

future treatment. Strictly speaking, I understand that the best English form is 'B'haa,' but practically I prefer 'Baha.' I also prefer 'Bahai' to 'Bahaist,' but recognize your point and do not object in this instance."

Mr. Dodge feels that a historian or literateur is unable to understand the significance of Behaism. He writes:

"I have been an earnest seeker after the truth for many years, dating far back of my first knowledge of this great Bahai Revelation.

"It appears that about all writers have approached the subject with scarcely an adequate apprehension of the vast inner significance and potential value of the proclamation or manifestation of this movement. It was so with Professor Browne, whom, however, I esteem most highly. I passed a few days with him, and a more delightful gentleman I believe I have never met. He writes charmingly of the cause, approaching the matter as he does, and as most writers and historians thus far have, fromx the view-point of literature-history. Notwithstanding all this, it is apparent that greater justice is being done by current historiaias than was done in former centuries, when, for instance, such noted historians as Tacitus and others denied Christianity and declared it should be abolished!"

THE BAHAI REVELATION.

BY ARTHUR PILLSBURY DODGE.

The interesting article entitled "A New Religion — Babism," by Dr. Paul Carus, the editor, in *The Open Court* of June, 1904, furnishes evidence that the data of information was, as usual, based largely upon the almost universal misconception concerning certain features of this most important subject.

When, however, we consider the fact that Christianity was misapprehended and erroneously represented by the early historians, it is not strange that in this day the reality of the Revelation of Baha 'Ullah should be misconstrued.

Let us start aright. First, the treatment of religion per se is usually very unfortunate. From every source we hear of this, or that religion, as though there were several religions, when, truly speaking, there never was, and never will be, more than one religion ! Let the reader pause and consider before denying this assertion. Religion, in a word, is the truth and knowledge of God. There being One Unchangeable God, His truth must of necessity be and is One and Unchangeable; hence it is impossible that the world has known or can know other than One religion ! But it is true that there have been many revelations of religion.

The statement that the Bahais "Believe in a personal God and positive revelations" is true, though the words are scarcely adequate. The idea of the human relation of parent and child, as a reflection, is a reasonable indication, in miniature if you please, of the far grander relation. The human being is the effect of a cause. The "cause" must be greater, but possess all the qualities manifest in the "effect." The human being is the child of God,

the Father. The offspring of the human being has to be educated from infancy to maturity. Who can say that the race of mankind, in the broadest sense, does not require education from its infancy to a mature condition?

This being the case, is it not natural and logically correct that the world we inhabit is a vast schoolhouse; the scholars, mankind; the principal, God; and the educators or teachers, the prophets or messengers sent by God during the ages of creation still in process ?

In the rise and progress of this great Bahai movement, there was a time when it was properly designated by the word Babism, but that was during the early days of the cause, and prior to 1852. The word Babism was derived from Bab, pronounced as though spelled "Barb" or "Bahb," signifying "gate" or "door."

Mirza Ali Mohammed, signifying Elijah the Prophet, was born at Shiraz, Persia, in the year 1235, A. H., on the first day of Muharram, corresponding to our year 1819, A. D. He arose on the 23d of May, 1844, announcing himself as the one promised by Christ, who would come to herald the appearance of the day of God, and the coming of "Him Whom God shall Manifest" (Baha 'Ullah), to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. He, Ali Mohammed, became known as The Bab, and as such will be referred to hereinafter. It is apparent that Elijah the Prophet, John the Baptist, and The Bab were each, in turn, the recipients and manifestations of the Announcer Spirit to go before the face of the Lord. (See Mai. iv. 5-6; Luke i. y(i-y Rotherham; Matt. xi. 11-14.) Thus it will be seen that The Bab was the mere herald or precursor of the dawning of this great revelation, bearing precisely the same relation to Baha 'Ullah as John the Baptist bore to Jesus Christ 1900 years ago.

Comparatively few fully understand that the Bab literally fulfilled Biblical prophecy, nor do many seem to recognize the logical sequence and inseparableness of all the great prophetic revelations. He came to prepare the way for the coming of the "Great and dreadful day of the Lord" on earth and his appearance was rapidly followed by tens of thousands of believers, drawn from all parts of Persia and elsewhere. The mission of The Bab was concluded on the ninth day of July, A. D., 1850, when he suffered martyrdom, being shot by a company of soldiers. His work was accomplished in a little less than seven years with remarkable humility, patience, love, heroism, and fortitude. The manner of his being murdered was prophesied twelve hundred years before, and prior to the invention of guns and gunpowder ! The prophecy was by Mohammed and to the effect that The Bab (Imam Mahdi) would be executed by a pestle issuing forth from a mortar with a loud noise ! Considering that this prophecy was made several centuries before the invention of firearms, it was most remarkable.

THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE BAB AND BAHA "ULLAH.

It is true that Subh-i-Ezel, now an exile on the island of Cyprus, was the duly authorized head of the Babis for the short period of time from the martyrdom of The Bab to the appearance and announcement of Baha 'Ullah in 1852. Subh-i-Ezel was a half brother of Baha 'Ullah and was born at Nur, in Mazandaran, Persia.

Baha 'Ullah and The Bab never met. While they were confined in separate prisons, however, they were in communication with each other through the mediumship of Mirza Abdul Karim, known as Mirza Ahmad, the amanuensis of The Bab, and in this way it was arranged that Subh-i-Ezel should be appointed as the temporary successor of The Bab to care for the "friends."

This was done because the time was not then ripe for the Manifestation to declare Himself.

The Bab declared that "He Whom God shall Manifest" was upon the earth and would declare Himself and enter upon His great mission at the proper time, and that this event would occur within nineteen years. In his great work, the Beyan, originally regarded as the Babi Bible, The Bab declared that under no circumstances was Subh-i-Ezel to be regarded as the Great One, his mission being only a temporary one and as that of a "blind" and protection of the true One. In the Beyan it is also stated that all of the writings and utterances of its author would not equal in importance one verse of Him that was to come after, that is, "He Whom God shall Manifest."

BAHA 'ULLAH, THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD.

The father of Baha 'Ullah, of a house of Persian statesmen, was born in Nur, near Teheran. His illustrious son, Mirza Huseyn Ali, later to be known, in the days of The Bab, as Baha 'Ullah, signifying "The Splendor of God," was born at Teheran, Persia, on November 12, 1817. Before His declaration of His mission He was known as one of the humblest followers of The Bab.

The Bab was uneducated of the world, and Baha 'Ullah was not accounted a learned man, but he was wealthy, possessing an estate valued at more than a million dollars.

In 1852 Bahri 'Ullah and His family and the believers were exiled as prisoners to Baghdad, His property first being confiscated by the Persian government. On what ground? Simply this: that His pure Godly life and utterances were too marked in contrast with and offensive to the mullahs or priests and their practices.

But let us quote a few of His own words from A Traveller's Narrative By Edward G. Browne, M. A., M. B.:

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations yet they, accusing us of stirring up strife, deem us worthy of bondage and banishment That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled — what harm is there in this?... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the "Most Great Peace" shall come. ...Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold?. ...Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankindThese strifes and this bloodshed

and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family. ... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this that he loves his kind. ... "

On his arrival at Baghdad in 1852 Baha 'Ullah first made a partial declaration to the believers only, of His mission. Again at Baghdad, in the eleventh or twelfth year of His remaining there. He made the announcement, this time to the believers fully. The second announcement was made in the garden of Najib Pasha, where He tarried about twelve days, just before departing for Constantinople. On His declaration as "He Whom God shall Manifest" the great majority of the believers at once acknowledged Him, notwithstanding the fact that Subli-i-Ezel had become selfishly and jealously ambitious, seeking with desperation to maintain his claim that he was the one prophesied of to come. Subh-i-Ezel, however, only succeeded in gathering around his standard a comparatively small number of followers, but they gradually became enlightened and left him. At the present time he has but a mere handful of misguided devotees.

When Baha 'Ullah's possessions were confiscated by the Persian government He is reported to have raised His hands and exclaimed: "Praise be to God! I am now free!" It is a noteworthy fact that when Baha 'Ullah took up His Divine Mission there were many times "Ten Thousand Saints or Angels," meaning true and faithful believers, on earth, ready to receive and follow Him. This was fulfilment of the passages in Deut. xxxiii. 2, Isaiah ix. 6-7; Dan. vii. 18, Matt. xxv. 31. i Tim. iii. 16, Rev. i. 20, and other prophesies.

The believers in the Orient usually refer to Baha 'Ullah as "The Blessed Perfection."

With His party He remained in Baghdad about twelve years. They were then taken to Constantinople, and from thence to Adrianople, and shortly afterwards to the ancient prison city of Acca (Acre, Akka, Accho, etc.), jutting out into "the tideless sea" at the base of Carmel, the famous "Mountain of God" in Northern Palestine. The evil design since the exile was to rid the world of these saintly, peaceful characters, and in this last move it was the confident belief of the wicked captors that the holy people would suffer speedy death from contact with this old pestilential place, of which it was an old saying, "the foulness was so great that if a bird flew over the city it would fall to earth dead."

The officials were disappointed, for, ever since this imprisonment, conditions have steadily improved, not only in Akka, but in all that region. In this lapse of time it is readily seen that the long suffering holy land desolation has ended, and the promised new order of things in actual restoration is in process.

From this New Holy City in 1867-9 there went forth from Baha 'Ullah those famous "Letters to the Kings" inviting them to a Spiritual Banquet. This was fulfilling the Christ parable of the Great Supper, and though the Manifestation and followers were taken to Akka wholly on the motion of the enemies of God's Cause, the latter were thereby unwittingly fulfilling prophecy of many

centuries !

Governors, princes, and other notables learned to humbly bow before Baha 'Ullah, often waiting patiently for an audience.

Some might ask why did He submit to such indignities, persecutions, and sufferings? He was no more obliged to do so than was Jesus Christ compelled to endure outrage, persecution, torture, and crucifixion; save that in both instances these things had to be done, not only to teach the world lessons of humility, patience, meekness, love, courage, and obedience, but that The God Plan should be fulfilled to the very letter as prophesied !

From the foregoing it is clearly erroneous to say: "This Mirza Huseyn AH (Baha 'Ullah) suddenly came to the conclusion during his stay at Adrianople that he himself was Baha 'Ullah, 'The Glory of God.' " It will be remembered that the announcement was made before Adrianople, or even Constantinople, was reached.

The Mission of this saintly Baha 'Ullah lasted forty years, until His departure on May 28, 1892. He appointed His eldest son, Abbas Effendi, who is now known as Abdul Baha Abbas, to be His successor in charge of the spiritual Kingdom of God on earth.

ABDUL BAHHA ABBAS.

This beautiful, saintly soul, now residing in Akka, Syria, a prisoner through the injustice and fanaticism of the Oriental "divines," in much the same way as was Jesus Christ in his time, is setting the world an example in magnificent love, patience, humility, power, and grandeur of life without a parallel.

Abdul Baha Abbas was born in Teheran, Persia, on May 23, 1844, the very day of the announcement by the Bab of his mission. In this circumstance the future will recognize a remarkable significance.

Abdul Baha signifies "Servant of God," and this he truly is, and is known by his "works." He lives the life, utters the teachings, and is doing the work of the Father where Christ left off nineteen hundred years ago. He is the servant of mankind as well as the servant of God. He was recognized as "The Greatest Branch" by Baha Ullah, who appointed him The Center of The Covenant of God's Religion on Earth; the Commentator of the Books and the one whom all should look up to, emulate and obey in the service of the Kingdom. All of these and other names and titles were given to Abdul Baha. He claims literally nothing for himself save being the humble servant of all. In him is fulfilled the Biblical definition of the true minister — the servant of all, particularly the needy.

The devotion of Abdul Baha to Baha 'Ullah, the Manifestation of God, the Father, is sublimely indicated in the following few words from his pen: "I swear by the One God, and there is but one, that, had each of us one hundred mouths, and each mouth one hundred tongues, we could not praise God as He should be praised for the great blessing and privilege of being on earth in these days, the greatest days in all the history of the ages. But the world

does not realize it. You must not consider the present day, for the blessings are not yet manifest. In the days of Christ, He was despised, cursed and rejected, but after 1900 years people come from half around the world to visit some stones upon which tradition says He once sat ! How much greater will these days be when they are once known !"

Abdul Baha is known and often spoken of as "The Master." To enter his presence is to love him and desire to follow his example — providing we really love God. While Baha 'Ullah is the promised "Spirit of Truth," who was to come and furnish the key of explanation of all mysteries in revealed utterances, The Master is giving forth the explanations to the world in lessons of incomparable beauty and value. By carefully reading Daniel xii, Revelation v, Isaiah ix. 6-7 and xxxv, and the Christ parable of the Lord and the vineyard in connection with this article, some idea may be had of the importance of these things.

The year 1844. will be recognized in all time to come as of vast importance. Then was begun the mission of The Bab; then Abdul Baha, the Master, was born, and this year dates the beginning of the remarkable "New Heaven and new earth," the Divine promise of the Christ or Word of God manifested through Saint John, and recorded in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. Should any one feel disposed to make light of this matter, such are advised to pause and reflect. It is a most serious matter, the importance of which to all in the world was never before equaled. Regarding the new earth, many changes have occurred within the past sixty years; changes incident to the marking of a new era.

On the morning of May 24, 18⁴⁴. Professor Morse took his seat at the telegraphic instrument placed in the Supreme Court room in the Capitol. Many of the chief officers of the Government were present. The Professor pressed the key of the instrument with his finger. In an instant this message was flashed along the wire to Baltimore and back, a distance of eighty miles: "What hath God wrought!" (Numbers xxiii. 23.- — Montgomery.) This remarkable incident took place a few hours after the birth of Abdul Baha and the proclamation by The Bab.

In 1843 Professor Morse prophesied the certainty of telegraphic communication across the Atlantic Ocean. This, as well as many other achievements, discoveries, and inventions, has been realized, marking complete revolution in methods of communication, locomotion, in the manner of living generally, etc., all tending to prove the fact of our now having a "New Earth."

Regarding the "New Heaven" it is likewise true that such is rapidly becoming a reality, for the truth of religion is already supplanting the colossal error of past superstition and imagination. Heaven indicates the religion or truth of God. Christ said, "Behold, the Kingdom of God is within you!" (Luke xvii 21.)

Another great work of importance was inaugurated in 1844, when Layard commenced explorations which have, from that time to the present, revealed in antique remains such wonderful corroborative proof of Biblical record.

There are many mistaken ideas concerning the Revelation of Baha and of other

Revelations. While true, of course, it is not sufficient to state that Baháism is the reformation of Mohammedanism. All Revelation has been successively greater in extent of promulgation than was formerly manifested. Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, each prophesied of and led up to the Revelation of Baha 'Ullah for the reformation of the entire world. All former manifestations were much less in broadness of scope and effectiveness, and quite naturally when we grasp, for instance the marvellous significance of the parabolic utterances of Jesus Christ. Although this last revelation is the greatest, all the prior revelations, as has been truly said, are practically the same — as far as they go. The essence of all is, "Love the good God and be good."

The Bahai Revelation, as before stated, is the grand culmination, the sum total of all that has gone before. It is the sublime climax of all that Christ stood for. It is the veritable inauguration of the "Day of Most Great Peace," realizing the "Unity and solidarity of mankind." It is the first in the world history to unite the people of every race, of every nation, into one belief and faith, one brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of the One God.

How do we know this? Because, first: The Manifestation has so declared, and in every time of Revelation the word of the prophet or messenger has invariably been found to be the greatest power of truth and authority in the world. Second: The character of the life, works, and teachings of Baha 'Ullah and Abdul Baha proclaim their divine origin and authority Third: "Ye shall be known by your works," and the irrefutable fact is that there are now more than nine millions of united believers gathered from Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, Mohammedans, and other faiths, presenting to the world a spectacle as new as grand.

At each time respectively when Moses, Christ, and Mohammed appeared, the vast majority of mankind were doubters and deniers, but from this distant view-point it is readily seen that the prophets were right and the world wrong. The people could not then see it, but we now realize that those and other prophets or messengers carried with them the stamp of genuineness, and represented the Invincible Truth and Power of God. Shall we profit by the blunders of former ages?

All great epoch-making teachings have been departed from as time has elapsed. If Mohammedanism is, as observed, wholly unlike the precepts enunciated by its founder, can anything better be said respecting "Christianity" in its present deplorable state of departure from the Christ standard? The Jews erred greatly in denying Christ, but have not the Christians offended even more seriously in rejecting a later prophet — Mohammed, whom Christ foretold? By what right do the descendants of certain races ascribe to themselves the lordship of the earth, ignoring the fact that all human beings, in every part of the world, are children of One Father? By what right have the creatures of God decided whom of His teachers to accept and whom to reject?

"Do you know why We created you from one clay? That no one should glorify

himself over the other. Always be mindful of how you were created, for as We created you from one substance, you must be as one soul, walking on the same feet, eating with one mouth, and living in one land, that you may be able to show from your being and your deeds and actions the signs of the unity and the essence of abstraction...." (Baha 'Ullah.)

At the present time there are several false Christs in the world— people who are vain or misguided enough to claim the divine station of Messiahship. It is understood that there are six or seven of these claimants, and it is selfevident that if any one of them were genuine, the others must be false.

The significant point of the matter, however, is this: that no one can put forth such a claim without at the same time and thereby proclaiming himself an impostor! This is apparent from the words of Christ, for He said He would come like a thief in the night (Rev. xvi. 15), that is to say, in a manner unexpected and surprising. He also declared: "Beware of false prophets which come to you in slieep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them hy their fruits." (Matt. vii. 15-16.) Read His warning (Matt, xxiv) against those who would falsely come in His Name.

When Christ propounded this question to his disciples: "But whom do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the of the living God !" Jesus Christ answered: "Blessed art thou, Simon BarJona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 16.)

The world now has before it, nearly twenty centuries after Christ, the magnificent spectacle of one residing in the New Holy City, who claims absolutely nothing for himself other than being the humble servant of God and of humanity, but who is doing the works and living that sort of life that has alone impelled millions of people of every nation, religious faith, and belief of the world to arise and declare, as did Peter of old, "Thou art Christ (the Word or Spirit of Truth from God), the Son of the living God!"

While most people who go into the presence of Abdul Baha, the Master, feel in their hearts the sentiments Peter expressed, still there are some who do not, but this is certain that all, so far as the knowledge of the writer extends, admit that He continually urges everybody to love and serve God and all mankind, and that he, himself, lives a humble, merciful, sacrificing, loving serving life of incomparable devotion.

In conclusion let us quote a few of his words: "I have sacrificed my soul, spirit, life, mention, honor, attributes, my comfort and my name in the Path of God, and I have chosen no dignity or possession save the obedience of Baha, and no name or title save Abdul Baha — servant of Baha. Therefore be content with this and follow me in my words and wishes, because in so doing the Blessed Trees of life, springing up in the Paradise of God, will grow and become verdant.

"If you desire to speak in praise, praise the beauty of El Abha; if you desire

to commend, commend the Name of your Supreme Lord; for if you exalt the 'Tree' you also exalt the 'Branch'! If you mention the sea you also mention its gulfs and bays (for they belong to it), therefore mention the Beauty of Abha!" (Part of a Tablet to an American believer from Abdul Baha Abbas.)

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