

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

August 1970

To the Continental Conference in La Paz, Bolivia, and the Oceanic Conference in Rose-Hill, Mauritius

Beloved Friends,

Our hearts turn with eager expectancy to the twin Conferences now in session in the southern hemisphere. Their convocation so shortly after the worldwide commemoration of the Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Purest Branch, calls to mind that the promotion and establishment of the Faith of God have always been through sacrifice and dedicated service. Indeed, these very Conferences testify to the creative power, the fruitfulness, the invocation of Divine confirmations which result from sacrificial service to the Cause of God. Although both Bolivia and Mauritius are mentioned specifically in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, the Cause, even thirty-five years ago, was virtually unknown in those areas; today we witness the holding of these historic Conferences.

Little wonder that South America, whose rulers and presidents were addressed by Bahá'u'lláh in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, of whose indigenous believers the Master, in those Tablets already referred to, wrote "should they be educated and guided, there can be no doubt that they will become so illumined as to enlighten the whole world," should have exerted a magnetic attraction upon a number of ardent souls in the northern continent, eager to serve in so promising a field. A band of heroic pioneers, bearing the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, gradually penetrated its wide territories, its jungles and mountains. They were followed by others under systematic crusades of two Seven Year Plans and the beloved Guardian's Ten Year Plan and together they became the spiritual conquerors of that continent. The Latin American communities which arose as a result of their pioneer efforts were described by the beloved Guardian as "associates in the execution" of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan. May Maxwell, one of the great heroines of the Faith, attained her longed-for crown of martyrdom in Buenos Aires; Panama became the site of the sixth Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world, and La Paz, Bolivia, is now the scene of this Continental Conference.

The Indian Ocean, whose furthest waves lap the shores of the Cradle of our Faith, upon whose waters the Divine Báb traveled in the course of His pilgrimage to Mecca, the heart of Islam, where He openly announced His Mission; whose mighty subcontinent from which it derives its name was the home and assigned province of the ninth Letter of the Living; whose major islands were severally mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the seventh of His Tablets of the Divine Plan, lay, for most of a century, fallow to the Word of God, a challenge to the promotion of His Faith. This challenge was answered by half a hundred Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, who, in response to the beloved Guardian's call left their homes and wholeheartedly gave themselves to the establishment of the Cause in those parts. They implanted the banner of Bahá'u'lláh upon its atolls, its great islands and bordering territories. Now, in the midmost heart of that huge expanse of sea, Mauritius, an island whose name was enshrined in Bahá'í history during the Heroic Age of our Faith as the source, two years before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival in America, of a contribution to the purchase of the site of the Mother Temple of the West, has been chosen as the venue of this oceanic Conference.

Not only have the institutions of the Faith been established in this ocean and this continent, but the spirit of the New Day, brilliant even at this early dawn with the light of Bahá'u'lláh's gifts to man, is apparent in the diversity of the attendants, in the brotherhood of erstwhile strangers—even enemies—and above all in the noble purposes for which you have gathered.

Your aim is the redemption of mankind from its godlessness, its ignorance, its confusion and conflict. You will succeed, as those before you succeeded, by sacrifice to the Cause of God. The

deeds and services required of you now, will shine in the future, even as those of your spiritual predecessors shine today and will forever shine in the annals of the Cause.

We share with you the spiritual delight of these occasions and assure you of our constant and ardent prayers that your deliberations upon the objectives of the Cause in your areas and the spiritual fellowship which you will enjoy will result in immediate and determined plans to complete the tasks assigned to you ere the rapidly approaching end of the Nine Year Plan. This Plan is the current stage of the Master's Divine Plan and its success must precede those greater triumphs when, as the result of your labors, the divine outpourings will raise up a vast concourse of radiant and devoted servants of Bahá'u'lláh who will establish His Kingdom in this world.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]