

The Seeds Are Tended 1922–1944

Shoghi Effendi

Original English



The Seeds Are Tended 1922–1944

Letter of 5 March 1922¹

Dear Fellow-workers in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh,

It is with words of regret and disappointment that I desire to open this letter because of my inability, in view of my manifold and pressing duties, to respond individually and in writing to the many messages of love and sympathy and of hope that you have so affectionately sent me since our Beloved's passing from this World. I am sure I am voicing the sentiments of the bereaved ladies of the Household when I say that however desirous we may be to correspond separately with every one of you, the grave responsibilities and manifold duties now devolved upon us make it regrettably impossible to express in written messages to every friend what we constantly feel in our hearts, and pray for when visiting His sacred Shrine.

At this grave and momentous period through which the Cause of God in conformity with the Divine Wisdom is passing, it is the sacred duty of every one of us to endeavour to realise the full significance of this Hour of Transition, and then to make a supreme resolve to arise steadfastly for the fulfilment of our sacred obligations.

Great as is the love and paternal care which our beloved Master is extending to us from on High, and unique as is the Spirit that animates today His servants in the world, yet a great deal will depend upon the character and efforts of His loved ones on whom now rests the responsibility of carrying on His work gloriously after Him. How great is the need at this moment when the promised outpourings of His grace are ready to be extended to every soul, for us all to form a broad vision of the mission of the Cause to mankind, and to do all in our power to spread it throughout the world. The eyes of the world, now that the sublime Personality of the Master has been removed from this visible plane, are turned with eager anticipation to us who are named after His name, and on whom rests primarily the responsibility to keep burning the torch that He has lit in this world. How keenly I feel at this challenging hour in the history of the Cause the need for a firm and definite determination to subordinate all our personal likings, our local interests, to the interests and requirements of the Cause of God! Now is the time to set aside, nay, to forget altogether, minor considerations regarding our internal relationships, and to present a solid united front to the world animated by no other desire but to serve and propagate His Cause.

1. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration." (See para. 3, page xvii.)



ORIGINAL

It is my firm conviction which I now express with all sincerity and candour, that the dignity and unity of the Cause urgently demands — particularly throughout the American continent — that the friends should in their words and conduct emphasise and give absolute prominence to the constructive dynamic principles of Bahá'u'lláh, rather than attach undue importance to His negative Teachings. With hearts cleansed from the least trace of suspicion and filled with hope and faith in what the spirit of love can achieve, we must one and all endeavour at this moment to forget past impressions, and with absolute goodwill and genuine co-operation unite in deepening and diffusing the spirit of love and service that the Cause has thus far so remarkably shown to the world. To this 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 groups of individuals, is it advisable to make the matter public; for an untimely declaration that shall give rise to open differences among the friends is far more detrimental than forbearing still further with those who are suspected of evil intentions. As the Master so fully and consistently did throughout His lifetime, we must all make a supreme effort to pour out a genuine spirit of kindness and hopeful love to peoples of various creeds and classes, and must abstain from all provocative language that may impede the effect of what true and continued kindness can produce.

Does not 'Abdu'l-Bahá wish us, as He looks down upon us with loving expectation from His glorious Station, to obliterate as much as possible all traces of censure, of conflicting discussions, of cooling remarks, of petty unnecessary observations that impede the onward march of the Cause, that damp the zeal of the firm believer and detract from the sublimity of the Bahá'í Cause in the eyes of the inquirer? 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 to the Holy Land for further consideration and consultation.

This clearly places heavy responsibilities on the local as well as national Assemblies, which in the course of time will evolve, with the Master's power and guidance, into the local and national Houses of Justice. Hence the vital necessity of having a local Spiritual Assembly in every locality where the number of adult declared believers exceeds nine, and of making provision for the indirect election of a Body that shall adequately represent the interests of all the friends and Assemblies throughout the American Continent.

A perusal of some of the words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the duties and functions of the Spiritual Assemblies in every land (later to be designated as the local Houses of Justice), emphatically reveals the sacredness of their nature, the wide scope of their activity, and the grave responsibility which rests upon them.

Addressing the members of the Spiritual Assembly in Chicago, the Master reveals the following: — “Whenever ye enter the council-chamber, recite this prayer with a heart throbbing with the love of God and a tongue purified from all but His remembrance, that the All-powerful may graciously aid you to achieve supreme victory: — ‘O God, my God! We are servants of Thine that have turned with devotion to Thy Holy Face, that have detached ourselves from all beside Thee in this glorious Day. We have gathered in this spiritual assembly, united in our views and thoughts, with our purposes harmonised to exalt Thy Word amidst mankind. O Lord, our God! Make us the signs of Thy Divine Guidance, the Standards of Thy exalted Faith amongst men, servants to Thy mighty Covenant. O Thou our Lord Most High! Manifestations of Thy Divine Unity in Thine Abhá Kingdom, and resplendent stars shining upon all regions. Lord! Aid us to become seas surging with the billows of Thy wondrous Grace, streams flowing from Thy all-glorious Heights, goodly fruits upon the Tree of Thy heavenly Cause, trees waving through the breezes of Thy Bounty in Thy celestial Vineyard. O God! Make our souls dependent upon the Verses of Thy Divine Unity, our hearts cheered with the outpourings of Thy Grace, that we may unite even as the waves of one sea and become merged together as the rays of Thine effulgent Light; that our thoughts, our views, our feelings may become as one reality, manifesting the spirit of union throughout the world. Thou art the Gracious, the Bountiful, the Bestower, the Almighty, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”

In the Most Holy Book is revealed: — “The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Bahá, and should it exceed this number it does not matter. It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly. Thus hath the Lord your God commanded you. Beware lest ye put away that which is clearly revealed in His Tablet. Fear God, O ye that perceive.”

Furthermore, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reveals the following: — “It is incumbent upon every one not to take any step without consulting the Spiritual Assembly, and they must assuredly obey with heart and soul its bidding and be submissive unto it, that things may be properly ordered and well arranged. Otherwise every person will act independently and after his own judgment, will follow his own desire, and do harm to the Cause.”

“The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. Should they be graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them. In this day, assemblies of consultation are of the greatest importance and a vital necessity. Obedience unto them is essential and obligatory. The members thereof must take counsel together in such wise that no occasion for ill-feeling or discord may arise. This can be attained when every member expresseth with absolute freedom

his own opinion and setteth forth his argument. Should any one oppose, he must on no account feel hurt for not until matters are fully discussed can the right way be revealed. The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions. If after discussion, a decision be carried unanimously well and good; but if, the Lord forbid, differences of opinion should arise, a majority of voices must prevail."

Enumerating the obligations incumbent upon the members of consulting councils, the Beloved reveals the following: — "The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly free from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden. Should harmony of thought and absolute unity be non-existent, that gathering shall be dispersed and that assembly be brought to naught. The second condition: — They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden. The honoured members must with all freedom express their own thoughts, and it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth, and should differences of opinion arise a majority of voices must prevail, and all must obey and submit to the majority. It is again not permitted that any one of the honoured members object to or censure, whether in or out of the meeting, any decision arrived at previously, though that decision be not right, for such criticism would prevent any decision from being enforced. In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is light, and should the least trace of estrangement prevail the result shall be darkness upon darkness.... If this be so regarded, that Assembly shall be of God, but otherwise it shall lead to coolness and alienation that proceed from the Evil One. Discussions must all be confined to spiritual matters that pertain to the training of souls, the instruction of children, the relief of the poor, the help of the feeble throughout all classes in the world, kindness to all peoples, the diffusion of the fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Holy Word. Should they endeavour to fulfil these conditions the Grace of the Holy Spirit shall be vouchsafed unto them, and that assembly shall become the centre of the Divine blessings, the hosts of Divine confirmation shall come to their aid, and they shall day by day receive a new effusion of Spirit."

So great is the importance and so supreme is the authority of these assemblies that once 'Abdu'l-Bahá after having Himself and in His own handwriting corrected the translation made into Arabic of the *Iṣhráqát* (the Effulgences) by Ṣhayḵ Faraj, a Kurdish friend from Cairo, directed him in a Tablet to submit the above-named translation to the Spiritual Assembly of Cairo, that he may seek from them before publication their approval and consent. These are His very words in that Tablet: — "His honour, Ṣhayḵ Faraju'lláh, has here rendered into Arabic with greatest care the *Iṣhráqát* and yet I have told him that he must submit his version to the Spiritual Assembly of Egypt, and I have conditioned its publication upon the approval of the above-named Assembly. This is so that things may be arranged in an orderly manner, for should it not be so any one may translate a certain Tablet and print and circulate it on his own account. Even a non-believer might undertake such work, and thus cause confusion and disorder. If it be

conditioned, however, upon the approval of the Spiritual Assembly, a translation prepared, printed and circulated by a non-believer will have no recognition whatever.”

This is indeed a clear indication of the Master’s express desire that nothing whatever should be given to the public by any individual among the friends, unless fully considered and approved by the Spiritual Assembly in his locality; and if this (as is undoubtedly the case) is a matter that pertains to the general interest of the Cause in that land, then it is incumbent upon the Spiritual Assembly to submit it to the consideration and approval of the national body representing all the various local assemblies. 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. (By national affairs is not meant matters that are political in their character, for the friends of God the world over are strictly forbidden to meddle with political affairs in any way whatever, but rather things that affect the spiritual activities of the body of the friends in that land).

Full harmony, however, as well as co-operation among the various local assemblies and the members themselves, and particularly between each assembly and the national body, is of the utmost importance, for upon it depends the unity of the Cause of God, the solidarity of the friends, the full, speedy and efficient working of the spiritual activities of His loved ones.

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 Bahá’í organ, the matter of publication, or reprinting Bahá’í literature and its distribution among the various assemblies, the means whereby the teaching campaign may be stimulated and maintained, the work of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, the racial question in relation to the Cause, the matter of receiving Orientals and associating 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.

The time is indeed ripe for the manifold activities, wherein the servants and handmaidens of Bahá’u’lláh are so devoutly and earnestly engaged, to be harmonised and conducted with unity, co-operation and efficiency, that the effect of such a combined and systematised effort, through which an All-powerful Spirit is steadily pouring, may transcend every other achievement of the past, however glorious it has been, and may stand, now that, to the eyes of the outside world the glorious Person of the Master is no more, a convincing testimony of the potency of His everliving Spirit.

Your brother and co-worker in His Cause,
Shoghi

Letter of 16 December 1922

To my spiritual brethren and sisters in Great Britain.
Care of the members of the Spiritual Council.²

My dearest brethren and sisters in the faith of God!

May I at the very outset of this, my very first letter to you, convey to your hearts in words, however inadequate but assuredly deeply felt and sincere, a measure of my burning impatience, during my days of retirement, to return speedily and join hands with you in the great work of consolidation that awaits every earnest believer in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Now that happily I feel myself restored to a position where I can take up with continuity and vigour the threads of my manifold duties, the bitterness of every disappointment felt, time and again, in the course of the past weary months at my feeling of unpreparedness, have been merged in the sweetness of the present hour, when I realise that spiritually and bodily I am better equipped to shoulder the responsibilities of the Cause. The thought, so often comforting and sustaining, that in the counsels of my British co-workers of that land, I shall find spontaneous and undiminished support as well as wise and experienced assistance, is surely one of those forces which will hearten me in the midst of my future labours for the Cause.

That in every one of you our departed Master reposed His future and truest hopes for an able and convincing presentation of the Cause to the outside world, is abundantly revealed in His spoken and written words to you, as well as in His general references to the spirit of sincerity, of tenacity and devotion that animates His friends of that land.

The fierce tests that have raged over that island in the past; the calm and determination with which they have been so bravely faced and surmounted; the seeds of loving fellowship that the Beloved in person has more than once scattered in its soil; the rise, as its result, of a few but indeed capable, reliable, devoted and experienced followers and admirers of the Cause; the splendid and in many instances unique opportunities that are yours — these indeed are cherished thoughts for a land that illumines its past and should cheer its future.

I need hardly tell you how grateful and gratified I felt when I heard the news of the actual formation of a National Council whose main object is to guide, co-ordinate and harmonise the various activities of the friends, and when I learned of its satisfactory composition, its harmonious procedure and the splendid work it is achieving.

My earnest prayer is that the blessing of the Almighty may rest upon all its deliberations, that it may be divinely guided, inspired in its work, may smooth speedily and definitely all differences that may arise, may promote the all-important work of Teaching, may widen the sphere of its correspondence and exchange of news with the distant parts of the Bahá'í world, may secure through its publications a dignified and proper presentation of the Cause to the enlightened public, and may in every other respect prove itself capable of distinct and worthy achievements.

² Mr. G. P. Simpson (see block b.4) was elected Chairman.

With abiding affection and renewed vigour I shall now await the joyful tidings of the progress of the Cause and the extension of your activities, and will spare no effort in sharing with the faithful, here and in other lands, the welcome news of the progressive march of the Cause and the unceasing labours of our British friends for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Your
Shoghi

brother,

Letter of 23 December 1922

To my beloved brethren and sisters throughout Great Britain.
Care of the members of the Bahá'í Council.

Dearest Friends,

I have during the last few days been waiting eagerly for the first written messages of my Western friends, sent to me since they have learned of my return to the Holy Land. How great was the joy when dear Miss Rosenberg's³ letter — the very first that reached me from the West — was handed to me this evening, bearing the joyful news of the safety, the unity and the happiness of my British friends across the seas! I read it and re-read it with particular pleasure and felt a thrill of delight at the welcome news of the harmonious and efficient functioning of your Spiritual Assembly.

I very sincerely hope that now that I have fully re-entered upon my task, I may be enabled to offer my humble share of assistance and advice in the all-important work which is now before you. I fervently pray to God that the field of your activities may go on expanding, that your zeal and efforts may never diminish, and that new souls, active, able and sincere, may soon join with you in bearing aloft the Glorious Standard of the Cause in that land...

Ere long, an able and experienced teacher recently arrived from Persia will visit your shores and will, I trust, by his thorough knowledge of the Cause, his wide experience, his fluency, his ardour and his devotion, reanimate every drooping spirit and inspire the active worker to make fresh and determined efforts for the deepening as well as the spreading of the Movement in those regions. His forthcoming book, which he has patiently and laboriously written on the history of the Movement and which has been partly revised by the Pen of our Beloved Master is beyond any doubt the most graphic, the most reliable and comprehensive of its kind in all Bahá'í literature. I am sure he will considerably enrich the store of your knowledge of the various phases and stages of the Bahá'í Movement. Our beloved Dr. Esslemont will, I trust, be particularly pleased to meet him, as he is eminently qualified to offer him valuable help in connection with various aspects of his (Dr. Esslemont's) book. I am enclosing various suggestions of Mr. Dreyfus-Barney and of Mr. Roy Wilhelm made by them at my request, during their last sojourn in the Holy Land. I submit them to Dr. Esslemont's consideration as well as to that of the Spiritual Assembly. I very deeply regret my inability to give the attention I desire to this admirable work of his, but will assuredly do all in my power to aid him in the final stages of his work. I am certain however that the book as it now stands gives the finest and most effective presentation of the various aspects of the Cause to the mind of the Oriental as well as to that of

³. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. IV, p. 263.)

the Westerner. May it arouse a genuine and widespread interest in the Cause throughout the world.

I am now starting correspondence with every Bahá'í local centre throughout the East and will not fail to instruct and urge the believers everywhere to send directly through their respective spiritual local Assemblies the joyful tidings of the progress of the Cause, in the form of regular detailed reports, to the various assemblies of their spiritual brethren and sisters in the West. England, I am confident, will regularly and consistently receive, directly, and indirectly through the "Star of the West" and the "Bahá'í News" of India, a large share of such tidings from Persia, Caucasus, Turkestan, India, Turkey and Mesopotamia, North Africa and Egypt. It would be most gratifying and encouraging to all earnest workers for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh if every now and then a report on the spiritual activities of the friends in Great Britain, as well as articles on spiritual matters, would be submitted for publication to the above-mentioned periodicals. It would, I feel very strongly, react very favourably on the Cause in England, and would serve to draw closer the ties that bind all spiritual centres together at the present time.

I would be pleased and grateful if the members of the Spiritual Assembly would at any time inform me of their needs, wants and desires, their plans and activities, that I may through my prayers and brotherly assistance contribute, however meagrely, to the success of their glorious mission in this world.

To my extreme regret, I feel unable in view of my manifold and pressing duties, and owing to the extraordinary extension of the Movement in recent times, to correspond with the friends individually and express to them in writing what I always feel in the depth of my heart of brotherly affection and abiding gratitude for their love and sympathy for me. I shall, however, await with eager expectation their individual letters and assure them of my readiness and wish to be of any service to them in their work for the Cause.

Remembering every one of you in these hallowed surroundings and fervently praying at the three sacred Thresholds that the blessings of the Lord may rest upon your individual and collective efforts,

I am as ever your devoted brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 17 February 1923

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout London, Manchester and Bournemouth.
Care of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.⁴

Dearest brethren and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá,

4.

The letters that I have recently received from the friends in London and Manchester have been to me a source of great hope and encouragement, and have served to strengthen the ties that bind me to my dearly-beloved friends in that great country.

I am much pleased and gratified to hear of the wonderful progress of the work of our able and devoted brother, Jináb-i-'Avárih, and my earnest hope and prayer is that he may, by his zeal, patience, experience and knowledge, set ablaze the fire that the Master has kindled in the heart of that land.

The supreme necessity, and the urgent need of the Cause of God at present, is the unity of the friends, and their sustained and wholehearted co-operation in their task of spreading the Divine Teachings throughout the world. It is the sacred duty of all believers to have implicit confidence in, and support heartily, every decision passed by their Spiritual Assemblies, whether local or central; and the members of these Assemblies must, on their part, set aside their own inclinations, personal interests, likes and dislikes, and regard only the welfare of the Cause and the well-being of the friends. This is surely the foundation which must be firmly laid in the hearts of all believers the world over, for upon this only can any constructive and permanent service be achieved, and the edifice of the Beloved's last instructions, as revealed in His Will and Testament, be raised and established.

The all-conquering Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh cannot prove effective in this world of strife and turmoil, and cannot achieve its purpose for mankind, unless we, who are named after His Name, and who are the recipients of His Grace, endeavour, by our example, our daily life and our dealings with our fellow-men, to reveal that noble spirit of love and self-sacrifice of which the world stands in need at present.

I have been reading lately some of the oldest Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and am enclosing for your perusal the translation of various selections from His soul-stirring words, revealed some twenty-five years ago, during the darkest days of His incarceration in the prison city of 'Akká. You will realise as you read them the unshakable confidence of the Master in the future growth of the Movement, the significance of the Cause in this age, and the glorious privilege of the friends to labour for its spread in every land.

I am enclosing also my revised translation of the Hidden Words, both Persian and Arabic, a copy of which I have sent to the friends in the United States in response to their cable, requesting me to authorise circulation of my version among the friends in America.

I have recently received a message from our beloved brethren and sisters in Germany, who, in the midst of their sufferings and trials, yearn to receive a word of sympathy and comfort from their fellow-workers in France and England. I am sure you will gladly respond to their request, and cheer them with the glad-tidings of the wonderful progress of the Cause in your land and elsewhere.

I am always looking forward to receiving your letters and hear from you personally in all matters pertaining to the Cause. It is my earnest prayer whenever I visit the Sacred Shrines, that the friends in England may be always protected, guided and blessed in their work of service to the

Cause, and may soon witness the fulfilment of the glorious promises of the Master regarding the future of that land and the spiritual re-awakening of its people.

Your brother and fellow-worker,
Shoghi

Letter of 24 February 1923

Dear Spiritual Brother,

Your letter to Shoghi Effendi has been received and was read by him with keen delight and satisfaction for it bespoke of the new spirit of ardent devotion that has enkindled the hearts of the faithful followers of Bahá, and of their loyal and active endeavours in the path of service. Should the friends continue in their labours of love and service their activities will yield glorious results and they shall witness the realisation of the promises of the Beloved regarding the spiritual achievements of the friends in that land.

Shoghi Effendi is highly gratified and encouraged to know that the friends have carried out so efficiently his directions regarding the establishment of National and local Spiritual Assemblies; and he feels confident that the co-ordinated and unified efforts of its members, blessed by the unflinching assistance and guidance of the Beloved Master, will mark the dawn of a new era of spiritual activity and enlightenment.

He is very pleased to know that you are faithfully working for peace and harmony amongst the friends; and he prays that you may be blessed in your endeavours and be inspired and guided to clear all misunderstandings that may arise; and may help bring about that spirit of unity which is so essential to the life and growth of the Cause. There is no doubt that difficulties will always arise; but if met in the spirit of earnest and selfless devotion and purity of motive all problems will be solved and we shall emerge from every difficulty spiritually stronger and wiser.

Shoghi Effendi wishes to extend to you his thanks for your giving him the report of the activities of the friends there. He will soon write a letter to the Assembly based on their report. He wishes you to rest assured that his thoughts and prayers are with you wishing you all success in your labours for the promulgation of the Blessed Cause.

Although unable to write individual letters he will gladly welcome all letters that you will send him in the future..

Letter of 29 November 1923

To the members of the English National Spiritual Assembly

My dearly-beloved fellow-workers in the Vineyard of God!

I am in receipt of your letter dated Nov. 17th 1923, and forwarded to me by our active and devoted brother, Mr. Simpson. I have read it with the utmost pleasure and satisfaction. I feel happy and encouraged to learn that those few, yet earnest and promising, servants of

Bahá'u'lláh in that land are, despite the vicissitudes and obstacles that confront the rapid rise of the Movement, wholeheartedly striving and co-operating for the fulfilment of His divine Promise.

You, surely, have laid a firm foundation for the future development of the Cause in those regions, and my hope is that the National Assembly of Great Britain may, by full, frequent, and anxious consultation, protect the Cause, maintain and promote harmony amongst the friends, and initiate and execute ways and means for the diffusion of its spirit and the promotion of its principles.

I welcome with keen and genuine satisfaction the active participation of our beloved sister, Mrs. Thornburgh-Cropper, in the affairs of the Cause, and feel confident that her wisdom, her experience, her influence, and her unparalleled opportunities for the service of the Movement will pave the way for the wholesome growth of the Cause in that land.

I am sure you all realise the seemingly unsurmountable difficulties in the way of individual correspondence with the ever-increasing multitude of Bahá'ís throughout the world, and I need hardly tell you how tremendously difficult it is, and how reluctant I feel, to discriminate at all between the many letters of varying importance which I daily receive from almost every corner of the globe. Realising however that direct and intimate individual correspondence, in some form or other, is most urgent and vital to the interests of the Cause, I am, I assure you, giving it these days again my careful and undivided attention, and pray God that to this problem may soon be found a satisfactory and feasible solution. In the meantime, I wish to emphasise the fact that I eagerly await, and would welcome, and would assuredly have time to peruse, most carefully and in person, every individual letter you may wish to send me, and my readiness and wish to attend, in the very best way I can, to every matter raised in those letters. No written message, however unimportant, will first be opened and read by any one save myself.

Regarding the proposed conference on "Living Religions within the British Empire", I feel that such a great opportunity for the Movement should not be neglected, and I am glad to know that it has been seized by the members of the National Assembly, and is being closely examined by them. I would welcome further particulars as to who has conceived the idea, under whose auspices it will be conducted, and whether it is being supported by government authorities, and what conditions are imposed on its proceedings. I am discussing the matter with some of the Bahá'í representatives of India and America as to what friends would be most competent to represent the Cause at this conference. I shall communicate on this subject with the National Assemblies of India and America, and will inform you immediately I receive definite information from them.

As to the raising of funds to provide for the expenses of the Bahá'í representatives, I am sure the friends in England will find in the National Assemblies of India and America and in myself ready and generous supporters of a step that will undoubtedly prove of immediate and universal value for the ultimate recognition of the Cause by the world.

It is my ardent prayer that we may all be inspired to adopt the most effective measures for the successful achievement of this great undertaking.

I was much impressed by the charm and force of Major Moore's article, published recently in T. P. Cassell's weekly, and I would much desire to know whether his action was spontaneous, or whether he was urged or requested by someone to write it. I strongly urge the friends, and particularly the members of the National Assembly, to do all in their power to make of this able and highly-minded admirer of the Cause, a zealous and true Bahá'í. I am looking forward with keen anticipation to his spiritual development and his taking a more active part in the affairs of the Cause.

I am enclosing for the friends recent translations of the wonderful prophetic utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, and I trust you will find them of great value in your work of teaching and spreading the Cause.

Awaiting eagerly your letters, individually as well as collectively,

I am your brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 9 December 1923

My dear Mr. Simpson,

Your short yet encouraging letter was gladly received by our dear Shoghi Effendi just yesterday evening. He felt very pleased indeed with that spirit of hopefulness which your letter conveyed, and he eagerly hopes that in the days to come nothing will mar the brightness and optimism of his English brethren and sisters over in the West.

Your references to the commemoration meeting held in London, brought back with all its painful sadness recollections of that one night. In a calm and quiet night, brightened by the silvery rays of the moon, gathered 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sorrow-stricken faithful ones, to commemorate the night of His last farewell. On the cistern by the Tomb sat His fervent servants; below them flickered the dying lights of Haifa, and above head shown in full magnificence the star bespangled heavens. It was in the mid-watches of such a night that with sorrow and fervour the servants turned unto their dear Master so near and yet so far away; and with a deep feeling of that bitter loss they supplicated help and guidance from their Lord. A word or two from Shoghi Effendi made them feel the Master nigh, and made them realise as never before that it was only in following in His steps, and in living the life that He had, that we can prove our faithfulness to our Master's Cause. It was indeed a night of meditation and prayer and we missed you all so much.

We are receiving encouraging news from almost everywhere, such as Italy, Germany, China and Australia; and as you will have them more fully in the circulars of the Spiritual Assembly, I had hardly need make mention of them here.

Shoghi Effendi's earnest hopes in England are very great, and I am sure that the sincere and true-hearted efforts of his fellow-workers, will spread the principles of this great Revelation as never before. Hard though it be to get access to the more intellectual circles in England, he firmly believes that through persistence, the obstacles will be soon overcome and they, with

their own accord, will welcome you in their midst, turning a sympathetic ear to all that you have to share with them. May these high hopes be realised...

[From the Guardian:]

My beloved brother,

My deepest admiration for your indefatigable exertions for the success of the Cause. I will always remember you in my prayers and await eagerly your personal letters. I welcome any suggestions and further particulars regarding the conference on the Living Religions within the British Empire.

Your
Shoghi

brother,

Letter of 6 January 1924

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your letter of Dec. 23rd furnishing necessary information concerning the Conference on Religions arrived and made our dear Guardian highly pleased and delighted.

As he has quite recently written to the friends in England, he has instructed me to answer your letter and inform you that he has written and directed the National Spiritual Assembly of America to have a comprehensive article written by the ablest pen among the American friends — to be excellent both in style and in representation.

After this essay is written, it will be sent to our dear Shoghi Effendi who will send it to your N.S. Assembly for your perusal and consideration. You will add your remarks and suggestions and return it to him for final approval.

Shoghi Effendi is also thinking of selecting someone among the Indian friends to represent India. This Conference and a worthy and dignified representation of the Holy Cause therein, are under his serious consideration. We hope that through his wise instruction and powerful prayers your activities in this respect will be crowned with glorious success and that it will be known to the public that the Cause is not a movement collateral with other movements such as the Brahma Somaj or Ahmadi movements.

Here at the Holy Shrine of our Beloved we remember all the dear friends in England and supplicate humbly for their happiness.

Shoghi Effendi is sending you his love and affection together with his deep appreciation towards your noble labours and sacrificial efforts in the service of the Holy Cause...

[From the Guardian:]

My dear friend,

I enclose a copy of my recent letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of America regarding the Conference as well as copies of my recent translation of some of the most remarkable and prophetic utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá which might interest the friends in Great Britain. Pray convey my love to all of them.

Shoghi

Letter of 4 January 1924 (Enclosure)

To the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

My dearest friends!

On Nov. 28th I received the following communication from the President of the National Spiritual Assembly of Great Britain!

"I have now to bring to your notice, though possibly you are already aware of it, a matter which is of the first importance in the opinion of the National Spiritual Assembly as you will see from one of the paragraphs of the enclosed minutes of its first meeting, which was held on October 13th. So far the programme of the conference on the 'Living Religions within the British Empire' is in a somewhat nebulous condition, but I have ascertained from Miss Sharples, the honorary secretary of the committee of organisation, that the conference has been approved by the authorities of the British Empire Exhibition, 1924 and will last for ten days, covering the last week of the month of September and the first three days of October. It is proposed that all religions taught and practised throughout the British Empire shall be represented at the conference, including the Christians, Muhammadans, Buddhists, Brahma Somaj, Theosophists and others, and that each one in turn shall have at its disposal a day or part of a day for a meeting to expound its principles and deal with its organisation and objects."

In their last letter, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Great Britain further inform me that the idea of the above-mentioned conference has originated with the Theosophical Society, but these having later dropped its management the organisation of the conference passed into the hands of the School of Oriental Studies and the Sociological Society. You will also note from the enclosed copy of a letter addressed by the same Miss Sharples to the President of the British National Spiritual Assembly that the time offered to the Bahá'í representatives will be very limited, and that most probably the allotted time will be just sufficient to read their papers or deliver their address and engage in the discussion that might arise after their formal presentation of the Cause.

As the British Empire Exhibition, of which this conference forms a part, is itself a semi-official undertaking, and receives actually the generous support and active participation of the government authorities throughout the British Empire, I feel that the opportunities now offered to the Bahá'í world should not be missed, as this chance, if properly utilised, might arouse and stimulate widespread interest among the enlightened public.

As so much will depend upon the nature and general presentation of the theme, rather than upon the personality of the reader or speaker, I feel that first and foremost our attention should

be concentrated on the choice and thorough preparation of the subject matter as well as on the proper drafting and the form of the paper itself, which might possibly have to be submitted afterwards to the authorities of the conference.

I feel the necessity of entrusting this highly important and delicate task to a special committee, to be appointed most carefully by the National Spiritual Assembly of America, and consisting of those who by their knowledge of the Cause, their experience in matters of publicity, and particularly by their power of expression and beauty of style will be qualified to produce a befitting statement on the unique history of the Movement as well as its lofty principles.

I am enclosing an article on the Bahá'í Movement which I trust might serve as a basis and example of the paper in question. An account of the most salient features of the history of the Cause, a brief but impressive reference to its many heroes and martyrs, a convincing and comprehensive presentation of the basic principles, and a characteristic survey of the Master's life, as well as a short but graphic description of the present position and influence of the Movement both in the East and the West, should, in my opinion, be included and combined into one conclusive argument. Its length should not surpass that of the enclosed article, and its general tone, expression and language should be at once dignified, sober and forceful.

The greatest care and caution must be exercised in choosing those who can best provide and fulfil the above-mentioned requisites and conditions.

I shall be most pleased to offer my views and suggestions once the paper has assumed its final shape, and wish you to obtain the assistance and advice of those whom you think able to judge amongst the friends in England and elsewhere.

Mr. Simpson, the President of the British National Spiritual Assembly, writes that Miss Grand from Canada has suggested the names of Dr. Watson and Mr. J. O. McCarthy of Toronto to represent the Canadian Bahá'ís. I would be pleased to receive your views as to who should represent Canada at the Conference. India is the only other country within the British Empire that can send a native Bahá'í representative to the conference, and it is rather unfortunate that the United States of America should have to be excluded, as the speakers at the conference must necessarily be subjects of the British Empire.

I am enclosing recent translations of the prophetic and most remarkable words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá which I trust you will all find of great value and interest in the great work you are doing for the Cause.

May this great project yield an abundant harvest for the Cause, and your efforts be richly blessed by the guiding Spirit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Your
Shoghi

fellow-worker,

Letter of 18 January 1924

My dear Mr. Simpson,

Shoghi Effendi was glad to hear from you again and hopes that the activities of the friends in England are progressing day after day. There is really so much to be done in almost every country that the more the friends accomplish, the larger does the field of service become. As a matter of fact in many countries we can hardly claim to have fully represented the Cause and to have declared its strong and sublime principles to all classes of men. It is with a vision of greater accomplishments among higher and higher circles of society, that our Guardian wishes his fellow-workers to feel inspired; and in these dark and dismal days it is the proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh's great Message for which the faithful servant must strive with heart and soul.

Concerning the sum which Shoghi Effendi has sent to the National Assembly as a personal gift; he would like to inform you that in case you feel in great need of funds for the activities of the Cause in England, you might take from the sum which he sent you, and at the time of the Exposition Shoghi Effendi might be able to help you in case you cannot collect the necessary expense. Shoghi Effendi attaches great hopes to the activities of the friends in London, and may they some day be realised.

The copies of the "Hidden Words" you had published were received and Shoghi Effendi thinks that they are quite well printed. He is glad that he can share these comforting thoughts from Bahá'u'lláh with his brothers and sisters in the West...

[From the Guardian:]

My dear fellow-worker,

I always look forward with keen anticipation to any news from England indicating the progress and advancement of the Cause so dear to our hearts. I pray ardently for every one of you and assure you personally of my affection, esteem and gratitude,

Your
Shoghi

brother,

Letter of 6 February 1924

My dear Mr. Simpson,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter to our dear Guardian and assure you that he is always most glad to hear from you in person and to know still more of the activities of his fellow-workers in that country. At a time when the whole work and administration of the Cause with all its overpowering intensity and extent has devolved upon the shoulders of our youthful Guardian, I am sure you quite well realise what every single expression of the progress of the Cause he stands for would mean to him as our leader and captain; and at a time when the varied questions and problems that the Bahá'í Movement, on its way to the spiritual reconquest of the world, is confronted with, seem endless in number, I hardly need mention what effect the personal assurance and the undying enthusiasm of his fellow-workers would bear upon the tender heart of Shoghi Effendi.

Concerning the passing away of Mr. Hall's father, he wishes me to ask you to extend to him a full measure of his grief at the bereavement of such a radiant brother as Mr. Hall, although he briefly conveyed his sentiments to him through a short telegram. He was, however, quite pleased with Mr. Hall's work and the measure of success which he has met with. He shared this good news with his friends here with a view to inspire all to action. You should assure Mr. Hall that the deep sense of love and gratitude that Shoghi Effendi feels toward him is perhaps too great for me to put into words, but I feel that the success which he has attained is an ample proof of Shoghi Effendi's ardent prayers for him.

[From the Guardian:]

My esteemed brother: —

Just a word of appreciation on my part of your devoted and persistent efforts in the service of the Cause. Do please convey to our precious Mr. Hall my condolences and sentiments of undying affection as well as the assurance of my ardent prayers for the welfare and spiritual happiness of his dear family and the Manchester Bahá'í Group.

Shoghi

Letter of 11 June 1924

To Mr. Simpson, President of the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly of England.

My dear and revered Bahá'í Brother,

As I do not have your address with me I am writing and forwarding this to you through our dear brother, Mr. Asgarzadeh.⁵ Some time ago I received a letter addressed to our beloved Guardian from Miss Mabel M. Sharples, the Hon. Secretary of the Conference on Living Religions within the Empire, giving him some information concerning the time of the Conference, and conditions covering the submission of papers to be read at the Conference. I forwarded this letter to our beloved Shoghi Effendi.

Yesterday I received a letter from him instructing me to answer in his behalf Miss Sharples' letter. Yesterday I answered her letter and told her that Shoghi Effendi hopes to be able to attend the Conference and deliver an address on the Cause in person and in case circumstances prevent him from doing so, a paper will be sent to the Conference through Mr. Simpson, the President of the Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly, to be read on that occasion. I told her also that we will appreciate any further information or suggestion she thinks necessary in regard to this matter. This information or suggestion will be communicated by her to your National Spiritual Assembly.

This morning a cablegram was communicated by the Greatest Holy Leaf to Mr. Roy Wilhelm in New York, instructing the committee in charge of the desired article to hasten its despatch. This article should be handed towards the end of July. The time is short. If the American friends have already sent that article, I mean if it is on the way, and we receive it in time, we shall immediately

5. He passed away in Jersey in April 1956. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XIII, p. 881.)

forward it to our dear Shoghi Effendi for his approval and then mail it to you. If it, however, arrives late, we will directly mail it to you so that you may modify it if necessary and hand it over to the Secretary of the Conference. In the latter case, it is not necessary to submit it to Shoghi Effendi for his approval, for he authorises you, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly to make any correction which you think advisable.

Shoghi Effendi has also instructed me to enclose a cheque for thirty pounds in this letter as contribution towards the Conference. If the English friends are to add something to this sum and offer it to the Conference, it will be highly appreciated by Shoghi Effendi.

The cheque is drawn by the Anglo-Palestine Bank at Haifa on the Jewish Colonial Trust, London, payable to your order. It is dated June 15th and No. F077834/34224. Today we received the answer to our cablegram to Mr. Wilhelm, stating that the article was mailed on the 11th, both to Haifa and England and that Mr. Mills would gladly act at the Conference.

As we understand Mr. Mountfort Mills may go from America to England at the time of the Conference. Shoghi Effendi will be very glad, if Mr. Mills read the Paper. This desire of Shoghi Effendi was also mentioned in to-day's cablegram which was communicated to Mr. Wilhelm.

Through the many cablegrams and letters which have arrived from different centres of the Cause, promising the maintenance of harmony, union and love among the dear friends, the grief and sorrow of our beloved Guardian has been greatly lightened and so we have great hope that when the hot season of the Holy Land is over, we will have the pleasure and joy of his return.

The members of the Holy Family are all sending you and your dear co-workers their tender love and assure you of their ardent prayers at the Holy Shrines in your behalf. They are always awaiting heart-refreshing glad tidings from you. My humble greeting and warm love to yourself and the dear friends too.

Your humble brother and co-worker in His service,

(Enclosure)

Bahíyyih K̄hánum, Haifa

Article mailed eleventh both Haifa London gladly act conference.

Mills

Letter of 16 July 1924

My dear Bahá'í Brother,

...I have to write you and inform you that only yesterday I had the privilege of receiving a letter from our dear Guardian who is still away from Haifa ... he wishes me to write you, in answer to

your letter to him, that he very much regrets to be unable to be present in London and represent a Cause to which he has ... dedicated his heart and soul. Were it at all possible for me to send you his short note, you would see for yourself with what a spirit he expresses his deep regret.... Although he realises your disappointment at his inability to go to London, he wishes me to assure every one of you that his eager prayers for you all is unflinching and that it is with a glad heart that he cherishes the fondest hopes in the effort that the proceedings of the religious Conference shall have on the audience. May I also add that this is a hope in which everybody shares especially the Greatest Holy Leaf and the members of the family.

I presume by now you have already received a copy of the address that is to be read...

You might be interested to know that the news of the progress of the Cause among the Kadiani sect in India is quite surprising and two of their chief leaders have not only become Bahá'ís, but have started an admirable little weekly, I think, through which they hope to bring many of their colleagues over. By the way, I believe the leader of the sect who is himself a young man is coming over to London to represent his sect at the Conference.

The confusion and disorder in Persia which had aroused so much apprehension on the part of the helpless Bahá'ís and had even led in one case to actual martyrdom, has apparently subsided for the moment.

Here in Haifa everybody is in good health. With heartfelt greetings to all the friends in London....

Letter of 23 September 1924

May Wembley (Sic conference) fulfil your fondest hopes pray convey authorities my sincere regret at inability to be present I wish them full success in their noble endeavours.

Shoghi

Letter of 24 September 1924

The beloved of the Lord and the hand-maids of the Merciful in Great Britain.

Care of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Dear Friends,

I return to the Holy Land with an overpowering sense of the gravity of the spiritual state of the Cause in the world. Much as I deplore the disturbing effect of my forced and repeated withdrawals from the field of service, I can unhesitatingly assure you that my last and momentous step was taken with extreme reluctance and only after mature and anxious reflection as to the best way to safeguard the interests of a precious Cause.

My prolonged absence, my utter inaction should not, however, be solely attributed to certain external manifestations of unharmony, of discontent and disloyalty — however paralysing their

effect has been upon the continuance of my work — but also to my own unworthiness and to my imperfections and frailties.

I venture to request you to join me in yet another prayer, this time more ardent and universal than before, supplicating with one voice the gracious Master to overlook our weaknesses and failings, to make us worthier and braver children of His own.

Humanity, through suffering and turmoil, is swiftly moving on towards its destiny; if we be loiterers, if we fail to play our part surely others will be called upon to take up our task as ministers to the crying needs of this afflicted world.

Not by the force of numbers, not by the mere exposition of a set of new and noble principles, not by an organised campaign of teaching — no matter how worldwide and elaborate in its character — not even by the staunchness of our faith or the exaltation of our enthusiasm, can we ultimately hope to vindicate in the eyes of a critical and sceptical age the supreme claim of the Abhá Revelation. One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely, the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendour of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Looking back upon those sullen days of my retirement, bitter with feelings of anxiety and gloom, I can recall with appreciation and gratitude those unmistakable evidences of your affection and steadfast zeal which I have received from time to time, and which have served to relieve in no small measure the burden that weighed so heavily upon my heart.

I can well imagine the degree of uneasiness, nay of affliction, that must have agitated the mind and soul of every loving and loyal servant of the Beloved during these long months of suspense and distressing silence. But I assure you such remarkable solicitude as you have shown for the protection of His Cause, such tenacity of faith and unceasing activity as you have displayed for its promotion, cannot but in the end be abundantly rewarded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who from His station above is the sure witness of all that you have endured and suffered for Him.

And now as I look into the future, I hope to see the friends at all times, in every land, and of every shade of thought and character, voluntarily and joyously rallying round their local and in particular their national centres of activity, upholding and promoting their interests with complete unanimity and contentment, with perfect understanding, genuine enthusiasm, and sustained vigour. This indeed is the one joy and yearning of my life, for it is the fountain-head from which all future blessings will flow, the broad foundation upon which the security of the Divine Edifice must ultimately rest. May we not hope that now at last the dawn of a brighter day is breaking upon our beloved Cause?

Shoghi

Letter of 10 October 1924

My dear good brother,

Your letter of Sept. 30th written to our beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, arrived and rejoiced his dear heart with its very interesting contents.

Yesterday he instructed me to translate a great part of it into Persian so that it may be inserted in the circular of the Haifa Spiritual Assembly and also to convey to you his great affection for you and the dear English friends who so splendidly laboured towards the dignified representation of the Cause of God at the Conference on Religions.

We have already the reports given in "The Times" from the two sessions of the Conference allotted to the Ahmadiyyih people and to us. Both are very interesting indeed....

Shoghi Effendi prays for the success and confirmation of you and all the dear and noble English friends whose earnestness of efforts towards the welfare of the Cause of God he highly admires and appreciates with profound love....

Letter of 10 October 1924

My dearly-beloved brother,

I am highly gratified with your splendid achievements and deeply appreciative of your painstaking efforts. More power to your elbow! You are rendering our precious Cause a splendid service in its hour of need! Lady Blomfield's⁶ idea of a reception was undoubtedly inspired and was admirably executed. It has indeed rejoiced my heart. My love and my gratitude for her wise, patient and fruitful efforts.

Your
Shoghi

brother,

Letter of 25 October 1924

My dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your very interesting letter of Oct. 15th. written to our beloved Guardian together with the printed copy of the sermon of Dr. Walsh arrived the day before yesterday and imparted great joy to his dear heart. He cherishes great hopes for the bright future of the Cause in England. Of

⁶. Born in Ireland of a fearless Protestant mother and a strong Roman Catholic father, she understood from an early age the tragedy of religious intolerance which led her to search for Truth until she found the Bahá'í Revelation. She was held in high esteem in the London society of the late "nineties" but she herself was always looking for the Promised One. She was a great friend and admirer of Basil Wilberforce, Archdeacon of Westminster. Not only did she place her home in Cadogan Gardens at the disposal of the Master during His London visits but she accompanied Him to Paris. While He was in America she went to Mount Pelerin, in Switzerland, to edit the rough notes of "Paris Talks", had them sent to Him for correction and had the book published in time for His second visit when He signed and gave away many copies. She accompanied Shoghi Effendi when he returned to Haifa after the passing of the Master and wrote the letter which was later published as "The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá". She was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly for eight of its first eleven years. She passed away on the last day of 1939 and a remarkably fine obituary in the magazine "The World's Children" of March 1940 was headed "Lady Blomfield — Apostle of World Unity".

course his hopes are partly based on the intrinsic mighty power of the Cause of God and partly on the dignified way the dear friends in England are presenting the Cause of God to the public.

Yesterday afternoon he instructed me to write this informing you of the safe arrival of your letter and assure you that he appreciates with great love your distinguished services to the Cause of God. He prays at the Holy Shrines that fresh confirmations may reach you from the Abhá Kingdom day by day so that you may have material comfort and spiritual success. He is sure that the holy spirit of our beloved Lord, 'Abdu'l-Bahá is watching over you and guiding your steps in life.

The members of the Holy Family and the friends in Haifa are thinking of you and the other dear friends in England with love and admiration, joining all in prayers for your happiness.

[From the Guardian:]

My dearest friend,

I wish to add a few words of assurance and sympathy in view of the heavy burden of responsibility that rests on your shoulders in these difficult and trying times. My fervent and increasing prayer is that 'Abdu'l-Bahá may show you the way that will enable you to continue your splendid pioneer work effectually, peacefully, free from every earthly care and anxiety. Dr. Walsh's sermon is astonishingly good. I wish you would send me about 50 copies of the same. I pray unceasingly for my friends in England.

Shoghi

Letter of 4 November 1924

My dear Mr. Simpson,

It is always a pleasure to acknowledge receipt of your letters to our dear Guardian, and he was deeply interested in the minutes of the last meeting of the N.S.A. which you were so kind as to enclose.

Your own letter, however, brought up a very interesting and vital question in regard to the future progress of the Cause in England, especially now that through the efforts of you all the spread of the Bahá'í Movement has been well placed on the road to our ultimate victory. Now is the time to take all necessary measures against a slacking in our pace and it is truly unfortunate that just when the individual endeavours of every single member is most needed and necessary, age and earthly cares deprive us of some of our experienced and able co-workers. It would, I believe, be a great service if just as few as possible could manage to deny themselves of the joy and enthusiasm of serving as noble a Cause.

I am sure it would interest you to know that Mr. and Mrs. Mills are now in Haifa and all that they have to say proves well the energy and efforts of the London friends. We already have about ten pilgrims and are expecting some more. I suppose Dr. Esslemont who would have much to tell us and whose arrival Shoghi Effendi is eagerly awaiting, is among those who will soon arrive....

[From the Guardian:]

My dear fellow-worker,

I trust that the prolonged visit of Dr. Esslemont will prove to be in future pregnant with far-reaching possibilities for the service of the Cause in England. To yourself I send my imperishable love and brotherly greetings.

Affectionately,
Shoghi

Letter of 22 November 1924

My dear Mr. Simpson,

The letter you had sent through Dr. Esslemont to Shoghi Effendi has arrived and it gave him very great pleasure to read it. Although it is quite beyond me to express to you just what thoughts and sentiments your frank expressions of loyalty and love aroused in his heart, this I feel I can assure you that it made him hopeful of the future and added to his great confidence in you.

The Bahá'í Cause has a great mission to the people of England but the field of service though immensely vast presents innumerable difficulties, and it needs the able hand of a staunch and true Bahá'í primarily and the dexterity of a good supervisor, to overcome every confronting difficulty and to carry His Message to millions of people. This responsibility has been entrusted to you by the guided decision of the Bahá'ís in England and our Guardian finds great pleasure in confiding the same duty in you and in endorsing the happy decision of the friends there.

In regard to your contemplated withdrawal from the presidency of the N.S.A. and the London Assembly, it made him very happy to know that even the thought of it has totally vanished. The hopes that he cherished in you are far too many to permit you a more quiet part in Bahá'í activities in England, and the hopeful signs of progress in the past year has made the prospects of the coming year very bright and it all depends upon the efforts of the friends in England and the guidance of our Master from on high just how bright it shall turn out to be.

We still have Mr. Mills with us in Haifa and I assure you, we miss you very much. The photograph you had sent to Shoghi Effendi has been received and it shall be framed and placed in the Persian Pilgrim House...

...just of late we had the very sad news of the martyrdom of a Bahá'í woman expecting to be soon a mother, and although she was related to very influential officers in the army, nothing could make the criminals, who sought refuge in the house of one of the Mullas, arrested. Though such cases of untold carnage prove with much more force than mere words just what the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh infused into every such Bahá'í has been, and exactly what it means in Persia to try and become one, the horrors of such a murder are truly beyond words. All that we have to do is to seek His Grace and to beg and implore for God's mercy.

May I also write a further assurance of Shoghi Effendi's reliance upon you and with an expression of his heartfelt love for you....

[From the Guardian:]

My most precious fellow-worker,

But for your unremitting labours, your sound and selfless efforts, the burden that weighs upon me would prove well-nigh unbearable. I am sure your heart responds to the sentiments that surge in my heart. I have a profound admiration for the heroic manner in which you are rendering such pioneer service to the Cause in England. May the Master sustain you, comfort you and uphold you in your great task. Be assured of my brotherly, unflinching prayers.

I am your true and affectionate brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 24 November 1924

To my dearly beloved brothers and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
Care of the English National Spiritual Assembly.

Dearest friends!

The day is drawing near when for the third time we shall commemorate the world over the passing of our well-beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá. May we not pause for a moment, and gather our thoughts? How has it fared with us, His little band of followers, since that day? Whither are we now marching, what has been our achievement?

We have but to turn our eyes to the world without to realise the fierceness and the magnitude of the forces of darkness that are struggling with the dawning light of the Abhá Revelation. Nations, though exhausted and disillusioned, have seemingly begun to cherish anew the spirit of revenge, of domination, and strife. Peoples, convulsed by economic upheavals, are slowly drifting into two great opposing camps with all their menace of social chaos, class hatreds, and world-wide ruin. Races, alienated more than ever before, are filled with mistrust, humiliation and fear, and seem to prepare themselves for a fresh and fateful encounter. Creeds and religions, caught in this whirlpool of conflict and passion, appear to gaze with impotence and despair at this spectacle of increasing turmoil.

Such is the plight of mankind three years after the passing of Him from Whose lips fell unceasingly the sure message of a fast-approaching Divine salvation. Are we by our thoughts, our words, our deeds, whether individually or collectively, preparing the way? Are we hastening the advent of the Day He so often foretold?

None can deny that the flame of faith and love which His mighty hand kindled in many hearts has, despite our bereavement, continued to burn as brightly and steadily as ever before. 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? What greater perseverance and fortitude than that which His tried and trusted friends have shown in the face of untold calamities, intolerable oppression, and incredible restrictions? Such staunchness of faith, such an unsullied love, such magnificent loyalty, such

heroic constancy, such noble courage, however unprecedented and laudable in themselves, cannot alone lead us to the final and complete triumph of such a great Cause. Not until the dynamic love we cherish for Him is sufficiently reflected in its power and purity in all our dealings with our fellowmen, however remotely connected and humble in origin, can we hope to exalt in the eyes of a self-seeking world the genuineness of the all-conquering love of God. Not until we live ourselves the life of a true Bahá'í can we hope to demonstrate the creative and transforming potency of the Faith we profess. Nothing but the abundance of our actions, nothing but the purity of our lives and the integrity of our character, can in the last resort establish our claim that the Bahá'í spirit is in this day the sole agency that can translate a long cherished ideal into an enduring achievement.

With this vision clearly set before us, and fortified by the knowledge of the gracious aid of Bahá'u'lláh and the repeated assurances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, let us first strive to live the life and then arise with one heart, one mind, one voice, to reinforce our numbers and achieve our end. Let us recall, and seek on this sad occasion the comfort of the last wishes of our departed yet ever watchful Master:

"It behoveth them not to rest for a moment, neither to seek repose. They must disperse themselves in every land, pass by every clime, and travel throughout all regions. Bestirred, without rest, and steadfast to the end, they must raise in every land the triumphal cry, Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá! (O Thou the Glory of Glories)... The disciples of Christ forgot themselves and all earthly things, forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion, and with absolute detachment scattered far and wide and engaged in calling the peoples of the world to the divine guidance; till at last they made the world another world, illumined the surface of the earth, and even to their last hour proved self-sacrificing in the pathway of that beloved one of God. Finally in various lands they suffered glorious martyrdom. Let them that are men of action follow in their footsteps!"

Having grasped the significance of these words, having obtained a clear understanding of the true character of our mission, the methods to adopt, the course to pursue, and having attained sufficiently that individual regeneration — the essential requisite of teaching — let us arise to teach His Cause with righteousness, conviction, understanding and vigour. Let this be the paramount and most urgent duty of every Bahá'í. Let us make it the dominating passion of our life. Let us scatter to the uttermost corners of the earth; sacrifice our personal interests, comforts, tastes and pleasures; mingle with the divers kindreds and peoples of the world; familiarise ourselves with their manners, traditions, thoughts and customs; arouse, stimulate and maintain universal interest in the Movement, and at the same time endeavour by all the means in our power, by concentrated and persistent attention, to enlist the unreserved allegiance and the active support of the more hopeful and receptive among our hearers. Let us too bear in mind the example which our beloved Master has clearly set before us. Wise and tactful in His approach, wakeful and attentive in His early intercourse, broad and liberal in all His public utterances, cautious and gradual in the unfolding of the essential verities of the Cause, passionate in His appeal yet sober in argument, confident in tone, unswerving in conviction, dignified in His manners — such were the distinguishing features of our Beloved's noble presentation of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

If we all choose to tread faithfully His path, surely the day is not far distant when our beloved Cause will have emerged from the inevitable obscurity of a young and struggling Faith into the broad daylight of universal recognition. This is our duty, our first obligation. Therein lies the secret of the success of the Cause we love so well. Therein lies the hope, the salvation of mankind. Are we fully conscious of our responsibilities? Do we realise the urgency, the sacredness, the immensity, the glory of our task?

I entreat you, dear friends, to continue, nay, to redouble your efforts, to keep your vision clear, your hopes undimmed, your determination unshaken, so that the power of God within us may fill the world with all its glory.

In this fervent plea joins me the Greatest Holy Leaf. Though chagrined in the evening of her life at the sorrowful tales of repression in Persia, she still turns with the deepest longings of her heart to your land where freedom reigns, eager and expectant to behold, ere she is called away, the signs of the universal triumph of the Cause she loves so dearly.

Shoghi

Letter of 13 February 1925

"I have read with the deepest pleasure the Minutes of the meeting of your National Assembly and am deeply gratified to note the constancy, devotion and thoroughness with which you are conducting your affairs." (Copied from National Spiritual Assembly Minutes, 28 February 1925)

Letter of 26 March 1925

My dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your interesting letter of March 12th written to our beloved Guardian together with the draft minutes of the 12th meeting of your National Spiritual Assembly has been received. The draft on Haifa for the sum of thirty-three pounds sterling which is the joint contribution of the English friends for the relief of their suffering brothers at Nayríz, and enclosed in your letter, has also been received. This sum has been added to contributions received from other centres and will be sent by next mail to the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia. From Persia they shall acknowledge the receipt of this sum directly and for the present, our Guardian acknowledges its receipt gratefully and wishes you to kindly convey his gratitude to all the dear friends who have so kindly and generously contributed.

Our dear brother, Dr. Esslemont, was not well for some time, but now I am glad to tell you that he is better and we are expecting him to come out of the hospital to-day.

We have nowadays the pleasure of having among us the first group of our beloved New Zealand and Australian believers. They are of great sincerity and devotion. From here they are intending to visit England where I am sure you will enjoy their acquaintance and company very much....

[From the Guardian:]

My precious fellow-worker,

The prompt and generous contribution of the British friends for the relief of the sufferers in Nayríz is deeply appreciated and I wish to offer through you to them all in the name of the victims of that great catastrophe my deep and grateful thanks. May the All-Bountiful reward and bless them a hundred fold! The sum of approximately 1000 pounds has been until now collected from various parts of the Bahá'í world and more is expected. What an admirable and convincing testimony of the reality of the Bahá'í bond that binds the East with the West. Regarding the historical compilation suggested by the Persian friends, I think your plan is suitable and correct. The English N.S.A. will I trust collect all the data and exercise its discretion and judgment in collating all the material received from the friends and assemblies throughout Great Britain, and, after having given it a definite and final shape, will forward it direct to Persia. I would welcome a copy of it myself. Assuring you of my gratitude and prayers,

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 2 November 1925

Iráq's supreme court unexpectedly pronounced verdict against us in Baghdád case strongly advise national and every local assembly communicate by cable and letter with 'Iráq high commissioner appealing ardently for action to ensure the security of Bahá'u'lláh's sacred house.

Shoghi

Letter of 6 November 1925⁷

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the East and throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved friends:

The sad and sudden crisis that has arisen in connexion with the ownership of Bahá'u'lláh's sacred house in Baghdád has sent a thrill of indignation and dismay throughout the whole of the Bahá'í world. Houses that have been occupied by Bahá'u'lláh for well nigh the whole period of His exile in 'Iráq, ordained by Him as the chosen and sanctified object of Bahá'í pilgrimage in future, magnified and extolled in countless Tablets and Epistles as the sacred centre "round which shall circle all peoples and kindreds of the earth" — lie now, due to fierce intrigue and ceaseless fanatical opposition, at the mercy of the declared enemies of the Cause.

I have instantly communicated with every Bahá'í Centre in both East and West, and urgently requested the faithful followers of the Faith in every land to protest vehemently against this glaring perversion of justice, to assert firmly and courteously the spiritual rights of the Bahá'í

⁷. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration".

community to the ownership of this venerated house, to plead for British fairness and justice, and to pledge their unswerving determination to ensure the security of this hallowed spot.

Conscious of the fact that this property has been occupied by Bahá'í authorised representatives for an uninterrupted period of not less than thirty years, and having successfully won their case at the Justice of Peace and the Court of First Instance, the Bahá'ís the world over cannot believe that the high sense of honour and fairness which inspired the British Administration of 'Iráq will ever tolerate such grave miscarriage of justice. They confidently appeal to the public opinion of the world for the defence and protection of their legitimate rights now sorely trampled under the feet of relentless enemies.

Widespread and effective publicity along these lines, in well-conceived and carefully-worded terms, is strongly recommended for it will undoubtedly serve to facilitate the solution of this delicate and perplexing problem.

Having exerted ourselves to the utmost of our ability, let us rest assured in the power of the Lord, Who keepeth watch over His house, and Who will, no matter how dark present prospects appear, assure for generations yet unborn His cherished and holy edifice.

Your brother and fellow-worker,
Shoghi

Letter of 11 November 1925

Dear Friends,

I have been asked to enclose for your kind attention the following papers: —

1. Circular letter concerning the residential house of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád.
1. Circular letter concerning the purchase of land around the Holy Shrines in Haifa.
1. The system of transliteration to be used in all Bahá'í references.
1. A plan of the immediate neighbourhood of the Shrines in Haifa showing in approximate proportions the different plots around it.

In view of the extreme importance of the aforementioned papers, Shoghi Effendi trusts that all necessary measures will be taken to insure their prompt distribution among all the different assemblies and among all such recognised Bahá'ís as your distinguished assembly deems fit and advisable....

Letter of 12 November 1925

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Our dear Guardian was very glad to receive your letter of Nov. 4th through which you acquaint him with the steps you have already taken in carrying out his instruction concerning the Baghdád House.

He is highly pleased with what you have done. In other Bahá'í Centres also the friends have in a similar way followed promptly his telegraphic instruction. Up to this time we have received no further information regarding the actual situation of the House.

Shoghi Effendi will let you know of any fresh development as soon as he receives information. He sends you his warm affection and extends to you his appreciation for your noble services to the Cause of God. He prays for your health and success in service. He wishes you to kindly convey his loving greeting to all the dear friends in England...

[From the Guardian:]

My dear self-sacrificing brother,

The wise and prompt measures you have taken have given me the utmost satisfaction. I trust your devoted endeavours will be crowned with full success. I have sent you a few days ago various circulars, a list of transliterated terms and the plan of the surroundings of the Holy Shrine, copies of all of which I earnestly request you to place in the hands of every recognised believer.

Your
Shoghi

grateful

brother,

Letter of 23 November 1925

Beloved Esslemont passed away, communicate friends and family distressing News urge believers dedicate special day for Universal Prayer and Remembrance.

Shoghi

Letter of 27 November 1925

My dear Bahá'í Brother,

I find it very hard to be able to express in adequate words our deep feelings and sorrow at the loss of our dearly-beloved brother Dr. Esslemont. Those of us who had known him only since his sojourn in Haifa, had even in that short period of time, learnt to admire and love him. How much more so those of you to whom he was an old friend and fellow-worker.

I have been ordered by Shoghi Effendi to relate in as simple words as possible for the information of his friends in England, the sufferings of his last days and yet words fail me in that painful task.

The chronic disease from which he had suffered in the past had very much undermined his weak constitution and his eagerness to serve the Cause he so dearly loved, despite all advice to the contrary, was a great tax upon his failing strength. His stay at the Black Forest in Germany all through the summer had improved his health, but upon his return to Haifa he felt rather weak and he was frequently in bed for a few days. Not until a fortnight ago was Dr. Esslemont seriously ill and even then the doctors thought that in spite of the fact that the trouble from which he had suffered in the past was now more active there was no reason for great anxiety. His health was slowly improving and everything was being done to give him the best medical advice obtainable here in Haifa, when suddenly and unexpectedly at about midnight of November 21st the doctor had a severe stroke of "cerebral embolus". The next day a second stroke followed and he at last succumbed to the third which he had at about seven o'clock of the next evening. The attending doctors were both European — one Italian and the other German. Our two Bahá'í doctors Yúnís K̄hán and Mírzá Arastú, whom you must have met in London very gladly put themselves at his disposal.

Hard as it was for everyone who had known Dr. Esslemont to see him pass away and to realise what a great loss it means to the friends the world over, we can find no greater consolation than in the happy thought that he now lies in peace and his soul where it so loved to be. Beyond all earthly cares, all pains and sorrows his soul dwells forever.

The funeral service was both simple and touching. His body was washed by two of the friends, dressed and wrapped in white silk cloth and perfumed by attar of roses. On his finger Shoghi Effendi placed his own Bahá'í ring which he had worn for a good many years. Laid in a simple casket of walnut and placed in the hall of the Pilgrim House, the friends gathered together and said their funeral prayer over him. The casket was carried for a short distance by Shoghi Effendi and then placed in the Master's carriage and accompanied by the sons-in-law of the Master it slowly wound its way, followed by eleven other cabs carrying the friends, to the foot of Mt. Carmel. There it was laid to rest in that beautifully-situated cemetery, and flowers from the garden of the Master's home were scattered over his grave. Simple as he was in his life and character, equally simple was his funeral service. And yet just as in the simplicity of his character lay his many virtues, in like manner did the simplicity of that service sink into every heart and fill every eye with tears.

In case you think it would please them you are perfectly welcome to communicate to the family of Dr. Esslemont the particulars of his death and burial. Enclosed you will please find a letter from Shoghi Effendi addressed to the family and relations of the deceased. You will please have it read by his wife, who I believe is in London, and then sent over to his father and sister who are in Aberdeen.

Due to the reason that Shoghi Effendi hopes to build in the near future the grave of Dr. Esslemont on his behalf and on behalf of all the friends, our Guardian would like very much to have the design chosen by the family of the deceased. Of course you would let them know that through certain considerations it would be best to have the design devoid of any cross as that in this country would particularise it to the Christian faith. You would let the family know that the expense would be defrayed by the friends all over the world and by Shoghi Effendi himself.

Shoghi Effendi would also like you to send the picture of Dr. Esslemont to the countries where the friends have published magazines with a request to have it published. They are America, India, Germany and Australia. He wants you also to write a comprehensive biographical sketch of the life of Dr. Esslemont for "The Star" in America laying most stress on his life since he became a Bahá'í. This of course does not necessarily mean that you should write it yourself but anyone in London. You should also make mention of him in your circular letter in detail...

Letter of 30 November 1925⁸

To the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful in the East and in the West.

Dear fellow-workers,

It is with feelings of overwhelming sorrow that I communicate to you the news of yet another loss which the Almighty, in His inscrutable wisdom, has chosen to inflict upon our beloved Cause. On the 22nd of November, 1925 — that memorable and sacred day in which the Bahá'ís of the Orient celebrated the twin Festivals of the Declaration of the Báb and the Birthday of 'Abdu'l-Bahá — Dr. John E. Esslemont passed on to the Abhá Kingdom. His end was as swift as it was unexpected. Suffering from the effects of a chronic and insidious disease, he fell at last a victim to the inevitable complications that ensued, the fatal course of which neither the efforts of vigilant physicians nor the devoted care of his many friends could possibly deflect.

He bore his sufferings with admirable fortitude, with calm resignation and courage. Though convinced that his ailments would never henceforth forsake him, yet many a time he revealed a burning desire that the friends residing in the Holy Land should, while visiting the Shrines, implore the All-Merciful to prolong his days that he may bring to a fuller completion his humble share of service to the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh. To this noble request all hearts warmly responded. But this was not to be. His close association with my work in Haifa, in which I had placed fondest hopes, was suddenly cut short. His book, however, an abiding monument to his pure intention, will, alone, inspire generations yet unborn to tread the path of truth and service as steadfastly and as unostentatiously as was trodden by its beloved author. The Cause he loved so well he served even unto his last day with exemplary faith and unstinted devotion. His tenacity of faith, his high integrity, his self-effacement, his industry and painstaking labours were traits of a character the noble qualities of which will live and live forever after him. To me personally he was the warmest of friends, a trusted counsellor, an indefatigable collaborator, a lovable companion.

With tearful eyes I supplicate at the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh — and request you all to join — in my ardent prayers, for the fuller unfolding in the realms beyond of a soul that has already achieved so high a spiritual standing in this world. For by the beauty of his character, by his knowledge of the Cause, by the conspicuous achievements of his book, he has immortalised his name, and by sheer merit deserved to rank as one of the Hands of the Cause of God.

He has been laid to rest in the heart of that beautifully situated Bahá'í burial ground at the foot of Carmel, close to the mortal remains of that venerable soul, Hájí Mírzá Vakílu'd-Dawlih, the illustrious cousin of the Báb and chief builder of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Iṣḥqábád. Pilgrims

⁸. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration".

visiting his grave from far and near will, with pride and gratitude, do honour to a name that adorned the annals of an immortal Cause.

May he eternally rest in peace. Shoghi

Letter of 5 December 1925

My dear Mr. Simpson,

I write to acknowledge receipt of your two letters of Nov. 25 and 28th to Shoghi Effendi and to thank you on his behalf for all the trouble you have taken in communicating to the friends and to his family the sad news of the passing away of Dr. Esslemont. Shoghi Effendi cannot but appreciate the many evidences of your devotion and love.

We are very glad to know that Mr. Mills is as successful in his endeavours and we trust that it should end with a decisive victory on our part. Mr. Mills has kept us briefly in touch with what he has been doing in London but we still await more detailed news from him. He is probably too busy to write.

Shoghi Effendi has already heard from Miss Esslemont.

Everybody is well here. Shoghi Effendi and the family send you their heartfelt greetings....

[From the Guardian:]

My dear indefatigable co-worker,

Knowing what the urgency and multiplicity of pressing activities mean to a person who pursues his task almost single-handed, I can well understand, sympathise, and admire your noble endeavours and the splendid work you are doing for the Cause of God. I wish to renew the expression of my deep confidence in, and great appreciation of, the part you play at this highly-important and difficult stage of our work. Your communications regarding the houses in Baghdád have been highly satisfactory and I trust will yield the long-desired fruit. Regarding the position of ..., Azízu'lláh K̄hán Bahádur will immediately after my decision let you know on my behalf what I feel to be the most suitable way of meeting this difficult situation. I feel too overwhelmed with work to write more.

Shoghi

Letter of 9 December 1925

Urge friends inquire in courteous terms by cable and letter from 'Iráq high commissioner results of investigations.

Shoghi

Letter of 14 December 1925

My dear Mr. Simpson,

I am sending you enclosed a copy of the pamphlet written by Dr. Esselmont.

Last year Dr. Esslemont sent you a similar copy of the pamphlet fully revised for you to publish. Shoghi Effendi would like very much to have a copy of his revised edition and is sending the enclosed only as a reminder of some of the corrections and revisions he had made in the copy he sent you. In case you have published copies of the revised edition, Shoghi Effendi would like to have a number of copies sent to him and in case you have not published it, he would like you to send him a correct copy of the revised form of the edition as you have it. He could have it published himself. In any case, however, he wishes you to send back to him the enclosed copy.

We received last night news that the keys of the houses in Baghdád have been given to the Shí'ites and they had made a regular demonstration on the occasion. We await to see what will be done at last...

Letter of 23 January 1926

My dear Bahá'í Brother,

I take pleasure in thanking you on behalf of our dear Guardian for your letters of Dec. 9th and 13th and of Jan. 4th which he was very glad to receive. He appreciates immensely your many efforts and although so far away, you are to him, I assure you, a great and indispensable helper. It is always with confidence in its thoroughness that he refers to you anything of importance.

He is so glad to learn that the friends in England have in the different centres held memorial meetings for our departed brother. He was to us all a great friend and fellow-worker and to the Cause a faithful servant — his memory will help us to follow an equally righteous path.

The biographical sketch which you have written for the different Bahá'í magazines and a copy of which you had sent to our Guardian was received and read. He fully approves of it and feels sure that the different publications will welcome your article and will be glad to devote some of their pages to the memory of one whose name and writings were often to be seen in those same magazines.

With regard to the design of the grave of Dr. Esslemont, a picture of which you had sent enclosed, Shoghi Effendi wishes to inform you that although he himself liked the design and would have been glad to follow it altogether, up till the present the tombs of the Bahá'ís have been very simply built and the custom has been to have them as beautiful and at the same time as simple as possible. This general custom holds true even in the case of the tombs of the Master's mother and brother. The graves are built of white marble stones but the designs have in every case been simple, and he wishes you very much to make the family of Dr. Esslemont understand that although Shoghi Effendi will not be able to follow the design strictly he will try to make the tomb as near it as possible, while keeping within the range of the customary

simplicity. Even the tomb of the cousin of the Báb which is close to that of Dr. Esslemont and which Shoghi Effendi also intends to build will be very simple.

In connection with the leaflet of Dr. Esslemont, Shoghi Effendi feels that if you intend to publish a new edition you would do well to keep it until you are through with it, but if you already have many copies of the last issue and the Assembly does not intend to bring out a new edition in the near future, he wants you to send him the leaflet so as to be able to send it to America where he wants to have it translated into Hebrew and other languages. At any case he wants you to send him a copy of it or the original as soon as possible.

Our Guardian has been very glad to receive a wire of late from Baghdád telling him that everything was hopeful. As yet we do not have any particulars but we trust that we can soon regain our rights in the houses. It is perhaps very fortunate that the High Commissioner himself will be in Baghdád and will be able to help us very much....

P.S. With regard to the accent in the letter a in the transliteration of Persian names and words and the difficulty of the publishers in having a vertical mark, Shoghi Effendi feels that in case having the regular vertical mark means too much trouble and expense it would be justified to replace it by the horizontal dash on the a, but if the trouble and expense would not be much, for the sake of uniformity throughout transliterations everywhere, it would be best to have the regular vertical mark.

[From the Guardian:]

My dear fellow-worker,

I am sure you will understand, and explain my motive and reasons to dear Esslemont's relatives in connexion with the design of the tomb. Much as I love and esteem my departed friend, I feel I must pay due consideration to the general practice prevailing in Haifa and 'Akká particularly as it is applied even to the resting places of the Master's nearest relations. I will however follow the design as closely as it is consistent with simplicity, without altering in any way the shape and general outline presented by the architect. Please assure his relatives of my keen desire to do everything possible that will enhance and preserve the memory of such a staunch and precious friend.

Shoghi

Letter of 1 April 1926

My dear Mr. Simpson,

Many thanks for your letter of Feb. 21, and I am so sorry I could not answer you earlier.

I am sending you enclosed the plan that you had sent and behind it I have marked the approximate prices of the plots. You realise that the exact price cannot be determined because they fluctuate and various causes bring about this change in price. For this reason I have given two figures one being the minimum and the other the maximum. There are no probabilities that under any conditions the maximum and the minimum will change. However, I have sent

you the price for the so called region rather than the individual plots, the latter being due to many reasons quite impossible.

Shoghi Effendi is quite well though as usual very busy with an overwhelmingly vast correspondence. The family are all well and send you their love and best wishes...

[From the Guardian:]

My esteemed and valued friend:

I understand from your recent cable to me that Miss ... has at last complied with my request and written the London Assembly acknowledging their authority. I have immediately cabled you my heartfelt appreciation of her act. If that is the case I wish to urge you and the London Council to exercise the utmost care, consideration and vigilance that this new step taken in the right direction may gradually lead to a definite solution of this painful problem. I am as usual terribly overwhelmed with my unceasing work and this cable of yours has been a most welcome relief. I have received your letter dated Feb.108. I am returning one of the leaflets for future publication in London. I wish to remind you of the necessity of close co-operation on the part of the English National Spiritual Assembly with 'La nova Tago' published in Hamburg.

Shoghi

Letter of 11 April 1926

My dear Bahá'í Brother,

I thank you very much indeed on behalf of our dear Guardian for your kind letters of March 29th and 31st.

The news of the reconciliation of ... with the National Assembly has been the source of immeasurable joy to the heart of Shoghi Effendi and he appreciates the spirit of both parties in trying to forget all past misunderstandings and in starting anew with genuine love and goodwill. This has relieved Shoghi Effendi of a very heavy weight of thought and distress and this itself gives you as much satisfaction as it does to us all.

Shoghi Effendi has gladly received the names of the elected body for the London Assembly and he wishes them all success from the bottom of his heart. That they may all help to vindicate still more strongly the great claim of our dear Cause in England, that they may succeed to increase daily the numbers of earnest Bahá'í workers and that they may mirror forth the great spirit of our beloved Master, is the fondest hope and the fervent prayer of our dear Guardian.

As I write you these lines we are all sorely distressed with the ghastly news of the martyrdom of twelve Bahá'ís in one of the towns of southern Persia...

[From the Guardian:]

My dear and valued friend:

I have received with feelings of deep satisfaction the welcome news of ... compliance with my request. I wish to impress upon all those who come in contact with her the necessity of exercising forbearance, kindness and loving consideration while adhering closely to the established principles of the Cause. I will inform you if any action is necessary regarding the martyrdom in Jahrum in Southern Persia — a monstrous crime that has deeply afflicted us all. Concerning the membership of the Spiritual Assembly, I have already communicated with America to the effect that the members who are entitled to vote must be strictly limited to nine. Additional members may attend only in a consultative capacity. I realise fully the delicacy and difficulty of your position but it must be made clear to all that nine and only nine can vote. All other subsidiary matters are left to the Assemblies.

Lovingly,
Shoghi

Letter of 11 April 1926⁹

I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of the sum of seventeen pounds from my dear friends the Bahá'ís of England as their much appreciated contribution for the purchase of land around the Holy Shrines on Mt. Carmel.

Shoghi

Letter of 22 April 1926¹⁰

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Fellow-labourers in the Divine Vineyard:

In the midst of the many vicissitudes which the creative Word of God is destined to encounter in the course of its onward march towards the redemption of the world, there breaks upon us the news of still another loss, more bewildering in its character, yet more inspiring in its challenge, than any of the gravest happenings of recent times. Once again the woeful tale of unabated persecution, involving this time the martyrdom of twelve of our long-suffering brethren in Jahrum, southern Persia, has reached our ears, and filled us with a gloom which all the joys and ennobling memories of Riḍván have failed to dispel.

From the meagre reports which have thus far been received from that distracted country it appears that this shameful and atrocious act, though the outcome of a number of obscure and complex causes, has been chiefly instigated by that ever-present factor of fierce and relentless impulse of religious hostility. Persia — long-neglected and sorely-tried — continues, despite the

9. This is the first example of a receipt from the Guardian. A few such receipts appear in this book as they illustrate his meticulous attention to detail. They do not, however, represent the total contributions made by members of the British Bahá'í community during the thirty-five years covered by the book.

10. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration."

revival of recent hopes, to be the down-trodden victim of unscrupulous personal rivalries and factious intrigue, of tribal revolt, political dissensions and religious animosities — all of which have in times past brought in their wake the shedding of the blood of so many of its innocent and choicest sons.

Fully alive to the gravity of the occasion, and realising the urgency of my sacred duty, I have, upon the receipt of the news, transmitted telegraphically through the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia a special message addressed in the name of the Bahá'ís in every land to the supreme Authority in the State, expressing our profound horror at this outrageous act as well as our earnest entreaty to inflict immediate punishment on the perpetrators of so abominable a crime. And as this sad event involved chiefly the welfare and security of the Bahá'í residents in Persia, I have specially requested all local Assemblies in that land to address a similar message to the highest authorities concerned appealing for full protection and justice. Should future developments necessitate direct and foreign intervention, I shall acquaint the national Bahá'í representatives in every land to take in cooperation with all local Assemblies such measures as will effectually conduce to a fuller recognition of the dynamic force latent in the Bahá'í Faith and ensure the betterment of the lot of the heroic supporters of our Cause.

Pending the opening of official and direct communication with recognised authorities whether in Persia or elsewhere, I strongly feel that the time has assuredly come when it is incumbent upon every conscientious promoter of the Cause to bestir himself and undertake in consultation with the friends in his locality such measures of publicity as will lead to the gradual awakening of the conscience of the civilised world to what is admittedly an ignominious manifestation of a decadent age.

I would specially request all National Assemblies to give their anxious and immediate consideration to this grave matter, and to devise ways and means that will secure the fullest publicity to our grievances. I would remind them that whatever is published should be couched in terms that are at once correct, forceful and inoffensive. I would particularly stress the importance of making every effort to secure the sympathy and hospitality of the leading journals and periodicals of the Western world, and of sending to the Holy Land any such references in papers that will arise to champion the cause of Righteousness and Justice. I greatly deplore the fact that owing to the remoteness and the unstable conditions in Persia, details and particulars regarding this ugly incident are not as yet available, but will be duly communicated to the various centres immediately upon their receipt. I would however ask the believers throughout the West to arise without any further delay and supplement the publication of the news conveyed in this message with an account of previous happenings of a similar character, combined with an adequate survey of the aim, the principles, and history of the Bahá'í Cause.

It is to you, dearly beloved friends of the West, who are the standard-bearers of the emancipation and triumph of the Bahá'í Faith, that our afflicted brethren of the East have turned their expectant eyes, confident that the day cannot be far-distant when, in accordance with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's explicit utterance, the West will "seize the Cause" from Persia's fettered hands and lead it to glorious victory.

Though grief-stricken and horrified at this cruel blow, let us be on our guard lest we give way to despair, lest we forget that in the Almighty's inscrutable Wisdom this sudden calamity may prove to be but a blessing in disguise. For what else can it do but to stir the inmost depths of our souls, set our faith ablaze, galvanise our efforts, dissolve our differences, and provide one of the chief instruments which the unhampered promoters of the Faith can utilise to attract the attention, enlist the sympathy, and eventually win the allegiance of all mankind?

Ours is this supreme opportunity; may we fulfil our trust.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 11 May 1926¹¹

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá!

Grave and manifold as are the problems confronting the struggling Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, none appear more significant nor seem more compelling in their urgency than the incredible sufferings borne so heroically by our down-trodden brethren of the East. Recent reports confirming the news which I have lately communicated to you have all emphasised the barbarous severity practised on the innocent followers of our Cause. They reveal the possibility of the extension of this agitation, partly instigated for political purposes and selfish motives, to neighbouring towns and provinces, and dwell upon the traditional slackness of the local authorities to inflict prompt and severe punishment upon all the perpetrators of such abominable crimes. It has been ascertained that in the town of Jahrum women have suffered martyrdom in a most atrocious manner, that the knife of the criminal has mercilessly cut to pieces the body of a child, that a number have been severely beaten and injured, their bodies mutilated, their homes pillaged, their property confiscated, and the homeless remnants of their family abandoned to the mercy of a shameless and tyrannical people. In other parts of Persia, and particularly in the province of Ádhirbayján, in the town of Marághih, the friends have been pitilessly denied the civic rights and privileges extended to every citizen of the land. They have been refused the use of the public bath, and been denied access to such shops as provide the necessities of life. They have been declared deprived of the benefit and protection of the law, and all association and dealing with them denounced as a direct violation of the precepts and principles of Islám. It has even been authoritatively stated that the decencies of public interment have been refused to their dead, and that in a particular case every effort to induce the Moslem undertaker to provide the wood for the construction of the coffin failed to secure the official support of the authorities concerned. Every appeal made by these harassed Bahá'ís on behalf of their brethren, whether living or dead, has been met with cold indifference, with vague promises, and not infrequently with severe rebuke and undeserved chastisement.

The tale of such outrageous conduct, such widespread suffering and loss, if properly expressed and broadcast, cannot fail in the end to arouse the conscience of civilised mankind, and thereby secure the much-needed relief for a long-suffering people. I would, therefore, renew my plea,

¹¹. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration".

and request you most earnestly to redouble your efforts in the wide field of publicity, to devise every possible means that will alleviate the fears and sorrows of the silent sufferers in that distracted country.

Surely these vile wrong-doers cannot long remain unpunished for their ferocious atrocities, and the day may not be far distant when we shall witness, as we have observed elsewhere, the promised signs of Divine Retribution avenging the blood of the slaughtered servants of Bahá'u'lláh.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 20 May 1926

My dear Mr. Simpson,

I thank you on behalf of Shoghi Effendi for your letter of May 8th.

He was very glad indeed to learn the names of the newly elected London Spiritual Assembly and he wishes them success from the bottom of his heart. He earnestly trusts that throughout the coming year they will succeed to give a fresh impetus to the progress of the Cause in England and will not be satisfied with only mediocre efforts and endeavours.

With regard to the election of the Assemblies and your desire to have substitutes in order to ensure a steady and easy-to-obtain quorum for business, Shoghi Effendi would not like to give you any further special regulations but would prefer you to communicate with America and follow the method they have adopted. He has a keen desire that uniformity should exist in the regulations. I am sure you would gladly communicate with Mr. Horace Holley on the subject.

He is so gratified that the case of ... is settled permanently and he hopes that in future no such petty misunderstandings will come in the way of the steady growth of the Movement, which is of the utmost necessity not only in England but throughout the world.

Shoghi Effendi is well but as usual very busy. The recent atrocities in Persia have been a source of deep grief to his heart....

[From the Guardian:]

My dear fellow-worker,

In order to avoid misunderstandings and confusion and ensure uniformity of method and action I have requested you to conform to the principle adopted by the American friends and Mr. Holley will inform you of the method they pursue. I realise the special and peculiar difficulties that prevail in London and the nature of the obstacles with which they are confronted. I feel however that an earnest effort should be made to overcome them and that the members must arrange their affairs in such a way as to ensure their prompt attendance at 9 meetings which are held in the course of the year. This surely is not an insurmountable obstacle.

I will remember their needs and difficulties in my prayers at the Holy Shrines and will continue to supplicate for them Divine guidance and blessings.

Shoghi

Letter of 28 June 1926

Dear Mr. Simpson,

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated June 22nd,15. He is most appreciative of the many and continuous services you are rendering to the Cause in that land. Your efficiency, sincerity and untiring zeal are great assets for the friends in England....

Shoghi Effendi fully approves of your suggestion to put a royalty on the translations of Dr. Esslemont's book equal to what he had arranged for the original. Not only is that a fair thing to do but also it is incumbent upon us to show our appreciation of Dr. Esslemont's services to the Cause by safeguarding the interests of his family, especially as his wife is an invalid and in need of help. Shoghi Effendi specially wants me to ask you to show utmost consideration to her interests.

[From the Guardian:]

My dear fellow-worker,

I hope you will assure Mrs. Esslemont on my behalf and express to her my warm approval of your suggestion which would safeguard her interests and prove of some assistance to her....

Assuring you of my earnest prayers for your continued and unsparing efforts for the promotion of the Cause you serve so well,

I am your grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 16 July 1926

Dear Mr. Simpson,

This is to acknowledge the receipt of your letter to Shoghi Effendi dated June 20,16. He is very thankful for what you are trying to do for the friends in Persia. I hope the efforts of the whole western friends combined will alleviate this great burden which rests upon them, and at least give them the peace and comfort which they have been for so long desiring.

As to the translation or rather revision of the translation of the "Hidden Words". A year ago, I believe, the American friends wrote to Shoghi Effendi and asked him to do it. Complying with

their wish he revised his translation and they have published it both in paper and leather bound. Shoghi Effendi believes that another edition in England will be useless and perhaps will not find the necessary market. You could buy from America all the copies you need. Nevertheless, if you want to have a new English edition you can procure a copy from America. Shoghi Effendi does not believe it necessary to give it a still other revision....

[From the Guardian:]

My dear and able friend,

I am in correspondence with Rev. Townshend¹² in connexion with various alterations in my rendering of the Hidden Words. I have just received his second letter containing suggestions which I greatly appreciate and value. I am hoping to revise it for a third time after my correspondence with Mr. T. is over. I feel you can postpone it for the present. I hope and pray you will succeed in giving wide and effective publicity to the atrocities perpetrated in Persia, in the British Press. It is so necessary and important. We must at all costs capture the heights and the British friends have in this connexion a unique and splendid opportunity in their own country and amid their own people. Difficult though it be we must persevere and not relax in our efforts. What Martha¹³ has achieved is a great incentive and example. Your own splendid efforts are deeply and lovingly appreciated by me.

Shoghi

Letter of 17 October 1926¹⁴

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá!

12. The Master wrote to him "It is my hope that thy church will come under the heavenly Jerusalem". For very many years he tried to bring to the clergy of the Church of Ireland and particularly the senior ones, the realisation of Bahá'u'lláh as Christ returned in the Glory of the Father. In spite of his important books, "The Heart of the Gospel" and "The Promise of All Ages", no one in the church responded and in 1947 the Guardian called upon him to resign from the church. He complied immediately and moved with his wife and two children to a small bungalow in Dundrum near Dublin. He was one of the founder members of the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Dublin and in 1951 was elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause. For many years he gave distinguished services to the Guardian, not least of which was the writing of the introduction to "God Passes By" and his presentation on behalf of the Guardian of his paper "Bahá'u'lláh's Ground Plan for World Fellowship" to the inaugural meeting of the World Congress of Faiths in 1936. The pamphlet he wrote to all Christians under the title "The Old Churches and the New World Faith" was sent out to 10,000 so-called "responsible people" in the British Isles on the occasion of his resignation from the church, and his last book "Christ and Bahá'u'lláh" was described by the Guardian as "his crowning achievement". He participated in the Inter-Continental Conference, Stockholm, Sweden in July 1953 and passed away in March 1957 at the age of 81. ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XIII, p. 841.)

13. Martha Root.

14. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration".

In the course of the few months that have elapsed since my last communication to you regarding the appalling circumstances that have culminated in the martyrdom of our Persian brethren in Jahrum, events of the highest importance to the future welfare of our beloved Cause have transpired, and with startling suddenness conferred abiding solace upon those who still have to face the pains and terrors of unmitigated and shameless tyranny.

You have, most of you I presume, read with thrilling joy in one of the recent issues of the "Star of the West" that illuminating account given by our beloved sister, Miss Martha Root, wherein she tells with her characteristic directness and modesty the story of her moving interview with Her Majesty Queen Marie of Rumania and of the cordial and ready response which her gentle yet persuasive presentation of the principles of the Bahá'í Faith has evoked in the heart of that honoured Queen. One of the visible and potent effects which this historic interview proved capable of achieving was the remarkable appeal in the form of an open letter which Her Majesty freely and spontaneously caused to be published to the world at large testifying in a language of exquisite beauty to the power and sublimity of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

It was indeed a never-to-be-forgotten occasion when, on the eve of the day commemorating the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, a handful of us, His sorrowing servants, had gathered round His beloved Shrine supplicating relief and deliverance for the down-trodden in Persia, to receive in the midst of the silence of that distressing hour the glad-tiding of this notable triumph which the unbending energy and indomitable spirit of our beloved Martha has achieved for our sacred Cause.

With bowed heads and grateful hearts we recognise in this glowing tribute which Royalty has thus paid to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh an epoch-making pronouncement destined to herald those stirring events which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has prophesied, shall in the fullness of time signalise the triumph of God's holy Faith. For who can doubt but that the deeds of those valiant pioneers of the Faith, unexampled though they have been in the abundance of their number and unexcelled in their sublime heroism, are but a faint glimmer of what, according to the Divine Promise, its steadfast followers are destined to perform? Those heroic exploits that have immortalised the names of its primitive adherents will continue to adorn and illuminate the pages of its blood-stained history; yet we cannot forget that the period of its full fruition with all its promise of world felicity and undreamt-of-achievements is yet to be realised, its golden Age yet to unfold. Indeed, how chastening to our pride, how challenging to our enthusiasm, if we but pause for a moment amidst the world's many distractions and ponder in our hearts the vastness, the compelling urgency, the ineffable glory of what still remains unachieved.

But let us all remember, in this connexion, that prior to every conceivable measure destined to raise the efficiency of our administrative activities, more vital than any scheme which the most resourceful amongst us can devise, far above the most elaborate structure which the concerted efforts of organised Assemblies can hope to raise, is the realisation down in the innermost heart of every true believer of the regenerating power, the supreme necessity, the unfailing efficacy of the Message he bears. I assure you, dear friends, that nothing short of such an immovable conviction could have in days past enabled our beloved Cause to weather the blackest storms in its history. Naught else can today vitalise the manifold activities in which unnumbered disciples of the Faith are engaged; naught else can provide that driving force and sustaining power that are both so essential to the success of vast and enduring achievements. It is this spirit that above

all else we should sedulously guard, and strive with all our might to fortify and exemplify in all our undertakings.

Moved by an irresistible impulse, I have addressed to Her Majesty in the name of the Bahá'ís of both the East and the West a written expression of our joyous admiration and gratitude for the queenly tribute which Her Majesty has paid to the beauty and nobility of the Bahá'í Teachings. I have, moreover, assured Her Majesty of the far-reaching effect which her superb testimony will inevitably produce, and of the welcome consolation it has already brought to the silent sufferers in that distracted country. To my message of appreciation and gratitude there has come lately a written response, penned by Her Majesty, profoundly touching, singularly outspoken, and highly significant in the testimony it bears, from this queenly tribute to a Divine Ideal I quote these penetrating words:

“Indeed a great light came to me with the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It came as all great messages come at an hour of dire grief and inner conflict and distress, so the seed sank deeply.... We pass on the Message from mouth to mouth and all those we give it to see a light suddenly lighting before them and much that was obscure and perplexing becomes simple, luminous and full of hope as never before. That my open letter was balm to those suffering for the Cause is indeed a great happiness to me, and I take it as a sign that God accepted my humble tribute.... With bowed head I recognise that I too am but an instrument in greater Hands and rejoice in the knowledge....”

Dear friends, with feelings of profound emotion we recall the glowing promises that have so often fallen from the lips of our departed Master, and with throbbing hearts rejoice in the gradual realisation of His most cherished desire.

And as we call to mind the circumstances that have led to such a notable advance, we are filled with admiration for that unique and great-hearted apostle of Bahá'u'lláh, our dearly-beloved Martha Root, who under trying circumstances and almost single-handed in her efforts, has so wonderfully paved the way for the universal recognition of the Cause of God. In her case we have verily witnessed in an unmistakable manner what the power of dauntless faith, when coupled with sublimity of character, can achieve, what forces it can release, to what heights it can rise.

Let such remarkable revelations of the reality and continuity of the Divine Purpose, made manifest from time to time to us His feeble children serve to fortify our faith in Him, to warm the chill which fleeting misfortunes may leave behind, and fill us with that Celestial potency which alone can enable us to withstand the storm and stress that lives dedicated to His service must needs encounter.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 23 October 1926

My dear Mr. Simpson,

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your letters dated October 3rd and 10th, 17. He wishes me especially to mention how appreciative he is of your many services so efficiently and devotedly rendered. He will pray for you and for the other members of the London Group that through your combined efforts an unprecedented progress be made there and numerous persons attracted to the precepts of the Cause.

Concerning the attendance of certain individuals at the meeting of the Assemblies and at the invitation of that body. This, Shoghi Effendi considers, to be as expert advice which is absolutely necessary for good administration. The members of the Assembly are not supposed to know everything on every subject, so they can invite a person, versed in that question, to attend their meetings and explain his views. But naturally he will have no right to vote...

[From the Guardian:]

My dear and precious co-worker,

I am glad and grateful to feel that the joint efforts of Martha and Mountfort¹⁵ have given a fresh impetus to the promotion of the Cause in Great Britain. I trust that the collective and individual efforts of the members of the British Spiritual Assemblies will serve to consolidate the work already achieved. I should be pleased to receive if available full copies of any newspapers in Great Britain that may have published the appreciations broadcast by the Queen of Rumania. The entire issue of the papers — not clippings — will be of great significance to the friends in Persia. Ten copies of each would be sufficient. I wish also to request you to urge all the friends in Great Britain to subscribe to the “Messenger Bahá’í” published by Mrs. Stannard in Geneva. It is essential and valuable.

Your
Shoghi

true

brother,

Letter of 29 October 1926¹⁶

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dear fellow-workers in the Divine Vineyard!

It will gladden and rejoice every one of you to learn that from various quarters there has of late reached the Holy Land tidings of fresh developments that are a clear indication of those hidden and transforming influences which, from the source of Bahá’u’lláh’s mystic strength, continue to flow with ever-increasing vitality into the heart of this troubled world.

Both in the wider field of its spiritual conquests, where its indomitable spirit is forging ahead, capturing the heights, pervading the multitude; as well as in the gradual consolidation of the administrative structure which its avowed followers the world over are labouring to raise and

¹⁵. Martha Root and Mountfort Mills.

¹⁶. Printed also in “Bahá’í Administration”.

fortify, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, we can increasingly discern, bids fair to become that force which, though not as yet universally recognised, none can afford to belittle or ignore.

In the bold and repeated testimonies which Her Majesty, Queen Marie of Rumania, has chosen to give to the world — a copy of whose latest pronouncement I enclose — we truly recognise evidences of the irresistible power, the increasing vitality, the strange working of a Faith destined to regenerate the world. Her Majesty's striking tribute paid to the illuminative power of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá is bound to effect an entire transformation in the attitude of many to a Faith the tenets of which have often been misunderstood and sorely neglected. It will serve as a fresh stimulus to the enlightened and cultured to investigate with an open mind the verities of its message, the source of its life-giving principles.

From Baghdád, moreover, where the sacred habitation of Bahá'u'lláh has been violated by a relentless enemy and converted into a rallying centre for the corrupt, the perverse, and the fanatical, there comes the news, highly reassuring to us all, of the satisfactory progress of the negotiations which, we are informed on high authority, will soon lead to the expropriation of the property by the State, culminating in the fullness of time in its occupation by the triumphant followers of God's holy Faith. The case of the houses, so ably presented, so persistently pursued, above all reinforced by the vigilant and protecting power of our departed Master, will eventually triumph, and by its repercussions in Persia as in the world at large, will lend a powerful impetus to the liberation of those forces which will carry the Cause to its ultimate destiny. I will, when the occasion presents itself, inform the believers through their respective National Spiritual Assemblies to address messages of appreciation and gratitude to the Authorities concerned in view of their unrelaxing efforts for the triumph of Right and Justice.

For the present, we cannot but rejoice and feel profoundly thankful as we witness in so many directions the welcome signs of the gradual emancipation of the struggling Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, of the increasing recognition on the part of both the high and lowly of its universal principles — all so rich in their promise of ultimate victory.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 29 November 1926

Dear Mr. Simpson,

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated November 14th, 1926, together with the minutes of the 18th meeting of the National Assembly, held on October 23rd³². He has received the 200 copies of the 4th edition of the folder and desires to thank you for them.

The question of incorporating the National Assembly is very important for though at present there may not be any important business which necessitates that, one may arise at any time. There is also some advantage in being ready for any future developments. But naturally such a

step should be taken after consultation with competent lawyers lest some defect may in the future cause some inconveniences.

What Shoghi Effendi desires to have are clippings of any article written by the Queen of Rumania on subjects referring to the Cause and published in England. He has received such declarations or open letters from America and wishes to know what she is doing along those lines in England which is her own native home. It is really wonderful how boldly she is advocating this Cause absolutely regardless of what others may say. This is a very good lesson for those who being Bahá'ís keep in the dark so as not to be criticised and perhaps ostracised by so called society people.

We are eagerly awaiting to meet Miss Rosenberg and Mrs. Slade¹⁷ to obtain a first hand information of the condition of the Cause in England and the extent to which Mr. Mills and Miss Root have succeeded to improve it.

[From the Guardian:]

My dearly-beloved co-worker:

I am hoping that our deliberations with our English Bahá'í visitors will assist and aid the work in which you are engaged and prove beneficial to the Cause in general. I feel that the opportunities now open to the friends are greater than ever before and I will pray that the measures they undertake will redound to the glory, the power and effectiveness of the Cause. The utterances of the Rumanian Queen should be given the fullest possible publicity and be fully utilised as I feel they are of great significance and value. More power to your elbow!

Shoghi

Letter of 29 January 1927

Dear Bahá'í Friend, Mr. Simpson,

Thank you so very much for your clear good letter of Jan. 16th — Shoghi Effendi bids me say how much pleasure he always derives from the perusal of your letters — which are always expressed with such admirable clearness, and to the point. He has just now been discussing with me the various matters you mention.

He says that in one way we are not quite correct in the way we manage our elections for the National Assembly — Shoghi Effendi says that the intention is, that when once the 19 delegates have been elected by the friends of the respective centres in the proportions you mention, i.e. 12 delegates from among the London friends, five from the Manchester friends, and two from the

¹⁷. To the end of her long life she would delight her visitors with fascinating stories of her experiences in the early days of the Faith in the British Isles and she passed away in September 1972 at the age of 98. The Universal House of Justice cabled: "Passing Isobel Slade severs one few remaining links early cause British Isles deprives community outstanding believer stop her unflagging support cause god more than half century comprising membership national spiritual assembly pioneer visiting teacher six year plan constant devotion duty high moral stature render her shining example future generations stop Express relatives friends loving sympathy assure prayers sacred threshold ample reward progress soul abhá kingdom."

Bournemouth group, that then, these 19 delegates assembled should choose by secret ballot from the whole body of the believers in Gt. Britain and Ireland, the nine friends they consider most suitable as members of the National Assembly. Heretofore, as I understand it, it has rather been our practice that the 12 London delegates elected six from the London friends — the Manchester five delegates elected two from Manchester and the Bournemouth delegates elected one from Bournemouth. But, Shoghi Effendi says, all the 19 delegates must clearly understand that they must select from the whole body of the believers in Gt. Britain and Ireland those 9 whom they consider the most fit and suitable members to constitute the National Assembly. Therefore it will be necessary to supply each of the 19 delegates with a complete list of all those believers in Gt. Britain and Ireland. From that complete list of course must be eliminated all those who from one cause or another are unable to serve on the National Assembly. Also — Shoghi Effendi says that those 19 elected delegates should if possible meet during the Feast of Riḍván in London thus forming as it were a baby Convention! I had not realised before that the annual Bahá'í Convention in the U.S.A. consists solely of those delegates who had been chosen by their respective Centres in order that they may elect the 9 to form the National Assembly of that country. Did you understand this? I certainly did not. As Shoghi Effendi points out — it is quite possible that — e.g. in the future — 7 members might be elected from the Manchester friends and only two from London! On the other hand — it is quite possible that all nine members chosen by the 19 delegates might be from the London group. Of course, on reflection one sees clearly that the proceedings must be as now described because in the future there may be 21 or 53 separate local Assemblies in Gt. Britain just as is now the case in the U.S.A. — and it would obviously be impossible for each of these Assemblies to elect one of their number to sit as their representative on the National Assembly. No doubt I ought to have understood this before — but I must confess I did not!...

It is very grievous that our dear Mrs. Cropper should have been so ill — we have all been praying for her recovery since we knew of it and I am thankful to hear she is now making steady progress.

Since writing to you I too have had a bad influenza cold that swept through our house. But I am now quite recovered I am glad to say.

With all best wishes to yourself.

Your sincere friend in His service,
Ethel Rosenberg

P.S. I have just remembered I have said nothing about the London area that should be included — Shoghi Effendi thinks it would save trouble if you drew your circle widely enough to include Mrs. Slade and her daughter! At first he inclined to agree with you that it would be best to take the middle one — the Postal Area — and make exceptions in favour of Mrs. Haybittel and her daughter. (Mrs. Ginman¹⁸ I hear from my brother has moved into town now) but it seemed to him that you might possibly have other friends residing or moving out to Surbiton etc., so that it might save you trouble in the future if you selected the widest area? This is merely a suggestion on his part — as it will no doubt be decided at the meeting of the London Assembly. But with

¹⁸. She served on the London Spiritual Assembly for a period; pioneered to Oxford, and then to Bristol where she died in February 1963 at the age of 92.

regard to the choosing by the 19 delegates of the nine members of the National Assembly, his instructions are quite definite and must not be departed from — as these instructions are as laid down by the Master in the Testament and other Tablets. Shoghi Effendi says you can even now soon select the day for the 19 delegates to come to London during Riḍván. By the way Riḍván begins exactly 31 days after the New Year so it starts almost always on April 21st and lasts for 12 days. I have recorded my notes on list enclosed.

Yours
E. Rosenberg

ever,

Shoghi¹⁹ Effendi emphatically urges that the 19 friends elected as delegates should meet together during Riḍván — Shoghi Effendi has sent you three copies of the Bahá'í Year Book, one for London, one for Manchester and one for Bournemouth.

Read and approved. Shoghi

Editor's Note:

From December 1926 to April 1927, while the secretary who was then helping with the English correspondence was away from Haifa, Miss Ethel J. Rosenberg (addressed in letters by the Guardian as "My dear Rosa"), was on pilgrimage and kept up a lengthy and repetitive correspondence with George P. Simpson. In these letters from Miss Rosenberg are many instructions from the Guardian to the British National Assembly. The letter reproduced in this compilation, dated January 29th, 1927 is important for many reasons:

1. It is the only one from Miss Rosenberg which carried the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi where he "Approved" what had been written.
1. It outlined the principle for the election of the National Spiritual Assembly by delegates which the British N.S.A. had not then appreciated from the earlier letters of the Guardian (of 1923, 1294, 1925, later published in "Bahá'í Administration").
1. It insisted upon Convention being held in London during Riḍván.
1. It clarified the need to have a recognised voting area for London but left the final decision to the local Spiritual Assembly of London.

As a result of this letter 13 delegates attended Convention and 4 voted by post; ten members were elected to the National Assembly (Guardian's letter of May, 13th, 1927 refers), and the London area was defined as having a radius of 36 miles.

Letter of 12 February 1927²⁰

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

¹⁹. In a different handwriting from Miss Rosenberg's.

²⁰. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration."

Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

The trend of various events, affecting directly and indirectly the interests of the Bahá'í Cause, have of late served to bring into further prominence the character as well as the significance of a Faith destined to regenerate the world.

Of all the diverse issues which today are gradually tending to consolidate and extend the bounds of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, the decision of Egypt's religious Tribunal regarding the Bahá'ís under its jurisdiction appears at the present moment to be the most powerful in its challenge, the most startling in its character, and the most perplexing in the consequences it may entail. I have already alluded in my letter of January 10, 1926, addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, to a particular feature of this momentous verdict, which after mature deliberation has obtained the sanction of Egypt's highest ecclesiastical authorities, has been communicated and printed, and is regarded as final and binding. I have stressed in my last reference to this far-reaching pronouncement the negative aspect of this document which condemns in most unequivocal and emphatic language the followers of Bahá'u'lláh as the believers in heresy, offensive and injurious to Islám, and wholly incompatible with the accepted doctrines and practice of its orthodox adherents.

A closer study of the text of the decision will, however, reveal the fact that coupled with this strong denunciation is the positive assertion of a truth which the recognised opponents of the Bahá'í Faith in other Muhammadan countries have up to the present time either sedulously ignored or maliciously endeavoured to disprove. Not content with this harsh and unjustifiable repudiation of the so-called menacing and heretical doctrines of the adherents of the Bahá'í Faith, they proceed in a formal manner to declare in the text of that very decision their belief, that the Bahá'í Faith is a "new religion", "entirely independent" and, by reason of the magnitude of its claim and the character of its "laws, principles and beliefs," worthy to be reckoned as one of the established religious systems of the world. Quoting various passages judiciously gleaned from a number of Bahá'í sacred Books as an evidence to their splendid testimony, they proceed in a notable statement to deduce the fact that henceforth it shall be regarded as impossible for the followers of such a Faith to be designated as Muslim, just as it would be incorrect and erroneous to call a Muhammadan either Christian or Jew.

It cannot be denied that in the course of the inevitable developments of this present situation the resident Bahá'ís of Egypt, originally belonging to the Muslim Faith, will be placed in a most humiliating and embarrassing position. They, however, cannot but rejoice in the knowledge that whereas in various Muhammadan countries and particularly in Persia the overwhelming majority of the leaders of Islám are utterly opposed to any form of declaration that would facilitate the universal recognition of the Cause, the authorised heads of their co-religionists in one of the most advanced communities in the Muhammadan world have, of their own initiative, published to the world a document that may justly be termed as the first charter of liberty emancipating the Bahá'í Faith from the fetters of orthodox Islám. And in order to insure the complete rupture of Bahá'í official relations with Muslim Courts they lay down in unmistakable terms the condition that under no circumstances can the marriage of those Bahá'ís who have been required to divorce their Muslim wives be renewed by the Muslim Court unless and until the husbands formally recant their faith by solemnly declaring that the Qur'án is the "last" Book

of God revealed to man, that no law can abrogate the Prophet's Law, no faith can succeed His Faith, no revelation can claim to fulfill His Revelation.

While unwavering in their belief in the Divine station of the Author of the Qur'án and profoundly convinced of the necessity and worldwide influence of His Divine mission, Bahá'ís in every land stand undeterred and unabashed in the face of the strong condemnation pronounced against their brethren in Egypt. Indeed, they together with their fellow-workers in all Muslim countries welcome with gladness and pride every opportunity for further emancipation that they may set forth in a truer light the sublime mission of Bahá'u'lláh.

In the face of such an outspoken and challenging declaration, the Bahá'ís of the West cannot but feel the deepest sympathy with their Egyptian brethren who, for the sake of our beloved Cause and its deliverance, have to face all the embarrassments and vexations which the severance of old-established ties must necessarily entail. They will, however, most certainly expect every staunch and loyal believer in the Faith who resides in that land to refrain in view of the grave warning uttered expressly by our opponents, from any practice that would in any manner constitute in the eyes of a critical and vigilant enemy a repudiation of the fundamental beliefs of the people of Bahá. They will most assuredly, whenever the moment is opportune, step forth with eager hearts to offer every support in their power to their fellow-workers who, with stout hearts and irreproachable loyalty, will continue to hold aloft the standard of God's struggling Faith. They will not fail to come to the rescue of those who with joyous confidence will endure to the very end such vicissitudes as this New Day of God, now in its birth-throes, must needs suffer and surmount.

We cannot believe that as the Movement grows in strength, in authority and influence, the perplexities and the sufferings it has had to contend with in the past will correspondingly decrease and vanish. Nay, as it grows from strength to strength, the fanatical defendants of the strongholds of orthodoxy, whatever be their denomination, realising the penetrating influence of this growing Faith, will arise and strain every nerve to extinguish its light and discredit its name. For has not our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent forth His glowing prophecy from behind the prison walls of the citadel of 'Akká — words so significant in their forecast of the coming world turmoil, yet so rich in their promise of eventual victory: —

“How great, how very great is the Cause; how very fierce the onslaught of all the peoples and kindreds of the earth! Erelong shall the clamour of the multitude throughout Africa, throughout America, the cry of the European and of the Turk, the groaning of India and China be heard from far and near. One and all they shall arise with all their power to resist His Cause. Then shall the Knights of the Lord, assisted by grace from on high, strengthened by faith, aided by the power of understanding and reinforced by the legions of the Covenant, arise and make manifest the truth of the verse: ‘Behold the confusion that hath befallen the tribes of the defeated!’”

Dearly beloved friends, upon us devolves the supreme obligation to stand by His side, to fight His battles and to win His victory. May we prove ourselves worthy of this trust.

Your
Shoghi

true

brother,

Letter of 26 February 1927

...quite in order to utilise the Bahá'í Fund for the payment of at least half of the travelling expenses of the Friends who come to London from a distance, "one chief object of the Fund should be to help the Friends in these difficulties".

(Quoted in National Spiritual Assembly Minutes)

Letter of 22 March 1927

Loving appreciation affectionate remembrance.

Shoghi

Letter of 27 April 1927²¹

Dearly-beloved friends:

With feelings of horror and indignation I communicate to you the tale of yet another tragedy involving the shedding of the blood of a martyr of the Faith on Persia's sacred soil. I have before me, as I pen these lines, the report of the local Spiritual Assembly of Ardibíl, a town on the north-east confines of the province of Ádhirbayján, not far distant from those hallowed spots where the Báb suffered His last confinement and martyrdom. Addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia, this report recounts in simple but moving language the circumstances that have led to the cowardly crime committed in the darkness of the night at the instigation of the fanatical clergy — the deadliest opponents of the Faith in that town.

Our martyred brother, Amínu'l-'Ulamá by name had for some time past become notorious in the eyes of the Muslim inhabitants of Ardibíl for his tenacity of faith by openly refusing at every instance to vilify and renounce his most cherished convictions. In the latter part of Ramadán — the month associated with prayer, pious deeds and fasting — his use of the public bath — that long-established institution the amenities and privileges of which are as a rule accorded only to the adherents of the Muslim Faith — had served to inflame the mob, and to provide a scheming instigator with a pretext to terminate his life. In the market-place he was ridiculed and condemned as an apostate of the Faith of Islám, who, by boldly rejecting the repeated entreaties showered upon him to execrate the Bahá'í name, had lawfully incurred the penalty of immediate death at the hands of every pious upholder of the Muslim tradition.

In spite of the close surveillance exercised by a body of guards stationed around his house, in response to the intercession of his friends with the local authorities, the treacherous criminal found his way into his home, and on the night of the 22nd of Ramadán, corresponding with the 26th of March 1927, assailed him in a most atrocious and dastardly manner. Concealing within the folds of his garment his unsheathed dagger, he approached his victim and claiming the need of whispering a confidential message in his ears plunged the weapon hilt-deep into his

²¹. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration."

vitals, cutting across his ribs and mutilating his body. Every attempt to secure immediate medical assistance seems to have been foiled by malicious devices on the part of the associates of this merciless criminal, and the helpless victim after a few hours of agonising pain surrendered his soul to his Beloved. His friends and fellow-believers, alarmed at the prospect of a fresh outbreak that would inevitably result were his mortal remains to be accorded the ordinary privileges of a decent burial, decided to inter his body in one of the two rooms that served as his own dwelling, seeking thereby to appease the fury of an unrelenting foe.

He leaves behind in desperate poverty a family of minors with no support but their mother, expectant to bring forth her child, and with no hope of relief from their non-Bahá'í relatives in whose eyes they deserve to be treated only with the meanest contempt.

It appears from the above-mentioned report that the merciless assailant has been arrested, waiting, however, as has been the case with similar incidents in southern Persia, to be sooner or later released under the pressure of bribery and intimidation sedulously exercised by an impenitent enemy.

Dearest friends! Any measure of publicity the concerted efforts of the Bahá'í Spiritual Assemblies of the West, on whom almighty Providence has conferred the inestimable benefits of religious toleration and freedom, can accord to this latest manifestation of unbridled barbarism in Persia will be most opportune and valuable. It will, I am certain, confer abiding solace to those disconsolate sufferers who with sublime heroism continue to uphold the traditions of their beloved Faith. Our one weapon lies in our prayerful efforts, intelligently and persistently pursued, to arouse by every means at our disposal the conscience of unheeding humanity, and to direct the attention of men of vision and authority to these incredibly odious acts which in their ferocity and frequency cannot but constitute in the eyes of every fair-minded observer the gravest challenge to all that is sacred and precious in our present day civilisation.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 29 April 1927

May deliberations first British Bahá'í convention be divinely guided and blessed.

Shoghi

Letter of 13 May 1927

My dear Mr. Simpson,

I thank you on behalf of our dear Guardian for your welcome letter of the 2nd.

It was with unbounded joy and great hopes for the future that we learnt of the success of your first National Convention. May it prove to be the beginning of a new era of achievement and expansion in the field of service. Time was when individually we had to drink deep from the all-

satisfying teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, and although this is far from being accomplished yet it is time for us to share with many others what we firmly believe....

Miss Rosenberg left only a few days ago and I suppose she will arrive back home earlier than this letter.

As she will have plenty of news to give you I hardly need add any....

[From the Guardian:]

My dear and valued co-worker:

Although I rejoice at your appointment as member of the National and local Assemblies, I fully sympathise with you in your arduous work and responsibilities, for all of which you are so distinctly equipped and qualified. I feel that next year, the number of members should be strictly confined to nine, and a second ballot is quite proper and justified.²² I trust that the choice of Rev. Biggs signifies his unreserved acceptance of the Faith in its entirety — a condition that we must increasingly stress in the years that come. Please assure the elected members of my love, my best wishes and of my ardent prayers for them all individually and collectively that the Beloved may guide them, and reinforce their efforts for the spread of our beloved Cause.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 22 May 1927

My dear Mr. Simpson,

I thank you on behalf of Shoghi Effendi for your short letter of the 8th giving the name of the occupants of the various offices.

He is glad to see the well chosen members each undertaking his suitable task with the chairman shining amongst them. However he trusts that the coming year may be one of renewed activity and greater accomplishment. Let us not be loiterers in a fast-flying world especially when we know to what grave and universal ills this Cause is a divine remedy....

[From the Guardian:]

With loving greetings and apologies for inability to write more due to mental fatigue and strain.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

²². As there were two believers with an equal number of votes for the ninth place it had been decided to have all ten on the National Assembly!

Letter of 25 May 1927

National Assembly affectionately remembered holy shrines

Shoghi

Letters of 8 October 1927 and 17 October 1927

Referred to in Minutes; no text available.

Letter of 15 November 1927

Loving appreciation remembrance.

Shoghi

Letter of 28 November 1927

Loving appreciation tenderest remembrance.

Shoghi

Letter of 5 January 1928

“...Nothing should be attempted that would, in the least and however indirectly, interfere with the unqualified freedom of local and national elections...”

(Quoted in National Spiritual Assembly Minutes)

Letter of 16 January 1928

My dear Mr. Simpson,

I am instructed by our dear Shoghi Effendi to thank you for your letter of Dec. 31st with enclosures all of which he was very glad and interested to read.

With regard to Miss Pinchon's²³ book, Shoghi Effendi feels that if she herself and the Assembly in London feel that the arrangement with the London branch of Brentano's is really to her advantage, he would then be glad to endorse it. The arguments you had brought were really very favourable and that might help the success of the book in America. Moreover, he would wish you to thank Asgarzadeh for his commitment in helping the Assembly to promise a sum of

23.

1.

fifty pounds. Shoghi Effendi has liked the book immensely and trusts that it may render great services and fulfil all our hopes.

He has taken notice of your solicitor's answer with regard to official recognition by the Board of Trade and thinks your view of the subject perfectly sound. Will the answer of the Board of Trade prove a stimulus to the friends in England and help to multiply their numbers and establish the Faith?...

[From the Guardian:]

My dear and valued co-worker:

I am so glad to have the opportunity of reaffirming in person my deep affection for, and unshaken confidence in, you as well as my growing appreciation of your ability and constancy in service. I am delighted at the prospect of the joint publication of Miss Pinchon's admirable book in London and in New York, and I would leave all subsidiary matters in this connexion to the National Assembly and Miss Pinchon herself. I wish to order beforehand 50 copies of her book at whatever price the publishers will fix the rate of its sale, and will gladly send through you the amount whenever seems to you the most suitable time. Kindly assure the friends of my continued prayers at the Holy Shrines for their welfare and the success of their arduous yet noble task.

Affectionately,
Shoghi

Letter of 8 February 1928

My dear Mr. Simpson,

I am instructed by our dear Guardian to thank you for your letter of Jan. 29th with the minutes of the regular meeting of the English N.S.A. enclosed.

He has read both your letter and the minutes with interest and pleasure. He trusts that your next list of electors will show marked progress and your weekly meetings at Lindsay Hall will attract new and enlightened people. It is strange that the English Bahá'ís have really contributed a great deal to the Cause, and in the form of books and publications given us works of real and permanent value — perhaps proportionately more than America, and yet it is such a Herculean affair to bring in new fellow-workers. Perhaps just that difficulty is a sign of their merit — staunch and unflinching adherence once they believe in something.

In connection with the form in which new electors are to be admitted into the Cause, our Guardian will personally append his suggestions if any. You would do well to see what the American system is.

Shoghi Effendi hopes very much that Miss Pinchon's book will prove a "good-seller" in England also. Perhaps in being less scholarly it might prove more popular and widely read....

[From the Guardian:]

My very dear and valued co-worker:

Pressure of cares and anxieties, most of them sudden and unforeseen, has caused the delay in mailing this letter to you. Although immersed in an ocean of preoccupations and work, I can always find the time to turn my heart in prayer at the Holy Shrines and supplicate for you as well as for your fellow-workers in that land the Beloved's unfailing Guidance, sustaining strength and imperishable blessings. May He assist you to persevere in your task, and enable you to achieve in the various fields of your activity your heart's desire.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 22 March 1928

Loving appreciation.

Shoghi

Letter of 15 April 1928

My dear and valued co-worker:

I am glad to learn of your sustained activity, your undiminished enthusiasm and vigour in the service of our beloved Cause. I will, on my part, continue to pray for you from the very depths of my heart, that the Beloved may guide you in every step you take, help you to remove misunderstandings and difficulties amongst the friends and grant you strength and long life to consolidate and extend the bounds of the splendid pioneer work you are engaged in at present.

Your true brother and well-wisher,
Shoghi

Letter of 24 April 1928

Brotherly greeting loving appreciation.

Shoghi

Letter of 24 May 1928

National Assembly tenderly remembered holy shrines.

Shoghi

Letter of 13 November 1928

Convey National Assembly loving appreciation.

Shoghi

Letter of 29 November 1928

Loving remembrance.

Shoghi

Letter of 6 December 1928²⁴

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá,

Events of a startling character and of the utmost significance to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, have recently transpired throughout the Near and Middle East in such rapid succession, that I feel moved to write about them to those who, in distant lands and with eager hearts, are waiting to witness the fulfilment of the prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh. You will, I am certain, rejoice with me to learn that the quickening forces of internal reform are swiftly awakening from their age-long slumber of negligence those lands which, trodden by the feet of Bahá'u'lláh and wherein are enshrined the memorable scenes of His birth, His ministry, His exiles, His banishments, His suffering and His ascension, are destined in the fullness of time to play a pre-eminent rôle in the regeneration of the East — nay of all mankind.

From Persia, the cradle of our Faith and the object of our tenderest affections, there breaks upon us the news of the first stirrings of that social and political Reformation which, as we firmly believe, is but the direct and unavoidable consequence of that great spiritual Revival ushered in by the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. These social and political forces now released by the Source of such a tremendous Revival are bound in their turn to demolish one by one the barriers that have so long impeded its flow, sapped its vitality and obscured its radiance.

From a communication addressed to me recently by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia, as well as from reliable reports submitted by the local representatives of the Persian believers, and confirmed by the vivid narrative of visiting pilgrims, it is becoming increasingly manifest that the glowing promises so many times uttered by our departed Master are, with extraordinary exactitude and remarkable swiftness, being successively fulfilled. Reforms of a revolutionary character are, without bloodshed and with negligible resistance, gradually transforming the very basis and structure of Persia's primitive society. The essentials of public security and order are being energetically provided throughout the length

²⁴. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration."

and breadth of the Ṣháh's domain, and are hailed with particular gratification by that much harassed section of the population — our long-suffering brethren of that land. The rapidity, the incredible ease, with which the enlightened proposals of its government, in matters of education, trade and finance, means of transportation and travel, and the development of the country's internal resources, are receiving the unqualified sanction of a hitherto reactionary Legislature, and are overcoming the resistance and apathy of the masses, have undoubtedly tended to hasten the emancipation of our Persian brethren from the remaining fetters of a once despotic and blood-stained regime. The severely repressive and humiliating measures undertaken on the initiative of progressive provincial Governors, and with the connivance of State officials in the Capital, aiming at the scattering and ultimate extinction of a rapidly waning clergy, such as degradation, detainment, deportation and in some cases pitiless execution, are paving the way for the entire removal of the shackles imposed by an ignorant and fanatical priesthood upon the administration of State affairs. In matters of dress; in the obligatory enforcement of a uniform style of national head-gear; in the strict limitation of the number, the rights and the prerogatives of high ecclesiastical officials; in the growing unpopularity of the veil among almost every section of society; in the marked distinction which unofficially and in various phases of public life is being made by an enlightened and pressing minority between the tottering forms of a discredited Ecclesiasticism and the civil rights and duties of civilised society; in the general laxity in religious observances and ceremonies; in the slow and hidden process of secularisation invading many a Government department under the courageous guidance of the Governors of outlying provinces — in all of these a discerning eye can easily discover the symptoms that augur well for a future that is sure to witness the formal and complete separation of Church and State.

To this uplifting movement, various external factors are being added that are tending to hasten and stimulate this process of internal regeneration so significant in the life of renascent Persia. The multiplicity and increasing facilities in the means of transportation and travel; the State visit of energetic and enlightened reformers to Persia's capital; the forthcoming and widely-advertised journey of the Ṣháh himself to the progressive capitals of Western Europe; the repercussion of Turkey's astounding reforms among an essentially sensitive and receptive people; the loud and persistent clamour of a revolting order in Russia against the evil domination and dark plottings of all forms of religious sectarianism; the relentless vigour with which Afghánistán's ambitious Ruler, reinforced by the example of his gracious Consort, is pursuing his campaign of repression against a similar order of a corrupted clergy at home — all tend to lend their force in fostering and fashioning that public opinion which can alone provide an enduring basis for the reform Movement destined to usher in that golden Era craved for by the followers of the Faith in Bahá'u'lláh's native land.

As a direct consequence of the birth of this new consciousness in the life of the nation, as evidenced by these early stirrings in the minds of the people, both high and low, meetings of an elaborate character, unprecedented in the number of their attendants, in the tone of the public addresses, in the undisturbed atmosphere of their proceedings, and the general impressiveness of their organisation, have been publicly held in Ṭíhrán, under the auspices of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia. Particularly significant and impressive were those that were held in the Hazíratu'l-Quds, the administrative and spiritual centre of the Faith in the Capital, on the occasion of the twin Festivals commemorating the declaration of the Báb and

the birth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, at the chief of which no less than two thousand representative Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, leaders of public opinion, State officials and foreign representatives were officially invited. The addresses stressing the universality of the Teachings of the Cause, the formal and ordered character of the proceedings so unusual a feature to a gathering of such proportions, the mingling of the Bahá'ís with the recognised representatives of progressive thought in the Capital who, by virtue of their high office and stately appearance, lent colour and weight to the concourse of attending believers, have all contributed to enhance the brilliance and spiritual significance of that gathering on that memorable occasion.

Moreover, reports of a highly encouraging nature are being continually received from local Assemblies and individual believers, giving the names and stating the numbers of influential Persians who, hitherto reluctant to declare openly their faith in Bahá'u'lláh, are as a result of this reassuring and promising state of affairs emerging from the obscurity of their concealment and enlisting under the erected banner of Bahá'u'lláh. This has served to embolden the followers of the Faith to take the necessary steps, under the direction of their local Assemblies, for the institution of Bahá'í schools, for the holding of public gatherings, for the establishment of Bahá'í hostels, libraries and public baths, for the construction of official headquarters for their administrative work, and for the gradual execution among themselves, within the limits imposed upon them by the State, of the laws and ordinances revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Words fail me to describe the feelings of those patiently suffering brethren of ours in that land, who, with eyes dim with tears and hearts overflowing with thanksgiving and praise, are witnessing on every side and with increasing force the unfoldment of a Faith which they have served so well and love so dearly. Accounts pathetic and inspiring in their tone are being received from that steadfast and cheerful band of exultant believers, and are being shared with the resident friends in the Holy Land who, having had the privilege of close and continued association with the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, cannot but marvel at the range, the potency and accuracy of the prophecies of their departed Master.

From Turkey, on whose soil, for well nigh three score years and ten, were enacted some of the sublimest and most tragic scenes in the annals of the Cause; Turkey, under whose rule Bahá'u'lláh twice proclaimed Himself, was thrice exiled and banished, and finally ascended to the Abhá Kingdom, and where 'Abdu'l-Bahá spent more than fifty years of His Life, in incarceration and suffering; has of late been rudely awakened to a Call which it has so long obstinately despised and ignored. Following on the overthrow of that effete theocracy, resting on the twin institutions of the Caliphate and Sultanate — those two sinister forces that have combined to inflict the deadliest blows to our beloved Faith in the earliest stages of its infancy and growth — an uncompromising policy aiming at the secularisation of the State and the disestablishment of Islám was initiated and carried out with exemplary vigour. Religious institutions and monastic orders which under the guise of religious propaganda were converted into hotbeds of political intrigue and sedition were peremptorily closed, their adherents scattered and banished, their funds confiscated, their privileges and prerogatives abolished. None, save the little band of Bahá'u'lláh's devoted followers, escaped the trenchant axe of the pitiless reformer; all, without fear or favour, had to submit to his searching investigations, his dictatorial edicts, his severe and irrevocable judgment. Lately, however, the Turkish Government, faithful to its policy of ceaseless vigilance, and fearful of the growing activities of the Bahá'ís under its rule, decided to order the Police in the town of Smyrna to conduct a close investigation

into the purpose, the character and the effects of Bahá'í activity in that town. No sooner were the representative Bahá'ís in that locality arrested and conducted to the Law Courts for purposes of investigation, than the President of the Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly of Constantinople who, having read in the morning papers the report of the Smyrna incident, had resolved unsummoned to offer the necessary explanations to the authorities concerned, was in his turn arrested and taken to the Police Headquarters where he soon afterwards was joined by the other members of the Assembly. The official searching of their homes, the seizure of whatever Bahá'í literature they had in their possession, their twenty-four hours' detention at the Police station, the searching severity of the cross-examination to which they were subjected — all proved powerless to alarm and shake the faith of those intrepid champions of the Cause, or to evince anything detrimental to the best interests of the State. On the contrary, they served to deeply impress upon the minds and hearts of the officials concerned the sublimity, the innocence, and the dynamic force of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. So much so that their books were returned, a genuine desire to deepen their knowledge of the Cause was expressed by their examiners, and widespread publicity, as reflected in the articles of about a dozen leading newspapers of Turkey, was accorded by the Government, proclaiming the innocence of the Cause and lifting up the ban that now so oppressively weighs upon religious institutions in Turkey.

From Constantinople in European Turkey to the eastern confines of Anatolia, on the banks of the river Euphrates, where a small and flourishing Bahá'í Community has been recently established, a wave of public interest, criticism and inquiry has been sweeping over the surface of the land, as witnessed by the character and number of the leading articles, the illustrations and caricatures that have appeared in the most prominent newspapers of the capital and the provincial towns of Asiatic Turkey. Not only Turkey, but its neighbouring countries of the East and the West, have lifted up their voice in the vindication of the Bahá'í truth. From information thus far gathered we learn that in Hungary, in 'Irâq, Egypt and Syria, and as far west as France and England, newspapers have, of their own accord, with varying degree of accuracy, and in more or less detail, reported this incident in their columns, and have given, unasked and unaware, such publicity to our beloved Faith which no campaign of teaching, however elaborately organised by the believers themselves, could ever hope to achieve at the present time. Surely the invincible arm of Bahá'u'lláh, working through strange and mysterious ways, will continue to guard and uphold, to steer the course, to consolidate, and eventually to achieve the world-wide recognition and triumph of His holy Faith.

And while the East, through suffering and turmoil, is moving on in its slow and toilsome march towards the acceptance of God's holy Faith, let us turn for a moment our gaze to the Western Hemisphere, and particularly to the American continent, and attempt to visualise the possibilities of the future spread of the Cause, and to estimate afresh those golden yet swiftly passing opportunities which Bahá'u'lláh in those far-away lands has accorded to His chosen people. I feel thoroughly convinced, and am moved to share this firm conviction within me with that great company of western believers, that in the speedy resumption of the sorely-neglected construction of the Maṣhriqu'l-Aḡhkár at Wilmette lies our undoubted privilege, our primary obligation, our most vital opportunity to lend an unprecedented impetus to the advancement of the Cause, not only throughout the West but in every country of the world. I would not stress at this moment the prestige and good name of the Cause, much as they are involved in this most

pressing issue, I would not dwell upon the eager expectancy with which the unnumbered followers of the Faith as well as the vast number of the non-believers in almost every section of society throughout the East are awaiting to behold that noble structure rear its head in the heart of that far-western continent; nor would I expatiate on the ineffable beauty of this holy Edifice, its towering glory, its artistic design, its unique character, or its functions in the organic life of the Bahá'í community of the future. But I would with all the strength of my conviction emphasise the immeasurable spiritual significance of an Edifice, so beautiful, so holy, erected solely by the concerted efforts, strained to the utmost degree of self-sacrifice, of the entire body of the believers who are fully conscious of the significance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. In this vast endeavour, unparalleled in modern times, its world-wide range, its spontaneity, its heroic and holy character, the American believers, on the soil of whose country Bahá'u'lláh's first universal House of Worship is to be built, must, if they be faithful to their trust, claim and fulfil a pre-eminent share in the collective contributions offered by the Bahá'ís of the world.

For this reason do I feel impelled to direct my incessant plea in particular to the followers of the Faith in the United States and Canada to arise and play their part, while there is yet time, and not to allow their earnest strivings to be swamped and superseded by the self-sacrificing heroism of the multitude of their brethren in Persia. Again I feel the urge to remind you one and all of the necessity of keeping ever in mind this fundamental verity that the efficacy of the spiritual forces centering in, and radiating from, the first Maṣḥriqu'l-Aḏḥkár in the West will in a great measure depend upon the extent to which we, the pioneer workers in that land will with clear vision, unquenchable faith, and inflexible determination, resolve to voluntarily abnegate temporal advantages in our support of so meritorious an endeavour. The higher the degree of our renunciation and self-sacrifice, the wider the range of the contributing believers, the more apparent will become the vitalising forces that are to emanate from this unique and sacred Edifice; and the greater, in consequence, the stimulating effect it will exert upon the propagation of the Faith in the days to come. Not by the abundance of our donations, not even by the spontaneity of our efforts, but rather by the degree of self-abnegation which our contributions will entail, can we effectively promote the speedy realisation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's cherished desire. How great our responsibility, how immense our task, how priceless the advantages that we can reap!

I cannot refrain, however, from giving expression to my gratification and appreciation of the substantial and continued support already accorded, and in particular during the past year by the believers in the United States and Canada, under the wise and judicious direction of their elected national representatives, to the Plan of Unified Action, whose declared purpose is to insure, ere the present Bahá'í year comes to a close, the raising of the funds required for the building of the first Unit of the Maṣḥriqu'l-Aḏḥkár. The vigilance and fidelity with which the National Assembly of the United States and Canada has observed its pledge in connection with the limitation of the current administrative expenses of the Cause, and the zeal and ready response manifested by local Assemblies and individual believers to curtail their local and personal expenditures in order to concentrate on the Temple Fund, are worthy of the highest praise, and will deservedly attract the manifold blessings of a loving and bountiful Master. Much indeed has been accomplished during this past year of concentrated and consecrated self-sacrifice for so glorious a purpose. Much more still remains unachieved if we are to vindicate, in

the eyes of an expectant world, the honourable name, the inexhaustible and miraculous vitality of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

In the mid-watches of the night, commemorating the passing of Him Who with His own hands laid the head-cornerstone of His Father's House of Worship in that land, seated within the hallowed precincts of His shrine, and keeping vigil in the company of His closest companions, I have more than once in the midst of my devotions prayerfully remembered those chosen ones of God on whose shoulders has fallen so weighty a responsibility, whose destiny is to bring to full fruition so excellent a heritage. I have recalled on that peaceful and moonlit night, with much emotion and gratitude, the inestimable bounties He lavished while on earth upon you. I have revived in my memory the glowing promises that His unfailing guidance and gracious assistance would continue from His station on high to be showered upon you. I have pictured in my mind that beautiful vision of a Cause unfolded in all its glory which in His immortal writings He has revealed unto you. And with my head upon His threshold, I have prayed and prayed again that we may all prove ourselves worthy disciples of so gracious a Master, that we may, when called unto Him, transmit, undiminished and unimpaired, our share of the immeasurably precious heritage bequeathed by Him to us all.

And in closing, dearly-beloved friends, what more appropriate thought with which to conclude my fervent plea than these pregnant words fallen from the lips of Bahá'u'lláh: "O My friends! I bear witness that the Divine Bounty has been vouchsafed unto you, His Argument has been made manifest, His Proof has been revealed and His Guidance has shone forth upon you. Let it now be seen what your endeavours in the path of renunciation can reveal."

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 6 December 1928²⁵

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the East and West.
Dear fellow-workers,

I desire to convey to you in a few words my impressions of the recently published "Bahá'í World", copies of which I understand, have already, thanks to the assiduous care and indefatigable efforts displayed by the Publishing Committee of the American National Spiritual Assembly, been widely distributed among the Bahá'í countries of East and West.

This unique record of world-wide Bahá'í activity attempts to present to the general public, as well as to the student and scholar, those historical facts and fundamental principles that constitute the distinguishing features of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to this age. I have ever since its inception taken a keen and sustained interest in its development, have personally participated in the collection of its material, the arrangement of its contents, and the close scrutiny of whatever data it contains.

I confidently and emphatically recommend it to every thoughtful and eager follower of the Faith, whether in the East or in the West, whose desire is to place in the hands of the critical and

²⁵. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration."

intelligent inquirer, of whatever class, creed or colour, a work that can truly witness to the high purpose, the moving history, the enduring achievements, the resistless march and infinite prospects of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Eminently readable and attractive in its features, reliable and authoritative in the material it contains, up-to-date, comprehensive and accurate in the mass of information it gives, concise and persuasive in its treatment of the fundamental aspects of the Cause, thoroughly representative in the illustrations and photographs it reveals — it stands unexcelled and unapproached by any publication of its kind in the varied literature of our beloved Cause. It will, without the slightest doubt, if generously and vigorously supported, arouse unprecedented interest among all classes of civilised society.

I earnestly request you, dearly-beloved friends, to exert the utmost effort for the prompt and widespread circulation of a book that so faithfully and vividly portrays, in all its essential features, its far-reaching ramifications and most arresting aspects, the all-encompassing Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Whatever assistance, financial or moral, extended by Bahá'í Spiritual Assemblies and individual believers, to those who have been responsible for such a highly valuable and representative production will, it should be remembered, be directly utilised to advance the interests and reinforce the funds that are being raised in behalf of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, and will indirectly serve to exert a most powerful stimulus in removing the malicious misrepresentations and unfortunate misunderstandings that have so long and so grievously clouded the luminous Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 21 December 1928²⁶

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá!

With feelings of profound sorrow I am moved to address you these few lines mourning the loss which the Cause has undoubtedly sustained by the passing of one who, for many years and in circumstances of exceptional significance, rendered the sacred Threshold distinctive and inestimable services. The hand of Divine Decree has removed, by the death of our talented and dearly-beloved friend, Mr. Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, yet another outstanding figure in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, who, by his brilliant gifts of mind and heart as well as by the divers achievements of his life, has truly enriched the annals of God's immortal Faith.

A pioneer of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh ever since its celestial light first warmed and illuminated the West, he has, by his close association with the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, by his contact with all sections of society, by his scholarly presentation of the history and fundamentals of the Faith, and lastly by his unforgettable share in the settlement of the complex and pressing issues that called for expert assistance in the days following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, achieved a standing which few have as yet attained.

26. Printed also in "Bahá'í Administration."

The days of his spiritual communion with 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His household within the walls of the prison-city of 'Akká, wherein he imbibed the principles which he later so ably expounded to the peoples of the West; his pre-eminent role on his return to Paris in kindling the torch which is destined to shed eternal illumination upon his native land and its people; the links of abiding fellowship which he forged with our Persian brethren in the course of the historic mission entrusted to his charge by our Beloved; the seeds which he scattered far and wide during his subsequent travels to the heart of Asia, throughout India, beyond the remotest villages of Burma and as far as the eastern confines of Indo-China; the able support he lent in its initial and intermediary stages to the case of Bahá'u'lláh's house in Baghdád; his unhesitating intervention with State officials in paving the way for the ultimate emancipation of our Egyptian brethren from the yoke of orthodox Islám; the stimulating encouragement his visit caused to the Bahá'í community of Tunis on the northern shores of Africa; and last but not least the ability and diligence with which he applied himself to the solution of the delicate and vexing problems of the Holy Land in the critical years following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension — all stand out as memorable landmarks in a life that was as varied in its international aspects as it was rich in its spiritual experience.

His gifts of unflinching sympathy and penetrating insight, his wide knowledge and mature experience, all of which he utilised for the glory and propagation of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, will be gratefully remembered by future generations who, as the days go by, will better estimate the abiding value of the responsibilities he shouldered for the introduction and consolidation of the Bahá'í Faith in the Western world.

Suffering as he did in his last days from the effects of a slow and painful illness, he bore heroically his share of the afflictions of the world, and is now in the realms of blissful deliverance partaking his full share of the goodly reward which he certainly deserved. To me, and particularly amid the storm and stress that have agitated my life after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, he was a sustaining and comforting companion, a most valued counsellor, an intimate and trusted friend.

With much emotion and the deepest sense of gratitude I supplicate at the holy Threshold — and request you to join with me in my prayers — for the spiritual advancement in the realms above of a soul who by the sheer merit of the signal services he rendered already deserves to rank highly among the departed faithful.

May he forever rest in peace. Shoghi

Letter of 31 December 1928

Not until harmony and concord are firmly established among the friends of London and Manchester will the Cause advance along sound and progressive lines.

May they be guided and inspired to do His Will and achieve His Purpose.

Shoghi

Letter of 29 August 1929

My dear Mr. Simpson,

I write on behalf of the Guardian with reference to a subject that has lately been raised by the N.S.A. of America, and referred to him — the publication of a revised edition of the “Hidden Words” in England.

Shoghi Effendi has asked me to write to America that in view of the alterations that were lately introduced through the assistance of Miss Rosenberg and Canon Townshend, a new edition of the “Hidden Words” is fully justified and he approves of it. However he does advise that such a publication should not be taken up privately but wholly undertaken by the English N.S.A. and in view of the large stock which the American N.S.A. now holds of the present edition, he would urge that the new edition should be deferred until the American N.S.A. has sold off the bulk of its present stock. In general he would greatly desire and keenly advise better co-operation and co-ordination in the work of the American and English N.S.A. with regard to publication. London, despite its small group has done great work in Bahá'í publications but they must never forget that their market lies unfortunately mainly across the Atlantic....

...I hope you have been able to go to Geneva with Mr. Mills. Yours will be an Englishman's sober and matter of fact talk....

Letter of 27 September 1929²⁷

Guardian wires deeply regrets inability participate personally dedication gathering overjoyed
bright prospects loving good wishes, Shoghi.

Bahá'íyyih (taken from National Spiritual Assembly Minutes of 16 November.)

Letter of 29 November 1929

My dear Mr. Simpson,

Thank you so much for your letter of Sept. 19th and for the copy of the “Hidden Words” you sent me later.

Evidently enough I kept them until our Guardian's arrival and I now hasten to reply.

While he is well pleased with the booklet as it is now produced, Shoghi Effendi wishes me to express his regret that by appearing so soon, it has rendered the sale of a few thousand copies now in the hands of the American Publications Committee, extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Of course the Guardian appreciates your efforts and understands perfectly your desire to have a more correct and a better printed copy of the work on hand. It is with that view that he is

²⁷. On the occasion of the opening of the new Bahá'í Centre on 19 September, at Walmer House, Regent St., London.

sending enclosed a cheque to the value of £19 for which kindly send him leather bound copies exactly like the specimen you sent.

Shoghi Effendi has returned much refreshed and has again taken up his work with renewed strength. He is much hopeful of your new centre in Regent Street or thereabouts, and he trusts that it will mark a turning point in the history of the Cause in England — from happy tea-parties at individual homes, into a group of less personal but eager, active and thoughtful workers co-operating in a common service. It is a basis upon which healthy progress is possible....

Letter of 26 December 1929

Earnestly appeal English friends reinforce heroic exertions American brethren in behalf Maṣhriqu'l-Aḍhkár.

Shoghi

January

1930

(Circa)

Through Mrs. Coles:²⁸ —

“...I am delighted with your new centre, and will pray at the Holy Shrines from the depths of my heart for its progress. Kindly assure my dear English friends of my heartfelt appreciation of their staunchness, their renewed activity, their self-sacrificing endeavours. I will continue to pray for their individual, as well as their collective efforts, from the bottom of my heart.”

Shoghi

Through Miss Challis:²⁹ —

“I rejoice to hear of the new centre in London. I will pray for its extension and growth and for the success of your manifold activities...”

Shoghi

Through his Secretary to Sister Challis: —

“Now that the London centre has been transferred to a better locality we hope it will attract more attention and add to the number of attendants at the meetings. We should however, bear in mind that no matter how important the hall may be — the talks given and the unity manifested are of far greater significance.”

“Shoghi Effendi has a special affection for the English friends, for he has been in their midst and knows most of them personally. He therefore wishes and prays fervently that their number may increase, and that they may render distinguished services to the Cause. Please assure them all of his prayers and extend to them his loving greetings.” (Taken from National Spiritual Assembly Minutes of 8 January 1930)

28.

1.

29.

1.

Letter of 31 January 1930

With regard to change in the official title of the N.S.A. he is pleased that the matter has been definitely decided. (i.e. — “National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the British Isles.”)

In connection with the important question of collating and editing the Master’s Tablets to the friends in the British Isles ... Shoghi Effendi has already wired his reply. (i.e. — Cablegram Haifa February 3 1930 —

“Welcome Townshend’s splendid suggestion regarding collection tablets, advise send originals to him for present.”)

Shoghi Effendi wants me to express his pleasure over such an undertaking, and he sincerely trusts that it will result into a splendid achievement for posterity — a mine of endless knowledge, illumination, and insight into Bahá’í teachings and outlook.

He wishes me to add that whereas he welcomes the work on the Tablets the friends have received from the Master he does not wish anything done on notes taken or personal accounts of visits.

The reason for this is the fear that a set of conflicting accounts of the same topic may crop up in various parts of the world from friends who have drawn largely from their memory, or have based their understanding of the Master’s opinion or words, upon the imperfect, not to say faulty, renderings of the interpreters of those days.

Such accounts are not only impossible to verify but may lead to much perplexity and constitute a set of traditions that may not prove healthy...

Letter of 29 April 1930

Convey convention delegates and friends assembled feast of Riḍván loving appreciation remembrance holy shrines.

Shoghi

Letter of 20 September 1930

The work of collecting and publishing the Tablets is one of the most important tasks that this generation has undertaken, for upon it depends our true understanding of the Cause and its principles. The more we put it off, the more we are apt to lose some of the original writings. Yet important as this task may be, it is fraught with difficulties. The early translations are far from being accurate, no matter who the translator may be. Shoghi Effendi firmly believes that only Tablets with the Master’s signature and in the original tongue should be recognised. Any translations or copies of them fail from having real authority. This shows the importance of

collecting the original Tablets that bear the Master's signature. November 1930 (on the death of Miss Ethel J. Rosenberg, 17 November 1930)

Deeply grieved passing Rosenberg England's outstanding Bahá'í pioneer worker. Memory her glorious service will never die 'Abdu'l-bahá's family join me in expressing heartfelt condolences her brother relatives urge friends hold befitting memorial service.

Shoghi

Editor's Note:

From the end of 1930 until early 1934 there are no records of cables or letters from the Guardian. Indeed there are very few references to the Guardian in the scanty Minutes of the National Assembly of that period. These brief Minutes indicate that only five or six short meetings were held each year.

At the meeting of the National Assembly on 12 June, 1932 it was reported that a reply had been received from Shoghi Effendi in answer to a request from a Mr Wren for some confirmation of the Lambeth Resolution on Peace. Another letter from the Guardian was read during the September 11 meeting and it was recorded that the Assembly endorsed Resolution 26 of the Lambeth Conference, 1930 "with the full sanction of Shoghi Effendi".

Letter of 24 January 1934³⁰

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

At the request of the Guardian I am sending you enclosed the programme of "The New Commonwealth", a society for the promotion of international law and order, having its headquarters in London, and which seems to have a wide and well selected membership. The Guardian wishes the British N.S.A. to consider the possibility of their joining this organisation, and to carefully investigate whether any affiliation with that body involves any political allegiance or may indirectly and eventually lead to participation in any form of political activity. In the contrary case, he strongly advises the N.S.A. to join that organisation, as he feels that in this way the friends can give a wide and effective publicity to the teachings of the Cause. Membership in non-political organisations of this type is, indeed, the best method of teaching indirectly the Message by making useful and frequent contacts with well-known and influential persons who, if not completely won to the Faith, can at least become of some effective use to it.

Trusting that you are in the best of health, and with the assurance of Shoghi Effendi's ardent prayers on your behalf and on behalf of all the friends in London.

Yours in His Service,

³⁰. Addressed to Mrs. Slade.

Letter of 11 February 1934

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge on his behalf the receipt of your letters dated Jan. 20th and Feb. 2nd, 1934, all of which he read with deep interest. He has also received the text of the High Commissioner's reply to your petition.

With regard to the "New Commonwealth" society he would advise the N.S.A. to join it as soon as possible after having carefully ascertained that affiliation with such a body does not involve any political allegiance to any doctrine or group. As you have already stated this organisation is run on non-party lines. It would be, however, advisable that you should find out the real aims and objectives of the society and specially the methods it advocates for the carrying out of its ideals before definitely joining it.

The Guardian hopes that this will give the friends a further opportunity to make new contacts, and to draw more competent and sincere people to the Cause. He is fully alive to the difficulties facing the friends at the present time. But he would urge each and all to work harder than ever, and to persevere in order that the Faith may be better appreciated and understood by the public.

He will continue to supplicate on behalf of you all at the Holy Shrines, so that Bahá'u'lláh may sustain you in your efforts to spread His message.

With best wishes for Mr. Slade and yourself,
Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

May the Almighty bless richly your continued and self-sacrificing endeavours, restore your health, cheer your heart, and enable you to promote effectively the vital interests of our beloved Faith.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 5 May 1934

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

I wish to thank you in the name of the Guardian for your deeply appreciated letter of April 24th, as well as for the article on Jerusalem which appeared in "Time and Tide", all of which he greatly enjoyed reading.

In regard to Mr. Townshend's book³¹ he wishes me to renew his request that your N.S.A. should seriously consider the ways and means for the speedy publication of this highly valuable work,

³¹. "Promise of All Ages"

the spread of which cannot but give an unprecedented publicity to the Faith. He values the efforts that have thus far been exerted to this end and particularly appreciates the careful attention you have given the matter and hopes that as a result of these combined efforts something truly substantial will be achieved.

Shoghi Effendi feels rather surprised that no acknowledgment has thus far been made of his last general letter, Feb. 8,³² to the believers of the West, a copy of which was forwarded to you as secretary of the N.S.A. Will you please be kind enough to inform him whether the said document has reached you safely.

With the renewed assurance of his best wishes and of his continued supplications for the speedy development of the Cause in your country.

Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

With the assurance of my continued prayers for the extension of the range of your splendid activities and for the success of your constant and high endeavours,

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 15 May 1934

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Guardian has received and deeply appreciated your message dated May 7th, and was gratified to learn of the results of your national Bahá'í elections. He wishes me to convey to you, and to the remaining officers of the N.S.A. his hearty greetings, and his best wishes for the success and continued expansion of your Bahá'í activities in this year. He is fervently praying for your guidance and assistance in all the various and historic steps you are taking for the spread and the consolidation of the Movement throughout Great Britain.

What the Guardian would strongly urge your National Assembly to do in the next few months is a renewed and decisive effort for the speedy publication of Mr. Townshend's recent book on the Cause. Through the reading of such a challenging and scholarly work many will, undoubtedly, be awakened and stimulated, while others will be infuriated to the extent of virulently attacking the Faith. The unprecedented publicity which the Cause will be thus receiving will in itself constitute an important step towards a wider and fuller recognition of the Movement by distinguished personalities, in both intellectual and social circles. Mr. Townshend's book is, indeed, very timely, and through it the friends and the non-believers will be given a new vision of the Cause. Shoghi Effendi is hoping that, as a result of his repeated requests, your N.S.A. will be stimulated to renew and persevere in their efforts in this vitally important matter.

³². Published under the title, "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh".

With the renewed assurance of his prayers on your behalf and on behalf of the friends in London.

Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker,

I will fervently pray that the obstacles that stand in your way and which hinder the publication of Canon Townshend's splendid work will be completely and speedily surmounted. I anticipate an outburst of interest and an unprecedented revival of activity as a direct result of the circulation of this notable work — a work which I trust will prove a landmark in the history of the Faith in your land.

Shoghi

Letter of 2 July 1934

Dear Mrs. Slade,

Shoghi Effendi is pleased to learn, from your letters of June 11th and 16th, of the new possibilities for the publication of Canon Townshend's book. Realising the number and force of the difficulties which have thus far stood in your way, he cannot indeed but feel gratified that you have at last been able to overcome some of them. He hopes that through your determination to have this valuable booklet published without any further delay some valuable and permanent result will be achieved, and that a few people of capacity and influence will be attracted to the Faith.

In case no publishing firm accepts your offer for the printing of the booklet, the Guardian approves that the N.S.A. should undertake the publication.

Hoping to hear very soon some more definite and encouraging news about this matter, and with the Guardian's best wishes for you and for your collaborators in the N.S.A.

Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

With the renewed assurance of my loving and continued prayers for the success of your unsparing efforts for the spread of His Faith and the consolidation of its institutions,

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 11 July 1934

Dear Mrs. Slade,

On behalf of the Guardian I wish to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and to assure you once more of his deepfelt appreciation of your highly-valued efforts for the publication of Canon Townshend's booklet on the Cause. He hopes that the believers the world over will co-operate with your N.S.A. for giving the work the widest publicity possible, and by ordering as many copies as they can for distribution in their own communities. They will surely appreciate, and draw great benefit from, this original and beautifully-written essay of Mr. Townshend, and they will certainly do their best to make it known by the outside world.

Shoghi Effendi wishes you to send him, as soon as the book is published, 150 copies for his library. He will also place some of them in Bahá'u'lláh's Mansion at Bahjí for the benefit of the Bahá'í as well as non-Bahá'í visitors.

With the renewed assurance of his best wishes and of his continued prayers on your behalf.

Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

May the Almighty bless your incessant and meritorious endeavours and crown them with unprecedented success,

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 2 September 1934

Dear Mrs. Slade,

The Guardian has received and read with much interest your letter of August 9th. It gives him pleasure to learn that the agreement for the publication of Canon Townshend's book has already been signed, and he is looking forward to see the book out of the press within the next few weeks. He hopes that your communications with the American N.S.A. for bringing out an American edition of this same book are proceeding satisfactorily, as he has every reason to believe that the friends in America will do their best to secure for that important publication the widest demand and publicity possible.

Shoghi Effendi would advise that you should also communicate with the N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís of Australia and New Zealand, and with other English speaking Assemblies, groups and individuals, informing them of this new publication, and asking for their assistance in creating for it as wide a demand as possible.

With his renewed greetings and best wishes to you and to all the friends in London,

Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker,

I have read your letter of May 22 and Aug. 9 with joy and thankfulness as both eloquently testify to your inflexible resolve to promote by every means in your power the best interests of our beloved Cause. I trust and pray that the effect of the publication of the "Promise" will be such as to gladden your heart and reinforce the constant efforts which you have so devotedly exerted in recent years for the propagation of the Faith. I will soon send the cheque for the books I have asked you to send me and which I will distribute as widely as I possibly can.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 30 September 1934

Dear Mrs. Slade,

The Guardian has directed me to thank you for your welcome letter dated September fifth. The news of the passing away of Mr. Simpson has deeply grieved his heart. He hopes and fervently prays that the Beloved may fully reward him for all the services which he has rendered the Faith in Great Britain, and particularly for the active part which he took during the early days of his association with the Movement, in establishing the Cause of the Administration in that land. May the Almighty enable his soul to progress spiritually in the other world, and may the memory of his earlier services to the Faith sustain and encourage the friends in their labours for the propagation of the Cause in Great Britain.

The Guardian has already written Mr. ... concerning Mr. ... gift to the Cause and has expressed his profound appreciation of the suggestion made by him to have his property registered in the name of your National Assembly. This step, he is convinced, would be of great help to your Assembly, in that it would assist in enabling it to obtain full legal recognition from the authorities and thus become an effective and powerful organ for the administration of Bahá'í affairs throughout the British Isles. But, if your Assembly feels that such a step would be premature, he suggests that you should have the property registered in the name of the Palestine Branch of the American N.S.A., until such time as your own Assembly would be in a position to acquire full legal recognition from the British authorities, and will be entitled to hold property in Palestine. In the meantime the American N.S.A. can issue a statement testifying that this property is registered only temporarily in their name, and that as soon as the incorporation is effected they will have it transferred to the name of the National Assembly of the British Isles.

Concerning the material which your Assembly has been requested to provide for the writing of a history of the Cause in England, the Guardian feels the advisability of making as few references to individuals as possible. He further suggests that emphasis be placed on two major events, the Master's visit to England, and the publication of Dr. Esslemont's "New Era" which, indeed, constitutes a real landmark in the history of the Faith in that country.

There is another point to which the Guardian wishes to draw the attention of your N.S.A. It is the importance which national Bahá'í summer schools are acquiring in the development and spread of the Cause. Two of these, as you know, have already been established and are now regularly functioning, that of America with its three branches in Green Acre, Lou-Helen Ranch and Geyserville, and that of Esslingen in Germany which in the last two years has considerably

developed, and has attracted the attention of non-German believers throughout the Bahá'í world. The Guardian suggests that pending the establishment of a similar Bahá'í Summer School in England, your Assembly should take into consideration the most effective way in which it can co-operate with the German friends in furthering the interests of their summer school at Esslingen. Meanwhile an effort should be made by our English believers to take the necessary steps for the formation of a similar institution in Great Britain. Many Bahá'í travellers in Europe, mostly American, have had this summer the opportunity of attending meetings and classes of the friends in Esslingen. Mr. and Mrs. Greven, Mrs. Collins, Mr. and Mrs. Bishop representing the Bahá'í Bureau at Geneva. Bahá'ís from Austria and Persia attended. Miss Jack and Mrs. Gregory came specially from the Balkans, and gave detailed reports on the conditions of the Cause in the Balkans. In view of this international importance which the Esslingen summer school is thus acquiring, at least in Europe, the Guardian feels the advisability of your National Assembly being represented at these important gatherings.

In closing I wish to ask you to convey the Guardian's greetings and love to Mr. Asgharzádeh who, as you write, seems to be suffering from ill-health. Will you kindly assure him of Shoghi Effendi's prayers for his complete recovery, and express his appreciation of his continued labours for the Cause in London.

With warmest greetings to you and to all the friends,

Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker:

The utmost effort, I feel, should be exerted to ensure the incorporation of the British National Assembly. Should the authorities require a document setting forth the laws and principles governing the activities of the community, the text of the Declaration of Trust and By-laws now operating in America and adopted by the National Assemblies of Egypt, India and 'Iráq should be presented to them. The text is published in Vol. IV of the "Bahá'í World" and constitutes a pattern for all national Bahá'í constitutions. I would also greatly welcome close collaboration by the believers in England in the development of the very useful and promising summer school recently initiated in Esslingen and which has served this summer as a meeting place of teachers and representatives in Europe.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 22 November 1934

Dear Bahá'í Sister,

Your letters dated September 21st and November 16th have been received and their contents carefully noted by the Guardian.

He has also received the one hundred and fifty copies of "The Promise of All Ages" and wishes me to thank you for them, and to renew his appreciation of your painstaking efforts for the publication of this most timely and singularly penetrating book on the Cause. He hopes and prays that your labours in this connexion may be abundantly rewarded. He has already sent Mr. Townshend a cheque of thirty-five pounds on account of the 150 copies of his book. He hopes the sum will reach him very soon. He would deeply appreciate if you kindly send him copies of the letters of acknowledgment which you receive from those to whom the book has been offered, as in this way he can more or less know of the reaction which the book has produced on the mind of the intellectual public in London and elsewhere.

With regard to Mr. Townshend's suggestion to procure the copyright of the portraits of the Master taken in Paris, Shoghi Effendi fully approves the idea, and would advise you to write the Paris Assembly about it and to try to enlist their co-operation and help in this matter.

The Guardian also wishes to express his whole-hearted approval of the steps your National Assembly is taking for incorporating their Assembly as a duly recognised religious body in England and throughout the British Isles. He would suggest that in case the authorities refuse to recognise the N.S.A. as a religious society you should insist on having it temporarily registered as a commercial body or under any other designation. He requests you to send him copies of the registration documents as soon as they are ready, as he intends to take the necessary steps for the establishment of a Palestine Branch of your National Assembly similar to that which the American N.S.A. now possesses in Palestine.

With his fervent prayers and loving greetings to you and to all the friends in London,

Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker:

The books you have sent me are being widely distributed and I am sure they will serve to stimulate genuine interest in the fundamentals of the Faith. A special and sustained effort, I feel, should be exerted by your National Assembly in order to ensure that copies of this brilliant production may reach most, if not all the Bahá'í centres throughout the East and West and may be made accessible to the most influential leaders and organisations in every continent of the Globe. The success it can achieve largely depends upon the publicity which the continued and organised endeavours of your Assembly can now accord it.

Praying for your success and protection.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 17 December 1934

Dear Mrs. Slade,

The Guardian has directed me to thank you for your welcome letter dated December 8th, and also for the undated one just received.

In regard to his money order for the 150 copies of the "Promise of All Ages", he wishes you to offer the remaining sum to your National Assembly for the purposes of their national fund.

He is pleased to learn that the editor of "The Times' Literary Supplement" has accepted to have Canon Townshend's book reviewed in his paper. He trusts that the result will be such as to stimulate many people to buy this volume, and to carefully and seriously study and meditate upon its contents.

With reference to Mr. ... property on Mt. Carmel, the Guardian specially requests you to proceed quickly in the matter of your National Assembly's incorporation so as to enable him to establish a branch of that Assembly in Palestine and thus make possible the registration of the land in question in the name of the British N.S.A. The land is completely safe-guarded at present.

He would deeply appreciate if you send him photostatic copies of the registration documents as soon as they will be ready.

In this connection, the Guardian wishes me to draw once more your attention to the importance of following, in the adoption of your Assembly's constitution, complete and exact wording of the text of the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of the American N.S.A., with due consideration however to all local conditions which may necessitate some minor departure from the original American copy.

It will interest you to know that the N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís of India and Burma have carefully followed the constitutions adopted by the American believers, both in the local and the national sphere, and have succeeded in registering their National Assembly as a legal body empowered to administer the affairs of the Cause throughout India and Burma. The Guardian is now engaged in establishing a branch of the Indian N.S.A. in Palestine. The National Assemblies of Egypt, 'Iráq and Persia have likewise adopted without any alteration whatever the text of the American constitution as a pattern for their local as well as national regulations and by-laws.

Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

May the Almighty enable you to surmount all the obstacles that stand in your path and accomplish the great project which you are initiating, and establish your manifold administrative activities on a sound, permanent and unassailable basis.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 27 December 1934

Dear Mrs. Slade,

The Guardian has directed me to send you enclosed a copy of the Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India and Burma.

You will find, after going carefully over the text, that except for Article VIII which is being amended, it is fully identical with the constitution adopted by the American N.S.A., and as such is in close conformity with the principles laid down by the Guardian concerning national Bahá'í constitutions throughout the world.

He feels it his duty, now that your N.S.A. is taking steps for its formal registration in the Government, to earnestly request you to adopt, in its entirety and without any alteration, the full text of the constitution of the American N.S.A. so as to maintain the necessary uniformity in the essential principles of the Administrative Order. Whatever is not specified in the text of this national constitution, the Guardian has already explained to the National Assemblies of America, India, Egypt, 'Irâq and Persia, is to be left to the discretion of these Assemblies. He does not object if there be any differences in these secondary matters, but he feels that he should insist on uniformity in essentials. Diversity in unity — which is so vital and basic a principle of the Movement — would thereby be maintained.

With heartiest greetings to you and to all the friends, Yours in His Service,

Letter of 15 February 1935

Dear Mrs. Slade,

I am directed by the Guardian to thank you for your letters of the fourth of January last and of the seventh of this month, all of which he has read with deepest interest.

He was, however, grieved to learn of the slight indisposition in your health, and particularly of the serious illness of Miss Elsie Lea. He is praying for you both at the Holy Shrines that you may be given the necessary strength to resume your work for the Cause in London.

With regard to the situation in Persia, it is pretty bad indeed. Conditions have not improved in the slightest degree, and the friends are still suffering from the intolerable burden of restrictions imposed upon them by the Authorities. The Guardian does not advise your Assembly to enter into detailed correspondence with any of the friends there, but sees no objection if you send them copies of your News Letters....

The friends will no doubt appreciate the possibilities which the admission of so distinguished a person as ... in their midst will have for the Cause. This new development should, indeed, encourage and stimulate them to persevere, nay to redouble their efforts for the extension of their teaching activities throughout Great Britain. The future of the Cause in that country is, indeed, bright. But the friends should also exert their utmost, lest through neglect and apathy its progress be impeded. Now that such a wonderful opportunity has presented itself to them, it is their responsibility to take their full chance and to make a renewed attempt to extend and further consolidate their teaching work in London and throughout the British Isles.

Shoghi Effendi is fervently praying that through the confirmations and blessings of Bahá'u'lláh you may all be assisted in effectively attaining this objective.

Yours in His Service,

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker:

I am so pleased to learn of the splendid response of ... to the call of our Faith, and would urge you to make a special effort, in conjunction with the friends and Assemblies in England, to aid him to deepen his faith and extend the scope of his valued activities. I will pray for the success of your efforts and the realisation of your highest hopes.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 7 April 1935

Dear Mrs. Slade,

Shoghi Effendi has received your letters dated March 8th and April 1st, and wishes me to thank you for them.

With regard to the incorporation of the British N.S.A., he is sorry, indeed, that the authorities have definitely refused your application. He is, nevertheless, confident that your Assembly's efforts in this connection will, in due time, bear fruit, and that the officials concerned will gradually come to alter their views regarding the nature and significance of the Movement.

In the meantime, the Guardian can have ... property on Mt. Carmel transferred to the name of the Palestine Branch of the American N.S.A.

With the renewed expression of Shoghi Effendi's deepfelt appreciation of your services, and with his loving greetings and best wishes to you and to the friends in London...

[From the Guardian:]

Dear co-worker,

I grieve to learn of the refusal of the Board of Trade to incorporate the National Assembly, but I feel certain that the friends will not allow this setback to damp their zeal or to weaken their determination to prosecute the work they have so devotedly undertaken. It may indeed prove a blessing in disguise, and I would urge the friends to persevere and not to lose heart and to rest assured that our beloved Faith will ultimately conquer.

With my best wishes for all of you,
Shoghi

Letter of 9 December 1935

Dear Mrs. Slade,

The Guardian has just received letters from Sir Herbert Samuel and Sir Francis Younghusband inviting him to attend and present a paper on the subject: How to promote the spirit of World Fellowship through religion at the projected conference of the "World Fellowship Through Religion" to be held in London this coming July.

As he is unable to be present at this meeting, he has thought best to ask the British N.S.A. to act as his representatives, and to appoint someone to read this paper which he is asking Mr. Townshend to prepare for that occasion. He is specially writing Mr. Townshend about it, and urging him to have the statement ready by the end of January, when it has to be handed by your N.S.A. to Sir Francis Younghusband according to his request from the Guardian.

He also thinks it necessary for your Assembly to communicate as promptly as you can with Sir F. Younghusband, and to express your readiness and pleasure to participate in the activities and deliberations of the World Fellowship conference.

In view of the vital importance of this gathering, at which representatives of various religious organisations will be present, and specially as Sir Herbert Samuel has himself expressed the desire that the Cause should be authoritatively and adequately represented there, Shoghi Effendi would urge the British N.S.A. to make every effort to fully avail themselves of this splendid opportunity for giving the Faith in England a fresh and unprecedented impetus.

Wishing you complete success in your labours in this connection, and awaiting the news of the progress of the action that you will take in this matter,

Yours in His Service,

Letter of 26 December 1935

Dear Mrs. Slade,

This letter is to confirm the one I wrote you nearly two weeks ago at the direction of the Guardian regarding the projected World Congress of Faiths to be held in London next summer.

As stated in that letter, the Guardian has whole-heartedly accepted the Committee's invitation, as expressed through both Sir Herbert Samuel and Sir Francis Younghusband, to have the Cause authoritatively represented at the above-mentioned Congress.

He now wishes to urge again your N.S.A. to speed up the matter of preparing the address which he has requested Mr. Townshend to prepare for that occasion. He is also urging Mr. Townshend to have the address ready for presentation to the Committee towards the end of next January.

The Guardian hopes that the N.S.A. will do its very best to speed up this matter.

With his renewed thanks to you and to the friends, Yours in His Service,

Letter of 13 March 1936

Dear Mrs. Slade,

The Guardian has just sent you a cable asking you to send him, as soon as you can, two copies of the photograph of the N.S.A. of the British Isles of the year 1935–36 for publication in Volume Six of the “Bahá’í World”. He hopes there will be no delay in forwarding to him these photographs.

Thanking you in anticipation,
Yours in His Service,

Letter of 16 March 1936

Dear Mrs. Slade,

The Guardian has been very pleased to learn, from the report you have submitted for the next issue of the “Bahá’í World” regarding the activities of the Cause in England, that the centre in London has been given by the authorities the status of a place of worship, and that the Movement has been registered as a definite religious community.

If there are any documents or any letters you have obtained from the Government in connection with such a registration will you kindly send him reproductions of them as promptly as you can for publication in the next issue of the “Bahá’í World” (Vol. VI).

With many thanks and warmest greetings, Yours in His Service,

Letter of April 1936

The National Teaching Committee of the N.S.A. of the British Isles.

Dear Bahá’í Friends,

The Guardian has read with profoundest interest the second number of the “Teaching Bulletin” issued by the N.S.A. of the Bahá’ís of the British Isles, and feels highly gratified at the steps your committee is taking for the inauguration of a new teaching campaign throughout England. This is surely a clear evidence of the new spirit animating the friends in that country, and a further revelation of their intense desire to give the cause of teaching a fresh and unprecedented stimulus. There is undoubtedly no higher call than that of bringing the Message to a world tormented and torn on every side by the forces of destructive materialism. It is for us to realise the full measure of responsibility that has been laid upon our shoulders in this matter, and having attained full consciousness of our responsibility to unitedly arise to contribute all that we can towards its discharge.

It is Shoghi Effendi’s hope that under the guidance and encouragement of the N.S.A. your committee’s work will steadily progress, and that the results achieved will be such as to create further confidence and arouse fresh hopes in your activities among all the friends throughout the British Isles. He is looking eagerly forward to learn more of your activities, and to witness

further signs of the effectiveness, unity and power with which you are striving to diffuse the Teachings and principles of the Cause.

May the Almighty ever bless and sustain you in your labours....

Letter of 27 April 1936 (Convention)

Deeply appreciate message fervently praying success deliberations love.

Shoghi

Letter of 3 May 1936

The National Teaching Committee of the N.S.A. of the British Isles.

Dear friends and co-workers,

The Guardian has instructed me to convey to you his deep gratitude for your welcome message of April 21st. He has been made truly happy by its perusal and wishes me to express once more his genuine appreciation of the remarkable work which your committee is accomplishing for the spread of the Message throughout England. He wishes you full success in your labours, and is praying to Bahá'u'lláh to guide and assist you in every step you are taking for the dissemination of His Teachings and the establishment of His Faith in your country.

His chief advice to you is perseverance without which, he strongly feels, no success is attainable. The difficulties in your way are undoubtedly manifold and not always easy to overcome. But provided you persevere, and face with courage, full faith and confidence such obstacles you can be sure of attaining the goal you have set yourselves to achieve.

Now is the beginning of your work. And as in the beginning of every task you are bound to meet all sorts of difficulties. The more you strive to overcome these, the greater will be your reward, and the nearer you will get to that glorious success which, as repeatedly promised by Bahá'u'lláh, must needs crown the efforts of all those who, whole-heartedly and with pure detachment, strive to work for the spread and establishment of His Cause.

With cordial greetings and every good wish....

[From the Guardian:]

With the renewed assurance of my loving and constant prayers for the extension of your meritorious activities and services,

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 9 May 1936

Dear Mr. Hofman,³³

The Guardian has duly received your letter of April 29th written at the direction of the N.S.A. of the British Isles, and he wishes me to thank you for it.

He has learned with deep satisfaction of the result of your national elections, and has instructed me to convey to each and every member of your newly elected assembly his hearty congratulations and sincere good wishes. He hopes that the officers of the N.S.A. will be fully guided in the discharge of their manifold and heavy responsibilities, and that through their collective and sustained efforts the Cause will receive a fresh and unprecedented impetus throughout England. He is praying from the very depth of his heart on behalf of you all, entreating Bahá'u'lláh to ever bless, sustain and guide you in your labours.

The Guardian would deeply appreciate receiving the minutes of the N.S.A. meetings, and hopes that you will send these to him as regularly as you can.

With his renewed and most loving greetings, also to the members of the N.S.A....

[From the Guardian:]

Wishing you the fullest success in your high and deeply appreciated endeavours,

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 3 September 1936

Beloved Bahá'í Brother,

Your welcome letter of August 7th together with the enclosed programme of the English Bahá'í Summer School and Mrs. Bishop's notes on the Bahá'í session of the World Fellowship of Faiths Congress have all duly arrived and been read with sustained interest and deepest appreciation by our beloved Guardian.

33.

David

Hofman

A member of the Universal House of Justice since its formation in 1963, he became a Bahá'í in the Maxwell home in Montreal in 1933, when he began corresponding with the Guardian. Returning to England in 1936, he was elected to the British National Spiritual Assembly and was the Secretary during some of its most crucial years. He was the first Manager of its Publishing Trust and played a vital rôle on the National Teaching and Africa Committees of the Six and Two Year Plans. He served almost continuously on the National Assembly until his election to the Universal House of Justice. David and Marion Hofman pioneered during the Six Year Plan in Northampton, Birmingham and Oxford and during the Ten Year Crusade in Cardiff and Watford. Throughout his years of devoted service to the British community he was always in demand as a most accomplished speaker and convincing teacher.

He has been particularly pleased to read Mrs. Bishop's report which is truly illuminating and highly encouraging. The Cause has no doubt been well represented at the Congress, and the attendants must have surely been deeply impressed by the manner in which the Message was introduced and presented by both the Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í speakers.

The Guardian feels particularly grateful for the share which your N.S.A., as well as your distinguished and able co-workers Mrs. Bishop and Madame Orlova have contributed towards the success of the Bahá'í meeting. May the noble efforts which you all have so unitedly and so successfully exerted in this connection serve to attract, even as a magnet, the blessings of God and His favours upon the entire community of the believers throughout the British Isles.

With every good wish and hearty greetings to you, and to your fellow-members in the N.S.A....

[From the Guardian:]

Dearest co-workers,

I rejoice to learn of the splendid work that has recently been achieved. Your accomplishments should spur you on to achieve still greater results in both the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í service. My prayers will be offered on your behalf. The work in which you are so devotedly engaged is near and dear to my heart. Persevere and never feel disheartened.

Affectionately,
Shoghi

Letter of 17 October 1936

Dear Mr. Hofman,

I am directed by our beloved Guardian to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter dated August 25th with the enclosed minutes of the British N.S.A.'s last meeting. He has read them all with utmost care and profoundest appreciation.

Regarding your Summer School; he is indeed grateful to your Assembly for the great success that has attended your efforts for the formation of this institution, the teaching value of which for England cannot be overestimated. He wishes, in particular, to offer his most sincere thanks to the Bahá'í youth group in London for their remarkable share in making the school such an outstanding success this year. This has been certainly a bold undertaking, considering the limited number and resources of the believers in England. But the results obtained are highly encouraging and augur well for the future of this first English Bahá'í Summer School. The unity, courage and whole-hearted loyalty of the friends have enabled them to boldly face and successfully overcome the difficulties and obstacles which may have first appeared, to many at least, to be quite unsurmountable. The Guardian would, therefore, urge all the believers to persevere in their efforts for raising the standard, both intellectual and spiritual, of their Summer School and to heighten its prestige in the eyes of the friends, and of the general non-Bahá'í public outside. The institution of the Summer School constitutes a vital and inseparable part of any teaching campaign, and as such ought to be given the full importance it deserves in the

teaching plans and activities of the believers. It should be organised in such a way as to attract the attention of the non-believers to the Cause and thus become an effective medium for teaching. Also it should afford the believers themselves an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the Teachings, through lectures and discussions and by means of close and intense community life.

As regards the N.S.A.'s request concerning Mrs. Bishop's teaching services in England, the Guardian wishes you to assure your fellow-members of his hearty approval of their suggestion that she should extend her stay in your country for another year. He is advising her to visit Geneva for a brief period and then return immediately back to England....

[From the Guardian:]

Dearest co-worker,

I wish to congratulate in person the English believers, and particularly the members of the youth group, on their splendid achievements. The activities they have initiated, the perseverance, zeal and fidelity they have increasingly manifested, the plans they have conceived and the obstacles they have already overcome, rejoice my heart and arouse fresh hopes and expectations within me. I will continue to pray for their success. Rest assured and persevere.

Affectionately,
Shoghi

Letter of 2 December 1936

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your kind letter of November 22nd with enclosures have been read with deep interest and profound gratitude by our beloved Guardian, and their contents have imparted fresh encouragement to his heart. He has also received your communication of the 28th September with the accompanying minutes of the British N.S.A. and the report of your Summer School, and is indeed sorry for the long delay in thanking you for them.

Regarding Mr. Townshend, the Guardian is pleased to hear that he has written you, and offered a method whereby he could be freed to serve the Faith. He is confident that your N.S.A. will give this matter their most careful and sympathetic consideration, and fervently hopes that they will, as a result, be able to find some way that would relieve Mr. Townshend of his many domestic cares and troubles which, as you know only too well, seriously impede the progress and expansion of his activities for the Faith.

It is a matter of deep regret, indeed, that our dear friend's material position is such as to make it quite impossible for him to devote his full time and energies to the Cause. The friends in Great Britain, who are in special need of his able assistance in their teaching work, should, therefore, consider it their responsibility to find some solution to this urgent problem facing one of their most distinguished and competent fellow-workers.

Any suggestion which your N.S.A. could offer would certainly be deeply appreciated by Mr. Townshend, and the Guardian would be only too pleased to assist your Assembly in insuring the success of any plan you may propose and decide upon in this matter.

Wishing you full and continued success in your work, and assuring you again of Shoghi Effendi's fervent prayers on your behalf and on behalf of your fellow-members in the N.S.A....

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and prized co-worker,

Your splendid collaboration with the English believers is, as I am gradually and increasingly realising it, infusing a new life and a fresh determination into individuals and assemblies which will prove of the utmost benefit to our beloved Cause. Persevere in your remarkable efforts and historic achievements. With the aid of Mrs. Bishop an unprecedented and most powerful impetus will I am sure be given to the onward march of the Cause of God. I am deeply grateful to you.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 10 January 1937

Beloved Bahá'í Brother,

The Guardian has instructed me to inform you of the receipt of your communications of the 6th and 24th December and of the 1st January, all of which he has read, together with their enclosures, with sustained interest. Kindly convey to your fellow-members in the N.S.A. his appreciation and gratitude for the truly valuable work they are accomplishing for the promotion of the Faith in Great Britain. He is continually and fervently praying for the guidance and success of the plans they have recently initiated for the extension of the teaching work and for the consolidation of the administrative institutions of the Cause in their land.

The Guardian is specially praying for the success of your N.S.A.'s project in connection with Mr. Townshend's problem. Much as he realises the financial difficulties involved in such a plan, he is nevertheless convinced that if every individual believer, no matter how limited his resources, pledges himself to give it his whole-hearted and continued support it will eventually, though after considerable effort and self-sacrifice, become effective and successful. The opportunity has now come for the friends in Great Britain to demonstrate the measure of their devotion to the Cause, as well as their capacity to maintain, consolidate and extend its nascent administrative institutions in that land. The occasion calls for a tremendous amount of sacrifice, of perseverance and united labour on the part of the friends, and for the self-same devotion that characterised the nation-wide efforts of the American believers for the building up of their beloved Temple at Wilmette. May the friends in Great Britain, despite their limited numbers and resources, be guided and assisted to successfully meet this challenge. Their triumph will assuredly draw upon them the blessings and confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh, and may prove to be the signal for fresh conquests and unprecedented developments in the Cause throughout the British Isles.

Regarding the New Commonwealth Society, the Guardian does not wish the friends, whether individually or collectively, to affiliate themselves with this and other kindred organisations, in view of the fact that the aims and ideals upheld by such bodies do not entirely conform to the Teachings, and hence there is always the possibility of creating complications for the Cause by accepting membership in them.

However, as the New Commonwealth Society is nearer to the Cause than perhaps any other organisation of its kind, the Guardian would advise the friends to participate, occasionally and in an informal manner, in its activities, to attend some of its meetings, and to contribute articles to its publications. Association, as you certainly realise, is quite different from affiliation, and it is the latter which the Guardian wishes the friends to strictly avoid.

With his warmest greetings and sincere good wishes to you and your fellow-members in the N.S.A....

[From the Guardian:]

With the renewed assurance of my continued, my loving and ardent prayers for the expansion and the consolidation of the splendid work which the English believers are unitedly accomplishing for the furtherance of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh,

Your true brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 24 February 1937

Beloved Bahá'í Brother,

I am directed by the Guardian to acknowledge the receipt of your welcome communications of the 19th January and the enclosed latest number of the "Bahá'í Journal" issued by the British N.S.A., and to transmit to you, and through you to your distinguished collaborators in that body, his admiration and gratitude for the quick action you have been prompted to take in connection with the formation of a Publishing Company under the direction of your National Assembly.

The plan you have conceived is certainly bold, knowing how limited are the number and resources of the believers in England. But it nevertheless offers great possibilities of development and success, provided your Assembly gives it full moral and financial support, and succeeds in stimulating the interest and obtaining the assistance of the believers outside Great Britain for its immediate and effective prosecution.

In this connection, he wishes you to assure the N.S.A. of his whole-hearted and full approval of their suggestion to solicit subscriptions from the Bahá'ís of those countries who normally order literature from them. He feels it, indeed, to be the duty of every believer who has the means, and has also the interest of the Cause at heart, to assist in any capacity, and to any extent he can, in carrying out the British N.S.A.'s project. Nothing can demonstrate more effectively the spirit of solidarity and self-sacrifice which should animate the friends than their response to this call.

Aside from the fact that London is the heart of the British Empire, and as such commands an importance which few other centres in the world can equal and should consequently be raised to the status of one of the leading outposts of the Faith, it should be stated that now that the Administrative Order has at last been firmly established and is being increasingly consolidated in that centre, it is the supreme obligation of all the believers, both in Great Britain and other European countries, to assist by every means in hastening this internal development and growth. And it is quite evident that the formation of a Publishing Company along the lines suggested by the British N.S.A. is the greatest asset to such a development and expansion of the Cause in London and throughout England as a whole.

It is the Guardian's hope that the response which the friends will make to this project will be such as to mark the inauguration of a new era of expansion of the Cause throughout the British Isles, and the rest of the far-flung British Empire. He would appeal to every believer to carefully ponder upon the responsibilities which he is called upon to shoulder in order to meet this supreme and vital obligation.

Letter of 5 March 1937³⁴

Dear and prized co-worker,

Your subsequent letters dated Jan. 29th enclosing the minutes of the National Assembly meeting, and February 26th enclosing copy of the Bahá'í Journal No. 5 have also reached me and have filled my heart with joy and gratitude for the splendid services of your Assembly and the efforts they are systematically and vigorously exerting for the initiation, the expansion and consolidation of Bahá'í administrative activities and enterprises at this auspicious stage in the evolution of the Faith in your country. I fully approve the publication in your Journal of the passages quoted in your letter of February 26th. I am enclosing the sum of £50 as my contribution towards the Fund which is being raised for the establishment of the Publishing Company for the success of which I cherish the brightest hopes. I will especially pray for the removal of every obstacle that may impede its formation and development, and for the realisation of your highest hopes in this connection. Persevere in your great enterprise, and rest assured that the almighty power of Bahá'u'lláh will, if you remain steadfast in your purpose, enable you to attain your goal.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 25 March 1937

Announce assemblies celebration marriage beloved guardian imperishable honour bestowed upon handmaid of Bahá'u'lláh Rúhíyyih Khánum miss Mary Maxwell.

(Sgd. Zíáíyyih, mother of the guardian)

³⁴. Added as footnote to letter of February 24th.

Letter of 2 April 1937

Greatly value message abiding love.

Shoghi

Letter of 1 May 1937

Dear Mr. Hofman,

I am charged by our beloved Guardian to acknowledge the receipt of your communications of March 21st, 31st and of April 22nd with enclosures.

He has received and read with particular interest the latest issue of the Journal issued by the British N.S.A. and is indeed happy to realise that the teaching work, now so ably reinforced by the valuable support extended to it by dear Mrs. Bishop, is steadily progressing in England. He is most pleased over the progress of the Devonshire Group, and wishes you to assure its members, and particularly Mrs. Stevens,³⁵ of his deep appreciation of their efforts for the propagation of the Message in that highly promising centre from which, he hopes, the light of the Cause will radiate throughout South Western England which has heretofore remained closed to the Faith. He would urge your N.S.A. to continue giving your attention to the problem of finding ways and means to further widen the interest that has been aroused, and is fervently praying that your efforts in this connection may bear the richest and most satisfactory results.

Concerning the N.S.A.'s Publishing Fund; the Guardian has learned with satisfaction that the friends are gradually awakening to the realisation that it constitutes an invaluable support to the extension of the teaching work throughout the British Isles. He hopes that the flow of contributions will steadily increase, so as to enable your Assembly to carry out its important project. He is rejoiced to hear that you have taken the necessary steps to have the Company legally established — which step, he hopes, will pave the way for the registration of the N.S.A. as an independent religious organisation....

[From the Guardian:]

With the assurance of my continued prayers for the realisation of your highest hopes, and for the uninterrupted progress and consolidation of your teaching and administrative activities,

Your true brother,
Shoghi

35.

1.

Letter of 3 May 1937 (Convention)

Assure delegates friends loving appreciation remembrance holy shrines supplicating
unprecedented success teaching field administrative activities.

Shoghi

Letter of 10 July 1937

Dear Mr. Hofman,

I am charged by our beloved Guardian to acknowledge the receipt of your communications of May 3rd and 29th written on behalf of the British N.S.A.

The enclosed copy of the Annual Report, as well as the minutes of the N.S.A. meeting of the 13th May have also reached him and he has read their contents with deepest satisfaction.

With regard to your Assembly's request for permission to publish in the "Bahá'í Journal" an extract from his letter of April 24th addressed to Miss Baxter,³⁶ he wishes you to assure your fellow members of his approval of their request.

With his loving Bahá'í greetings and with his renewed and abiding appreciation of your labours for the Cause...

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker,

Your letter of June 24th has also been received. I feel the urge to add these few words in person in order to assure you afresh of my deep appreciation of the remarkable spirit of constancy, devotion and loyalty which you and your fellow workers, in both the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í service are ably and continually manifesting. My heart overflows with unspeakable gratitude. I will continue to pray for all of you from the depths of my heart.

Shoghi

Letter of 7 September 1937

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

On behalf of our beloved Guardian I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter of the 17th August enclosing the minutes of the meeting of the British N.S.A. held at the Summer School on August 8th....

³⁶. She had already pioneered in the Six Year Plan to Birmingham, Nottingham, Hove, Oxford and Cardiff. She died on 21 August 1969 and the Universal House of Justice cabled: "*Deeply grieved passing knight of Bahá'u'lláh Evelyn Baxter. Among first pioneers six year plan her Long faithful service British Bahá'í community provides example devotion fortitude*". ("Bahá'í World", Vol. XV, pp. 456-7)

[From the Guardian:]

May the Beloved bless your persistent efforts and enable you to consolidate still further the manifold interests of the Faith of God.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 16 November 1937

Beloved Bahá'í Brother,

I am charged by the Guardian to acknowledge the receipt of your communications of September 26th and November 6th with enclosures, all of which he has read with deepest interest and appreciation.

He very much regrets indeed the departure of Mrs. Bishop and Madame Orlova from England, as the services they rendered all through their stay in that country have been truly outstanding. The teaching force, in particular, will feel the loss of these two of its most capable and promising supporters. Every effort should now be exerted by the N.S.A. however, to carry on the teaching work through every means possible, and every believer should be made to realise that he has an added and most grave responsibility to shoulder in this matter.

The Guardian has also learned with deep regret of ... resignation from the membership of the N.S.A. and trusts that the new member who will be elected to replace her will be able to contribute as much as she did to the growth and further consolidations of the National Assembly.

He will continue to pray for the confirmation and guidance of all the members, that they may befittingly discharge their manifold and weighty obligations toward the Faith throughout the British Isles.

With his loving greetings and deepest appreciation of your efforts...

[From the Guardian:]

Wishing you the fullest success in the efforts which you are exerting in conjunction with the believers for the protection, the promotion, and the consolidation of the Cause of God.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 22 April 1938 (Convention)

Deepest loving appreciation fervent supplication success deliberations.

Shoghi

Letter of 24 April 1938 (Convention)

Delighted urge incoming National Assembly perseverance subordinate all activities teaching objective.

Shoghi

Letter of 28 April 1938

Bahá'í world mourns loss Holy Mother Munirih Khánum stop Riḍván festivities suspended. Advise all centres hold memorial gatherings commemorate her outstanding services rendered during one of most critical stages in evolution beloved Faith.

Shoghi

Letter of 17 May 1938

Dear Mr. Hofman,

I am instructed to acknowledge the receipt of your communications addressed to our beloved Guardian dated December 24th, January 10th, February 13th and March 22nd together with the enclosed minutes of the meetings of the British N.S.A., as well as the copies of the "Bahá'í Journal", all of which he has read with closest attention and keenest interest.

He has noted with gratification that the Teaching Conference held in Manchester during last December was successful, and that the meetings were all pervaded with a spirit of unity and of fellowship. He has read with deep satisfaction the report of the above Conference which you had sent, and indeed trusts that the decision and plans that have been adopted will, through their faithful application in the course of this year, serve to greatly accelerate the expansion of the teaching work throughout the British Isles...

P.S. Shoghi Effendi has just received your letter of May 16th and wishes your Assembly to make strenuous efforts in connection with the incorporation of the N.S.A. He would advise you to approach Lady Blomfield, Major Tudor-Pole and Lord Lamington.

The Guardian wishes me to inform you that you have been appointed by him a member of the International staff of editors of the "Bahá'í World". He wishes you to start from now collecting the necessary material for the next edition and to send them gradually and directly to Mrs. French.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker,

I greatly welcome the determination of the English believers to concentrate their energies on the teaching work, and I pray from all my heart for the success of their high endeavours in this

all-important field of Bahá'í service. Individuals as well as local Assemblies must arise and co-operate and persevere and refuse to allow any obstacle, however formidable, to dim their hopes or to deflect them from the course they have so spontaneously chosen to pursue. Kindly assure them of my constant prayers for their success.

Shoghi

Letter of 30 June 1938

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

I am instructed by the Guardian to acknowledge the receipt of your communication dated May 31st, enclosing two copies of the newly published booklet prepared by the British N.S.A. for teaching purposes, and also the latest issue of the "Bahá'í Journal", and the report of the Convention proceedings for this year.

He has read with keenest interest and with deep gratification the Annual Report of your Assembly and has been very much impressed indeed by its comprehensiveness, and by your ability in presenting the facts in such a lucid and effective language. He has sent the text to Mr. Holley for reproduction in the next "Bahá'í World", as an appendix to the International Survey of activities.

Although the range of Bahá'í activities throughout Great Britain during this past year has been considerably restricted as a result of the departure of many travelling and visiting Bahá'í teachers, yet the fact that the friends were, in spite of that and other handicaps, able to maintain the course of their activities constitutes a clear evidence that the English Bahá'í Community is at last able to stand on its own feet, and has sufficient resources, both moral and material, to enable it to carry on, without any external help, the heavy task that has been committed to its charge.

The Guardian wishes you to assure your fellow members on the N.S.A. and through them the friends throughout Great Britain, of his fervent prayers that throughout the course of this new year they may evince such a unity, zeal and renewed consecration to their task as to further demonstrate the strength of their position as a self-supporting and ever-growing national Bahá'í community....

[From the Guardian:]

Wishing you and your dear co-workers the utmost success in your high and meritorious endeavours,

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

October 1938 (Third Summer School)

Assure you prayers heartily reciprocate greetings.

Shoghi

Letter of 24 October 1938

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your communications written on behalf of the British N.S.A. and dated June 23rd, July 8th and September 15th with their enclosures have all been duly received and their contents noted with interest and satisfaction by our beloved Guardian.

Regarding the papers you had enclosed in your last letter relating to the N.S.A.'s application for incorporation, he has read these with the closest attention, and has already communicated to you his approval by cable, and wishes me now to urge your Assembly to proceed with this matter without delay and to make every effort to have the whole thing completed in the course of the next few months, preferably before the termination of your Assembly's term of office next April....

The Guardian has read with considerable interest Mr. Balyuzi's³⁷ booklet on "Bahá'u'lláh", and hopes that the two companion essays on the Báb and the Master on which he is working will be soon completed and ready for distribution, as he feels they can be of a valuable help to the friends in their teaching work.

With the renewed assurances of his prayers for the confirmation of your services, and reciprocating your greetings....

[From the Guardian:]

Dear co-worker,

The energy, loyalty and resourcefulness with which your Assembly is conducting and extending the manifold activities of the Faith in these days of stress and trial deserve the highest praise. Your achievements constitute indeed a landmark in the history of the Faith in that land. I urge you, with all earnestness and with feelings of abounding gratitude, to redouble your efforts and to persevere until your highest hopes and plans in both the spiritual and administrative spheres are realised and fulfilled. My prayers are always with you.

Shoghi

Letter of 27 November 1938

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

³⁷. Mr. Balyuzi was Secretary of the first Summer School Committee in 1936, on the National Teaching Committee in 1940 and Chairman of the National Assembly almost every year from 1942 until his retirement. He was elevated to the rank of Hand of the Cause in 1957, and has made invaluable contributions to the literature of the Faith with his trilogy, "Bahá'u'lláh", "Abdu'l-Bahá" and "The Báb"; his "Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith", his pamphlet on "Bahá'í Administration", and "Muḥammad and the Course of Islám".

I am directed by our beloved Guardian to express his thanks for your letter of the 2nd inst. written on behalf of the N.S.A.

He has noted your Assembly's request for his advice as to what forms of national service friends may volunteer for in times of emergency. While the believers, he feels, should exert every effort to obtain from the authorities a permit exempting them from active military service in a combatant capacity, it is their duty at the same time, as loyal and devoted citizens, to offer their services to their country in any field of national service which is not specifically aggressive or directly military. Such forms of national work as air raid precaution service, ambulance corps, and other humanitarian work or activity of a non-combatant nature, are the most suitable types of service the friends can render, and which they should gladly volunteer for, since in addition to the fact that they do not involve any violation of the spirit or principle of the Teachings, they constitute a form of social and humanitarian service which the Cause holds sacred and emphatically enjoins.

The Guardian has noted with genuine satisfaction what you had written about your recent visit to ... and his earnest desire to become of increasing service to the Faith. We will certainly pray that he may fully avail himself of the manifold opportunities that now lie before him of spreading the knowledge of the Cause in hitherto closed and conservative circles, and of thus drawing to it the attention of thoughtful and responsible people throughout Britain.

With the renewed assurances of his prayers for you and for your dear fellow members of the N.S.A....

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and trusted co-worker,

The marvellous zeal, unity, understanding and devotion exemplified by the English believers in recent months, individually as well as through their concentrated efforts, constitute a landmark in the progressive development of the Faith in that land. They who have risen to the height of their present opportunities stand at the threshold of unprecedented achievements. They must labour continually, exercise the utmost vigilance, proclaim courageously, and cling tenaciously to the principles of their Faith, spiritual as well as administrative, and resolve to endure every sacrifice and hardship, however severe, for the vindication, the consolidation and recognition of the Faith they profess and are now so admirably serving.

With a heart filled with pride and gratitude I pray continually for their triumph.

Shoghi

Letter of 29 November 1938

Rahmatu'lláh 'Alá'í outstanding promoter faith Írán soon arriving London for treatment extend cordial welcome every possible assistance.

Shoghi

Letter of 15 January 1939

Urge 'Alá'í follow whatever treatment prescribed doctor praying.

Shoghi

Letter of 10 February 1939

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

At the direction of our beloved Guardian I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your communications dated November 28th, December 5th, January 5th and 14th written on behalf of the British N.S.A., all of which he has read, together with their enclosures, with earnest and fullest attention.

Regarding the matter of the N.S.A.'s incorporation, he has noted with real satisfaction that in spite of the difficulties raised by the officials in the Board of Trade in connection with your application, the contacts you have formed with these officials have been of such a friendly nature as to give your Assembly an opportunity to further press your case, and also to impress the authorities concerned with the true nature and significance of the Faith.

The Guardian would urge your Assembly to strain every nerve to bring this task to speedy completion, and wishes me to reassure you and your fellow-members that he will continually and most fervently pray that your renewed efforts in this connection may be crowned with full success.

He also wishes me to express his feelings of deep satisfaction at the efforts of your Assembly in connection with the publication of "New World Order", which paper, he hopes, will prove of increasing value as a medium for the spread of the Cause throughout England.

In closing I feel I must also convey his loving thanks to your Assembly for the very cordial welcome and warm hospitality which you have, in response to his telegram, kindly extended to our well beloved and highly esteemed brother Mr. 'Alá'í. The love and consideration he has been shown by the friends, and by the members of your Assembly in particular, will, he feels certain, help to a marked degree in counter-acting the painful effects of the insidious disease from which he is so severely, yet so uncomplainingly suffering. The spirit of courage and fortitude which he is displaying surely cannot but create a profound impression upon all those friends, doctors and patients who come in contact with him. May his presence in your midst, however temporary, serve as an opportunity of further spreading the knowledge of the Faith, and also be the means of encouragement and inspiration to the believers....

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

I am delighted with the work which is being so energetically conducted, and so faithfully extended and consolidated by the English believers, and particularly by their national elected representatives whose magnificent efforts, courage and perseverance deserve the highest praise. A splendid beginning has been made. A firm foundation has been established. Perseverance is now required to bring these devoted, painstaking and concerted efforts to full and speedy fruition. The path you are treading is beset with formidable obstacles, but the invincible power of the Faith will, if you remain faithful and steadfast, enable you to surmount them. My prayers will continue to be offered on your behalf. May Bahá'u'lláh fulfil every hope you cherish in the service of His Faith.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 22 March 1939

Loving appreciation praying unprecedented triumphs.

Shoghi

Letter of March 1939

“...Under no circumstances should any local Assembly be given the right to criticise and much less oppose, the policy duly adopted and approved by the N.S.A.” (Bahá'í Journal 17 — cited in an article).

Letter of 30 April 1939 (Convention)

Delighted notable achievements,³⁸ grateful praying richest blessings deliberations deepest love.

Shoghi

Letter of 31 May 1939

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

At our beloved Guardian's direction I gratefully acknowledge the receipt of your communications dated February 19th, March 7th and 27th, May 3rd with enclosures, written on behalf of the British N.S.A.

He has noted with considerable satisfaction the report of the progress recently achieved in Bradford and Torquay where, he is most delighted to know, the friends, and particularly the

³⁸. In reply to the Convention's cable stating that two new Assemblies — Bradford and Torquay — were represented, and the incorporation documents were completed.

newly enrolled young believers, are displaying great enthusiasm in their activities and have obtained many openings of presenting the Cause.

The news of the confirmation of Mr. Frank Hurst³⁹ is specially gratifying and should prove of deep encouragement to all the friends who should indeed avail themselves of the opportunity of his presence in the community to give intensive publicity to the Faith.

Regarding the new prayer book which the N.S.A. is proposing to publish; the manuscript has already been returned to your address and the suggestions and recommendations of the Guardian on the matter duly conveyed to your Assembly in a recent letter. He would advise that on the inside cover mention should be made only of the British Reviewing Committee's approval, as it is invariably done in the case of all official Bahá'í publications.

In connection with the problem of Bahá'í refugees, the Guardian feels this is a matter which concerns the N.S.A., who would be justified in taking any action they deem appropriate, provided the state of the National Fund permits it, and only after the particular case of each individual applicant has been thoroughly investigated, and his status as a believer duly ascertained.

With reference to your suggestion as to the advisability of your approaching Mr. Eden, and through him possibly Lord Halifax, with the view to obtaining from them statements for the "Bahá'í World", Shoghi Effendi would approve of your seeing Mr. Eden only, and would leave it to the N.S.A.'s discretion whether you should approach him as his representative or as the representative of the British National Assembly.

Concerning Mrs. Basil Hall's⁴⁰ paper which she had prepared for last year's Summer School; the N.S.A.'s approval sanctioning its publication would be sufficient. You need not, therefore, send the manuscript to Haifa. But as to the passages she had quoted from Myron Phelps' book, the Guardian does not advise that these quotations be included in the pamphlet, as Phelps' book is full of inaccuracies that are misleading, and for this reason should be ignored by the believers.

The Guardian is inexpressibly delighted at the news of the completion of the N.S.A.'s incorporation certificate, and would appreciate your sending him three photostat reproductions of the original, one of which he will arrange to be placed in the Mansion at Bahjí, and the second he will include in the next issue of "Bahá'í World", and the third he will keep in his own files.

The Guardian wishes me in closing to urge your Assembly to make a special effort during this year to concentrate on furthering the teaching work in Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Brighton, Sheffield and Bournemouth, in view of the teaching opportunities that these centres, as indicated in your letter, seem to offer at present. He welcomes the recommendation made to this effect at the last Annual Convention and would urge the newly elected N.S.A. to give this task its continued and fullest attention. However stupendous the plan now confronting your

³⁹. He died in Leeds in 1949.

⁴⁰. She served for five years on the National Spiritual Assembly and for a short time on the National Teaching Committee of the six year plan. At her passing the National Assembly cabled the guardian, "*Parvine gloried in success plan passed to Abhá Kingdom morning 28th*" (April 1950).

Assembly may be, you should resolutely and relentlessly endeavour to carry it through, ever confident in the promised assistance and unfailing guidance of Bahá'u'lláh.

To you and your distinguished fellow-members I beg to convey the assurances of his profound and loving appreciation of your loyal and affectionate greetings...

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The extension, along sound lines and with such memorable swiftness and harmony, of the activities in which the believers of the United Kingdom are so earnestly and devotedly engaged, merits the highest praise and is a source of constant encouragement and satisfaction to me in my arduous work. They are taking a momentous step forward and are launching enterprises that will no doubt shed fresh lustre on their beloved Faith and leave a distinct mark on Bahá'í history. I will continue to pray on their behalf, and feel certain that if they persevere the Beloved will richly bless their concentrated and highly meritorious efforts.

Shoghi

Letter of 4 June 1939

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

I am charged by our beloved Guardian to inform you of the receipt of your letter of May 9th written on behalf of the British N.S.A. on the subject of the Bahá'í attitude towards war.

His instructions on this matter, conveyed in a letter addressed to your Assembly during last November, were not intended for that particular occasion, but were meant for present conditions, and for any such emergency as may arise in the immediate future.

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 involve them in direct warfare with their fellow-humans of any other race or nation. The Bahá'í Teachings, indeed, condemn, emphatically and unequivocally, any form of physical violence, and warfare in the battlefield is obviously a form, and perhaps the worst form which such violence can assume.

There are many other avenues through which the believers can assist in times of war by enlisting in services of a non-combatant nature — services that do not involve the direct shedding of blood — such as ambulance work, anti-air raid precaution service, office and administrative works, and it is for such types of national service that they should volunteer.

It is immaterial whether such activities would still expose them to dangers, either at home or in the front, since their desire is not to protect their lives, but to desist from any acts of wilful murder.

The friends should consider it their conscientious duty, as loyal members of the Faith, to apply for such exemption, even though there may be slight prospect of their obtaining the consent and approval of the authorities to their petition. It is most essential that in times of such national excitement and emergency as those through which so many countries in the world are now passing that the believers should not allow themselves to be carried away by the passions agitating the masses, and act in a manner that would make them deviate from the path of wisdom and moderation, and lead them to violate, however reluctantly and indirectly, the spirit as well as the letter of the Teachings.

The N.S.A., in this and similar issues that may arise in future, should act with firmness and vigilance and with such wisdom and tact as would make them an example worthy of the confidence and admiration of all the believers....

[From the Guardian:]

May the beloved bless and guide you in collaboration with your fellow members, to uphold the integrity, vindicate the truth, demonstrate the power, and promote the spirit of the exalted teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 26 June 1939

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

On behalf of our beloved Guardian I beg to acknowledge with grateful thanks the receipt of your Assembly's communications of May 26th and June 1st, together with the accompanying copy of the minutes of your meeting held on May 20th-21st, and the latest issue of the "Bahá'í Journal" containing your Annual Report and the account of the Convention proceedings for this year.

He found the Annual Report published in the Journal so encouraging that he decided to have certain sections of it translated into Persian, and sent through the Haifa Assembly's newsletter, to different Bahá'í centres throughout the East.

In response to your request for one copy of each of the printed translations of Dr. Esslemont's book which the N.S.A. wishes to include as part of the Bahá'í exhibit at the forthcoming "Sunday Times" Book Exhibition to be held in London during next Autumn, the Guardian has directed me to mail to your address thirty-one printed translations of that book, which are the only ones available at present. There are a few more translations in process of publication, among which, it will surely interest the friends to know, is the Icelandic version which, it is hoped, will be off the press sometime in the course of this Summer. The new revised edition of the German translation, which is being published under the auspices of the International Bahá'í Bureau in

Geneva, will be soon ready, and you can obtain a copy of that new edition by applying to Mrs. Lynch.

The Guardian does not want these books to be returned to Haifa after the closing of the Exhibition, but wishes you to accept them as his gift to the National Bahá'í Library at the Centre in London, and would suggest that you keep them for any future Bahá'í exhibit which the N.S.A. may propose to hold in other parts of England.

He wishes me, in this connection, to express the hope that the exhibition you have arranged for this coming Autumn will prove highly successful and a most useful and effective medium of teaching the Cause. The idea of a Bahá'í display, chiefly of publications, he feels, is indeed excellent, and he will specially pray therefore that the one you are now preparing will achieve such results as to encourage and stimulate the N.S.A. to arrange for similar exhibits in the future.

Regarding the originals of Tablets revealed in honour of the late Miss Rosenberg, there are only one or two of them, here in Haifa, and these were sent by Miss Rosenberg herself. The Guardian is keeping them for the present as they contain important references concerning the practice of monogamy in the Cause.

To you and your dear fellow-members I seize this opportunity of renewing the assurances of his abiding and loving gratitude, and of wishing you continued guidance for the further promotion of the Faith in England....

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The determination of the English believers to extend rapidly and systematically the range of their teaching and administrative activities is a welcome evidence of the genuineness of their faith, the nobility of their purpose and the depth of their devotion. That such a determination may yield the richest fruit is my special and constant prayer. What they have already achieved fortifies my hopes and confidence in them. They have laid a firm and unassailable basis for their future work. Perseverance, co-ordination, fearlessness, vigour and wisdom will enable them to gradually rear on this basis the majestic structure of Bahá'u'lláh's administrative order, which in the fulness of time must yield, on the soil of their country a harvest unexampled in its abundance and glory. May His Spirit guide and sustain them to hasten that hour and consummate that task.

Your
Shoghi

true

brother,

Letter of 2 July 1939

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Enclosed please find a draft for fifteen English pounds issued in your name which the Guardian has directed me to forward to you with the request that you send him for that sum copies of Mr.

Townshend's "Heart of the Gospel", which he understands will be off the press in the course of this month.

May I take this opportunity of expressing his hope that this little volume may fulfil the author's purpose, namely to attract the attention of the orthodox Christian element in England to the Cause, and stimulate many thoughtful and spiritually minded individuals to seriously investigate the Teachings....

Letter of 26 July 1939 (Summer School)

Congratulate attendants notable progress grateful praying fresh advances deepest love.

Shoghi

Letter of 7 August 1939

Heartiest congratulations outstanding success.

Shoghi

Letter of 6 November 1939

Overjoyed thankful perseverance English believers attested recent communications assure them special prayers abiding appreciation.

Shoghi Rabbání⁴¹

Letter of 20 November 1939

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

On behalf of our beloved Guardian I beg to acknowledge with grateful thanks the receipt of your communications dated July 11th, 20th, August 14th (2 letters) and October 19th with enclosures written on behalf of the British N.S.A.

He also wishes me to inform you that the photostatic reproductions of the incorporation papers of your Assembly have safely reached him, and he has placed one copy in Bahá'u'lláh's Mansion in Bahjí, and is keeping the other for inclusion in the next issue of the "Bahá'í World".

The copies of Mr. Townshend's latest book, "The Heart of the Gospel", which you have forwarded at his request have likewise been received and a number of volumes distributed among the various Bahá'í libraries established in the Holy Land. He feels confident the N.S.A. is sparing no

⁴¹. The Guardian only used his full name in cables when the censorship regulations during states of emergency made it obligatory.

effort to bring this valuable production to the attention of leading personalities throughout the British Isles, and will pray that the interest aroused may be such as to lead to the full spiritual awakening and confirmation of a number of thoughtful individuals in various parts of the country.

As regards the projected prayer book; he does not know whether the N.S.A. has been able to proceed with the printing of this work. But in case it is published, he would like you to mail to him twenty copies, some of which he needs for distribution among various Bahá'í libraries here.

The Guardian feels most truly delighted to know that the outbreak of war has, in general, stimulated the friends to greater teaching effort, and that the newly established communities such as those of Bradford and Torquay are showing particular enthusiasm in carrying on the teaching work in their respective centres. He will earnestly supplicate the Almighty that He may bless and reinforce these steadfast and self-sacrificing exertions of the English believers, and that He may, in these days of storm and stress, vouchsafe unto them all an increasing measure of His unfailing protection and guidance....

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker,

I wish to reaffirm clearly and emphatically my deep sense of gratification and gratitude for the recent and truly remarkable evidences of the devotion, courage and perseverance of the English Bahá'í community in the face of the perils that now confront it. Its members have abundantly demonstrated their profound attachment to their Cause, their unshakable resolution to uphold its truth and defend its interests, and their unfailing solicitude for whatever may promote and safeguard its institutions. However great and sinister the forces with which they may have to battle in future, I feel confident that they will befittingly uphold the torch of Divine Guidance that has been entrusted to their hands and will discharge their responsibilities with still greater tenacity, fidelity, vigour and devotion.

Shoghi

Letter of 5 December 1939

*Remains purest branch and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mother permanently laid rest close neighbourhood
shrine greatest holy leaf hearts rejoicing.*

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 7 December 1939

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

The Guardian has just received your letter of the 20th November last, and feels indeed deeply encouraged at the report of the teaching activities of our dear English believers. He is unspeakably grateful to you all, and in particular to the members of your Assembly, for the determination, resourcefulness and the spirit of absolute consecration with which you are prosecuting the teaching campaign throughout England, and he will ardently pray that, in spite of the smallness of your numbers and means, and notwithstanding the various obstacles you may encounter in the course of your future activities for the Faith, you may, individually and collectively, receive such confirmations from Bahá'u'lláh as would enable you each and all to befittingly and completely acquit yourselves of this high task you have undertaken to accomplish in service of His Faith.

In connection with your application for exemption from active military service, the Guardian trusts that the authorities will give careful consideration to this matter, and will find it possible to relieve the Bahá'í friends from the necessity of serving in the army in a combatant capacity. Should they, however, refuse to grant such exemption, the believers should unhesitatingly assure them of their unqualified obedience and of their readiness to join and serve in the army in whatever manner the government deems best.

Renewing to you and to all the friends his warmest good wishes and greetings...

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The various and compelling evidences of the unquenchable enthusiasm, the unbreakable resolution and the inflexible purpose of the English believers, in these days of stress, of turmoil and danger, have cheered my heart and fortified me in the discharge of my arduous and multitudinous duties and responsibilities. I feel truly proud of them all, and will, with increasing gratitude and redoubled fervour, supplicate the Beloved whose Cause they are so valiantly serving, to bless, sustain, guide and protect them under all circumstances, and aid them to establish firmly the institutions of His Faith throughout the length and breadth of their country.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 29 December 1939

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

I am instructed by our beloved Guardian to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your communication of the 19th December, sent through the care of our very dear brother Dr. 'Alí, and of the twenty copies of the newly-published prayer book, as well as the last copy of the "Bahá'í Journal" and the Christmas number of "New World Order".

He has also received and read with deep satisfaction the statement on 'Bahá'ís and War' recently issued by the N.S.A., together with the teaching report prepared by your Assembly, both

of which he will consider for incorporation in the next issue of the “Bahá’í World”, the manuscript of which he hopes to receive in the course of January or February next....

The Guardian welcomes the plan suggested by Mr. Townshend to republish “The Promise of All Ages” under his own name, and trusts this will serve to attract wider publicity to the Cause, and in particular to fully awaken the church officials to the significance of such direct and vigorous presentation of the Faith by so well-known and long-standing a Christian divine.

Renewing to you and your dear fellow-members and to all the friends in London, the assurances of his prayers for your welfare and protection in these perilous days, and with his warmest greetings to you all....

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The news of your persistent activities, your safety and protection, and above all of your unyielding resolve and undisturbed confidence in the face of the uncertainties and perils that face and surround you, have greatly cheered and heartened me in my duties and responsibilities which are now heavily pressing upon me. You are often in my thoughts and prayers at this grave hour. I cherish the brightest hopes for you, and will continue to supplicate the Almighty on your behalf.

Be assured, persevere and be happy, Shoghi

Letter of 1 January 1940⁴²

Profoundly grieve passing dearly beloved outstanding co-worker Sitárih Khánum memory her glorious services imperishable advise English community hold befitting memorial gatherings assure relatives my heartfelt sympathy loving fervent prayers.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 2 January 1940 (Teaching Conference)

Welcome Noble resolve prosecute energetically teaching campaign praying ardently signal success.

Shoghi

Rabbání

42.

1.

Letter of 18 February 1940

Dear Mr. Hofman,

The Guardian wishes me to write and thank you for your welcome communication of January 29th with its various enclosures, all of which he was indeed most gratified and encouraged to read.

As you have not mentioned having received his general letter of December 21st written in connection with the transfer of the sacred remains of the Purest Branch and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mother to Mt. Carmel, I am taking the liberty of sending you on his behalf another copy which, I trust, will reach you safely...

The Guardian welcomes your suggestions to send a memorial of the late Lady Blomfield for publication in the next issue of the "Bahá'í World", Vol. VIII, and wishes you to send him in addition a good photograph of her for reproduction in the same volume.

Also he would appreciate your sending him a brief account of Mrs. Thornburgh-Cropper's Bahá'í life and services together with her photograph for publication in the same issue of the Biennial.

The passing away of these two long-standing believers has indeed robbed the Cause in England of two of its most distinguished members, and the English Bahá'í Community is certainly the poorer now that it has been deprived of their ready and invaluable support.

The departure of Sitárih K̄hánum in particular is to be deeply mourned, not only by the members of the Faith throughout England, but by so many of her fellow-believers abroad, and the Guardian himself feels most keenly the loss of so precious and faithful a co-worker, who, in the early days following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, had proved of such invaluable assistance to him in the discharge of his heavy duties and responsibilities...

[From the Guardian:]

Dear co-workers,

I wish to reaffirm my deep sense of gratitude and admiration for the splendid manner in which the English believers are discharging their duties and responsibilities in these days of increasing peril, anxiety and stress. Their tenacity, courage, faith and noble exertions will as a magnet attract the undoubted and promised blessing of Bahá'u'lláh. They have, at a time when the basis of ordered society itself is rocking and trembling, laid an unassailable foundation for the Administrative Order of their Faith. Upon this basis the rising generation will erect a noble structure that will excite the admiration of their fellow countrymen. My prayers for them will continually be offered at the Holy Shrines.

Gratefully,
Shoghi

Letter of 27 March 1940

Dear Mr. Hofman,

Your letter dated March 13th has safely reached our beloved Guardian together with the following enclosures:

In Memoriam: Lady Blomfield.

Minutes N.S.A. March 2nd and 3rd.

“Bahá’í Journal” No.

Introduction to “The Chosen Highway”.

Preface to “The Chosen Highway”. He has also received by registered post the photographs of Lady Blomfield and Mrs. Thornburgh-Cropper which you had kindly sent at his request for reproduction in the “Bahá’í World”....

The Guardian has noted with satisfaction that the arrangements for the publication of “The Chosen Highway” are complete, and hopes that by the time you receive this letter it will be well on the way to printing.

Concerning the question you have asked as to whether in elections for Spiritual Assemblies the electors should cast exactly nine votes, or may cast less than this number. Inasmuch as Spiritual Assembly membership, according to the principles of Bahá’í Administration, has been limited for the present to nine members, it follows that no electoral vote can be effective unless it is cast for exactly that number. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of every Bahá’í elector to cast nine votes, neither more nor less, except under special circumstances, so as to ensure that the results of the elections for the Spiritual Assembly will be effective and on as wide a basis of representation as possible....

P.S. The Guardian has noted with surprise in reading over the Minutes of your N.S.A. that the British Annual Convention is to be held this year on the 12th May. He wishes you from now on to hold that gathering on any day during the period of Riḍván (21 April-2 May).

[From the Guardian:]

May the Almighty bless, sustain and protect the English believers, who in these days of unprecedented turmoil, stress and danger, are holding aloft so courageously the banner of the Faith, and who will, in the days to come, contribute, through His grace and power, a notable share to its establishment and recognition in the West.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 12 May 1940 (Convention)

Greatly admire deeply thankful undaunted courage inflexible resolution English believers represented convention intensify efforts extend activities notwithstanding gravity hour praying ardently protection success.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 14 August 1940

Delighted News safety English believers progress teaching work assure them each all loving continued prayers.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 10 October 1940

Dear Mr. Hofman,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of May 7th addressed to our beloved Guardian, and of the enclosed memoir of Lady Blomfield which you have condensed at his request for use in the "Bahá'í World", Vol. VIII.

The size of the memoir in question makes it now quite suitable for reproduction in the Biennial, and it will be forwarded to the U.S.A. for incorporation in the manuscript, as the latter has been already mailed to America for printing.

The material regarding the Bahá'í wedding recently held in London has been also received and noted with interest and appreciation by our beloved Guardian. He is keeping it for possible use in the forthcoming or future editions of the "Bahá'í World".

Renewing to you and your dear co-workers the assurances of his prayers, and of his deep gratitude for your painstaking and devoted exertions in service to the Cause in England, and with greetings...

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker,

Our anxiety for the safety of the English believers is deepening every day, as it is fully realised how dangerous the situation has become in recent months, and how manifold and pressing are the problems that confront them in the faithful discharge of their sacred and vital responsibilities. The perusal of the reports, minutes and periodicals received lately from that

country has served to deepen my sense of admiration and my feelings of gratitude for the wisdom, the staunchness and fidelity with which the elected representatives of the English believers are conducting in these critical times the activities of their Faith. My fervent and constant prayer is that Bahá'u'lláh may ever keep them safe and protected under the shadow of His wings and aid them to play a worthy and memorable part in these tragic days of the Formative Period of our beloved Cause.

Shoghi

Letter of 19 October 1940

Anxious welfare English believers praying protection cable assurance deepest love.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 22 November 1940

Dear Mr. Hofman,

On behalf of the Guardian I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your communications dated May 28th, June 20th, July 5th and August 30th with enclosures, written at the direction of the British N.S.A.

He has noted with satisfaction the results of the elections for the new N.S.A. and wishes you to convey to your fellow members the assurances of his prayers for the success of their work during this year. Notwithstanding the storm and stress raging around them, the friends in England should more than ever, firmly united behind their National Assembly, and strengthened by an unshakable conviction in the ultimate triumph of their Faith, earnestly and resolutely endeavour to foster the cause of teaching. The trials and tribulations facing them should but serve to steel their resolve to leave no stone unturned until their goal has been fully accomplished. The Guardian's prayers are being ardently offered that whatever the immediate repercussions of the war may be on the British Bahá'í Community, its members may, through the Divine aid and protection of Bahá'u'lláh, receive such guidance and strength as would enable them to face confidently and courageously the sufferings and vicissitudes of the present hour, and to arise as one body for the promulgation and wider establishment of the Faith throughout Great Britain.

Concerning your Assembly's request for lantern slides of the Shrines on Mt. Carmel which you propose to use in your teaching campaign, the Guardian much regrets that no such slides are at present available here.

As regards the question of what procedure the Bahá'í Assemblies should adopt when dissatisfied with the services of any of their officers, should such dissatisfaction involve the loyalty of an Assembly officer to the Faith, he should, following a majority vote be dismissed. But in case the dissatisfaction is due to the incompetence of a member, or simply to a neglect on his part to

discharge his duties, this does not constitute sufficient justification to force his resignation or dismissal from the Assembly. He should be kept in office until new elections are held.

The Guardian fully approves that, in view of the National Secretary's key position in the Cause at the present time, he should apply for complete exemption. He hopes that the representations the N.S.A. will make will meet with success.

In closing he wishes me to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of two copies of Lady Blomfield's book presented to him by the N.S.A., one of which he has already placed in the Library of Bahá'u'lláh's Mansion in Bahjí...

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker,

I was greatly relieved to learn of the safety of the English believers and was filled with admiration through the assurance you have given me of their steadfastness, their unwavering determination to labour for the spread of our beloved Faith and the defence and protection of its interests in spite of the unprecedented calamities and confusion that now afflict their country. Bahá'u'lláh from His station on high is watching over them, is pleased with them, and will, I feel certain, guide their steps, cheer their hearts, bless their efforts, protect their lives, and fulfil the desire of their hearts.

Gratefully and affectionately,
Shoghi

Letter of 27 December 1940

Wire safety London Manchester friends constantly praying loving admiration.

Shoghi Rabbání

Letter of 24 February 1941

Letters June July August enclosing minutes arrived answer mailed November letter December ninth just received also Blomfield's books cabling hundred pounds my contribution relief believers incessantly praying deepest love.

Shoghi Rabbání

Letter of 19 April 1941

Rejoice safety admire dauntless courage Marvel unquenchable spirit English believers sharing joyful News Noble perseverance with pilgrims arriving in increasing numbers from near and middle east all praying continued safety extension activities sore tried exemplary servants Faith Bahá'u'lláh throughout British Isles urge persistent efforts utilise utmost limit priceless spiritual opportunities present hour.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 30 April 1941 (Convention)

Exhilarated resolution intensify teaching admiration heightened praying redoubled fervour.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 30 April 1941⁴³

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Shoghi Effendi has instructed me to answer your letter to him of December 9th,

He was greatly relieved to hear from your letter and cables that all the dear friends in the British Isles are well and safe, as his thoughts have been so constantly with them during these dangerous and tragic days.

The extreme devotion to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh which the English friends are evincing at such a time of trial and suffering not only sets a truly heroic example to their fellow Bahá'ís the world over, but greatly cheers and encourages the Guardian himself, at a time when he has every reason to long to see the Bahá'ís stand out as luminous examples to their fellow-men — thus leading them out of the valley of spiritual death into the glorious plains of the future World Order of Mankind.

The recently received news of the Convention's resolve to teach the Faith as never before in those islands, and to achieve new victories in this all-important field, meets not only with Shoghi Effendi's whole-hearted approval, but also evokes his profound gratitude and admiration. His ardent and loving prayers continually surround you all and all the sorely tried Bahá'ís, who with you are toiling for the triumph of our Faith.

⁴³. This was the first letter received by the British N.S.A. in which the secretarial part was written by, and signed, "R. Rabbání" (Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih K̲h̲ánum).

He was deeply touched at the spirit which impelled Lord Lamington to wish to place in the hands of the Guardian that ring which he had for so long treasured as a gift of the beloved Master. He feels that it is only befitting that this historic relic should be the property of the British Bahá'ís and wishes it to be kept in your National Archives. If you could send a copy of Lady Lamington's letter the Guardian would very much like to have it. Assuring you of the Guardian's ardent love and prayers....

[From the Guardian:]

Dearly beloved co-workers,

The message I have recently received, with the assurance it gives me and the spirit it conveys, merits indeed the highest praise. The English believers in these days of increasing peril and stress, are manifesting those qualities which only those who have deeply imbibed the transforming spirit and the ennobling principles of the Cause of God are able to reveal. They are by their very acts, their sufferings and exertions, and above all by the superb staunchness of their faith, laying a magnificent foundation for the spiritual edifice their hands are destined to raise in their native land. My prayers for them all will surround them wherever they labour and in every sphere of their meritorious activities.

Gratefully and affectionately,
Shoghi

Letter of 15 May 1941⁴⁴

Informing mother praying his soul fervently supplicating protection devoted much loved English believers.

Shoghi Rabbání

Letter of 22 May 1941

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Shoghi Effendi instructs me to answer your letter to him of March 10th, 1941 together with the minutes of your meeting held March 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and your Feb. "Bahá'í Journal" and the "World Congress of Faiths" programme, all of which he was very pleased indeed to receive.

I cannot adequately express to you all the warm love and profound admiration for the Bahá'ís of those islands which Shoghi Effendi feels. At such a time of personal danger and anguish the spirit of pure love and devotion to the Faith and Order of Bahá'u'lláh which they manifest, and which is so typified by the zeal and wisdom with which your National Spiritual Assembly is

⁴⁴. In reply to cable sent to the Guardian 13 May 1941 *Fu'ád Afnán first Bahá'í air raid victim England killed early Sunday morning grateful if you inform mother.*

handling the affairs of the Cause in that country, is a source of great comfort to the Guardian himself.

Indeed he feels that the N.S.A. members are bearing their load of responsibility in a manner which lifts partially the weight of cares from his own shoulders, and sets a noble example to all Bahá'í administrative bodies.

In reference to your question contained in minute 208⁴⁵ of the recent N.S.A. meeting: Shoghi Effendi feels that while all Bahá'ís should be encouraged to turn to their Assembly for the solution of their various problems, thus enabling the Spiritual Assembly to fulfil one of its most important functions, yet they are quite free to write to him if they feel the urge to do so...

He was also very pleased to note the teaching plans undertaken by your body at this time, particularly in respect to Manchester. He hopes the believers there are all well and safe, and will pray for the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh in their contemplated teaching campaign.

Indeed, dear friends, his thoughts and prayers are constantly with you and the beloved flock of English believers over whom you are so faithfully watching through these dark days.

He wishes you at all times to turn to him for any advice or help you may need.

With assurances of his abiding love...

[From the Guardian:]

Dearly beloved co-workers,

As the dangers confronting the believers in the British Isles increase in number and gravity, my admiration, as well as the admiration of the Bahá'ís in East and West, for the spirit that animates those who face them, grows deeper and acquires added intensity and fervour. Though their numbers be small, and their activities restricted, and their trials and anxieties manifold and oppressive, yet their spiritual contribution through their fortitude, valour and self-sacrifice, to the progressive unfoldment of the Faith's latent potentialities in the Western World is both notable and constantly increasing. As the clouds of war dissipate, and the horrors of this universal carnage fade away, it will become increasingly evident, to both the friends and foes of the Faith, how solid has been the foundation which their indomitable spirit has laid, and how rich the harvest which their incessant labours have yielded.

With a heart brimful with love and gratitude, I will, when visiting the Holy Shrines, recall their signal acts, and supplicate increasing blessings on the historic work, which, in their hour of trial, they are so magnificently achieving, for the glory, for the honour, the extension and the establishment of the invincible Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Shoghi

⁴⁵. This Minute recorded that: "Personal problems should not be referred to the Guardian without the advice or direction of the National Spiritual Assembly...."

Letter of 30 May 1941

Praying fervently guidance assembly's deliberations protection believers success activities Faith loving appreciation.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 9 July 1941

Assure Josephs⁴⁶ approval profound appreciation building scheme. These further evidences growing vitality continually afflicted believers British Isles enhance prestige cause Bahá'u'lláh heighten admiration increase debt gratitude his followers owe valiant british community praying continually safety increasing success.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 18 July 1941

Dear Bahá'í co-worker,

The Guardian has instructed me to answer your letter to him of May 6th, and to acknowledge the receipt of the minutes of the N.S.A. meetings held on April 25th and 27th.

He was very happy to receive your letter, and his heart rejoiced at the good news which it conveyed. The holding of a successful Bahá'í Convention during days of such stress and strain as the English believers are passing through, he considers as a triumph of the spirit of their faith in Bahá'u'lláh. They are increasingly demonstrating their right to be called champions of the Cause of God, and manifesting their ability to follow in the footsteps of the early heroes of their religion. The Guardian feels truly proud of them.

In accordance with the request you made in connection with the generous proposal of ..., Shoghi Effendi cabled your Assembly his approval of their plan for establishing a building fund for a future Bahá'í property to be built in.... He feels that this demonstrates a most notable donation to the Cause of God on their parts, and wishes you to convey to them both the expression of his profound gratitude for this service they are rendering the Faith in England.

These evidences of growth, in spite of the universal destruction that is holding the planet in its grip at the present time, should greatly hearten the believers. They bear witness to the future harvests which their increasing labours are sure to reap, and demonstrate the great and God-

⁴⁶. Both were mentioned in and received some Tablets from the Master and both were warmly regarded by the Guardian for their services to the Faith. Jeff died in August 1969 in Manchester and Albert in August 1978.

given strength which flows and will flow ever more abundantly from the springs which Bahá'u'lláh has unsealed in these days.

Shoghi Effendi assures you all of his unceasing prayers on your behalf, that God may strengthen, bless, and guide you in your great work for His Faith.

He wishes you to please convey his love to all the British believers and to assure them of his prayers for their protection and for the triumph of their labours....

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and prized co-workers,

I am thrilled by the recent evidences of the noble determination of the English believers to extend the range of their activities in these days of grave danger and widespread and ever deepening anxiety and stress. The report of your Convention sessions, of your teaching activities and of your Bahá'í publications, and other administrative undertakings, enhances my admiration and deepens my gratitude for the historic work you are achieving in these days. This feeling is shared by all those of your co-workers, both in the East and the West, who follow the progress of your work despite the formidable obstacles in your path. We all pray for your safety, for the realisation of all your hopes, and the fulfilment of the plans you have so boldly conceived and are so energetically carrying out.

Your true brother,
Shoghi

1941 (Summer School)

Overjoyed success attending ever expanding institutions Faith. Continually supplicating unfailing protection ever-increasing blessings eternal gratitude.

Shoghi Rabbání

Letter of 20 August 1941

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Guardian has instructed me to answer your letters to him dated June 6th and 30th respectively, also the minutes of the N.S.A. meetings of May 24th and 25th and June 14th were safely received.

He is happy to see that, in spite of the great physical and nervous strain which the believers of England are at present being subjected to — especially in centres like London — they yet persevere with the work of the Cause and the attraction of new souls.

The Guardian does not feel that the friends should for a moment feel discouraged if they do not succeed in having large meetings or the public do not regularly attend, this is easily

understandable in view of the severe ordeal which their present sufferings subject them to. However, the importance of broadcasting the seeds of the Cause far and wide can never be sufficiently stressed. It is the right and privilege of organised humanity to hear of the Faith and the Plan of Bahá'u'lláh in these days, and in this holy duty to their fellow men the Bahá'ís must not fail whatever may be the sadness of their personal plight, for they alone can truly see the future in the tragic present, and possess hope and strength to go on with the spiritual battle for the victory of the New Day.

Regarding the question you have put to the Guardian concerning minute No. 259, whatever is not laid down in "Bahá'í Administration" is left to the judgement of the National Spiritual Assembly to decide. These are purely secondary details and as the Guardian wishes to avoid introducing into the administration a labyrinth of rules and regulations he leaves the friends in authority to decide such matters as they arise.

He hopes the Summer School will be a success. In all your undertakings you may rest assured of his constant and most loving prayers, not only for the National Assembly members, but for each and every member of the flock they are watching over and guiding...

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The report of your continued activities, conducted amid the turmoil that oppresses and afflicts the English believers, is a source of continual joy and inspiration to me, as well as those who, in distant parts of the Bahá'í world are made to realise the unwavering constancy with which you are all upholding the vital interests of the Faith of God. That the teaching work is speedily expanding, that the institutions of the Faith are functioning with vigour and in accordance with the principles of the Administrative Order, testify to the solidity of the foundations that have been established. On this foundation you will as the present hindrances are removed, and the tremendous reactions of this conflict are made apparent, rear an edifice worthy of the name, and attesting the glory of the Faith, of Bahá'u'lláh. Persevere in your present labours and be ever confident.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 3 November 1941

Ruhi Afán's sister married secretly covenant breaker her mother and brothers all concurred all manner communication with them according master's will forbidden.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 29 December 1941

Sister Mehrangis followed example Ruhi's sister justice demands announce believers her expulsion.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 28 February 1942

Dear Bahá'í Sister,

The Guardian has instructed me to answer your letters dated June 30th, Aug. 20th, Sept. 5th, Oct. 20th and 28th (duplicates of both received) and December 23rd and to acknowledge the receipt of the various minutes, programmes, etc., which they enclosed.

Regarding ..., Shoghi Effendi is writing him direct, advising him to sever his membership in the Synagogue, but to continue to maintain friendly association with the members of its community.

The Guardian was very happy indeed to hear of the success of the Summer School and the enthusiasm that prevailed. He has received news of it from some of the friends, as well as the N.S.A., and feels that the English Bahá'ís have every reason to feel encouraged and proud of the way their tireless efforts are being rewarded.

The good news of the increase in Bahá'í membership is yet another evidence of the vitality of the community and the activity of the friends, in spite of the gloom of the times, which increasingly prevails. Indeed as material affairs go from bad to worse in the world, the confidence, optimism, love and hope of the believers will, by force of contrast, shine out as an ever brighter beacon, leading the people to the Path of Truth, the way laid down by God, which alone can guide them to the promise of the future.

Now that the British Isles have a respite from intense aerial warfare, no doubt the friends, especially in London and other cities, find themselves more refreshed and consequently better able to carry on the work of the Cause. They should not lose any time in consolidating the teaching work, reinforcing new centres, and enlarging their numbers.

The Guardian is urging the American friends, also, to redouble their efforts and not lose their precious opportunities. The value of work accomplished at present is inestimable, and opportunities lost are in a way quite irretrievable, as the agony of mankind moves forward to a climax....

The many activities undertaken by the English friends, their determined efforts to bring the Cause before a wider public and reach people of outstanding importance, their new centres and study groups, are all signs which should greatly encourage them and demonstrate to them that

the Holy Spirit is ever ready to sustain and reinforce the believers in all work for the good of our precious Faith.

The Guardian assures the members of the National Assembly of his most loving prayers on their behalf and his deep and abiding appreciation of their tireless services. They are helping the friends to build an edifice which neither time nor tide shall undermine and which needs must become the sole refuge for their sorely tried countrymen....

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

I wish to assure you again of my feelings of profound gratitude for the manner in which you are performing your sacred task and discharging, individually and collectively, your pressing and manifold responsibilities. I rejoice and am deeply thankful to learn that the trials and tribulations that so fiercely assailed you in the past have lessened and have failed to interfere with the progress of your activities. Bahá'u'lláh will no doubt continue to guide, sustain and protect you in the days to come and is well pleased with the marvellous evidences of your perseverance, unity, loyalty and devotion. I will continue to supplicate His abundant blessing for you all, that your numbers may steadily increase, your community life be continually enriched, your institutions flourish and multiply, and the foundation of your individual spiritual lives be strengthened. Persevere in your high labours.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 27 April 1942 (Convention)

Magnificent spirit English believers cheers strengthens me arduous task thankful their message
admire their achievements praying their protection cherish great hopes triumphant attainment
their goal.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 20 June 1942

Dear Bahá'í Sister,

The Guardian has instructed me to answer your letters written on behalf of the National Assembly, and dated Feb. 6th, March 17th and April 6th, and to acknowledge the receipt of the minutes of the Jan. and March meetings of your Assembly together with other enclosures.

In pursuance of your request the Guardian wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Hill about the tragic and unexpected passing of their daughter. He also felt moved to cable them his condolences and the assurance of his prayers. This must have been for them a very grievous blow; but he feels

sure the deep assurances concerning the future life, which have been given us by Bahá'u'lláh, have comforted and sustained them throughout.

He was pleased to read the sympathetic letter you received from ex-President Benes of Czechoslovakia, as well as that of Sir Ronald Storrs. Many men in high positions are aware now of the existence and aims of our Faith, but they do not yet reckon it to be a movement worthy of more profound interest on their part. As time goes by, however, we may rest assured their interest will grow.

That is perhaps what is most glorious about our present activities all over the world, that we, a band not large in numbers, not possessing financial backing or the prestige of great names, should, in the name of our beloved Faith, be forging ahead at such a pace, and demonstrating to future and present generations that it is the God-given qualities of our religion that are raising it up and not the transient support of worldly fame and power. All that will come later, when it has been made clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that what raised aloft the banner of Bahá'u'lláh was the love, sacrifice and devotion of His humble followers and the change that His teachings wrought in their hearts and lives.

It is just such exemplary devotion and perseverance that the British Bahá'ís are showing at present, and their reward cannot but be great and lasting. The laying of the foundation is a slow process, but the most important one in the erection of any structure. The Guardian feels that your Assembly, as well as the friends in England, have every reason to feel proud of, and encouraged by, the way the work is progressing there.

He hopes that your Summer School this year will be even more successful than last year, in spite of being held in two parts. You may be sure he will pray for its success.

He fully realises the difficulties you are undergoing enhanced by the war and its hardships, yet he sees, perhaps even more clearly than you yourselves can, that these very difficulties and the surmounting of them are deepening and strengthening the ties that bind you all to our beloved Faith, and enabling you to do a work which only future generations of your countrymen will be able to properly appreciate and assess.

Please convey to all the dear friends the assurances of his love and his prayers for their service in these days, and his high hopes for the future that awaits them in the days to come, when the Cause of God begins to emerge above the waves of the old order and shines forth in all its strength and beauty.

Assuring you and all your fellow-members of his deep appreciation of your tireless work and his ardent prayers for your guidance and strength....

[From the Guardian:]

Dearly beloved co-worker,

The steady progress and extension of Bahá'í activities in the British Isles is, no doubt, the direct consequence of the unswerving loyalty, the high courage, the incorruptible spirit and the exemplary devotion and steadfastness of the British believers, who have, simply and strikingly,

demonstrated the quality of their faith and the soundness of their institutions in these days of unprecedented commotion, stress and peril. I feel proud of their record of service and of the evidence of their noble faith. The Beloved watches over them from the Abhá Kingdom. The Concourse on High extols their achievements and will reinforce their endeavours. They should confidently, gratefully, joyously and unitedly redouble their efforts, extend the range of their activities, rededicate themselves to their historic task and anticipate a renewed outpouring of Bahá'u'lláh's promised blessings and favours.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 28 July 1942

Magnificent spirit animating steadfast English believers notable accomplishments teaching field prompt me contribute two hundred pounds furtherance their historic teaching activities urge redouble efforts praying signal victories loving gratitude.

Shoghi Rabbání

Letter of 8 August 1942 (Summer School)

Delighted successful school appreciate spirit believers assure all continued prayers.

Shoghi Rabbání

Letter of 8 August 1942

Dear Bahá'í Sister,

Your letters of May 14th and June 10th together with their enclosures reached the Guardian safely, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He has been very gratified to hear of the successful Summer School sessions, news of the Buxton one having just recently reached him in your latest cable. He feels that you must all be very encouraged that this new way of holding them in different places, which circumstances made imperative, has proved so successful in the end. It presages the day when the friends in England will see the institutions of their Faith rising from various flourishing centres.

Regarding minute No. 507, the Guardian feels that it would be better for either the mothers of Bahá'í children — or some committee your Assembly might delegate the task to — to choose excerpts from the Sacred Words to be used by the child rather than just something made up. Of course prayer can be purely spontaneous, but many of the sentences and thoughts combined

in Bahá'í writings of a devotional nature are easy to grasp, and the revealed Word is endowed with a power of its own....

Shoghi Effendi fully realises the strain which those who are so actively bearing the weight of Bahá'í responsibility are subjected to in these days, when already, as private individuals, the events of the world are affecting their lives and drawing on their strength. It makes the quality of Bahá'í service so much finer, that it should entail on the part of all definite self-sacrifice.

Though the friends may not be fully aware of it, their staunch perseverance in carrying out their Bahá'í activities in the face of war conditions, is really in itself of historic importance. Convention, Summer Schools, meetings, all are not only demonstrating the calibre of their faith, but also evincing marked progress, all of which greatly cheers and delights the Guardian.

He assures you and your fellow-members of the National Spiritual Assembly, of his continued prayers on your behalf, that you may be guided, protected and sustained in your devoted services to the Faith....

P.S. — Shoghi Effendi is deeply interested in the plans you are developing to aid and attract more young people to the Faith. He feels this is both praiseworthy and a valuable method of teaching the Cause.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-worker,

The work so splendidly initiated by the English believers and so devotedly and energetically pursued and consolidated in these days of peril, uncertainty and turmoil, establishes beyond any doubt their right to claim to be the true upholders and custodians of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. They have, ever since the outbreak of this world wide conflict, abundantly demonstrated the high quality of their faith, the soundness of their institutions, the intensity of their devotion, and their capacity to defend and promote the interests of their beloved Cause. Impelled by admiration and gratitude for the work they have already accomplished, I have contributed a sum which I trust will enable them to extend the range of their teaching activities throughout the British Isles. May the Beloved graciously assist them to achieve such victories in this field as shall truly befit the conclusion of the first century of the Bahá'í Era.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 12 November 1942

Cabling two hundred pounds care cooks thanksgiving protection community believers British Isles and furtherance all-important teaching activities praying continually epoch making victories.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 13 January 1943

Convey glad tidings English believers completion exterior edifice mother Temple West advise cable congratulations representatives American Bahá'ís superb achievement and wide publicity *British* *press.*

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 20 January 1943

Assure attendants conference loving appreciation prayers.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 9 March 1943

Dear Bahá'í Sister,

Your letters dated July 19th 1942, Aug. 20th 1942, Sept. 15th 1942, and Dec. 8th 1942 have all reached the Guardian safely, as well as their enclosures, and he has instructed me to answer them on his behalf.

This last year he has been greatly overburdened with work, and that is why he so frequently has to delay the answering of his many letters.

The good news you conveyed of the marked success of the various Summer Schools held last year pleased him greatly. When the English friends remember that it is not many years since they ventured on their first Summer School and now, during war time, they have managed to hold four successful ones, they should feel very encouraged and proud! It shows that when the determination is strong and the faith firm, the friends can work wonders and surprise even themselves!

He was also delighted to hear of the successful teaching work and public meetings undertaken in Bradford and Manchester, and that the advertisements and publicity which you are sponsoring are meeting with a certain amount of response from the public.

He hopes that some of the friends will find it possible to move, at least temporarily, to centres where sufficient believers, or interested enquirers exist to enable a Spiritual Assembly to be formed by³⁵. If such work is feasible it is, indeed, of great importance and well worth the sacrifices involved. This policy of settlement has been fruitful in both India and the United States, and as soon as a determined and active Assembly is started it is, of course, much easier to teach and carry on the work of the Cause.

The burdens everyone has to bear these days are heavy, and the way often seems long and hard which we and our fellow-men in general, are called upon to tread; but we know where it leads and what our work is and what that work must ultimately mean to not only the Bahá'ís but the whole world. This knowledge strengthens us and enables us to go on with a faith and confidence which cannot but help and inspire others. We are Bahá'u'lláh's army and we cannot fail, as He leads us on.

The Guardian assures you and all the N.S.A. members of his most loving prayers. The English friends are increasingly dear to him, and he has great hopes for their future achievements.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

The evidences of renewed activity in the teaching field are most encouraging and the spirit which animates the English believers in these days of stress and peril is highly inspiring. As the first Bahá'í century draws to a close, a supreme effort should be exerted by the believers in order to consummate befittingly the task they have arisen to achieve. I will pray with all my heart that the hopes they cherish may be realised, and their continued labours be crowned with glorious success.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Naw-Rúz, 1943

Appreciate message reciprocate loving greetings thankful divine protection praying
unprecedented victories last year first Bahá'í century.

Shoghi Rabbání

Letter of 21 April 1943 (Convention)

Appeal delegates assembled convention deliberate prompt effectual measures ensure
unprecedented expansion pioneer teaching activities last year century and befitting celebration
May 1944 centenary faith advise prepare survey outstanding events forty-five year history faith
British Isles assure friends fervent continued prayers abundant blessings success two-fold task
cabling three hundred pounds contribution towards fulfilment projected undertakings deepest
love.

Shoghi Rabbání

Letter of 26 April 1943

Delighted response high resolve assure assembly prayers magnificent victories.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 12 May 1943

Kindly air mail immediately full list names all localities British Isles where one or more believers reside specifying those possessing spiritual assemblies.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 17 June 1943

Cabling two hundred pounds through cooks contribution assist your assembly celebrate befittingly centenary beloved faith writing.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 17 June 1943

Dear Bahá'í Sister,

Your letters, written on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly, and dated Oct. 22nd 1942, Feb. 18th 1943 and April 12th and May 11th, have all been received, and the Guardian has instructed me to answer them on his behalf.

He was very pleased to hear that the publicity you are giving the Faith is meeting with a wider response than has hitherto been the case, and he hopes that the N.S.A. and local Assemblies will organise their efforts in such a way as to enable them to draw enquirers closer to the Cause and, if possible, meet with them and include them in suitable teaching classes.

Regarding the matter of Fuád Afnán's grave, the Guardian has no objection to its being built.

He feels that Bahá'ís who, though still considering themselves believers, omit attending the 19 Day Feasts for long periods, should not be deprived of their voting rights; they should, however, be encouraged to attend these Feasts as often as possible.

In less than a year the Bahá'ís the world over will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of their Faith, and the Guardian is very anxious that the British believers should commemorate this

historic occasion befittingly. He would, therefore, suggest that your Assembly take up the following points for deliberation as soon as possible:

1. The holding of a large and representative gathering, attended by the Bahá'ís and the public alike, in a hired hall in London on the 23rd May 1944. He feels that prominent friends and sympathisers of the Faith should be invited to speak on this occasion, as well as Bahá'ís, and that every effort should be made to make the gathering both festive and dignified, as befits so blessed and solemn an occasion.
1. The publication of a Centenary Pamphlet outlining the important events of the Faith, and with a special emphasis placed on the rise and development of the Cause in England, its early history in that country, the achievements of the friends in spreading the Teachings there and establishing the administration, the formation of the Publishing Trust, and so on.
1. He wishes your Assembly to call the annual Bahá'í Convention for days that will include the 22nd May, so that all the assembled friends may be present at a special Bahá'í meeting to be held at 2 hours and 11 minutes after sunset on May 22nd as this is the exact time at which the Báb made His first historic declaration of His mission to Mullá Ḥusayn.

In order to aid the dear English believers in their befitting celebration of so glorious an occasion the Guardian is forwarding to your Assembly the sum of two hundred pounds sterling to be used for the arrangements you deem fit to make, and the publication of the above mentioned pamphlet. The Bahá'í communities all over the world — wherever free to do so — will also be celebrating this memorable day, each according to its capacity, and he is very anxious that the British Bahá'ís should, as befits their increasingly prominent position in the Bahá'í World, demonstrate to the public and to their fellow believers, the vitality of their community and the marked advancement it has made of late. He leaves all details to the discretion of your Assembly.

Mr. Yool of Manchester was recently able to spend his leave in Haifa at the Western Pilgrim House, and the Guardian was so happy to welcome one of the English friends here. He hopes that after the war many will be able to make the pilgrimage. They will be most welcome.

Assuring you and all the members of the N.S.A. of his loving prayers and his ardent hopes for the success of this great celebration which you will now be planning....

P.S. The Guardian recently cabled asking you to forward a complete list of all Spiritual Assemblies in the British Isles and the name of every locality where one or more believers reside.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

I pray that the celebration of the Centenary of our beloved Faith by the English believers may be a remarkable success. The committee that will have to be appointed for this purpose must strain every nerve, explore every avenue, and lose no time in order to ensure the unqualified success of this undertaking. I will supplicate the Beloved to guide every step you take, to aid you

to surmount all obstacles, and to inspire you to undertake the measures that are most conducive to the proper discharge of your noble task. The widest possible publicity should be given to the Faith by every means at your disposal.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi

Letter of 4 August 1943

Dear Bahá'í Sister,

Your letters, written on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly and dated May 14th and June 6th have been received, together with the minutes of the April and May N.S.A. meetings, and the Guardian has instructed me to answer them on his behalf.

He was very encouraged to see the number of places where there are now one or two registered Bahá'ís residing, as these are beacons of the Faith — however lonely and however, as yet, feeble the light they are able to radiate.

The Guardian feels that it would be an excellent plan if some way could be found to raise Bournemouth and Torquay to Assembly status; either through some self-sacrificing souls moving to these places and thus giving them the required number, or through the efforts of the local and visiting teachers. With the Centenary of the Faith so rapidly approaching it seems a great pity that England should be deprived of these two Assemblies, when each one of them only requires one person to bring it to Assembly status.

Regarding the questions you asked in connection with the following minutes of the N.S.A. meetings: 18. The Guardian advises you to consult Canon Townshend, and if he considers it advisable to compile a pamphlet for distribution to the clergy you could get one out along the lines he might suggest as suitable. 754. He would not advise any special contact being made with the Swedenborgians as the Master's reference is not sufficiently clear and emphatic to warrant it. 755. The Guardian does not believe you should ask the Russian Embassy for help in locating Mde. Grinevskaya's play about the Báb, as he believes they could be of no help in the matter. You might ask the American N.S.A. if they have this material available.

The Guardian's prayers are offered on behalf of the N.S.A. members, that you, one and all, may be aided and guided in your labours during the coming months, to prepare the way for a befitting and glorious Centenary celebration of our beloved Faith during May of

[From the Guardian:]

Dearly beloved friends,

I was so pleased and encouraged to witness the recent evidences of the determination of the English believers to arise, as never before, during this concluding year of the first Bahá'í century, and ensure the extension of the teaching activities of the Faith, the consolidation of its interests, and a better understanding and wider recognition of its aims, its principles, and accomplishments. The efforts they must exert during these remaining months must be unprecedented in their range and character. The blessings that will be vouchsafed to them, if they unitedly persevere and vigorously prosecute their urgent task, will alike be unprecedented. The preparation for a befitting celebration of the forthcoming Centenary must likewise be carefully and energetically carried out. May the Almighty sustain and guide them in their vast and meritorious endeavours.

Shoghi

Letter of 10 August 1943 (Summer School)

Concentration teaching and centenary preparations most vital matters fervently pray all may become radiantly active greetings deeply appreciated.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 25 October 1943

Advise contact Herbert Samuel Ronald Storrs Tudor Pole and other sympathisers which National Assembly may suggest vigorous action necessary safeguard interests faith insure success celebration.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 2 November 1943

Cabling five hundred pounds to be expended discretion your assembly furtherance teaching activities and Bahá'í publications deepest love assurance continued prayers.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 5 January 1944⁴⁷

Kindly cable date formation first Bahá'í National Assembly.

⁴⁷. "

Letter of 13 March 1944

Dear Bahá'í Sister,

Your letters dated July 15th, Aug. 12th, Oct. 3rd, Nov. 1st and 10th and Dec. 5th together with various enclosures have been received, and the Guardian has instructed me to answer them on his behalf.

Regarding the article by Mrs. Thornburgh-Cropper, the Guardian does not place such material in the archives, but it might possibly be either stored with past documents or have been returned to the "Bahá'í World" Committee. He regrets his inability to forward it to you in time to be of any use in preparing the Centenary Pamphlet.

He would like you to assure Mr. St. Barbe Baker⁴⁸ that the Bahá'ís would be happy to avail themselves of his connections in Africa and his assistance and advice in the future teaching work there. Tremendous tasks lie ahead of the believers during the opening years of the second Bahá'í century, and undoubtedly spreading the Faith in Africa will be one of them.

He considered the Diary gotten out by the Publishing Trust to be in excellent taste, and is very pleased it has proved a medium of spreading the news of the existence of our beloved Faith and its nature. He appreciated receiving the copies forwarded to him. He is also very pleased to hear that the publication of the Centenary Pamphlet is now assured.

He sees no objection to getting out a compilation of Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá (as per minute No. 906) providing the source is authentic and the translations faithful and presentable.

He was very pleased to see that new and better headquarters for the Assembly and meetings in London have been found, and trusts this foreshadows the development of a national administrative headquarters there in England in the not too distant future.

In spite of the burden the Bahá'ís, in common with their countrymen, are bearing these days, they are showing marked progress in their activities, and he feels confident that the friends, so loyal and devoted to the beloved Faith, will arise unitedly, in so important a country as England

⁴⁸. Later, for twelve consecutive years, he sent an official message to St. Barbe's World Forestry Charter Gatherings attended by Ambassadors from up to sixty-two countries each year. St. Barbe took an active part on the Committee celebrating the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb in 1944. After his first Sahara University Expedition carrying out an ecological survey of 9,000 miles in 1953, and in response to the Guardian's desire, St. Barbe attended the First African Conference in Kampala. In 1975 St. Barbe was called upon to advise on tree planting of the site of the Tihrán House of Worship in consultation with Quinlan Terry, architect. Afterwards, in collaboration with architect Hossein Amánat, he recorded his observations for the Universal House of Justice for the landscaping of their site on Mt. Carmel and for tree-scaping at Bahjí. St. Barbe attended the Intercontinental Conference Nairobi, in October 1976 and still (1979) at almost 90 is introducing or teaching the Faith in many lands and would be content to "lay down his bones in service to the Faith" in his beloved Africa.

— one of the first to receive the Divine Message in the West — and will ensure that the Centenary is befittingly celebrated in spite of the many difficulties to be overcome.

Assuring you one and all of his ardent prayers for the success of your work, for your strength and protection....

P.S. Your letter of Jan. 18th has been received and the Guardian wishes to state that in connection with the royalties on "Paris Talks" that, as Mrs. Hall and her sister wish to turn them over to the Cause, the Assembly should accept and the money in future go to the National Fund there in England...

Any royalties on the works of the Master, as one of the Central Figures of our Faith, are naturally the property of the Cause and not of His heirs.

[From the Guardian:]

Dear and valued co-workers,

I am delighted to hear of the steps that have been taken by your Assembly in preparation for the forthcoming celebration of the centenary of our beloved Faith, and I pray that success may crown your devoted efforts. The English believers are in every field of Bahá'í activity and service demonstrating the quality of their faith and the keen sense of responsibility which animates them in their organised and concerted endeavours for the promotion of the vital interests of the Faith. I feel proud of their record of service, and will pray with increasing fervour for their protection and success.

Shoghi

Naw-Rúz, 1944

Appreciate greetings praying great victories opening century.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Letter of 22 April 1944

Cabling one thousand pounds my loving contribution further extension Bahá'í publishing activities and initiation additional measures ensure brilliant success centenary celebrations praying ardently success both fields.

Shoghi

Rabbání

Shoghi Rabbání

Letter of 23 May 1944

Announce friends joyful tidings hundredth anniversary declaration mission martyred herald Faith signalised by historic decision complete structure his sepulchre erected by 'Bbdu'l-bahá on site chosen by Bahá'u'lláh. Recently designed model dome unveiled presence assembled believers. Praying early removal obstacles consummation stupendous plan conceived by founder Faith and hopes cherished by centre his covenant.

Shoghi

Rabbání

