

IS THE  
BAHAI ORGANIZATION  
THE  
ENEMY  
OF THE  
BAHAI RELIGION?

AN  
APPENDIX TO  
ABDUL BAHÁ  
AND THE  
PROMISED AGE

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## APPENDIX TO ABDUL BAHÁ AND THE PROMISED AGE

Seven years have elapsed since the passing of Abdul Baha and it is with mingled feelings of regret, as well as from a sense of duty, that I add this chapter to my book.

Two months after the death of Abdul Baha his sister sent the following cablegram to this country:

January 16, 1922

Haifa, Wilhelmitz, N. Y.

In will, Shoghi Effendi appointed Guardian of the Cause and Head of House of Justice.

(Signed) GREATEST HOLY LEAF.

A typewritten translation of the alleged will arrived in America four weeks later and was read by Mr. Horace Holley to a gathering of Bahais.

The appointment of a successor came as a thunderbolt out of a clear sky to all the Bahais, as Abdul Baha had given no hint that he intended to appoint a successor. On the contrary, he said that after him the power of the Bahai Cause was to vest in what will be known as Houses of Justice. Among many instances that could be cited is the following, published in the official magazine of the Bahai organization. *The Star of the West*, November 23, 1913, p. 238:

In case of difference, Abdul Baha must be consulted. . . . After Abdul Baha whenever the Universal House of Justice is organized it will ward off differences.

Commenting on the above the editors of *The Star of the West*, in a footnote of the December 31, 1913, issue express in the following the belief current among the Bahais during the lifetime of Abdul Baha:

The cycle of Baha'o'llah extends for one thousand or thousands of years from 1844 A.D.; but it is unique in that the "Most Great Characteristic" of the New Covenant is the appointment of a Center, which is now in the person of Abdul Baha, and after him shall be vested in the Universal House of Justice for a period of one thousand or thousands of years.

At the time the document was read I neither accepted it nor rejected it. I felt that if it were true the results of the administration of Shoghi Effendi would be one of the strongest proofs of its authenticity. If it were not true, then time and circumstances would eventually cause the truth to become known.

This stand on my part caused me no embarrassment inasmuch as I had never belonged to the Bahai organization (Spiritual Assemblies). For from my personal contact with Abdul Baha, as well as from all of his teachings, and those of Baha'o'llah, I realized that one of their chief aims was to eradicate the clan consciousness from man, and bring him into the universal consciousness, and not as the Bahais were doing into an organization, or a box. In primitive times the clan idea, or organization, was the great achievement. For man was so lacking in the consciousness of the oneness of mankind that he had to be educated into so simple an organization as the family life. Little by little he was led to broaden his conception from family to tribe and from tribe to country. But that which was a splendid thing and very necessary at one stage in the life of an individual, or a race, becomes not only unnecessary at a later stage but harmful as well. For in exact accordance as people increase in numbers in these different boxes, or organizations, do they use the force of numbers to impose their will upon the rest of the race. So that today we witness the same old primitive warfare of tribe against tribe, only as it is now called organization, and is conducted on a larger scale, we lose sight of the fact that the principle is the same as that which governed the primitive races. And this was the martyrdom of Abdul Baha. He spoke for the maturity of the age and hoped his followers would catch a glimpse of that maturity, and not be content with the effete methods of the past.

Now while I do not mean to imply that I understand this maturity, yet I do know that only as we function on the universal

plane do we catch glimpses of it. The many tests that befall us blur these glimpses, if we succumb to them. But with each test that we overcome the Truth grows clearer. One of the tests that beset me, just after I had become interested in the Bahai Cause, was an offer to travel as a paid teacher in order to promulgate the Bahai Message. But I refused this offer, because I knew that the door of further spiritual enlightenment would close unless I kept my religion inviolate from money, and love of leadership, as Abdul Baha had cautioned his followers to do.\*

These were my convictions when I visited Abdul Baha at Haifa, Palestine, in 1920. Therefore, one day when he very opportunely spoke of certain conditions existing in America among the Bahais, I mentioned to him that I had never belonged to the Bahai organization (Spiritual Assemblies). His face beamed with happiness as he replied:

Good, very good. The organization that the Bahais have among themselves has nothing to do with the teachings of Baha'o'llah. The teachings of Baha'o'llah are universal and cannot be confined to a sect.

This same thought runs through all the writings of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha. It is expressed in many different ways, ranging from the above, and the following unequivocal statement: "The Bahai Religion is not an organization. You can never organize the Bahai Cause," to the less obvious way of saying the same thing. For instance, Abdul Baha says that it will be impossible to create any schism in the Bahai Religion. The Bahais have interpreted this as meaning that *two* Bahai organizations cannot be formed when, as a matter of fact, both Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha show that *no* organization can be formed. The moment a person joins the Bahai organization he is following a "particular meeting of unity" which Abdul Baha in the following says he should not do:

O friends! It is the wish of Abdul Baha that the friends may establish general unity and not a particular meeting of unity. You must have great consideration of this fact, for while during past cycles such events were, in the beginning, a means of harmony, they became in the end the cause of trouble.

\* See page 208 on tests.



But to return to the subject of the alleged will of Abdul Baha. Although the document had been read at a meeting of Bahais in February, 1922, at which I was present, yet it was not until three years later, in February, 1925, that typewritten copies of the document were distributed only among "old and recognized believers" with the permission of Shoghi Effendi. I was presented with a copy.

The reason that the will had come as such a complete surprise was because Abdul Baha not only had given no hint that he intended to appoint a successor but he declared himself in unmistakable terms against such a policy. The following was spoken at a Persian meeting and was recorded by his secretary, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, July 19, 1913. This was five or six years after the appointment of a successor was supposed to have been made:

The Blessed Perfection \* has upturned the root of the tree of superstition and religious offices. In the Past the ambitious leaders of religions have been the cause of the retrogression and ignorance of a nation. In this Cause there are no religious titles, no ceremonies of ordination. One is not respected simply because he wears a peculiar dress or carries a religious title, or has inherited it from the Fathers. No! These are not the marks of distinction. On the other hand, those SANCTIFIED souls, the signs of their divine sanctity and spirituality become apparent in the hearts of others. People are unconsciously attracted to them through their pure morality, their justice and loving kindness. Everyone is drawn to them through their praiseworthy attributes, and pleasing qualities, and all the faces are illumined by the light of their virtues and integrity. *In this movement there is no title to be given to anyone; no See to be inherited by any person.* "The Hands of the Cause" are the Hands of Truth. Therefore Whosoever is the promoter and the servant of the Word of God he is the hand of Truth. By the "hands of God" certain definite meanings are connoted. It is not only a verbal expression. Whosoever is more humble in the Cause of God he is more confirmed, and whosoever is more evanescent, he is more favored.

And again Abdul Baha says:

"There are no officers in this Cause. I do not and have not 'Appointed' anyone to perform any special service, but I encourage everyone to engage in the service of the Kingdom. The founda-

\* Baha'o'llah.

tion of this Cause is pure spiritual democracy and not a theocracy."

From the *Diary of Ahmad Sohrab*.

The keynote of the teachings of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha is freedom of conscience and freedom from the clan conception of life. Therefore the appointment of a successor, endowed with all the powers of a pope, to whom all must turn in obedience, means a reversal of all that they taught during their lifetimes. For instance in "A Traveller's Narrative," edited and translated from the Persian by Professor Edward G. Browne, there is a summary of Baha'o'llah's teachings on the freedom of conscience, part of which is as follows:

. . . the conscience of man is sacred and to be respected; and that liberty thereof produces widening of ideas, amendment of morals, improvement of conduct, disclosure of the secrets of creation, and manifestation of the hidden verities of the contingent world. . . . So in the world of existence two persons unanimous in all grades (of thought) and all beliefs cannot be found. "The ways unto God are as the number of the breaths of (His) creatures," is a mysterious truth. . . .

Every line of the teachings of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha breaths forth this spirit of freedom. Then what a shock to come in contact with the mutilations to which the leaders of the Bahai organization have subjected these teachings, such as the following by Mr. Horace Holley, who is the paid secretary and leader of the Spiritual Assembly:

. . . the individual conscience must be subordinated to the decisions of the Spiritual Assembly, . . .

P. 55, *Bahai Year Book*, 1926, Vol. I.

Could inversion of the teachings of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha go further than this: To organize the religion which these founders said could not be organized—to have paid officials and teachers in the religion which the founders said must be kept free from paid officials—and finally, to cap the climax, to have one of the paid officials declare, that the individual conscience must be subordinated to the Spiritual Assembly!

In order to understand how the leaders of the Bahai organization came to see the Bahai Religion in this inverted manner, it

will be necessary to show that they have confused two aspects of the teachings of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha, as meaning the same thing. One aspect is the path of personal attainment which Baha'o'llah describes with great beauty in "The Seven Valleys." Abdul Baha confirms this path of personal attainment as being the only sign of real faith. That is, we can be Bahais only through deeds and not through words. To assist in promulgating the Cause, wherever there are nine believers, an assembly may be established. The members of these assemblies are counseled to correspond with the members of the other assemblies all over the world, in order to promote international good-will. But Abdul Baha shows in the following that even these assemblies are not necessary:

Regarding the Spiritual Assembly (Board of Consultation, Working Committee, House of Spirituality), this is not the House of Justice. It is a purely Spiritual Assembly, and belongs to spiritual matters, and that is, to teach the Cause of God, and diffuse the fragrance of God.

If the believers arise in the accomplishment of this work, the existence of the Spiritual Assembly will not become absolutely necessary or obligatory. The aim is to teach the Cause of God and spread the fragrance of God. In California they have no Board, but the teaching of the Cause is being done.

Instructions of Abdul Baha, November 1, to the members of the spiritual meeting.

. . . How I was pleased with the friends in California! They said: "We do not want a committee of consultation, lest we fall into the thought of leadership and superiority, and become the cause of dissension; . . . we are serving according to our capacity, and have no thought or aim except the spreading of the fragrances of God."

*Diary of Mirza Mahmood, November, 1912.*

The Cause of God is like unto a college. . . . The students must show the results of their study in their deportment and deeds, otherwise they have wasted their lives. Now the friends must so live and conduct themselves as to bring greater glory and results to the Religion of God. To them the Cause of God must be dynamic force, transforming the lives of men, and not a question of meetings, committees, futile discussions, unnecessary debates, and political wire-pulling.

Extract from *Ahmad's Diary*. Lake Tiberias, Syria, May 6, 1914



Furthermore Abdul Baha says that the ideal assembly is the attainment to the spiritual condition that the disciples of Christ experienced when they gathered together after his crucifixion.

Only as mankind succeeds in putting the principles of the first aspect into practice will the second aspect come into existence. This deals with the government of the future state. That is, when the majority of the peoples of the world become Bahais through deeds, they will naturally want to vote for the laws which Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha have outlined for the economic readjustment of the affairs of the world. This is as follows: In each country of the world there will be established, by universal vote, what will be known as Houses of Justice. These will take the place of our senates and parliaments of the world. From the members there will be established a Universal House of Justice. One of the ordinances of the House of Justice will be the Laws of Inheritance:

. . . seven classes inherit--children, wives, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and teachers. In the absence of one or more of these classes, the share which would belong to them goes to the "House of Justice" (Beytul-Adt) to be expended on the poor, the fatherless and widows, or on useful public works. . . .\*

See *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, pp. 948-949.

Another ordinance of the House of Justice will be the law of Huquq. This is similar to our present income-tax laws, and these two laws will help equalize the wealth of the world so that there will no longer be the extremes of wealth and poverty. But Abdul Baha makes it very clear that this will take place only by the vote of the majority of the peoples of the world. The people naturally will obey these Houses of Justice in the same way that we obey our governments today (or should obey). Abdul Baha says:

. . . The House of Justice will be appointed by the people. It must be obeyed because it is the Law of God expressed through the people by their own will and voice.

. . . It is the centre of true government and must be obeyed in all things. It is the Law of God embodied in the people, reflecting

\* Professor E. G. Browne had several Mss. of the *Lawh-i-Akdas* of Baha'o'llah in Persian and this is his translation and summary of one of these laws.

His Will and their need and desire; not blindly following command.

*Ten Days in the Light of Acca*, p. 24.

And again in "The Light of the World," pp. 102-103:

Each state, for instance New York, will have one House of Justice. The cities (of that state) will be under that House of Justice. The nations will choose directly the International House of Justice and everything will be in its hands. For instance, Syria will have a House of Justice. The people will elect it. Then this House of Justice of Syria (as a state under the Turkish Empire) will elect the House of Justice of Constantinople. Then Constantinople, London, Paris, Washington and so on will elect the International House of Justice.

All during the lifetimes of Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha the words "Beytul-Adt," which literally mean "House of the Just," were translated as meaning just what they mean—House of Justice. But since the death of Abdul Baha these words have been mistranslated as meaning "Spiritual Assembly." That is by substituting the words "Spiritual Assembly" for "House of Justice" it makes the writings of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha read as if they meant that the Spiritual Assemblies should be obeyed, instead of which they mean that we should obey the future state when it is called "House of Justice," exactly as we are commanded to obey our governments today. Also in the alleged will the tax, which will be one of the ordinances of the future government, and which is to be paid to the House of Justice, is to be paid to Shoghi Effendi.

These inversions and others have taken place so gradually that many of the Bahais are unconscious of the extent of these inversions. It is therefore a constant source of wonder, that, for some unaccountable reason to themselves, intelligent people shy off when they try to persuade them to come into their organization, or box. They have, therefore, resorted to indirect methods of propaganda, and they have organized "World Unity Conferences" and a magazine called *World Unity* and a *World Unity Foundation*. Shoghi Effendi wrote to the Assemblies in 1926 as follows:

In connection with the World Unity Conferences, . . . as to the policy that should be adopted with regard to these conferences and other Bahai activities in general, . . . the National Spiritual Assemblies should . . . resort to the twofold method of directly



and indirectly winning the enlightened public to the unqualified acceptance of the Bahai Faith. The one method would assume an open, decisive and challenging tone. The other, . . . would be progressive and cautious. . . .

*Bahai Administration* by Shoghi Effendi, pp. 114-115.

The World Unity Conferences are held in all the large cities, but no mention is made from the platform that it is a Bahai activity. The Bahais flock to these meetings to do what they call "follow-up work" among those who evidence any interest. Then the process begins of trying to achieve the impossible. That is, these teachers who do "follow-up work" try to interest those who have just heard universal principles propounded from the platform, to accept the inverted conception of these principles, and join their organization and become clan conscious. Mr. Horace Holley, is one of the leaders of the Bahai organization, and yet as one of the leaders of World Unity Conferences, and as managing editor of *World Unity Magazine* he represents himself as a modernist. And for promulgating these irreconcilable viewpoints he receives a salary from both sides of the organization.

The Bahais do not call their activities "organization" because they know that the founders of the Bahai Religion said it could not be organized. Therefore, Shoghi Effendi and the Bahais have tried to side-step this issue by calling their activities "Bahai Administration." This despite the fact that since the death of Abdul Baha they have incorporated the Bahai Religion, and have even made it an article of faith that unless one belongs to their corporation, and subordinates one's conscience to it one is not to be considered a Bahai. Some of the activities of their corporation are: collecting funds to build the Bahai Temple—financing their paid officials, and their Green Acre Summer School—delivering lectures at their headquarters 119 West 57th Street, and in other large cities—publishing The Bahai Magazine, as well as their indirect activities flourishing under World Unity Conferences.

In December, 1925, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada issued a pamphlet, "A Plan of Unified Action to Spread the Bahai Cause." The object of this plan was to make a drive to raise \$400,000, as the following quotations show:

The objects of the plan are, in brief, to unify the efforts and enlarge the numbers of the Cause in North America, penetrate the consciousness of the public with the spirit of Baha'o'llah, and, by the end of three years at most, accumulate, in response to the request of Shoghi Effendi, a fund of \$400,000 to construct the first unit of the superstructure of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar \* at Wilmette, Illinois.

. . . It is the fixed and unalterable intention of the National Spiritual Assembly to so administer the affairs of the Cause, and so assist the friends, that the amount specified by the Guardian (Shoghi Effendi)—\$400,000—can be gathered together by December 31, 1928. . . .

To carry this plan steadily forward to a successful conclusion means that contributions must average nine dollars per month from every confirmed American Baha'i beginning January, 1926, and continued uninterruptedly until December, 1928.

At the end of the three-year period the condition of the Fund will be laid before the Guardian of the Cause. . . .

One of the pamphlets and a letter soliciting contributions to this fund, were mailed to me. Without remembering at the time that both Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha had forbidden soliciting, or begging in any form, I made several contributions. Shortly after this I realized that such policies, and others that the leaders of the Bahai organization were advocating, were contrary to the principles of the Bahai Religion, one of which was that it should be kept inviolate from money and other worldly considerations, such as paid officials, and paid teachers. And it was because I saw that under the administration of Shoghi Effendi the Bahai teachings had not only become more and more inverted, but more and more commercialized that I at last demanded of the National Spiritual Assembly that they send for photographic copies of the alleged will, and have this document examined by the best handwriting expert. I based my demand on the fact that the Bahai organization had asked me to subscribe to this fund, and that I had donated to it, without knowledge at the time that the will had not been legally authenticated. In this demand that I made on December 3, 1927, to the nine following members of the Spiritual Assembly: Mr. Horace Holley, Mr. Roy

\* Bahai Temple.



C. Wilhelm, Mr. Alfred Lunt, Mr. Allen McDaniel, Mr. Carl Scheffler, Mr. Louis Gregory, Mrs. Amelia Collins, Mrs. May Maxwell, and Mrs. Florence Morton, I also called their attention to the many warnings Abdul Baha had given the Bahais not to accept Tablets purporting to be his which gave authority to any person, such as in the following:

. . . be most careful and attentive that it is in my writing and my signature, that they may not be counterfeits.

Four weeks later, on December 31, I received a reply from Mr. Holley, part of which is as follows:

Cable Address  
Bahai, New York.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHAI'S OF THE UNITED  
STATES AND CANADA

*Office of the Secretary*  
129 EAST TENTH STREET  
NEW YORK CITY

December 31, 1927.

*My Dear Mrs. White:*

Although you have indicated several points on which you desire explanation or comment, we feel that your letter raises only one fundamental question, namely, the validity of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha. Since this Will appoints a Guardian to administer the administrative affairs of the Cause, and since the Guardian has approved the matters you question, it of course follows that those who really desire to conform to the wishes and instructions of 'Abdu'l-Baha will accept His instructions concerning administrative affairs as soon as they know what these instructions are.

We can, therefore, give you full assurance that the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha, a copy of which was sent you over two years ago, is a document written by Him in His own hand, the validity of which has been established by a number of well-known Baha'is from different countries who inspected the original at Haifa.

Apart from this entirely convincing proof, it is a matter of interesting historical record that, when the custody of one of the Bahai'i tombs at Haifa was questioned after the departure of 'Abdu'l-Baha the final decision lay in the hands of the representative of the British Government administering Palestine under the mandate of the League of Nations, and after full investigation he



restored the keys of the Tomb to the Guardian appointed in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

As no photographic copies of this document exist in this country, we are unable to meet your request for such a copy. In view of the fact that the world-wide Baha'i community naturally most concerned with establishing the completeness and accuracy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's final instruction to His followers, has been satisfied with the verbal accuracy of His Will and Testament; and in view also of the fact that the highest civil authorities of Palestine have also accepted the Guardian as the administrative head of the Baha'i Cause, we know that you may rest assured that obedience to 'Abdu'l-Bahá at this time means obedience to the Guardian appointed by Him in all matters pertaining to the Baha'i Cause."

(Signed) HORACE HOLLEY, *Secretary*.

This letter was wholly unsatisfactory because Mr. Holley and the National Spiritual Assembly had evaded answering the question at issue, which was that they had no legal, or spiritual, right to represent the Bahais, inasmuch as they based their authority on an unauthenticated will in disobedience to the commands of the maker of the alleged will. Furthermore, the "representative of the British Government" had not had the will authenticated legally as no direct property was involved and no one had contested it to the point of insisting upon this being done.

As Mr. Mountford Mills was one of the "well known Baha'is" who had gone to Palestine shortly after the passing of Abdul Baha, I wrote to him asking him to give me what information he could concerning the alleged will. He answered as follows:

THE HARVARD CLUB

27 WEST 44th ST.  
NEW YORK CITY

January 19th, 1928.

Dear Mrs. White,

I have your letter of yesterday and have also received the copies of your earlier letters to the National Spiritual Assembly and to Mr. Holley, all bearing upon the question whether the Will accepted by the National Spiritual Assembly as Abdu'l Baha's Last Testament is really so. Needless to say, I am glad to give you any information I can relating to the matter.

Answering more specifically the questions in your letter to me, I have seen the Will.

It is written entirely in the Master's own hand.

It is signed by him.

Its parts written before the Master's seal was stolen from him in this country are sealed.

It is not dated, but its approximate date appears from its contents.

It has not been probated in the sense that we use the word, as there is no provision under the laws of Islam for such a proceeding. It has, however, been officially recognized by the British Government, the Mandatory Power now governing Palestine.

I hope these answers will satisfy the doubts that have arisen in your mind concerning the authenticity of the Will. Please let me know. I have enjoyed exceptional opportunities to learn the facts about it and do not hesitate to assure you that the document of which copies have been circulated among the Baháís in this country is the Last Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha and embodies his final and most sacred message to his followers.

Sincerely Yours,

(Signed) MOUNTFORD MILLS.

Then upon further questioning he wrote again as follows:

THE HARVARD CLUB

27 WEST 44th ST.

January 22nd, 1928.

*Dear Mrs. White,*

I have your letter of yesterday.

As I wrote in my last letter, the formal standards in executing wills here required by our laws cannot be applied to the Will of Abdu'l Baha. Viewing it through the eye of our custom so far as possible, however, we should consider its three parts as forming his main Will to which two codicils had been added, all three parts being his Last Will and Testament. This is the view I took when writing you. It also seems beyond question that this was the Master's own intention. The three parts were filed together in one place by him, with the evident intent that they should be read together as one document.

Answering your specific questions,

All three sections are signed by Abdu'l Baha.

The first two sections are sealed.

All three sections are in the handwriting of Abdu'l Baha.

The Master's seal was stolen during his visit to this country in 1912.

The first two sections were thus obviously written before 1912, the last section after his return to Palestine in 1913. A closer approximation to the exact dates can be drawn from events referred to in the separate sections, but I have not this data with



me here. As explained above, following our occidental terminology, there is but one Will with two codicils, the three parts having been written at different dates.

The commands of Abdu'l Baha which you quote concerning the identification of letters alleged to have been written by him were given out with special reference to Orientals who might come to this country and mingle with the Friends with the purpose of creating differences among them, and it has always been supposed that the commands were given with particular reference to Dr. —, who, as you know, did come here shortly afterwards. That these instructions could not have been intended to apply in full detail to all of the Master's writings is clearly shown by the innumerable Tablets sent to us that were almost never written in his own hand beyond the signature. However, I agree with you entirely that he would wish even more strongly that anyone feeling that he had reasonable grounds to doubt the authenticity of so gravely important a document as his Will should take every reasonable precaution to be sure.

Sincerely,

(Signed) MOUNTFORD MILLS.

In response to other letters that I wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly, reiterating my demand that they send for photographs of the alleged will, and have it examined by handwriting experts, I received a reply from Mr. Holley, asking me to meet the members of the Spiritual Assembly. I accepted this invitation and met them on February 25, 1928. The object of the meeting on their part was, apparently, to try to make me believe that I should accept this document on faith, or on verbal and circumstantial evidence. I, on my part, tried to make them realize that to accept it in this manner was disobedience to the commands of Abdul Baha such as the following which, though it sounds severe, yet was necessary inasmuch as Mohammed Ali and his colleagues were continually trying to undermine the teachings of Abdul Baha:

Any Persian, . . . (who comes to America) . . . even if it is Shoghi Effendi, or Rouhi Effendi (the two grandsons of Abdul Baha) the friends must demand of him before anything else, his credential letter, written in my handwriting, or signed with my signature.

(Signed) ABDUL BAHÁ ÁBBÁS.

*From Star of the West, October 16, 1915.*

They contended, just as Mr. Mills had in his letter to me, that this referred to a certain relative of Abdul Baha's. I maintained that it referred to anyone, and that it made no difference whether a person *brought* a letter or document, or *sent* one, purporting to be Abdul Baha's which gave him authority, this command applied equally to either case, and that it applied overwhelmingly in the case of his alleged will. For this gave Shoghi Effendi more potential authority than a king or a pope. At this meeting I learned that the photographs of the alleged will, which I had requested three months prior to this meeting, had not even been sent for.

The next day, before the meeting adjourned, I sent the members of the Spiritual Assembly, a letter by special delivery demanding that they cable to Mr. Allen McDaniel, who was then in Haifa, and request him to bring back the photographs when he returned. In response to this letter Mr. Holley wrote that the photographs had been sent for.

But on April 25, as I had received no assurance to numerous inquiries I had made that the photographs had even been started on the way, and hearing that photographs of this document existed in London, I sailed for England for the twofold purpose of securing this document, and also to observe the effects of the administration of the Bahai Cause under Shoghi Effendi. Due to a very fortunate combination of circumstances that had happened several years earlier, I succeeded in obtaining the photographs of the alleged will.

In England, as well as in Germany, I found that the administration of Shoghi Effendi had brought chaos to the Bahai Cause. Lady Blomfield, whom I met on several occasions, said that there was practically no longer a Bahai Cause in England, and she had come to the conclusion that the Bahai Cause cannot be organized. She had asked Abdul Baha in 1911 if he approved of the Houses of Spirituality (the organized groups of Bahais also called Spiritual Assemblies). He replied as follows:

If you had lived in the time of His Holiness the Christ which would you have chosen to be—one of his disciples, or a member of the Council of Trent?

She replied:



Without question I would have chosen to be one of His disciples. But if by my presence I could have leavened and helped the Council of Trent, then I would have chosen to be one of them.

Lady Blomfield now perceives that the latter choice would have been a mistake, for she tried to leaven the Bahai organization and found it an impossible task.

I returned to America on May 29 with the much coveted document. On that very day Mr. Holley also wrote to me that the photographs of the will were at his office, and invited me to inspect them, which, needless to say, I was glad to do. He informed me that neither he nor the National Spiritual Assembly intended to have the will examined by experts, as they were perfectly certain that it was valid. With this final refusal of the Spiritual Assembly to comply with the wishes of Abdul Baha, I knew that his prophecy had indeed come true. He said that when the final test came to America there might not be two Bahais left. This, then, had been the great test—they had tried to build on a foundation of disobedience; they had violated the Covenant, which could result in one thing and one thing only—disaster to themselves individual and disaster to their organization.

I had also taken this matter up with Mrs. Mary Handford Ford, who is the leader of the other faction in the Bahai organization. For there are two decided factions in the Bahai organization. One faction is represented by the leaders of the National Spiritual Assembly, the chief of which is Mr. Holley. It is the sectarian, dogmatic group which by garbling, or at any rate acquiescing to the garbling, of the texts of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha, has led the public to believe that the obedience which Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha said mankind must give to the future government, means obedience to the leaders of the Bahai organization. The other faction, of which Mrs. Ford is the leader, does not go in for such extreme organization. Therefore, I had more hope that she and her group would see that to accept the appointment of Shoghi Effendi, based on an unauthenticated will, was spiritually and legally wrong and my disappointment was keen when she failed to do so.

After I had been to Mr. Holley's office and examined the photographs of the alleged will, I wrote to him and the Spiritual



Assembly asking them if they would permit me to use their photographs as their copies were clearer than those I possessed. I also asked them if they would secure for me photographs of several Tablets known to be in the handwriting of Abdul Baha. Nearly six weeks later, on June 13, I received a letter from Mr. Holley with the photographs, but no mention of my request regarding the Tablets.

My next step was to try to secure the services of the greatest handwriting expert in the land, and I finally selected one who is conceded to be so. Due to the fact that he was working on a book, shortly to be published, he could not undertake the work before January, if then; but he gave me some valuable advice, that the document should be examined from three different angles: First, from the spiritual point of view. Does the alleged will agree with the teachings, and the intent, that the maker held during his lifetime, or does it contradict them? Secondly, from the literary point of view. Is it written in the style of Abdul Baha; Thirdly, from the scientific point of view—submit it to the scrutiny of the best handwriting experts.

I decided to undertake the examination of it from the spiritual point of view. My two main reasons for believing it to be invalid are, because it contradicts the teachings of Baha'o'llah and of Abdul Baha, and also because, under the administration of Shoghi Effendi, the Bahai teachings have become completely inverted and commercialized. \$9,806.00 was sent to Shoghi Effendi in ten weeks, from November 30, 1925 to February 8, 1926.

Every incident that has happened in connection with this affair convinces me that the real enemy of the Bahai Religion is the Bahai organization. It was not mere chance that the Bahai organization was founded by Dr. I. G. Kheiralla and Mirza Assad'ullah,\* the two arch enemies of Abdul Baha, and it has continued ever since as the enemy of the Bahai Religion. Not of course as the open or avowed enemy, because such an enemy is never effective; but the enemy, nevertheless, which, while purporting to represent Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha in words, are their bitterest enemy in policies. For although the Bahais have long since repudiated

\* Assad'ullah organized the first Spiritual Assembly, which was called The House of Spirituality, at Chicago in 1901.

Dr. Kheiralla and Mirza Assad'ullah personally (they had to as both of these men, shortly after they had organized assemblies, became the open enemy of Abdul Baha, and allied themselves with Mohammed Ali) yet they never repudiated the inverted interpretation that these two men gave to the Bahai Religion. This has prevailed ever since.

I do not mean to imply that the leaders of the Bahai organization are conscious enemies of the Bahai Religion, any more than the bigots of the dark ages were the conscious enemies of Christianity. For like those same bigots, these modern-day bigots shout the loudest that they are the only true representatives of the religion they claim to represent. It was the policies of the bigots of the dark ages that were the enemies of Christianity, exactly as the policies of the Bahai organization are the enemies of the Bahai Religion today. In both instances the underlying idea of their respective organizations were the same—that the individual conscience must be subordinated to the leaders of their organization, and in both cases they gave to the world the inverted idea of the religion they claimed to represent; for Christianity taught the freedom of conscience, just as the Bahai Religion reiterates it today.

I now believe that it would make little difference to the leaders of the Bahai organization whether the will proved to be valid or invalid, for they would continue to follow their present policies just the same. Except that in case it proved to be invalid they would merely repudiate Shoghi Effendi personally, just as they had repudiated Dr. Kheiralla and Mirza Assad'ullah, while still retaining their policies. It also occurred to me that perhaps the most effective means of precipitating matters that will lead to the legal examination of the alleged will was to send the following letter to the High Commissioner of Jerusalem:

To His Excellency  
The High Commissioner of Palestine,  
Jerusalem, Palestine.

*Your Excellency:*

I wish to consult you about a matter of international importance, which is as follows:

Sir Abdul Baha Abbas of Haifa, Palestine, and his illustrious Father, Baha'o'llah, the founders of the Bahai Religion, have ad-



herents in all the great countries of the world. Eight weeks after the death of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas, in November, 1921, his sister sent cablegrams to the Bahais of the world announcing that Sir Abdul Baha Abbas had left a will in which he appointed Shoghi Effendi (his oldest grandson) his successor. The powers granted to Shoghi Effendi in this alleged will, endows him with as much potential power as a king or a pope. For a tax is to be paid to him by all the Bahais of the world, and this as well as other things in the alleged will, is contrary to everything that Sir Abdul Baha Abbas taught during his lifetime.

In December, 1925, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada distributed pamphlets, the object of which was to collect funds, as the following extract will show:

The objects of the plan are, in brief, to unify the efforts and enlarge the numbers of the Cause in North America, penetrate the consciousness of the public with the spirit of Baha'o'llah, and, by the end of three years at most, accumulate, in response to the request of Shoghi Effendi, a fund of \$400,000 to construct the first unit of the super-structure of the Mashriqu'l-Adhka \* at Wilmette, Illinois.

I subscribed to this fund, as the enclosed photostats of the checks will show, without knowledge at the time that this document had not been legally examined by handwriting experts. I understand that no one contested it to the extent of insisting upon this being done. It is very significant that Mohammed Ali, the half brother of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas, did not insist upon this being done, for the following reasons:

When Baha'o'llah died, in 1892, he left a will appointing Sir Abdul Baha Abbas his successor. This infuriated Mohammed Ali to such an extent that he interpolated an epistle of Baha'o'llah's, in order to nullify the influence of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas, and claim the succession for himself. This interpolation was made public by Badi'u'llah, in a pamphlet called "An Epistle to the Bahai World," in which he confessed that he had witnessed Mohammed Ali's interpolation. After this public confession the influence of Mohammed Ali was broken. But in all the years that have intervened since 1892, Mohammed Ali has been secretly working to gain control of the Bahai Religion. The alleged will of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas is a recital of the plotting of Mohammed Ali, in order that the Bahais would not follow Mohammed Ali after the death of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas. Therefore, Mohammed Ali knowing that he could not be the successor himself may have, in collusion with other members of the family of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas, interpolated into this authentic document the appointment of Shoghi Effendi. The motive for this is very obvious, for the appointment of a successor of any member of the family of Sir

\* Bahai Temple.

Abdul Baha Abbas endowed them with as much potential power as the family of a king or of a pope. For if there had been no appointment, the family of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas would have been penniless. The thing that gives credence to these suppositions is the fact that the alleged will contradicts the teachings of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas, inasmuch as the appointment of a continual line of successors, to whom a tax must be paid, is contrary to everything that he taught during his lifetime.

May I ask you (if it comes under your jurisdiction) to have the alleged will examined by handwriting experts, and with especial care the parts relating to the appointment of Shoghi Effendi? If it does not come under your jurisdiction then will you please delegate it to the proper official;

Mr. Mountford Mills, a Bahai who went to Haifa to inspect the alleged will shortly after the death of Sir Abdul Baha Abbas, wrote to me as follows, in answer to questions I asked concerning it:

It has, however, been officially recognized by the British Government, the Mandatory Power now governing Palestine.

May I ask you also, as a special favor, if you will give me the report dealing with this recognition by the British Government. The enclosed check is for this report. I shall be glad to send you another check for any other necessary expenses.

This request is made in the interest of universal peace, which Baha'o'llah and Sir Abdul Baha Abbas worked so hard to establish, and because I believe their work is being nullified under the powers granted in the alleged will.

I shall be deeply grateful if you will look into these matters.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed) RUTH WHITE.

This letter has been dispatched. In a later edition of this book I shall give the details of this affair as they unfold. It is with much regret that due to the fact that the leaders of the Bahai organization refused to do their duty, legally and spiritually, that the unpleasant task devolved upon me of doing it for them. Also in the doing of it their policies, and actions, became so clear to me that I felt this history should be published, inasmuch as it is a problem that affects the present as well as the future welfare of humanity. This chapter is a preliminary effort to rescue from the chaos of the Bahai organization the universal religion that Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha gave to the world.

