



further the succession which began with Abraham, and destined to be followed by other Revelations: and he made his appeal to all people, and not simply to Moslems. The next step was the conversion to Bahá'ísm of a Syrian called Ibrahim George Khayru'llah, who had learnt English, and had married an English wife. In 1892 he went to the so-called Parliament of Religions at Chicago, and lectured there, attracting a good deal of attention. This has led to the development of a community of Bahá'ís in America, numbering some thousands, and to the erection of a huge Bahá'í temple at Evanston, Minnesota.

The Bahá'ís now regard themselves as members of a new religion, and not as Moslems. They possess an extensive sacred literature, some of it composed by Mirza 'Ali Muhammad, and some of it by Mirza Yahya, but most of it by Baha'ullah, in the form of epistles, which are regarded by Bahá'ís as of the nature of verbal revelations, and are extremely numerous. The followers of Baha'ullah have split into two sects, the larger being led by Abdu'l Baha, and the smaller by his brother, Muhammad Ali. There is another large temple at Haifa.

Bahá'ísm, apart from its not very satisfactory early history, possesses some teachings which are salutary, even though not original.

It is said to be dwindling in the Middle East, and shows no sign of being able to supersede Christianity as a universal religion. Indeed an impartial observer in 1931 declared that the conversion of a Moslem to Bahá'ísm, so far from being an advance, was actually a step on the road to materialism, and that Bahá'ísm as a religion did not stand very high. The idea of an hereditary religious leader, though common

[page 312]

enough in the Middle East, does not seem generally attractive. In general, the teaching seems to be a kind of Asian Unitarianism, with a strong emphasis upon world-peace. There seems to be a vigorous effort at the present time, probably subsidized from America, to further the claims of Bahá'ísm, and the number of its adherents is said to be on the increase.

Note 1. The following quotation from the recent work of Pere Danielou, *The Salvation of the Nations*, may serve well to end this section: One can stifle from lack of prayer just as one can stifle from lack of air. Our Western world in its restless and activistic life has completely lost this sense of prayer. That is why there are so many mentally ill and eccentric in our midst: people don't pray enough. There is a well of silence within themselves to which they have no access, a domain of peace they know not how to enter. Islam has held on to these things.

Note 2. A valuable treatise called *The Qur'an as Scripture* was composed in 1952 by Arthur Jeffery, Professor of Semitic Languages at Columbia University, New York. It is not only an excellent

critical account of the Qur'an in particular, but contains some valuable remarks upon sacred books in general.

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