

Vol. IV Chicago, November 23, 1913 No. 14

STAR OF THE WEST

Special "Center of The Covenant" issue

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THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT
THE GREATEST BRANCH
ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS

حِينَئِذٍ تَكُونُ الْوَسْطَةَ الْمَعْنَوِيَّةَ وَتَكُونُ الْمَرْكَزَ الْعَظِيمَ
 فِي كَوْنِ الْعَالَمِ كُلِّهِ وَتَكُونُ الْمَرْكَزَ الْعَظِيمَ
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"When the ocean of My Presence
 hath disappeared and the Book of Origin
 is achieved to the end, turn your faces
 toward Him Whom God Hath Purposed,
 who hath branched from this Pre-Existent
 Root." — Words of BAHÁ'O'LLAH.

لبها عباس
 عبد

He Is The Most Great, The El-ABHA!

THIS is *THE BRANCH* that hath extended from the Bower of Thy Oneness and from the *TREE* of Thy Unity. Thou beholdest Him, O My GOD, gazing unto Thee and holding fast to the Rope of Thy Providence. Preserve Him in the neighborhood of Thy Mercy!

Thou knowest, O My GOD that, verily, I have chosen Him only because Thou hast chosen Him; I have elected Him only because Thou hast elected Him. Therefore, assist Him by the Hosts of Thy Heaven and earth. Help Thou, O My GOD, whosoever may help Him; choose whosoever may choose Him; strengthen whosoever may advance toward Him; and reject whosoever may deny Him and desire Him not!

O My LORD! Thou beholdest My Pen moving and My Limbs trembling in this moment of Revelation. I beg of Thee by My craving in Thy Love, and My yearning for the declaration of Thy Command, to ordain for Him and His lovers that which Thou hast ordained for Thy messengers and the trusted ones of Thy Revelation.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty!

REVEALED BY *BAHA'O'LLAH* TO *ABDUL-BAHA*

FROM THE TABLET OF *THE BRANCH*.

REVEALED BY *BAHA'O'LLAH*.

Say: Verily the Ocean of Pre-existence hath *branched* forth from this Most Great Ocean. Blessed, therefore, is he who abides upon its shores (*THE BRANCH*), and is of those who are established thereon. Verily this Most Sacred Temple of ABHA—the *BRANCH OF HOLINESS*—hath branched forth from the Sadrat-el-Muntaha; Blessed is whosoever has sought shelter beneath it* and is of those who rest therein!

Say: Verily the *BRANCH OF COMMAND* hath sprung forth from this *ROOT* which GOD hath firmly planted in the ground of the Will, the *LIMB* of which hath been elevated to a station which encompasses all existence. Therefore, exalted be He for this Creation, the Lofty, the Blessed, the Inaccessible, the Mighty!

O ye people! draw nigh unto it and taste the fruits of its Knowledge and Wisdom on the part of the Mighty, the Knowing One. Whosoever will not taste thereof shall be deprived of the Bounty, even though he hath partaken of all that is in the earth—were ye of those who know.

Say: Verily a Word hath gone forth in favor from the Most Great Tablet and GOD hath adorned it with the Mantle of Himself and made it Sovereign over all in the earth and a Sign of His Grandeur and Omnipotence among the creatures; in order that, through it, the people shall praise their Lord the Mighty, the Powerful, the Wise; and that, through it, they shall glorify their Creator and sanctify the Self of GOD which standeth within all things. Verily this is naught but a Revelation upon the part of the Wise, the Ancient One! Say: O people, praise ye GOD for its Manifestation (*THE BRANCH*), for verily it (*THE BRANCH*) is the Most Great Favor upon you and the Most Perfect Blessing upon you; and through him every mouldering bone is quickened. Whosoever turns to him hath surely turned unto GOD and whosoever turneth away from him hath turned away from My Beauty, denied My Proof and is of those who transgress. Verily, he is the Remembrance of GOD amongst you and His Trust within you and His Manifestation unto you and His Appearance among the servants who are nigh. Thus have I been commanded to convey to you the Message of GOD, your Creator; and I have delivered to you that of which I was commanded. Whereupon, thereunto testifyeth GOD, then His Angels, then His Messengers, and then His Holy Servants.

Inhale the fragrances of the Rizwan from his roses and be not of those who are deprived. Appreciate the Bounty of GOD upon you and be not veiled therefrom—and verily We have sent him forth in the temple of man. Thus praise ye the Lord, the Originator of whatsoever He willeth through His wise and inviolable command!

Verily those who withhold themselves from the Shelter of *THE BRANCH* are indeed lost in the wilderness of perplexity,—and are consumed by the heat of self-desire,—and are of those who perish.

Hasten, O people, unto the Shelter of GOD, in order that He may protect you from the heat of the Day whereon none shall find for himself any refuge or shelter except beneath the Shelter of His Name, the Clement, the Forgiving. Clothe yourselves, O people, with the Garment of Assurance, in order that He may protect you from the dart of doubts and superstitions, and that ye may be of those who are assured in those days wherein none shall ever be assured and none shall be firmly established in the Cause except by severing himself from all that is possessed by the people and turning unto the Holy and Radiant Outlook.

*The Branch referred to in this Tablet as "it."

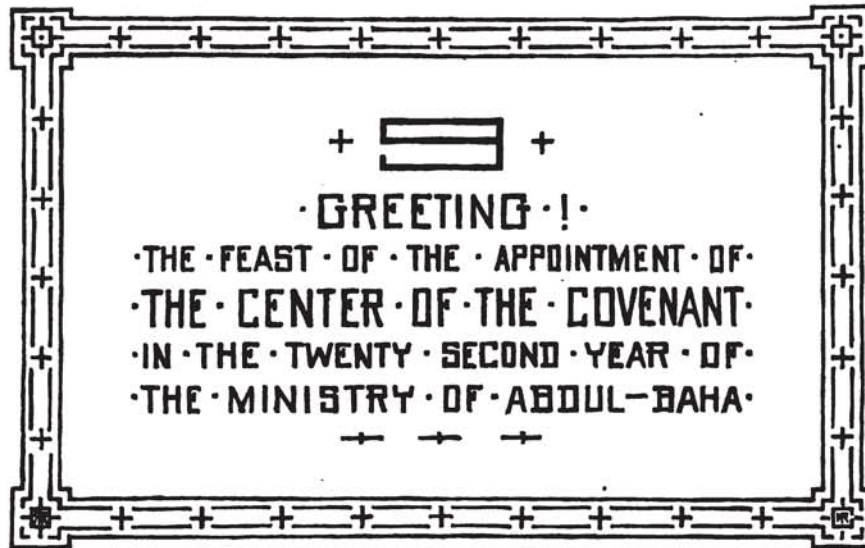
STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened; that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

Vol. IV

Kowl 1, 69 (November 23, 1913)

No. 14



“THE COVENANT” AND “THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT”

AS the twenty-sixth of November is known among the Bahais as the “Feast of the Appointment of the Center of the Covenant,” the STAR OF THE WEST—following its procedure of last year—devotes this issue to a presentation of the important subject of THE COVENANT and THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT.

During Abdul-Baha's sojourn in America, he awakened the friends to a realization of the greatness of this matter and the necessity of turning to the appointed Center and remaining firm therein, saying:—

“Today, the most important affair is firmness in The Covenant, because firmness in The Covenant wards off differences.”

“In former cycles no distinct Covenant was made in writing by the Supreme Pen; no distinct personage was appointed to be the Standard differentiating falsehood from truth, so that whatsoever he said was to stand as truth and that which he repudiated was to be known as falsehood. At most, His Holiness Jesus Christ gave only an intimation, a symbol, and that was but an indication of the solidity of Peter's faith. When he mentioned his faith, His Holiness said, ‘thou art Peter’—which means rock—‘and upon this rock will I build my church.’ This was a sanction of Peter's faith; it was not indicative of his (Peter) being the expounder of the Book, but was a confirmation of Peter's faith.

“But in this Dispensation of the Blessed Beauty (BAHA'O'LLAH) among its distinctions is that He did not leave people in perplexity. He entered into a Covenant and Testament

with the people. He appointed a CENTER OF THE COVENANT. He wrote with His own pen and revealed it in the *Kitab-el-Akdas*, the Book of Laws, and *Kitab-el-Ah'd*, the Book of the Covenant, appointing him (Abdul-Baha) the Expounder of the Book. You must ask him (Abdul-Baha) regarding the meanings of the texts of the verses. Whatsoever he says is correct. Outside of this, in numerous tablets He (BAHA'O'LLAH) has explicitly recorded it, with clear, sufficient, valid and forceful statements. In the Tablet of THE BRANCH He explicitly states: *Whatsoever THE BRANCH says is right, or correct; and every person must obey THE BRANCH with his life, with his heart, with his tongue. Without his will, not a word shall anyone utter.* This is an explicit text of the Blessed Beauty. So there is no excuse left for anybody. No soul shall, of himself, speak anything [i. e., "the words must be according to what has proceeded from the Mouth of the Will of God and is recorded in Tablets"] Whatsoever his (Abdul-Baha's) tongue utters, whatsoever his pen records, that is correct; according to the explicit text of BAHA'O'LLAH in the Tablet of THE BRANCH.

"His Holiness Abraham covenanted in regard to Moses. His Holiness Moses was the Promised One of Abraham, and He, Moses, covenanted in regard to His Holiness Christ, saying that Christ was the Promised One. His Holiness Christ covenanted in regard to His Holiness 'The Paraclete,' which means His Holiness Mohammed. His Holiness Mohammed covenanted in regard to The Bab, whom He called, 'My Promised One,' His Holiness The Bab, in all His books, in all His epistles, explicitly covenanted in regard to the Blessed Beauty, BAHA'O'LLAH, that BAHA'O'LLAH was the Promised One of His Holiness The Bab. His Holiness BAHA'O'LLAH covenanted, not that I (Abdul-Baha) am the Promised One, but that Abdul-Baha is the Expounder of the Book and the CENTRE OF HIS COVENANT, and that the Promised One of BAHA'O'LLAH will appear after one thousand or thousands of years. This is the Covenant which BAHA'O'LLAH made. If a person shall deviate, he is not acceptable at the Threshold of BAHA'O'LLAH. In case of difference, Abdul-Baha must be consulted. They must revolve around his good pleasure. *After Abdul-Baha, whenever the Universal House of Justice is organized it will ward off differences.*

"Now I pray for you that GOD may aid you, may confirm you, may appoint you for His service; that He may suffer you to be as radiant candles; that He may accept you in His Kingdom; that He may make you the cause of the spread of the light of BAHA'O'LLAH in these countries, and that the teachings of BAHA'O'LLAH may be spread broadcast.

"I pray for you, and I am pleased with all of you, each one, one by one; and I pray that GOD may aid and confirm you. . . . At present, farewell to you!"

The Editors.

FROM THE *KITAB-EL-AH'D*—"BOOK OF THE COVENANT"

The Will and Testament of BAHA'O'LLAH.

It is revealed in the *Kitab-el-Akdas* concerning this, that which from the Horizons of its Words, the Lights of the Divine Bounties gleam, rise and glitter:—

O My Branches! In this Existent Being the greatest strength and the most perfect power is hidden and concealed; look towards it and gaze in the direction of its union and not at its seeming differences. *This is the TESTAMENT OF GOD, that the Branches (Aghsan), Twigs (Afnan), and Relations (Muntessabeen), must each and every one look to the Greatest Branch (Ghusn Azam).* Reflect upon that which is revealed in My Book, The *Akdas*:—"When the Ocean of My Presence hath disappeared and the Book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn your faces towards Him whom GOD hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Pre-Existent Root." *The aim of this blessed verse hath been the Greatest Branch.* We have likewise elucidated the Command as a favor from before Us; and I am the Generous, the All-Dispenser!

REVEALED BY *BAHA'O'LLAH* FOR *ABDUL-BAHA*

AT ACCA, SYRIA.

O Thou MY GREATEST BRANCH!

Thy letter was surely presented before this Oppressed One, and I heard that which Thou hast communed with GOD, the Lord of the worlds.

Verily, We have ordained Thee the Guardian of all the creatures, and a Protection to all those in the heavens and earths, and a Fortress to those who believe in GOD, the One, the Omniscient!

I beg of God to protect them by Thee; to enrich them by Thee; to nourish them by Thee; and to reveal to Thee that which is the Dawning-point of riches to the people of Creation, and the Ocean of Generosity to those in the world, and the Rising-point of Favor to all nations. Verily, He is the Powerful, the All-Knowing, and the Wise!

I beg of Him to water the earth and all that is in it by Thee, that there may spring up from it the Flowers of Wisdom and Revelation and the Hyacinths of science and knowledge.

Verily, He is the Friend to those who love Him, and an Assistant to those who commune with Him!

There is no GOD but He, the Mighty and the Magnified!

REVEALED BY *BAHA'O'LLAH* TO *ABDUL-BAHA*WHEN *ABDUL-BAHA* WAS IN BEYROUT, SYRIA.

Praise be unto Him! who honored the land of Beyrou't with the feet of Him around whom all the Names revolve. Therefore, all the (created) atoms have announced good tidings unto all the contingent beings, that the Sun of the Beauty of the *Greatest* and *Majestic* BRANCH of GOD, the Most Weighty and Well Made Mystery of GOD, hath arisen, dawned, appeared, gleamed and shone forth from the Door of the Prison (Acca) and its Horizon, and advanced to the former place (Beyrou't). Therefore, the prison land is darkened, while the former is rejoiced.

Exalted! Exalted! is our Lord GOD, the Creator of all things and the Maker of Heaven, by whose Power the Gate of the Prison is opened,—the opening of which fulfilled that which was formerly revealed in the Tablets.

Verily, He is Powerful to do that which He pleases; the Kingdom of Emanation is within His Grasp! He is the Powerful, the Knowing, the Wise!

Blessed is the land which is honored with His footsteps!

Blessed is the eye which is illuminated by His Beauty; the ear which is favored with hearing His Voice; the heart which has tasted the sweetness of His Love; the breast which is dilated by commemorating Him; the pen which moves in praising Him; and the Tablet which bears His Signs!

I beg of GOD, the Exalted, the Most High, to cause us to attain His visit ere long.

Verily, He is the Hearer, the Powerful, the Answerer!