

THE PRECURSOR, THE PROPHET, AND THE POPE.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF THE BAHAI MOVEMENT.

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[CONCLUSION.]

AS the second merit claimed for Bahaism, we may take its alleged furtherance of scientific progress. This is the claim of Pope Abbas as cited by Mrs. Kirchner, and Mr. Morton asserts that the Bahais take an "eager interest" in science in "pleasing contrast" with the attitude taken by Christians and Jews! It is a pity Mr. Morton did not go into details as to just how he reached this conclusion. Perhaps he regarded the reception accorded his lectures at Greenacre as a tribute to scientific thought. The fact that the Greenacre Bahais listened with "extreme appreciation" to Mr. Morton's Single Tax theories does not however prove them to have a marked aptitude for economic science; indeed most scientific economists would draw quite the contrary conclusion. Neither does the gratifying reception given Mr. Morton's advocacy of Esperanto permit us to exalt the Bahais at the expense of our other fellow citizens. The Bahai Pope cannot be granted laurels as a patron of science merely because he has taken up Esperanto, and (according to a statement he made to the Esperantists of Edinburgh) has commanded all the Oriental Bahais to study this language. In the universal language movement the cause of Esperanto is, in fact, not that of science but the very reverse. Esperanto represents stagnation and traditionalism, those of the original Esperantists that were truly progressive having passed on to a more scientifically framed language, Ido.⁵ Only the less scientific of the advocates of

⁵ I must say however that all the artificial languages devised up to date, even when ruled grammatically by true scientific principles, seem to me to suffer from this fatal defect: that their inventors have been strangely anxious to provide for the discourse of the groom and the housemaid, or, at best, of the shop keeper and the tourist, while neglecting the vastly more important needs of the scientist and the scholar, the technologist and the merchant. The

a universal tongue are still content to accept the *ipsi dixit* of Dr. Zamenhof, and reverentially abide by the blunders of the "master," but it is the very attitude of submission to tradition in despite of reason which would appeal to the religious mind.

From my own observations I am inclined to say that to describe adequately the "science" in which the Bahais are so eagerly interested, one ought to prefix an adjective, and, for instance, speak of "Bahai Science," where the word *Bahai* is privative, like the *non* in "nonsense" or the *Christian* in "Christian Science." An example is afforded by the regard in which the true believers hold the number nineteen. This number is in their eyes important by virtue of a branch of "science" known as Cabbalistic Science or Cabbalology: the science of the numerical values of letters and words which in Christendom has produced so many ponderous tomes on the number 666 and the Beast of Revelations. Side by side with it goes an art: Onomatomancy or Gematria, the art of divination by the numerical value of words; adepts in this will tell all about a person's past, present and future by merely adding together the numerical values of the letters of his name.⁶ So important are these numerical values⁷ that, according to the Bab (who devotes no inconsiderable portion of the *Bayan* to Cabbalology, and commands his followers to commit to memory these sections in particular) seventy thousand angels are constantly watching over each letter of the alphabet! Because the numerical values of the letters of a word important in Babi and Bahai theology (*Vahid* or "Unity") sums up to nineteen, the Bab and Baha call upon us to revise not merely the calendar and have nineteen minutes in an hour, nineteen hours in a day, nineteen days in a month and nineteen months in a year, but also to adopt the nineteen system in all weights and measures whatsoever. Every nineteen days the Bahais hold "unity feasts," and the American believers in holding these make it a point to affect the conciseness of the vocabularies of such languages as Volapük, Esperanto and Ido is largely due to the small provision made for the well developed and highly specialized terminology current in business, science and technology.

⁶ Of course, quite distinct from all such absurdities is the contention that ancient writers sometimes practiced symbolism, using a word of a particular numerical value to convey to the initiated something of which they desired the casual reader to remain ignorant. Scholars recognize it to be no un-plausible conjecture that the author of the Apocalypse may have used the number of the Beast to fix its identity upon the Emperor Nero whom he would not dare to name outright, the reference being thus to the author's own time and not to a prophesied future occasion.

⁷ It may perhaps be worth while to note that when the numerical value of a letter (or of a word) is spoken of, the adjective "numerical" has here quite a different meaning from that of its mathematical use in which we speak of the numerical value of a quantity.

Oriental fashion of dining, not merely in the dishes served but in table manners as well. Under the original Babi law, when one had guests at dinner he was bound to endeavor to fix the number of partakers at nineteen or a multiple, though if this was impracticable the will might pass for the deed. The penal code of the Bab specified punishments lasting for nineteen periods of time or fines of nineteen pieces of money and with this naturally went a monetary system based on denominations of nineteen. Baha however has remitted the obligation to carry out this last scheme, so we may still hope to retain a decimal coinage when Bahaism holds sway.

The projected Bahai "reform" of weights and measures is not brought to the attention of the public by the American and European Bahais, but they never hesitate proudly to boast of their intention to inflict upon us the calendar devised by the Bab. An especially amusing instance of this occurred with me some time ago, when I attended a Bahai meeting in one of our larger cities—Philadelphia. On this occasion the sect could muster only four believers in attendance at their services, but none the less did the person at the head of the little flock tell me in a most impressive manner that when the Bahais got into power they intended so to alter the calendar as to give us a year with nineteen months of nineteen days each. Fortunately for us, at the present rate of their progress, it will be many a year before the Bahais are strong enough to put this plan into effect. Notwithstanding their grandiloquent talk, there are to-day assuredly not more than five thousand Bahais (Nakizis included) in the whole of the United States and Canada, and a conservative estimate would go far below half that number. The claim made some years ago that there were thirty thousand of the faithful in the United States may have been justified at that time—the time of high water mark for Bahaism—but in all probability it was not. The Bahais are by no means loth to exaggerate; even now, it is said, they do not hesitate to tell the Persians that half of the inhabitants of Chicago acknowledge the Bahai faith! The actual strength of the sect in Chicago may be judged from the fact that on a recent occasion (in the year 1915) a count of the believers in attendance at the devotional services of the Chicago Bahais showed precisely twenty-one women and nine men to be present, while in stormy weather the attendance drops to a still lower figure.

Ninety-five is 5×19 and is moreover the numerical value of the word *Lellah* ("For the sake of God"), and on this account Baha commends his people to repeat ninety-five times every morning

the words *Allaho Abha* ("God is the most glorious"). Nine is a sacred number as well as nineteen, since the letters of the name of the Prophet Baha give this as the sum of their numerical values. Not infrequently the figure 9 is imprinted in large type on the front cover or flyleaf of a Bahai book "to indicate that it is related to the people of Baha." Prayers at morning, noon and night are prescribed for the Bahais, and on each of these occasions the believer is bound to say three prayers, each of which includes three prostrations towards the direction of Acre, there being thus nine prostrations in all. The Bahai temples are to have nine sides, and communities unfortunate enough to be under Bahai rule are to be governed by a council of nine true believers.

A further illustration to show that the phrase "Bahai Science" is not unworthy a place in our vocabulary alongside the expression "Christian Science" is afforded by the Bahai use of their "Healing Tablet." When a Bahai brother or maid-servant (a Bahai lady is not a sister but a "maid servant" or "leaf") becomes ill there is a more potent aid at hand than carnal medical science. Bahai science is called in, and at the next Bahai assemblage the Healing Tablet is repeated in unison nine times for the benefit of the patient, who soon recovers—or else does not, for in this strange world there have been known cases so grave that even the wondrous Healing Tablet could not bring about a cure. Here is the Tablet in question: "Oh my God! Thy name is my Healing, and Thy Remembrance is my Medicine, and Thy Life is my associate, and Thy Mercy is my need and my aid in the world and in the day of judgment. Verily Thou art the Knower and the Wise." Other practices in the matter of diseases, less pardonable than the use of the Healing Tablet, have been ascribed to the Bahais. It is said that when a Nakizi becomes especially obnoxious, the faithful will gather in a circle and concentrate their most evil thoughts in unison upon their enemy, thus applying what Christian Scientists call "malicious animal magnetism" to the suppression of heresy. I myself hardly credit this report, though the lady who gave it circulation, herself a Bahai, firmly believed that such doings took place at Greenacre and were very efficacious in inflicting ills upon the opponents of "His Holiness, Abdul Baha."

A third claim made for Bahaim is the encouragement it gives to the cause of education. In this too, we are told, the Bahais take an "eager interest." Quite certainly this was not the case with the original Babis. The Bab utterly forbade the study of any branch of knowledge not founded on religious faith. Logic, jurisprudence

and philosophy were especially obnoxious to him. Books on other subjects, if found to be unobjectionable, might be left intact for 202 years when, if worthy of being handed down to posterity, they must be copied out and the original destroyed, this process of copying and recopying being repeated every 202 years. But works on the three subjects named were to be indiscriminately immolated whenever the Babis conquered a city. And only lack of power prevented the Bab from carrying out his literary reforms as ruthlessly and effectually as the Caliph who destroyed the Alexandrian library. In the sacred writing given the world by the Bab, we have what the Babis regard as a perfect code of laws and a system of profound philosophy, the exposition of which is most luminous and logical. What need then of studying jurisprudence, philosophy and logic, especially in view of the Bab's remark, in justification of his prohibition of such studies: "Assuredly I myself have never been instructed in these sciences." Professor Browne, to be sure, describes the sacred Babi books as for the most part "hard to comprehend, uncouth in style, unsystematic in arrangement, filled with iterations and solecisms, and not unfrequently quite incoherent and unintelligible to any ordinary reader," and tells us that what is good in the writings of the Bab is "lost in trackless mazes of rhapsody and mysticism" and "weighed down by trivial injunctions and impracticable ordinances," but he was a reader who did not see the Babi scriptures with the eyes of faith. In the eyes of the Bab himself his compositions were clear and convincing, and he forbids his followers to seek any proof or explanation of religion beyond what they will find in the *Bayan*. Here too other "sciences" besides theology have been brought to entire perfection, notably cabbalology, the believers being expressly prohibited from adding any further developments of their own to the "science of numbers" as expounded by the Bab.

The writings of Baha likewise, which his disciples so greatly admire, were the product of a mind which had never been submitted to scholastic instruction. The prophet says: "I have not learned the science possessed by the people and I have not entered the schools. . . . The gale of the Almighty passed over me and taught me the knowledge of that which was." None the less, according to Mr. Kheiralla, does the Prophet display a "knowledge which is beyond that of man." What he really displays is exemplified by the statement made in the *Book of Ighan* that copper "if it is protected in its own mine from superabundance of dryness, will in seventy years attain to the state of gold." This piece of misinfor-

mation was not original with Baha; it had long been a belief of the Oriental "philosophers"; but, in reiterating it, the Bahai prophet exhibited a gross ignorance of facts known to every schoolboy in the Occident. While the education of Baha was thus as deficient as that of the Bab, the views of the former on educational matters were more liberal than those of the latter. In the eleventh of his "Glad Tidings" Baha revoked the prohibition of his forerunner, and gave his followers permission to acquire "sciences and arts of every kind," making however the express reservation that only such study was permissible as is "beneficial and the cause of progress to the servants."

Knowledge for its own sake, the mere pursuit of truth, was not a merit in the eyes of the Blessed Perfection. The sort of education he recommends is that exemplified by the Catholic parochial schools, and in the ultimate working out of the scheme laid down by Baha it will be compulsory and will be supported by taxes levied by that board of nine believers which is to enforce the Holy Law wherever the Bahais get into power. Any one who thinks that those at the head of the Bahai flock favor any secular education that would be inimical to what they regard as the "spiritual development" of the people is woefully mistaken. The education they have in view is the education which strengthens the faith. The followers of Baha'u'llah are admonished by the prophet that "schools must first train the children in the principles of the religion." Commenting upon this statement, M. Dreyfus, a prominent Bahai, says "there is no danger of a prescription emanating from such authority ever being disregarded," to which remark he adds that, since Baha warns his people not to bring up their children in "ignorant fanaticism and bigotry" there can be no fear "of generations instructed in Bahatism ever falling into fanatical excesses. Presumably the Bahais think we ought not to regard as a sign of fanaticism the doctrine put forth in a pamphlet called *An Epistle to the Bahai World*, written by one of the sons of the Prophet Baha'u'llah. The author of this, Mirza Badi'u'llah, was the brother of Mohammed Ali and the half-brother of Abbas; at first he adhered to the former and was counted among the Nakizis, but in 1903 he recanted and abjuring his heresy became one of the most fervent upholders of the papal prerogatives. His *Epistle*, the English translation of which came out in Chicago in 1907, was translated and published, not merely with the consent, but by the express command of Pope Abdul Baha Abbas, so that it is absolutely authoritative.

In this precious treatise (which is not one of those that the

Bahais are in the habit of parading before the eyes of prospective converts and neophytes) we are told that the most important moral duty is submission to Abdul Baha, this being the one "which holds the first degree in importance, which is incumbent upon all" while "second in importance are the other commands of the Book of God. For instance, if a person commits a murder he has committed a crime the harmful result of which will concern him; but if he disobeys the word of the Covenant of God (disobeys Abdul Baha) and causes dissensions in the Law of God, the harmful result of it will touch the Cause itself (humanity at large)." [The parentheses of this citation are not inserted by me, but are to be found in the original text published by the Bahai Publishing Society of Chicago.] An American Bahai, Mr. Remy, tells us that "Abdul Baha commands that nothing but reality be taught. There is but one reality in the world to-day and that is the New Covenant." In other words, the whole of Bahai education must be overshadowed by the inculcation of submissiveness to Pope Abbas. Another Bahai tells us that "this world has an owner; Abdul Baha owns the world and all that is in it." Bahais may say that children impregnated with such doctrines and brought up to regard disobedience to the Bahai Pope as worse than murder will be "free from fanaticism" but they will find it hard to get anybody else to believe it.

A fourth feature in its favor is that Bahaism, we are told, unlike certain other religious movements, offers "no menace to the larger principles of liberty." This contention assuredly cannot be admitted by those of us who regard separation of church and state as one of the larger principles of liberty, since complete union of the two is definitely held up as the Bahai ideal. Never in this matter has there been any deviation from the original doctrines of Baha'u'llah; these his followers accept in all their pristine purity, though, as one of my critics remarks, "it would be too much to hope that Bahaism, any more than any other form of faith, should remain forever untainted." Many of the older religious bodies have been tainted by the doctrine of a free church within a free state and are tamely content to claim exemption from taxation and a few minor privileges of like character. But this "fatal error" (as Mr. Holley calls it) that "religion has made in permitting or compelling society to develop its governmental activity apart from its spiritual life" has not yet crept into Bahaism, which repudiates the "alienation of religion from government" and aspires to "a new social synthesis, in which the world-states and the world-churches are united and allied." As M. Dreyfus says: "The separation of Church

and State can only be temporary. . . . In the presence of religious unity the State will be religious." The very "inner significance" of such a temple as the Bahais are about to build near Chicago is "the union, after their long estrangement, of Church and State" (Holley, p. 184). And a third Bahai finds in the Bible a prophecy to the effect that this great blessing shall come to us in the year 1917 when "the opponents of this Great Truth shall find themselves in the minority; then the laws and ordinances of God [i. e., those revealed by Baha] shall prevail to guide, rule and govern the nations of the world." "These teachings," says Pope Abbas, "make tame every ferocious animal, give speed to those that only move, transform human souls into angels of heaven and make the world of humanity the center of the manifestation of mercy." Mr. Kheiralla, too, thinks that when the commandments of Baha dominate, unity and peace will be attained and "the Wolf and the Lamb shall live together." Those however who have heeded the lessons history teaches us and have not forgotten what has in the past been brought about by connection between church and state, will be less optimistic, and will see in the religious unity to which the Bahais urge us and the "Most Great Peace" which is to be its result, the kind of unity and peace that comes when the lion and the lamb lie down together with the lamb inside.

A fifth recommendation that Bahatism is said to have to the more advanced portions of mankind is its "departure from the crude anthropomorphisms of the old religions." Just how wide a difference there really is between the Bahais and the votaries of the older cults, who think of their deities as persons whom they might meet face to face, may be judged from the remark made to Professor Browne by a Persian Bahai while Baha'u'llah was still alive and residing at Acre: "God is something real, visible, tangible, definite. Go to Acre and see God!" Baha himself showed no desire to discourage his followers from taking this view of his personality. Two eminent believers, as we are told by Mr. Phelps (who, be it remembered, is not a hostile witness, but an ardent advocate of the Bahai cause) quarrelled about the precise relation of the Prophet to the Deity. When this came to the ears of Baha he summoned both the men into his presence, and "To the one he said, 'You say that I am God and that there is no other. You are right.' To the other he said, 'You say that I am but the reflection of God. You are right.' Then to both he said, 'You are both right.'" In the light of this, one can see a certain grim humor in Baha's statement

that the death of his Azalite enemies at the hands of his own disciples was the work of God.

The frank deification of flesh and blood by oriental Bahais has its counterpart with the occidental converts in an attitude well illustrated by what Mr. Horace Holley tells us of his feelings on meeting Abdul Baha Abbas, the son of Baha'u'llah, or as Mrs. Phoebe Hearst is said to have put it, "the son of God." Mr. Holley says: "He displayed a beauty of stature, an inevitable harmony of attitude and dress I had never seen nor thought of in men. Without having ever visualized the Master, I knew that this was he. My whole body underwent a shock. My heart leaped, my knees weakened, a thrill of acute, receptive feeling flowed from head to foot. I seemed to have turned into some sensitive sense-organ, as if eyes and ears were not enough for this sublime impression. In every part of me I stood aware of Abdul Baha's presence. From sheer happiness I wanted to cry—it seemed the most suitable form of self-expression at my command. While my own personality was flowing away, even while I exhibited a state of complete humility, a new being, not my own, assumed its place. A glory, as it were, from the summits of human nature poured into me, and I was conscious of a most intense impulse to admire. In Abdul Baha I felt the awful presence of Baha'u'llah, and, as my thoughts returned to activity, I realized that I had thus drawn as near as man now may to pure spirit and pure being."

As sixth point in the praise which my critics lavish on the Bahai body may be taken the allegation that it is radically different from "the many freak sects of our day." That is, if I understand this contention aright, the grotesque absurdities that mark the mushroom cults which spring up in our midst from time to time, are wholly absent in Bahaism; all that it has in common with such cults is recognition of the supernatural, and, whether its supernaturalism be wrong or right, Bahaism is at least a dignified and decorous religion. With this appreciation of the cult of Baha'u'llah I cannot agree, and I think it has been shown, by facts brought to light in my previous remarks, that Bahaism is by no means lacking in grotesque and absurd features. Its very phraseology, the phrases peculiar to it, used so unctiously by the American and European members of the sect, can only be described as ludicrous in the extreme. Take, for example, such phrases as "The Most Great Infallibility," "The Most Great Peace" (an expression which is forever rolling off the tongues of the American Bahais) and many others of like character, the Bahais being inordinately fond of superlatives so

formed. Take the Prophet's designation of Acre, his place of exile, as "This Most Great Prison" (a better description of Baha's abiding place, toward the end of his stay, would have been "This Most Great Palace") or the reference made by the very "Supreme Pen" of the "Blessed Perfection" to his own "peerless and wronged Beauty," quoted by a disciple who appears to think this a most admirable way of speaking of oneself. Or take the titles assigned to certain members of the flock at Acre. "The Sailor of Sanctity," "The Barber of the Truth" (which designated, it would appear, that barber who agreed for the sake of Baha, so the Azalites allege, to cut the throat of Azal while giving his ministrations to the latter), "The Baker of the Divine Unity," "The Confectioner of the Divine Eternity." Consider the habit of saying, in reference to Baha and Abbas, "May our lives be His Sacrifice," "May the lives of all the denizens of the world save Him be a sacrifice to Him," phrases to which Bahai assemblies will listen with profound edification. Take the names "maid-servant" and "leaves," by which the Bahai ladies are known to the faithful. (Imagine an American, like Mr. Remy, in telling of his meeting with a Bahai woman at Khazvan in Persia, saying: "We, in our turn, gave her the greetings of the *maid-servants* of the West.") Consider such a rhapsody as this, written by Mrs. Brittingham, after she had made a pilgrimage to Acre and met Pope Abbas: "I have seen the King in his beauty. . . The Master is here and we need not look for another. This is the return of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, of the Lamb that once was slain; the Glory of God and the Glory of the Lamb." Really, when we see how the American Bahais express themselves, we can hardly be surprised that Badi'u'llah, the brother of the Bahai Pope, should write: "Consider how great is the utterance of His Holiness Abdul Baha that inhabitants of America, notwithstanding the long distance and the difference in the tastes and customs, have been so attracted and enkindled as to cause the amazement of intellects." Without admitting the justice of the inference as to the greatness of the utterance of Abbas we must, nevertheless, concede the "amazement of intellects," especially in view of the next statement of Badi'u'llah: "In these days one of the believers and assured maid-servants from that land, known as the maid-servant of God [Mrs. Getsinger], is present in this blessed spot [Acre]. She is enkindled and attracted beyond description and sheds tears night and day, seeking permission from His Holiness Abdul Baha to go to Persia and quaff the cup of martyrdom."

One Bahai absurdity which I have not had occasion to touch

upon and which may be mentioned here is the ordinance of fasting. In this respect, Baha'u'llah was more rigid than his predecessor, the Bab, who did not make the practice obligatory on men and women above the age of forty-two. Baha, saying "I love fasting! Unless the people become old and weak they should fast," decreed that for all persons above the age of fifteen, except travelers, the sick and infirm, and women who are pregnant or have children at the breast, the law shall hold that for nineteen successive days in March of each year (throughout the whole month of Ola in the Bahai calendar) "no manner of food or drink is to be taken between sunrise and sunset. The nights are to be passed awake and in prayer. The Bahai periodical published in Chicago every nineteen days by the American Bahais, the *Star of the West*, in all seriousness set forth these regulations repeatedly in its issues of 1912, the year Pope Abbas visited the United States. The Bahais here have not yet been able to put this ordinance of fasting into effect, but appear to look upon strict observance of it as an ideal to be attained some time in the future.

A complement to the view which ranks Bahaim as a highly refined supernaturalism, free from the crudities of the vulgar cults, is the contention that the movement associated with the names of the Bab, Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha embodies, to a certain extent at least, the modern rationalistic spirit of the West. As Professor Browne says. "No mistake could be greater." The Babis and Bahais, with their insufferable dogmatism, are the very antithesis of the eclectic and latitudinarian Sufis of Persia, "whose point of view is quite incompatible with the exclusive claim of a positive and dogmatic creed," and who, far better than their rivals, represent in the domains of the Shah that spirit which has brought the people of the Occident to look upon religious dissent with the eye of toleration. A Sufi philosopher would have little inclination to say that disobedience to a spiritual leader is worse than murder. Bahaim takes this stand because, in the words of the first American Bahai, Thornton Chase, it is essentially "a call to obedience." Not to it belongs the spirit which leads one to garner and make his own the best from all religions. To your true Bahai nothing save the commands of his Asiatic masters is worthy even of contemplation. As a very prominent American Bahai, Mr. C. M. Remy, puts it: "In those centers where the people have *clung exclusively* to the teachings of Baha'u'llah, shutting out from the meetings the very mention of all else, in these places there has been growth and fruition, fragrance and spirituality, because the people have been nourished upon the

pure life-giving spiritual food of The Word of God, and consequently have grown in the grace of the Kingdom." Abdul Baha is at pains to prescribe in advance that in the Bahai temple to be erected near Chicago "the words of Baha'u'llah only are to be read." When the faithful have raised the million dollars which Abdul Baha says must be expended on the Chicago edifice, other temples are to arise throughout the land to serve the same purpose, notably one on Monsalvat⁸ at Greenacre, the property recently captured by the true believers. Abdul Baha "hopes and prays that Greenacre may become the elysium of heavenly beatitudes." The religious parliament idea, the idea on which Greenacre was founded, that of giving a sympathetic ear to the religious views of others, Miss Farmer's idea, which Mr. Remy quite correctly says was "to provide a platform open to all, from which each might proclaim his message, whatever it might be, the only restriction being that each speaker should expound his theories in the spirit of toleration toward all holding views other than his own," was all very well so long as it brought about increased opportunities for carrying souls over to Baha, but it belonged only to a transitional stage. It would be a most pestiferous doctrine did it lead believers in the teachings of the Blessed Perfection to harken to any other religious preachings. As Mr. Remy says: "The original Greenacre ideal had its mission to perform. It gathered together people to receive the spiritual teachings of the Bahai Message. That being accomplished, it has fulfilled its mission according to the lines prescribed and outlined by its founder.[!] Little did Miss Farmer and her friends realize, when they started this work, that the Covenant of God would be proclaimed there, and that the Center of the Covenant would actually appear there and teach the people. Now, through the bounty of God, a new and a great opportunity is offered to Greenacre, that of becoming a great center for the study of the Covenant and the investigation of spiritual reality. Greenacre has diligently sought the Truth from all sources, and she has found it, and now her work lies in nurturing souls in the pure reality of the Word of God." On reading such a statement, one can only echo: True enough! Little indeed did the group of idealists who built the original Greenacre, putting into it not merely their money, but the

⁸ A little eminence called by the Eliot people "Sunset Hill" on account of the magnificent sunsets to be seen from it, but renamed Monsalvat (i. e., Mount Salvation). The project to erect a temple on this spot was, it seems, discussed by correspondence between Pope Abbas and Mirza Ali Kuli Khan (chargé d'affaires of the Persian Legation, but in this matter representing the American Bahais). See the *Star of the West* of July 13, 1915, p. 53.

best of their work of heart and soul, dream that the foundation for which they sacrificed so much would one day pass into the control of a sect whose most earnest desire is to propagate the doctrine of the infallibility of the Center of the Bahai Covenant and to deal damnation around the land on all who dare deny the claims of Pope Abbas.

Of the various points raised in contravention of my strictures on Bahatism, the most absurd is assuredly the contention (made by Mrs. Kirchner, if I apprehend her rightly) that Baha'u'llah cannot justly be termed a rival of Jesus, since "each have their own identity or station." It would be quite as sensible to say that in the United States presidential contest of 1912 Mr. Wilson was not a rival of Theodore Roosevelt, because, forsooth, he recognized the perfect legitimacy of Mr. Roosevelt's title to the presidential chair during an earlier period between Sept. 12, 1901 and March 4, 1909. There is, in Bahatism, a place assigned to Jesus, sure enough; but what? It is a place on the scrap heap. Jesus, in the Bahai view, is an obsolete prophet of the past. And when did he go into this category? As late as 1864 when Baha'u'llah announced his mission or in 1844 when the Bab began to preach? Far, far earlier than either of these dates. The Bahai view is that Jesus has had no message for the human race since the beginning of the Mohammedan dispensation which the Babism and Bahais fix at Anno Domini 612, ten years before the Hejira (the flight of Mohammed from Mecca, ordinarily taken as the commencement of the Mohammedan era.)

Since that time (until Bahatism arose in the nineteenth century) it has been the duty of all mankind to listen, not to the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, but to the revelations put forth in the Koran by the Prophet of the Sword! The date thus fixed is sixty years earlier than that of the conversion of England to Christianity; it is one hundred and fifty years before the time Charlemagne brought the Saxons into the Christian fold. The Christian period in northern Europe was thus a sad mistake from the very beginning; the northern pagans should have been converted to Mohammedanism, not to Christianity. Through all these years of the Mohammedan dispensation, for thirteen centuries, the whole of Europe (outside of the fragment under Musulman sway) was wallowing in religious error; whether a man looked for guidance to Rome or to Geneva or to Wittenberg, he was turning away from God, for the divine will had, so the Bahais hold, fixed the center of true religion, not in Christendom, but in Islam. Only that

part of the human race (the Bahais would say, if they spoke with perfect sincerity and straightforwardness) could be regarded as heeding the admonitions of the Deity which took the teachings of His latest manifestation, Mohammed, as guide until these were superseded by the revelations of the Persian prophet. Jesus, the Bahais will admit, was indeed a greater prophet than any of his predecessors, and gave to mankind a doctrine as pure as the people of his time and the next six centuries were fit to receive. But as soon as the inhabitants of the earth were ready for loftier and nobler teachings, a far greater prophet, so the Bahais contend, arose in the person of Mohammed. And in Baha'u'llah finally appeared the greatest of all manifestations, the "crowning glory," as Mr. Phelps puts it, the prophet "in whom the perfect Divine Image was reflected." Christians of the present day are called upon to abandon Jesus and put Baha in his place; to forget the anguished figure on the cross who prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," and give their reverence to the prophet who on the death of Fuad Pasha, the Turkish official that had banished him to Acre, penned in his palace "prison" a poem of bitter exultation consigning his enemy "to hell, where the heart boils and the tormenting angel meets him." "Jesus," as some of Baha's more ardent admirers would say, "lived for his own age and his own people. . . . But the Blessed Perfection. . . . lives for our age and offers his spiritual feast to men of all peoples." Jesus, the Bahais say, was but the manifestation of the Son; Baha'u'llah, however, was the "Appearance of the Everlasting Father" and the Bahai view is that "his knowledge, teachings, life as well as his personality are superior to those of Jesus Christ."⁹ The prophecy of the Bible, say the Bahais, is that after the Son shall come the Father, and the Father has come. As some believers look at the matter however several Sons came before the Father, and these minor prophets were reincarnated as the earthly progeny of the Blessed Perfection. According to this view, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed reappeared on earth as the four sons of Baha, as Ziah'u'llah, Badi'u'llah, Abbas and Mohammed Ali respectively. Abbas himself does not make this specific claim—to do so would be exalting his rival, Mohammed Ali, at his own expense—but he at times makes pronouncements in which he would seem to put himself in the ranks of the prophets. An example is his statement: "I am the manifestation of God. My paps are full of the milk of Godhead; whoever will, let him come and suck freely."

⁹ I. G. Kheiralla in *The Open Court* for October, 1915.

To any one aware of the facts about the cult of Baha'u'llah that have been brought out in this and in my preceding article, the case against Bahaimism is so convincing that the conversions effected in Europe and America appear to present quite a puzzling problem. How has such a sect gained a foothold in civilized communities? The answer to this question is that Bahai success in the Occident has had a twofold root: first, the nature of what passes for logic with men and women of the emotionally religious type; second, the fact that the Bahai leaders have, in their propaganda, made free use of the Persian practice of *ketman*. Let us consider the latter before we take up the former, and first of all let us see just what *ketman* is and ascertain the extent to which it has been and is used in the Bahai propaganda in the Orient.

Deviation from the truth occurs with men of all races and countries, but, as the Bahai author, Mirza Huseyn of Hamadan, says, it "is the principal vice of the Persians." In the land of the Shah religious dissimulation has been taught systematically for centuries under the name of *ketman* or *takiya* as a practice, not merely permissible, but in many cases highly meritorious. According to this doctrine, if you are among people of another faith than your own, and the disclosure of your true belief might cause you grave inconvenience, you are quite justified in denying your own religion, in making professions of faith contrary to what you actually hold, and in going through religious rites which at heart you thoroughly repudiate and condemn. Following these convenient precepts, Shiite Mohammedans, when they go to Turkey or other countries where the hostile Sunnite sect is in power, will quite commonly represent themselves as belonging to the Sunnite branch of the followers of Mohammed. And *ketman* does not alone allow your passing yourself off as a member of another sect than that to which you really belong; it also sanctions the most extreme misrepresentation of the doctrines of your own religion. "If," say the holy men of Persia, "you can produce a favorable impression upon an infidel by misrepresenting the nature of your religion, do so by all means, and God's blessing will be upon you. Even if there is no hope of making a conversion you must not cast pearls before swine, or expose a holy faith to the derision of scoffers. To avoid this you are justified in going to any lengths to deceive and edify the unbeliever, even to the extent of falsifying the sacred scriptures of your faith."

In the times before the Bab arose, the Persian casuists of all ages and of all sects had glorified the practice of *ketman*, and there would be nothing surprising in so convenient a custom being carried

over into a religion growing up on Persian soil. Early Babism, however, seems to have been comparatively free from it. Not until Baha began to remodel the work of the Bab did systematic dissimulation become one of the mainstays of the movement. Nowhere has *ketman* been practiced to greater perfection than in the religion of Baha'u'llah. One notable instance of its use by the Bahais was in the production of the *New History of the Bab* by the rewriting of the *Point of Kaf* of the Babi author, Mirza Jani. The Bahai writer who here distinguished himself by his suppression of inconvenient facts was that very Huseyn of Hamadan who so vigorously reproached his countrymen for their habits of prevarication. In his revision of Jani's matter, passages which show how well recognized were the claims of Azal to the spiritual throne on the death of the Bab are invariably omitted. Thus the story which Baha himself circulated of his mother, the "honorable concubine" of Azal's father, having had a miraculous dream which made known to the family the future greatness of Azal when the latter was yet a child (a story which is of value as showing the attitude Baha originally took toward his brother) is completely elided, and so is a passage indicating that even Kurratu'l-Ayn occupied a higher position in the sect than did Baha. As for the account given by Jani of the naming of Azal as the Bab's successor, a matter into which the author of the *Point of Kaf* goes with some detail, this is carefully omitted by the Bahai reviser, who passes over the subject in very significant silence. Again, there is suppressed a long passage concerning an Indian convert to Babism, Jenab-i-Basir, and his relations to Baha and Azal, a passage telling of many minor prophets or "manifestations" over all of whom stood Azal making "apportionment to every claimant of his rights." Jenab-i-Basir, claimed to be a reincarnation of the Imam Huseyn of the Muslims, and was awarded the right to recognition as this manifestation. Precisely what constituted a "manifestation" is not very clear, but at all events none of these minor prophets, not even Azal the master of all, was looked at in the light in which Baha later posed before his flock as a superior to the Bab himself. Jani regarded this "chaos of Theophanies," as Professor Browne describes it, as a proof of the greatness and dignity of the Babi religion, and called upon the Mohammedans to acknowledge that a religion which could produce so many manifestations at one time was assuredly of no slight merit. But, sad to say, scoffers were found who sneered at the manifestations of God, and regarded their wondrous

utterances as nothing more than the ravings of men unbalanced by excessive indulgence in opium and hashish.

The legitimate title of Azal to the post of successor to the Bab was a serious obstacle to the putting forward of the claims of Baha to prophetship. "The Bahais," says Professor Browne, "endeavored to get over the difficulty by ignoring Subh-i-Azal's existence as far as possible, and by suppressing all documents tending to prove the position he undoubtedly held." And when Browne was in Persia in 1887-1888 he found that the Bahais he met "generally feigned complete ignorance of the very name and existence of Subh-i-Azal." The early Babi books, which, if the assertions made by Baha and his advocates were true, ought to lend support to the Bahai side of the controversy, have been as far as possible kept out of sight or, as the Azalites think, largely destroyed by the partisans of Baha, into whose hands fell the major portion of the scriptures left by the Bab and his apostles. Professor Browne, in regard to this matter, says: "From my own experience, I can affirm that, hard as it is to obtain from the Bahais in Persia the loan or gift of Babi books belonging to the earlier period of the faith, at Acre it is harder still even to get a glimpse of them. They may be, and probably are, still preserved there, but for all the good the inquirer is likely to get from them, they might almost as well have suffered the fate which the Azalis believe to have overtaken them."

Fortunately the Bahais were not able to work their will with all the Babi books, and some very instructive works are still accessible to the historian. The *Bayan* of the Bab is, of course, of paramount authority in the study of Babi doctrine, but for historical investigation concerning the doings of the Babis, the most important of the early works now extant is the *Point of Kaf* of Jani. A copy of this, the only one now known to exist, was brought to Europe by Count de Gobineau and in 1892 was unearthed in the French Bibliothèque Nationale by Professor Browne. A few years ago an English diplomat, freshly returned from Persia, where he had held repeated and intimate conversations with many of the followers of Baha, made to Browne the following comment on the attitude of the Bahais toward this book: "As for the History of Hajji Mirza Jani, which you regard as of such incomparable interest on account of the light which it throws on various conflicting tendencies and rash deeds and doctrines which agitated the young Babi church, I do not doubt from what they said, that they would, if possible,

compass the destruction of the one surviving copy of the book, to which, unfortunately as they consider, you obtained access."

Since the power of destruction of the Bahai leaders did not keep pace with the will to destroy all damaging evidence against the cause, cases occur in which the only resort remaining is to endeavor to explain away the evidence that could not be destroyed. In one particular instance the character of the explanation put forward is especially noteworthy. Up to 1858, Baha "was, as his own writings prove, to all appearances as loyal a follower of Subh-i-Azal as he had previously been of the Bab," so Professor Browne tells us. How do the Bahais explain the apparent subordination of Baha to his brother when they are compelled to face such facts? By telling us that the Blessed Perfection practiced *ketman*; that he allowed outsiders and even members of the Babi flock to believe Azal was the supreme ruler of the Babis after the death of the Bab in order to avoid the persecution with which the government authorities and the Mohammedan mullas would be likely to pursue the leader of the obnoxious sect—that Baha so arranged matters that most of the trouble would fall on a mere figure-head in the person of his brother, while the true head of the faithful would be left in comparative peace!

Now Baha, be it remembered, is in the eyes of his adherents "the perfect manifestation of God," a phrase which one of them explains as follows: "The Bahais use the illustration of the sun and the mirror to explain what they mean by a Manifestation of God; the perfect Manifestation of God is the perfect mirror which reflects so faithfully the light, warmth and glory of the sun that it has a right to say, 'I am the sun.'" What, then, we see in Baha is a reflection of the divine attributes; and we may not unreasonably infer, from what the Bahais tell us, that God, like his prophet, is an unconscionable liar, delighting in the practice of *ketman*! This brings up a rather interesting question: If such be the case, why should any one believe in the revelations of the Deity put forth by Baha'u'llah? If the Deity delights in lying how can we rely on the truth of what He tells us? To the Bahais I leave the task of attempting a reply.

For falsification of history the Bahais find other uses besides its application in the factional fight against the Azalites. They quite carefully cover up all the unedifying features of the conflicts between the early Babis and the unbelievers. For example, in their *Traveller's Narrative* and other pseudo-historical works, the attempt on the life of the Shah in 1852 is represented as being

the work of a single aberrated Babi. As a matter of fact three Babis took part in the actual attempt and were caught *flagrante delicto*. This much seems certain; and further it is said, though perhaps without justification, that the attempt was proposed to the Babis of Teheran by one of the saints, Mulla Sheykh Ali (by honorary title Jenab-i-Azim), that twelve believers volunteered, that the three who were caught in the act began their work by a mistake half an hour too soon, so that the other nine would-be assassins were not on hand to lend their aid, and that to this unfortunate blunder the Babis subsequently ascribed the failure of the plot. Various other points of Babi history are perverted in the accounts given us in the Bahai books, and it is hardly unjust to characterize as a tissue of falsehoods what these works put before the public as the story of the Bab and his disciples.

Equally disingenuous have the Bahai publicists been in dealing with the movement headed by Baha'u'llah. Of their falsification here I have already given some account in this and in my previous article. In addition however I may mention that different texts sometimes come to light of the same epistle addressed by Baha to some ruler or potentate. One text is that really sent; the other appears to be that circulated in the Bahai flock, and in this much bolder language will be used, language which, if in the original epistle, might have got the writer into trouble, but which impresses the faithful with the idea of the perfect fearlessness of their prophet. An obvious advantage of this procedure is that vague premonition of impending evil in the original document can after the event, by change of a few words, be turned into a fairly definite prophecy of something that has actually come to pass, and the believer thus be greatly edified.

Another variety of *ketman*, of which the Bahais have not been slow to avail themselves, especially in connection with the Christian missions of the Orient, is that of simulating a faith other than one's own. In Persia a Bahai will go to a missionary and, denying that he is a Bahai but saying that he is a Musulman dissatisfied with Mohammedanism, endeavor to obtain employment. He will take any position he can get, from teacher of language to cook, and once he has obtained a foothold he will do his utmost to fill the mission with his coreligionists (likewise sailing under false colors) where they will secretly work in unison for the good of the faith. Some missions have become thus so surrounded by Bahai employees that they were more Bahai than Christian, and it has been quite a while before the innocent missionaries realized that their subordinates

were covertly working against Christianity and for Bahaism. A Bahai will not hesitate to become baptised as a Christian, and to pose as a Christian evangelist if the missionaries will so employ him. The tale is still told in Persia of the Swedish mission where two Bahais so crept in and received salaries for preaching the Gospel to their countrymen, while in fact the propaganda in which they were very actively engaged was in behalf of Baha and not of Jesus.

Turn now to the use of *ketman* in putting forth a religious faith in colors other than its own—the use which is especially relevant to the problem of the occidental Bahai conversions. To the American and European inquirer Bahaism is never presented on first sight in all its ugly nakedness. It is dressed up for the occasion in a guise quite different from that in which it appears to the initiated. The movement is represented as having been a constant fight for human freedom, and to its opponents is ascribed a blinding bigoted fanaticism. The essentially sectarian nature of the cult of Baha'u'llah is kept out of sight, and it is portrayed as a means of rendering the Mohammedan bigot tolerant and of leading the Hindu out of his narrow caste system. By softening down religious prejudice it is to bring about a cessation of religious strife. Stress is laid on the humanitarian aspects of Bahaism, and the dogmatic side is ignored or glossed over. Its purpose is represented, not as the bringing over of souls to Baha, but as the promotion of progress and all forms of social betterment. "Love and Unity," we are told, "are its sole principles; and on this broad program all believers in various faiths can unite." The prophet is pictured, not as the founder of a new sectarianism, but as a utilitarian philanthropist who, with vision wondrous clear, laid plans for the amelioration of man's lot and developed a scheme which comprehends "the sum of all and every dream or plan for human betterment, from the Republic of Plato on through all the Utopias that men's minds have planned and men's hands sought to materialize." Baha'u'llah's message to mankind is represented as including the best that science has to offer in aid of human progress, and, if it be but heeded by ever increasing numbers of believers, the world, so the Bahais say, will be on the way to become a terrestrial paradise.

By painting so idyllic a picture, the Bahais can gain the sympathies of men and women who would look upon the new religion with quite a different feeling were they at the outset brought face to face with its true nature. Once in the toils of a religious move-

ment, many people can, unfortunately, be gradually led on and on by playing upon their emotions until they are finally brought to accept doctrines which would in the beginning have been utterly abhorrent to them. And this is what takes place in Bahatism. The true Bahai doctrine is disclosed by degrees as the mind of the convert is found prepared to receive it. How deep a disguise is laid on the cult of Baha'u'llah at its first presentation depends upon the circumstances. Things that would shock the American or European neophyte if put before him at too early a stage, can be disclosed at once to the Asiatic proselyte without any fear of disturbing his equanimity. Even Americans and Europeans in the Orient are told far more than the proselytizers for the sect in the West think it advisable to put before the public. The good souls in Christendom, who from afar cast admiring eyes at the Bahai communities of Persia and Turkey, can be kept in ignorance of many features that it is hardly possible to veil from the inquirer on the spot. And moreover, the native Bahai, in his ignorance of the standards that prevail with the inhabitants of civilized countries, will often make the most unedifying statements without the slightest idea that what he is saying could in any way prove a stumbling block to a prospective convert. But while the oriental Bahais by such naivety make many damaging disclosures, they never wantonly tell the inquirer what they do not deem him apt to assimilate. When Professor Browne was in Persia the Bahais had high hopes of converting him, and no pains were spared to instruct so prominent a proselyte. He was told much that the present Bahai missionaries in Europe and America wisely refrain from putting before the outsider, yet his instructors took great care not to disclose immediately the doctrines of Bahatism in their entirety. If one of the more impetuous propagandists seemed inclined to advance too rapidly in revealing the nature of the Bahai faith to the stranger, older and wiser heads would check his indiscretions by saying that Professor Browne "was not yet ripe" for these things.

Just such an attitude is taken by the Bahai leaders in the Occident. Here too the pious propagandists feel no compunction in keeping the real essentials of the Bahai faith out of sight of the unripe inquirer, and only bringing them to the notice of the thoroughly corrupted convert. In my previous article I told of an occurrence, coming under my own observation at Greenacre, which showed how far the Bahais there were from esteeming frankness as a virtue. At this place a pamphlet expounding the doctrines of the papal pretensions of Abbas came into the hands of a visitor

to the summer colony of the Bahais, a man who gave his full sympathy to the humanitarianism which is put forth to the public as the Alpha and Omega of Bahaism, but felt only aversion and contempt for such doctrines as the dogma of the Most Great Infallibility. Naturally Bahaism took a sudden drop in the esteem of this attendant at the Bahai meetings. And the Bahai view of the matter seemed to be that there was nothing to be ashamed of in resorting to misrepresentation for the good of the faith. The saints had hoped, it would appear, to overcome gradually the natural broadness and love of liberty of their prospective convert, expecting to pervert him in the course of time to the full bigotry of Bahai sectarianism. And they felt it was really too bad that an indiscrete member of their circle should have disclosed the essentially dogmatic and intolerant nature of the cult of Baha'u'llah before the inquirer had been inveigled into the fold.

This is merely a single exemplification of Bahai methods; the American Bahais systematically practice *ketman*, and, if I were to attempt to characterize the Bahai leaders of the United States in a single phrase, I would feel quite justified, from what I know of their procedures, in describing them as amateur Jesuits. For them to be entirely frank and open, where this might prove a stumbling block in the path of the convert, would indeed be in flagrant contravention with the commands of Pope Abbas, who specifically bids them keep certain of their deliberations hidden that they "may not become a cause of hindrance" to the weaker brethren. The Bahais show their amateurishness by actually putting this admonition into print, though they take care not to disclose what particular deliberations are referred to. Again do they show themselves to be amateurs when they deliberately put on record the fact that *ketman* was practiced by their Pope in connection with the doctrine of the Covenant. "Abdul Baha," the *Star of the West* tells us, "has always maintained his position as The Center, although for some years this Centership has been veiled from the people because of their spiritual blindness." In other words, in order to gain a foothold in the United States and Europe, it was thought advisable to keep carefully concealed from the proselytes as well as from the public the claims of the head of the Bahais to papal power. Not until 1912 did the leaders say to the faithful that "the time has now come when the Bahais of the West should understand what is intended by 'The Center of the Covenant.'" For twenty years Abdul Baha had been continually deceiving the Occidental members of the sect (with the exception of the few

belonging to the inner circle of the propaganda) and his apostles had been making public declaration that "The spirit of Bahatism is anti-papal." But in 1912, when he made his trip through Europe and America, he and his lieutenants thought it safe to disclose the true doctrine to the rank and file of the believers; to explain to them that the head of the sect was a pope and not a mere episcopal shepherd; and to inform them that "To-day the most important affair is firmness in The Covenant." And so ensnared in the meshes of fanaticism were most of the Bahai dupes that they felt no resentment at the deception that had been practiced upon them, but docilely acquiesced in the papal claims of Abdul Baha.

It is hardly necessary to say that for the Bahai propaganda to prosper there is another requisite besides the application of *ketman*, namely a certain cast of mind in the public addressed. Men and women whose minds run in logical channels, though they may be temporarily deceived by the advocates of the new religion, will not become converts to Bahatism merely because the Bahai movement appears at first sight to have very laudable ends in view. They will look below the surface; they will ask whether the means proposed are likely to be conducive to the ostensible ends; and they will above all inquire whether the Bahais are committed to anything else besides the humanitarianism they parade before the public eye. Fortunately for Bahatism there are many persons who do not answer this description. The Persian cult depends for its career in the Occident on people of the emotional type who do not investigate so closely a religion they are inclined to favor. These, once their emotions are touched, are liable to succumb without further question, and are always prospective converts to a religion upheld by propagandists skilled in the use of rhetoric and possessing the gift of oratory.

To take rhetoric as evidence of religious truth is a rule that has few, if any, exceptions with the Bahai proselytes. Such a criterion has in fact been in vogue from the very beginning of the movement, even with the Babi progenitors of the Bahais. The former explicitly recognized, as among the "signs of Godhead," "verses spontaneously uttered, which are the greatest of all signs." By these signs, by the Bab composing within five or six hours "over two thousand verses" of "exceeding eloquence and beauty of expression" was it that Seyyid Yahya of Darab became a convert and was brought to the point where he was willing to slay his own father "for the sake of the Beloved." And a like view of the func-

tions of rhetoric as an evidence of divinity is taken by the Occidental Bahais.

An illustration of their point of view is afforded by the following passage from an article by Mr. Harrold Johnson: "That he was in very deed a Divine Manifestation Baha'u'llah speedily proved. For from Adrianople, and a little later from his fortress-prison of Acca, this tortured prisoner penned and dispatched astounding epistles to the Pope, to the crowned heads of Europe, and to the Shah of Persia." Another excellent exemplification came to me personally at Greenacre in the course of a conversation with an American Bahai, who told me that his conversion was brought about, not by calm and deliberate consideration of the merits of the movement, but by mere perusal of the eloquent composition of Baha'u'llah known as *Hidden Words*. Reading this had filled him with enthusiastic fire and caused his bosom to thrill with a feeling that had been hitherto unknown to him. It is men and women like this that the Bahai leaders hold in their toils; those of a saner type may sympathize and lend their support to what they have been led to believe is a humanitarian cause, but they will not remain in the Bahai ranks when they learn the true inwardness of the movement.

Though beautiful rhetoric and *ketman* are the mainstays of Bahaism, two other things brought to our notice in the arguments of its advocates are worthy of mention here: prophecy and marvelous events. Of the former, and in particular of Mr. Kheiralla's efforts to show that the Bible prophesies the advent of Baha'u'llah, little need be said. The remark, so well made, that study of the Apocalypse either finds a man crazy or leaves him so, applies equally well, I apprehend, to any attempt to find prophecies in other parts of the Bible applicable to the present day. As to the prophetic foresight attributed to Baha himself, we have already taken note of the facilities afforded for the production of such alleged wonders by the willingness of the Bahai flock to accept as authentic "Tablets" not precisely the same as those put out before the events they are supposed to have predicted.

Of another type is a Babi prophecy which modern Bahais cite as a proof of the divine guidance of their predecessors. The story goes that Mulla Mohammed Taki, while discussing Babism with his niece, Kurratu'l-Ayn, was "led to curse the Bab and to load him with insults." At this Kurratu'l-Ayn looked into his face, and said to him: "Woe unto thee, for I see thy mouth filling with blood!" The following day, as the mulla was crossing the threshold of the mosque, he was struck upon the mouth by the lance of a Babi who

continued his attack until Mohammed Taki was mortally wounded. In the Orient such an occurrence may pass as proof of the possession of prophetic gifts, but an Occidental jury would be likely to see only a proof that the "prophetess" was accomplice before the fact to a murder. In behalf of Kurratu'l-Ayun let me say that this "prophecy," of which the Babis and Bahais so curiously boast, may perhaps be a figment of the imagination. Under the same head as such "prophecies" comes the rumor spread in the bazaars of Teheran, shortly before the Babi attempt to assassinate the Shah in 1852; a rumor to the effect that the end of the month of Shavval would be fatal to the Persian monarch. In fact the attempt took place on the last day of that month, but its failure prevented the Babi historians from recording here a case of prophetic foresight.

As to the miraculous features of the movement I can only endorse the well-put comment of P. Z. Eaton, formerly a resident of Tabriz, that "Persian flattery, Persian imagination and Persian falsehood easily account for all the wonders mentioned," and the remark of another author well acquainted with Persia that, considering the fact that "the Persians of to-day are ready to believe the most incredible report of miraculous performances by dead or living saints, it is really to the credit of Bahatism that it has so few alleged miracles to offer when it would be so easy to impress a much larger number on the credulity of its votaries."

Bahatism proper indeed makes but a sorry showing as regards miracles in comparison with its progenitor which, according to the accounts of its advocates, has quite a respectable number to its credit; and if we go by the strength of the miraculous element in the claims of a religion, we must needs rank the Bab as a much greater prophet than Baha. Even as a child he predicted the earthquakes that occurred, and frequently told pregnant women the sex of their future offspring. Later in life a locked door would fly open when he merely laid his hand upon it, and a box of sweetmeats, which at the beginning of a journey he consigned to the hands of a hostile guard, proved miraculously inexhaustible, the Bab each day making a liberal distribution of the contents to his companions. During another journey occurred the miracle of his transfiguration; the Bab's companions "looked and saw the form of His Holiness erect in the saddle like the *Alif* of the Divine Unity, while a continuous flow of light hung like a veil round him and rose heavenwards; and this light so encompassed him, forming, as it were, a halo about him, that the eye was dazzled by it, and a state of disquietude and perturbation was produced." At his touch

a pipe cover of base metal was miraculously changed into gold, and a spoonful of sherbet administered by his holy hands cured his first disciple, Huseyn of Bushraweyh, of the palpitation of the heart from which the latter had suffered. When the Bab was at Milan, "an old woman brought a scab-headed child, whose head was so covered with scabs that it was white down to the neck, and entreated His Holiness to heal him. The guards would have forbidden her, but His Holiness prevented them, and called the child to Him. Then He drew a handkerchief over its head and repeated certain words; which He had no sooner done than the child was healed. And in that place about two hundred persons believed and underwent a true and sincere conversion." Invalids at a distance, too, he healed. At Tabriz, when he was taking afternoon tea in a garden, "one Mash-hadi, Ali by name, entered the garden in a state of great trouble, saying, 'Three of my family are sick, and I despair of the lives of two of them, since there is no hope of their being restored to health; but the third, whose recovery appears possible, I pray thee to heal.' 'Be of good cheer,' answered His Holiness, 'all three will get well.' After a while the man departed, but next morning he came to me [says the narrator] saying, 'On arriving at my house I beheld all three sitting up in perfect health, as though they had never been ill.' This man became a sincere believer, and was converted, and set himself to perform humble and devoted service. So likewise others who heard and understood were amazed at the might and spiritual virtues of His Holiness." The very water in which the Bab washed his hands proved a sovereign cure for divers maladies, and at Chikrik the water in which he bathed was regularly sold and brought the price of eighty tumans.

To no such miracles as these can Baha lay claim. When called upon to apply his divine powers to the alleviation of human ills he found it most convenient to devise excuses for not exercising them. Thus a blind man in Teheran sent to the prophet begging that his sight might be restored, but the answer was sent back that it was to the glory of God that he should remain blind! The marvelous events of which the Bahais tell us in connection with their Messiah consist almost exclusively of the divine retribution falling upon the princes and potentates who disregarded his admonitions. In the opinion of the Bahais, the loss of the temporal power by the Pope of Rome and the loss of the throne of France by Napoleon III were alike due to the failure of these rulers to take any notice of epistles addressed to them by Baha'u'llah! Here, though we may be sceptical as to the agency of Baha in bringing about the events,

we can hardly find fault with the results ascribed to him. There is a third case however, in which the exultation of the Bahais over the wonders wrought by their prophet is more open to criticism. Frederick the Third of Germany, when crown prince, made a trip to Syria, and an invitation was extended to him to come to Acre and do homage to Baha'u'llah. But "The Most Great Invitation," as the Bahais term it, was disregarded, and for this (as Mr. Kheiralla puts it in his book, *Beha'u'llah*) the Prince "was judged by the statement that he should never rule his country. He was crowned on his sick-bed and died three months later without having actually ruled Germany a single day."

Nakizis and orthodox Bahais alike glory in this demonstration of the power of their prophet, and point out as a contrast that the blessings of God were liberally showered upon the Czar of Russia whose officials gave protection and a certain amount of support to Bahaim in the Russian provinces bordering on Persia. From all accounts Frederick was a prince of unusually high type and of great promise; his death would seem to have been a very decided loss to humanity. And as to the Russian Czar, it is hardly necessary to characterize the system of government carried on in his name. So, on looking at the matter from a merely worldly point of view, we must regard the divine judgment said to have been brought about by Baha as decidedly discreditable to the Prophet.

So much, then, for the "evidences" of Bahaim, and the causes that have contributed toward the success of its propaganda. There remains but one question to be asked. Has the cult of Baha'u'llah any merits at all? The reply is that merits, minor and relative, it undoubtedly possesses; even its progenitor, Babism, had these. Though in the Babi scriptures "precept bore but a small proportion to dogma, and dogma a still smaller proportion to doxologies and mystical rhapsodies of almost inconceivable incomprehensibility" (as Browne well says); though the positive precepts of the Bab that were not maleficent were "generally quite impractical and not rarely extremely inconvenient," yet there remains a modicum of sense and of sound prescriptions not unworthy of praise. The Bab, for instance, told the people of the Bayan to clean their teeth carefully each day; he told them not to put too heavy a load on a beast of burden; and he admonished parents not to deal harshly with their children. But even with these precepts, just as in the Bab's advocacy of "integrity" in dealing with European merchants, we find the grounds upon which Babi practice is based to be very far from those upon which a rational ethical system can be founded. Thus

the Bab urges that children shall be treated with consideration, not out of any regard for the happiness of the millions of ordinary human children that may exist, but because at some time in the future a great prophet shall arise who will begin his career of incarnation as a child, indistinguishable from other children, and it would be a fearful thing for any one to have to reproach himself for having harshly treated the divine infant.¹⁰ And when from meritorious practices we pass to the absurdities prescribed by the Bab; when we learn that he forbade his followers to wear beards, to drink asses' milk, to eat omelettes or any other dish in the preparation of which eggs were broken before they were cooked, above all when we consider the downright immorality of the Babi ordinances enjoining holy wars and the robbery of all unbelievers, we see that the claim of Babism to our sympathies is exceedingly slight. Of Bahatism, likewise, this is true; the merits of both reside chiefly in the purely negative part of their teachings.

When the Bab abrogated a useless or pernicious ordinance of Mohammed he did well; when Baha in his innovations went still further in removing the trammels of the old tabus he did better. The ill was in the work of construction and conservation; in reiterating some of the worst of the old dogmas and in replacing others by new ones equally bad or worse. Baha, for instance, made a step forward when he lifted the Bab's embargo on beards and permitted his followers to let their hair grow at their will. It was a step backward however when he made more stringent the Babi regulations concerning fasting. It was progressive to remit the obligation to propagate religion by conquering infidel countries and dispossessing of their property those inhabitants blind to the merits of the religion of their conquerors; and we must recognize as a merit of the Bahai revelation that the Prophet bade his people associate with the followers of other religions "with spirituality and fragrance." But when we consider the excommunications of Pope Abbas and his forecast that eventually even kings who disregard the New Covenant shall be "cut off," and recall that a number of Baha's Azalite opponents actually were cut off by the sword or by poison, we realize that the Bahai faith, though it may be a step in advance of the original Babism, is no whit more tolerant than Mohammedanism. For, as has already been mentioned, even sincere and devout believers in the law of the Koran have been

¹⁰ This remark alone is sufficient to confute the partisans of Baha, who contend that the latter is he whose coming the Bab predicted. For when the Bab's ordinance concerning the treatment of children was framed, Baha had already passed out of the stage of childhood.

known to contend that the authorities of a Musulman country ought to extend their protection to all citizens save heretical and renegade Mohammedans, allowing people of every religion to live in peace under Mohammedan rule. And it is giving a very favorable interpretation to Bahai doctrine to allow that it concedes this much: to suppose that excommunication and "cutting off" are processes intended to be applied solely to Nakizis and one-time Bahais that have relapsed into infidelity. History shows indeed that intolerance so attenuated in precept would be likely to count for even less in practice.

Bahatism is, we must conclude, far behind the liberal Protestant Christianity of to-day, and even behind the Mohammedan in its best and most tolerant phase. There are however many Mohammedans and likewise many Christians who have nothing to lose by becoming Bahais. Let the apostles of the cult of Baha'u'llah be content to work in such fields. Let them go to Naples and convert the pious members of the Camorra, or to Sicily and labor with those brigands who are highly scandalized and shocked if a prisoner they are holding for ransom asks for meat on a Friday. Let Bahai missionaries go to "Holy Russia" and seek to wean the Orthodox peasants from their pogroms. But let them keep away from the more civilized portions of humanity and not attempt to drag down to the level of the Asiatic barbarians who originated the Bahai cult men and women with ideals infinitely above this narrow sectarianism.