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ERRATA

The descriptions of Sections VIII and XI should stand as given in the Table of Contents on the preceding page, and not as in their respective titles on pp. 309 and 341.

INTRODUCTION

Nearly thirty years have elapsed since I first established direct relations with the Bábís in Persia, having already become deeply interested in their history and doctrines through the lively and graphic narrative of the Comte de Gobineau in his classical work *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*. Subsequently (in the spring of 1890) I visited Mírzá Yahyá Subhi-i-Azal ("The Dawn of Eternity") and Mírzá Husayn `Alí Bahá'u'lláh ("the Splendour of God"), the respective heads of the two rival parties into which the original community had split, at Famagusta in Cyprus and at `Akká (St Jean d'Acre) in Syria; and from that time until

now I have maintained more or less continuous relations with both parties through various channels. Fresh and fuller materials for the study of Bábí history and doctrine have continued to flow into my hands through these channels, until, apart from what I had utilized fully or in part in previous publications,¹ a considerable

¹ The more important of these publications, arranged in chronological order, are as follows. (1) *The Bábís of Persia: 1. Sketch of their History and Personal Experiences amongst them: ii. Their Literature and Doctrines* (J.R.A.S., Vol. xxi, 1889). (2) *A Traveller's Narrative etc., Persian text and English translation*, 2 vols. (Camb. Univ. Press, 1891). (3) *Some Remarks on the Bábí Text* edited by Baron V. Rosen (J.R.A.S., Vol. xxiv, 1892). (4) *Catalogue and Description of 27 Bábí Manuscripts* (J.R.A.S., Vol. xxiv, 1892). (5) *A Year amongst*

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amount of new and unpublished matter had accumulated in my hands. Much of this matter, consisting of manuscript and printed documents in various Eastern and Western languages, could only be interpreted in connection with the correspondence relating to it, and would inevitably, I felt, be lost if I did not myself endeavour to record it in an intelligible form, capable of being used by future students of this subject. Hence the origin of this book, which, if somewhat lacking in coherence and uniformity, will, I believe, be of value to anyone who shall in the future desire to study more profoundly a movement which, even if its practical and political importance should prove to be less than I had once thought, will always be profoundly interesting to students of Comparative Religion and the history of religious Evolution.

The book, in the form which it has finally assumed, comprises eleven more or less independent sections, about each of which something must be said.

Section I (pp. 3—112) is a translation into English of a short historical and biographical sketch of the Bábí movement, of the life of Bahá'u'lláh, of the further schism which succeeded his death, and of the Bahá'í propaganda in America, written in Arabic by Mírzá Muhammad Jawád of Qazwín, by whom the original, and, I believe, unpublished manuscript was transmitted to me. I was not personally

the Persians (A. and C. Black, 1893). (6) The Ta'rikh-i-Jadíd or New History of...the Báb, translation (Camb. Univ. Press, 1893). (7) Personal Reminiscences of the Bábí Insurrection at Zanján in 1850, translated from the Persian (J.R.A.S., Vol. xxix, 1897). (8) The Kitáb-i-Nuqtatu'l-Káf, being the earliest history of the Bábís, compiled by Hájjí Mírzá Jání of Káshán: Persian text with Introduction in English (E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, Vol. xv, 1910). Also articles on Bábís in the Supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica and Hastings' Dictionary of Religions.

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acquainted with the author, but his son Mírzá Ghulámu'lláh, paid me a visit of several days at Cambridge in January, 1901, on his way to the United States. Both belong to that section of the Bahá'ís, called by themselves "Unitarians" (Ahlu't-Tawhíd, Muwahhidún) and by their opponents "Covenant-breakers" (Náqizún), who reject the claims of `Abbás Efendi `Abdu'l-Bahá (whom the majority of the Bahá'ís recognize as their head) and follow his half-brother, Mírzá Muhammad `Alí. From incidental remarks in the narrative we learn that the author, Mírza Muhammad Jawád, was at Baghdád (p.15) about 1862 or a little earlier, shortly before the removal of the leading Bábís thence to Adrianople; that he was with them at Adrianople (pp.25, 27, 28) for rather more than a year before Bahá'u'lláh was transferred thence to `Akká in August, 1868; that he was Bahá'u'lláh's fellow-passenger on the steamer which conveyed him from Gallipoli to Hayfá (p.32); that he was at `Akká in January, 1872 when Sayyid Muhammad of Isfahán and the other Azalís were assassinated (pp.54-5) and also at the time of, or soon after, Bahá'u'lláh's death on May 28, 1892, when he was one of the nine Companions chosen by `Abbás Efendi to hear the reading of the "Testament" or "Covenant," (p.75). We also learn (pp.35-6) that he was one of several Bábís arrested at Tabríz about the end of 1866 or beginning of 1867, when, more fortunate than some of his companions, he escaped with a fine. This is the only mention he makes of being in Persia, and it is probable that from this date onwards he was always with Bahá'u'lláh, first at Adrianople and then at `Akká, where, so far as I know, he is still living, and where his son Mírzá Ghulámu'lláh was born and brought up. Since the entry of Turkey into the European War in November, 1914, it has, of course, been impossible to communicate with `Akká, or to obtain news from thence.

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Mírzá Jawád's narrative is valuable on account of the numerous dates which it gives, and because it comes down to so late a date as March, 1908

(p.90), while Nabíl's chronological poem (see p.357) stops short at the end of 1869.

The value of his account of the propaganda carried on in the United States of America by Dr. I. G.

Khayru'lláh has been somewhat discounted by this gentleman's recent publication of his

autobiography in his book *O Christians! why do ye believe not in Christ?* (p. 181),

which reached me only after this portion of my book was already in type.

Section II (pp.115-171) deals more fully with the Bahá'í

propaganda carried on in America since 1893 by Dr. I. G. Khayru'lláh and his converts

with remarkable success. Of the methods employed an illuminating account (pp.116—142) is given by an American lady of enquiring mind who attended the classes

of instruction in a sympathetic but critical spirit. Her notes show very clearly the adaptation

of the Bahá'í doctrine to its new environment in a manner which can hardly fail

to remind the Orientalist of the old Isma`ilí propaganda, still further recalled by the

form of allegiance (p.121) which the neophyte is obliged to sign before he is fully initiated into

the details of the new doctrine. Extracts from the *American Press* in the years 1902—4

are cited to show how much attention, and even in some quarters alarm, was aroused by the

success of the new doctrines. Khayru'lláh's narrative (pp.154—5) of the threats

addressed to him on account of his apostasy from `Abbás Efendi `Abdu'l-Bahá by

Mírzá Hasani-i-Khurásáni, and the history of the sad fate

of Mírzá Yahyá at Jeddah (pp.156—167) read like extracts

from the history of the Assassins of Alamút and "the Old Man of the Mountain."

Section III (pp.175—243) contains a bibliography

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of everything written by or about the Bábís and Bahá'ís in eastern or western languages which has come under my notice since the publication of the bibliography

in Vol. II of my *Traveller's Narrative* in 1891, and of my *Catalogue* and

Description of

27 Bábí Manuscripts in the J.R.A.S. for 1892. This supplementary bibliography contains descriptions of 49 printed works in European languages (English, French, German and Russian), 18 printed and lithographed works in Arabic and Persian, and between 30 and 40 Bábí, Azalí and Bahá'í books which exist only in manuscript. Nearly all of these are in my own library, and in many cases were presented to me by their authors or by kind friends who knew of the interest I felt in the subject, but in the case of the manuscripts I have included brief descriptions of a number of books (mostly obtained from Cyprus through the late Mr Claude Delaval Cobham, for whom they were copied by Subh-i-Azal's son Rizwán `Alí, alias "Constantine the Persian") belonging to the British Museum, which were examined and described for me by my friend and former colleague Dr Ahmad Khán. For several rare manuscript works I am indebted to an old Bábí scribe of Isfahán, resident at Tihrán, with whom I was put in communication by Dr Sa`id Khán of Hamadán, who, though coming of a family of mullás, is a fervent Christian, while preserving in true Persian fashion a keen interest in other religious beliefs. This old scribe, a follower of Subhi-i-Azal, seems to have been in close touch with many Bábís in all parts of Persia, and on several occasions when persecutions threatened or broke out to have been entrusted by them with the custody of books which they feared to keep in their own houses, and which in some cases they failed to reclaim, so that he had access to a large number of rare Bábí works, any of which he was willing to copy for me at a very moderate charge.

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Section IV (pp.247—264) contains the text and translation, with photographic fac-similes, of three original Persian documents connected with the examination and condemnation of the Báb for heresy, one of which appears to show that he formally abjured all his claims, and begged for mercy and forgiveness. These are followed by two English documents penned by the late Dr Cormick of Tabríz, one of which gives the impression produced on him by the Báb, whom he was called into see professionally. I do

not know of any other European who saw and conversed with the Báb, or, if such there were, who has recorded his impressions.

Section V (pp.267—271) contains a moving account by an Austrian officer, Captain von Goumoens, who was in the service of Násiru'd-Dín Sháh in the summer of 1852, of the horrible cruelties inflicted on the Bábís in the great persecution of that period which resulted from the attempt by three Bábís on the Sháh's life; cruelties so revolting that he felt himself unable to continue any longer in the service of a ruler who sanctioned them.

Section VI (pp.275—287) contains the fac-similes, texts and translations of two Persian State papers bearing on the negotiations between the Persian and Turkish Governments as to the removal of the Bábí leaders from Baghdád to a part of the Ottoman Empire more remote from the Persian frontier. These documents were kindly communicated to me by M. A.-L.-M. Nicolas, a French diplomatist who has devoted much attention to the history and doctrine of the Bábís, and whose father is well known to Persian students as the first to introduce to Europe the now celebrated quatrains of `Umar-i-Khayyám.

Section VII (pp.291—308) contains accounts received at the time from various correspondents as to the persecutions of Bábís at Isfahán and the neighbouring villages of Si-dih

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and Najafábád in 1888—9, and at Yazd in May, 1891. For these accounts I am indebted to the late Dr Robert Bruce, Mr Sidney Churchill, Mr (now Sir) Walter Townley, `Abbás Efendi `Abdu'l-Bahá, his brother Mírzá Badî u'lláh, and two other Bahá'ís, one actually resident at Yazd at the time of the persecution. To another horrible persecution of Bábís in the same town in the summer of 1903 some references will be found in the Rev. Napier Malcolm's illuminating work *Five Years in a Persian Town* (pp.155—6, 186 etc.).

Section VIII (pp.311—315) contains the translation of an account of the death and burial of Mírzá Yahyá Subh-i-Azal on Monday, April 29, 1912, written in Persian by his son Rizwán `Alí alias "Constantine the Persian," and also some further information on matters connected with the succession kindly furnished to me by Mr H. C. Lukach, to whom I am further indebted for permission to reproduce here two photographs of the funeral which he

published in his book *The Fringe of the East*; for which permission I desire to express my sincere gratitude both to him and his publishers, Messrs Macmillan.

Section IX (pp.319—322) contains a list of the descendants of Mírzá Buzurg of Núr in Mázandarán, the father of both Bahá'u'lláh and Subhi-i-Azal, of which the original Persian, drawn up by a younger member of the family, was sent to me by the Bábí scribe already mentioned (p.xi supra). This is followed by lists of the children of Bahá'u'lláh and Subh-i-Azal compiled from other trustworthy sources.

Section X (pp.325—339) contains a condensed summary in English of a portion of the polemical work *Ihqáqu'l-Haqq* dealing with the principal doctrines of the Bábís and Bahá'ís deemed heretical by the Shî'a Muhammadans. I have sometimes been reproached with having written so much more about the history of the Bábís than about their doctrines,

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though I hope that the Introduction to my edition of Hájji Mírzá Jání's *Nuqtatu'l-Káf* has in some degree removed this reproach. But the fact is that, though the synthesis may be original, almost every single doctrine held by the Bábís and Bahá'ís (and their doctrine, even on such important matters as the Future Life, is by no means fixed and uniform) was previously held and elaborated by one or another of the earlier cognate sects grouped together under the general title of Ghulát, whereof the Isma`ilís are the most notable representative. The *Ihqáqu'l-Haqq*, which shows a much better knowledge of the opinions which it aspires to refute than most polemical works directed against the Bábís, summarizes in a convenient form the most salient points of doctrine in which the Bábís differ from the Shî'a Muhammadans.

Section XI (pp.343—358), which concludes the volume, contains the texts, accompanied in some cases by translations, of one unpublished and two already published poems by Qurratu'l-`Ayn and of two poems by Nabíl of Zarand. I should like to have enlarged this section by the addition of other Bábí poems in my possession, especially of the *Qasída-i-Alifiyya* of Mírzá Aslam of Núr (see pp.228—9), but the book had already considerably exceeded the limits which I had assigned to it, and I regretfully postponed their publication to

some future
occasion.

As regards the illustrations, the originals from which they are taken have in several cases been in my possession for many years, but I desire here to express my thanks to Dr Ignaz Goldziher for the two American newspapers partly reproduced on the plates facing pp.151 and 152; to M. Hippolyte Dreyfus for the three documents (A., B., and B1.) bearing on the

1 Vol. xv of the E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series.

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examination of the Báb; to M. A.-L.-M. Nicolas for the two Persian State papers dealing with the expulsion of the Bábís from Baghdád; to Mr H. C. Lukach and his publishers Messrs Macmillan for their kind permission to reproduce the two illustrations mentioned above (p. xiii), and to my old friend and colleague Mr Ellis H. Minns, who has given me valuable help in connection with the Russian books mentioned in the bibliography.

In conclusion I desire to add a few words as to what I conceive to be the special interest and importance of the study of the Bábí and Bahá'í movements. This interest is in the main threefold, to wit, political, ethical and historical, and I shall arrange what I have to say under these three headings.

1. Political interest.

The original Bábís who fought so desperately against the Persian Government at Shaykh Tabarsí, Zanján, Nayríz and elsewhere in 1848—50 aimed at a Bábí theocracy and a reign of the saints on earth; they were irreconcilably hostile to the existing government and Royal Family, and were only interested for the most part in the triumph of their faith, not in any projects of social or political reform.

Of their attitude during the Baghdád and Adrianople periods (1852—63 and 1863—68) we know little, and the anxiety of the Persian Foreign Office as to their activities in the former place is sufficiently explained by fear of the propaganda which they were so easily able to carry on amongst the innumerable Persians who

passed through it on their way to and from the Holy Shrines of Najaf and Karbalá.

After the schism and the banishment of Subhi-i-Azal to Famagusta in Cyprus, and of Bahá'u'lláh to `Akká in Syria,

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we have to distinguish between the activities of the two rival parties. The Azalís, from the first a minority, were much more cut off from external activity than the Bahá'ís. They represented what may be called the conservative party, and experience shows that with such religious bodies as the Bábís fresh manifestations of activity and developments of doctrine are essential to maintain and increase their vitality. The same phenomenon was witnessed again in the further schism which took place after the death of Bahá'u'lláh in 1892; the conservative tendencies represented by Muhammad `Ali could not hold their own against the innovations of his more able and energetic half-brother `Abbás Efendi `Abdu'l-Bahá, who since the beginning of this century commands the allegiance of the vast majority of the Bahá'ís both in the East and in the West.

That the Bahá'ís constituted a great potential political force in Persia when I was there in 1887—8 was to me self-evident. Their actual numbers were considerable (Lord Curzon estimated them at the time he wrote¹ at nearer a million than half a million souls), their intelligence and social position were above the average, they were particularly well represented in the postal and telegraph services, they were well disciplined and accustomed to yield a ready devotion and obedience to their spiritual leaders, and their attitude towards the secular and ecclesiastical rulers of Persia was hostile or at least indifferent. Any Power which, by conciliating their supreme Pontiff at `Akká, could have made use of this organization in Persia might have established an enormous influence in that country, and though the valuable researches of the late Baron Victor Rosen and Captain Tumanskiy were no doubt chiefly inspired by scientific curiosity, there may have been, at any rate in the

¹ Persia (London, 1892), Vol. i, p.499.

case of the latter gentleman, some *arrière-pensée* of a political character. At any rate the Russian Government showed a good deal of civility to the

Bahá'ís¹ of `Ishqabad (Askabad), where they allowed or encouraged them to build a

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, or place of worship, which was, I believe, the first of its kind ever erected; and when a leading Bahá'í was murdered there by fanatics from Mashhad, the Russian authorities condemned the assassins to death, though subsequently,

at the intercession of the Bahá'ís, their sentence was commuted to hard labour in

the Siberian mines. That Bahá'u'lláh was not insensible to these amenities is clearly apparent from two letters filled with praises of the Russian Government which he

addressed to his followers shortly afterwards, and which were published by Baron Rosen,

together with an account of the circumstances above referred to, in Vol. vi of the Collections

Scientifiques². If the statement (on p. 11 *infra*) that Colonel (afterwards Sir) Arnold

Burrows Kembell, when British Consul-General at Baghdád about 1859, offered British

protection to Bahá'u'lláh be true, this would account for the laudatory tone adopted by him in the epistle which he addressed to Queen Victoria. None of the other rulers

addressed in the "Epistles to the Kings" come off so well, and for Napoleon III in particular

disaster is clearly foretold. Germany fares no better than France, being thus apostrophized in

the Kitáb-i-Aqdas:

"O banks of the river Rhine, we have seen you drenched in gore for that the swords of the foes are drawn against you;

¹ Already in 1852 the Russian Minister at Tihrán had intervened in Bahá'u'lláh's favour (see pp.6—7 *infra*), for which intervention Bahá'u'lláh expresses his gratitude in the Epistle to the Tsar of

Russia (J.R.A.S. for 1889, p.969).

² See also my Remarks on these texts in the J.R.A.S. for 1892, pp. 318-321.

and you shall have another turn! And we hear the wail of Berlin, although it be to-day in conspicuous glory!"¹

The occasion of this outburst, according to Roemer², was the omission of the then Crown-Prince of Prussia Friedrich Wilhelm to pay his respects to Bahá'u'lláh when he visited Palestine in the autumn of 1869. In the main, however, Bahá'u'lláh wisely avoided any political entanglements, and indeed sought rather to conciliate the Sháh and the Persian government, and to represent such persecutions of his followers as took place in Persia as the work of fanatical theologians whom the government were unable to restrain. The Azalís, on the other hand, preserved the old Bábí tradition of unconquerable hostility to the Persian throne and government.

In the Persian Constitutional or National Movement dating from the end of 1905 the Azalís and Bahá'ís were, as usual, in opposite camps. Officially `Abbás Efendi `Abdu'l-Bahá commanded his followers to abstain entirely from politics, while in private he compared the demand of the Persians for parliamentary government to that of unweaned babes for strong meat. Some of the leading Bahá'ís in Tihrán, however, were accused, whether justly or not, of actually favouring the reaction³. In any case their theocratic and international tendencies can hardly have inspired them with any very active sympathy with the Persian Revolution. The Azalís, on the other hand, though they cannot be said to have any collective policy, as individuals took a very prominent part in the National Movement even before the Revolution, and such men as Hájjí Shaykh Ahmad

1 See J.R.A.S. for 1889, p. 977.

2 Die Babi-Beha'i (Potsdam, 1911), p. 108.

3 See Roemer, op. cit. pp.153-8, and my Persian Revolution, pp.424—9.

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"Rúhi" of Kirmán, son-in-law to Subh-i-Azal, and his friend and fellow-townsmen Mírzá Aqá Khán, both of whom suffered death at Tabríz in 1896, were the fore-runners of Mírzá Jahángír Khán and the Maliku'l-Mutakallimín, who were victims of the reactionary coup d'état of June, 1908. Indeed, as one of the most prominent and cultivated Azalís admitted to me some six or seven years ago, the ideal of a democratic Persia developing on purely national lines seems to have inspired in the minds of no few leading Azalís the same fiery enthusiasm as did the idea of a reign of the

saints on
earth in the case of the early Bábís.

The political ideals of the Bahá'ís have undergone considerable evolution since their propaganda achieved such success in America, where they have come into more or less close connection with various international, pacifist and feminist movements.

These tendencies were, however, implicit in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings at a much earlier date, as shown by the recommendation of a universal language and script in the

Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the exaltation of humanitarianism over patriotism, the insistence

on the brotherhood of all believers, irrespective of race or colour, and the ever-present idea of

"the Most Great Peace" (Sulh-i-Akbar). In connection with the last it is interesting to note that Dr I. G. Khayru'lláh, "the second Columbus" and "Bahá's

Peter" as he was entitled after his successes in America, definitely stated in his Book

Behá'u'lláh, originally published at Chicago in 1899 (Vol.ii, pp.480—1), that "the Most Great Peace" would come in the year 1335 of the Hijra, which began on October 28, 1916 and ended on October 17, 1917. This forecast,

based on Daniel xii, 12, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the end of the thousand

three hundred and five and thirty days," has, unfortunately, not been realized, but the

paragraph in which Khayru'lláh speaks of the frightful

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war which must precede "the Most Great Peace" is so remarkable, when one remembers that it

was written fifteen years before the outbreak of the Great War, that I cannot refrain from quoting it.

"In testimony of the fulfilment of His Word, the Spirit of God is impelling mankind toward that outcome with mighty speed. As the prophet indicated, the final condition in

which peace shall be established must be brought about by unparalleled violence of war and

bloodshed, which any observer of European affairs at the present day can see rapidly

approaching. History is being written at tremendous speed, human independence is

precipitating the final scenes in the drama of blood which is shortly destined to drench Europe

and Asia, after which the world will witness the dawn of millennial peace, the natural, logical and prophetic outcome of present human conditions."

And again two pages further on (p. 483) he says:

"Although the thousand years began with the departure of the Manifestation¹ in 1892, the commencement of the 'Great Peace' will be in 1917."

He also quotes Guinness as having written (in 1886)²:

"The secret things belong to God. It is not for us to say. But there can be no question that those who live to see this year 1917 will have reached one of the most important, perhaps the most momentous, of these terminal years of crisis."

2. Ethical interest.

While ethical teaching occupies a very subordinate place in the writings of the Báb and his disciples, it constitutes the chief part of the Bahá'í teachings.

Sir Cecil Spring-Rice,

1 i.e. the death of Bahá'u'lláh.

2 *Light for the Last Days* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1886), pp.345—6. The reference (p.224) given by Khayru'lláh is evidently to a different edition.

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formerly British Minister at Tihrán, who had the most extraordinary insight into the Persian mind, made one of the most illuminating remarks I ever heard in this connection. He pointed out most truly that the problem which Bahá'u'lláh had to solve was a far greater one than any mere question of claims of succession, and was essentially the same as that which confronted St Paul, viz. whether the new religion which he represented was to become a world religion addressed to all mankind, or whether it was to remain a more or less obscure sect of the religion from which it sprang. Mutatis mutandis the strife between Bahá'u'lláh and Subh-i-Azal was essentially identical with the strife between St Paul and St Peter, though in the former case the resulting separation was even greater, and the Bahá'ís regard the Báb as a mere fore-runner and harbinger of the greater Manifestation, and his writings and teachings as practically abrogated, for which reason they no longer willingly suffer

themselves to be called Bábís, a name which was still almost universally applied to them in Persia by those who were not members of their body at any rate when I was there in 1887—8.

Of the ethical teaching of Bahá'u'lláh numerous specimens are given in this volume (pp.64—73 infra) and many more have been published in English by the American "Bahá'í Publishing Society" and elsewhere. These teachings are in themselves admirable, though inferior, in my opinion, both in beauty and simplicity to the teachings of Christ. Moreover, as it seems to me, ethics is only the application to everyday life of religion and metaphysics, and to be effective must be supported by some spiritual sanction; and in the case of Bahá'ism, with its rather vague doctrines as to

1 Address: 84 Adams Street, Chicago; or, Charles E. Sprague, Publishing Agent for the Bahá'ís' Board of Counsel, 191, Williams Street, New York.

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the nature and destiny of the soul of man, it is a little difficult to see whence the driving-power to enforce the ethical maxims can be derived. I once heard Mr. G. Bernard Shaw deliver an address to a branch of the Fabian Society on "The Religion of the Future." In this lecture he said that he was unwilling that the West should any longer be content to clothe itself in what he called "the rags of Oriental systems of religion"; that he wanted a good, healthy Western religion, recognizing the highest type of humanity as the Superman, or, if the term was preferred, as God; and that, according to this conception, man was ever engaged in "creating God." As I listened I was greatly struck by the similarity of his language to that employed by the Bahá'ís¹, and was diverted by the reflection that, strive as he would, this brilliant modern thinker of the West could not evolve a religion which the East had not already formulated. Yet it would be an error to regard Bahá'ism merely as an ethical system, as is already shown by the opening verse of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas:—"The first thing which God hath prescribed unto His servants is the recognition of the Dawning-place of His Revelation and the Day-spring of His Dispensation. Whosoever attaineth unto Him hath

attained unto all good, and whosoever is hindered therefrom is in truth of the people of error, even though he bring forth all good works."

3. Historical interest.

But the chief interest of the study of the Bábí and Bahá'í movements is, as it seems to me, neither political nor ethical, but historical, because of the light it throws on the genesis and evolution of other religions. Renan emphasized this in

1 Cf. p. 346 *infra*, n.1 *ad calc.*; and p. 211 of my Year amongst the Persians.

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his work *Les Apôtres*, and it was he, I think, who said that to understand the genesis and growth of a new religion one must go to the East where religions still grow. And this holds good particularly of Persia, which has ever been the fertile breeding-ground of new creeds and philosophies from the time of Zoroaster, Manes and Mazdak to the present day. It would be interesting to compute how many of the "seventy-two sects" into which Islam is supposed to be divided owe their existence wholly or in part to the theological activity of the Persian mind.

The phenomena actually presented by Bábíism are often such as one would not *primâ facie* expect. In spite of the official denial of the necessity, importance or evidential value of miracles in the ordinary sense, numerous miracles are recorded in Bábí histories like the *Nuqtatu'l-Káf* and the *Ta'ríkh-i-Jadíd*, and many more are related by adherents of the faith. The most extraordinary diversity of opinion exists as to doctrines which one would be inclined to regard as fundamental, such as those connected with the future life. A similar diversity of opinion prevails as to the authorship of various Bábí books and poems, though the beginnings of Bábí literature only go back to 1844 or 1845. The earliest, fullest and most interesting history of the Báb and his immediate disciples (that of Hájjí Mírzá Jání of Káshán¹) was almost completely suppressed because it reflected the opinion which prevailed immediately after the Báb's martyrdom that his successor was Mírzá Yahyá Subhi-i-Azal, and thus came into conflict with the

Bahá'í contention which arose ten or fifteen years later, and a recension of it was prepared (known as "the New History," Ta'ríkh-i-Jadíd) in

1 The Nuqtatu'l-Káf, edited by me in the E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series (Vol.xv) from the Paris MS., the only complete one extant in Europe.

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which all references to Subhi-i-Azal were eliminated or altered, and other features regarded as undesirable were suppressed or modified. Later a third official history,

"The Traveller's Narrative," Maqála-i-Shakhsí

Sayyáh¹, in which the Báb was represented as a mere forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, was issued from `Akká, and subsequently lithographed to secure its wider diffusion, while the Ta'ríkh-i-Jadíd, of which not more than three or four copies exist in Europe, was suffered to remain in manuscript. Certain

critical Christian theologians have seen in Hájjí Mírzá

Jání's history in its relation to the later narratives a close parallel to the Gospel

of St Mark in its relation to the synoptic gospels.

Of the future of Bahá'ism it is difficult to hazard a conjecture, especially at the present time, when we are more cut off from any trustworthy knowledge of what is

happening in the world than at any previous period for many centuries. Less than a month ago

the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's birth was celebrated in America, whither his teachings have spread only within the last twenty years, but what influence they have attained

or may in the future attain there or elsewhere it is impossible to conjecture.

EDWARD G. BROWNE.

December 10, 1917.

1 Edited by me with English translation and notes in 1891.

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