different story to tell regarding the promotion of the Bahai Cause in the

United States since its introduction at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, in 1893.

Baha-O-Llah was a champion of religious liberty, an apostle of intellectual freedom and the advocate of man's emancipation from the fetters of dogmas and creeds. His teachings inaugurated an era of human brotherhood on a logical foundation, and made a royal circle of universal understanding among the religions, nations and races. Consequently, the Bahai Cause stands for equality, and this equality of course can have no meaning except equal rights for *all*; nor can there be a functioning of equal rights unless the individual is allowed liberty to act according to his best judgment and the dictates of his conscience.

Baha-O-Llah calls upon his disciples to arise and banish religious intolerance from the face of the earth, in order that the era of universal freedom may set in. He says:—

Gird up the loins of endeavor, so that perchance religious dissension and strife may, through your efforts, be reduced to nothingness among the inhabitants of the world. Arise for the love of God and man in this important Cause.

—*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 11.

Spiritual Hospitality

The late Prof. Edward G. Browne, Orientalist of Cambridge University, England, visited Acca, Palestine, in 1890 and had the privilege of several interviews with Baha-O-Llah. At their first meeting, the founder of the Bahai Cause addressed him thus:—

We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of

strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment. . . . That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this?

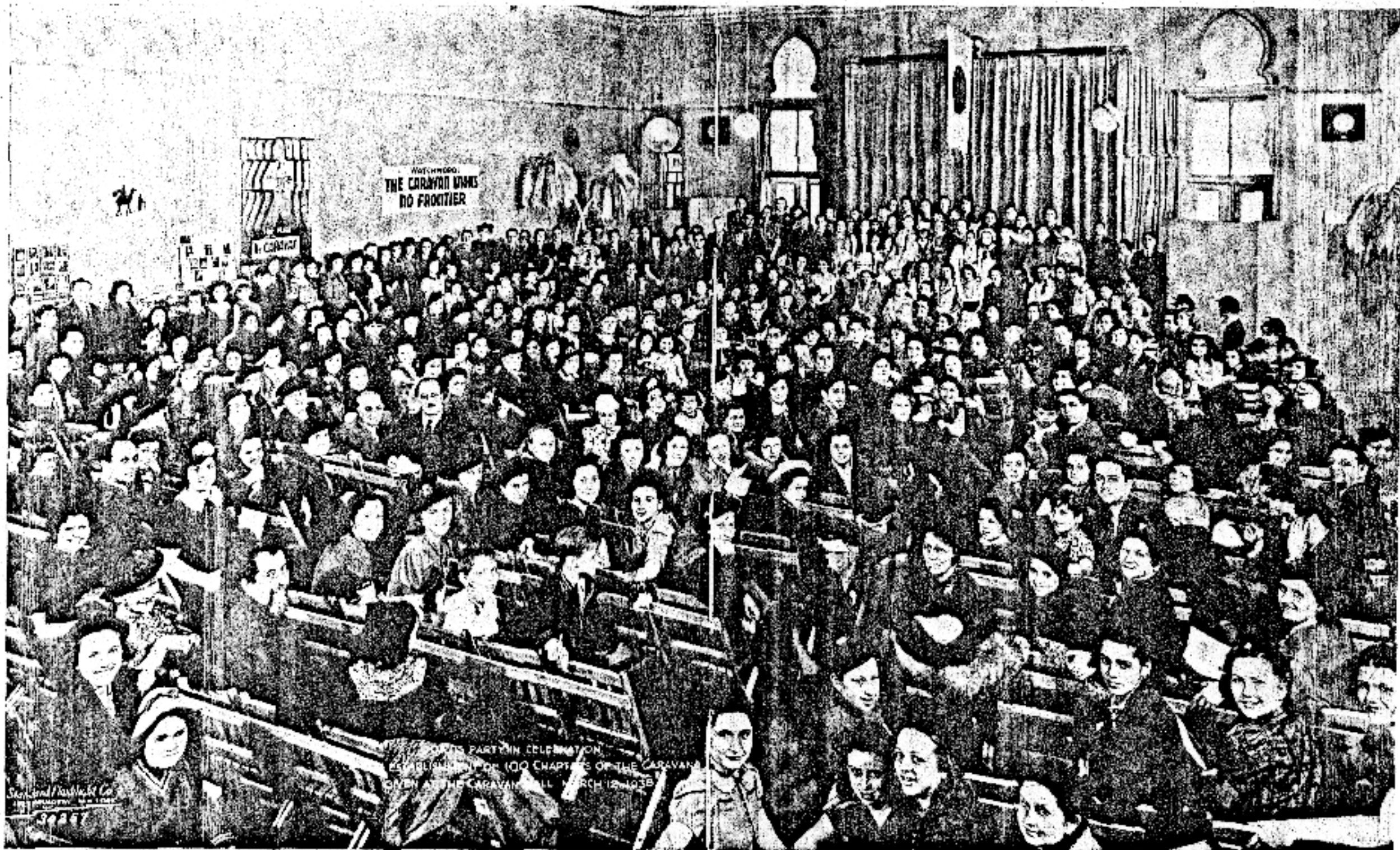
—*Introduction to a Traveller's Narrative*, page xl.

The purpose of Baha-O-Illah, as expressed in the above utterance, is more and more becoming justified in these United States, for through the power of the First Amendment, a spiritual hospitality *has* been established, and religions, sects and denominations, instead of shunning and antagonizing one another, live side by side, associate and are *as brothers*—thus the ground is prepared for the realization of the *One Faith*. Indeed, we see before our eyes a miracle of transformation; sons of men, having come from the four corners of the earth, are strengthening amongst themselves *the bonds of affection and unity*, and year by year minimizing *diversity of religion* until, in God's own appointed time, they shall turn in *complete harmony and concord*, to the Divine Horizon that encircles them all. Toward this beloved land of opportunity all the races of the world have wended their way. Englishmen and Frenchmen, Italians and Germans, Poles and Swedes, Palestinians and Persians, Chinese and Japanese, Africans and Syrians, Turks and Arabs—all are here in these United States. *Differences of race* are not yet *annulled* and it may be a long, long time before they are definitely placed in the discard, but we have taken the preliminary steps toward that end; we are not hostile to one another; we meet in the market-place and often in the

churches; we work side by side, study from the same textbooks, read the same magazines and newspapers, travel east and west, north and south, without passports or customs barriers; and we broadcast our grievances, and listen to the music and messages of our multi-colored, multi-farious brothers and sisters as the radio brings them to us by day and by night. More than all, we have come to value the cultures and noble qualities that characterize the races, and appreciate the contributions of each one to the spiritual, artistic, scientific and economic structure that is America.

Yes, we have learned to *know* one another very well, and to have respect for one another's ideals and convictions; and, as the years roll on, we are becoming aware of the fact that the salvation of mankind lies in religious, intellectual, social, national, international and interracial cooperation. Even now, through her own example, America can teach this lesson of cooperation to the rest of the world.

No! *Differences of race* are not *annulled*, but they do not play havoc in our national life; they hardly disturb the smooth workings of our national economy. For the present, we are moderately satisfied with the results that have come out of the laboratory of our interracial experiences. A working example of unity has been set up. It is not perfect, far from it; but it operates and is better than anything that has been attempted elsewhere. Or I might ask: Has it *ever* been attempted elsewhere? Doubtless, as we continue to learn the lessons of universal cooperation and apply them to the actual and concrete problems of our life, *differences of race will be annulled*, for



Oasis Party of The Caravan (Youth Section of The New History Society)
The meeting is in celebration of the One Hundredth Chapter year of 1941, the Two Hundredth

Society) held at the Caravan Hall, New York, in March, 1938.
formed in this international correspondence club. In the present
mark has been passed.

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such is the injunction of Baha-O-Llah—his wish for us as we strive and struggle in our ever-evolving civilization! And then—not now—can we exclaim with him: *What harm is there in this?* and the answer will come, out of our own experience: *Nothing at all! Nothing at all!*

Baha-O-Llah says:—

I declare by the Sun of Truth that the light of understanding renders the horizon brilliant and luminous.

—Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, page 11.

And he makes his mission very clear as he speaks again:—

O people of the earth! My only aim has been to suppress disputes among the religions of the world and enmity among the nations, so that all, happy and free, may occupy themselves with their own interests.

—Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, page 26.

The first part of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States established the right to religious freedom; the second part established the right to *freedom of speech and of the press*. This one sentence put an end to *enmity among the nations* that had adopted this country as their home; for, their rights of worship and of expressing their ideas and hopes in speech and press being protected, there remained no reason for any misunderstanding or altercation. Through these constitutional protections, they could, *happy and free*, occupy themselves with their *own interests*.

In the words of Baha-O-Llah which I have repeatedly quoted throughout the preceding paragraphs, we plainly see that the supreme mission of this Prophet has been to

confer upon the population of the entire earth the inalienable rights of liberty of religion, of speech and of the press. Evidently, emancipation of mind and spirit is a fundamental doctrine of the Bahai Cause, even as it is an elementary law of the United States. It originates in the liberation of a moral personality, working towards the Highest Good—the *Supreme Concourse*, or in Christian terminology, the Kingdom of Heaven.

Reformation

Abdul Baha visited the United States in 1912, where in speech after speech he referred to the problem under discussion. He felt that the entire conception of man in regard to civilization must be reformed; that, inasmuch as the sciences and arts were subject to change, even so the laws of morality and religion must undergo a thorough transformation and be brought up to the level of the spiritual consciousness of God, universal, all-embracing, free—so that man himself may become a reflector of the Divine Radiance. In a speech delivered before the New Thought Forum, Boston, Mass., on August 25th, 1912, he said:—

Day by day, the world attains a new bounty. In this radiant century, neither the old customs nor the old sciences, crafts, laws and regulations have remained. The old political principles are undergoing change and a new body-politic is in process of formation. Nevertheless, some whose thoughts are congealed and whose souls are bereft of the light of the Sun of Reality seek to arrest this development in the world of the minds of men. Is this possible?

In the unmistakable and universal re-formation we are witnessing, when outer conditions of humanity are receiving such impetus, when human life is assuming a new aspect, when sciences are stimulated afresh, inventions and discoveries increasing, civic laws undergoing change and moralities evidencing uplift and betterment, is it possible that spiritual impulses and influences should not be renewed and reformed? Naturally, new spiritual thoughts and inclinations must also become manifest. If spirituality be not renewed, what fruits come from mere physical reformation? For instance, the body of man may improve, the quality of bone and sinew may advance, the hand may develop, other limbs and members may increase in excellence, but if the mind fails to develop, of what use is the rest? The important factor in human improvement is the mind. In the world of the mind there must needs be development and improvement. There must be re-formation in the kingdom of the human spirit, otherwise no result will be attained from betterment of the mere physical structure.

In this new year, new fruits must be forthcoming, for that is the provision and intention of spiritual re-formation. The renewal of the leaf is fruitless. From the re-formation of bark, or branch, no fruit will come forth. The renewal of verdure produces nothing. If there be no renewal of fruit from the tree, of what avail is the re-formation of bark, blossom, branch and trunk? For a fruitless tree is of no special value. Similarly, of what avail is the re-formation of physical conditions, unless they are concomitant with spiritual re-formation? For the essential reality is the spirit, the foundation basis is the spirit, the life of man is due to the spirit, the happiness, the radiance, the glory of

man—all are due to the spirit; and if in the spirit no re-formation takes place, there will be no result to human existence.

Therefore, we must strive with life and heart that the material and physical world may be re-formed, human perception become keener, the merciful effulgence manifest and the radiance of reality shine. Then the star of love shall appear and the world of humanity become illumined. The purpose is that the world of existence is dependent for its progress upon re-formation; otherwise it will be as dead. Consider, if a new springtime failed to appear, what would be the effect upon this globe, the earth? Undoubtedly it would become desolate and life extinct. The earth has need of an annual coming of spring. It is necessary that a new bounty should be forthcoming. If it comes not, life would be effaced. In the same way the world of spirit needs new life, the world of mind necessitates new development, the world of souls a new bounty, the world of morality a re-formation, the world of divine effulgence ever new bestowals. Were it not for this replenishment, the life of the world would become effaced and extinguished. If this room is not ventilated and the air freshened, respiration will cease after a length of time. If no rain falls, all life organisms will perish. If new light does not shine, the darkness of death will envelop the earth. If a new springtime does not arrive, life upon this globe will be obliterated.

Therefore, thoughts must be lofty and ideals uplifted in order that the world of humanity may become assisted in new conditions of reform. When this re-formation affects every degree, then will come the very "Day of the Lord" of which all the prophets have spoken. That is the Day wherein the whole world will

be regenerated. Consider: are the laws of past ages applicable to present human conditions? Evidently they are not. For example, the laws of former centuries sanctioned despotic forms of government. Are the laws of despotic control fitted for present-day conditions? How could they be applied to solve the questions surrounding modern nations? Similarly, we ask, would the status of ancient thought, the crudeness of arts and crafts, the insufficiency of scientific attainment serve us today? Would the agricultural methods of the ancients suffice in the twentieth century? Transportation in the former ages was restricted to conveyance by animals. How would it provide for human needs today? If modes of transportation had not been re-formed, the teeming millions now upon the earth would die of starvation. Without the railway and the fast-going steamship, the world of the present day would be as dead. How could great cities such as New York and London subsist if dependent upon ancient means of conveyance? It is also true of other things which have been re-formed in proportion to the needs of the present time. Had they not been re-formed, man could not find subsistence.

If these material tendencies are in such need of re-formation, how much greater the need in the world of the human spirit, the world of human thought, perception, virtues and bounties! Is it possible that that need has remained stationary while the world has been advancing in every other condition and direction? It is impossible.

Abdul Baha—*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
Vol. II, pages 272, 273, 274.

In the preceding pages, I have presented ample proofs

that the Bahai Cause, as a religious and cultural re-formation, is free from the bondage of any and all the limitations that in the past have impeded the progress of thought; that it aims not only at the moral but also at the practical emancipation of man; that it looks to the fulfillment of the *glorious liberty of the children of God* (Romans 8:21). Baha-O-Llah and his son, Abdul Baha, are the two great Apostles of Freedom. Their message is addressed to freemen and slaves alike; to freemen to lead the *children of God* into the Land of Promise; to slaves to throw off the shackles of serfdom and assert their heritage to the Kingdom. The Bahai Cause summons all men to a glorious enterprise, and in turn it offers *itself* to all men as a way to Truth, liberty and universal service.

A Case in Point

Abdul Baha said that there are some men who *seek to arrest this development in the world of the minds of men*, and one cannot but consider that the lawsuit, brought by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada against Mrs. Chanler and myself, in which the court was requested to restrain us from the *unlawful act* of teaching the Bahai Religion, is a case in point. The Papers were signed by a battery of four lawyers, and I cannot but wonder whether any one of them had ever read the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, wherein the people are guaranteed the free exercise of their religions. Attention to this simple phrase, from this most famous document, would undoubtedly have convinced them that the words *unlawful act* were unwisely chosen.

This strange Complaint continues:—

(1) That the defendants and each of them, their agents, servants, employees, associates, and each of them, be enjoined and restrained, during the pendency of this action and thereafter perpetually

(a) From using, or participating directly or indirectly in the use of, the word Baha'i or any word deceptively similar thereto, as the name or a part of the name of any meeting, lecture, class or social gathering, or as the name or title or a part of the name or title of any book, magazine, or other publication, or as the name or a part of the name under which any book shop or other business is conducted.

Now, I take it for granted that the judges of our courts know the contents of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and that they would not under any circumstances restrain the citizens of these United States from the exercise of their religious beliefs. Therefore, the request of the National Spiritual Assembly that an unconstitutional judgment be rendered, preventing us, our employees and our associates from *using or participating* in the name of our Faith, during the pendency of the lawsuit and thereafter perpetually, is so fantastic and so incredible that I cannot find words to describe such arrogant naïveté.

Perpetually!

What is the actual significance of the word *perpetually*? Perpetual means continuous, incessant, interminable; also everlasting and eternal. Now, as we all are subject to

death, it is evident that the members of the National Spiritual Assembly intended the Court to carry its rulings into the life-hereafter, so that, in the very Kingdom of God we may be prevented from gathering together in the name of our Master and uttering the word *Bahai* or any syllable thereof, or any word *similar thereto*, either *directly or indirectly*.

Likewise, this august body doubtless intended the long arm of present day justice to stretch out into the future affairs of the nation and prevent our children and grandchildren, and the children and grandchildren of our agents, servants, employees and associates unto the third and fourth generation, nay, unto the hundredth generation, throughout all ages and cycles—in other words *perpetually*—from using the word *Bahai as the name or a part of the name of any meeting, lecture, class or social gathering*.

I am a writer and lecturer, and frankly I enjoy my work. I speak and write on the Bahai Cause and on a number of other subjects, and I know that the Bill of Rights has given me and all other American citizens

1. Liberty of Religion,
2. Liberty of Speech,
3. Liberty of the Press.

Thus, in the three particular domains in which I specialize, I have been accorded complete freedom of expression, and neither the National Spiritual Assembly nor the Courts of the United States can take these privileges away from me or from any other.

According to Hitler's policy makers, the Nazi regime of dictatorship is set at one thousand years; but, to the National Spiritual Assembly such a period is but a short and fleeting moment. Its vision is far more grandiose; indeed, it envisaged a *perpetual* dictatorship to be imposed on every aspect of spiritual life, backed by the laws of the United States.

Probation

Simply out of curiosity and with the utmost goodwill, I would like to ask a question of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly. How did they expect the Courts of New York to carry out their demand? Did they suggest that a corps of marshals and detectives shadow Mrs. Chanler, myself and our *agents, servants, employees, associates and each of them* by day and by night, ready, as soon as they hear the word *Bahai*, to swoop down upon us and drag us to the police department? Would such precautions, and the expense to the city involved therein, be justified in the eyes of the Mayor?

If so, I will proceed with another inquiry. Are we really such desperados that we should be subjected to minute and incessant supervision? Do we belong to the class of malefactors of wealth, known as *economic royalists*, or are we Fifth Columnists, ready at any moment to do our part in handing over the country to other dictatorships which have already *arrived*? Actually what is the color of our guilt? Is it perhaps red?

If we have trespassed on anyone's property; if we have disrupted the peace of the community; if we have committed arson; if we have embezzled the funds of a business or society; if we have pillaged, plundered, rifled and

sacked the private possessions of our neighbors; if we have smuggled forbidden goods through the customs house; in brief, if we have violated any of the laws of these United States, we would be more than willing to stand before the bar of justice and receive adequate and ample sentence of fine or jail, or think ourselves lucky if we should get off on probation, perpetual or otherwise.

Yet, the while I ask these questions, I know very well that our supposed sins are far greater than these, and more serious: We do not surrender our religious liberty nor submit to the corporate and ecclesiastical authority of the National Spiritual Assembly. We turn to Baha-O-Llah without asking permission. We carry the name of Abdul Baha in our hearts and on our lips. We spread the ideals of peace and brotherhood as taught by these, our beloved Masters. We hold meetings and deliver lectures on spiritual subjects relative to the Bahai Cause. We write and publish leaflets, pamphlets and books on the Bahai Movement. Yes, we perpetrate all these actions, in love, happiness and freedom; we have stepped out into the open spaces of service, unmindful of obligations imposed on us to remain on perpetual parole and on perpetual probation; and these crimes have been committed in broad daylight, unblushingly and with no tremors of fear. Indeed, we are fully aware of the fact that few Bahais would have acted as we have.

Justice

Now, it is probable (and this is the pity of it) that the members of the National Spiritual Assembly believed that, in this legal action, they were just to the Cause and just to us, and it is not for me to question their ideal of justice.

Nevertheless, I venture to quote the ideal of justice as tendered to us by Baha-O-Llah. It is to be found in the *Hidden Words*:—

Justice is loved above all. Neglect it not, if thou desirest Me. By it thou wilt be strengthened to perceive things with thine own eyes and not by the eyes of men, to know them by thine own knowledge and not by the knowledge of any in the world. Meditate on this—how thou oughtest to be. Justice is of My bounty to thee and of My providence over thee; therefore, keep it ever before thy sight.

Janus

We have all read of Janus, an ancient Roman Deity, primarily god of gates and doors—hence of all beginnings. Our month of January was named after him. In the Forum, the shrine of Janus was equipped with double doors, symbolizing the quality of this personage who was represented as having two faces, looking opposite ways.

Now, after a close study of the actions of the National Spiritual Assembly, I have come to the conclusion that this body is a replica of that ancient god, for it looks upon the world through two masks, one turned toward the East and the other toward the West.

First:(a) On the one hand, the literature put out by the Bahai Administration is replete with references to present-day persecutions undergone by the Bahais in Persia and other parts of the East, on account of the absence of religious liberty in those countries. In numerous letters, Shoghi Effendi describes most vividly the injustices heaped upon the followers of the Faith, who have thus been

denied freedom of expression. He requests the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada who, as Westerners, have received *the inestimable benefits of religious toleration and freedom* (*Bahai Administration*, page 124), to give publicity to the *unbridled barbarism* existent in Persia.

(b) On the other hand, this same National Spiritual Assembly, with the sanction of Shoghi Effendi, has been making every effort to abolish religious liberty within the country where it functions. As a final step, it instituted legal proceedings to prevent the meeting of Bahai groups which do not operate under its own supervision. The explanation offered is: *the protection of the sacred rights of the Bahai Community* (*Annual Reports of the National Spiritual Assembly 1939-1940*, page 2).

Now, it is a fact that the Persians, in denying religious liberty to the Bahais, also bear in mind *the protection of the sacred rights of the Islamic Community*. It is for this reason that they enforce restrictions upon a minority such as the Bahais, and the reason is considered valid by the Hierarchy and the State likewise. It is to be noted that, in this instance, the sanction of the State constitutes the only difference between the two examples; for, in our country, the State holds itself aloof from such matters. (For fuller information read *Bahai News*, No. 53, July 1931, p. 6, article entitled "Persia"; *Bahai News*, No. 90, March 1939, p. 3, "Important Events Affecting the Faith in Persia"; *Bahai News*, No. 96, December 1935, p. 6, "Report from National Spiritual Assembly of Iran"; *Bahai News*, No. 97, January 1936, p. 1, "Letter from Shoghi Effendi on Closing of Tarbiat Schools"; *Bahai News*, No.

121, December 1938, pp. 10-11, "Annual Report, Iran"; also *Bahai Administration*, pp. 84, 94, 111, 123, 124.)

A Shrine in Bagdad

Second: A certain property in Iraq has, for many years, been an object of litigation between the Bahais and the Mohammedan Community.

When, after his exile from Persia in 1852, Baha-O-Llah arrived in Bagdad, he established himself and his family in a group of dwelling-houses belonging to one of his disciples, which houses he later acquired. Here he lived for eleven years until a second exile drove him on to Adrianople.

Now, Baha-O-Llah had never revealed his ownership of these dwelling-houses, which to all appearances remained the property of the disciple; but, after his departure they continued vacant, owing to the sacred character which the long residence of the Prophet had imposed upon them.

So, for many years, the Bahais watched over this property very quietly, concealing from the authorities the importance that they attached to it, for religious persecution was rampant in those days.

Matters remained in this condition until, with the establishment of the British Mandate, *liberty of conscience and religion*, proclaimed in the Covenant of the League of Nations, was confirmed in Iraq by the Treaty of 1922 with Great Britain, and later by the Organic Law of Iraq. Then, taking advantage of a security and freedom which they had never before known, the Bahais, under the direction of Shoghi Effendi, set about to putting into repair

these dwellings, *which*, the Guardian describes, *to outward seeming, appeared only as a cluster of humble and decrepit buildings lost amid the obscure and tortuous lanes of old Bagdad.*

Presently, the Bahais tried to take possession of the houses, and it was at this juncture that definite opposition set in. The case was carried from court to court with no decision in favor of the Bahais until, through the efforts of the Bahai Assembly of Bagdad with the assistance of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, Mr. Mountfort Mills, a lawyer and a most prominent Bahai, was enabled to bring the question before the Permanent Mandates Commission held in Geneva, Switzerland, from October 26th to November 13, 1928. The conclusion was as follows: *The Permanent Mandates Commission, recognizing the justice of the complaint made by the Bahai Spiritual Assembly of Bagdad, has recommended to the Council of the League such action as it thinks proper to redress the wrong suffered by the petitioners.*

I regret that I do not find any record in the literature of the Bahai Administration that is in my possession whether the Council of the League made any recommendation regarding the actual return of the property to the Bahais; or whether the return was ever accomplished. I certainly hope so.

Inconsistency

My object in giving the details of this transaction is to show that, in support of their claims, the Bahai Community repeatedly appealed *to the principle of the liberty*

of conscience and religion contained in the Treaty of 1922 between Iraq and Great Britain (Article III) and in the Organic Law of Iraq (Article XIII) as also to Article 22 (1) of the League Covenant. The principle of *liberty of conscience and religion* seems very important to the National Spiritual Assembly in its dealings with the East, and it turns to the Courts of that land to enforce its application; but this same body, in its dealings with the West, applies to the Courts of the United States to *prevent* the application of the same principle. Here is the DOUBLE MASK, in full use!

Again, I can picture the Janus-faced lock, which history describes to us. It was one that could be opened by two keys on opposite sides of the door. Now, the National Spiritual Assembly turns the key, opening toward Bagdad and pours reproaches upon the officials of that city because, in their dealings with the Bahais, they do not put into practice *the principle of liberty of conscience and religion* as embodied in their Organic Law. Then, this same Assembly turns the key opening toward New York and pours reproaches, even more vehement, upon a group of Bahais in The New History Society, because they have allowed themselves to put into practice *the principle of the liberty of conscience and religion* as taught by Baha-O'llah and Abdul Baha, and as embodied in the Bill of Rights.

*But whereunto shall I liken this generation? . . .
For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they
say, He hath a devil.*

The Son of man came eating and drinking and they

say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

—St. Matthew, Chapter XI, Verses 16-19.

(For further details about the House of Baha-O-Llah in Bagdad, read *Bahai News*, No. 30, March 1929, p. 3, "Letters from Shoghi Effendi"; *Bahai News*, No. 32, May 1929, pp. 5-7, "Letter from Shoghi Effendi"; *Bahai News*, No. 41, May 1930, pp. 6-7, "The Houses of Baha-O-Llah"; and *Bahai Administration*, pp. 84, 85, 90, 96, 104.)

Ban on Literature

Third: The Government of Iran, in furtherance of its nationalistic policy, had placed a ban on the entry and circulation of Bahai literature throughout the country. In 1932, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, following instructions from Shoghi Effendi, addressed a petition to His Imperial Majesty the Shah on the subject of lifting this ban, and entrusted this petition to its personal representative, Mrs. Keith Ransom-Kehler.

In this document, thus forwarded to the ruler of Persia, the National Spiritual Assembly considered *how widely spread throughout America and especially among the Bahais, is the appreciation of the notable reforms which have been made in Persia as the result of your Majesty's Administration of Affairs in that land. It also referred to the importance of the spiritual ties, through the reverence of the believers in both countries for the enlightened religious teachings of Baha-O-Llah; and finally stated: The appointment of a representative, to journey to Teheran*

for the purpose of presenting in person the petition of this Assembly, will make it evident to your Majesty how profoundly the American Bahais are moved by their inability to communicate fully with their fellow-religionists in Persia by reason of the Postal regulations still prohibiting the entry of Bahai books and magazines published in the United States and Canada.

Mrs. Ransom-Kehler did not meet the Shah, but was received by the Prime Minister in August 1932 and was given the assurance that the ban on Bahai literature would be lifted. This announcement produced extraordinary rejoicing throughout the Bahai world and the National Spiritual Assembly released news of victory to the press. A long cable was sent to the Prime Minister expressing gratitude for the removal of the ban, and this message was brought to the attention of the Persian Minister in Washington, D. C. Likewise, *A statement to the American press was also issued, reporting that Mrs. Ransom-Kehler had received firm assurance from the Court Minister that the postal regulations under which Bahai literature had been confiscated would be immediately annulled.*

Then, within a very short time, and to the consternation of the Bahai community, it was realized that the ban had *not* been annulled. Here, Mrs. Ransom-Kehler again valiantly rose to the occasion; she made every effort to discover the reason for the change of attitude; she interviewed the Secretary charged with American affairs at the Foreign Office; she wrote passionate and glowing appeals to the Shah, to the President of the Parliament and to Cabinet Ministers, yet she was never able to penetrate the official veil. The Secretary at the Foreign Office told her

that it was contrary to the Constitution of Persia to sanction any religion founded *after* Islam and, that consequently, Bahai literature must remain unrecognized. In a long letter to the Shah, Mrs. Ransom-Kehler spoke of *the recent gracious action of your Majesty in asserting the power of religious freedom and opening the door to the amenities of international communication customary in modern times which was by us immediately communicated to all leading newspapers in the United States and Canada together with an expression of our grateful recognition of your Majesty's response to our petition.* No answer to this letter was received.

The story is a long one. The matter was brought up for full discussion by the delegates at the 25th Bahai Convention held in Chicago in June 1933, and a resolution was adopted *to take immediate action to bring about the cessation of the reported maltreatment of our Bahai brethren, to secure the entry of Bahai literature and to restore the constitutional provision for the printing and circulation of Bahai literature within Persia.* An elaborate report was drawn up and presented to the Persian Minister in Washington by a Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly. It says in part:—

After entertaining the hope that the ancient land of Persia had been granted the high privilege of a regime based upon fearless justice, the very foundation of civilization, we cannot but deplore the survival from the past of indications that *free intercourse* on the part of American citizens with loyal citizens of Persia on matters of purely spiritual interest is prevented by regulations imposed by Persian authorities. The Bahais of America assert very frankly to your Excellency their

unhappiness because of the fact that unfounded prejudice against the Bahais of Persia, whether emanating from atheistic or ecclesiastical sources, can in this day and age find sanction from authorities of the State. . . . The outcome of this representation will, we trust, enable the National Spiritual Assembly to inform the local Bahai communities that their determined desire to assist in removing the disabilities and maltreatment of their Persian brothers has been completely realized.

On Sept. 10, 1933, Mrs. Ransom-Kehler, still in Persia, sent the following announcement to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada: *Petition unanswered.*

And on October 27, 1933, the Spiritual Assembly of Teheran cabled the sad news that Mrs. Ransom-Kehler had passed into the life beyond.

Thus, a very interesting and significant *effort* made by Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly, in trying to remove the ban placed on the entry and circulation of Bahai literature in Persia, came to an end.

Now, the point which I again wish to call to the attention of the reader is the contradictory attitude of the National Spiritual Assembly which, on the one hand, puts forward such a stupendous amount of time, energy and money to lift the ban on entry of Bahai literature in Persia, on the basis of *the power of religious freedom and international communication customary in modern times*; while, on the other hand, it spends a very appreciable amount of time, energy and money to place a ban on this same literature in the *United States*.

Can one reconcile these two diametrically opposite ac-

tions of the National Spiritual Assembly, or are its members endowed with two natures such as are amphibians, who have adapted themselves to live on land and in water, at one and the same time?

(For a detailed account of Mrs. Ransom-Kehler's trip to Iran and her effort to lift the ban on entry and circulation of Bahai literature in that country read *Bahai News*, No. 69, October 1932, p. 5, "Persian Government Removes Ban on entry of Bahai literature"; *Bahai News*, No. 80, January 1934, pp. 10-15, "The Unity of the East and West"; and *Bahai Administration*, pp. 109, 110.)

Relations with Society

To my mind, the major tenor of Bahai life is the process of the transmutation of authority into liberty; of tradition into freedom of thought and action; it is the ceaseless renovation of habits and customs and the incoming and outgoing of the spirit of truth to and from the heart of a Bahai. No individual or group should have dictatorial rights over other individuals or groups, and everyone should be allowed to function as a Bahai according to the dictates of his conscience.

In our striving after freedom of conscience and liberty, we have been accused by the National Spiritual Assembly of a tendency to break away from the divine government; of a destructive effort to atomize the distinctive teachings of the Cause; of planning to bring about dissolution of discipline and order. But the National Spiritual Assembly has lost sight of the important fact that a human Bahai

personality must possess the moral privilege of expressing itself in thought and action, and that it is entitled, through divine right, to emancipation which in itself is the essence of discipline and the substratum of the divine order.

A moral Bahai personality has two aspects. The first is the universal aspect, which I call the religious or the spiritual, in virtue of which every Bahai ought to have complete and unchallenged right to idealistic and ethical self-expression. Here, freedom of conscience holds court with no rival; here, we enjoy liberty of thought, undivided and whole. Then, there is the individual aspect, to which I ascribe legal or state obligations. Here the individual Bahai, as a member of society, is called upon to observe the laws of the State and realize the fact that, although he is free to break any of these laws, he is at the same time liable to be haled into court and punished for his infractions.

Today, in the civilized world, there is *no* religious tribunal that can *compel* a man to appear before it on account of his so-called heresies or unbeliefs in the doctrines of the church. In the moral sphere, there is no judge to condemn a person. The religious authorities may excommunicate him, but such an act will not be legal in any state court and will simply be regarded as the decision of a group of ecclesiastical disciplinarians.

In brief, the relation subsisting between an individual Bahai and his group must be conditioned by the incontrovertible postulate that, as a moral personality, he shall have all rights to think and act spontaneously and consistently according to his own spiritual insight.

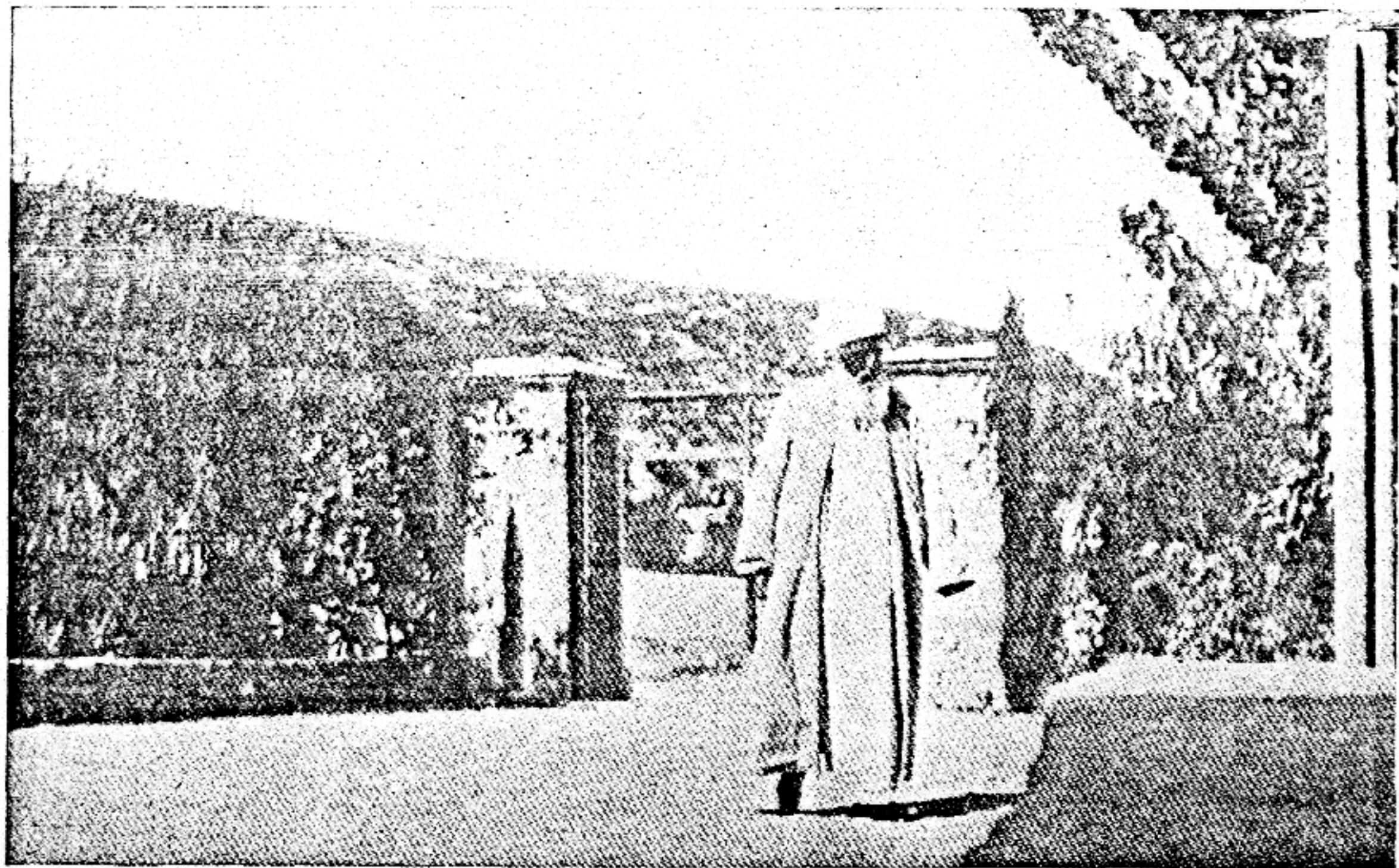
Our Standard

Abdul Baha has set up before us a very high and lofty standard. If I and my friends, as well as the members of the Bahai Administration, could live up to it, we would be *distinguished by a brilliancy like unto the sun, and all misunderstandings would disappear in the twinkling of an eye*. In such case, we would welcome a *Bahai modernist* as a sincere seeker after truth, and take to heart a *Bahai traditionalist* as a reverent follower of the law. We would exercise the grace of patience toward one another, for, although liberty is a great gift, charity is yet greater.

And now, let us listen to Abdul Baha as he sets up before our eyes his measure of the Bahai life:—

. . . you must conduct and deport yourselves in such a manner that you may stand out among other souls distinguished by a brilliancy like unto the sun. If any one of you enters a city, he must become the center of attraction, because of the sincerity, faithfulness, love, honesty, fidelity, truthfulness and loving-kindness of his disposition and nature toward all the inhabitants of the world, that the people of the city may all cry out: "This person is unquestionably a Bahai; for his manners, his behavior, his conduct, his morals, his nature and his disposition are of the attributes of the Bahais.

—*Tablets of Abdul-Baha*, Vol. I, p. 41.



Abdul Baha in his garden at Haifa, with Mount Carmel in the background.

CHAPTER XV

THOUGHT-CONTROL

Independent Investigation

A fundamental law of religion and philosophy is freedom of inquiry and investigation, together with the inalienable right of each individual to express the result of his search without any external control or official supervision. *Censorship* as applied to the fruits of the spirit is the negation of the spirit itself. In the Baháí Cause, the obligation of free and independent research is basic and incontrovertible. Baha-O-Llah states:—

Should a servant desire to make the words, deeds and actions of other servants, learned or ignorant, the standard for knowing God and His Chosen Ones, he shall never enter the Rizwan of the Knowledge of the Lord of Might nor attain to the Fountains of the Knowledge and Wisdom of the King of Oneness; neither shall he reach the bourne of immortality nor partake of the Cup of Nearness and Good Pleasure.

—*The Book of Assurance*, page 2.

In this way, the Founder of the Baháí Revelation has discounted reliance on the traditions and authorities of past and present, requiring from each student personal and rigorous application to the discovery of truth and to its enunciation. To make this individual responsibility still more binding, he declares in ringing tones:—

The Peerless Beloved says:
The Way of Freedom is opened!
Hasten ye!
The Fountain of Knowledge is gushing!
Drink ye!

—Baha-O-Llah, *Bahai Scriptures*, page 132.

Self-Reliance

On his visit to this country, Abdul Baha was asked: What is the greatest thing you have seen in America? and he answered: *The greatest thing I have seen in America is its freedom.*

—*Star of the West*, Vol. IV, No. 12,
October 16, 1913, page 207.

In enumerating the fundamental teachings of his Father, the Master usually placed the principle of *independent investigation of truth* at the top of the list. He asserted that we must depend on our own reason and adhere to the outcome of our own investigation. The following quotation, which is one example chosen from hundreds of similar utterances, boldly illustrates this mighty truth:

God has given man the eye of investigation by which he may see and recognize truth. He has endowed man with ears that he may hear the message of reality and conferred upon him the gift of reason by which he may discover things for himself. This is his endowment and equipment for the investigation of reality. Man is not intended to see through the eyes of another, hear through another's ears nor comprehend with another's brain. . . . Therefore depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of

your own investigation; otherwise you will be utterly submerged in the sea of ignorance and deprived of all the bounties of God.

—Abdul Baha—*Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
Vol. II, page 287.

No progressive student of religion would deny the validity of the above assertions which are again to be found in Abdul Baha's remarkable sermon given on November 6, 1912, at the Universalist Church, in Washington, D. C.:—

Praise be to God! The standard of liberty is held aloft in this land. You enjoy political liberty; you enjoy liberty of thought and speech, religious liberty, racial and personal liberty. Surely this is worthy of appreciation and thanksgiving. . . . Liberalism is essential in this day; justness and equity toward all nations and people. Human attitudes must not be limited, for God is unlimited, and whosoever is the servant of the Threshold of God must likewise be free from limitations.

—*Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
Vol. II, page 384.

A Dramatic Change

This attitude of religious liberalism and freedom of conscience; this *idealization of the liberty of thought and right of speech*; this *right of unrestricted individual belief* came to an end with the departure of Abdul Baha from this life, in 1921. Immediately, a sudden and dramatic change of principle and policy was inaugurated, for Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahai Cause, in a letter dated March 5, 1922, created a censorship to be applied not only

to all Bahai writings and books, but to all other matters as well. The right of supervision was placed in the hands of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly. Shoghi Effendi writes:—

Not only with regard to publication, but all matters without any exception whatsoever, regarding the interests of the Cause in that locality, individually or collectively, should be referred exclusively to the Spiritual Assembly in that locality, which shall decide upon it, unless it be a matter of National interest, in which case it shall be referred to the National body. With this National body also will rest the decision whether a given question is of local or national interest. . . . Large issues in such spiritual activities that affect the Cause in general in that land, such as the management of the *Star of the West*, and any periodical which the National Body may decide to be a Bahai Organ, the matter of publication, or reprinting Bahai literature and its distribution among the various assemblies, the means whereby the teaching campaign may be stimulated and maintained, . . . the matter of receiving Orientals and association with them, the care and maintenance of the precious film exhibiting a phase of the Master's sojourn in the United States of America as well as the original matrix and the records of His voice, and various other national spiritual activities, far from being under the exclusive jurisdiction of any local assembly or group of friends, must each be minutely and fully directed by a special board, elected by the National Body, constituted as a committee thereof, responsible to it and upon which the National Body shall exercise constant and general supervision.

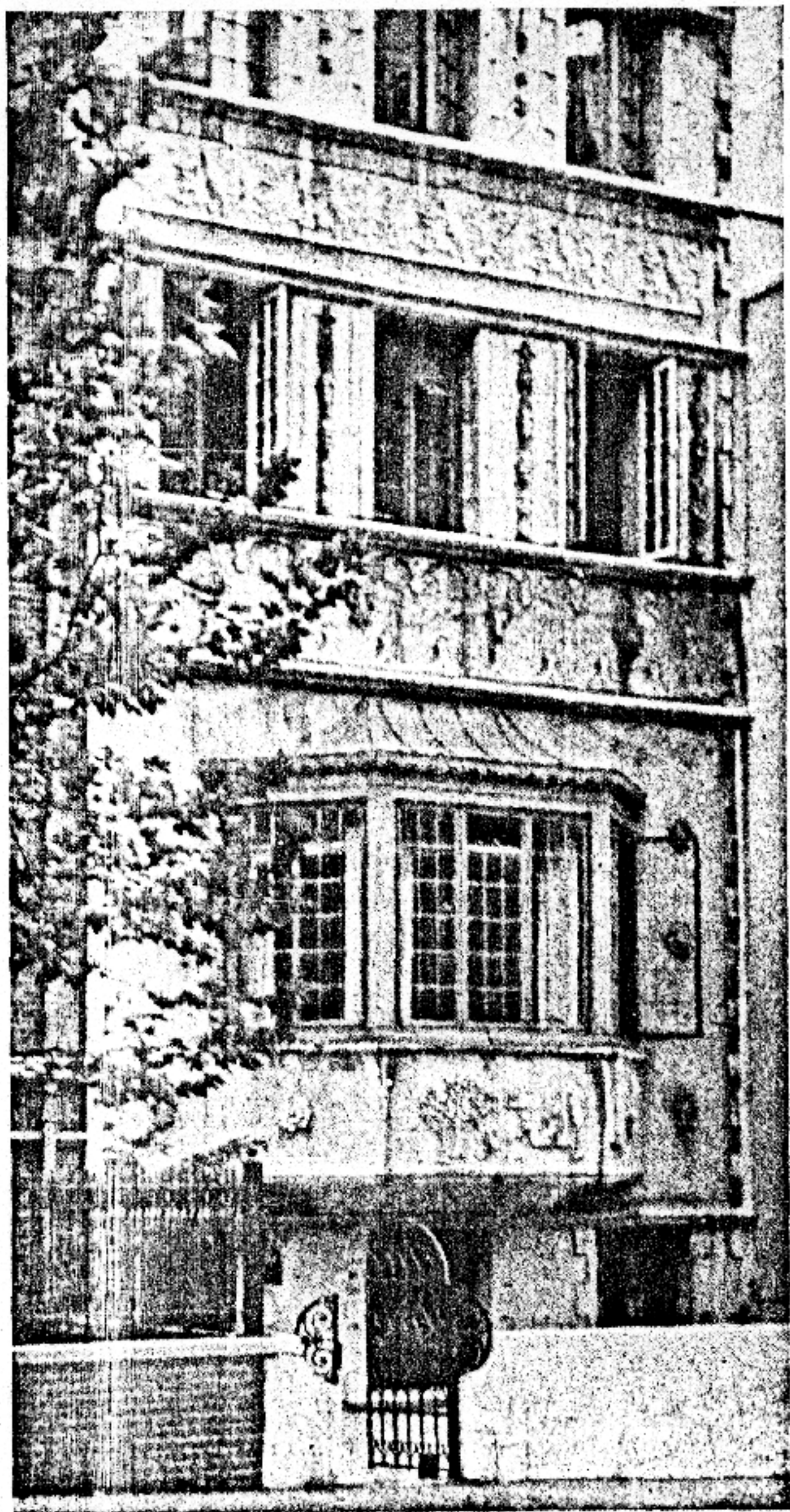
—*Bahai Administration*, pages 23-24.

This desire to control the thoughts and actions of the Bahai community, this drive toward the centralization of authority, this creation of a board of censorship, this plan of bringing under the full jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly *all* matters pertaining to the Bahai Cause is, to say the least, in strange and incomprehensible contrast to the broad tolerance and liberality of Baha-O-Illah and Abdul Baha.

Centralized Control

Just as Baha-O-Illah and Abdul Baha, over and over again in their writings, repeat their injunction regarding freedom of thought and liberty of speech, Shoghi Effendi misses not a single occasion to reiterate his ideas on the centralization of power in the hands of the National Spiritual Assembly.

In a subsequent letter dated March 12, 1923 (*Bahai Administration*, page 33), Shoghi Effendi feels that, inasmuch as the Bahai Cause is still in its infancy, all its publications need *supervision*. He does not realize the very evident fact that what this movement actually needs at this, its early stage, is freedom to grow and to develop its muscles, both intellectual and spiritual. It is too young and fragile to be placed under the rigid rules of disciplinarian nurses. In the same letter the Guardian refers to *grave responsibilities* to be assumed by the National Spiritual Assembly, namely: to exercise *full authority over all local Assemblies*; to *direct the activities of friends*; to *guard vigilantly the Cause of God and control and supervise the affairs of the Movement in general*. With such intensive control exercised over every department of the



Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Chanler and Headquarters of
The New History Society.

Bahai Cause, the believers become mere automata, having no will of their own, no incentive and no initiative to start any original undertaking; for, they are at all times conscious that, at any moment, the heavy hand of the National Spiritual Assembly may fall upon them and destroy their labors.

The work of teaching the Cause, a bounden duty of every Bahai, is likewise placed under the authority of the National Spiritual Assembly, so that a teacher must follow, to the letter, exact and rigid prescriptions. He has no liberty of action, no leeway to express his own convictions. Always, he must accommodate himself to the regulations of the Teaching Committee. Shoghi Effendi states that *authority* must be centralized in the National Spiritual Assembly and *power* concentrated in the various local Assemblies. He seems to differentiate between authority and power. This definition may bewilder the uninitiated, but I feel sure that those who enjoy these prerogatives know the exact groove in which they fit.

In another letter dated April 9, 1923 (*Bahai Administration*, page 40), all publications must *fall under the exclusive control of the National Spiritual Assembly*. However, it seems that this control is not enough: a special committee shall minutely guide and judiciously scrutinize all information.

What a system! Apparently we are a lot of wayward children. Every word, spoken or written, must be scrutinized; every action must be controlled. We are, indeed, according to these extraordinary orders, as dead men in the hands of an undertaker. Why, in heaven's name, become Bahais? What benefits do we receive from this

spiritual totalitarianism? Even the helots of Greece, the galley slaves of Rome, the serfs of the Middle Ages and the bondsmen of the Southern States had more freedom than have the Bahais who thus submit themselves to such parasitical dependency!

Censorship

The strict injunctions laid down by Shoghi Effendi in his letters, naturally, led the National Spiritual Assembly to create a Reviewing Committee. This Reviewing Committee or Board of Censorship is patterned on the church authorities of the Middle Ages whose function it was to suppress the expression of free thought. In spite of the fact that there were no official censors before the age of printing, the informal beginnings of the practice did exist among the ancients. Methods were rough and ready in those days. Socrates was condemned for blasphemy and for corrupting the morals of youth; so the cup of hemlock brought him to speedy account. In the Middle Ages, writers were chiefly ecclesiastics. When printing quickened the flow of books and growing culture widened the circle of authors, clerical influence arose to demand censorship in order to protect the tenets of the Church.

This clamor for the control of thought created the Catholic *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*—an institution and a body of rules for the proscription of *pernicious* literature. The Index, like the Reviewing Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly, constituted a positive ecclesiastical ordinance, based on the false assumption that free thought was dangerous.

As far back as the first centuries of Christianity, when

ecclesiastical authority was still in its infancy, the apocryphal writings and certain other books were consigned to the flames.

Toward the close of the 15th century, the University of Cologne passed a measure which finally became the *Imprimatur* or preliminary censorship of books; it prescribed the examination of books before printing. The manuscripts which survived this ordeal carried the *Imprimatur* of the Board of Censors.

In similar manner the National Spiritual Assembly, in its legal action brought against me, had requested the Court to prevent my using the name Bahai, in connection with any publication, which teaches or purports to teach any Bahai religion, faith, cause, movement, system of thought or way of living; unless said publication shall be submitted to and approved by the Reviewing Committee of the plaintiff trustees or their successors, and there shall be printed on the title page the notice: "*Approved by the Reviewing Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada.*"

Roman Catholic Imprimatur

About 1501 A. D., Pope Alexander VI forbade the printers of the dioceses of Cologne, Mainz, Trèves and Magdeburg, on pain of excommunication and fine, to print any book whatsoever without permission from the bishop. The prohibition of books, specified by name, began in 1520 through the bull of Leo X which condemned all the writings of Luther. In 1624, Clement VII ordered excommunication as the penalty for the reading of books which the Church considered heretical. This order remains un-

changed to the present day. Likewise, even now it is necessary to have permission to print the *Imprimatur* of the Bishop on all books applying to religion or sciences. Excommunication is incurred by those who wittingly without permission read, keep, print or defend any books written by those whom the Church has designated as apostates and heretics, or the books directly condemned by the Pope. Excommunication is the penalty also for those who, without permission, print or cause to be printed the books of the Holy Scriptures or annotations or commentaries thereon. Thus were the laws of censorship created by the Church to suppress free expression of thought.

Now, I maintain that these were criminal acts committed against reason and spirit. If in any realm more than any other we need freedom, it is in the domain of religion. History has shown us that censorship may deprive a nation of its best leadings and inspirations.

Again, I assert that no man or body of men is wise enough or tolerant enough to be entrusted with power controlling the expression of thought, either in the Catholic Church or outside of it. The right of free speech and free press is the most precious possession of man, and there is no authority on the face of the earth which has the right to withhold it.

Bahai Imprimatur

Let us now turn our attention to the rules of *Bahai Procedure* as set forth by the National Spiritual Assembly for the guidance of its so-called Reviewing Committee.

In *Bahai Procedure*, Section 2, Sheet 25, we find an article entitled *Review and Publication of Bahai Litera-*

ture by Local Assemblies. This article contains the result of the discussion on the subject of Bahai Publications by the National Spiritual Assembly.

The National Spiritual Assembly considers itself very liberal in not including in the list of *publications*, programs and bulletins printed by Local Assemblies. The *Procedure* continues:—

What the National Spiritual Assembly had in mind in adopting a general policy was the more formal publications represented by pamphlets and books. . . . The Guardian's instructions in Bahai Administration make it clear that all Bahai literature of a general character, that is aside from programs and bulletins, are to be reviewed by a Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly. This makes it evident that, as far as the review function is concerned, a Local Spiritual Assembly (apart from local teaching and publicity work) is subject to the general jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Another privilege given to a Local Spiritual Assembly is that it can publish a pamphlet (such as excerpts from the recognized writings) already approved by the Reviewing Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly. However, such a pamphlet must be distributed free of charge, for publishing Bahai literature for sale is vested solely in the Publishing Committee appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly. The article concludes by again generously allowing Local Spiritual Assemblies to print their programs without submitting them to the Reviewing Committee. Thus:—

Aside from evidently local matters, like programs, a

Local Spiritual Assembly has no right of review or publication of Bahai literature, except in the one case that it may issue, as free literature, printed leaflets and pamphlets, containing material already in its entirety approved by the National Reviewing Committee and subsequently confirmed by action of the National Spiritual Assembly.

On Sheet 26 of *Bahai Procedure*, Section II, no Bahai is allowed to deliver a radio broadcast unless it is approved by the Local Assembly before delivery.

On Sheet 16 of *Bahai Procedure*, Section I, all literature, charts and other material used in Bahai teaching should be confined to that which has been approved by the Reviewing Committee or has the recorded sanction of the National Spiritual Assembly.

On Sheets 20-21 of *Bahai Procedure*, Section I, a compilation from the writings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha is subject to review by the Reviewing Committee in the same manner as are other Bahai works. The compiler should not conclude any arrangement with a non-Bahai publisher until the compilation has been officially approved, and if the compiler intends to print the compilation outside the Cause, the proposed arrangement is to be submitted to the National Spiritual Assembly through its Publishing Committee for approval. Over and above all these restrictions, the National Spiritual Assembly requests the compiler to assign to the Bahai Publishing Committee any copyright taken out on the publication of the book or pamphlet.

Having placed all kinds of iron fences around the Kingdom of Bahai thought, closing the *Way of Freedom* that

Baha-O-Llah had *opened* and sealing the *Fountain of Knowledge* which was intended to flood the earth with its salubrious waters, the legislator of the Reviewing Committee solemnly affirms:—

The purpose of this statement is to assure proper protection of the interests of the Bahai Faith, while providing sufficient freedom of action to individual believers under all circumstances.

Royal Largesse

In reading the above *statement* one cannot help wondering what are the particular *interests of the Bahai Faith* which need *proper protection*!

Does God and His Truth stand in need of the protecting arm of the National Spiritual Assembly? Can the creature indeed *protect* the Creator? Or, is it the people who are to be protected from contamination through the Love of God; and are we to combine in a union to bar the common run of humanity from access to the life-giving words of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha?

Yet, in regard to the clause which provides *sufficient freedom to individual believers*, probably, it is appropriate to offer a vote of thanks to the National Spiritual Assembly for this largesse on their part, so royally meted out. *Sufficient freedom*? Of course! It is a superfluity, even beyond our deserts. Why should we be grasping? As intellectual and spiritual bondsmen to the National Spiritual Assembly, we must accept our lowly station, and in all obsequiousness stoop to pick up the crumbs that fall from the table of our Administrative masters! Who are we, and what are we that we should dare to even *think*

of more freedom? The members of the National Spiritual Assembly are all-wise, and they say that it is sufficient. So, sufficient it is and sufficient it must be! We should ask no questions. As model slaves, it is fitting that we obliterate ourselves before our superiors. We should pray that we be characterized with the qualities of meekness, deference, compliance and subserviency. We should, in all humility, present our allegiance to these shepherds who have assembled us under the overhanging rock of their salvation and who, in solicitude for us, have set aside appropriate and *sufficient* pasture-land, wherein we may graze and offer them our thanksgiving at dawn and at sunset.

A Divine Legacy

Just the same, there are some who cannot blot out the memory of the Bahai Cause as it was taught once upon a time and who, in spite of prevailing conditions, yet hold to the teachings of Baha-O-Llah and the universal expositions of them as dispensed by Abdul Baha. Man's reason contains a truth which has existed since the dawn of human history; his spirit is enveloped with a light which was enkindled by God at the very foundation of creation. This is no other than a divine legacy reserved for us by the Maker of the Universe. The Prophets appeared upon the earth to remind us of these preternatural truths, which so consistently have been defaced by spiritual charlatans and perverted by superstitious organizations. In our own times, Baha-O-Llah came to restore these lost truths through the free exercise of rational and celestial faculties; and now, while powerful influences, actually *within* the established Faiths, have arisen to assist mankind in

this process of emancipation, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, pitifully claiming to represent the foremost liberal element in religion, has formed another set of dogmas wherewith to throttle free thought and subvert the essential liberty of human expression in all its diversified manifestations. Censorship, in the social domain, is an outmoded tyranny; in the spiritual realm, it is unwholesome and impracticable. Censorship is not wanted anywhere, especially in the Bahai Cause; and if we allow it to retain the upper hand in the great movement that has been entrusted to us, we will set ourselves up before the world and in the face of history as false trustees, and as men and women unworthy and unfit to call ourselves Bahais.

We could not voice our vehement protest against the Reviewing Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly better than by quoting the words of Milton, who himself revolted against church censorship when serious objection was raised to parts of *Paradise Lost*. In his *Areopagitica*, a classic on tolerance of speech and thought, he said:—

Should ye set an oligarchy . . . over it (the Press) to bring a famine upon our minds again, we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel. When God shakes a Kingdom with strong and healthful commotions to a general reforming, it is not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing; but yet more true it is that God then raises to His own work men of rare abilities, and more than common industry, not only to look back and revise what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further and go on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth. He relies on the survival of the fittest in this

sphere. . . . Let her (Truth) and Falsehood grapple: whoever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?

The Emergence of a New Race

In this summer of 1941, a meeting without parallel in sheer dramatic worth took place between the Prime Minister of England and the President of the United States. On a sea, alive with danger and under ominous skies, these two great personalities came face to face and drafted a Charter for the emancipation of the peoples of all nations. The Churchill-Roosevelt Eight Points, fruit of this dangerous excursion, stand as testimony to the awakened conscience of the leaders of the Anglo-Saxon race; and when, in his report to Congress on the meeting at sea, made on August 21st, 1941, Mr. Roosevelt added two more points, which he said were necessarily included, the Atlantic Charter was rounded out to full value. These two points, in the language of the President, read as follows:—

It is also unnecessary for me to point out that the declaration of principles includes of necessity the world need for freedom of religion and freedom of information. No society of the world organized under the announced principles could survive without these freedoms which are a part of the whole freedom for which we strive.

On the same day, the President sent a message to the National Convention of Young Democrats, meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, which was delivered to delegates

from 48 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In it, Mr. Roosevelt has this to say about the preservation of *utmost freedom*:—

I would be the last person to dispute or limit the right of every citizen to have his own opinion and express it, and I know you are with me as to the preservation of that utmost freedom.

This ideal of utmost freedom has been set forth by H. G. Wells in very concise terms. In his *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, he says:

Every man has a right to the utmost freedom of expression, discussion, association and worship.

—*The Rotarian Magazine*, September, 1941, page 9.

The leaders of the Bahai Administration in America have for years been carrying on an ideological flirtation with the totalitarian religious systems of the past, copying their methods and procedures, and manifesting the while a pride and satisfaction as if they had discovered an entirely new system. Nevertheless, the incomparable worth of Baha-O-Llah's genius lies in the fact that he has constructed for the children of this generation a spiritual fortress which shall protect the rights of man against the encroachment of all religious dictators, whether in the Bahai Administration or outside of it.

As Bahais, it is our duty to stand firm by the principles of the Cause; as citizens of a New World Order, we must proclaim the essential rights of men. New advocates of human dignity are raising their voices in every quarter of the globe; new champions of a United Humanity are

waging war against blind and selfish interests. The ideals of a new civilization are being hammered on the anvil of high striving and bitter experience, and at last we behold the emergence of the New World, which can be effected only by the sons and daughters of an emancipated race.

PART SIX

PSYCHOSES

16. Fear

17. Excommunication

*And who is he that will harm you, if
ye be followers of that which is good?*

—I Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 13



Group taken with Abdul Baha on the terrace of the Bab's tomb on Mt. Carmel, Haifa, Palestine, about 1917.

CHAPTER XVI

FEAR

The Secret of Fearlessness

There is no fear in Bahai Philosophy. Its basic principles are the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. There are no secret doctrines in the Bahai Teaching. The chief premise of the Cause is association and collaboration among men and women of all races and all religions. It does not recognize any enemy, for it does not wage physical, intellectual or spiritual warfare against the children of God who are encircled by the hounties of a Merciful Father.

Fear—a persistent, all-pervading influence—poisoning mind and character, has no place in the Bahai vocabulary. Fear, a morbid enslavement, a paralysis of will and effort in anticipation of some actual or remote contingency, does not affect the Bahai attitude. A Bahai is not plagued with a fear-consciousness nor with a fear-complex; he does not allow his life to be guided by fear-impulse or fear-reaction. Not recognizing the existence of enmity, he does not harbor hatred toward any living creature; his life is an exemplification of love and affection for all mankind. Baha-O-Llah teaches his followers to overcome fear. He says:—

There is today a science which can eradicate fear. It must be taught from the earliest period of childhood and if it becomes popular, the very nature of man will be changed; for that which decreases fear increases courage. —Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, pages 25-26.

Abdul Baha had mastered the secret of fear-control; and this he demonstrated in his daily relations with his fellowmen. It consisted of the simple and yet mysterious lesson of non-recognition of enmity between souls and the inculcation of the ideal of friendship.

In order to impress this lesson on our minds he on one occasion declared:—

Baha-O-Llah has clearly said in his Tablets that if you have an enemy, consider him not as an enemy. Do not simply be long-suffering, nay rather, love him. Your treatment of him should be that which is becoming to lovers. Do not even say that he is your enemy. Do not see any enemies. Though he be your murderer, see no enemy. Look upon him with the eye of friendship. Be mindful that you do not consider him as an enemy and simply tolerate him, for that is but stratagem and hypocrisy. To consider a man your enemy and love him is hypocrisy. This is not becoming of any soul. You must behold him as a friend. You must treat him well. That is right.

**—Promulgation of Universal Peace,
Vol II, pages 261-262.**

Baha-O-Llah, the Wise Physician, knew that more than often the spark of enmity and alienation is ignited through religious controversy and altercation; therefore, he exhorted his followers to discourse with the people *in the language of love and affection*.

He says:—

Oh people of Baha! Consort with all men with joy and fragrance. If you possess a word or principle, of which another is deprived, reveal and communicate

it in the language of love and affection; if it is accepted and produces its effect, the end is obtained; if not, rather than torment your friend, leave him to himself and pray for him.

—*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 12.

Again, he says:—

In the book of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, you are forbidden to dispute and to contend with one another. Cultivate that which will benefit you and the peoples of the earth likewise.

—*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pages 19-20.

Bahai Comradeship.

On December 2, 1912, three days before his departure from the United States, Abdul Baha, after a journey of nine months athwart this country, delivered a farewell address at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Kinney in New York. In this talk he epitomized his ideal of non-recognition of enmity in the Bahai Cause and elucidated this important topic in such a clear and comprehensive manner that his words should serve as a manual of instruction for all time to come. They were as follows:—

These are the days of my farewell to you for I am sailing on the fifth of the month. . . . I must therefore give you my instructions and exhortations today, and these are none other than the teachings of Baha-U-Llah.

You must manifest complete love and affection toward all mankind. Do not exalt yourselves above others but consider all as your equals, recognizing them as the servants of one God. Know that God is compassionate toward all; therefore love all from the

depths of your hearts, prefer all religionists before yourselves, be filled with love for every race and be kind toward the people of all nationalities. Never speak disparagingly of others but praise without distinction. Pollute not your tongues by speaking evil of another. Recognize your enemies as friends and consider those who wish you evil as the wishers of good. You must not see evil as evil and then compromise with your opinion, for to treat in a smooth, kindly way one whom you consider evil or an enemy, is hypocrisy and this is not worthy or allowable. You must consider your enemies as your friends, look upon your evil-wishers as your well-wishers and treat them accordingly. Act in such a way that your heart may be free from hatred. Let not your heart be offended with anyone. If some one commits an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly forgive him. Do not complain of others. Refrain from reprimanding them, and if you wish to give admonition or advice, let it be offered in such a way that it will not burden the bearer. Turn all your thoughts toward bringing joy to hearts. Beware! Beware! lest ye offend any heart. Assist the world of humanity as much as possible. Be the source of consolation to every sad one, assist every weak one, be helpful to every indigent one, care for every sick one, be the cause of glorification to every lowly one and shelter those who are overshadowed by fear.

In brief, let each one of you be as a lamp shining forth with the light of the virtues of the world of humanity. Be trustworthy, sincere, affectionate and replete with chastity. Be illumined, be spiritual, be divine, be glorious, be quickened of God, be a Baha'i.

—*Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
Vol. II, pages 448-449.

A Dangerous Doctrine

In considering the problem of fear, let us for a while study the writings of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Cause, and see how he handles this vital subject. We will do this because the issue is one which cannot be ignored in this study of the present-day Bahai Movement.

The three published volumes of Shoghi Effendi are *Baha'i Administration*, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah* and *The Advent of Divine Justice*, which works consist of the letters which he has addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly in the course of the last 20 years. Now, I have read these three books and find that the words *enemies* and *adversaries* are greatly featured. Baha-O-Llah has said: *Consort with all men with joy and fragrance*, yet Shoghi Effendi, in his very first letter, dated January 21, 1922, written after his assumption of the guardianship, recommends *the absolute shunning of whomsoever we feel to be an enemy of the Cause*. (*Bahai Administration*, page 16.)

Now, I cannot bring myself to the point of believing that *absolute shunning* of whomsoever we *feel* to be the enemy of the Cause is a principle of Baha-O-Llah. Is every one going to let his *feelings* guide him in the matter? Can we not take for granted that frail human beings as we are, a great deal of personal caprice and spite may enter into our calculations as to *who* is the enemy of the Bahai Cause? This is a very dangerous doctrine, and yet one finds it in different forms throughout Shoghi Effendi's communications. He practically never mentions the names of the *enemies* or *adversaries* to whom he constantly refers. He simply creates ogres and bogey men, and fills the

hearts of the Bahais with apprehension and fear. In this way, the fountain-head of free and open comradeship is dried up and the flowers of loving-kindness wither away.

Abdul Baha makes this point very plain when he says:—

Even as avoiding and shunning the company of people and being harsh with them are the sure means of filling them with fear, so are love, kindness, humility and gentleness the truest method of binding people's souls and attracting their hearts.

—*The Mysterious Forces of Civilization*, page 62.

Here, let us recall that Baha-O-Llah in the *Tablet of the World* states that in this Revelation brutal manners are changed into spiritual qualities; also that the four great barriers which kept the people of the world separate have been demolished by the Grace and Authority of the Word of God; one of the barriers referred to was *shunning other nations*. (*Tablets of Baha'U'llah*, page 31.)

Let us consider: Is not the so-called enemy, whom Shoghi Effendi commands us to shun absolutely, part and parcel of *other nations*, the same which Baha-O-Llah orders us not to shun?

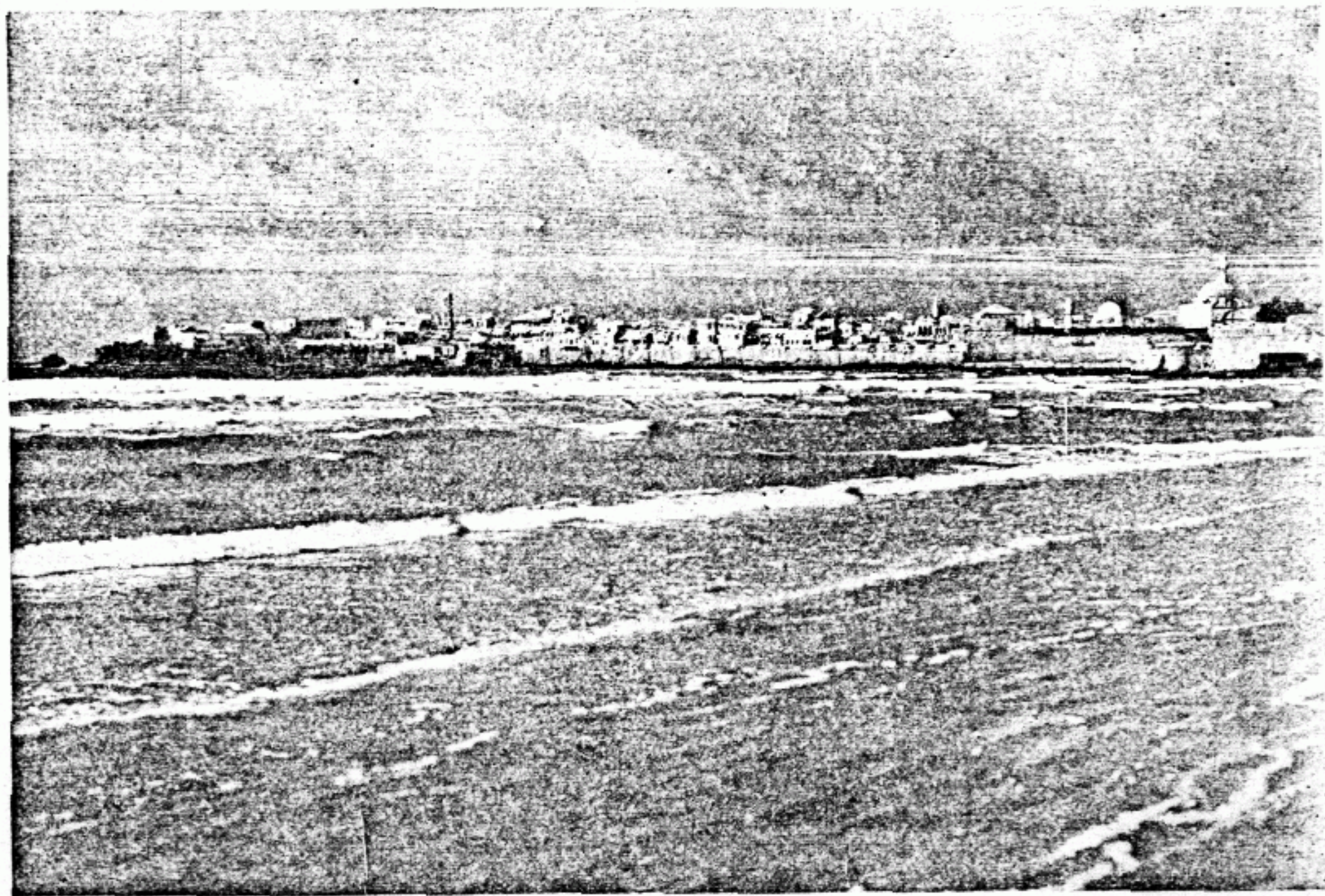
I am not going to dwell on the troublous impression which these sections of Shoghi Effendi's letters have made on me, but will simply submit a few of them and leave it to the reader to judge whether or not I exaggerate.

To the attitude of goodwill, of forbearance and genuine kindness to all, must be added, however, constant but unprovocative vigilance, lest unrestricted association with the peoples of the world should enable the very few who have been definitely pronounced by

the Master as injurious to the body of the Cause, to make a breach in the Movement. Not until, however, an unmistakable evidence should appear, manifestly revealing the evil motives of a certain individual or group of individuals, is it advisable to make the matter public. . . . In order, however, to insure fair and quick and vigorous action whenever such an evil activity is revealed and has been carefully ascertained, the best and only means would appear to be, for the careful observer, once he is assured of such an evil action, and has grown hopeless of the attitude of kindness and forbearance, to report it quietly to the Spiritual Assembly representative of the friends in that locality and submit the case to their earnest and full consideration. Should the majority of the members of that Assembly be conscientiously convinced of the case—and this being a national issue affecting the body of the friends in America—it should, only through the intermediary of that Assembly, be cautiously communicated to that greater body representing all the Assemblies in America, which will in its turn obtain all the available data from the local Assembly in question, study carefully the situation and reserve for itself the ultimate decision. It may, if it decides so, refer it to the Holy Land for further consideration and consultation.

—March 5, 1922, *Baha'i Administration*,
pages 18-19.

This servant, after that grievous event and great calamity, the ascension of His Holiness Abdul Baha to the Abha Kingdom, has been so stricken with grief and pain and so entangled in the troubles (created) by the enemies of the Cause of God, that I consider that



Acca, Palestine, Baha-O-Llah's final place of exile. From behind the walls of this "Most Great Prison", he wrote his immortal epistles to the kings and rulers of the world.

my presence here, at such a time and in such an atmosphere is not in accordance with the fulfilment of my important and sacred duties.

—May, 1922, *Baha'i Administration*, page 25.

The work of the noble Edifice that the mighty hands of the All-Wise Master has reared in this world can suffer no delay, nor can its foundations be made to totter, whatever the apparent obstacles its enemies in their impotent wrath and despair may throw in its way. We need not wait too long, for already from various quarters there comes the news that the awful promises of Abdul Baha regarding the Covenant-breakers have been strikingly fulfilled. But it behooves us not to dwell for a moment on these doomed and darkened efforts.

—December 16, 1922, *Baha'i Administration*, page 26.

From the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, the unnumbered servants of Baha-U-Llah, disdainful of the evil machinations of the enemies of His Cause, the breakers of His behests, have rallied to His Standard, and risen with one accord to carry on the great work He has entrusted to their charge.

—March 12, 1923, *Baha'i Administration*, page 29.

It is incumbent upon them to be vigilant and cautious, discreet and watchful, and protect at all times the Temple of the Cause from the dart of the mischief-maker and the onslaught of the enemy.

—March 12, 1923, *Baha'i Administration*, page 33.

The flames of sedition, so maliciously kindled in the past by those who have dared to flout His Will, are gone out forever, and the fondest hopes of these evil plotters are now abandoned, doomed never to revive. . . . And now, with the Cause purified and inwardly victorious, its principles vindicated, its enemies silenced and sunk in unspeakable misery, may we not, henceforth, direct all our efforts to collective action and constructive achievement, and in utter disregard of the flickerings of their fast-fading light, arise to carry out those urgent measures that will secure the outward and complete triumph of the Cause.

—November 14, 1923, *Baha'i Administration*, pages 44-45.

Who can question that His loved ones, both in the East and the West, notwithstanding the insidious strivings of the enemies of the Cause, have displayed a spirit of unshakable loyalty worthy of the highest praise?

—November 24, 1924, *Baha'i Administration*, page 59.

These challenging criticisms, whether or not dictated by malice, cannot but serve to galvanize the souls of its ardent supporters and to consolidate the ranks of its faithful promoters. They will purge the Faith from those pernicious elements whose continued association with the believers tends to discredit the fair name of the Cause, and to tarnish the purity of its spirit. We should welcome, therefore, not only the open attacks which its avowed enemies persistently launch against it, but should also view as a blessing in disguise every storm of mischief with which they who apostatize their faith or claim to be its faithful exponents assail it from

time to time. Instead of undermining the Faith, such assaults, both from within and from without, reinforce its foundations and excite the intensity of its flame.

—March 21, 1930, *The World Order of Baha'U'Llah*, page 15.

Let him (an upholder of the Cause) be aware that so soon as the full measure of the stupendous claim of the Faith of Baha'U'Llah comes to be recognized by those time-honored and powerful strongholds of orthodoxy, whose deliberate aim is to maintain their stranglehold over the thoughts and consciences of men, this infant Faith will have to contend with enemies more powerful and more insidious than the cruelest torture-mongers and the most fanatical clerics who have afflicted it in the past.

—March 21, 1930, *The World Order of Baha'U'Llah*, page 17.

Many and powerful have been its enemies who, as soon as they discovered the evidences of the growing ascendancy of its declared supporters, have vied with one another in hurling at its face the vilest imputations and in pouring out upon the Object of its devotion the vials of their fiercest wrath.

—April 21, 1933, *The World Order of Baha'U'Llah*, page 72.

In the prosecution of their task neither the whisperings of the treacherous nor the virulent attacks of their avowed enemies were allowed to deflect them from their high purpose or to undermine their faith in the sublimity of their calling.

The agitation provoked by him who in his incessant and sordid pursuit of earthly riches would have, but

for Abdul Baha's warning, sullied the fair name of their Faith, had left them in the main undisturbed. Schooled by tribulation and secure within the stronghold of their fast evolving institutions they scorned his insinuations and by their unswerving loyalty were able to shatter his hopes. They refused to allow any consideration of the admitted prestige and past services of his father and of his associates to weaken their determination to ignore entirely the person whom Abdul Baha had so emphatically condemned.

The veiled attacks with which a handful of deluded enthusiasts subsequently sought in the pages of their periodical to check the growth and blight the prospects of an infant Administration had likewise failed to achieve their purpose.

The attitude which a besotted woman later on assumed, her ludicrous assertions, her boldness in flouting the Will of Abdul Baha and in challenging its authenticity and her attempts to subvert its principles were again powerless to produce the slightest breach in the ranks of its valiant upholders.

The treacherous schemes which the ambition of a perfidious and still more recent enemy has devised and through which he is still striving to deface Abdul Baha's noble handiwork and corrupt its administrative principles are being once more completely frustrated.

These intermittent and abortive attempts on the part of its assailants to force the surrender of the newly built stronghold of the Faith its defenders have from the very beginning utterly disdained. No matter how fierce the assaults of the enemy or skillful his stratagem they have refused to yield one jot or one tittle of their cherished convictions.

His insinuations and clamor they have consistently ignored. The motives which animated his actions, the methods he steadily pursued, the precarious privileges he seemed momentarily to enjoy they could not but despise.

Thriving for a time through the devices which their scheming minds had conceived and supported by the ephemeral advantages which fame, ability or fortune can confer, these notorious exponents of corruption and heresy have succeeded in protruding for a time their ugly features, only to sink, as rapidly as they had risen, into the mire of an ignominious end.

—April 21, 1933, *The World Order of Baha'U'Llah*, pages 89-90.

These verities, if valiantly upheld and properly assimilated, will, I am convinced, powerfully reinforce the vigor of our spiritual life and greatly assist in counteracting the machinations of an implacable and vigilant enemy.

—1933, *The World Order of Baha'U'Llah*, pages 99-100.

Numerous and powerful have been the forces that have schemed, both from within and from without, in lands both far and near, to quench its light and abolish its holy name. Some have apostatized from its principles and betrayed ignominiously its cause. Others have hurled against it the fiercest anathemas which the embittered leaders of any ecclesiastical institution are able to pronounce. Still others have heaped upon it the afflictions and humiliations which sovereign authority can alone, in the plenitude of its power, inflict.

The utmost its avowed and secret enemies could hope

to achieve was to retard its growth and obscure momentarily its purpose. What they actually accomplished was to purge and purify its life, to stir it to still greater depths, to galvanize its soul, to prune its institutions, and cement its unity. A schism, a permanent cleavage in the vast body of its adherents, they could never create.

They who betrayed its cause, its lukewarm and faint-hearted supporters, withered away and dropped as dead leaves, powerless to cloud its radiance or to imperil its structure. Its most implacable adversaries, they who assailed it from without, were hurled from power, and, in the most astonishing fashion, met their doom.

—March 11, 1936, *The World Order of Baha'U'Llah*, pages 195-196.

Though the enemies which every acceleration in the progress of your mission must raise up be fierce, numerous, and unrelenting, yet the invisible Hosts which, if you persevere, must, as promised, rush forth to your aid, will, in the end, enable you to vanquish their hopes and annihilate their forces.

—Dec. 25, 1938, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, page 13.

Fear Complex

Through the publication and wide distribution of these instructions, the National Spiritual Assembly and its followers have come down with an acute attack of ecclesiastical goose-flesh and much energy is spent in locating these *enemies* and in unearthing their *plots*. Gossip becomes fact, and facts assume distorted proportions. Consequently, a chain of correspondence is established among the

various Spiritual Assemblies, the object of which is to hunt down the enemies and expose them. Meanwhile, hatred is engendered and the spirit of tolerance, mercy and forgiveness is trampled underfoot.

Baha'i News, organ of the National Spiritual Assembly published month by month *For Baha'is Only*, communicates these sacred fears to all the Bahai Communities throughout the world. Here is one example:—

. . . Indeed contact with the different centers in Europe has proven beyond question the great need for the protection of the friends from the nefarious operations of those whom the Guardian and the National Spiritual Assembly have found to be disturbers of peace and disseminators of evil. Firmness and courage are required to deal with these situations so that they may be removed from any vestige of personal animus, and only emphasize the direct and positive laws of administration in the most dignified and helpful way. Had such wise methods been employed earlier, much of the confusion which it has taken nearly two years to undo might have been avoided. We are only beginning to glimpse the beauty and perfection of the system which must ultimately become the perfectly functioning medium for circulating general information.

—*Bahai News*, No. 62, page 14, May, 1932.

I am sure that Heinrich Himmler would describe *the beauty and perfection* of his own system of Gestapo in much the same manner.

The Years Have Brought Safety

In recalling the events which, since its inception, have

taken place in the Cause, one cannot ignore the fact that enemies *have* played no small part in the history of the movement. The early Babis and Bahais were forced to contend with overwhelming odds, and thousands of them suffered martyrdom. Baha-O-Llah himself met with opposition, not only from without but from within, and to such a point that his very life was attempted by a blood-relative, with the result that he carried with him physical injury throughout his existence on this earth. Abdul Baha, for forty years a captive in Palestine, was under constant surveillance and at the mercy of traitors and spies. He was forced to recognize the existence of enemies and to take steps to protect the Cause from their plots, both open and secret. But, Shoghi Effendi has never been a prisoner. The rule of Nasiru'd Din Shah and of Sultan Abdul Hamid, under which the Cause quivered for so long a time, has, in Persia and Turkey, been replaced by progressive governments; while Palestine, the headquarters of the movement, enjoys the beneficent protectorship of England. The lives of the Bahais are safe, so is their property; and, if once in a while a Christian missionary writes an argument against the Bahai Faith, or, if a Bahai author sends a book to press without the sanction of the authorized publishing committee, or again, if a Bahai with an unassailable record chooses to associate with an old friend, the orders of the Assemblies notwithstanding, these actions do not constitute such danger to the Cause that the tenor of the Guardian's recommendations to his followers need be colored thereby. No! The risks in these days are very mild, to say the least, and it seems unnecessary to apply to them the terminology that might have been appropriate in former years.

What if Abdul Baha found it necessary, after long persecution, to read out of the Cause some individuals whom his infinite patience and loving-kindness could not placate! What if, in contemplating a House of Justice to be established in the distant future, he envisioned the possibility of the expulsion of recalcitrant members! Shall then an order of priests make of these facts a precedent, so that, henceforth and forever after, it shall feel at liberty to hold aloft the weapon of excommunication? No! I think that the least we can allow the Master is all sanction regarding what he did and what he did not do, and that our duty is to concern ourselves with his teachings and to practice them.

I had so much hoped that Shoghi Effendi, assuming leadership as he did at a time when all danger had passed, would have seen fit to discard and eliminate the fear-complex which has left so deep a mark on the Bahai mentality. With his training at the Universities of Beirut, Syria, and Cambridge, England, it would have seemed appropriate, and we had every reason to expect, that the hang-over of dread, resultant from an anguished past, would have been forcibly lifted from the minds of the Bahais the world over. And in regard to these United States, the Bahai citizens of which have always been afforded every right and privilege, what a pity it is to transplant from overseas, and graft on their consciousness, this seed of fear with its abundant and destructive harvest! Times have changed, no dagger is brandished before the Bahais; then why should they load their bodies and consume their strength with the weighty links of the medieval mailed shirt?

The Test of a Bahai

A recently received communication from the Guardian on the subject of *enemies* brings up, among other points, one which I consider to be most important. It is in reference to the Master's Will and Testament.

In the Bahai writings, we have a vast body of incomparable teachings which include universal principles for the regeneration of mankind; we also have the Will of Abdul Baha. Naturally, this latter document has its place in Bahai literature, and an important one; but, look at it as you will, it is only *part* of the great whole.

Now, the Bahai Administration has seen fit to feature the Will above and beyond everything that has been written and spoken by the Founders of the Cause. It is ever accentuated in publications, ever driven in upon the minds of the people with unremitting intensity. Nothing else matters; only the Will, the Will, the Will! The word has, by this time, been seared into the consciousness of the Bahais. It, and it alone, is the Cause.

Why so? Simply, for the reason that, in his Will, Abdul Baha made it incumbent upon his followers to render absolute obedience to the Guardian. The Master had his reasons for doing this: he trusted Shoghi Effendi to carry out his teachings, and he wished, at all hazards, to prevent a split in the movement. This is very clear; and, certainly, a foremost wish in the mind of every Bahai would be to adhere to the Master's instructions. For many years this was my own ardent wish; for, naturally, I have never doubted the authenticity of Abdul Baha's Will.

Yet, after all, the Will is not the Cause *in toto*; there are other injunctions, other teachings. We cannot forget

the glorious Bahai education that has been made available to us, in order to cling desperately to this one point. The National Spiritual Assembly has its reasons for so bringing forward the Will. The Will says: Obey the Guardian! and the Guardian says: Obey the National Assembly! Therefore, the Will constitutes a sceptre of authority, a sceptre which, but too often, bears the aspect of a whip.

Unfortunately, it is not the National Spiritual Assembly alone which bears unflagging testimony to this feature in the Master's Will, for the Guardian himself gives to it supreme and unparalleled importance; and, as things stand today, an obedience to Shoghi Effendi, so abject as to entail all personal dignity, has become the test of a Bahai. Nothing else matters; nothing else is ever dwelt upon.

Abdul Baha said: *If a man has ten good qualities and one bad one, look at the ten and forget the one; and if a man has ten bad qualities and one good one, look at the one, and forget the ten*; yet, the Bahai authorities say: If a man has ten Bahai qualities and does not recognize the Guardian as the arbiter of his conscience, think only of this last failing and forget all the other qualities.

Now, I am not possessed of the courtier-psychology; I did not have it when I served the Master, and he did not exact it of me. He wanted us to be upright, sincere and self-reliant, and I have patterned myself on his conception of a man. I frankly admit, at this juncture, that there is nothing in my bearing of the Uriah Heep, and that I have small respect for that perennial type, so deftly portrayed by Charles Dickens.

Following is Shoghi Effendi's letter, written by his secretary, to which I have just referred:—

The material sent to him regarding the legal action taken against the New History Society, as well as copies of their monthly publication, have been received and the Guardian feels that Ahmad Sohrab is increasingly revealing his latent opposition to the spirit as well as the letter of the Master's Will and Testament. His references to excommunication flatly contradict the Master's own actions and attitude, of which he is personally fully aware, and are irreconcilable with some of the most emphatic and unmistakable injunctions of 'Abdu'l-Baha in His Will and Testament. His increasingly bold criticisms of the action taken by the Guardian amounts to a repudiation of the authority of the Guardianship, and is thus an open and flagrant violation of the Will establishing that authority. In fact the more he writes and the more he gives vent to his true feelings, and discloses his real attitude to what 'Abdu'l-Baha has regarded as absolutely essential to the unity, the integrity and protection of the Faith, the more will he clearly demonstrate his disloyalty to the Master whom he professes to uphold and defend. He is no doubt the most subtle, resourceful and indefatigable enemy the Faith has had in America, and the retribution he will in the end suffer will be correspondingly grievous and devastating. Every effort should be made by your Assembly to protect the new believers from the poison which he is trying to instill into their minds and souls, and to reinforce their confidence in his ultimate downfall and complete obliteration.

—*Excerpts From Letter From the Guardian
in Bahai News, No. 145, July 1941.*

In the above description of myself, I am rather flattered at the word *subtle*, for it is a characteristic that I never

thought I possessed. There is so much that I think and feel, now that the flood-gates of discussion have been *opened*, that I can do no more than explain and act upon my innermost convictions. However, I consider the adjectives *resourceful* and *indefatigable* as well chosen, for I have been trained by the most resourceful of all teachers and the most indefatigable of all leaders. Was I not, during eight years, a witness to the Master's unflagging enthusiasm, undeviating tenacity and world-shaking energy! He expected me to imitate these qualities in him, and I expected this course of action of myself.

In regard to being an *enemy of the Faith*, to this I definitely make objection; nor do I allow this statement to pass without making flat denial. If the upholding of the freedom of the Cause, is enmity to the Cause; if the teaching of the Bahai principles, is *instilling* poison into the minds of the hearers, then I assert, and without reserve, that Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha were enemies of the Cause, *par excellence*, and that their words were the essence of poison upon poison.

Finally, I note that the National Spiritual Assembly should exert *every effort to reinforce* the confidence of the Bahais in my *ultimate downfall and complete obliteration*. Here we have entered the realm of prophecy. It would seem that the people should be left free to believe in certain prophecies, or to ignore them, or to disbelieve in them, according to their choice and aptitudes; and I do question the advisability of taking steps to induce the Bahais to accept forecasts of the future, especially when these forecasts apply to the obliteration of any soul. Such efforts are not conducive to the healthy development of a com-

munity; they simply bring to mind the dark practices of the past, when so-called sorcerers applied themselves to inserting pins into the waxen bodies of dolls shaped to portray their enemies. This did not do any harm to the bodies and souls of the alleged enemies, but I believe that it did a lot of harm to the bodies and souls of those who inserted the pins.

Oriental Exclusion Act

In a letter dated June 8, 1919, written during the lifetime of Abdul Baha, Shoghi Effendi, after giving a glowing account of the Mashriqu'l Azkar at Ishkabad, Russia, as described by a pilgrim, mentions the Master's instructions regarding fellowship and association. The following is an extract from this early communication:—

When Abdul Baha inquired the condition and the association of the friends, it was intimated that, unlike the days gone by, the friends are intimately associating with all the people of every shade and opinion, of every sect and social standing. He said:— “Such is the way that must be adopted, for only through intimate association will the friends be able to teach and sow the seed in the heart of a seeker. The flower must be brought close and near in order to inhale its scent and fragrance.”

**—*Star of the West*, Vol. XI, No. 1,
March 21, 1920, page 15.**

However, with his assumption of the guardianship, these ideas seem to have receded in the mind of Shoghi Effendi.

Although the Bahai Cause has appeared in the Orient

and its cardinal principle is union and harmony between the inhabitants of East and West; although Baha-O-Llah openly declares. *Oh people of the world! Ye are all the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch. Conduct yourselves with perfect love, friendship and understanding (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, page 11)*; although Abdul Baha cries at the top of his voice: *We must exercise the utmost love toward each other. We must be loving to all the people of the world. We must not consider any people, the people of Satan, but know and recognize all as the servants of the One God (Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. II, page 264)*; yet, for some obscure reason, Shoghi Effendi instructs the American Bahais not to receive Orientals in their midst—even Oriental Bahais are barred out unless they can produce proper credentials from the right authorities.

Here are the instructions written by Shoghi Effendi himself:—

I wish to add a few lines and remind you of the necessity of refusing to admit to your assembly, or associate with, any Oriental who does not have proper credentials from a recognized spiritual Assembly. No excuse whatever is acceptable. I am sure that a few are trying to cause mischief and bring about a split in the ranks of the believers in these days of stress, and the utmost caution should be exercised, lest these mischief-makers succeed in undermining the foundations of the Cause.

—*Bahai News*, No. 52, pages 4-5, May, 1931.

Regarding association with Oriental travelers and residents in the United States and Canada, I desire

to emphasize afresh the vital necessity for the exercise in these days of the greatest vigilance and reserve, prudence and caution, on the part of the American believers in their dealings with them, either in an official or private capacity, whether in business transactions or for purely religious purposes. As the Movement grows in prestige, fame and influence, as the ambitions, malice and ill-will of strangers and enemies correspondingly wax greater, it becomes increasingly important for every individual and spiritual Assembly to be on their guard lest they fall innocent victims of the evil designs of the malevolent, the self-seeking and greedy.

—*Baha'i Administration*, page 92.

The matter of receiving Orientals is left entirely in the hands of the National Spiritual Assembly, whose special committee for this purpose will have to investigate all the questions arising in this connection in future.

—*Baha'i Administration*, page 41.

In this manner, the entire Eastern Hemisphere, the home of Revelation, is looked askance by the Bahai community, and one thousand million Orientals automatically become suspect.

Additional instructions regarding the above subjects are to be found in *Bahai News*:

The National Spiritual Assembly feels that Oriental believers visiting America should transmit their credentials to the Secretary of the National Assembly, so that proper credentials may be issued by the National Assembly for their use while in America. If therefore, a Baha'i from the Orient should hereafter present his

credentials to any local Assembly, that Assembly is requested to see that the credentials are transmitted.

—*Bahai News*, No. 131, page 7, November, 1939.

As regards those Persian or Oriental non-believers who become genuinely interested in the Cause in America, they can be admitted to study classes, but every care should be taken by the Assemblies to fully test their sincerity and the genuineness of their desire to join the Community before they are given the necessary facilities that will enable them eventually to be regarded as voting members of the faith.

—*Bahai News*, No. 118, page 2, August, 1938.

Thus, it is made most difficult for Eastern people of all faiths and creeds to come in contact with American Bahais and to learn of the Cause; and then to cap this gorgeous structure of exclusiveness and intolerance, a bar is made, preventing even the American Bahais, travelling from one city to another, from visiting local Assemblies or having a chat with individual believers, if these travellers happen to be unarmed with the proper *credentials*. Here is the fiat that proclaims this spiritual embargo to all the world:—

It has been voted to call attention once more to the fact that local Assemblies and individual believers should be careful in dealing with persons who claim to be Baha'is but have no proper credentials. This applies particularly to persons who come from other cities.

—*Bahai News*, No. 95, page 4, October, 1935.

Segregation! Thy name, indeed, is Bahai Organization!

Isolationists! Why not take a few leaves out of the text books of the Bahai Administration?

Irreconcilable Teachings

In bringing this chapter to a close, I venture to make the following comparison between the two points of view treated here; that of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha and that of Shoghi Effendi.

Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha banish the spectre of fear and enmity; Shoghi Effendi evokes them.

Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha teach association with all men; Shoghi Effendi commands the shunning of whomsoever we even *feel* to be an enemy.

Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha throw wide open the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven; Shoghi Effendi closes them to a crack lest any *mischief-makers* enter the Temple of the Cause.

Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha were the embodiments of courtesy and affability; Shoghi Effendi departs considerably from the path of even ordinary good manners, as is exemplified by his term *besotted woman* which he applies to an honorable lady, a Bahai of more than twenty years' standing, whose conclusions on certain matters may be incorrect, but who is intelligent, sincere and self-sacrificing beyond all shadow of doubt. It was no less a person than Baha-O-Llah who said:—

I declare by God that the sword of civility is keener than blades of steel.

—Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, page 23.

Baha-O-Llah tells his followers: *If in the presence of*

the Manifestation, the evil in some one is apparent, you must not make opposition, only turn to God (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, page 84); Shoghi Effendi, instead of renouncing opposition, is much taken up with the flames of sedition, the pernicious elements, the machinations of an implacable and vigilant enemy and the invading forces of schism. He, likewise, is catapulted into an idyllic rapture when he contemplates the awful doom that will overtake these notorious exponents of corruption and heresy who succeed in protruding for a time their ugly features only to sink, as rapidly as they had arisen, into the mire of an ignominious end. There is a sentence for you! One fitted to strike terror into the hearts of many so-called heretics, and at the same time to produce unctuous satisfaction in the innermost being of those who are trained to hunt them.

Thus, we can see that Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly throughout these years have built a segregated community—a community, the members of which are taught to suspect the motives and actions of the most innocent—an isolated, self-centered, self-satisfied community, living behind the iron walls of a prison which Baha-O-Allah and Abdul Baha thought to destroy. Tragic? Yes. Unexpected? Of course; and as the Father and Son, from the Supreme Horizon, watch this process of rebuilding the fortress of alienation and proscription which they themselves had dismantled, can you guess the thoughts that occur in their Minds, can you imagine the conversation that is going on between them? Can you?



GATEWAY TO ACCA

CHAPTER XVII

EXCOMMUNICATION

An Ecclesiastical Law

Excommunication, as practiced by religious communities throughout the ages, is an ecclesiastical law adopted by the spiritual leaders of Judaism and Christianity, also Islam in modified form, to protect the faithful from contamination with those ideals and ideas that were considered harmful or heretical. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church resorted to this method in order to eject, and shut out from communion, those men and women who questioned her authority or her exclusive claim to salvation.

As an ecclesiastical law, whenever pronounced against a person or persons, it automatically deprived them of fellowship in things spiritual. The Roman Catholic Church perfected this engine of discipline and divided excommunication into two kinds: minor and major. Minor excommunication is separation or suspension from the sacraments. Major excommunication is absolute exclusion from the Church with all its rights and advantages and, in the case of very great offenders, even from social intercourse with the faithful.

In time, the church hierarchy created most rigorous methods of disciplinary constraint which culminated in the establishment of the Boards of Inquisition, which were empowered to excommunicate those found guilty of heresy, to imprison them and see to it that their houses were de-

stroyed, their goods confiscated and their bodies burned at the stake.

These severe measures reduced the church government to a mere contrivance for exacting explicit obedience to a system of ecclesiastical enactments; thus turning religion, which had been intended to be the very essence of mercy and love, into a machine of injustice and hate.

The practice of excommunication, as developed from the theories of the Schoolmen, was as follows: first: to reclaim the believer from error of doctrine and if possible to save his soul; second: in case the first act of mercy were unsuccessful, to cut him off, as a withered branch, from the body of Christ and all participation in the benefits thereof. Penalties of various degrees were legislated and enforced upon dissenters from the Church's formulated standard of doctrine. One most efficacious invention, fitted to strike terror into the heart of any rebel, was excommunication by inch or excommunication by candle, where the period allowed for repentance depended on the life of a burning candle. If the candle had died out before the apostate had recanted, no restoration could be expected in this world or in the world to come, and even Christ would not act as a pleader on the judgment day for such an accursed soul.

Now, I deny the temporal and spiritual right of excommunication as exercised in the past by the ecclesiastical institutions; and I reject claims to the same prerogatives which are maintained today by those who hold themselves as the shepherds of the flocks. Long enough has religion been defaced by this inhuman contraption, operated by so-called *holy* men! Long enough have these far-from-holy-men manipulated the conscience of mankind through

their demoniacal devices and, terming themselves the Vice-Gerents of the Most High, imposed their anti-spiritual and anti-social dogmas on a defenseless and innocent humanity!

The people of the world must awaken to the realization that God, who is the fountain-head of all blessings, was not, is not and will never be an excommunicator. He is no God of wrath and vengeance, but a God of understanding and compassion. All those who sat on the thrones of authority, expelling and anathematizing the *dissenters*, did not themselves know what faith meant and had no share in the truth that they pretended to promulgate.

The greatest service that could be rendered to religion is to lift from its brow the dark curse of excommunication and to demand, nay to insist, that this law be struck out from the creeds of all faiths. As long as it retains its place, even theoretically, in the Articles of the Confessions of various sects and denominations, the establishment of the principles of a Universal Religion and a Universal God will remain an impossibility. Therefore we, the people of the world, must eradicate from the pages of our spiritual consciousness the language of hate and denunciation, and obliterate from our religious books the rules of expulsion and anathema.

The Language of Love

It was certainly not an idle exhortation when Baha-O-Llah, from behind the prison walls of Acca, Palestine, announced that:—

The language of love is the touchstone of hearts and sustenance for the spirit; it is like unto the significances

behind the words, and a horizon for the dawn of the Sun of Wisdom and Knowledge.

—*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 12.

Baha-O-Llah's aim was to purify all religions from the defects of cursing, execration and excommunication. His plan was to change the surface of the earth into the Paradise of Our Lord the Merciful; and in order that his followers might arise for the accomplishment of this mighty task, he addressed them saying:—

O people of Baha! Ye are the dawning-places of the Love and day-springs of the Favor of God. Defile not the tongues with cursing and execrating any one.

—*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 130.

Again he admonished them:—

I sincerely hope that my friends will not be contaminated by the dust of lies, and that the exaggerated things which they hear will not affect their state, their condition, their saintliness nor their purity.

—*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 26.

The Bahais are therefore called upon, by the Revelator himself, to speak in the language of love and to protect themselves from the dust of lies; and the greatest lie of all the ages is that a compassionate God is the excommunicator of His own children or that He approves excommunication in His Name.

Baha-O-Llah, also says:—

The people of Baha must not refuse to discharge the reward of any one, and must respect possessors of

talents; and they must not stain their *tongues with slander* (or evil words) like unto the former community (i.e. Islamites).

—*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 10.

The Language of Hate

In this connection I cannot help but think of the excommunication pronounced by Clement VI (1346) against Louis the Bavarian. It surpasses anything that I have read on this subject. Compared to it, a cup of hemlock is heavenly nectar and prussic acid a life-imparting remedy. Through these words you can hear the hiss of the serpent and the whistling of the slave driver's scourge. It is a gem in the literature of the Curse:—

Let him be damned in his going out and his coming in! The Lord strike him with madness and blindness and mental insanity; may the heavens empty upon him their thunderbolts, and the Wrath of the Omnipotent burn itself into him in the present and the future world! May the universe fight against him, and the earth open to swallow him up alive!

Small wonder that emperors, kings, princes and the peoples of Europe quaked before this awesome power! When I, for the first time, read this majestic curse, a tremor ran through my spine and my pulse boiled as though caught in fire.

Presently, however, I realized more plainly than before what Baha-O-Llah really meant when he commanded us: *Defile not the tongues with cursing and execrating any one*; and when I had controlled my horror and regained my poise I remembered that I must not let myself be con-

taminated by the dust of lies—for these are indeed blasphemy against God, the Father, and the Christ, His Son, who on the cross prayed for his enemies. They are blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, attendant upon all men.

A Vast Difference

In carrying this new principle of a non-cursing, non-execrating and non-excommunicating religion to its logical conclusion, Abdul Baha, while traveling in the United States, repeatedly spoke on the subject. In the course of a sermon delivered before the Congregation of All Souls Unitarian Church, New York, on July 14, 1912, he said:—

All humanity must be looked upon with love, kindness and respect, for what we behold in them are none other than the signs and traces of God Himself. All are evidences of God; therefore, how shall we be justified in debasing and belittling them, uttering anathema and preventing them from drawing near unto His mercy. This is ignorance and injustice, displeasing to God, for in His sight all are His servants.

**—Promulgation of Universal Peace,
Vol. I, page 226.**

What a vast difference between the above utterances of Abdul Baha and those of Thomas Aquinas—the father of the rationalization of theology in the Roman Catholic Church—who, relying on the authority of St. Augustine, asserted that:—

Heretics were not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but from the world by death. As falsifiers of coins are put to death, much

more should they be put to death who are guilty of the more wicked act of corrupting the faith. The heretic, the Church delivers over to the secular tribunal to be put out of the world.

Heretic-Hunting

The Tribunal of Inquisition, established by Innocent III (1215), was intended to meet the peril of heresy and extirpate it. The heretics were compared to serpents concealing themselves in the grass, and princes were ordered to take an oath to support the Church in punishing them, and, on pain of forfeiting their dignities, to imprison them and confiscate their goods. Anyone who, in whatsoever way, supported heretics was himself excommunicated and denied his inheritance. Innocent III openly declared that even as treason was punished, so much more should punishments be meted out to those who committed the greater crime of blasphemy against God and His Son.

Abdul Baha must have been thinking on these and other such ungodly occurrences when on August 17, 1912, he spoke at Green Acre, Maine:—

From the beginning of human history down to the present time the various religions of the world have anathematized and accused each other of falsity. Each religion has considered the others bereft of the face of God, deprived of His mercy and in the direct line of divine wrath. Therefore, they have shunned each other most rigidly, exercising mutual animosity and rancour.

—*Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
Vol. II, page 259.

Universal Bounty

In the same speech, Abdul Baha develops this subject in a very striking and original manner:—

... How ignorant therefore the thought that God who created man, educated and nurtured him, surrounded him with all blessings, made the sun and all phenomenal existence for his benefit, bestowed upon him tenderness and kindness and then did not love him! This is palpable ignorance, for no matter to what religion a man belongs, even though he be an atheist or materialist, nevertheless God nurtures him, bestows his kindness and sheds upon him His light. How then can we believe God is wrathful and unloving? How can we even imagine this when as a matter of fact we are witnesses of the tenderness and mercy of God upon every hand? All about us we behold manifestations of the love of God. If therefore God be loving, what should we do? We have nothing else to do but to emulate Him. Just as God loves all and is kind to all, so must we really love and be kind to everybody. We must consider none bad, none worthy of detestation, no one as an enemy. We must love all; nay we must consider every one as related to us, for all are the servants of one God. All are under the instructions of one educator. We must strive day and night that love and amity may increase, that this bond of unity may be strengthened, that joy and happiness may more and more prevail, that in unity and solidarity, all mankind may gather beneath the shadow of God, that people may turn to God for their sustenance, finding in Him the life that is everlasting.

—*Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
Vol. II, page 261.

Inquisitorial Precepts

Let us contrast the above spiritual utterances of Abdul Baha with the writing of Pope Innocent III to the Inquisitorial Magistrates of Viterbo on the 25th of March, 1199:—

According to civil law, criminals convicted of treason are punished with death and their goods are confiscated; if even their children's lives are spared, it is simply out of pity. With how much more reason then should they who offend Jesus, the Son of the Lord God, by deserting the faith, be cut off from Christian communion and stripped of their goods, for it is infinitely more serious to offend against the Divine Majesty than to injure human majesty.

On another occasion the same Pope addressed the Princes of France:—

It is our wish that all the people take arms against the heretics whenever Brother Raynier and Brother Gui may deem advisable to give the command.

Bahai Administration Follows Suit

The few quotations from the writings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that their central aim was the abolition of all exclusive acts and of every sectarian tendency. This one all-embracing spirit distinguishes their cause from all the past religions.

Yet, alas, *this limitation, this expulsion, this excommunication*, which Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha entreated their followers to renounce and cast away, these evil spirits of a by-gone age, these gibbering goblins of a lost generation

have been taken up by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada and incorporated in the fundamental laws of their ecclesiastical organization. The pity of it is that Shoghi Effendi falls in line with their medieval orthodoxy, with the result that today the Bahai world is witnessing religious persecution, heresy-hunting and excommunication according to standard pattern. In addition to this, the National Spiritual Assembly does not permit its *recognized* followers to join any organization, political or religious, and the Bahais are required to cancel any membership they may have in such bodies.

Thus, it seems to me that this is not at all *the New World Order of Baha-O-Llah* but the very old world order of intolerance, fanaticism, exclusion and spiritual isolation which Baha-O-Llah came to destroy. Thanks to the labor and ingenuity of the National Spiritual Assembly and Shoghi Effendi, these liabilities of the dark ages have been recaptured and embodied bag and baggage in this modern and one-time healthy movement.

Minor and Major Excommunication

According to its ruling, the National and Local Assemblies have the power to deprive a member of voting rights and suspend him from meetings and gatherings. These individuals are termed *recalcitrant*—not considered as expelled or excommunicated, but simply subsisting under a temporary ban.

This is very much like the *Minor Excommunication* in the Catholic Church; however, when the Guardian expels or excommunicates a person, this act has far-reaching spiritual implications *affecting the very soul of that be-*

liever. This is, of course the *Major Excommunication*, similar to that in the Roman Church. The triumphant edict of excommunication is laid down in *Bahai News*, No. 134, March 1940, page 2.

Concerning your question as to the status of those individuals whom the local Assembly or the National Spiritual Assembly have considered it necessary to deprive of the voting right and to suspend from local meetings and gatherings; such action which local and National Assemblies have been empowered to take against such recalcitrant members, however justified and no matter how severe, should under no circumstance be considered as implying the complete expulsion of the individuals affected from the Cause. The suspension of voting and other administrative rights of an individual, always conditional and therefore temporary, can never have such far-reaching implications, since it constitutes merely an administrative sanction; whereas his expulsion or excommunication from the Faith, which can be effected by the Guardian alone, in his capacity as the supreme spiritual head of the Community, has far-reaching spiritual implications affecting the very soul of that believer. The former, as already stated, is an administrative sanction, whereas the latter is essentially spiritual, involving not only the particular relationship of a believer to his local or National Assembly, but his very spiritual existence in the Cause. It follows, therefore, that a believer can continue calling himself a Bahai even though he may cease to be a voting member of the Community. But in case he is excluded from the body of the Cause by an act of the Guardian he ceases to be a believer, and cannot possibly identify himself even nominally with the Faith.



Group taken with Abdul Baha in Paris, in 1913.

From left to right:—A Persian statesman, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Dr. Lotfullah Hakim, Mirza Mahmud Zargani and Seyyed Assadollah.

The above quotation is from a letter addressed to Mr. Harlan Ober, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly. To my mind it raises a few fundamental issues, the discussion of which will be of vital importance.

The letter is written by the Guardian through his secretary and is published in *Bahai News with Shoghi Effendi's consent*; therefore to all intents and purposes it has the same validity as if he had written it personally.

A Staggering Claim

Shoghi Effendi claims for himself a power that is staggering in its implication; he assumes a spiritual dictatorship which is predictable of catastrophic results as regards the future of the Bahai Cause. This is a brand of Fascism much as that which has placed Europe under the heels of dictators accountable to no one, and which thus reduces Bahai membership to the level of spiritual serfdom. The exercise of this power is the more dangerous because, once Shoghi Effendi, as the Guardian, is entrenched in it and the precedent has become well established, all the succeeding Guardians will be liable to follow suit, appropriating it as their natural and inherited right.

It is an axiomatic fact that there is no man who, before the face of his Maker, can arrogate unto himself the power of excommunicating any person whatsoever from the religion of God or of controlling the spiritual destiny of that person. If it is proven that Shoghi Effendi really claims and actually practices this unwarranted right, then I say with all solemnity that it is the bounden duty of the liberal Bahais throughout the world to wage a continuous and vigorous war against such an assumption on his part.

For ages, the Christian world was crimsoned with the blood of innocent men, women and children, because the Popes claimed and exercised the power of excommunicating the so-called heretics and apostates. No record is more ghastly, no account more gruesome than are the records and accounts of the Inquisition and the *Autos-da-fe*; the very names suggest the worst horrors—lighted torches, towering flames, fierce-eyed hangmen, burning bodies, to say nothing of the faces of those who watched these spectacles with fiendish glee or, to say the least, with acquiescence. Now, do we want to bring into the Bahai Cause these relics of barbarism, these inventions of the devil? One may legitimately argue that such conditions will never return to our world. Yet I answer: So long as a single man claims this power and the right to exercise it, and a subservient group yields to his authority, the potential danger of a return to the practices of the Middle Ages exists. Some day there may be an eruption like unto a silent volcano which, at unforeseen times, floods the countryside with its rivers of lava and covers the face of the heavens with its clouds of smoke.

No one ever dreamed that in our lifetime Europe would be saddled with Nazism and Fascism with their attendant ideologies of regimentation, intolerance and barbarism, yet the impossible has happened and here we are, facing this terror!

On the other hand, it is not difficult to picture the establishment of a type of spiritual cruelty which would not necessitate the burning of heretics at the stake. This is the 20th Century, in spite of the European nightmare, and it is probable that we will content ourselves with more

refined methods of persecution. We are able to propagate, by subtle and *civilized* methods, rumors that in time will destroy the character of those whom we are pleased to point out as enemies. Just keep hammering at it, persistently, unremittingly, and, in time, men will be ready to call white black, and day night.

The Twin Swords

The Roman Catholic Church arrogated to herself the wielding of the *spiritual sword*; she *draws the sword which of God she hath received*, and the Princes of Europe were commanded to draw their *temporal* swords and support her in her doings. Another important chapter in the history of the Roman Catholic Church was the famous assertion of Boniface VIII (1302) that *both* swords were in the hands of the Pope. The Popes unsheathed these two swords and with their sharp blades struck at thousands. These acts of spiritual terrorism and devastation were the *fruits of seeds* sown in the early stages of Christianity, no doubt in some cases by sincere Christians whose sole aim it had been to protect the *deposit of Faith* handed down by the Apostles.

In Shoghi Effendi's letter, we find the statement: *But in case he is excluded from the body of the Cause by an act of the Guardian he ceases to be a believer, and cannot possibly identify himself even nominally with the Faith.* Being familiar with the development of the history of religions, we recognize in this statement the seed out of which will unquestionably grow the tree of a new Inquisition with its attendant cruelty and corruption. As you

sow so shall you reap, is the universal law of nature—cause and effect—no one can escape it.

The very worst calamity that could befall the Bahai Cause is that its members should supinely accept the principle that Shoghi Effendi, *in his capacity as the supreme spiritual head of the Community*, has the power to *expel* or to *excommunicate* a *believer* and that this act *has far-reaching spiritual implications affecting the very soul of that believer*. Shoghi Effendi has no such power! His excommunication cannot affect even the soul of an amocba; how much less the soul of a believer in Baha-O-Llah! My faith in the Bahai Cause would indeed be very superficial, should I come to believe that *any* human being could, by a mere gesture or a few mesmeric words, take it away from me or from any one else. Every soul, in accepting the Bahai Cause, makes a covenant with Baha-O-Llah, and that Covenant, neither Shoghi Effendi nor the National or Local Assemblies can ever break. Its foundation is in the depths of consciousness, and God alone knows its dwelling-place.

Scriptural Authority

The Pope, as we have seen, *in his capacity as the supreme head of the Community*, had the power to *expel* or *excommunicate* a *believer*, and that act was supposed to have *far-reaching spiritual implications affecting the very soul of that believer*. Now, how did the Pope find grounds on which to assert this power? Those who chose to invest him with this prerogative had to search the New Testament in order to find a verse that would support such a claim. Well, they found it. Here is the verse:—

And I say also unto thee, that, thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

—*St. Matthew, Chapter 16, Verses 18-19.*

On the authority of these two verses the Roman Church built her universal, temporal and spiritual Empire!

Never, in the furthest stretch of his divine vision, could Christ have imagined the astounding repercussions of the above words, and if Peter, the humble fisherman, could have projected himself into coming centuries and witnessed what his so-called *successors* were perpetrating in his name, he would have opened his honest eyes in horror and disgust. Peter would have repudiated his successors, while it goes without saying that they, likewise, would have repudiated him, throwing him out of the Vatican as the *reprobate Jew* that he was.

The Doctrine of the Keys

From the very beginning, the doctrine of *the keys* was a topic of theological discussion, and for centuries controversy raged around this point. As an essential credo of the Church, it was related to the teaching which applied to the forgiveness of sin (John, Chapter 5: Verse 14 and Chapter 8: Verse 11). The Fathers wrote volumes of commentaries on this point, and indulged in varied and conflicting interpretations, all of which go to prove the

supreme importance that was attached to this doctrine, necessary to discipline and fundamental for the maintenance of religious uniformity.

Thus, the Church of Rome held up Peter as the steward of the House of God on earth, who possessed the keys to all the heavenly mansions and had therefore the power to open or to shut. This gift of the power to open or to shut, to bind or to loose, to permit or to forbid, was in time assumed by Bishops and Popes and exercised under all circumstances. Later, the claim was regularized by the Fathers and Schoolmen in the interests of the Church Order and of a Ministry that had become increasingly sacerdotal. Ambrose, in particular, asserted that the Church had the keys in her *own* possession and enjoyed the sole power both to *bind and to loose*.

Externalizing the Word of God

The resemblance between the Roman Catholic Church and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada affords another striking parallel: All the spiritual ideals of Christ, originally metaphoric and uttered in the flowery language of Eastern symbology, became hardened by the Western Church into dogmas, thus changing the spring of spirituality into the winter of formalism. This externalizing process gained momentum from age to age, as the forces of orthodoxy found themselves in control of the State. The belief in the divine right of the hierarchy and the duty of imposing submission to it by force became the cardinal principle of the Church, with the result that a suffocating darkness descended upon the nations. The method which the succes-

sors of Peter adopted was not to *loose* the souls on earth but to *bind* them; it was one of violence, not of persuasion. The Church rested her rule on the sword rather than on the Cross. Thus, the primitive Christianity of the East was transformed into the elaborate and ritualistic Catholicism of the West with its vast jungle of rules, culminating in its official slogan: *No salvation without the Church*.

As a result of the doctrine of excommunication propounded by Shoghi Effendi and upheld by the National Spiritual Assembly, the Bahai Cause has taken up all the characteristics of the Church of Rome and, unless this doctrine is publicly repudiated, it will be subject to the same spiritual diseases, with gradual corruption and disintegration.

Contradictory Estimates

The claim made by Shoghi Effendi, regarding his right, *in his capacity as the supreme spiritual head*, to excommunicate the believers from the Faith, totally and fundamentally differs from a previous estimate of himself, written by him in the *World Order of Baha-U-Llah*. This estimate was published in 1934, while the new role which he now assumes was given out in 1939. There is quite a gap between the two statements and a distinct change of principle. In the earlier one, he does not think that he is a *co-sharer with Abdul Baha*; he can never claim to be a *perfect exemplar of the teachings of Baha-U-Llah* or the *stainless mirror that reflects His light*; he forbids the believers to pray to him, to seek his benediction or even to celebrate his birthday. He feels that he can exercise the right and perform the obligation imposed upon him as the

Guardian and yet remain infinitely inferior to both Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha *in rank, and different in nature.*

Here are his words:—

The Guardian of the Faith must not under any circumstances . . . be exalted to the rank that will make him a co-sharer with Abdul Baha in the unique position which the Center of the Covenant occupies—much less to the station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God. So grave a departure from the established tenets of our Faith is nothing short of open blasphemy. . . .

No Guardian of the Faith, I feel it my solemn duty to place on record, can ever claim to be the perfect exemplar of the teachings of Baha-U-Llah or the stainless mirror that reflects His light. . . . In the light of this truth to pray to the Guardian of the Faith, to address him as lord and master, to designate him as his holiness, to seek his benediction, to celebrate his birthday, or to commemorate any event associated with his life would be tantamount to a departure from those established truths that are enshrined within our beloved Faith.

Feb. 8, 1934, Haifa, Palestine.

—*The World Order of Baha-U-Llah*,
pages 150, 151.

Naturally, I am fully aware of the fact that by this time many *believers* in the organization have, in contradiction to the above statement, deified Shoghi Effendi. It is known that they look upon him as a reincarnation of the spirit of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha and that they have bedecked his shoulders with the mantle of infallibility.

This strange belief, wholly at variance with Shoghi Effendi's earlier concept of himself, is taught but orally from mouth to mouth, yet traces of it can be detected in some of the pronouncements of the National Spiritual Assembly and the reports of its various committees.

The Black Plague

The doctrine of excommunication, appropriated by Shoghi Effendi, is peculiarly the weapon of the Dark Ages of intolerance and ignorance. No other dogma is so distinctly the creation of an irreligious era. It is the black plague in the realm of the mind; it is religious assassination and spiritual murder; it is an abomination unto the Lord of Mercy and Truth. The spiritual and cultural manifestations of the Renaissance as well as the courage and sacrifice of thousands of lovers of freedom contributed to wrest (to all intents and purposes) the power of excommunication from the hands of the Roman Catholic Church and to establish in Europe and America the age of the liberty of Religion. Does it then seem credible that Shoghi Effendi is so unmindful of the history of the past that he has brought himself to believe that he can bring back into the Western world the doctrine of excommunication? Are the members of the National Spiritual Assembly so blind to the significant events in the United States during the last hundred and fifty years that they hope to succeed in establishing on these shores a religious tribunal, with authority to expel from the Cause those believers whom they are unable to brow-beat into submission? The following significant words of Baha-O-Llah are applicable to this subject:—

O people of Baha! The possessor of the Name says: Meditate upon these events that ye may really break the idols of superstitions and imaginations.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 230.

A Worthwhile Excommunication

If the Bahai Cause aspires to spread its teachings far and wide and gain the respect and devotion of mankind, now or in the future, it must purge itself of *all* the religious limitations of the past. It must submit to a process of complete self-purification and then dedicate itself to the progressive, spiritual, social and intellectual interests of our fellowmen.

The doctrine of excommunication has *not one* good thing in its favor. It has set men against men and class against class. It has made the leaders of religions suspicious and revengeful, leaving behind an accursed memory. It is beyond my comprehension why Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of a Universal Movement, wishes to revive this practically lifeless corpse and so inflict a mortal injury upon the Cause!

In the face of this overriding danger, which is embodied in Shoghi Effendi's claim that as the supreme head of the Cause he has the power to excommunicate or expel the believers, thereby depriving them of their spiritual heritage, no other choice is left to me but to sound the alarm. I have been impelled by motives beyond my control to present this problem before the Bahai world, before the public in general, and before the conscience of an awakening society which, little by little, is becoming aware of the mission of Baha-O-Llah.

Herewith I appeal to Shoghi Effendi, as the Guardian designated by the Master, to preserve the democracy of the Bahai Cause, to protect the vital dignity of man, to obliterate all the traces of negation, to herald the universality of the Message of Abdul Baha, and, in so doing, to *expel* expulsion and *excommunicate* excommunication. Such an excommunication would, indeed, be worthwhile!

A Little Bunch of Flowers

Before leaving this subject, I will recount a story, simple, human and very touching. It took place shortly after The New History Society had been cut from the Bahai Administration, at a time when I had suddenly become *untouchable* to my former Bahai companions. This intimate glimpse of a ship-wrecked life can serve as an example of what has occurred over the centuries, in instances without number.

One night, a few of us were gathered in Mrs. Chanler's house. It was late, and the household had retired, so, when a ring was heard at the front door, I went downstairs and answered it myself. No one was there but, at my feet, a little bunch of flowers was resting on the doormat. I picked it up and carried it to the library; and all of us knew that it was a message of love that could not be delivered in person.

A few evenings later, under exactly the same circumstances, we again heard a ring at the door and I went down to find one of our Bahai friends in the street. She had not run away this time. I brought her up to the library, and there we held her in our arms for a long time

while she sobbed most pitifully; and all the while she was moaning: *I have come home! I could not bear it any longer. I have come home!*

The reunion was only a temporary one, for this Bahai sister of mine had a great veneration for the Guardian and she could not withstand his commands. So, for a while, she came and went, trying to reconcile her conception of the Cause with the dealings of the Administration. Sometimes she would pace the streets half the night in the hope that a speeding taxicab would put an end to her agony. Finally, when body and mind could endure no more, she passed between the doors of a hospital and disappeared from the sight of all who knew her.

Some years later, she returned to her family, and that fact is the last news that I have had of her. Probably, we will never meet again in this life, but she has left behind her a memory of spiritual loveliness and warm, human susceptibilities as poignant as any that I have, and, although the period of our separation is long, I can still sense the perfume of that little bunch of flowers that lay on the doormat.

Such is the harvest of excommunication—broken hearts, broken lives, shattered confidence! Does Shoghi Effendi really wish to deck the altar of the Bahai Cause with these gruesome trophies?

PART SEVEN

POLITICS AND THE BAHAI CAUSE

- 18. Bahais and Persian Politics
- 19. "Da" and "Niet"—"Ja" and "Nein"
- 20. Bahai Non-participation in Politics

By the blessing of the upright, the city is exalted. . . . Where no counsel is, the people fall; but, in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

—Proverbs, Chapter 11, Verses 11 & 14



Abbas Effendi, later known as Abdul Baha.
Photograph taken in Adrianople.

CHAPTER XVIII

BAHAIS AND PERSIAN POLITICS

A Marked Movement

From the year 1844, when the Bab declared his mission in Shiraz, up to the year 1909-10, the Babis, and the Bahais who succeeded them, lived under the autocratic rule of the Shahs of the Kadjar Dynasty; and, when in 1852 Baha-O-Llah was exiled to Turkey, he and those who accompanied him were subjected to another tyranny, that of the Ottoman Sultans.

In the dispensation of the Bab, his band of devoted followers met successive waves of persecution, during which thousands upon thousands were put to the sword by order of the Iranian government and the Islamic clergy. These blood-orgies were the result of loud and persistent accusations against the Babis, which were to the effect that this order planned to interfere with the political affairs of the nation and to overthrow the established order.

The encounters that took place between the small but fervent religious band and the armed forces of Iran make astounding reading. In several parts of the country, the Babis were attacked by the army and the populace, and were forced to take refuge in barracks where they were surrounded on all sides. Here, in many cases, protracted sieges set in, which, after months of heroic resistance, were terminated by promises of exemption and pardon which were never kept. When the exhausted Babis emerged from their refuge, they were massacred wholesale.

Precautionary Measures

Now, while these events were taking place, and in subsequent years when their recurrence was ever imminent, Baha-O-Llah from his place of exile strove to convey to the rulers of Iran and Turkey the fact that his people were, in no sense of the word, seditious; at the same time, he instructed the Bahais to concentrate on the improvement of their own characters and under no circumstances to engage in political pursuits. This step on the part of Baha-O-Llah was a most necessary one, for it prevented the wiping out of the entire movement. His stand was later adopted by Abdul Baha.

Baha-O-Llah Instructs the Bahais

The following words of Baha-O-Llah addressed to his followers very conclusively prove the point under discussion:—

Ye are forbidden sedition and strife in the books and epistles; and herein I desire nought save your exaltation and elevation, whereunto beareth witness the heaven and its stars, the sun and its radiance, the trees and their leaves, the seas and their waves and the earth and its treasures.

—A Traveller's Narrative, page 152.

This is what is intended by victory: Sedition hath never been nor is pleasing to God, and that which certain ignorant persons formerly wrought was never approved. If ye be slain for His good pleasure verily it is better for you than that ye should slay.

—A Traveller's Narrative, page 115.

The meaning of victory is not this, that any one should fight or strive with any one.

—*A Traveller's Narrative*, page 113.

Every one, then, who desireth victory must first subdue the city of his own heart with the sword of spiritual truth and of the Word.

—*A Traveller's Narrative*, page 114.

These lofty and definite statements of Baha-O-Llah induced the early Bahais to lay aside the more provocative attitude which had been held by the Babis and to turn their attention from the corrupt political systems of Iran and Turkey, which they were in no position to alter, to the spread of the teachings and the increase of their numbers. Thus in time they became a well-knit, disciplined minority, the model behavior of which had far-reaching influence.

Baha-O-Llah Pleads with the Shah

While Baha-O-Llah, on the one hand, was striving to restrain the dauntless Bahais from over-activity on dangerous terrain, he on the other hand laid their case before the Shah of Persia and did not hesitate to blame this sovereign in full for the part which he had taken in the long chapter of persecution.

Baha-O-Llah says:—

They have attacked a number of reformers of the world with the charge of seditiousness. As God liveth, these persons had and have no intent nor hope save the glory of the State and service to their nation! For God they spoke and for God they speak, and in the way of God do they journey.

—*A Traveller's Narrative*, pages 79-80.

It is twenty years and more that they (the Bahais) have been tormented by day and by night with the fierceness of the royal anger and that they have been cast each one into a different land by the blasts of the tempests of the king's wrath. How many children have been left fatherless! How many fathers have become childless! How many mothers have not dared, through fear and dread, to mourn over their slaughtered children!

—*A Traveller's Narrative*, pages 119-120.

And then Baha-O-Llah cries out from the depth of his heart:—

O King! The lamps of justice are extinguished and the fire of persecution is kindled on all sides, until that they have made my people captives.

—*A Traveller's Narrative*, page 139.

O King, I conjure thee by thy Lord the Merciful to regard His servants with the gaze of pitiful eyes, and to rule with justice in their midst, that God may award His Favor unto thee.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 69.

Verily those who surround thee, love thee for their own sakes, while this Servant loveth thee for thine own sake, nor doth He desire aught save that He may bring thee nigh unto the station of grace and turn thee unto the right hand of Justice.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, pages 70-71.

O God, this is a letter which I wish to send to the King; and Thou knowest that I have not desired aught of him save the display of his justice to Thy people, and the showing forth of his favors to the dwellers in Thy kingdom, and verily, for myself, I have not desired

aught save what Thou desirest. . . . Help, O God, his Majesty the King, to execute Thy laws amongst Thy servants and to show forth Thy Justice amidst Thy creatures, that he may rule over this sect as he ruleth over those who are beside them. Verily Thou art the Potent, the Mighty, the Wise.

—*Bahai Scriptures* page 74.

By God, I do not desire sedition, but the purification of God's servants from all that withholdeth them from approach to God.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 76.

We ask God . . . to assist the King in that which He liketh and approveth; and to help him unto that which shall bring him near to the Day-Spring of His Most Comely Names, that he may not shut his eyes to the wrong which he seeth, but may regard his subjects with the eye of favor and preserve them from violence. . . . And we ask Him to make thee a helper unto His religion and a regarder of His Justice, that thou mayest rule over His servants as thou rulest over those of thy kindred, and mayest choose for them what thou wouldst choose for thyself.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 80.

Baha-O-Llah Pleads with the Sultan

It is now the turn of the Sultan of Turkey to receive the reprimand of Baha-O-Llah:—

O, thou personage, who considerest thyself the greatest of all men, while looking upon the Divine Youth, (Baha-O-Llah) thinking him to be the lowest of men, yet through Him the eye of the Supreme Concourse is brightened. . . . From the beginning every one of the Manifestations of mercifulness . . . who have stepped

forth from the Realm of Immortality . . . men like thee have considered those sanctified souls . . . upon whom the reformation of the world depends, as the people of strife and wrong-doers. Verily, their names (the deniers) are forgotten and ere long thy name will also be forgotten and thou shalt find thyself in great loss.

According to thy opinion, this Quickener of the world and its Peace-maker is culpable and seditious. What crime have the women, children and suffering babes committed, to merit thy wrath, oppression and hate? In every religion and community the children are considered innocent, nor does the Pen of Divine Command hold them responsible, yet the reign of thy tyranny and despotism has surrounded them. If thou art the follower of any religion or sect, read thou the Heavenly Books . . . so that thou mayest realize the irresponsibility of children . . . even those people who do not believe in God, have never committed such crimes. . . .

You have persecuted a number of souls who have shown no opposition in your country and who have instigated no revolution against the government; nay rather, days and nights they have been peacefully engaged in the mentioning of God. You have pillaged their properties and through your tyrannical acts, all they had was taken from them. . . .

Before God, a handful of dust is greater than your kingdom, sovereignty, glory and dominion, and should He desire, He would scatter you as the sand of the desert, and ere long his wrath shall overtake you, revolutions shall appear in your midst and your countries will be divided! Then you will weep and lament and nowhere will you find help or protection. . . .

Be ye watchful, for the wrath of God is prepared and ere long ye shall behold that which is descended from the Pen of Command. Have ye thought that your glory is everlasting, or did ye dream that your kingdom would remain forever? No, by the life of God! Your glory is not eternal, and our humiliation will not last. . . .

The point is this, that thou mayest raise thy head from the bed of negligence and become mindful and not oppose the servants of God without reason. Bear in mind that so far as power and strength remain in the body, thou shouldst remove persecutions from the oppressed ones. . . . Be just! Then turn to God, perchance He may forgive the sins thou hast committed in this ephemeral life . . . Through thy tyranny the Fire of Sinai flamed forth, the Spirit wept, and the hearts of the angels bled. . . .

Do not think that thou hast made this Youth powerless, or that thou hast conquered him. Thou art defeated by one of the servants but thou knowest it not. The worst and lowest of creatures rules over thee, that is, thy passion and desire . . . Thou art weak, and knowest it not.

—Baha-O-Llah in his tablet to Sultan of Turkey,
Bahai Scriptures, pages 81-88.

Abdul Baha Takes up the Defense

Writing in about 1874, Abdul Baha continued along the same lines, pointing out to the then Shah of Iran the fact that the Bahais were not a rebellious people; that they did not manifest any signs of *sedition*; that they were *the loyal subjects of the king*, and all that they required

from the government was freedom of conscience, which he thought must be the established principle of monarchy. This is the way that Abdul Baha expresses himself:—

For thirty years there has been no rumour of disturbance or rebellion, nor any sign of sedition. Notwithstanding the duplication of adherents, and the increase and multiplication of this body, through many admonitions and encouragements to virtue this sect are all in the utmost repose and stability; they have made obedience their distinctive trait and in extreme submissiveness and subordination are the loyal subjects of the king.

On what lawful grounds can the government further molest them, or permit them to be slighted? Besides, this interference with the consciences and beliefs of peoples, and persecution of diverse denominations of men is . . . contrary to the established principles of monarchy.

—*A Traveller's Narrative*, page 160.

Abdul Baha as well as Baha-O-Llah never condoned the injustices of the Shah, and, after exposing the enormities that had been committed against his followers, he asserts that one of the functions of government is *to ensure freedom of conscience and tranquility of heart*. He reminds the Shah that other countries did not become civilized, nor did they attain to high degrees of influence and power, until they had come to the point of dealing with all classes according to *one standard*. He then ends his dissertation with the significant remark: *The common interest is complete equality*.

Let us read his words:—

The true nature and real doctrine of this sect have now become evident and well known: all their writings and tracts have repeatedly and frequently fallen into our hands and are to be found preserved in the possession of the government. If they be perused, the actual truth and inward verity will become clear and apparent. These pages are entirely taken up with prohibitions of sedition, recommendations of upright conduct among mankind, obedience, submission, loyalty, conformity and acquisition of laudable qualities and encouragements to become endowed with praiseworthy accomplishments and characteristics. They have absolutely no reference to political questions, nor do they treat of that which could cause disturbance or sedition.

Under these circumstances a just government can find no excuse, and possesses no pretext for further persecuting this sect, except a claim to the right of interference in thought and conscience, which are the private possessions of the heart and soul.

And, as regards this matter, there has already been much interference, and countless efforts have been made. What blood has been shed! What heads have been hung up! Thousands of persons have been slain; thousands of women and children have become wanderers or captives; many are the buildings which have been ruined; and how many noble races and families have become headless and homeless! Yet nought has been effected and no advantage has been gained; no remedy has been discovered for this ill, nor any easy salve for this wound.

To ensure freedom of conscience and tranquillity of heart and soul is one of the duties and functions of government, and is in all ages the cause of progress in development and ascendancy over other lands. Other

civilized countries acquired not this pre-eminence, nor attained unto these high degrees of influence and power, till such time as they put away the strife of sects out of their midst, and dealt with all classes according to one standard. All are one people, one nation, one species, one kind. The common interest is complete equality. —*A Traveller's Narrative*, pages 157-158.

The Bahais Hold to their Mission

Notwithstanding this aloof attitude from the *corrupt autocratic systems* of Iran and Turkey which had been adopted as a protective measure, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Bahais were far from indifferent to the social and political destiny of their native land. They did not stand on the sidelines, callous to injustices, but simply changed their tactics and worked along unprovocative constructive lines.

Abdul Baha, the incomparable statesman, had placed in their hands a mighty weapon, with which to fight the dark forces of political chicanery and corruption; and, through this means, his people gained unheralded victories in the highways and byways of society. What was this weapon? It simply was a book: *The Mysterious Forces of Civilization*, written anonymously by the Master himself.

As its name indicates, this work is a treatise on political philosophy, democracy and just government. It develops the theories of citizenship, national and international; it deals with civil and religious liberty, freedom of speech and other basic principles for a new world order. Written in eloquent Persian, it was circulated far and wide.

Like leaven, these ideas fermented in the minds of the

young leaders and would-be reformers of Iran and Turkey. According to the judgment of a number of competent witnesses, the unobtrusive and persistent passing of this book from hand to hand contributed a decisive blow toward the downfall of the Iranian and Turkish monarchies, during the fateful years 1909-10. The fly-leaf bears the words: *Written in Persian by an Eminent Bahai Philosopher.*

The Mysterious Forces of Civilization, as translated into English by Johanna Dawud, became available to the western world through its first London edition in 1910. A reprint was made in 1918 by the Bahai Publishing Society of Chicago, Ill. I submit it, to the interested student, as a most consummate exposition of the kind of political philosophy that must inevitably be practiced in the world of today and the world of tomorrow, also as a manual for the organization of national and international government based on justice, truth and fair dealing. Likewise, I take the liberty of submitting it to the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, for a careful reading of this document will, to their possible amazement and I hope to their enlightenment, reveal the fact that Abdul Baha, unlike his grandson Shoghi Effendi, did not express his *abhorrence of political affairs* (*Bahai News*, July 1933, No. 75, Page 3) but rather, that he was the most able statesman our age has produced, and that he stands a model of political enterprise for those who wish to emulate him.

Restrictions Lifted

When the decadent autocracies of Iran and Turkey col-



ABDUL BAHHA'S HOUSE AT ACCA.

lapsed under the impact of democratic uprisings, a new era was inaugurated in those countries, and the Bahais found themselves at liberty to take their legitimate part in the establishment of a humanitarian society. It was at this time that Abdul Baha advised his followers to enter the domain of clean politics, enjoining them to purify the poisonous atmosphere that was still clinging to the minds of their contemporaries and to help lay the stable foundations of a fellowship of nations. There is no doubt but that the Bahais tackled the work with vigor and enthusiasm.

If the reader needs any evidence to prove the above assertion, I can do no better than quote a statement made by Abdul Baha in Boston, Mass., on July 23, 1912. It is in answer to questions put to him by some American friends who no doubt remembered his past instructions regarding the non-participation of the believers in politics.

Abdul Baha said:—

The injunction to Bahais has been this:—They must not engage in matters of politics which lead to corruption. They must have nothing to do with corruption or sedition, but should interest themselves in clean politics. In Persia, at the present time, the Bahais have no part in the movements which have terminated in corruption; but on the other hand a Bahai may be a politician of the right type; even ministers in Persia are Bahais. We have Governor-Generals who are Bahais and there are many other Bahais who take part in politics, but not in corruption. It is evident they must have nothing to do with seditious movements. For example, if the

Americans should arise with the intention of reinstating despotism, the Bahais should take no part in it.

—*Star of the West*, Vol. IV, page 122, No. 7,
July 13, 1912.

The above statement of Abdul Baha demonstrates the pride which he took in the political achievements of his Iranian followers. We can, by reminding ourselves of certain rules and developments, appreciate more fully the significance of his words:—

(a) Up to 1909, his instructions to the Bahais in Iran regarding non-participation in political affairs was literally obeyed.

(b) Within the short space of four years from 1909, when the Iranian Revolution occurred and the despotic monarchy was overthrown, up to 1912, when Abdul Baha made the foregoing statement, there had appeared on the political scene of Iran Bahai Ministers, Bahai Governor-Generals and Bahai Statesmen who were wielding the sceptre of power, not for the purpose of filling their own purses, but for that of serving the best interests of their country, and in the most unselfish manner.

(c) Abdul Baha divided politics into two parts: *clean* politics and *corrupt* politics. The Bahais should interest themselves in the former and totally avoid the latter. This instruction applies to America as well as Persia, and to all other lands as well.

(d) A Bahai may be a statesman. This is to be desired.

So did Abdul Baha give to his native land, Iran, some very wise and able servants. The question is: how did

he do it; how did he make such a transformation in men who, for over half a century, had been trained to rigidly avoid everything political? The whole answer lies in the meaning which he intended to convey, and which his followers read between the lines and grasped from the very beginning. When they were told not to participate in politics, they looked at one another, exchanged a few words, and went after their business, which was on the upward trend. Likewise, when the Shah of Iran and the Sultan of Turkey and their ministers read the words of Abdul Baha, they were very well satisfied and also went after their business—a business which was on the brink of failure. Finally, when the crash came, the Bahais stepped onto the scene, fully equipped for the work that was to be done.

The result of all this? Abdul Baha himself reported it to the American Bahais. Unfortunately, they had ears, but heard not; eyes, but saw not, and minds that did not comprehend.

Church and State

Abdul Baha did not believe in the centralization of governmental or religious authorities into vast monopolistic corporations. He denounced this tendency as directly leading to despotism. At the close of an address delivered at the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Ascension on Sunday morning, June 2, 1912, in New York City, he was asked the question:—

Is it not a fact that Universal Peace cannot be accomplished until there is political democracy in all the countries of the world?

Answer:—It is very evident that in the future of all the countries of the world, be they constitutional in government or Republican or Democratic in form, there shall be no centralization. The United States may be held up as the example of government in time to come, that is to say, each Province will be independent in itself but there will be a union concerning the interests of the various independent states . . . To cast aside centralization which promotes despotism is the exigency of the time.

—*Star of the West*, Vol. III, No. 10, page 27,
Sept. 8, 1912.

In studying the principle of non-centralization in government and progressive democracy, it would be well to examine the thoughts of H. G. Wells on the subject of legislation in a free world. In his *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, he says:—

In matters of cooperative and collective action, man must abide by the majority decisions ascertained by electoral methods which give effective expression to individual choice. All legislation must be subject to repeal. No treaties or contracts shall be made secretly in the name of the community. The fount of legislation in a free world is the whole people, and since life flows on constantly to new citizens, no generation can, in whole or in part, surrender or delegate this legislative power which is inalienably inherent in mankind.

—*The Rotarian Magazine*, September, 1941, page 9.

Separation of Religion and Politics

In the teachings of Abdul Baha, as in the constitutional laws of the United States, politics is separated from re-

ligion. Neither should interfere with the other, for each has definite and essential services to render to society. Nevertheless, Abdul Baha expects the officials of the government, no matter what position they may occupy, to be conscious of religion and of the spiritual values. Their souls must be vibrant with the love of God, their services to the nation must be actuated by noble impulses; at the same time, the internal problems of religion as such do not enter their domain.

Similarly, religious teachers should be conscious of social and democratic values, and must cooperate with the State. However, their duties lie along the lines of education, and their responsibilities are toward the unfortunate and the poor. They must hold to their mission and abstain from political plans and schemes. They should trust the officers of their government to perform their duties in the political domain, even as they are performing their own in the religious field. To make the above cardinal Bahai principle plain let us listen to Abdul Baha:—

At the same time religious interests should not be brought into politics. Religions should treat of morals; politics of material circumstances. Those in authority should occupy themselves with the lives of men; they should teach ideas of service, good morals and develop the habit of Justice. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

**—*Star of the West*, Vol. III, No. 2, page 7,
April 9, 1912.**

On another occasion the same thought is expressed in a slightly different way:—

In despotic Governments carried on by men without divine faith, where no fear of spiritual retribution exists, the execution of the laws is tyrannical and unjust. There is no greater prevention of oppression than these two sentiments, hope and fear. They have both political and spiritual consequences.

If Administrators of the law would take into consideration the spiritual consequences of their decisions, and follow the guidance of religion, they would be divine agents in the world of action, the representatives of God for those who are on earth, and they would defend, for the love of God, the interests of His servants as they would defend their own. If a Governor realizes his responsibility and fears to defy the Divine Law, his judgments will be just. Above all, if he believes that the consequences of his actions will follow him beyond his earthly life, and that "as he sows so must he reap," such a man will surely avoid injustice and tyranny.

Should an official, on the contrary, think that all responsibility for his actions must end with his earthly life, knowing and believing nothing of divine favors and a spiritual kingdom of joy, he will lack the incentive to just dealing, and the inspiration to destroy oppression and unrighteousness.

When a ruler knows that his judgments will be weighed in a balance by the Divine Judge, and that if he be not found wanting he will come into the Celestial Kingdom and that the light of the heavenly Bounty will shine upon him, then will he surely act with justice and equity. Behold how important it is that Ministers of State should be enlightened by Religion.

With political questions, the clergy, however, have nothing to do! Religious matters should not be con-

fused with Politics in the present state of the world (for their interests are not identical).

Religion concerns matters of the heart, of the Spirit and of morals. Politics are occupied with the material things of life. Religious teachers should not invade the realm of politics; they should concern themselves with the spiritual education of the people; they should ever give good counsel to men, trying to serve God and humankind; they should endeavor to awaken spiritual aspiration, and strive to enlarge the understanding and knowledge of humanity, to improve morals, and to increase the love for justice. . . .

In Persia there are some amongst the important Ministers of State who are religious, who are exemplary, who worship God, and who fear to disobey His laws, who judge justly and rule their people with equity.

Other Governors there are in this land who have no fear before their eyes, who think not of the consequences of their actions, working for their own desires, and these have brought Persia into great trouble and difficulty.

—*The Wisdom of Abdul Baha*—Addresses delivered in Paris 1910-11. Published by The Bahai Publishing Committee, New York, N. Y., 1924, pages 146-47-48.

Triumph of Democracy

In the era that is ahead of us, the development of governmental agencies along lines of Bahai thought is inevitable, but this must be orderly process of evolutionary laws. National adjustment through violence is a theory already discarded by the practical mind. It is true that

even in these modern days, the powers of brute force and of Democracy are ranged against each other; yet so long as there is one man in the world who can think and plan democratically, he is of the future and stands head and shoulders above those who cannot. His eventual success is assured.

The great despotic empires of Sumeria, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome have left a tradition of violence, war and destruction; and are now no more.

Through the struggle of the European nations, the Catholic Church, in the sixteenth century, lost its claim to worldly and spiritual universal sovereignty.

The American and French Revolutions form the watershed which divides the autocratic form of government from the slowly evolving nation-states. Broadly regarded, the history of modern government, until the declaration of the First World War in 1914, has been the history of a steady widening of the basis of democratic powers.

The arrival on the political arena of the Communist, Fascist and Nazi totalitarian regimes, each with its own dictatorial ideology, has once more thrown our world into a convulsive revolution, and the democratic system is being attacked on all sides by the forces of disruption and anarchy.

However, as a student of the Bahai Cause, I retain a deep and abiding faith in Democracy and am confident that although its ideal is being subjected to a severe test by the present crisis, it will, sooner or later, emerge from confinement and, purified by adversity and torture, establish itself in all lands as the universal principle. Strength-

ened and ennobled, it will maintain supremacy, not with cannon and poison gas, bombers and submarines, but with shining hopes, liberal measures and humanitarian accomplishments, the whole actuated by high responsibility toward every form and expression of life.

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EVERYBODY'S NATIVE LAND
THE EARTH

Approach to The New History Society's Exhibit at the New York World's Fair—1939, showing the World Flag which symbolizes: "Everybody's native land—this green, round, rolling earth—created without frontiers."

CHAPTER XIX

"DA" AND "NIET"—"JA" AND "NEIN"

Injunctions to Iran and Turkey Only

Although Baha-O-Llah and later on Abdul Baha had enjoined their followers in Iran and Turkey to abstain from political affairs, this was but a temporary concession to the despotic rulers of those countries, made for the protection of a small minority. It was a measure taken, one may say, *under fire*. A close study of the dates when these orders were issued reveal this fact very plainly. Abdul Baha never would have given nor did he ever give any such advice to democratic countries, for if he had done so, the Bahai Cause would have been stigmatized as pro-autocratic and anti-social. He never would have commanded, as does the present-day Bahai Administration, the American and Canadian believers to refrain from all legitimate political activities, which are essential to the welfare of their nations. He never would have commanded, as does the present-day Bahai Administration, the American and Canadian believers to forego their voting prerogatives, when it is a case of candidates running on the fundamentally democratic two (or more) Party systems. He never would have forbidden, as does the present-day Bahai Administration, the American and Canadian believers to participate in the civic and national duties of their fellow countrymen; nor would he have accompanied these unpatriotic requirements with threats of expulsion from the Bahai community.

Abdul Baha never would have done such things, and he never did them. On the contrary, he advised the Americans most emphatically to take an active part in the politics of their country, and he told them that they should under no circumstances deprive themselves of the inestimable privilege of the vote.

Injunctions to the United States

As far back as 1907, about the time that the Turkish Investigation Committee had arrived in Acca from Constantinople (this being *before* the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire) Abdul Baha wrote to Mr. Thornton Chase, a prominent believer of Chicago:—

Thou hast asked regarding the political affairs. In the United States it is necessary that the citizens shall take part in elections. This is a necessary matter and no excuse from it is possible. . . . As the government of America is a republican form of government, it is necessary that all the citizens shall take part in the elections of officers and take part in the affairs of the Republic.

—*Tablets of Abdul Baha Abbas*, Vol. II, pages 342-343, Published by Bahai Publishing Socitey, Chicago, Ill., 1915.

The above statement is so simple that even a sixth grade child could grasp its meaning, and one would naturally think that there would never be occasion to misunderstand it. In each sentence, Abdul Baha repeats the word *necessary*:—

It is *necessary* that the citizens shall take part in elections.

This is a *necessary* matter and no excuse from it is possible.

As the government of America is a republican form of government, it is *necessary*, that *all* the citizens shall take part in the affairs of the Republic.

Evidently, Abdul Baha was trying to make his meaning as clear as crystal; he was stating, in so many words, that, inasmuch as the government of the United States was a Republic and not an Oriental Monarchy, free American *citizens* could not be compared to the enslaved *subjects* of the *Shadow of Allah* nor to the obedient *servants* of the *Holy Caliph*. Therefore, it was *necessary* for *all* of them to take part in the affairs of the nation.

No statement could be set forth more concretely, and yet the Bahai Administration, through culpable misinterpretation, has set aside the above clear injunction of Abdul Baha to the American Bahais, and has incorporated in its fundamental laws and applied to the citizens of the United States and Canada the concessions (temporary at that) made to the defunct empires of Iran and Turkey.

If the above quoted Tablet of Abdul Baha is not sufficient to prove that the Master made a clear distinction between Despotism and Democracy, the following report of a conversation that took place between him and a pilgrim, during the year 1907, makes the matter still more plain. Here, it is again significant to point out the fact that this note was recorded during the very year when the Turkish Investigation Committee was in Acca to interrogate Abdul Baha and to examine his affairs. Abdul Baha's remark shows that, however dangerous the circumstances, he did

not mince words when the question of a principle was involved.

Asked if it were ever right to rebel against an earthly ruler, Abdul Baha replied:—

Yes, if he deals unjustly and tyrannically with his people he forfeits the right to govern them.

—Notes taken by A. S. D., Acca, October 16, 1907
(In *Compilation of the Holy Utterances of Baha-O'llah and Abdul Baha*, page 69. Publication authorized by the tenth Annual Convention of the Bahais of America held in Chicago, April 29-30, 1918).

I accept the above report as authentic, because I myself, on countless occasions, have heard the Master make substantially the same statement.

Abdul Baha's Policy Set Aside

The foundation on which the present-day non-political character of the Bahai Cause is based are the writings of Shoghi Effendi and the declarations of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, published in *Bahai News*. These are our sources of authoritative information; so, in order to get an impartial and unbiased understanding of the subject, we must now explore the above documents and compare them with Abdul Baha's teachings, to the end that we may find out how far they agree and to what extent they resemble each other.

Back in March 1932, Shoghi Effendi, in writing to the *beloved of God and the hand-maids of the Merciful*

throughout the United States and Canada, says:—

I feel it, therefore, incumbent upon me to stress, now that the time is ripe, the importance of an instruction which, at the present stage of the evolution of our Faith, should be increasingly emphasized, irrespective of its application to the East or to the West. And this principle is no other than that which involves the non-participation by the adherents of the Faith of Baha-U-Llah, whether in their individual capacities or collectively as local or national Assemblies, in any form of activity that might be interpreted, either directly or indirectly, as an interference in the political affairs of any particular government. Whether it be in the publications which they initiate and supervise; or in their official and public deliberations; or in the posts they occupy and the services they render; or in the communications they address to their fellow-disciples; or in their dealings with men of eminence and authority; or in their affiliations with kindred societies and organizations, it is, I am firmly convinced, their first and sacred obligation to abstain from any word or deed that might be construed as a violation of this vital principle.

*—The World Order of Baha-U-Llah,
pages 63-64.*

This sweeping command of the Guardian was like a bomb-shell thrown into the midst of a peaceful community. In the estimation of practically every believer who was even superficially conversant with the Teachings, this order was in direct contradiction to the instructions of Abdul Baha, most especially to his statement written to Mr. Thornton Chase 25 years earlier.

Athwart the continent, the pot of controversy boiled, and questions such as these were asked on all sides: On what grounds could a non-American religious leader, from his almost cloistered headquarters, 5,000 miles away in Haifa, Palestine, take it upon himself to lay the command upon citizens of the United States and Canada that they abstain from taking part, *either directly or indirectly*, in the legitimate political obligations of their respective countries? Was not this action, in itself, a direct interference in the affairs of other nations? Did not these governments count on the co-operation of their citizens, and would they welcome a loyalty to a foreign power superimposed on the national loyalty? Why, and on what logical basis, should an American or a Canadian Bahai think that *his first and sacred obligation was to abstain from any word or deed that might be construed as a violation of this vital principle* of aloofness? Did not this principle mean that the Bahais must abstain from all political participation in the affairs of their democracies; keep away from the polling booths on election day and, if need be, allow gangsters and racketeers to control by their votes the destiny of the unoffending citizenry? The question was asked: How could crooks and shysters be driven out of national and state offices, if the people who were supposed to be straight were deprived of their only weapon—the ballot?

The order of Shoghi Effendi was written in March, 1932, and ere long, the detailed letter including this order which was circulated throughout the continent, became the storm-center of heated debate. Then, in December of the same year, *Bahai News* published a statement by the

National Spiritual Assembly under the title: *The Non-Political Character of the Bahai Faith*. After referring to the order of Shoghi Effendi the statement continues:—

This instruction raised among American believers the important question whether the act of voting, in the normal pursuance of the function of citizenship, should be construed as a participation in political matters.

Another letter written by his secretary gives the Guardian's view on the subject:—

He strongly feels that the friends should abstain from any election that is along party line.

Again, we have this statement addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly:—

This is the general and vital principle; it is for the National representatives to apply it with fidelity and vigor.

Then the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, feeling a great responsibility in applying the principle to all detailed situations that can arise among local communities, summarizes the Assembly's understanding of this new instruction in the following articles of Faith:—

1. Recognized Bahais of the United States and Canada shall not hereafter take part in any local, provincial or national election conducted by political parties, where votes are to be cast for one of two or more rival candidates.

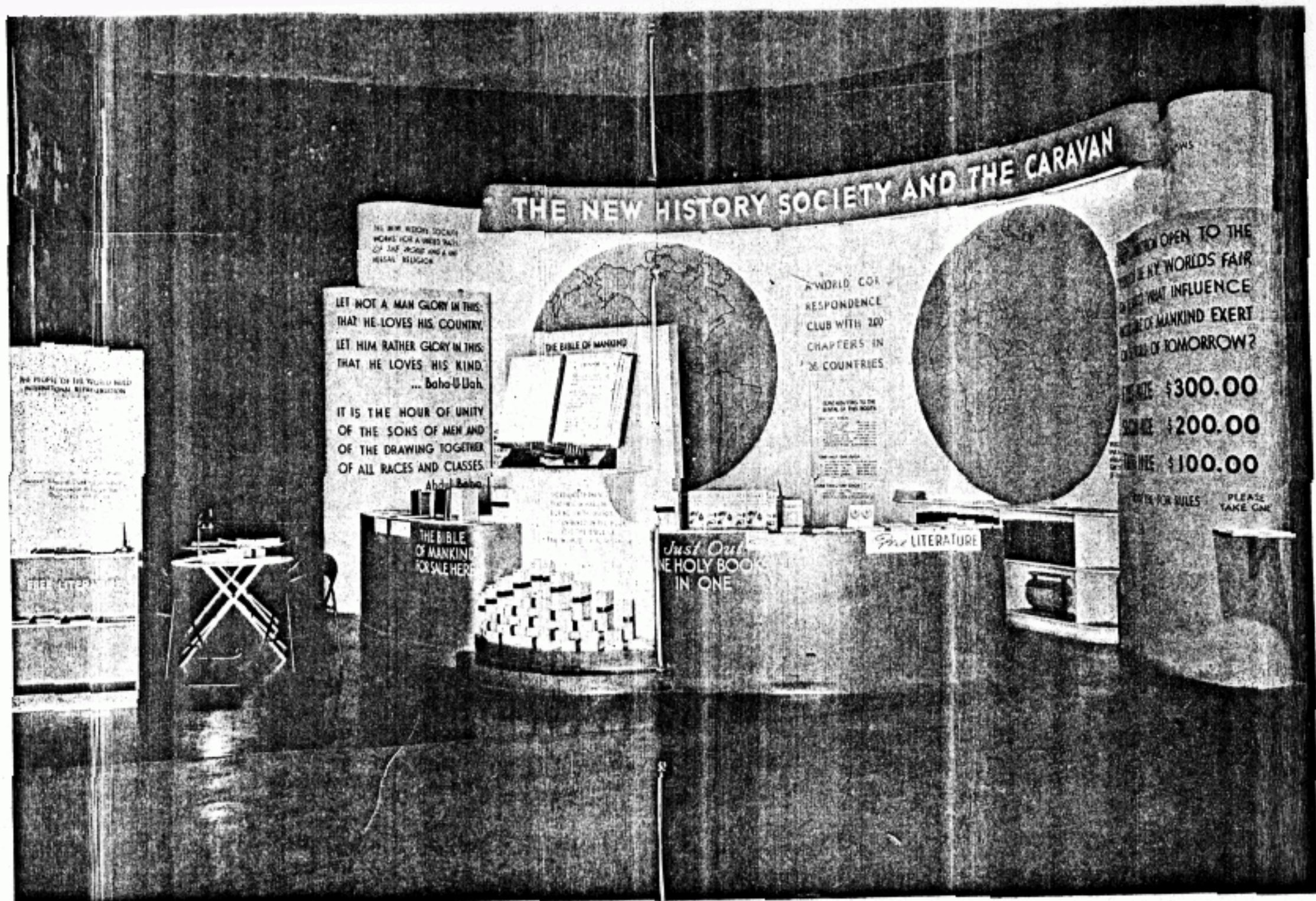


Exhibit of The New History Society at

the New York World's Fair, in 1939.

See page 488

2. Recognized Bahais shall not run for any public office as candidate of any political party, nor take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion of any party or party platform.

3. Political issues of a partisan character shall not be discussed at Bahai meetings.

4. Recognized Bahais shall abstain from affiliation with movements . . . whether avowedly political in nature or, while non-political in name, advocating social changes that presume partisan political action.

5. Bahais who speak on Bahai platforms shall refrain from making . . . critical statements about any particular Government or National policy.

6. Every Local Spiritual Assembly shall be responsible for the carrying out of these instructions by the Bahais in their respective communities. Local membership lists shall include only the names of those believers who faithfully preserve the non-political character of the Faith.

—*Bahai News*, No. 69, December, 1932.

The above list of instructions makes startling reading to any citizen of the United States and Canada, but article 1, especially, gives us pause in these days when the idea of a one-candidate Party is far from unfamiliar.

One Ticket

Inasmuch as it is difficult to conceive of Democracy without Parties, the Bahais of the two great Democracies of North America are, by this act, automatically excluded from *all* participation in local, state and national elections.

On the other hand, there are two other important countries, Russia and Germany, which are known as totalitarian dictatorships, where political life is organized and conducted by means of a One Party system. Therefore the National Spiritual Assembly, in its provisions regarding the political set-up to be contemplated, must have taken a leaf out of the revolutionary chronicle of these countries, which enjoy the very questionable privilege of *One monopolistic Party and One Ticket*.

In Russia, the dictatorship of the Proletariat has removed the burden of political thinking from the minds of the *people*. The Parties are liquidated; the liberals either are taking a sojourn in Siberia or have sought refuge in foreign lands, leaving to the *comrades* all the privileges and rights of voting for the *One Communist Party*, on its single ticket headed by the perennial Joseph Stalin. Yes, the Russians of today have been able to vote *DA*, in all safety—or *niet*, at the risk of their heads.

In Germany, the National Socialist Party, in order to glorify the Fatherland, got rid of all the bothersome Parties; purged the country of all the democrats; sent the intellectuals to concentration camps and drove the Jews and non-Aryans out of the third Reich. Then to the sound of trumpets, martial music, mass-herding and the singing of Horst Wessel and Deutschland Ueber Alles, all the goose-stepping German folk and simon-pure Aryans gathered together in the one and only National Socialist Party, headed by Reichsfürer Adolf Hitler. Yes, the Germans of today can vote *JA* in all safety—or *nein*, at the peril of their lives.

Now, I venture to think that the Bahai Administration,

with its allowance for a one Party system and its principle of letting the country go to the dogs, or to the wolves, would have been welcomed in Russia yesterday; today we do not know; and in Germany, yesterday, today and unfortunately tomorrow too. The Bahais would be enrolled as members in good standing—models of regimentation, uniformity, obedience and subserviency. It is certain that no Dictator would find their presence irksome or disturbing.

Unrest in Bahai Household

The publication of the above listed articles on the non-participation of Bahais in politics caused great commotion among the followers of the Faith in the United States and Canada. Many sharply disagreed with these Draconian rules and totalitarian measures; some, with a good deal of bitterness, compared them to the teachings of Abdul Baha and, finally, a few wrote to Shoghi Effendi, expressing their surprise and bewilderment. The atmosphere was charged with electric arguments, pro and con.

Many liberal Bahais, honestly and sincerely, considered that the Cause had been betrayed and its principles pilloried on a totem-pole of misunderstanding. The future of the movement had been sold across the counter for a mess of improvident pottage and its ideals sacrificed and abandoned. For a few months, there was no rest in the Bahai household; the opinions expressed were wide apart, for some keenly felt their responsibility toward the Cause, while others, more concerned with keeping out of trouble, were therefore willing to confide both mind and conscience to the tender mercies of the Administration.

The dissatisfaction and remonstrances on the part of the Bahais at length forced the National Spiritual Assembly to publish an explanatory statement in the February 1933 issue, No. 71, of *Bahai News*. The writer of the article makes a weak attempt to assure the believers that no radical departure from the original teachings had been made, and is quite confident that the grave doubts which had arisen in the minds of the Bahais could, through local consultations, be removed, creating *not merely an occasion for blind obedience, but rather for conscious, grateful co-operation*. Finally, in order to pour oil over the troubled waters, he makes an utterly meaningless concession, presupposing a possible political situation in which the Bahais *could* vote; although, he must have known that such a situation has never existed, nor will it ever exist in a democratic or republican form of government. Here is the incredibly fatuous concession:—

The instruction not to take part in political elections leaves us free to vote in any election where the various political parties have combined upon one candidate or one ticket.

Here we are back again in Russia or Germany, or rather, we are being helped forward toward an equally sinister form of government to supplant our Democracy in this country; but whatever the details of this sad postulate, or whatever the name to be used, be it old or new, we can only say, and with all our hearts: *In America at least, God forbid!*

It is, indeed, a sad commentary on the lack of imagination and acumen on the part of a large percentage of the

Bahais, that during all these years the National Spiritual Assembly has been able to pull the wool over their eyes by means of such specious reasoning.

On the other hand, there were some who strove to retain their political rights; therefore, the National Spiritual Assembly once more had to go on record, not only to guard the inviolability of its own word but to protect Shoghi Effendi from further molestation. An elaborate communication, in the form of an open letter to the *Beloved Friends*, in the April 1933 issue, No. 72, of *Bahai News*, appealed to the emotional and religious ideals and convictions of the reader, so that the best possible construction might be allowed to a very precarious situation. The writer makes a heroic effort to defend a principle that is *indefensible and, whenever he finds himself in a tight corner, resorts to sanctimonious flourishes and undulations, such as may be noticed in the following passage:—*

The matter of the non-political character of the Bahai Faith has arisen this year for the purpose of stimulating deeper awareness of our privileges and responsibilities in the World Order of Baha-U-Llah. Only four years ago the Guardian first upheld that glorious conception of the goal toward which humanity is being so rapidly impelled by the power of the divine Will.

For many of us, the idea that we should no longer take any part in the normal political activities of our environment came as a distinct shock.

A distinct shock? That is a mild way of putting it! It was an earthquake, a head-on collision that threw many a sincere Bahai reeling toward the precipice of spiritual

collapse. Yet, listen to the pietistic interpretation of the *inspiring new attitude*:—

The need that we arise to a higher vision and a more universal loyalty was not at first easy to appreciate. But little by little, thanks to the guidance given us by Shoghi Effendi, we can assimilate and make part of ourselves this inspiring new attitude the *Guardian* wishes for the protection of the Cause and our own spiritual well-being.

Free as Air

And now once more the chimerical situation presented in the February (1933) issue of *Bahai News* is paraded before the bewildered eyes of the believers:—

We are all free to vote in such elections as are non-partisan—that is, where the parties have combined upon one set of candidates, and voting is not merely a choice between two or more party tickets.

We are all free to vote! Free as air! Isn't that generous? Isn't that wonderful? For a moment, we were nervous; but now we are relieved, indeed! Yet, on second thought, *where* shall we vote? Certainly not in the United States, nor in Canada, nor in England, nor in Australia, nor in New Zealand, nor in any of the Democracies; because in none of these countries do the Parties ever combine *upon one set of candidates*. Where shall it be then? Please, don't offer us Russia again, nor Germany; for, even if we do fit in with the regime of those countries, even if they are likely to consider us in every way desirable, we *do* have a sneaking feeling that, sooner or later,

the Democracies will come out on top. We remember that Abdul Baha also said so; but, probably that is one of his sayings that we are supposed to forget.

A Strange Local

To go back to the open letter. The writer proceeds, striking a cadence on the *calm peace and steadfast faith that marks the true Bahai*. This brand of talk is intended to divert the attention of the victim from the main topic and lull him into the mythical Sahara of a somnambulent, denaturalized idealism. Listen:—

In a world through which run so many conflicting torrents of popular passion and partisan struggle, the spirit of calm peace, of steadfast faith and unswerving assurance marks the true Bahai and sets off a Bahai community from every other type of human gathering. . . . In the establishment of Local, National and International Bahai communities, we have the most glorious field of service ever granted to man.

This seems to be a perfect description of a self-centered, self-satisfied, self-contained, self-opinionated, self-applauding community, useless in every sense of the word to the country that harbors, maintains and protects it. A community, *set off from every other type of human gathering*, bringing to mind but one thing—a cemetery, which also is *set off from every other type of human gathering*; in which all the *conflicting torrents of popular passion and partisan struggle* are eternally stilled, and where, among the tombs, there broods *the spirit of calm peace*. A strange local indeed for the successors of the Babis and early

Bahais, those intrepid, ever-wakeful men and women, who had the will to die and the nerve to live in order *that the principles of their Masters might become dominant in the affairs of men!*



Corner of speakers' table at a dinner given by "Friends of the Duke of Windsor in America" at the Town Hall Club, New York, on January 20, 1939.

From left to right:—Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, the late Rev. Christian F. Reisner, D.D. and the late Dr. Har Dayal.

CHAPTER XX

BAHAI NON-PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

A Vision of Eternity

Bahais must never forget that they are members of a community that extends beyond the borders of one country and the Guardian's instructions covering non-participation in politics are not based upon human representations in any given communities but upon his vision over cons of time and the results which would follow the actions of the present time.

The above statement, made by the National Spiritual Assembly, presents two points very clearly. *First*: the Bahais are members of an international community. *Second*: the Guardian's instructions to them are based upon the future which is discernible to him.

We gather then that the believers must forego local political activities because of their bearing, whether evident or not, upon the larger scene; also, that Shoghi Effendi's vision actually extends beyond the confines of the centuries (according to the dictionary, cons of time means an infinite space of time---eternity). This latter assertion is a stupendous one. It leaves us breathless; for if true, the Guardian emerges from the station of man, seer or prophet, and becomes a conscious part of the Godhead. The National Spiritual Assembly continues:—

The question is not one of interpretation of the instructions of the Guardian but rather one of strict

obedience to him in the assurance that the wisdom of the principle will become more and more apparent as time goes on.

And now:—

As the new consciousness is universal and not local, the believers cannot lower this standard by participation in divisional activities.

Once more:—

It was generally agreed that if the world cannot be saved, it matters not at all whether one or another is elected, whereas the Bahais are called by Shoghi Effendi to establish the new world order of Baha-U-Llah.

(The above four quotations are from *Bahai News*, No. 75, July, 1933, page 3).

Physician Heal Thyself!

These instructions give pause to the average citizen of the United States, and especially to the American Bahai who has been trained, through the teachings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, to co-operate with all systems that are tending toward a larger life for the human race. To these people, this type of reasoning applies to the man who, while neglecting his own character, thinks of improving the characters of others; to the community which, unconcerned with righteousness and justice, looks for these qualities in other communities. Physician, heal thyself! is an old maxim; and it would seem that it is the duty of every American to set himself to putting his own national house in order, before attempting to bring order to the

world. A person endowed with the Bahai ideal (whether or not he be a Bahai) could well expend his energies on both causes at the same time; but it is difficult to allow exemption from national responsibility to one who claims international citizenship.

Inclusion of a Larger Loyalty

If the National Spiritual Assembly had been consistent in the formulation of its policies, it would have realized the untenability of its position; because, on the one hand, it makes a point of exacting of the Bahais obedience to the ordinances of their government while, on the other hand, by denying them the right to perform their civic and national duties as law-abiding and progressive citizens, it prevents them from so doing. Obviously, Abdul Baha did not invite the Americans to accept the universal teachings of Baha-O-Llah, in order to divest them of their responsibilities as citizens of the United States. It is true that, on embracing the Cause, an American immediately becomes member of a world-wide community composed of Persians, Turks, Hindus, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Chinese, etc., but this larger loyalty does not curtail his loyalty to the United States. When individuals become Bahais, they lose their national *prejudices*, not their national *rights* and obligations. Like variegated flowers in a garden, they contribute their beauty to the general scene, while retaining their own distinctive color and fragrance. The sun of the New Day shines upon all, and the mercy of the Almighty envelops the first and the last. The Bahais will co-operate and learn from one another. They will not throw away their hard-won liberties, but will

share them with their new-found brethren; for Baha-O-Llah did not come to abrogate the cherished freedoms of humanity, but to enlarge and spread them over the wide expanse of the earth.

The Teachings of the Faith Must be Set Aside

At this point, it is interesting to note that the National Spiritual Assembly, while denying the Bahais rational and humane participation in the constructive civic and social affairs of their country, has urged these same Bahais to register their names for service in the military preparations of the United States; and this, regardless of the already quoted words: *the believers cannot lower this standard by participation in divisional activities*. I suppose that killing is not regarded as a *divisional activity*. The people are dead, and that is the end of them!

A letter written in 1939 by the Guardian's secretary to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles reveals Shoghi Effendi's views on the subject of military service:—

It is still his firm conviction that the believers, while expressing their readiness to unreservedly obey any directions that the authorities may issue concerning national service in time of war, should also, and while there is yet no outbreak of hostilities, appeal to the government for exemption from active military service in a combatant capacity, stressing the fact that in doing so they are not prompted by any selfish considerations but by the sole and supreme motive of upholding the Teachings of their Faith, which make it a moral obligation for them to desist from any act that would in-

volve them in direct warfare with their fellow-humans of any other race or nation.

—*Bahai News*, No. 132, January, 1940, page 1.

Here we find that the believers should *appeal* to the government for exemption from active military service, *stressing the fact* that they are prompted by *the sole and supreme motive of upholding the Teachings of their Faith*. Nevertheless, they must express *their readiness to unreservedly obey any directions that the authorities may issue concerning national service in time of war*. Thus in order to be on good terms with the government, the *Teachings of the Faith* must, if necessary, be set aside.

In the Front Line or in Jail

According to my belief, it is good to stand by one's principles. If a man's conscience allows him to fight, and he steps forward to give his all, one cannot but respect him. On the other hand, if he has consecrated himself to the system of pacifism (as I myself have) neither displeasure of government nor the fear of punishment bears the slightest weight. At least, let us be clean-cut about it, taking the risks that are entailed in our conscientious choice; and may we never entreat for indulgence and special privileges when the question of moral obligation is involved!

In a book entitled *The Men I Killed* written by Brigadier General Frank Percy Crozier, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., published by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., New York, 1938, the following dedication appears on the fly-leaf:—

To the genuine fighters of all nations who stuck it



A BAHAI GROUP IN THE NEW HISTORY SOCIETY, TAKEN AT

Seated on floor. From left to right:—Mr. Solomon W. Leventhal, Miss May Carro, Miss Sarah Isaacs, Miss Harriet Meisler, Miss Geraldine Falk, Miss Serene Blake, Miss Ouise Vaupel, Mr. Alphonse Tonietti, Mrs. Adriene Peabody Van Rossum.

Second Row. From left to right:—Dr. Leopold Kohr, Miss Mildred Goodman, Mr. H. Obadie, Mrs. H. Obadie, Mr. O. J. Hanko, Mrs. Robert Blake, Mrs. Mary Furgang, Mrs. Charles E. Boyd, Mrs. Elsa Tabrizi, Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, Dr. Edwin F. Bowers, Mr. Charles E. Boyd.

Third Row. From left to right:—Mrs. Zahra Gemerd, Mr. Maurice Falk, Mrs. Maurice Falk, Mr. Kedar Nath DasGupta, Major Honoré Joseph Jaxon, Miss Janet Osterman, Miss Claire Osterman, Mr. Jacob Ferreira, Dr. Haridas T. Muzumdar, Mirza Ahmad

THE CARAVAN HALL, NEW YORK, ON OCTOBER 14, 1941.

Sohrab, Mr. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, Mrs. Charles H. Clarke, Mrs. Frederick Allien, Miss Chancy Carro, Mr. Louis J. Meisler.

Fourth Row. From left to right:—Mrs. H. H. Oliver, Mr. H. H. Oliver, Miss Anne Gemerd, Miss Sofia Froberg, Mr. M. Remneck, Mr. John J. Fitzpatrick, Miss Margaret O'Connor, Miss Fannie Rudy, Prof. Georgia Dunn, Miss Florence Brownell, Mr. John Forster, Maestro Pasquale Mondrone, Mr. James Mott, Mr. Emanuel Larsen.

Top Row. From left to right:—Mr. Bhupesh Guha, Mr. Rudolph Lopez, Mrs. Rudolph Lopez, Mr. James Bland Tuohy, Mr. Robert Blake, Mr. Lew Von Harden, Mr. Walter Sloane, Mr. Jay E. Abbott, Mrs. Grace Kopman, Miss Lilyan Tannen, Miss Patricia Goode, Mr. Murray Furgang.

to the end in the front line, and to the genuine conscientious objectors of all nations who stuck it to the end in jail, this book is dedicated.

Now, I would like to see Bahais in either or both of these groups; but to imagine them, with their tails between their legs, begging the government for permission to uphold the *Teachings of the Faith* is pitiful, to put it mildly. Indeed, the picture is not in accord with their background, their calling nor their *name*.

Thus, in abstaining from *divisional activities* through the ballot (because of the fact that the Bahai movement is an international one), and in taking part in *divisional activities* through the bayonet and bomb (in spite of the fact that the Bahai movement is an international one), the Bahais have assumed a totally illogical position. They cannot maintain it by argument, because they have forsworn their principles, but can merely lower their eyes and feebly rattle their chains in explanation.

Protracted Discussion

To their credit, it can at least be said that the liberal elements in the Assemblies of the United States and Canada did not accept the ruling on non-participation in political affairs without protracted protest. As a consequence, the subject was brought up for discussion and debate before the 25th Annual Bahai Convention held in Chicago during the month of April, 1933.

The July issue of *Bahai News* (1933) gives us the following under the heading *The Story of the Convention*:—

Therefore, the first subject for consultation was "The Non-Political Character of the Bahai Faith."

In opening the discussion, the chairman pointed out that with the receipt of the Guardian's letter, "The Golden Age of the Cause of Baha'u'llah," the opposition of the Guardian to participation in party politics became apparent and that later individual Bahais as well as the National Spiritual Assembly received communications saying that Bahais must not vote in any election based upon personal allegiances or partisanship.

These instructions seem to have been misunderstood by a number of the friends and it was felt wise that they should be thoroughly discussed in order that some general understanding and action might be formulated by the Convention.

Mr. Holley in giving the highlights of the subject said that the first intimation that the National Spiritual Assembly had had that the Guardian did not desire the American believers to vote was on receipt of a letter to a believer containing this instruction from the Guardian.

About the same time another believer sent in a copy of a tablet from Abdul Baha to Thornton Chase in which Abdul Baha said American citizens must vote. With these apparently conflicting instructions before it, the National Spiritual Assembly wrote to the Guardian to inquire if he were now setting aside the tablet. In his reply the Guardian said that the instruction of Abdul Baha is not conclusive under present conditions *and expressed his abhorrence of political affairs, pointing out that the National Spiritual Assembly is obligated to carry out his instructions on the subject.* The National Spiritual Assembly therefore drafted the article which appeared in the Bahai News of December, 1932, and which was considered by some as somewhat

drastic. It resulted in the exchange of several communications between the National Spiritual Assembly and the Guardian. —*Bahai News*, No. 75, July 1933.

The Tablet to Mr. Thornton Chase, already quoted, may here be referred to, and I doubt if any reader, Bahai or otherwise, will find Abdul Baha's instructions on the necessity for voting in any way ambiguous or susceptible to any interpretation other than its plain surface meaning. Here then we have a revealing picture of the way in which the Guardian reaches conclusions.

1. He delivers the opinion that Abdul Baha's instruction is *not conclusive under present conditions*. Why? If it is inconclusive *now*, it must have been inconclusive in 1907 when it was written.

2. Shoghi Effendi expresses *his abhorrence* of political affairs. There is the point! The Guardian, living thousands of miles away, unfamiliar with the democratic processes of the New World, finds them distasteful, chooses to *abhor* them, and then expects all his followers to alter their palates so that they also may abhor them. I myself cannot help questioning the method of bringing personal taste into the problem at all.

3. Shoghi Effendi informs the National Spiritual Assembly that *it is obligated to carry out* his instructions on the subject. There is no attempt at reasoning; there is no necessity for it. It is a Caesarian order, pure and simple. In so many words, the Guardian says:—

Yours not to make reply,
Yours not to reason why,
Yours but to do and die.

Independent investigation! The least that can be said of this principle of Baha-O-Llah is that the very mention of it has, by this time, become *heresy*.

Tactful but Vigorous Handling

A subsequent letter from the Guardian published in *Bahai News*, No. 78, October 1933, contains a variety of instructions on the subject. Evidently, there was need for a more delicate treatment of the case, for Shoghi Effendi calls upon his lieutenants in the National Spiritual Assembly to handle the subject of the non-participation of *Bahais of East and West in political affairs* with the *utmost circumspection, tact and vigilance*. Let us read his new instructions:—

The handling of this delicate and vital problem regarding non-participation by Bahais of East and West in political affairs, calls for the utmost circumspection, tact, patience and vigilance on the part of those whose function and privilege is to guard, promote and administer the activities of a world-wide ever-advancing Cause. The misgivings and apprehensions of individual Bahais should be allayed and eventually completely dispelled. Any misconception of the sane and genuine patriotism that animates every Bahai heart, if it ever obscures or perplexes the minds of responsible government officials, should be instantly and courageously dissipated. Any deliberate misrepresentation by the enemies of the Cause of God, of the aim, the tenets and methods of the administrators of the Faith of Baha-U-Llah should be vigorously faced and its fallacy pitilessly exposed.

Here, I take the liberty of remarking that no *responsible government officials* in the United States would ever concern themselves with the non-participation of the Bahais in politics. One can take it into consideration that in the 1940 Presidential campaign, nearly fifty million Americans cast their votes; consequently, the absence or presence of 2,585 Bahais (the World Almanac 1941, Page 854) would be neither felt nor noticed. Thousands of others, on account of old age or infirmities, were unable to go to the polling booths; others again, disfranchised for a variety of reasons, did not make an appearance. Then, there always are some men and women who are too listless to take an interest in anything. The government expects to find a vast gap between its population and its voters, and will not inquire into reasons for absence at the polls.

In regard to *deliberate misrepresentations by enemies of the aim, the tenets and methods* of the Bahai Administration, I will state that because a few interested observers or a number of Bahais did not approve of the disfranchisement of this community and had sufficient concern to voice their opposition, this attitude on their part did not make of them *enemies of the Cause of God* who should be vigorously faced and their fallacy pitilessly exposed. These people were nothing of the sort. They were honest and sincere men and women, students of the Bahai teachings who couldn't adjust themselves to the new ordinances. Everybody cannot think alike, try as they will, and it would seem that the Bahai Cause is big enough to embrace different opinions, or at least respect them.

During 1932-33, this question was discussed at full

length, and some cases of heresy came to light; in a few instances, suspects were dropped from membership on various committees and their places filled with the *regulars*. Then, little by little, the smoke of the battle drifted from the horizon of the Administration; the day had been won, definitely and completely, and if a handful of *enemies of the Cause of God* managed to make their escape from the *vigorous and pitiless* attacks of the forces of organization, these were left to lick their wounds in hide-outs and faraway places, and their very existence was presently forgotten.

In order to mark its definite victory over the opposition, the National Spiritual Assembly sums up the whole struggle from beginning to end in the January 1934 issue, No. 80, of *Bahai News*. The communiqué is entitled:—

The Non-Political Character of the Bahai Faith. A Statement prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly in Response to the Request for clarification of the subject voiced by the 1933 Annual Convention.

The communiqué is a long one, reviewing the successive instructions of the Guardian and the steps taken on the various fronts to establish the non-political character of the Bahai Faith.

Non-Participation in Bahai Politics

Having, to all intents and purposes, silenced the *enemies of the Cause of God*, Shoghi Effendi, looking toward the future, legislates an order for the adequate punishment of all those who may ignore the rulings of the new regime—i.e.: non-participation of all Bahais in the

civic, social and political affairs of their countries.

This order is dated March 16, 1933, and published at the end of the above-mentioned communiqué:—

But if a certain person does enter into party politics and labors for the ascendancy of one party over another, and continues to do it against the expressed appeals and warnings of the Assembly, then the Assembly has the right to refuse him the right to vote in Bahai elections.

Bahai elections? Yes, my gentle reader! Although I admit that it is almost too quaint to be true; for the punishment meted out by Shoghi Effendi to the Bahais who do not accept his ruling of non-participation in the political affairs of the United States is—believe it, if you can—non-participation in the political affairs of the Bahai movement. Actually, the recalcitrant Bahais, who persist in co-operating with their government for the progress of the Democracy which their forefathers established on these shores, are deprived of membership in the Bahai political machine, an institution which has incorporated within itself all the stratagems, tricks and juggleries of Tammany Hall in its most flourishing days. Thus, the recalcitrant Bahai can no longer attend the Annual Bahai Conventions and sit behind closed doors in its secret sessions; he can no longer apply himself to electioneering, possibly for Tenth or Fifteenth Term candidates; he can no longer go to the Bahai polling booths nor take advantage of the Bahai absentee vote; he can no longer share in the little privileges that are allotted to members in good standing nor bask in the sunlight that is shed upon the humble by

those who sit in High Places. Alas! He must resign himself to non-participation in Bahai political affairs, now and for evermore, as the price for being a self-respecting citizen of the United States, and for having tried to make his country a better place to live in.



MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB
in 1931.

PART EIGHT

A CONFESSION OF FAITH

21. I Believe in the Bahai Cause

*Not by might, nor by power, but by
my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*

—Zechariah, Chapter 4, Verse 6

CHAPTER XXI

I BELIEVE IN THE BAHAI CAUSE

Religion and Theology

I believe in the Bahai Cause

for it has taught me

that religion is not dogma and creed; it is not metaphysics and speculation; it is not mystery and mystification; it is not a series of sanctified and mummified articles of faith and the performance of sacerdotal gymnastics. If we ever find sufficient courage to take our spiritual destiny into our hands, banishing these strange bedfellows to some lonely island from which they can never escape to molest us, we should have the chance of looking straight into the face of religion, and of discovering that, after all, it is not such an insidious enemy of mankind as it is represented by both its votaries and its adversaries. The Bahai Cause states that religion is truth, love, peace, beauty; it also is common sense, good humor and every-day helpfulness. It propounds the question: To what extent are you capable of serving your fellowmen, irrespective of race, color and creed? To what degree are you willing to forego your own so-called interests in the interests of others?

Thus, the Bahai Cause points to service as the highest commitment of religion—not service to your soul, not service to your religious group, but service to people and to principles. This emphasis on altruism is the approach to a humane, spiritual and scientific outlook upon life; it

carries with it enthusiasm, indomitable persistence, an all-consuming faith in the final victory of good over evil, of right over might, together with an unshakable belief in the oneness of the essence of religion.

In the Bahai Cause is pointed out the too often forgotten yet important truth that the Founders of the Great Religions were born in the East and that all the Sacred Books were there revealed through the Minds of Eastern Prophets. Hence, the East is the fountain-head of Spiritual Knowledge and the power-house of inspiration in the phenomenal world. Just as the sun rises from the East to flood the earth with its warm rays, so has the Sun of Truth ever dawned in the hearts of Eastern Sages to illumine the world with the splendors of God's Revelations.

While the East has given us spiritual aspirations and ethical concepts of life, the West, according to its materialistic tendency, has constructed vast factories of theology. For ages, prosperous industrial ecclesiastics and privileged barons and princes of monopolistic sects have controlled the minds and the purse-strings of the Occidental nations and, while enriching their corporations, have starved the souls of the people. To all intents and purposes, they have usurped the moral sanction of the Holy Scriptures and dominated the religious scene with the whips of inflexible creeds.

At this juncture in history, the Bahai Cause strives to make it plain that the West is in need of a new outpouring of the spirit of the Prophets, so that it may be enabled to destroy the strongholds of religious materialism and fanatical orthodoxy; and, while bringing to an end the

winter of religiosity, usher in the springtime of spiritual spontaneity.

This task once accomplished, it will not be at all difficult to think of religion, not as churches and synagogues, not as mosques and temples, not as theologies and ceremonial ritualism, but as *self-illumination* and *self-realization*; for it is an axiomatic fact that no one can lay a claim to the possession of religion before it is *realized* and *witnessed* in the inner recesses of the heart. We do not need priests, rabbis, mullahs, authoritarians and theologians to tell us what we should and what we should not believe insofar as religion is concerned. Religion is truth, and truth is religion; religion is love, and love is religion; religion is joy, and joy is religion. Religion is simple and not complex. Religion is caught and not taught. Religion is the whole of life, and not a segment of it. When theology is acquired, religion is lost.

We can dispense with theology and ecclesiasticism, but we cannot live without religion.

A Bahai does not subscribe to any separativeness. He does not believe in nationalism, in racialism, in sectarianism, in churchianism. The moment you imprison your religion within the four walls of a building, it is dead; and the best thing that you can do is to admit the fact and bury it quickly.

From time to time, man has changed the form of his theologies, even as he has changed his politics, his economics, his social life. He will continue to pass through these changes until the hour when the true, unchangeable *Form* of the Formless Religion is revealed to him in all its simplicity and majesty—the religion that is a good gift,

a perfect gift, and which has ever come down *from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* (James, Chapter I, Verse 17.)

Unity

I believe in the Bahai Cause

for it has taught me

that religion in its etymological sense means to connect, to unite and to bring the people closer together. On the other hand, any system of thought, no matter under what name it parades itself, which isolates, divides, separates and segregates man from his fellows, is not and cannot be designated as religion. A study of the Bahai Teachings makes it plain that this is the fundamental approach to religion.

An *organized religion* is hard, dour, rigid, iron-handed and iron-hearted; it is stern, arrogant, coercive and merciless. An *administered religion* has been, is and ever shall remain an *arrested religion*; for the premise that a few individuals or a net-work of individuals are able to organize or administer the spiritual realities of God, is an assumption as false as it is impertinent, and as outlandish as it is sacrilegious."

Here is the test of the true religion: Does it unite the minds and hearts of the people in the task of developing a stable society and a humane civilization? Does it make us more tolerant, more sympathetic, more compassionate, more joyous, more sincere, more loving? If it accomplishes these things, then it is religion, indeed, and it comes straight from the Creator of the Universe.

If, on the other hand, self-seeking and self-assertive organizers and administrators place theological and artificial obstacles in the pathway of its followers, it is certain that such a system of thought, in spite of any regenerative powers which it may possess, will be not only limited but also nullified, and that ere long man will embalm it as a mummy and put it away in the museum of religious monstrosities.

Abdul Baha said:—

If religion be the cause of enmity and rancor, if it should prove the cause of alienating men, assuredly non-religion would be better. For religion and the teachings which appertain to it are as a course of treatment. What is the object of any course of treatment? It is cure and healing. But if the outcome of a course of treatment should be productive of mere diagnosis and discussion of symptoms, the abolition of it is evidently preferable. In this sense, abandoning religion would be a step toward unity.

—No. 9, page 5. A booklet published under the supervision of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

Universal Reconciliation

I believe in the Bahai Cause

for it has taught me

to keep the door of Bahai fellowship open wide to all humanity not excluding a single soul, no matter how sinister, how traitorous, how degraded or how inhuman! Hence, I have determined to associate in joy and fragrance

with all, in the task of the education and development of mankind, and to envelop every creature with the mantle of love and forgiveness. My Master has warned us against being dogmatic and self-opinionated; he has told us to put his Ideals into practice, and he has commanded us to go forth, relying on his help, into the wide world to deliver his message of goodwill and cordiality to all the children of men. I heard his voice in the long ago, and since that time, his ideas have reverberated through the corridors of my mind, even as the sound of an angel-choir descending from the upper sky:—

This is the day of international friendship!

This is the era of world-wide association!

This is the age of universal reconciliation!

This is the time of economic brotherhood!

This is the century of mutual helpfulness!

O men! O women! O leaders! Forget your religious differences! Set aside your theological squabbles! Cast to the winds your credal misunderstandings! Come, and sit around the banquet-table of harmony! Away with suspicion! Away with dogmatism! Away with fanaticism! Away with falsehood and accusations! Away with litigations and lawsuits! We are all *one*—not only behind the veil of glory, but in the open court of the earth!

Protectionism

I believe in the Bahai Cause

for it has taught me

a set of universal principles destined to regenerate the world of humanity. I am not the owner nor the proprietor

of these principles; they were not given to me for safe-keeping, but rather on the understanding that I should share them with others.

The Bahai Cause does not foster a High Tariff Party, striving to create a monopoly of its assets under the deceptive title of *Protection*. Firstly, the Cause is in no need of protection and, secondly, neither Baha-O-Llah nor Abdul Baha was a protectionist. Instead, both of them asserted that the more recklessly we disseminate their teachings, the more we own them. Truth is its best protection; generosity is the wisest investment, and if the Bahai Cause is the truth, as I believe it to be, then let us give it away, scatter its jewels to the four winds of heaven and establish its domain throughout the length and breadth of the land. We can do this joyously, freely, abundantly and without reserve, for we are aware of the fact that when we unlock the doors of our spiritual treasury, our treasure remains but the safer, showing manifold increase.

Do we want a religion that will forever keep us in a legal nursery? Will we not welcome a religion that will help us to win our intellectual and spiritual freedom? If so, let us realize without loss of energy, and without any further litigations and lawsuits, that the Kingdom of Baha-O-Llah and his Spirit will never be found behind high tariff walls as embodied in the National and State Constitutions and By-laws of the Bahai Administration; nor will they even faintly be detected in Deeds of Trust or Corporation Charters. The Kingdom of Baha-O-Llah and his Spirit are to be discovered *within us*, as we live, aspire and work in every community for the furtherance of his Cause.

Therefore, I most respectfully submit: Let the un-

daunted soldiers of Baha-O-Allah and Abdul Baha wage a fiery and uninterrupted war against all the religious protectionists, legalists, fundamentalists, canonists and codificationists of an old and impossible world; and, relying on the confirmation of their Supreme Generals, let them carry on the campaign, both within the Cause and outside of it, until the enemies of freedom fail—until they fall.

Cooperation

I believe in the Bahai Cause

for it has taught me

the fundamental doctrine of co-operation among the members of the human family, in religion, in politics, in science and in the arts. It emphasizes that in co-operation there is life; in isolation, there is death. As long as the cells of the body co-operate one with another, there is health; disease is lack of co-operation between the cells of one part and the cells of another part of the human anatomy.

A progressive Bahai cannot subscribe to an isolationist program; an enlightened Bahai cannot but be an internationalist.

It is an accepted fact that all the phenomena of life co-operate with one another. The sun co-operates with the mineral kingdom; the animal draws support from the mineral and vegetable worlds. Man is nothing less than the product of co-operation in all the lower kingdoms; then, how shall he refuse to co-operate with his own strata of existence, as expressed by the institutions of his age, through the civic, political and educational forces of his

community, through the religious societies and clubs of his country and the peace agencies and philanthropic associations of his world? My Bahai faith proclaims that the mandate of nature as well as of God is the universal law of co-operation, and that from this law there is no escape.

Whenever the leaders of any religious organization, Bahai or otherwise, prescribe for their followers, and put into effect, a plan of non-co-operation with human beings, either individually or collectively, they automatically prepare for the inevitable, if slow, disintegration of their religion; for association, according to Baha-O-Llah, leads to union and harmony; and isolation is synonymous with dissolution and extinction.

As a Bahai I have been taught the following, and I have deemed it wise and true: *Consort with all the people with joy and fragrance. Fellowship is the cause of unity, and unity is the source of order in the world.* It is indeed a sad commentary on the attitude of certain religious leaders who have lost sight of the teachings of their own Faith to such a degree as to substitute the principle of co-operation with orders spelling the exact reverse. It is a still sadder commentary that in this age, there can be found men and women who are willing to follow such blind leaders.

Has it not been said of yore:—*Blind leaders of the blind!*

My Bahai faith, as a universal religion, enjoins upon me to live up to its claim one hundred percent by sincerely and cordially inviting *all* the races, *all* the nations and *all* the tribes of men to enter the circle of its benign and

generous influence so that they may become part of its great destiny.

Initiative

I believe in the Bahai Cause

for it has taught me

a plan for the reconstruction of the human commonwealth—the most bold and, at the same time, the most practical ever conceived. In order to help in its fulfillment, every Bahai must, in his own right, become bold and practical. Through his innate power, he must open up new fields of action and, through self-reflection and self-perception, arrive at self-confidence. His heart must be as an ever-playing fountain, tossing high the life-giving waters of truth in order to irrigate the parched grounds of the world of humanity.

He must *become a lamp full of light*; he must be *active and fear not*; he must *go out from the solitary place like unto a shining star, blazing on its horizon*.

In countless ways, the Founders of the Bahai Cause have striven to evoke the original and creative faculties that are latent within us; they have told us not to belittle ourselves by being mere copyists and repeaters of ideas; they have encouraged us to rely on our mental and spiritual resources, for we cannot know the worth of these resources until we have drawn upon them.

Today the Cause requires self-possessed, independent workers. It needs leaders and not henchmen. Courtiers have never served their countries nor their kind, for the man of parts is unwilling to stand first on one foot and then on the other in the close atmosphere of the audience chamber.

It has been said that humility is a part of wisdom, but it also has been said that in the assurance of strength, there is strength. And strength comes from God.

Let us then move, as hollow puppets, on the great stage of life. Through ourselves, we can accomplish nothing, but the Lord holds the strings—we know that; and, if we are willing to respond to the deft workings of His hand, we will play our parts nobly and well, and bring the performance to a triumphant conclusion. Again, we may consider ourselves as actors, and in every scene listen closely to the voice of the Prompter—the still small voice that sounds in the secret shrines of our own hearts—the voice that never fails us, that never leaves us stranded.

Baha-O-Llah addressing each one of us declares:—

I have created thee rich; why dost thou make thyself poor? Noble have I made thee; why dost thou degrade thyself? Of the essence of Knowledge have I manifested thee; why searchest for another than Me?

—Hidden Words, page 7.

The rich resources of spiritual independence are within us; the essences of divine wisdom are implanted in our hearts; the honors of the world of freedom are hidden in our minds. Deaf, dumb and blind, we do not put these inherent treasures into use but instead, like beggars, look to others for spiritual support and moral confidence.

Great is the strength of the individual soul who, relying on the spiritual trust deposited within him by Baha-O-Llah, will arise to spread his Cause! Such a soul will shine forever from the horizon of eternity and will be accounted as among the companions of the White Way.

With wings outstretched, he will soar toward the Kingdom of Heaven; as a flame, he will enkindle the seekers with the fire of the Love of God. Girding up the loins of endeavor, he will display universal efforts, being constantly revitalized with the breaths of the Holy Spirit.

Such an intrepid and resourceful Bahai is a confirmed Bahai. He is the herald of the Cause of Baha-O-Llah, the proclaimer of his message, the producer of his drama, the distributor of his ideas, the interpreter of his dreams, the flagbearer of his army and the disciple at his Threshold.

As if realizing the difficulties that such an individual will have to encounter in his career of service to the Bahai Cause, Abdul Baha thus addresses him: — *Let not thy hands tremble nor thy heart be disturbed.* (*Tablets of Abdul Baha*, Vol. I, page 170.)

A Bahai

I believe in the Bahai Cause

for it has taught me

that a Bahai is a follower of Light, a diffuser of Light, a lover of Light from whatsoever globe it is shining.

He is baptized in the waters of Truth and emancipated from the superstitions of the past.

He is delivered from the sea of names; he does not use signs of discrimination.

A Bahai, not recognizing any racial, national, religious or political prejudices, looks upon all mankind as the children of one Father, as the sheep of one Shepherd, as the stars of one heaven, as the birds of one meadow and the fruits of one tree.

He is unafraid of the authority of Church and State—of Organization and Administration.

He does not sit in judgment upon his brothers, nor does he place stumbling-blocks of ignorance and hatred on the pathway of the marching pilgrims.

He is not occupied with himself, but is intent on the betterment of the world and the training of nations.

He turns his eyes from foreignness and gazes toward oneness.

He does not glory in the love of country, but in the love of humanity as a whole.

He is as an artery, pulsating in the body of the created world.

A Bahai does not attribute to another that which he would not attribute to himself.

He consorts with all the people with joy and fragrance, seeing in their faces the countenance of his Lord, the Merciful, the Clement, the Compassionate.

He does not choose his associates, for God has chosen them for him at the creation; and these associates are the members of his own family scattered over the expanse of the earth.

He is an optimist; he recognizes only the beautiful and the good, and works for the establishment of these virtues in all localities and in all regions.

A Bahai reverences all the spiritual Law-givers that have successively appeared in the East to act as connecting channels between the Supreme Power and Humanity.

He does not concern himself with theological rulings and priestly privileges; but, building his life on internal sanction and turning his sight unto himself, he finds the

Eternal Witness standing within him, powerful, mighty and supreme.

A Bahai is one who lives in the *Everlasting*.

What is a Bahai?

A Bahai is a torch in the darkness, a joy for grief, a sea for the thirsty, a refuge for the unfortunate, an arm for the oppressed. He is a home to the stranger, a remedy to the sick, a fortress to him who seeks protection. He is sight for the blind, a path for the strayed, dew for the earth of kindness, a bark for the sea of knowledge, a sun for the heaven of generosity—a white point upon the brow of the world.

Love of Liberty

I believe in the Bahai Cause

for it has taught me

that the mission of the Prophets and sages of the past was to assemble the scattered fragments of humanity into a whole and to establish the rule of spiritual democracy on the five continents and the islands of the seas.

This is the fiat of Providence, the concern of Heaven and the *will* of the supreme Architect of the New World Order—Baha-O-Llah.

There may be those within the Bahai Administration and outside of it who may claim that they can level to the surface of a smooth plain the towering Himalayas; they may pretend that they are able to turn backward the flow of the mighty Niagara; they may maintain that they can stop the sun from rising or the winds from blowing; they may announce that they can arrest the march of the spinning globes, hinder the law of universal evolution and

progress, damn to eternal perdition the children of the Almighty, or silence God in His Chamber of Melodies and imprison Him in their catacombs of death!

Well, they may lay claim to all these things, and indeed they yet may even have power to perform much weird jugglery and many a fantastic miracle; yet of one thing I entertain not the slightest doubt. It is this:—

They cannot and will never be able to stop, even for a second, the irresistible, uprushing and world-encircling power of BAHAI love and the love of liberty that surges and storms in the minds and hearts of the *freedmen of Baha-O-Llah*. Such religious technicians together with all the principalities, kingdoms and empires of the earth will be baffled before these individuals who have understood and suffered, who have fixed their eyes on the horizon lit by their Lord and cried out: *We have found Baha and we are his ransom.*

O freedmen of Baha-O-Llah! Possess daring, to dream the dreams of your Master; then coin these dreams into deeds of emancipation, so as to set their mark on the coming ages. Pave the pathways of your countryside with the accomplishments of intelligence and wisdom. Be compassionate to your enemies and ill-wishers. Seize life by never seizing it, and work unremittingly in this blood-drenched, hate-encircled world to the end that it may be transformed into a moonlit and dream-visited planet!

The Company of Free Individual Bahais

I believe in the Bahai Cause

for it has taught me

that it is the Way of God to man and the way of man

to God. It is the religion of Truth unveiled before the eyes of the seekers, and the truth of religion heralded from the house-tops. It is the source of all good and the origin of all honor. It is the principle of a Faith that *inspires men to lessen words and increase deeds*; for he whose words exceed his acts, his non-being is better than his being and his death better than his life. It is the root of knowledge, the mainspring of love and the power-house of endurance and self-sacrifice through which mankind shall be developed and exalted. It is freedom from the superstitions and imitations that have kept the people imprisoned in the dark jails of ignorance.

The Bahai Cause is not simply a religion or a faith; it is not simply a philosophy or a movement; it pre-eminently is a system of constructive thinking and a way of wholesome living that never can lend itself to rigid organization or arid regimentation. It is the assertion of man's immortal spirit, and a rallying cry for those unvanquished heroes who have dedicated themselves to the cause of the new civilization which is destined to emerge from the chaos of our time.

The Bahai Administration, on its part, has expended every effort to confine this limitless Ocean in a bottle and to reduce this glorious Light to a faint glow; and it might conceivably have succeeded in its destructive work, had it not been for the clear-cut decision of Justice Louis A. Valente, rendered in the Supreme Court of New York, which was sustained by the Appellate Division of the same county. That decision was based on a very simple theme—liberty of religious practice; yet, actually, it is packed with dynamite. It will become the cornerstone of developing

Bahai activity in this country and throughout the world. Indeed, *God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet* (*Psalms 47, Verse 5*), and reactionary leaders of all types would do well to hearken to that sound!

At this juncture in human history, when Democracy is meeting its crucial test before the embattled hosts of Totalitarianism, the Bahai Cause, as the spiritual Democracy of these times, was likewise forced to the encounter. It would seem that that struggle was inevitable in an epoch when the fundamental principle of Liberty is at stake everywhere, to be lost or won, to be blotted out in daily life or worn as a badge of honor, to be annihilated or set on the path of development and progress, where liberty as measured today will be slavery as measured tomorrow.

It is not an exaggeration to state that the aroused conscience of a considerable part of the Bahai world has expressed itself in the simple words of Justice Valente. Through this decision, and in spite of the theological barricades raised by the Bahai Administration, those who feel themselves called upon to serve the Cause independently will be strengthened in their resolve. Obviously, they would have preferred to please the representative of Abdul Baha by co-operating with the National Spiritual Assembly, even as I myself would have so preferred; but, sometimes a choice has to be made. In this case, the Cause of the Bab, Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha waits patiently on the one hand, while the Bahai Administration sits enthroned on the other. We cannot have them both; therefore, which shall it be? Abdul Baha once said that if, in the face of two important issues, it is incumbent upon us

to make a decision, we must choose the more important. Then, shall we take our places in the wake of the Glorious Dispossessed or shall we stand at attention before the monopolistic powers? This is a problem which each of us must answer for himself.

Baha-O-Llah's hammer-stroke of fate is sounding! Now is the time! Now is the accepted time! Let the disillusioned regimented Bahais, everywhere, arise and break the chains and fetters that are binding them to a despotic Administration! This is their opportunity to defy the tyrants within the Cause, even as Baha-O-Llah himself defied the tyrants that had subverted the former religions.

It is certain that, in that New World which we as Bahais have been taught to expect, which we in faith have anticipated, the followers of Baha-O-Llah will play no small part. Rising from each community, from each state, from each country, eager, determined children of the New Day shall form themselves into a formless Order—THE COMPANY OF FREE INDIVIDUAL BAHAIS; and these persons, known and unknown to one another, within organizations (even the Bahai organization) and outside of them, shall carry the name of their Lord to every region and take active part in the establishment of his Kingdom upon the earth.

May God be the support of the teachers who shall travel to these countries, and their helper!

Formerly they were as moths, but they shall become as royal falcons. Formerly they were as bubbles, but they shall become the sea!

Who was Baha-O-Llah?

He was the divine Advocate of man's emancipation

from the thralldom of former ages. His ideas were not static and temporary, but dynamic and eternal. He was a man of peace, but also he was a man of battle; and he led the army of New Ideas against the army of tradition. He was the personification of a spiritual and intensely human genius. He had daring and sublime self-confidence. While the enlightened religionists of his day gazed fearfully into the depths of prejudice and intolerance where their fellowmen were disporting themselves, he, with one stride, bridged the abyss and, in the face of the storm which rose about him on every side, he called on the kings and rulers of the earth, and on men and women in all walks of life, to arise, to move and to unite, in the name of freedom and in the cause of the oppressed and the downtrodden. Baha-O-Llah fought his battles without reserve.

Now, our time has arrived; our hour has struck! We, *THE COMPANY OF FREE INDIVIDUAL BAHAIS* must continue his work!

The Bounties of the Omnipotent are inexhaustible and they shall pour upon us! The Favors of the Merciful are boundless and they shall surround us! The Gifts of the King of Kings are numberless and they shall be given unto us! The Glories of the Father are resplendent and they shall encircle us! There is no cause for anxiety and no reason for backwardness. *THE COMPANY OF FREE INDIVIDUAL BAHAIS*, which always has been in existence, must now become vocal, active, imperative; and let us remember, let us constantly remember that Abdul Baha anticipated us and spoke of our coming. He said:—

The hosts of the Kingdom of Abha are drawn up and filed in battle array on the plain of the Supreme Concourse and are expecting that a band of volunteers will step upon the field of action with the intention of service, so that they may assist that band and make it victorious and triumphant.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, pages 490-491.

The attitude to be taken and the services to be rendered by this *band of volunteers*, *THE COMPANY OF FREE INDIVIDUAL BAHAIS*, are outlined and enumerated by Abdul Baha. Addressing them he says:—

Be not seated and silent. Diffuse the glad-tidings of the Kingdom far and wide to the ears; promulgate the Word of God. . . . Arise with such qualities and attributes that ye may continually bestow life on the body of the world, and nurse the infants of the universe up to the station of maturity and perfection. Enkindle with all your might, in every meeting the light of the love of God, gladden and cheer every heart with the utmost loving-kindness, show forth your love to the strangers just as you show to your relatives. If a soul is seeking a quarrel, ask ye reconciliation; if he blame ye, praise him; if he give you a deadly poison, bestow an all-healing antidote; if he createth death, administer ye eternal life; if he becometh a thorn, change ye into roses and hyacinths. Perchance, through such deeds and words, this darkened world will become illuminated; this terrestrial universe will become transformed into a heavenly realm, and this satanic prison become a divine court; warfare and bloodshed be annihilated and love and faithfulness hoist the tent of unity upon the apex of the world.

—*Tablets of Abdul Baha*, Vol. III, pages 503-504.

Therefore, let *THE COMPANY OF FREE INDIVIDUAL BAHAIS* step upon the field of action with the intention of service so that the Hosts of the Kingdom of Abha may make it victorious and triumphant!

PART NINE

ACTION AND REACTION

22. Out of the Mail Bag

And ye are witnesses of these things.

—St. Luke, Chapter 24, Verse 48



DR. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES
Pastor of the Community Church of New York City

CHAPTER XXII

OUT OF THE MAIL BAG

While the articles which constitute this book were appearing in *New History*, the mail bag was becoming heavier than usual. Friends, strangers, and especially Bahais felt called upon to express themselves on the problems which the legal action had brought to light. Therefore, a great deal of interesting correspondence was carried on. All the letters received have been placed for reference in the office files. There were hundreds of these letters coming from all parts of the country and from abroad, expressing, naturally, different angles and shades of thought. Indeed, they comprise a slice of life on subject-matter that is seldom dealt with! For this reason, it has been deemed advisable to make some extracts for publication.

Communications, reproduced herewith either in part or in whole, excepting the four historic letters from Dr. John Haynes Holmes as well as a letter from Palestine and one from India, are presented without identification—the matter of moment being the content of the statements, rather than the status of the writers.

April 1, 1940

Dear Mr. Sohrab:

I have read with the greatest interest and with seething indignation your complete Statement with correspondence as published in the April issue of **NEW HISTORY**.

It's all news to me that Mr. and Mrs. Chanler have been victims of such cruel persecution from the Bahai authorities. This latest attack seems incredible, and I would regard it as such did I not see the actual documents as you print them. Alas, it is the same old story of ecclesiasticism—the Church arrogating to itself all power, and persecuting the prophets and the saints.

I have always known that Mr. and Mrs. Chanler were utterly devoted persons, the unselfish and self-sacrificing servants of a great cause which has become central in their lives; but I never realized at what a price they were standing firm by their ideals. You have done us all a great service in making public the details of this story. Please convey to Mr. and Mrs. Chanler my sympathy and reverent regard, which I share with you as their devoted associate.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) *John Haynes Holmes.*

April 7, 1941

Dear Mrs. Chanler:

Thank you for letting me know the great victory you have won in the courts. I feel that this is a victory for us all, since it involves the great principle of freedom in religion. Imagine any group arrogantly claiming a monopoly in this great field. I congratulate you with all my heart, for I can realize what this long fight must have involved.

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) *John Haynes Holmes.*

April 21, 1941

Dear Mr. Sohrab:

I have read with absorbing interest your account of the famous lawsuit and the victory which has been won. More than ever do I feel that this is a victory for us all—a vindication in this country, in a trying circumstance, of our basic principle of religious liberty. There isn't one of us who doesn't owe an immeasurable debt to Mrs. Chanler and yourself. I hope this issue of *NEW HISTORY* together with the next issue containing your account of this affair, will be widely distributed in the libraries, for it is a document of genuine historical importance.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) *John Haynes Holmes.*

Sept. 30, 1941

Dear Mr. Sohrab:

I am mighty glad that this book is in hand, for this Bahai lawsuit is a chapter in the history of religious freedom in America. . . .

We have trying and difficult days ahead, and must close up our ranks tighter than ever.

(Signed) *John Haynes Holmes.*

* * * * *

The wise ones in the Bahai Cause will arise and say: "Praise be to God that Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha have opened our eyes to truth."

Those of opposite mind will either come forward with co-operative endeavor, or thrust our beloved Cause into chaos and confusion. They *cannot* refute the Word, which is absolute authority in your wonderful treatise.

* * * * *

Your little magazine *New History*, containing reference to the trade-marking of the name *Bahai*, etc., came today, and I have read the same very carefully. Allow me to say that I agree with every word of it. I have no brief for or against any individual or group. However, I have watched for years conditions going from bad to worse without meddling, because I see the end of it all.

* * * * *

My sympathies are entirely with Mr. and Mrs. Chanler's great work—what does it matter which way the Light is spread.

* * * * *

I am stirred to surprise and regret by the information you have conveyed to me concerning the strangely inconsistent effort of some Bahai representatives, to appropriate to private use the truly world-universal name and beauty of the Bahai faith.

This narrow, and, it seems to me, fundamentally selfish attempt, is surely directly contrary to all that the Bahai fellowship and devotion stand for. One need only try to imagine, today, a single body of Christians seeking to *copyright* the name itself of *Christian*. The error and narrowness of this other effort is, by such comparison, made to appear in its real aspect.

With earnest hope and prayer that such attempts will be withdrawn voluntarily, or, if not, will be defeated in their purpose, and assuring you that we feel that such noble-hearted and pure-spirited loyalty and labor as you and Mrs. Chanler have devoted to the Bahai faith for many notable years of service, should be sufficient to convince any but the sadly bigoted, of the wrong of

trying to hamper your great self-sacrifice and witness of divine truth. . . .

* * * * *

I received your small booklet and have read it. You do not say anything about the Guardian of the Bahai Cause, Shoghi Effendi. The National Assembly do just as he suggests in all matters. I am surprised that Ahmad Sohrab, with his background, will not work with the main body of the Bahais.

* * * * *

I have never heard of it—I am re-reading and studying thoughtfully No. 7 issue (April). It has cleared up some subjects that were “foggy” to my way of thinking. I thank you.

* * * * *

I have just finished reading your statement in the April issue of the little magazine, *New History*, and am simply dumbfounded. The action described seems diametrically opposite to the fundamental teachings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, so far as I have learned from your compendium of their writings and teachings in your *Bible of Mankind*, *I Heard Him Say* and pamphlets.

* * * * *

Thank you for the April issue of *New History*. My reaction is twofold: interest in your side of the case as presented by you, which has all the earmarks of sincerity, genuineness and soundness, and bewilderment at the past and present action of the Chicago *authorities* in seeking and securing a patent on Bahai literature and trying to enforce their alleged rights. It is astounding. The legal aspects baffle my layman's mind. But,

the whole world seems to have gone *cuckoo*, and from this you and Mr. and Mrs. Chanler may draw some comfort.

* * * * *

I read with great interest your statement regarding: Horace Holley. It is an impeachment equal to that of Warren Hastings.

* * * * *

Just a word to encourage you in your fight against the orthodoxy which wants to copyright and nullify the words of the Prophet. It has always been that way. Those who can only travel with a collar around their necks have to have some place to go—the others who can think and act for themselves will follow you.

* * * * *

I have read your pamphlets and will say that they are very well written, and no doubt do much good. I am sure however, that a man with your attainments could do much more for the Cause if you would join up with them and become one of the gang.

* * * * *

After reading from cover to cover the recently written statement by your pen regarding the trade-mark, Bahai, I felt so touched by the spiritual tone and the profound declaration of your conviction for the truth to be proclaimed for the Unification of the people of the World and their Emancipation. I read carefully every line of this most explicit article. I pray that this article will bring a peaceful solution for the difficulties in the path of the Followers of the Divine Teachings, who see the *blood clot* in religious freedom that is

forming; an operation is necessary in order that the *Will and Testament* of Abdul Baha be obeyed.

* * * * *

Now Ahmad, I am speaking to you as a brother. I am for the underdog, but I want the Truth only. Mr. . . . and others stated that you denied the station and authority of the Guardian, and thus the Will of the Master. I defended you on the grounds that your present writing did not indicate it and that I had too much confidence in your loyalty to the Master to reject his specific command. The National Spiritual Assembly is determined to smash you on this rock alone.

* * * * *

I have read with interest the pamphlet you sent me concerning a very unusual court proceeding against The New History Society.

You have justice on your side, and I hope you will also have the law. I know comparatively little about trade-mark law, but my impression is that your contentions are sound. You evidently have good counsel.

* * * * *

Thanks, so much, for New History! It answers so many questions which I have been asked in regard to you and your connection with the National Bahai Organization so much better than I was able to answer them at the time. I have passed it on, to make the *crooked thoughts straight*.

Personally, I extend both hands to you both in understanding—understanding too deep for words.

* * * * *

I am praying that you will be vindicated in New York,

as I feel that Shoghi Effendi, were he in possession of all the things necessary in the case, would feel a debt of gratitude is due any soul who tries to spread the Teachings, whether through book shop, temples, churches or schools.

* * * * *

I have wanted to tell you ever since the April number of the magazine when the great *Silence* was broken, as I had never heard *one* word of *your side* of the *story*.

I want to tell you how much I appreciate the little magazine, and when it comes every month, I just have to stop whatever I am doing and read it from cover to cover. It just strikes the nail on the head, for me. It clears my mentality, and I can see the *whole Truth* as you have it, that never can be adulterated, or organized.

God bless you. I am with you heart and hand, and have been from the very beginning. Yours is the sense of universal justice that lifts my heart to where it soars and sings. We need a consciousness as high as heaven to see all life as Love, all men as kings.

* * * * *

I was dumbfounded when I read about what the so-called Bahais are doing. Baha-O-Llah in the *Hidden Words* says, "I made you free, why are you a slave?" I take the same view as John Haynes Holmes, who so well expressed himself in the Oct. issue of *New History*. It is a deplorable condition at this time and age to confiscate the Word of God.

* * * * *

I read your magazine from cover to cover—because I had a tired moment—and I kept going, because the subject matter proved interesting.

Do you mean to say that a certain *Bahai Cause* pursues you because you *independently* branch out to teach its principles and axioms? *Legally pursued!* (altho' you use your own money). You're *teaching* it right—aren't you?

* * * * *

Most Bahai followers are very much of the dilettante order—you know this as well as I. But I will not quarrel with them. Let each soul travel the pathway of his choice. The worst trouble makers are generally the *leaders*.

* * * * *

And you Sohrab, don't send me your magazines no more. They are thrown into a waste paper basket. I am very particular what I read, and I have no time for your stuff.

* * * * *

I greatly sympathize with you in your troubles with personalities. But, this is beside the mark. Personalities have no importance in the *Cause!* We are striving to build an organization that will stand intact throughout the future ages—and it will be done. And even though the material that we start with is only one degree above the baboon, we must accomplish this mighty task of consolidating the Baha'i forces for posterity. It may be that you are on the negative side in order to show the rest of the Bahais that *this divine cause cannot be divided*. There has of necessity to be an opposite in all things.

* * * * *

Just as soon as a soul accepts Baha'u'llah as the prophet of his age, and obeys His teachings, I think that person is as much a Bahai as he could ever be. Some

of the organized believers do this only in a very slight degree. The reward for following Baha'u'llah comes from a realm far removed from the world of man.

* * * * *

Your little magazine is very helpful and often has some valuable information in it. I can see your standpoint, and yet I do not approve of it for this reason: The people of the earth are not strong enough to walk alone in the world of spiritual thoughts. It is too foreign and contrary to that which they have been trained so far. You have been given the privilege of living with some of the highest Spirits that have manifested on the earth. Abdul Baha certainly was one of the greatest; Janabe Fazel was like Him in a lesser degree. Through the help of such souls you became free from the world of nature and the struggle for existence. Your life shows this.

* * * * *

We might say that most of the Bahai followers are like unto creatures shut up in an animal house—the world of nature is this animal dwelling. They have far to go before they can be free, soaring high in the sky of spiritual understanding. The freedom that you now have is unknown to these people, and they have no power to live and do as yourself.

* * * * *

I am not at all interested in your publication and must ask you . . . not to waste your postage by sending it to me. Should I ever want anything that you possess (which God forbid!) I shall quite cheerfully let you know.

* * * * *

Their stand was ridiculous. I am afraid many Christian denominations have hugged their good news to their hearts and kept others out. High fences are falling down.

* * * * *

Congratulations on bright victory achieved for humanity the American way.

* * * * *

Of course, I am *delighted*, but *not* surprised, that Mr. Shorab and you won the court decision. It seemed ridiculous to bring such a suit in a country *founded* at least on the principle, that men might worship in their own way. I should give it the utmost publicity.

* * * * *

I congratulate you and Mr. Sohrab upon your great victory. This world can never be a world of peace and happy brotherhood of mankind until cruelty to helpless creatures both human and dumb animals is controlled by righteous laws.

* * * * *

To you and to Mirza Sohrab my heartfelt congratulations for the successful defense of your case—which is a rare triumph indeed of tolerant, all-embracing, loving and warm-blooded religious spirit over narrow-minded formalism. Let us be generous in victory and concede to those forces which want to monopolize a living Creed that they mean well, but are victims of their own jealousy and fanaticism.

You, however, who have carried the torch without pretense, self-effacing and patient, and with such loving insight even into the hearts of your adversaries,

you have won the triple award: the outward recognition, the inward justification, and finally the spreading of your methods to settle conflicts, namely to conquer by Love; to prevail by Humbleness.

You might not be aware of the far-reaching effects which your example might cause in a world which needs must be convinced soon that war and riots and violence breed naught but injustice, hatred and despair.

With more than usual interest I have followed your articles in *New History* since you revealed for the first time the intimate growth of your movement. And you revealed much more. Unknowingly perhaps, you showed us the advantages of taking a higher, impersonal and unimpassioned perspective, even on matters which are closest to our hearts. There was not a single instance of over-enthusiasm, of artificial fervor in those accounts of your religious struggles. On the contrary, everything was told as if it all had happened centuries ago. (And indeed it seemed to me a brilliant mirror of the period when Christianity changed from being a Faith to becoming a Church.)

And again, what impressed me most was your sympathy with your very adversaries; not a single instance of anger, of contempt or even of what is called righteous indignation. Only now and then some subtle humor which so delightfully relieved the tenseness of the situation; some gentle way of poking fun at your adversaries as is the custom amongst good friends. But a greater amount still of self-irony as if to say: "We're all sinners and each of us the worst of all." There was a tenderness, a charm, a serene wisdom in those essays;—so that our souls were captured at once and our minds were calmed with the knowledge that your cause shall prevail. * * * *

Warm congratulations and felicitations upon the thorough and decisive vindication of your entire position, from the Court! The dignity and courage with which you have conducted your part in this debate are worthy of all praise and of this complete verdict.

* * * * *

With greatest satisfaction I got the news, that at last you won a full victory in the case you so valiantly fought for.

Let me congratulate you and Mr. Sohrab for this success. I know how much this means to both of you, and how much it must mean to you to fight for a just cause.

* * * * *

Congratulations! Thank you for the Press Comments on your success in winning the suit that the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the U. S. and Canada brought against you. It delighted me beyond words.

You have rendered a great service to mankind in unmasking the members of the National Spiritual Assembly as the prototypes of the bigots of the dark ages. Their utter lack of wisdom in bringing this suit to prohibit your using the name *Bahai*, is the strongest evidence of their lack of the Spirit of the Bahai Religion. It has hastened the day hinted at by Abdul Baha when he said:

" . . . If we are not the instruments in spreading this Cause, others will be chosen. . . . God will raise up a people who will hoist the standard of God, who will ignite the Lamp of God, who will conquer the cities of the hearts, who will show forth the potency of the Word of God."—(*Bahai Scriptures*, Page 374)

* * * * *

Heartfelt congratulations to you and to Mrs. Chanler on your Victory! . . . May your work now go forward with greater joy and greater achievement.

We are so happy that you have overcome the obstacles put in your pathway—but such has ever been the experience of the constructive peoples of the earth.

May the forces of evil grow a million times weaker each day and the forces of good a million times stronger until the victory of Light for the world is won.

* * * * *

I wish to acknowledge your faithful promise to send me a leaflet on the Court procedure, for which I thank you. The verdict is what I predicted to our Local Spiritual Assembly sometime ago.

Religious freedom has been the inheritance of every creature on the American soil. Surely it would not be denied a believer in Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha and Shoghi Effendi.

* * * * *

I am grateful to you both for the good news you sent me. It was the best news I have had in a long time. Truth sure was mightier than the sword of Excommunication. I don't understand where Mr. Holley and Co. got their ideas from, except from the Roman hierarchy. Baha-O-Llah says, "Why are you a slave when I made you free?" We have been slaves long enough. I hope some of the folks that made up the parties in your house will return back again and enjoy your hospitality and not be afraid of Excommunication.

* * * * *

Please accept and convey to Mrs. Chanler my congratulations on the verdict, about which there was no doubt from the very beginning.

* * * * *

My heartiest congratulations. This news made my heart get into my throat. It was the best I have had for a long time.

Oh what shameless creatures, waiting in the ambush like wild cats for their prey, to devour it.

I am rejoiced over the way the Judge handled the case, putting on them the water hose. How they belittled themselves, walking out like wet rats. . . . So there's where some of the Temple money goes. . . .

Now, I hope and pray that the true believers will wake up,—shake the shackles off our necks. You broke those horrid links. Praise God. . . . How we innocently had suffered. . . .

Now, more than ever, I wish I could be in Chicago and hear what they have to say. Perhaps many will be glad that this happened. Is Shoghi Effendi getting this report? I hope he gets the newspaper clippings and sees that the Cause is in the hands of non-Bahais, and that he was deceived by the sweet tongue of Satan.

* * * * *

Most sincerely I offer my hearty congratulations upon your success in the full establishment of your claims:—

“To draw the thing as you see it.

For the God of things as they are.”

I enjoy the little magazine and read it carefully, and delight in the decision the Court has given you. I do not know all the reasons for the controversy, but I believe in you both; that is quite enough. If I ever return to New York City to reside, I shall follow your phase of the Call most earnestly.

* * * * *

Above all let me felicitate you and Mrs. Chanler on

the outcome of the court action which was so unjustly brought against you and your cause. Though I did not write to you for a long time, I have followed everything very closely in the writings you always send to me and which I always enjoy. Through them I never get out of touch with you, at least on my part.

* * * * *

You will forgive any undue delay in congratulating you and Mrs. Chanler on your victory for retention of individual freedom of conscience in religion as guaranteed by the Federal Constitution.

* * * * *

Congratulations. I have only just opened the Press Comments on April 1st and 2nd you so kindly forwarded. I am indeed rejoiced to know that religious freedom is still preserved, that formalism and tyranny are again defeated. The right to learn and spread Truth is the most precious part of Freedom and is the only right worth striving for. True religion is the only remedy for our war-torn world.

* * * * *

I spoke to some of the delegates about a girl who got married, and for a long time cooked steak, so her husband said, "Dearie, why do you not use your brain and cook up something else?" "I am trying," she said, "but it is always steak." So I said the same is with the election. They do not try to get someone else on the board of the National Spiritual Assembly.

* * * * *

What a glorious privilege was yours to vindicate the Truth of the Bahai Cause. "Justice is to be desired

above all things." You cannot organize the Bahai Cause, Abdul Baha told us in the very beginning of the Cause. So many things have crept into the method of teaching the Cause; but I have been thankful I heard, and was taught from the source, so I kept quiet, but I knew what Abdul Baha had said—so rested on His words. . . . God is not to be mocked nor hindered by man's interpretation, for He rules mighty and supreme.

* * * * *

It will give me the greatest pleasure if you will no longer send me your publication: in fact I request you to cross my name off your list entirely and oblige.

* * * * *

As the road is now clear to carry on with your teaching efforts, let every effort be given to the spreading of the Bahai Cause. The differences between a few people must be forgotten.

* * * * *

Grand too of you and Mr. Shorab to send me the copies of your periodicals that tell of your glorious victory for **FREEDOM OF RELIGION**. We congratulate you both.

Our best wishes in your great work for **TRUTH** and **FREEDOM**.

* * * * *

I was really happy when I read, the other day, in your magazine about the decision given by Justice Valente in your favor. It is really a triumph of Truth and Freedom over selfishness and bigotry. More Power to you! Please extend my heartiest congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Chanler also. Now, I am glad, you can

spread your message with more freedom and power than ever.

* * * * *

I want to register my satisfaction at the decision reached by Justice Valente in the long-drawn suit conducted to harass and hinder Mr. Sohrab and Mrs. Chauler. Any other decision would have struck a vital blow at the religious freedom guaranteed under the U. S. Constitution.

* * * * *

Permit me to congratulate you on your great victory. Although I have never doubted for a moment that the New History Society was in its rights and that this ugly controversy must be decided in your favor, I could not help feeling relieved when I received the printed announcement of the Court Decision and thus saw my expectation confirmed.

I read the May issue of your little magazine over and over; I was in my thoughts with you all, back in the New History office at 132 East 65th Street, and lived with you through the breathtaking minutes which you so masterfully described.

* * * * *

It seems incredible that the N. S. A. should appeal the case after such a clear cut decision made by Judge Louis A. Valente, and repeat the same mistake again in regard to the telephone book listing. It only goes to prove how veiled they are. Too bad you have to go all over the case again. They evidently cannot see that they are wrong. I think, perhaps after 5 judges give the same decision they will believe it.

* * * * *

a moment of great enthusiasm, tried to join the Bahai Administration.

In fact, since I have tried to live according to the teachings of the Great Masters, Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, my heart has been lighter and happier, and I have—I am quite sure—led a more useful life than before contacting them.

As for the *Philosophy of Fear*—the fruits of which the world is witnessing in the horrible War that now rages—there can be no place for this most destructive of all forces in *any* religious movement. If the Bahais' idea of keeping their Cause clean and pure is to use Voodoo methods and shun the sinners of the world, for fear of contamination, it might be well for them all—no matter how exalted they have become—to go back to the First Source of their religion and read again and again the words of the Masters.

For in no single instance can I find any such threats against a so-called sinner—which seems to be the title bestowed upon someone who does not agree with them—in these teachings. Mind, I'm not speaking of things *written by others* than the Masters.

Religious vanity, the temptation to aggrandizement, spiritual pride, self-righteousness, the superiority complex, are all likely to be part of the ego, when one feels that *they alone* have any monopoly on the spiritual concept—and that *they alone* have the *right to interpret*, and, if you please, enforce the teachings of this spiritual idea.

We are all limited by our frail human nature. But even if we cannot be Gods we can *emulate* them, and try to be something better than we are. No one can

frighten any intelligent individual into *his* particular way of thinking.

There is only *one path* to spiritual growth:—The path of tolerance and love. Every man, woman and child alive has an inalienable right to seek God according to his or her findings and convictions.

It is my sincere hope that the Bahais will grow into this consciousness, until there is no longer room in their hearts for anything but the tolerance and love that was the keynote of the lives of their great teachers, Baha-O-Llah and his beloved son, Abdul Baha.

* * * * *

Many thanks to your kindness in mailing me a copy of the Bible of Mankind which reached me last evening. I appreciate your generous gift more than I can tell you. I know I shall find it a mine of inspiration for future messages I hope to deliver. It ought to broaden my intellectual and spiritual horizon and quicken my interest in the messages God has given through the prophets of other races.

I was greatly interested in the Quarterly *The Children's Caravan*.

I was amazed to learn of the lawsuit which you and Mrs. Chanler were compelled to face. How preposterous for any group to claim a monopoly on Religion! Truly their suit was the negative of all they pretended to teach.

* * * * *

My heart rejoices that justice has been done in the work of Baha'u'llah of which you are both such loving representatives.

You were sweet to let me hear at once—but my heart

knew it, Peace came like the ringing of a bell and I said—"The decision has been given and Justice has triumphed over lust and greed!"

* * * * *

I want to congratulate you because of your wonderful and well-directed opportunity regarding the Bab, Baha-U-Llah and Abdul Baha—and because of the wonderful *Bible* that you have given the world. I have read all the *Bible* carefully. I was reading it to a man (organist) nearly blind, who was deeply interested. We rejoiced over the wisdom of your just judge. And to-day, the paper came from you—and I am glad for you and with you. When the man afflicted with blindness, comes to me again, the news will make him rejoice.

* * * * *

This is all tommy rot. Jealousy is at the bottom of it. Ahmad Sohrab is not spiritually mature or he would never have caused friction. This is the Day of Judgment, heed ye foolish people, you are gloating now, the time is short, instead of co-operating you are tearing down. Shame on you all. Baha'u'llah suffered martyrdom to spread this message and you want to rest on your laurels. Pettiness, wake up and grow up.

* * * * *

Congratulations and many thanks for sending us the Press Comments on your success in the matter on the Decision of the Supreme Court against the National Spiritual Assembly.

This decision could not have been otherwise, else it would be an evidence that there was no sanity left in the world.

All success to you both and again with many thanks

for helping to free the Bahai Religion from its arch enemies, the Bahai organization.

* * * * *

In one of your articles you said something about being willing to do "for a Persian Cause" what you would not do "for an American Corporation." . . .

In your June article on 'The Name' I found the closest approach to My thinking I have met for some time, yet I wish you had developed the subject matter. . . .

We have reached the final division in your Bible of Mankind. I read aloud to . . . as opportunity permits. We are enjoying the Bahai section very much. I blame Bahais for hiding their light under a bushel. In the movement in Australia I found the writings closely guarded, reserved for initiates only, instead of being broadcast so that he who runs may read. I am confiding this to you, because you and Julie Chanler have done so much to break down the barriers and get the message through to the world. I bless you for what you have done and I trust you will go on to complete the good work to which you have put your hand.

* * * * *

I want to thank you for sending me the magazines and newspaper items in regard to the case. I shall have to ask you to stop sending the magazines. . . . I assure you that not one copy of your magazine has gone into the waste-basket and I am very glad to know your side—it seems to be what Abdul Baha taught—yet He also said we must be obedient, and if we do obey the majority patiently, everything would be made right in time.

* * * * *

God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform.

And so you see, Ahmad, you were trained and prepared by Abdul Baha to vindicate the Truth of the Bahai message.

All must come under the Banner of Truth, Righteousness, Justice and Unity; all nations into one family of God. The Master warned us, if Bahais, so-called, did not fulfill the teachings of Unity, Justice, Peace and severance from all save God they would fail; others would arise, who would carry on,—so the Day of Revealing and Restitution is at hand. Only praise God you were chosen to vindicate the Truth. It was a shock and a revelation to me to find how the Cause had been misunderstood and dominated, until the vision was lost sight of. But the Cause is not lost.

* * * * *

Please discontinue sending me your magazine *New History*. Thank you!

* * * * *

My heartiest congratulations to you both upon the decision of the Supreme Court. You have nobly served the Cause of freedom of worship and the Cause of freedom of investigation and expression.

* * * * *

The mighty Excalibur has again been unsheathed, and consigned to the dark shades of Erebus at least one petty, selfish and hypocritical ego where inanely it now dazedly wanders about "unwept, unhonored and unsung." *Sela*. I tender both you and Mrs. Chanler my heartfelt congratulations for your valorous and successful fight over those who would strain at a gnat

as if it were a camel trying to throw into discard all fraternal and humanitarian principles not according with their peculiar whimsical ideas.

* * * * *

Please know that I am more than mildly interested in the Bahai movement. I do not know enough of its origin and prestige to fight for it as you are doing, but from my meager knowledge of world religions, I consider your own as the most fitting to human needs, extant today. Furthermore, I believe that transgression of the tenets of your faith is what has brought the world into its present horrible alternatives and actions. . . . In method also you are doing much to work out its problems in human progress. . . . I wish we might have a branch of your faith here, and believe the same could easily be organized.

* * * * *

Thank you for placing my name on your subscription list. I received your last two issues and today the June issue, just when I had begun to think you had forgotten, so thank you again.

I can only say I echo John Haynes Holmes and congratulate you and Julie Chanler (lovely name) on your victory. You know it's queer the answers I received to my inquiries about all this, as if I were a child and broaching something taboo. I am certain you will win the suit when it comes up before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

Also I want to express my admiration of the next to the last paragraph in this issue, the English is exquisite poetry fit to express your feelings of the Most Holy Name.

* * * * *

Spoke to a small Bahai group in . . . 2 weeks ago.
Congratulations on your victory over the orthodox.

* * * * *

Months ago when I was in San Francisco I met a Bahai, not one of your friends, I regret to state. She gave me your address, I wrote to you and received literature from you. Thanks, and please pardon the long delay, I intended to write to you before this.

I first learned about the controversy between "New History" and the Bahai Administration from a Bahai in San Francisco, one not friendly as I said; later, after receiving New History, October, 1940, I learned about your case, and immediately favored you, for I am an Independent myself, and I am most friendly toward you and all other Independents who affirm their Divine right to disregard "authorities" and carry on their own Spiritual Work in their own way. I wish you all success, I hope you have been or will be victorious. I hope that you and Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler have won or will win the right to give to the world the Bahai Teachings and the right to use the name Bahai.

I have read your magnificent paper "My Faith" and find myself in accord with you. . . .

I have met and known many teachers and "so-called" teachers. I have had many spiritual adventures in my Quest for Truth. I feel that I know you and it affords me joy. I hope to hear from you.

* * * * *

Kindly do not send any longer your publication "New History" to me. My husband and I regret so very much the course that you have taken and hope from the depth of our hearts you may not stay in it much

longer but come back to us very soon. The Guardian is your true brother and will help you, not hinder you.

* * * * *

The one thing in particular that is forbidden among the followers of Baha'u'llah is *contention*. If those who claim to follow His teachings engage in continual contention, then they are not His followers, but fakers. As long as humans cultivate the spirit of a mad dog there cannot be any unity among the human race. To strive and contend in the name of a religion, even the Bahai religion, will not exonerate anyone from this crime. I will say that your little magazine does some good teaching work, but why not let the personal disagreement drop into the background.

* * * * *

As far as the written word is concerned the Bahai Religion is complete. The mass of humanity will not have a true comprehension of much of that which has been revealed, for centuries yet to come. But it is necessary to promulgate all those parts of our teaching which can be understood by the mass of the people of the world. And to accomplish this great task we must discover the lowest common denominator of ordinary human intelligence. And that is quite low indeed. The organized Bahais, with the help of Shoghi Effendi, are doing just that—dealing with the lowest common denominator of understanding in the Bahai religion. When you undertake to teach a large number, it is certainly practical to offer only that which the greatest number of souls can follow and comprehend. Such being the case, the more advanced souls should not complain that the curriculum is not up to the standard

of their particular intelligence. The greater a soul's understanding the less need he will have for any human aid as regards the knowledge of spiritual things. . . .

The person of mystic knowledge is vastly impatient with the stock variety of human intelligence because he knows that it is only a stupid squirrel spinning around in its exercise-cage and then bragging about how great a distance it has traveled. This is a perfect simile of the world of nature-mind. Most of the things about which it thinks have no importance and really lead nowhere—except in an endless circle. Now just as the mystic mind is hostile to the operations of the earth-bound minds, so they are hostile to the condition of the mystic; they cannot understand anything of that world and therefore disapprove of everything related to it.

At the time that Christ questioned His followers as to what they thought about Him, Peter was the only one who said that he knew that Christ was the Son of the living God. Christ thereupon honored Peter above all the others, saying, "Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood have not revealed this to you." In other words, this kind of understanding could not be conveyed from one man to another, it was given by the Spirit of God to a man who was fit to receive it.

Long, long ago I read a little story titled, "In the Country of the Blind the One-Eyed Man is King." The setting of this story was in the Andes mountains in South America . . . I wish you would ask some of the literary searchers to hunt this up for you as it is really quite a little classic story and well worth reading. I am sure you can get something that you can use from it. The author certainly understood human nature.

The human race can never be led into the Kingdom of Heaven unless and until they gain a certain understanding of the universal divine spirit by themselves. And to accomplish this important matter they must first learn to do their *own thinking and understanding*. Everything in the teachings of Baha'u'llah points to and leads to this necessary power of the human soul—to *understand for himself and not blindly follow the dictates of human leaders*. . . .

Baha'u'llah did not encourage His followers to contend with each other in courts, or to curse one another or that a small handful should strive to prevent all the others from making use of their own reasoning powers. This idea is only a repetition of methods and systems that have been a curse to mankind throughout the ages past. This does not belong to the Cause of Baha'u'llah! Nay! Nay! . . . Let us beware that this enemy does not destroy the good that Baha'u'llah has brought to the people of the world today.

“Verily, God hath made it incumbent upon every soul to deliver His Cause, according to his ability. Thus hath the command been recorded by the Finger of Might and Power upon the Tablet of Majesty and Greatness.”—Baha'u'llah.

Who shall deprive me of this right and privilege?

* * * * *

All the suffering you endured . . . so long ago was too much for you. But it had to be, and belongs to the crucible of tests in the life of every chosen one to be graced with honors from on high—not the honors that you now have—but the everlasting honors which I hope you will obtain.

I hope that nothing too serious has already happened through your attitude toward the National Spiritual Assembly that could not be rectified . . . It is of course a very serious thing to differ with the Guardian. If there were something radically wrong with the National Spiritual Assembly the Guardian would know it and would correct it. He would not let it stand.

At any rate, it is forbidden in the teachings to feel offended, that is to say, you must not let it be known that you are offended; let God alone know it, and God will be your Advocate. You have the power to transform your sentiments toward the National Spiritual Assembly—there is a point of mystery in our teachings that you have never yet seen, and that is the cause of our differences.

What excuse will you make in the other world when the Judge will ask you, why you did not believe that the National Spiritual Assembly should be obeyed? Your love for Abdul Baha will help you nothing after your making a break in the Cause which is about the last thing you should have done and which now makes it very hard for the 4,000 believers in this country, and very hard for the National Spiritual Assembly and very hard for Shoghi Effendi. Even here in . . ., the non-believers are telling us that a division and split had come into our Cause and that this Cause was therefore not the truth. The Minister of the Christian Church here has received your literature from a Minister of another church. Do you want this damage to the Cause? In the end you will regret having taken so much vengeance on the National Spiritual Assembly.

Do you not read and study the Testament of Abdul Baha? Everything is so clear there. For a believer like

you to differ with Shoghi Effendi is a great sin, an unpardonable sin; therefore turn to God to help you in the rectification of this sin. He will help you if you pray for it, but do it before it is too late.

* * * * *

What would be the price for New History for year 1941?

I would especially like to have copies of it beginning with March of this year and back numbers if possible. . . .

I see that the Bahais here in . . . are all split up (I am not a Bahai but am interested in all faiths). It seems that there is some dissension among the Bahais here but I do not know the reason. . . .

* * * * *

Some of the Bahai followers have on occasions told me that I had no right whatever to do any thinking for myself; that the National Spiritual Assembly would do all this for me. But as I remarked before, this idea is the very essence of hell and damnation as far as I am concerned and to bow down to such rot would be worse than death, a thousand times. How can a group of animalistic bodies and brains be a guide to any soul living in the kingdom. Why do they seek to take the place of God, and, furthermore what right have they to be greater than God, for such seemingly is their claim and desire?

* * * * *

To a certain extent you are justified in feeling the way you do. Being spiritual-minded you naturally think that the rank and file of the people should become the same way. But this is entirely beyond their power, the

animal propensities have full dominion over most of them. Even among the Bahai leaders of this time you find the main concern is simply gold and physical well being. They are not to be blamed over much because they do not know any better. They understand the work of organizing or gathering together in a crowd but the purpose for which they organize is a secondary concern with most of them. The average human has a mad desire to follow a human leader, Shoghi taking the place of a priest with many of them. Baha-O-Llah wrote often that one of the greatest failures with the human creatures was that they would not think for themselves. It is thus that we find the average Bahai follower today. . . .

Conditions are just as you have written in your magazine and some of the things that the Bahai leaders are doing are quite offensive to any person of real comprehension, but I would not venture to oppose or offend them. . . .

Shoghi is a human the same as the rest of us. . . . You must also consider that most of his impressions come to him from people who for various reasons color their communications to him and give their own particular slants and ideas. In other words, he is working under great difficulties and is able to see things only in part. . . .

Just as you write, the hodge-podge of stuff that is now given them to study is more or less clap-trap as far as the teachings of Baha-O-Llah are concerned and personally I consider it to be a lot of rot harmful to the mind of any soul. . . . As you are a free lance, it is possible for you to present the higher viewpoint of the teachings and I am sure this is just what you are

attempting to accomplish. The real acceptance of the Bahai spirit makes any soul a little sun or centre of power and these are the ones who will save the day in the end.

I really think that the vast verbosity in this so-called teaching of the Bahais originally came from legal profession in the ranks of the followers—I know some of them!!! They are always witch hunting and looking for some one to bounce out of the gathering.

* * * * *

If you confine your work to the purely spiritual phase of the Bahai teachings you can have a good effect but to try to make them (the Bahais) believe that they have no right to be organized is a waste of time. They certainly are now organized and strongly so, and will stand because it is in the nature of the earthly people to be organized.

* * * * *

I have been among the organized Bahais enough to know very well that a large number have their fingers crossed, even while associating in the ranks. Their God is not always the Bahai God.

* * * * *

I read with the greatest interest in the August issue of **THE NEW HISTORY MAGAZINE** the details of the decision, in your favor, of the Appellate Court against the *National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the U. S. and Canada.*

Again I congratulate you both on your triumph over the organized Baha'is in their attempts to restrain the followers of the Baha'i Religion from practicing their

beliefs, except through the channel of the organization of the Spiritual Assembly.

You have both rendered a great and lasting service to mankind, the effects of which will become more apparent as time passes.

Do not permit the attempts of Shoghi Effendi to black magic you (as recounted on Page 12 of the September issue of the NEW HISTORY Magazine), or affect you in the least. Such language, as he uses, belongs to the bigots of the dark ages, and not to the teachings of Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha.

* * * * *

It will give me a sense of real spiritual exaltation to be included in your list of the faithful. Seldom indeed have I encountered an occasion on which I would be so delighted to stand up and be counted as in this courageous movement inaugurated by Mirza Sohrab and yourself for the counteracting of the forces of disruption and degeneracy that has been set in motion, through a long term of years, against a noble movement, by the vain and stupid misconduct of a few misguided souls, who seem to have completely missed or forgotten the essential tenets of the Bahai Message.

I regard Sohrab's articles in New History as masterpieces of restrained but incisive arguments. They contain phrases that illumine their subjects like a flash of lightning. That a man not born to the English tongue should have produced such gems of English literature is to me nothing short of a miracle. Such articles constitute a strong confirmation of the Faith, proving that the Bahai Cause is under the special protection of the Supreme Concurrence.

Abdul Baha still lives!

* * * * *

Kindly refrain from sending your magazine "New History" and other publications to my mother. It would be better to use your postage on some one who appreciates your point of view. We do not.

* * * * *

I have had the opportunity to read several back numbers of New History, and I am so pleased to find such a marvelous magazine is in existence. In my opinion this publication will certainly establish the wonderful cause of Baha-O-Llah, firmly in the Western Hemisphere.

* * * * *

Please send with all possible haste your free literature to . . . I have had a long time with these Bahais. Like myself they have been very unhappy and bewildered in this beautiful cause and like myself they believe that you are the one who will lead us back to the teachings. . . . The world needs these teachings now, and I think that it is almost a crime that they are not widely known and correctly interpreted.

* * * * *

The literature that you promised me has just this minute arrived, and I cannot wait a second in sitting down to the typewriter and thanking you for same.

I cannot begin to tell you how happy I am. I have studied this cause for three years, and last March under pressure, I joined the Bahai Organization. But I have never been satisfied. In April, I attempted to break away and join the . . ., but this so disturbed my teachers, who had worked so hard and so lovingly with me that I did not do it. I knew too, that it would be wrong to join the . . . when I was so in love with the teachings of Abdul Baha and Baha-O-Llah. All I could

do was to simply "sit tight" and hope that I could somehow persuade my instructors and other Bahai friends to come around to my way of thinking, which seemed like an impossibility. If ever a person was unhappy and miserable, it was I.

Now that I have joined your New History Society, I feel as if I have come home after wandering in desolate and foreign lands. To be truthful with you, I have concealed the fact that I was a Bahai—yes I have been ashamed of it, but **NOW I AM PROUD** and so, so happy. Everything is going to come out all right now, I know it!

Now I am going to work for the Bahai Cause with all my heart. I am so pleased that you are a Pacifist. So am I!

* * * * *

Baha'u'llah explains in the *Iqbal* that the worst single shortcoming that the human creatures have is: "That they will not try to understand things for themselves." Always they appoint some human creature to do *all their thinking for them*. Now I ask you, friends, are the organized Baha'is of America doing anything to help their followers to overcome this greatest of all handicaps? It seems they are doing just the opposite! My wish is to point out practices that are highly injurious to the seeking souls. The pure spiritual teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha have simply gone to pot and been replaced by a system somewhat like unto dirty politics.

I have good will towards Shoghi as a fellow follower of the teachings of Baha'u'llah, but the man is young, immature and certainly liable to mistakes. He will overcome all this in time. God is a spirit and unless

we make every effort to get in touch with this Spirit—then we can never attain to a conscious realization of the nature of it. After a soul has attuned himself to the divine spirit, he comes under its guidance, which of course appears in the mind. Baha'u'llah writes in the *Ighan* that to reach to the understanding of the Spirit of God is a *step of the soul*, and is not a step of the body. Unless one will strive for the *Goal* which Baha'u'llah has marked out for us, we are just creatures running along the shores of a salty lake, getting no place and doing no act except running.

I write to so-called Baha'is and make every effort to point out the really worthwhile features in the teachings, but they all turn their backs upon it. The illuminated man who taught me said that if I were able to bring one single soul into the Kingdom, I will have accomplished the greatest deed possible in this life.

The organized Baha'is have put a checkrein on all their membership, and as far as I can perceive will not tolerate any spirituality. Prayer is a thing of the past, looked upon as something not needed or wanted. Two features only are enlarged, the worship of Shoghi and the giving of all their money to the Cause. The brains of most of the leaders simply boil if you venture to travel the spiritual pathway contrary to their desire. I realize that this is just a natural shortcoming of the natural man, a manifestation of the *carnal mind*, and we cannot place much blame on them.

I believe that the organized aspect should continue because it is suitable to a *certain type of mentality*, but I also believe that there should be an unrestricted body of the teachings open to a *much more advanced type of minds*. I believe that you are able to carry this along.

writings to be a real Bahai. . . . Have you ever read the *Surat-ul-Hykal*? It tells you in that book that many of the attained ones walk the earth and "their number is known only to God." Shoghi hopes to locate some of them but he could not recognize them even when they stood before him!

* * * * *

Your September issue of *New History* is very good indeed. Since the advent of Shoghi, the Bahai teachings have been allowed to descend to a low level—that is, as far as the spiritual teachings are concerned. This is the main reason that I can find but little in common with the membership. I surely hope that you will bring back the teachings of Abdul Baha so that they will not be entirely lost to view.

The talk is always about a *world order*, but how can a world order be established if the Bahais will not obey the teachings of Abdul Baha and Baha'u'llah? If they allow these teachings to entirely die out of their minds they will go from bad to worse. As you have said, they are training their minds to behold enemies on every hand; in other words using a very harmful line of thought which can only poison their minds. I can no longer find many Bahai followers with whom I can enjoy talking, because they do not have much interest in the original teachings and in many cases are not very familiar with them.

Does the influence of Shoghi help them to look upon their fellowmen with kindness and friendliness? It certainly does not appear so to me. A Bahai who looks out upon the world of men with suspicion certainly is a very poor grade of a Bahai. Abdul Baha has had nothing to do with this attitude. I am sure, it is not

conveyed in His teachings. Certainly there is something radically wrong at this time. Also must all followers stop thinking and understanding for themselves—they have been so commanded by the present order. Why is this so?

Far be it from me to quarrel with anyone because of a difference of opinion, but I certainly will not allow anyone to prevent me from thinking for myself, seeing for myself and understanding for myself. Life would not be worth living if this came to pass. And really I consider that all others believe the same thing deep down in their hearts.

The aim of the Bahai Cause is to bring about the unity of all mankind. God the Father, revealed by His chosen teacher, Baha'u'llah, has given us all the information that we can possibly make use of in this day. Let us begin to use some of the most important of this great teaching. The most vital is certainly to keep in mind that humanity is all one family, regardless of the defects which may appear in the human creature. Not one of them is our *ENEMY*. There are plenty of humans who have gross defects, all will admit, but we must take it for granted that this is so because they do not know or understand any better. The punishment for wrong doing is absolutely certain to follow misdeeds, and surely no man likes to suffer. The Bahai teachings tell us that after we find our way into the Kingdom we will be free from error and affliction. This is the only condition wherein the human creature may find or have any peace, either on the earth or afterwards.

"The training of the people of the country of *thought* . . ." Baha'u'llah has written in the "Words of

Wisdom"—old *Hidden Words* and *Seven Valleys*! People seldom consider that they are creatures of thought and do not try to discipline their thinking activity; just allow it to run wild without any attempt at direction and pay the penalty for all which is not good. Pure thoughts keep us in contact with the higher planes, and then the spiritual forces are always near at hand to assist us; then they are able to work through us. But when we are dominated by negative thoughts, the forces of the higher planes cannot operate through us and we can get no help from them. The only difference between the spiritual masters and the ordinary person is that the spiritual masters or divine servants have attained the power to direct their thoughts and hold them within the field to which Baha'u'llah has directed all of us. Abdul Baha said that His mind was *always* in a state of prayer. This is the key. If we wish to gain first hand knowledge of this state, then, we likewise must pray until our defective human consciousness can rise above the world of nature in which nearly all are held prisoners. When we really make an effort, someone will contact us, who really knows and understands this matter. This is explained in the Bahai teachings and can be readily found by all. This is the master key. The rest is only trimmings.

* * * * *

The November 1941 issue of *New History* is Okay. Any and all Bahai ideas will act as a leaven in the world of thought, and as God has commanded that each soul promulgate these teachings to the best of his ability, I am sure that no collection of common humans can prevent us in this work. No one can successfully corrupt the teachings, because they are all in print and

broadcast to the world. Some day the present leaders will be replaced by spiritually evolved people and then the Cause will really expand as it should.

* * * * *

The *real teacher* of any soul is the divine spirit—holy spirit, or spirit of God. Call it what you will, it is the same. Until one has made a contact with this spirit, he is unable to really comprehend spiritual subjects of any kind. There is as wide a difference between material-minded people and the spiritual-minded type, as between darkness and light. The natural forces of the material-minded person are negative, while the forces of the spiritually enlightened soul are positive. Let me offer a simile easily understood. If one grasp a soft sponge in his hand and submerge it in a basin of water, it cannot absorb its full capacity of liquid as long as it is held in a contracted condition. But as soon as the pressure of the hand is relaxed, it immediately absorbs its full capacity of water. Now, you and I and all the rest are like unto this sponge; we are all submerged in an ocean of spirit which has always existed. Some, like the whale swimming in the sea, are continually asking: "Where is this ocean they talk about so much?" Until some of this water (spirit) penetrates into our consciousness, we remain in ignorance of its existence.

After a soul reaches the highest roadway he does not have much interest in the rag-bag concerns of souls still living in that which Baha'u'llah termed *the primary existence*. After a soul has learned to absorb this "water of spiritual life" he ceases to be concerned over the quarrels of those who do not know about the *spiritual ocean*, and do not wish to know.

When you say *Baha'i*, it really does not have any par-

ticular meaning as regards the station of any soul. I meet Christians who are as highly advanced as any *Bahai could be*. They have established themselves firmly on the true pathway. The Cause of God today is in the hands of earthly minded men and women and for this reason they must be bound and ruled by an earth-like organization—they are *entirely unfit for anything else*. . . .

One word of these new teachings of God has more value to the human race than all that has gone before, and they will lead humanity to maturity. Men will master the divine art of prayer and meditation, pass through a door within themselves and behold the Kingdom of God about them. Once the spirit is able to enter the reality of any soul, they have the power to direct it where they desire. Then, they are servants, and the ones Baha'u'llah writes about in the Surat-ul-Hyakal. The modern Baha'is dislike these people very much, because a divine servant is the killer of the human ego; it cannot function while exposed to positive spiritual power. As long as you promote the religion of Baha'u'llah, nothing can stop you.

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Jerusalem, Palestine

Sept. 7, 1941

For three years I had the pleasure and the honour to share the work of the "New History Society." At the time being I am enjoying the great privilege of defending its founders against attacks. The 2 clippings enclosed originate from the only newspaper in this country that is being printed in English. You may believe me that my reply was written more fully and

BAHA'I VERSUS BAHA'I

Supreme Court in N.Y. Dismisses Suit

HAIFA — A suit brought by the organized Baha'is in the U.S.A. against a Baha'i group in New York calling itself the New History Society was dismissed by the Supreme Court in New York recently.

The organized Baha'i sect complained that the unorganized Baha'is were giving the erroneous impression that they were authoritative Baha'is by conducting — what purported to be Baha'i meetings, lectures, classes and social gatherings. They also solicited contributions through the use of the name of Baha'is and listed the Baha'i Bookshop in the telephone directory over the name of the Baha'i Centre which is the office and bookshop of the organized Baha'is.

The Court held that "the complaint fails to state a good cause of action. The plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion." The ruling then dealt in detail with the complaints brought against the New History Society and pointed out that the defendants had the absolute right to practice Baha'ism.

With this ruling, the New History Movement has launched an intensive propaganda campaign both in the United States and abroad.

Concord and Harmony

The Central seat of the organized Baha'is is Haifa, the home of Shoghi Effendi, who is the recognized "Guardian of the Baha'i Faith" and a direct descendant (grandson) of the founder of the religion, the sage Baha'u'llah who died in Acre in 1892. In the words of Shoghi Effendi, "the Revelation proclaimed by Baha'u'llah, his followers believe, is divine in origin, all-embracing in scope, broad in its outlook, scientific in its method, humanitar-

ian in its principles and dynamic in the influence it exerts on the hearts and minds of men. The Baha'i Faith recognizes the unity of God and of His Prophets, upholds the principle of an unfettered search after the truth, condemns all forms of superstition and prejudice, teaches that the fundamental purpose of religion is to promote concord and harmony, that it must go hand-in-hand with science and that it constitutes the sole and ultimate basis of a peaceful, an ordered and progressive society."

Asked about the "New History Movement" Shoghi Effendi informed *The Palestine Post* that the "Movement" was started by a Persian named Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, supported by funds provided by Mrs. Julie Chanler of New York. The main difference between Sohrab and the Baha'is was rooted in a conflict with the Baha'i administration and, according to Shoghi Effendi, the "Movement" had no support in the U.S.A. except that of Mrs. Chanler and a few isolated followers.

From Cook to Divine

The career of Sohrab, who is about fifty years old, was described as that of an ambitious self-made man. He was formerly a servant of Shoghi Effendi's uncle in Port Said, and was later sent to America as the cook of Mirza Abu Faz, one of the Baha'i teachers. Later he went to Hollywood, where he wrote cinema scenarios.

According to Shoghi Effendi, the New History Movement, started by Sohrab, abused the Baha'i name, and to stop this, the suit was brought against him and Mrs. Chanler.

The dismissal of the suit by the Court, it was stated, has been appealed.

NEW HISTORY SOCIETY

To the Editor of The Palestine Post

Sir, - Please permit us to add somewhat to your information on the 'New History Society' in New York referred to in your issue of August 22, under the heading 'Bahai vs. Bahai', in which the amazing statement was made that this movement had 'no support in the U.S.A. except Mrs. Chanler and a few isolated followers'.

Anyone who knows the work of this Society, as we, the undersigned, who frequently heard the Society's speakers at the crowded 'Caravan Hall', will know that this statement is inaccurate. Among these speakers have been some of the most prominent personalities of American religious, scientific and political life. Among lecturers you could have heard there were Albert Einstein, Norman Thomas, a former German M.P., Gerhard Seger, who escaped from a German concentration camp, and John O'Neill, scientific editor of the 'Herald-Tribune'.

During the past ten years the 'New History Society' has gained a world-wide reputation as a forum open to all working for the betterment of human relationships. It has friends and followers all over the world.

The biographical data on the founder of the Society, Mirza Ahmed Sohrab, is likewise inaccurate and the description 'From Cook to Divine' is accurate concerning neither his origins nor his career. Sohrab came of an aristocratic Bahai family in Persia, and graduated at the Imperial University in Teheran. In 1908 he was sent to Washington as interpreter to Mirza Abdul Fazi by the Bahai leader Abdul Baha, and it is not particularly relevant whether he also cooked for him or not. Later Sohrab served for some time as Secretary to the Minister at the Persian Legation in Washington. From 1912 to 1918 he was closely associated with Abdul Baha and became a member of his household at Acre.

In 1929 Sohrab founded the 'New History Society' with the support of Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler and Mr. Chanler, a great-grandson of John Jacob Astor and former Lieut.-Governor of the State of New York.

The importance of Sohrab as a religious thinker is fully appreciated in the U.S.A. by such outstanding religious leaders of Christian, Jewish and Moslem communities as the Rev. Eliot White, Rabbi Louis I. Newman and Dr. Edward J. Uurji, who gave him their support for his work 'The Bible of Mankind'.

Yours etc.

Mrs. Erna Straus

H. W. Loewenthal

Jerusalem Sept. 2

Reply by Mrs. Erna Straus and Mr. H. W. Loewenthal to article dated August 22, 1941, in 'Palestine Post.'

detailed. The editor, however, shortened it. Maybe this was a necessity. . . .

Next month I shall be speaking on the "Bible of Mankind" in the best bookshop of the city.

Erna Straus.

* * * * *

I have received your magazine and the article published in Palestine Post. It is astonishing. The article *stupefied me and stopped my brain from thinking*, my heart from breathing. I was paralyzed. I could not believe my eyes in reading such false statements! . . .

The statement that Shoghi Effendi made to the Palestine Post regarding Ahmad Sohrab is not based on his knowledge. I am sure of that; for he, by his own free will, will never stoop to make such a statement, that The New History Society has no support. . . .

I believe that Shoghi Effendi is not told the truth. I do not believe that Shoghi Effendi will do anything contrary to the teachings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha. . . .

The Guardian does not know the true facts and therefore he believes in what is being written to him by the National Spiritual Assembly. He should come to America; that is, if they let him out and do not keep him a prisoner. Then he can see and hear everything with his own eyes and ears. So far as I am concerned I am ready to offer up my life to Baha-O-Llah, Abdul Baha and Shoghi Effendi, and I am sorry that he puts so much confidence in the National Spiritual Assembly. . . .

I have known Sohrab for many years and I have found him trustworthy, honest. If Mrs. Julie Chanler has seen in Sohrab the good that others were blind to;

and if she, being spiritual and full of love for the Cause, discovered the same qualities in him—then blessed be the pure in heart, for they shall inherit the kingdom. . . .

Well, maybe, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly will become the substitutes for Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha and in time, if possible, they will push out the Guardian. It seems the Cause is in danger. The newcomers do not realize this, for they have not lived in the glorious days of the Master. The old believers are discarded, in order that they may not inform the new ones.

* * * * *

Your magazine and writings are instructive and interesting to an unbiased mind. I was saddened to read the Palestine Post and I was dumbfounded at such foolish statements. I know that God would right the wrongs done to his true and sincere servants. He will not forsake those that love him. I put my trust in him. I cannot believe that Shoghi Effendi would stoop to misrepresent and humiliate you. I am sorry to see that the Guardian places such confidence in the National Spiritual Assembly and yet he cannot see that they are undermining him by misinforming him regarding the true facts.

I can clearly see why they instituted this lawsuit. This false propaganda was hatched by the bosses in the National Spiritual Assembly to discredit Shoghi Effendi, in order that the true and well-informed Bahais may rise against him on account of his making such a statement about you. The Guardian is well-informed regarding your services to Abdul Baha. You were with him for many years, serving as secretary and interpre-

would make such a statement. If he did, it would be *contrary* to the wishes of the Master who appointed him in his Will and Testament as the Guardian of the Cause and also guardian of every individual believer. He should uphold and protect them impartially and without any favoritism. If he failed in doing this and neglects the rights of one believer, because of slander and calumny, then he has failed to carry out the wishes of the Great Masters.

I still believe the guardian is not guilty.

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FOREIGN COMMUNICATIONS

England.

Am so glad your law case is satisfactorily ended—that is *another* *shackle* loosened in the fight against those who want to pin down truth with the limitations of human minds. Truth can only be itself when it is free as the winds to express the divine urge of the moment.

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England.

You are doing a great work and I am tremendously pleased by the very satisfactory decision of Justice Louis A. Valente. This constitutes another milestone in the journey to freedom and true civilization: and truly makes *New History*.

I will shortly be submitting to you an article for publication in the monthly, showing how the Unitarians in England ensure freedom of worship while they build and establish churches to worship in. I feel sure it will interest you.

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Canada.

I am just now in receipt of the April issue of *New History* and learn for the first time of the division in the Bahai ranks. I am very much interested in knowing this, as I can now whole-heartedly express my sympathy for, and participate in your kindly and inspiring movement, knowing that it is broad and liberal and leaves me quite free to also join in other liberal and humanitarian causes.

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Australia.

Last week, I received the monthly publication of your society together with printed copy of ruling Justice Louis A. Valente has recorded upon your momentous case at Law, which has such farflung results for people allied to your Cause. Need I, a veritable Bushman far from the seething chiaroscuro of New York, comment upon a verdict so close to your heart?

This would be idle, for my part; but I may at least offer *sincere felicitations* to those who, with you, have suffered so long torture.

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Australia.

Your two recent publications have reached my hand together with reproductions of press cuttings announcing the award of civil justice in favor of Mrs. Chanler and your society.

The decisions are momentous in your New York life and circle of adherents, so that, while I am unable to comment fittingly, I can assure you personally that I esteem the spirit which impels you to resist the impositions of greater organizations upon you and at the

same time find space for "outsiders" like myself in so wide an outer circle of the inhabited world.

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Sweden.

You can imagine my joy when I read your news about the jurisdiction of your process with the Bahai Administration.

It is very indicative that, even in this time, when only rough force and falsehood everywhere is winning ground, your case still could find JUSTICE.

I think your efforts in writing so very detailed about the Bahai movement *en grande*, and with your authority, as a man who lived so close to Abdul Baha many years, had its good effect and the Justice could really see and feel WHERE TRUTH is to be found.

The old history is repeating itself always, and after the passing away of the Master, the disciples, in most cases, are tempted to create a NEW CHURCH, and to be themselves the new chosen bishops.

You are surely not one of them, this I felt since I first read your paper and accepted that *New History Society* is not going to start a *new religion* and you not the *bishop* of it.

Freedom is the condition *sine qua non* of Love and also for a true RELIGION, and I feel so well you are the real GUARD of this Freedom and do not try to create new dogmas and fix anything.

* * * * *

Guatemala.

I have received your magazines and I was very surprised to read all these things which happen between The Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United

States of America and Canada and you; it is ridiculous and absurd, because between real, true, sincere and spiritual people, these things never hapen; much less taking it to the court. In my humble point of view, all this only proves to me once more the kind of people who call themselves spiritual; and they are not. The Truth and God has nothing to do with all those societies which only exploit the ignorance of the people. There is only One Truth, veracity and verity, and it is not limited by a group nor by any organization or any orders. There is Only One Lord, and One Law. But what most of the societies do, is business and they are based on interest created. They don't do what they say, and they call themselves spiritual, and brothers, only by name, but not in facts. I don't believe in them, only I believe in the Truth, and what I see they do. I say it of any societies, by the fruit you know the tree, by the facts you know the man, so don't worry for what they may say, because if you live a real and true life you are on the way to the Great Truth, and you will help others, without those societies who are only exploiting the *ignorance of the people*. The Truth is in you, the Light is in you too, but you must look into yourself deeply, and you will find it in yourself.

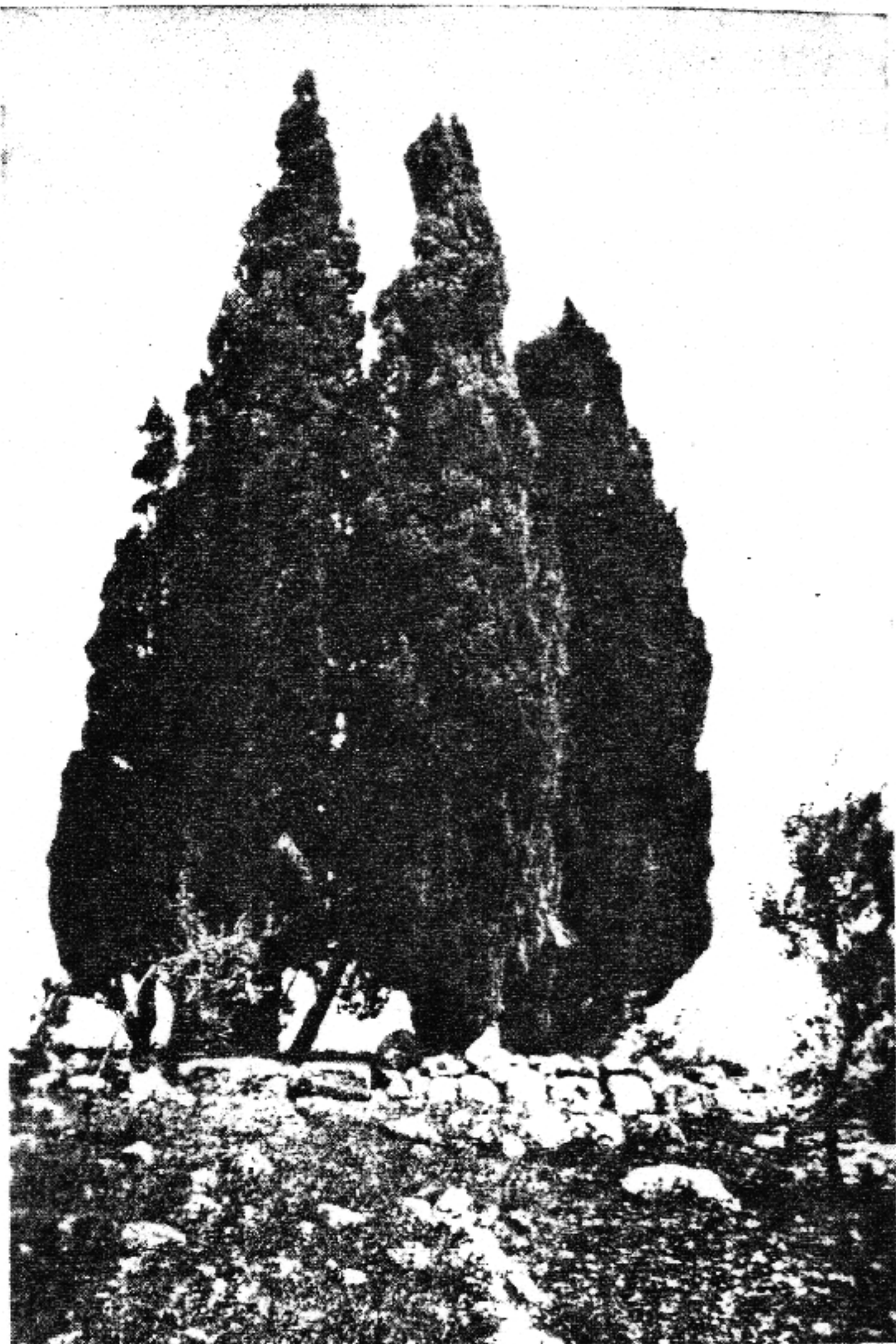
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Haiti.

We note in your last issue of your magazine that you will be willing to remove from your list the names of those who do not wish to appear thereon.

Will you kindly remove our names and we thank you for this favor.

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Cluster of cypress trees on the slope of Mount Carmel, in the shade of which some of their great teachings were first given to the world by Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha.

Calabar, Nigeria, West Africa.

I thank God that the Cause through His justice is made free from the thralldom of limited minds in the National Spiritual Assembly and the Supreme Court of New York County decided the case in your favor. May God who is the very Cause of New History take upon Himself all the affairs!

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Palestine.

I wanted to answer your kind letter immediately in order to tell you that I feel awfully sorry that your activity—I am admiring so much—got you into trouble, initiated by Bahai Organization. I really cannot understand this. It is evident they do not understand the Cause at all. If they did, they simply could not act like this. But I doubt, they will ever go to court. It would be too ridiculous.

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Palestine.

I am watching your discussion with the Bahai Organization with great interest; disagreeable as it may seem to you, it is instructive to the observer. It seems so difficult to mankind to behold great ideas in their genuine purity.

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Philippine Islands.

I noticed in one of the *New History* copies, April 1940, an article *Regarding the Trade-mark*. It was of great interest to me. Ever this play of opposites! When a constructive movement is launched upon the world, pushing forward, right beside it—in its wake rather—rises, and wrathfully so, its opposite. . . . In fact, the

cause of Baha-O-Llah thrives on these opposite stirrings—to a great extent, dont you think? As we say in English: "Persecute a thing if you want it to live."

* * * * *

Tokyo, Japan.

I thank you for the printed sheet which brought the news of your victory in the court. I congratulate you and your colleagues! Indeed, it is said that those days would mean the end of the world when religion would be set for sale! In other words, an age ends and another starts when the spiritual belief is so much degraded that it becomes just a commodity to make profit! I hope, this trade in religion ends, and that a New Era starts, making heaven of this earth. Let us do out duty in the great transformation.

* * * * *

India.

The attitude of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada is deplorable; yet one may pour one's blessings and sympathies on those misled brothers and sisters who are mentioned, no doubt under provocation, as sorcerers, necromancers, etc., in the statement. They will need a great help and prolonged guidance before they can turn back from the path which they are unfortunately treading.

* * * * *

India.

It was with great relief and joy that I read your notice of the outcome of the long controversy. I have waited so far, preferring to wait till the allotted ten (I believe it was ten) days had elapsed and I might have other news from you; but I cannot wait longer to hear. I am

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 1941

Court Rules Against Monopoly Of the Name of Any Religion

Justice Valente Rejects Suit of Organized Baha'is Against Baha'i Group Headed by Persian Poet; Says Purported Members Can Practice Faith

Justice Louis A. Valente ruled yesterday in Supreme Court that no one had a right to monopolize the name of a religion and that followers of a religion could not be restrained from practicing their beliefs because of the objections of organized practitioners of the same faith.

Justice Valente's decision dismissed a complaint brought by organized Baha'is, who brought suit as members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the United States and Canada, and members of the Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is in New York, against Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Persian poet, who is director of the New History Society, and his group.

The organized Baha'is contended that they were the truly authorized followers of Baha-O-Llah, Persian prophet who founded an order nearly a century ago with international peace as its principal aim. They asserted that Mr. Sohrab's group was conveying an erroneous impression to the public by conducting meetings, lectures and other activities in a bona fide Baha'i setting and soliciting contributions as organized Baha'is.

Moreover, the so-called authorized Baha'is complained that the others opened a book store under the name of Bahai (without the apostrophe) Book Shop, and that the listing of the shop in the telephone directory was immediately over that of the Baha'i Center, the office and book shop of the organized Baha'is.

Justice Valente held, however, that "in the court's opinion, the complaint fails to state a good cause of action."

"The plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion," his opinion continued. "The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an

equal right to use the name of the religion in connection with their own meetings, lectures and other activities.

"No facts are alleged in the complaint to indicate that the defendants have been guilty of any act intended or calculated to deceive the public into believing that their meetings, lectures or book shop are identified or affiliated with the meetings, lectures and book shop of the plaintiff."

Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, wife of the former Lieutenant Governor of New York under Charles Evans Hughes, and founder and sponsor of the New History Society, said last night that Justice Valente's decision "upholds our guarantee of religious freedom." Mrs. Chanler formed the society after she broke with the organized Baha'is twelve years ago.

"Mr. Sohrab and I started our group after we parted from the other Baha'is on good terms," Mrs. Chanler explained. "We broke away because we felt that they were limiting the movement. But time was short and we felt that the world should hear the principles laid down by Baha-O-Llah."

Mrs. Chanler expanded on her theme, saying that according to the teachings of Baha-O-Llah, "there shouldn't be any organization." However, she added, "Americans love organizations, and little by little the teachings of Baha-O-Llah were being restricted to a choice few." Baha-O-Llah, she said, espoused the principle of "unity pervading all things."

Mrs. Chanler also explained that the organized Baha'is took out a trademark on the name "Baha'i," but that she felt that Baha'is "should not be restricted by a trademark."

The organized Baha'is have ten days to serve an amended complaint.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 1941

Monopoly on Name Denied to Baha'i Group

Can't Keep Religion From Rivals, Court Rules, Dismissing Complaint

In a decision handed down in the Supreme Court today Justice A. Valente ruled that he could not grant a monopoly of the name of a religion. He also held that he couldn't stop anyone from practicing a religion merely because the organized practitioners of the religion objected.

The decision delighted Mrs. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanled, the society woman who has been a leader of a group of Baha'i followers in New York and a sponsor of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, a Persian poet, who inspired her to take up the work.

'Erroneous Impression.'

Justice Valente's decision dismissed a complaint brought against Mr. Sohrab and his group, which was a little formal organization, by the organized Baha'is, who sued as members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Trustees of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada in the Spiritual Assembly of Baha's of the City of New York.

The organized Baha'is complained that the unorganized Baha'is were giving an erroneous impression that they were authoritative Baha'is by conducting what purported to be Baha's meetings, lectures, classes, social gatherings, etc., by soliciting contributions with use of the Baha'i name and by listing the Baha'i Book Shop in the telephone book directory over the name of the Baha'i Center, which is the office and book shop of the organized Baha'is.

Equal Rights Upheld.

"In the court's opinion," said Justice Valente, "the complaint

fails to state a good cause of action. The plaintiffs have no right to a monopoly of the name of a religion.

"The defendants, who purport to be members of the same religion, have an equal right to use the name of the religion in connection with their own meetings, lectures, classes and other activities. No facts are alleged in the complaint to indicate that the defendants have been guilty of any act intended or calculated to deceive the public into believing that their meetings, lectures or book shop are identified with the meetings, lectures, etc., and the book shop of the plaintiffs.

Listing Doesn't Enter.

"Defendants have the absolute right to practice Baha'ism, to conduct meetings, collect funds and sell literature in connection therewith, and to conduct a book shop under the title 'Baha'i Book Shop.'"

As far as the listing of the book shop in the telephone directory was concerned, the justice said, that was merely an alphabetical and not a legal matter, for it was a well accepted fact that the letter "B" preceded the letter "C" in the alphabet and therefore the telephone company was quite right in listing the "Baha'i Book Shop" ahead of the "Baha'i Center."



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