

ened and enlarged.

"

6. Work among women. While all that precedes refers as well to the work among women as among men, the degraded position of woman in Eastern lands makes the opportunity for her elevation all the more important. Fathers are sending their girls to our Christian schools in large numbers, and the women who go into the homes with the Gospel for women were never so welcome as now.

The greatest field in the world is white to the harvest. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." Perhaps he will send you, or will ask you to help him send.

BABISM: A FAILURE-1

BY REV. S. G. WILSON, TABRIZ, PERSIA.

Author of .. "Persian Life and Customs"

Babism, or Baháism, proclaims itself a new revelation, and has been heralded by some as a great reform. What has it revealed either of truth or of law? What has it proposed or accomplished in the way of reform? An examination of Babism will show that neither as a revelation nor as a reform does it deserve a high place among the world's religions.

Theologically Babism is a chaos of Divine manifestation. It has developed and set forth certain doctrines of Shiaism-as, for example, that of the Imams-as manifestations of the Divine attributes and of the Mehti, and certain tenets of the Ismailis and Sufis as to the incarnation of the Divine Will or Reason. In the course of sixty years several claimants to the rank of manifestations or incarnations of God have risen among them. The original founder, Sayid Ali "Mohammed (1844), was for three years only the Bab (or Door) of communication with the absent Imam. He then became the Imam Mehti or the Imam Hussain, then the Point of Divine Unity, the center of the circle of existence. After his martyrdom in Tabriz, his

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appointed successor was Subh-i-Azal or Hazreti Azal (the Dawn of or the Lord, the In his day there was a "chaos of Divine manifestations," viz., Hazreti Zahib and Janab-i-Azim and a number of others. Later (1864) Mirza HuBBain Ali was "manifested" under the title of Baha-Ullah, the " Splendor of God," and supplanted his half-brother Azal, who has lately died in Cyprus. The rank assigned to Baha is evident from a remark made by one of his friends to me: "He is very God of very God, the everlasting Father." An enemy has said: "Baha is not content with being God, he must needs be a creator of Gods." Since he "ascended"-that is, left his mortal body (1892)--his son Abbas Effendi, not content with being" the Son of God" and with posing as the Master, Jesus, to Christians, and as

the Imam HUBBBin to Shiah Moslems, is forcing a new schism by introducing a new revelation and announcing "I am the manifestation of God. My paps are full of the milk of Godhead; whoever will, let him come and suck freely!" In these quickly succeeding dispensations, salvation-BBid to be-is by faith in the manifestation.

We are also asked to believe that the holy angels and prophets have come to earth. One of my acquaintances is the angel Gabriel, another is Abbas. Baha BBYSá: "Four prophets come with me," namely, his sons, of whom Abbas Eft'endi is Jesus, Mirza Mohammed Ali is Mohammed, and the other two are Abraham and Moses. Alas! _that these prophets hate and curse each other. Alas I that" Gabriel " should be cursed and persecuted because he refuses to accept the latest emendations to the revelation.

A J(aleidoacope of ReYeIatioI

Of this new revelation it be said, as Jacob said of his wages, have changed them seven times." Not only has the Bab altered his declaration regarding himself, but Subh-i-Azal made further changes. "In the hands of Baha," says Professor Browne, of Cambridge,t "Babism has undergone important modifications, and, indeed, has become almost a new religion." Abbas gives the kaleidoscope another whirl and puts many of the books of his father out of sight. For example, take their relation to Shiahism. The Bab in the Beyan declares "the substance of truth was confined to the Shiahis." Baha declared that the Shiahis were always heretics, but Abbas BByS the were true till they gave the decree for the execution of the Bab; after that they became infidels.

The books of revelation succeed each other so rapidly as to be bewildering. The Began and many volumes of the Bab have long since been laid aside. Manuscript copies of it can beá procured

• Bee "Sacred III7Bterlea," p. 74. Chicago,III0II.

t Author of .. The Episode of the JIab" aud .. The New Risto.....," and a speclaI authority

OD BabI8m. The quotatlonB of this article and c1tBtioDB of historical facts are mostl7 from

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only at a high price and in expurgated recensions. Baha wrote many books, and a number of them were printed in Bombay. Now all, except the "Ketabái-Akdas," are let alone, and their reading is not specially recommended. It is rumored that Abbas

is now preparing a new revelation for his followers. This will probably be adapted for exportation into the United States!

The Bahais profess to receive the previous Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, and the Koran. They are very familiar with them, but use a system of

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allegoncal interpretation whereby be "looked DpoD IDcarDaUOD 01 8_1.... they'can be made to mean any. aDd by ADler1C1U1 'oUowen .. CbrW retllrDecl weartb

thing. Thus, the day of resurrection is interpreted as the day in which a founder of a new dispensation was manifested. The resurrection of Jesus is called the time when the mission of Mohammed began. The prophecy that Christ will "come in the clouds" is interpreted to refer to his humanity, which conceals his divinity as in a cloud.

What the Bahais believe about the future life is a puzzle. I have asked several men who have known the Bahai manifestations, and who have read their revelations, and one said : "In the last analysis they reject the future life." Another said : "They believe in the transmigration of souls." A fervent Bahais of the old school said: "We believe in a future state so unthinkably ecstatic that if its joys were now rEl'\cale<1 to men IURU .Ow...&D ALI they would commit suicide to (GMBÁI.Akbar). al0DDger IOD 01 Saba Ulla, who hasten their entrance in to it." malDtalDa bIa (alber', ,upremacy

The subject remains obscure to European investigators. After twenty years of questioning them, I believe they have no definite teachings on the subject. Some believe

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in a future paradise, others in "rijat," or return, to earth as men. Certain it is, however, that they reject the doctrine of the resurrection

of the body and of the day of judgment.

Babism not only does not claim for its founders the power to work miracles, but they reject those of Christ and of the prophets. One of their preachers strenuously argued with me that Christ did not give sight to physical eyes, but simply opened the eyes of their understanding. He did not raise the dead, but simply "awakened the dormant spiritualities of mankind." A section of the *Tarikh-i-Jadid* is devoted to the denial and refutation of miracles. A blind man in Teheran sent to Baha, praying that his eyes might be opened. He received answer that it was for the glory of God that he remain blind. The Bab, at his examination in Tabriz, was asked to restore the sick Mohammed Shah to health. He replied: "It is not in my power, but I can write two thousand verses a day. Who else can do that?" Thus he appealed not simply to the quality of his work as did Mohammed, but also to its quantity as a proof of his manifestation. He is said to have composed a million verses, but critics find them faulty in style and grammar, and painfully obscure. In like manner manes, in old times, painted pictures in his book, and appealed to them as a proof of his inspiration.

Nineteen the Sacred H_ _

This new dispensation makes much of the symbolism of numbers, especially of the number 19, which is the sum of the numerical value of the letters of the Arabic word *Wahid* (unity), and is also the number of letters in " *Bismillah ir rakman ir rakim*" (In the name of God, the compassionate., the merciful). Had the founder been content with making a new alphabet of 19 letters, and a new script which nobody uses, and with choosing 19 chief disciples, whom he named by the 19 letters, and with dividing the new revelation into 19 books of 19 chapters each, we should have regarded it all as a harmless fancy; but when he builds the calendar on this number, it makes us certain that the God of Babism is not the God of Nature. A month of 19 days corresponds to nothing in heaven above or on the earth beneath, and 19 such months still leave four or five intercalary days to make up the solar year. Nineteen new names are revealed for these days, each being an attribute of God, the same serving for the months. A Bahai cycle is 19 years, after which period the furniture of every house should be renewed. According to this rule, I saw a strict Bahai dispose of a carpet softened with age and buy a new one with glaring colors. The year is made to begin with the vernal equinox, in accordance with the sensible habit of the fire-worshippers, and, from this date the Bab and Baha both fix their manifestations. Lately the number 9 (the sum of the letters of Baha) is being treated as more sacred than the number 19.

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Such are some of the doctrines and peculiar ideas of the Bahais.

Where is their superiority over Christianity or Islam? In what are they even origin, and where is their utility? The number 19 was already regarded as the number of the Divine Unity by the Persian mystics, and especially by Sheiph Muhiyyu-i-Din, a Sufi teacher of the twelfth century. The Zoroastrians had named the months for the angels. The titles "Bab" (Door) and "Baha" (Light)-have been frequently used. Not to speak of Him who said "I am the door" and "I am the light of the world," there are four celebrated Babs of the Imam Mehti in Shiah history, and a pseudo Bab was a martyr to death in the tenth century. The symbolism and incarnations, or manifestations, are nothing new in Persia. They are found among the Ismailis, Assassins, Ali-Allah is, and others. The veiled prophet Mukanna and Babak and numerous pretenders have declared themselves God. Persia never lacks for an incarnation or two. One of these, of the Ali-Allahi sect, arrived in 'I'abriz some years ago, and made an appointment to visit me at three o'clock in the afternoon. My samovar was set to boiling, and I awaited his arrival. But he failed to keep his engagement because the governor-general, the Amir-i-Nizam, heard of his presence in the city, and this God fled, forgetting to send word that he could not fulfil his engagement. The Mutazilites rejected miracles, and some of them taught, as do the Ali-Allahis, the transmigration of souls. In the denial of the resurrection the Bahais have many predecessors. The Persian Mani, the founder of Manicheism, announced his mission at the age of twenty-four, as the Bab did, and on the Festival of Noruzako he invented a new script and named his books after the letters of the alphabet; he also objected to miracles. Thus, Babi ideas have no more a claim to originality than to truth.

..... IUtaiIatIc: SpIrit

When we turn from doctrines to rites and ceremonies, we do not see any adequate reform of Moslem ceremonial law. The outward forms, such as prayer, fasting; pilgrimage, circumcision, etc., were explained allegorically by the Bab, but Baha has laid down a ritual on the same old lines. In most ceremonies there is only a slight modification, but no essential difference, from Islam. Like other Oriental religions, it prescribes rules and minute regulations, instead of stating principles of worship like Christianity and leaving their application to the believing conscience.

Babism appoints three times a day for prayer with 9 Rakas (sections) instead of the five times a day of Islam with 17 Rakas. There are no public prayers, and no prayers at funerals. In Islam devotion is a strong point, formalism is its weakness. Babism lessens the amount of devotion, without getting rid of the formalism. The Bahais wash the hands only before prayers, not the arms and

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foot, as Moslems do. The Moslem rosary has 100 beads, the Bahai only 95 (19 X 5). On rising the Bahai should say "Allahu Akbar" (God of lights, the title of Baha) 95 times, hoping to be heard for his vain repetitions. The same words are prescribed to be said on beginning a meal or any business, or as a greeting, just as the Moslem says "Bismillah" (In the name of God), or "Salaam alaikum" (Peace be to you). A prayer is 180 prescribed to be said at the time of washing the hands and face.

As a fast, Babism substitutes the last month of their year, named Ala, of 19 days, for the 30 days of Ramazan. As Christians have carnival week before Lent, following by Easter rejoicings, and Moslems have the Oruj Bayram, 80 the Bahais have five days of feasting before the fast, and Noruz following. Noruz is consecrated, and its ceremonies prescribed with religious sanctions. The ordinance of fasting says: "Thus ordaineth the Lord of men: abstain from eating and drinking from dawn to sundown." This abstinence includes smoking, as among Moslems. The same exceptions are made as in the Koran--...: that the traveler, the sick, and pregnant or nursing women are excused. The question naturally arises: if obligatory fasting is good, why reduce the time from 30 days to 19; if reform is the watchword, why not have the liberty of the Gospel?

Pilgrimage is retained in this so-called new revelation, and its devotees are encouraged to seek a local sanctuary. Acco (Acre), in Syria, by an undesigned ordaining of the Sultan of Turkey, becomes the shrine. Here Baba was in exile, and is buried, and his tomb, I understand, is in the custody of Mirza Ali, a younger brother and rival of Abbas Effendi. Hence the latter, not to be behind in this, has transferred to Accho, under his own charge, the body of the Bab, which was thrown to the dogs in Tabriz, and afterward carried to Teheran and buried there for more than half a century.

Besides Accho and the various mashads or martyr-places, the Bab's house in Shiraz and Baha's in Bagdad, as the places of their manifestations, are held sacred.

Babism and Woman

Let us pass to the test question of how Bahaim treats women. It is not great praise to say that in this there is an advance on Moham-- tho it is far behind Christianity. I have seen no evidence that Babi doctrine teaches communism of wives. Incidents leading to this conclusion may doubtless be credited to the sinners among the Babis. Babism forbids temporary marriage and concubinage and polygamy, which are allowed by Shishis. It allows bigamy, however. Baba had two wives at one time, by each of which he had children. When Abbas' mother died, he again joined a "partner" to his remaining wife, thus being a bigamist twice over. The "branches" (brothers) who are now quarreling are from different mothers. Marriage

among Bahais is on a low Oriental plane. Divorce is allowed at the option of the husband, even for frivolous caU£38, such as a quarrel. The parties are recommended not to marry inside of a year, that, if pOBBible, their hearts may be reconciled. The dowry the divorced wife is a mere pittance of 19 miscals of gold (about '50) in the city, and 19 miscals of silver (*2.00) in villages. If the husband leaves home and neglects to send word or means of support to his for one year, she is free to marry another man. Early marriages are discountenanced.

Women are secluded in the harems all from the society of men, as among ordinary Moslems. The historic case of Kurrat-ul-Ayn, Df Kaerin, is a solitary exception. She has had no successors. Even she ordinarily delivered her lectures from Behind a screen, and only occasionally let her veil fall aside in the presence of men when carried away by her enthusiasm. Bahais do not seem to approve of her conduct. Several Bahai families with whom I am acquainted are allowing their daughters to grow up without learning to read, tho thl) fathers are teachers and are educating their sons.

Bahaism, from this view of its doctrines and rites, appears to be simply a Mohammedan sect, with no special superiority to other Mohammedan sects of past ages.

(To be concluded)

. A NEW SECT IN INDIA

BY J.)(uBRA Y KITCHELL, LL.D.

Author of .. HIDDulam. Past and Preaent ..

"Videa tumuitum indies tmm£ltuosiu8 tumultuentem." So said in quaint but vigorous Latinity, when his hot battle with Rome was threatening to become still hotter. Even so may we now say regarding work in the miBBion field of the East.

There is at present a great and growing restleBBness among the followers of the chief Oriental religions. Even Buddhism, which seemed until of late quite asleep, is, in Ceylon at least, arming in self-defense. Still more distinctly is Hinduism awaking. We have the Brahmo-Somaj in its various brancies and offshoots, and the newer and more active Arya-Bomaj. We have also a new departure in the case of those, not few in number, who seek a purified religion,' but who for the most part hold that they can sit at the feet of Christ, drinking in llis precious teaching, and yet remain in the Hindu religion. " Come out, and be ye separate." This is, to a Hindu, perhaps, the most startling of all the Divine commands. Mohammedanism is not less agitated than Hinduism. The Babi sect in Persia is by no means extinct, altho for a time it seemed as if the creed had been quenched in blood.

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