

A NEW RELIGION.

BABISM.

BY THE EDITOR.

BABISM is the youngest faith upon earth and it promises to play a not insignificant part among the religions of the world. It originated, as all other great religions, in the Orient, and is remarkable for many reasons, and worthy of a closer study.

Babists believe in a personal god and positive revelations. They recognize the holy books and miracles of other previous religions, especially Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and their faith may, in a certain sense, be characterized as a product of all three. It contains elements of all Semitic religions and yet it is different and possesses specific qualities of its own. It rose into existence suddenly with an outburst of unparalleled religious enthusiasm, and, like the Christian faith of the second and third century, its growth was favored by the martyrdom of its adherents.

The first Western historian of Babism was Count Gobineau,* a French traveller and historian who was attracted to it by the dramatic features of the movement and the heroism of its martyrs. His reports were completed and brought up to date by Prof. Edward G. Browne, Lecturer in Persian at the University of Cambridge, England, who studied it with great sympathy and made through English translations the main sources of these remarkable historic events accessible to Western readers.

Concerning the significance of Babism, Professor Browne says: "Here is something, whether wise or unwise, whether tending towards the amelioration of mankind or the reverse, which seems to many hundreds, if not thousands, of our fellow-creatures worth

* *Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale.*

suffering and dying for, and which on this ground alone, must be accounted worthy of our most attentive study.”*

This Episode of the Bab, which is so extremely interesting on account of the development of a religion in the 19th century before our very eyes and under conditions which still allow a careful investigation of the historic facts, is briefly told as follows:

Mirza Ali Muhammed was born in Shiraz, Persia. In 1844, when about twenty years old, he was possessed of great religious enthusiasm and became a source of inspiration to all the people whom he met. When asked whether he was the manifestation of “the Glory of God,” he declared that they should not worship him as the one whom God shall manifest, “for,” said he, “I am only the gate through which man can come to the love of God.” His adherents spread all over the country, and he selected eighteen from his disciples who were considered the main supporters and apostles of the new faith. He called them “the Letters of the Living,” referring to the eighteen letters of the Persian alphabet, and included himself as the nineteenth of that number, calling himself the “Point”; and these nineteen persons constituted the sacred hierarchy called “the First Unity.”

Now it happened that an avowed Babist, but one of those unfortunates who should be confined in lunatic asylums, made an attack upon the Shah of Persia, and thus Babism excited the suspicions of the Persian government. Although the assailant of the Shah expressly declared that he had committed the crime not at the instigation of any other person, the Persian officials believed in the existence of a great conspiracy and proceeded with great severity against all Babists. The Bab himself and other devotees of the new faith were imprisoned and those only were set free who recanted. Seven of the leaders could not be prevailed upon to abandon their belief, and so they died gladly and joyously for the faith that was in them. Adherents of orthodox Islam, the national faith of Persia, witnessed with admiration the death of the Babists, and many among them became convinced that it was a spark of divine inspiration that gave them the power to face death so boldly and so joyfully.

The Bab himself was also condemned to die. He with one of his favorite followers was hung up on a rope at the entrance of their prison and a troop of soldiers fired a volley at the command

* *A Traveller's Narrative*, Written to Illustrate the Episode of the Báb. Edited in the original Persian and translated into English, with an introduction and explanatory notes by Edward S. Brown, M. A., M. B.

of their officer. When the smoke settled the witnessing crowds saw to their great astonishment the two men quite unharmed, for none of the balls had taken effect, but had only severed the ropes on



A GROUP OF BELIEVERS IN PORT SAID, WITH SAYID* NOR UL-DIN, A FIRST COUSIN OF THE BAB, IN THE CENTER.

which they had been suspended. The officer in charge declared that he had attended to his duty and refused to continue the execution.

* Sayid is a title meaning "lord." All members of the Koreish tribe, to which the family of Muhammed belonged, claim a right to the title.

He was supplanted by another and the prisoners were again suspended on ropes. A second volley ended the lives of these two martyrs of the new faith.

The Bab was dead, but his religion had become an established fact by his martyrdom.

During the time of his imprisonment the Bab had frequently written letters to his eighteen favorite disciples whom he called "the Letters of the Living," to strengthen them in their faith under the persecution of the powers of this world. The first and second of the "Living Letters" had died a martyr's death. They belonged to the seven great martyrs and the one who held the fourth place in the Babist hierarchy was Mirza Yahya, called by the Bab *Subh i Ezel*, that is "Morning of the Eternal;" or *Hazrat*, that is "Highness of the Eternal;" or *Ismu i Ezel*, that is "Name of the Eternal." He left Persia, disguised as a dervish, and went to Baghdad, where he joined his exiled brother Mirza Huseyan Ali. When the Turkish government sent his brother to the city of Akka he was sent to Famagusta, Cyprus, where he is still living.

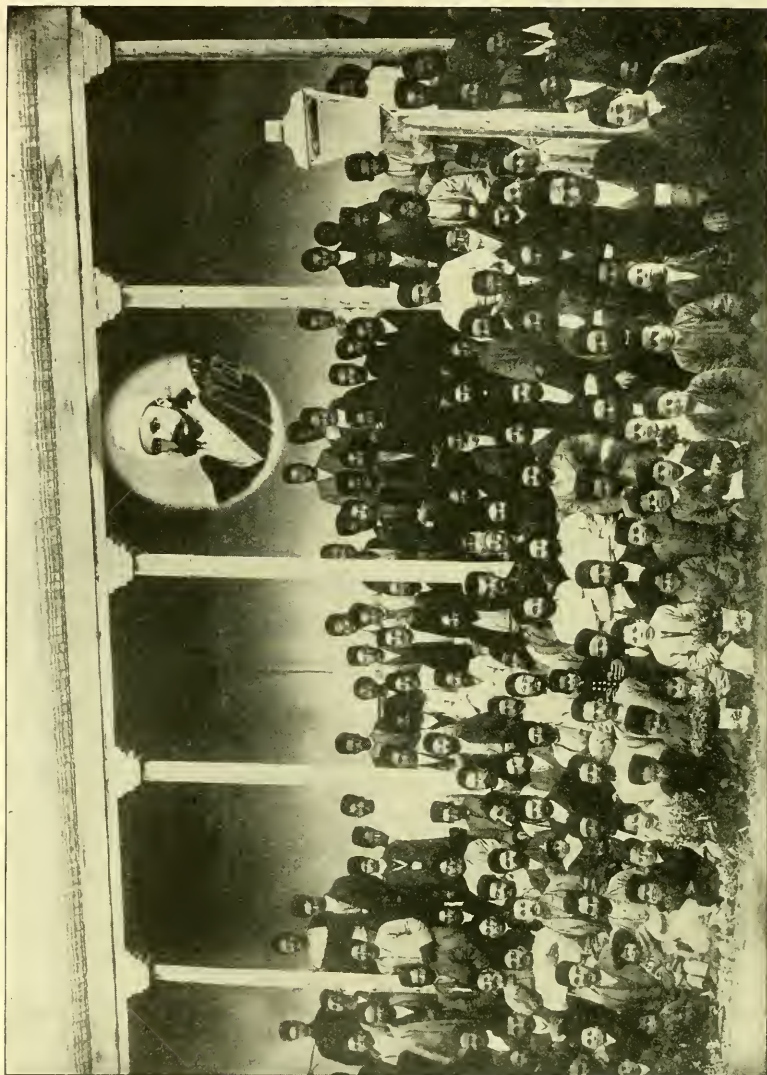
During Mirza Yahya's leadership of the Babists, Mirza Huseyan Ali, a half-brother of Yahya, rose into prominence. He had endured much persecution at the hands of the Persian government, and after imprisonment of a few months he was finally exiled into Baghdad. He stayed there for about twelve years, under the supervision of the Turkish police. Two years out of the twelve of his exile at Baghdad, he spent in the mountains near where the Kurds lived, not a far distance from the city of Souleymaniah. Then he was summoned to Constantinople, and was removed to Adrianople. The Turkish government did not deem him sufficiently dangerous to have him executed, but banished him to Acre, Syria, and he lived comparatively at peace with the government. In Acre he was restrained in all his actions and limited to a special territory, but he showed so much lovingkindness to all the people around him, especially to the poor and suffering, that even the Turkish police respected him and thought him a saint. He lived in poverty. Whatever he owned, he gave away to those whom he saw in need of assistance, and he died peacefully at an advanced age, leaving four sons and three daughters.

This Mirza Huseyn Ali suddenly came to the conclusion during his stay at Adrianople that he himself was Beha Ullah, "the Glory of God," the manifestation whose appearance the Bab had foretold. The members of his party who had followed him



A GROUP OF BELIEVERS IN EGYPT.

into exile recognized his authority and other Babists in Persia followed their example.



A MEETING OF BELIEVERS IN ASHKABAD, RUSSIA.*

Huseyn Ali is now almost universally recognised as Beha Ullah, that is the one in whom God's glory has become manifest.

* The portrait which appears above the assembly is that of Abbas Effendi, one of the sons of Beha Ullah.

In the meantime his half-brother Mirza Yahya continues to regard himself as the legitimate leader of the Babists. His adherents have dwindled down to a small minority, but their arguments as to the justice of the claims of the fourth "Living Letter" who by right of



A GROUP OF BELIEFERS AT AKKA.*

priority has ascended to the first place in the hierarchy of the Babists and was actually recognised as the legitimate successor to the leadership by the Bab himself before he suffered martyrdom, avail

* The young man in the center is the son-in-law of Abbas Effendi.

nothing. The Babists of Persia interpret the undeniable facts of their history in a different way. They declare that Mirza Huseyn Ali had been recognised by the Bab himself and that for the sake of protecting the one in whom God would manifest himself, from the persecution of the government, he misdirected the hostility of spies and persecutors, and addressed Mirza Yahya with such terms as would indicate him to be the leader of Babism, second in authority to no one but to himself, the Bab. Mirza Yahya according to the partisans of Mirza Huseyn Ali was merely "a man of straw" and the prominence given him by the Bab was a mere blind.

Whatever the truth may have been, Professor Browne believes that Mirza Yahya held the first position among the Babists next to the Bab himself. The Bab did not claim that his revelation was final and demanded of his followers that they should continually expect the advent of him whom God shall manifest. The Bab had extended to his disciples the hope that God would not delay his manifestation for more than 1511 or 2001 years (numbers calculated after a complicated fashion from some significant words), but there is no historic evidence that he had recognised the manifestation of the "Glory of God" in Mirza Huseyn Ali. "Yet," declares Professor Browne, "in spite of facts the future of Babism seems to belong to the latter and the adherents of Yahya are rather decreasing than increasing."

The adherents of Mirza Yahya are called the Ezelis and the adherents of Mirza Huseyn Ali are called the Behais, or Anglicised, Behaists, since they believe that the Glory of God, Beha Ullah, has become manifest in Mirza Huseyn Ali.

It is of great interest to study the growth of the movement and to watch the development of its historical documents. Among the older sources of information is a manuscript entitled *Tarikh i Jadid* which the history of Babism describing the conditions of Babism at the time of the Bab. Here the difference between the Ezelis and the Behais has not yet made its appearance. The two brothers are merely prominent leaders and both considered as shining lights among the disciples of their great master, the Bab. It is instructive to notice how both the Ezelis and the Behais reject the authority of the *Tarikh i Jadid*, and thus it is probable that no copies will be preserved except the three which by fortunate accidents found their way West, viz.; the one in possession of Professor Browne, one belonging to the British Museum, and the third one acquired by the Institute of Oriental Languages of St. Petersburg. It is not likely that the manuscript will be propagated in the original home

of its author, Persia. The author claims to be a foreigner, but as Professor Browne has convincingly shown, he is a Persian who for good reasons has to conceal his name, and Professor Browne seems to think that he knows the name of the author, or, as he suggests, the two authors.



IBN ABHER, A TEACHER OF BAHISM, IN CHAINS.

Among other histories of Babism, we have the reports of the Persian government, written by historians who, though recognising the courage of the Babists martyrs, misrepresent the movement almost as badly as Christian authors decry the gnostic and other sects which have now disappeared and can no longer be studied in their own original documents.

The Behaist sources, which become more and more numerous, speak of Mirza Yahya with indifference and almost slightly, while they extol from the beginning the name of Mirza Huseyn Ali whom they recognise as Beha Ullah, the manifestation of the Glory of God.

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To characterise the enthusiasm engendered by Babism, I will quote from a lecture* delivered before the International Congress of the History of Religions, held at Paris in 1900, by Monsieur H. Arakélian, who had just come back from Persia where he had devoted himself to a study of this new religion. He says:

"The Shah [intent on checking the spread of heresy] tried first peaceful methods. He sent Seid Yahya Darabi, the high priest, (Mousted) of Teheran, and head of the Shiite hierarchy, a wise and great theologian, and of repute, with a great following of eminent doctors of theology for a religious discussion with the Bab to Shiraz. Darabi was sure that even in the first meeting he would succeed in demonstrating to the people that the Bab was a false Mahdi, a charlatan and a distorter of the sacred dogmas of Islam and that he deserved to suffer the punishment of stoning; but imagine the surprise of Muhammed Shah, of his viziers and his mullahs, when after a few meetings Darabi declared that the Bab was the true Mahdi who was expected by the faithful and sent by the omnipotent Allah to preach the truth. Darabi not only gave up his sacerdotal functions, but after the manner of a true and zealous apostle began to travel over Persia and to preach the commandments of the Bab. The scandal for the Islam and Shiite clergy was immense. The clergy hurled its thunders of anathema against every Shiite who would give his adhesion to the new heresy. The government declared that all belongings of a Moslem who was suspected of favoring Babist ideas should be confiscated, and the clergy went further still. They preached that to kill a Babist was an act agreeable to Allah, and the murderer in recompense for his deed would enjoy all the happiness of true Moslems in Paradise. But the persecution, as is always the case, had quite contrary results from those expected. The number of proselytes increased from day to day."

Another incident quoted from the same source is not less characteristic:

"The greatest sensation was caused and an extraordinary im-

* "La Légende d'Alexandre-le-Grand chez les Arméniens," *Actes du premier Congrès International d'Histoire des Religions*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, Éditeur. 1902.

pulse was given to the propaganda of Babism among the Persian women by the young daughter of the famous Mousted of Kazvine, a city where are concentrated the theological schools of Shiitism, highly celebrated among the Moslems. The young heroine whose name was Kourrat-el-ayné (i. e. "light of the eyes"), was the first Persian Musselman woman who revolted against the yoke of Islam



MIRZA BADI, THE CARRIER OF THE MESSAGE TO THE SHAH OF PERSIA, IN CHAINS.

and defended the rights of women. She refused to wear the customary veil or *charshave* and appeared in public with uncovered face, a thing unheard of in Persia. She wrote verses and composed songs in glorification of the liberty and equality of men and women. Her songs and verses were of great literary finish. They are today

still read and admired. Her eloquence, her zeal, and the profound ardor with which she preached the new doctrine in the streets of Kazvine, and above all her marvelous beauty attracted multitudes of proselytes; and when her uncle, the successor of her father in rank of Mousted of Kazvine, cursed and excommunicated her, Kourrat-el-ayné was obliged to leave the city, but an overzealous Babist, and admirer of her talent and beauty took revenge by killing her uncle, who was forthwith regarded by the Shiites as a martyr. Kourrat-el-ayné was obliged to leave the city, but an overzealous Babist and persecution of Babists in 1852 on the order of Nassredin Shah and her body thrown into a pit. Her literary works, her religious hymns, her mystic philosophical verses have been published, and are admired by Babists and even by the Moslems."

Monsieur H. Arakélian, whom we quoted above, believes that Babism or rather Behaism will by and by become the religion of Persia. At the same time, he believes that Behaism is a higher development of Babism. Here are his own words, quoted from his lecture delivered in 1900 at the International Congress of the History of Religions:

"Persia, this deplorable wreck of the ancient kingdom of Iran-Turan, of yore so glorious, at present confesses the religion of Shiite Muhammedanism. Shiitism preaches that after the twelve preachers called Immas, the gate (Bab) of science and truth has been closed to man; and this doctrine engendered various sects and heresies, several of which (for instance, the Sufis, the Dawudis, the Dahrís, the Ali-Allahís) continue their existence to the present day, but none of them has attained so great a development or counts so many numbers of adherents as Babism or Behaism, for the number of Babists is actually calculated to be three millions in Persia, and two millions in Caucasia, in the trans-Caspian countries, in Bukhara, Central Asia, and in Asia Minor, among the Musselman countries, which is together about five millions. Since the total population of Persia is merely seven millions we find that almost half of them confess, although in secret, Babism, and, in the opinion of those who have visited Persia and have come in contact with the people, there is no doubt that Babism is the future religion of the country.

"Babism is a reaction against the enslaving regime of Islam, a protest against the moral oppression which it has exercised and is still exercising over the poor Persian people, otherwise so intelligent, so peaceful, so capable of developing a high culture, not inferior to other races. Shiite Islam has, through its antihuman and retrogressive ideas, through its principle that the gate of science and truth is shut

forever to men since the twelve imams, by its disdain and contempt of other nations and of secular sciences, thrown Persia and the Persians into a state of economical poverty and in a deplorable moral and intellectual condition. The yoke of Islam has been so crushing that it has become insufferable, and now Babism rises with vigor against it and opposes to it its two principles *Ihtihade* and *Ittifak*



ONE OF THE LATER MARTYRS.

(the unity and solidarity of the human race), for these two principles constitute the essential doctrines of Babism, principles which are diametrically opposed to the principles of Islam."

Monsieur Arakélian judges of Babism more from the standpoint of the Persians themselves than of Christian outsiders. He recognises Babism as a progress from the traditional Muhammedanism

and thus the significance of Babism appears to him in a different light than it would to Christians of Western countries, who will naturally be inclined to regard it as a rival of Christianity. M. Arakélian points out that the religion of the Bab forms a transition only to the broader religion of Beha Ullah. The Bab is in all essential points still a Muhammedan, while the doctrines of Babism have broadened out into an altruistic and universal religion. Mr. Arakélian says:

"The founder of Babism has not freed himself of several traditions of Islam. The revolution which he inaugurated in the Moslem religion retains certain fundamental principles of the faith of Muhammed. (1) The Bab gives preference to the Arabian language in which the Koran is written and which is considered sacred among the Musselmans. (2.) The Bab preached that one should conquer also the kingdom of this world and that one ought to propagate the new religion by force. One should follow in this respect the example of Muhammed. (3) He recommended the custom of the hadj pilgrimage. (4) He forbade severely the study of foreign languages, above all the dead languages. He even recommended in the *Beyane* to burn secular books and requested his followers not to study the secular sciences. (5) He declared his desire not to tolerate any individual of another religion in the future kingdom of the Babists. Upon the whole he never intended to substitute a new religion for Islam but only proposed to reform the religion preached by Muhammed.

"The work of his successor Beha Ullah was a thorough revolution which upset the foundation of Islam. Beha Ullah endows Babism with a cosmopolitan, a truly liberal humanitarian, and philanthropic, spirit. He modified Babism in the line of the evolution which all universal religions have taken, and if he did not succeed in every point, (for he was not a scholar versed in the history of religions and knew only the religions of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammed,) we must grant that the doctrine preached by him, Behaism, is one of the most altruistic religions.

"Two principles constitute the basis of Behaism *Ihtihade* and *Ittifak*, unity and solidarity (viz., of mankind). Its aim is "the kingdom of hearts." Therefore, there should be no conquest, no dominion, and no adhesion to political ideas. All men are equal and brothers. There are no great ones, no small ones, no nobility, no plebs. All men are children of one great country, the earth. There is no special country,—that is to say, the idea of patriotism does not exist among the Behaists; the cosmopolitan idea dominates entirely. With this respect Beha said that it would be better if all nations, all

mankind, would use one language and one universal writing. All the nations are good before God. There are no preferred ones. There are no chosen people, no such claims are allowed as were made by the Jews and the Moslems. There is no difference between the human races, white and negro and yellow; all are equal.

"Woman is respected, and she enjoys the same rights with man. Marriage cannot be contracted without the consent of the young couple. Monogamy is recommended. There is only one exception made. If a wife be barren, a man is allowed to take a second wife without separating from the first one, but concubinage is strictly forbidden. Women can have property in their own right.

"The study of the secular sciences and of foreign languages is considered indispensable. Babists are held to be under obligations to obey and respect the laws of the country which they inhabit. Among the forms of government, republicanism is deemed the best, or, at any rate, such a form under which all citizens should have the same rights and the same duties. Even war for the sake of the faith, the sacred war, should be abolished, and Beha recommends to regulate the differences between nations by an international tribunal.

"Beha not only forbids lying of every kind, even where it would serve a good purpose, but he remonstrated also against flattery and against a habit of Moslems, that of kissing the hands of the clergy or of persons of respect. He forbade asceticism and declared that the celibate was not agreeable to God. Babists believe in three prophets, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammed, and they regard them to be of equal dignity. The believer in the Bab or Beha must first of all believe in the three prophets. Jesus is called 'the Son of God.' Pilgrimages and masses for the dead or requiems are regarded as useless. Fasts are not required.

"The Babists believe in a future life and in eternity, but they do not admit the existence of Hell, or of Paradise, or of Purgatory. Everyone will receive his rewards and punishments according to his deeds, but no man knows in what way. As a child in the womb of its mother has no idea of the outer world to which it will go, so man of the present world can not have any idea of the life after death."

Monsieur Arakélian concludes his article with the following comments:

"There are many stories invented by the malevolence and fanaticism of the Moslems concerning the Babists, the Bab and Beha, but a careful study of their sacred books puts to naught all these legends. Babism is founded upon altruistic, humanitarian, and peaceable principles. It has nothing in common with Islam and agrees according

to my opinion much better with the character and inspirations of the Aryan Persians. Babism may be regarded as the future religion of Persia and its final victory would in my opinion be a great blessing for that country."

BEHAISM IN CHICAGO.

Babism has been introduced into the United States and it may count several thousand adherents. The preacher of Babism at Chicago is Ibrahim Kheiralla, and he has published a statement of his belief under the name "Beha Ullah," which means "the Glory of God."*

Mr. Kheiralla was born in Mount Lebanon, Syria, and is now a citizen of the United States. He received his instruction from Abd-el-Karim Effendi Teharani at Cairo, Egypt, and restates the belief of the Babists in its purity, adding thereto his own private reasons such as he found necessary to convince himself of the truth of his religion. Mr. Kheiralla's teacher was a Mohammedan and so he stated the doctrine from the Mohammedan standpoint, while he himself was a Christian from Syria, and thus he deemed it necessary to restate the foundations of his faith with a view of refuting Christian errors and establishing the Babist conviction as unequivocal truth. The present book is meant to be a proof of Babism, which, at least to the author, seems irrefutable. Critical minds, however, will naturally find flaws in the few assumptions from which he starts, and so his arguments will fail to be convincing to a great number of people.

Mr. Kheiralla starts his argument with a chapter on the soul. He opposes Rev. Philip Moxom, who declares a scientific proof of immortality at present to be impossible. Mr. Kheiralla proposes to offer scientific proof. He thinks there is no need of resorting to occultism, and trusts that the solution of the difficulties is at hand. He recapitulates the evidence which Babism offers as follows: "We possess nine intellectual faculties. They cannot be the result of the combination of material elements, which compose the body. Back of them must be an intelligent essence, which possesses and exercises these nine faculties, and which they qualify. Something cannot come from nothing. This proves the existence of the soul."

The second chapter deals with the mind, the third with life, sleep, breathing and the involuntary motions, descanting also on insanity. Having established the reality of the soul and its immor-

* *Beha 'U'llah* (The Glory of God), by Ibrahim George Kheiralla, assisted by Howard MacNutt. 1900. I. G. Kheiralla, Publisher. Chicago.

tality he proceeds to speak of God in chapters 4 and 5, where he rather assumes than proves his existence and perfection. He says: "God is one. From Him proceed all things which exist, and all His laws, spiritual and material, are in perfect harmony."

Babism rejects miracles, but not from unbelief. Babists argue that it would not be impossible for God to do miracles, but God being perfect, His laws must be perfect and cannot be annulled, or changed, or temporarily laid aside. The miracles related to in the Bible are not meant to be understood in a literal sense. They are "symbolical expressions of spiritual truth."

One instance will be sufficient. Mr. Kheiralla says of the burning bush of Moses: "In order to explain to the Israelites, how God had appeared to him, Moses used the 'bush' as a figure of speech to represent his heart. The symbol is a perfect one. As many branches spring from the bush rooted in the earth, so, from the heart, spring the arteries and veins which run through the body. Therefore, God appeared to Moses in his heart, in the form of fire. 'Fire' is the symbol of the spirit of God, and of His love toward His creatures; and as every symbol has two points, positive and negative, so 'fire' means sometimes 'love' and sometimes 'hatred.'"

The stick of Moses and Aaron, Jonah and the whale, Joshua commanding the sun to stand still, the Tower of Babel, the Apostles speaking many languages, Christ changing water into wine, the loaves and fishes, the devils going into the swine, the raising of Lazarus, and the Star of Bethlehem, are explained in a similar way.

Babism is opposed to the doctrine of resurrection. Paul's explanation of the spiritual body in I Corinthians, xv.50, concerning the spiritualised resurrection bodies, is spoken of as illogical and false. Mr. Kheiralla says: "Scripture, science and philosophy clearly prove the impossibility of the resurrection of the body. That souls return to earth in new and different bodies, however, is demonstrable from the light of all inquiry. Furthermore, it can be shown that this is the true resurrection of Scripture."

The Babist view of prayer is perhaps not different from the Christian view. "Prayer is worship * * * God does not need our worship * * * We worship God and petition Him for our own interests and benefits, for powers, gifts, and higher development." God has promised to hear and answer our petitions and thus the benefit we can derive from prayer is "absolutely certain, for He never fails in the fulfillment of His promises."

The Babist views differ most essentially from the Christian

in the conception of salvation and vicarious atonement. Salvation by blood is rigorously rejected, and thus we are told that Christ's death was not a payment of our sins: "The heavy yoke imposed upon Christians of the present day, arises from their claiming Messiahship for Jesus."

Jesus is regarded not as the Saviour of the world but after all as the Christ. Mr. Kheiralla says:

"We fully believe in our great Master, Jesus the Christ, and in all His teachings. He is the highest among all the creatures in the great universe; the first begotten Son of God, and His Agent; the Creator is His God, and He is His dearest Son. But we know that our salvation is not through His death, but through the great mercy of the Father.

"Salvation is not escape or exemption from the everlasting torture of hell. True salvation is the victory of accomplishment by the soul; the attainment of a privilege afforded us by God, in allowing us to come upon the earth.

"Hell is eternal regret for the loss of that privilege; hell is the soul's failure to accomplish."

As to the Bible, we are told that "The truth is in the Bible, but all the Bible is not the truth." The great revelation of God on earth had not been manifest when Christ appeared, and Mr. Kheiralla takes great pains to show that none of the prophecies had been fulfilled on the appearance of Christ. On the other hand he endeavors to prove that the great revelation of God has become manifest in Beha Ullah. Here the typical characteristics of the Babist faith appear.

The Babists in Chicago belong to the branch of the Behaists, that is they believe that Beha Ullah was the manifestation of God, the coming of which the Bab had prophesied. Mr. Kheiralla proves by arguments which seem to be very convincing to him and to Babists that no other interpretation of the signs by which we shall know Him shall be permitted. Beha Ullah, that is "the Glory of God," was exiled from Persia and lived during the end of his life at Akka (Acre), and he must have died there. His sons and daughters have inherited spiritual dominion over the Babists. Beha Ullah left four sons, called the "Branches," and three daughters, called the "Leaves." The oldest son is called the "Greatest Branch," the second the "Mightiest Branch," the third the "Holiest Branch," and the fourth the "Most Luminous Branch." They are not like their father, a manifestation of "the Glory of God," but they are simply men to whom the Babists look up to with reverence.

Mr. Kheiralla's book embodies a number of interesting pictures, among which we will mention portraits of the four branches, a tablet with the handwriting of the Bab in the shape of a pentagonal star, the tomb of Beha Ullah.