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THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS : A REVIEW.

BY THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

A famous American orator used to say that he had "but little foresight, but plenty of *hindsight*," the latter being found very trustworthy.

More than a year ago the Parliament of Religions took its place in history. Then, in common with many, we felt compelled to testify against the whole scheme, convinced that, at the very basis of it, there lay a blunder ; and that, without impugning the motives of its originators and abettors, its final outcome must be evil rather than good. Before dismissing the matter, we cast a backward glance for a true *review* ; and, instead of intruding merely our own judgment, let others also be heard from this forum of enlightened public opinion as to this attempted amalgamation of the one and only true faith and saving Gospel with the imperfect, iniquitous, idolatrous systems of so-called "religion."

I. Perhaps the Parliament of Religions was a mistake, first of all, in its *inadequate presentation and representation of Christianity*.

Some, who were promoters of the scheme, have since confessed disappointment and even chagrin that the true faith was feebly advocated, or appeared to disadvantage, while, on the other hand, heathenism and various systems of error are jubilant over their success.

There was a natural reason for the disadvantage at which Christianity was placed. The advocates of these foreign faiths were speaking to audiences in which were few who were competent to answer them, and where no reply or rejoinder was allowable. They were skilful masters of the art of presenting the best phases of their systems, and the only way to expose sophistry, fallacy, or even falsehood, was to have had the other side shown by equally competent parties. Such a course alone was fair to the hearers. Suppose, for example, the committee had provided two men equally able to present Buddhism ; one, if they pleased, its high priest, the other, one of its most intelligent, fair-minded opponents. What if Sir Monier Williams could have set forth the radical defects of Buddhism, and so offset the

religion, and to learn what the best religion is. The meetings showed the great superiority of Buddhism over Christianity, and the mere fact of calling the meetings showed that the Americans and other Western peoples had lost their faith in Christianity and were ready to accept the teachings of our superior religion.'

"These remarks and more like them were received with great applause by the enthusiastic audience. They will be thoroughly believed by the masses of the people, for whose benefit meetings are to be held here and there throughout Japan to spread these interesting reports. The educated classes, as a rule, know too much to believe such statements, but the effect upon the lower classes will be to strengthen the power of Buddhism and to neutralize the influence of missionaries and native Christians.

"Said an earnest, intelligent young Japanese Christian man: 'How could American Christians make so great a mistake as to hold such a meeting and injure Christianity as the influence of those meetings will do in Japan?'"

"With charity toward all and malice toward none," we now dismiss the Parliament of Religions from these pages, praying God that such a gathering may never again give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme!

BABISM—ITS DOCTRINES AND RELATION TO MISSION WORK.

BY REV. J. H. SHEDD, D.D., OROOMIAH, PERSIA.

In the Parliament of Religions Mormonism was not represented. In the opinion of some it should have been, for it purports to be a message from God and it has many myriads of followers. The same is true of Babism, the new religion of Persia. It is a product of the present century; it claims to be a new revelation; it has its own literature and martyrs and enthusiastic propagandists and many myriads of believers. If one is to judge between the coarse deceptions of Joe Smith and the gentle character of the founder of Babism, the palm must be given to the latter. The latest expounder of this faith is Edward Granville Browne, of Cambridge University. He is in sympathy with Persian life and modes of thought, and has a most amiable feeling toward the Babis. He spent a year in Persia, living mostly among them, and visited Beha in Acre, and has given us a full explanation of their books and spirit. See his "Year among the Persians" and "Traveller's Narrative to Illustrate the Episode of the Bab;" also the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1889 and 1892. A good review of these works is given in the New York *Independent*, May 17th, 1894.

It is not my purpose to reproduce the history here, except in outline sufficient to give the reader a basis for understanding the doctrines and bearings of this new faith.

The two personages upon whom the faith is founded are Mirza Ali

Mohammed, born 1820, died 1850, the Bab ; and Mirza Hussein Ali, born 1817, died 1892, called Beha.

The series of causes leading to this movement must be sought in the Persian form of Islam. Persia is the land of the twelve Imams, Ali and eleven of his descendants. They are supposed to possess a peculiar Divine ingredient in their creation, the *nur* or light from the Divine essence. The yearly passion play keeps alive the love of Imam Hussein. The twelfth Imam, called the Mahdi, or guide, is believed to have disappeared and to live in concealment, one day to come forth with a splendor and power that shall dazzle and subdue the world. The longing expectation of the Persians is the reappearance of the Mahdi. The shrines of several of the Imams are at Kerbela, near Bagdad, and there is the central school of the Sheah sect. Every age new expounders of the Imamat arise with new theories, and often with the wildest vagaries. Sheikh Akhmed was one who taught early in the present century. He was a genius in speculation, and gave name to the sect called *Sheikhhis*. His doctrine was that if we could but discover the key we should find all knowledge locked up in the Koran. To discover the inner meaning of the Koran he applied cabalistic methods to the Arabic letters. He exalted Ali to a place of worship and as God's agent in the creation of the heavens and the earth. He was sure that the Imams visited him in his dreams and gave him special communications of their will, and he hinted that the Mahdi would soon return. When he died in 1826 his pupil, Hadji Seyyed Kazim, received his mantle, and raised a more intense expectation of the speedy appearance of the Mahdi. Among those who attended his lectures and drank deepest of his teaching was Mirza Ali Mohammed, the Bab. In the Sheikhhi teaching Mr. Browne notes three points : " Extreme veneration for the Imams, who are regarded as incarnate attributes of God ; the belief in spiritual communication with them and instruction from them ; and the denial of a material resurrection in the sense held by Mohammedan theologians." Here was in part the germ from which the Bab developed his system. Another germ was the ever-recurring pantheistic longings of the Persian poets, especially in the *Mesnevi*. The fatalism of the Koran is but a form of pantheism, for God is the sole agent in both the good and the evil in the world. The mysticism of Persian poets charms the meditative mind to accept and enjoy the conception it presents of God, as essentially and ineffably pure, holy, and beautiful, and to long for absorption as waves on the surface of being into the ocean that is God.

The following is an outline of the careers of the Bab and of Beha :

October 9th, 1820, born at Shiraz, Ali Mohammed. In his boyhood he was amiable and given to thought.

1837 was sent to Bushire to conduct his father's mercantile business. Soon after made a pilgrimage to Mecca and thence to the shrines near Bagdad. Here he became the disciple of Hadji Seyyed Kazim.

1843 died Hadji Seyyed Kazim. The question arose who among his

pupils should be his successor. Some followed Karim Khan, of Kirman, who still is the head of the Sheikhis and bitter enemy of the Babis. Ali Mohammed returned to Shiraz and made another pilgrimage to Arabia. He wrote a treatise on pilgrimages.

May 23d, 1844, at Shiraz, he announced himself as the successor of his teacher, and as, moreover, the *Bab* or gate to the true knowledge of God. About this time he compiled two works in Arabic expounding his doctrine; won his first disciples from among his fellow-pupils of Seyyed Kazim, and sent them to propagate his doctrines.

September, 1845. By this time the Mohammedan clergy were alarmed at the spread of the new sect and secured his arrest.

1846. A plague broke out in Shiraz, and in the confusion the Bab escaped to Ispahan and was well received by the governor there.

1847. This governor died, and his successor arrested the Bab and sent him to Teheran. Near Teheran a number of believers came out to meet him. Among them was Mirza Hussein Ali, then aged thirty, afterward called Beha.

The king, Mohammed Shah, fearing to keep the Bab among his disciples, sent him to the remote castle of Maku, near Mount Ararat, where he remained in prison till near the time of his death.

October 5th, 1848. Mohammed Shah died and was succeeded by the present king, Nasuru Deen Shah. Formidable insurrections of Babis arose in Mazanderan, at Yezd, Niriz, and Zengan. Thousands of the Babis died fighting with reckless daring, especially in Zengan, where they defied the power of the Shah for several months. Meanwhile, the Bab in his imprisonment composed his voluminous works.

1850. The government at Teheran determined to strike terror into the ranks of the Babis by putting to death their head. He was removed for a time to Chara, a castle near Salmas and Orooomiah, thence was taken *viâ* Orooomiah to Tabreez.

July 15th, 1850. The Bab was executed in Tabreez. He and one of his disciples were suspended by ropes, and a file of Christian soldiers of Orooomiah fired a volley. When the smoke cleared away the dead body of the disciple was there, but the Bab was gone. The bullets had cut the rope and freed him. If he had cast himself on the people and appealed to his escape as miraculous, the sympathy was so great that probably he would have been saved by the people; but he fled into a guard house, was soon discovered, and at the second volley he died.

Mirza Yahya, under the title of *Subh i Ezel* (morning of eternity), became the Bab's successor. He is younger half-brother of Beha, and still lives in exile in Cyprus.

1852. Three Babis attempt to assassinate the Shah. This results in more severe persecution. The leading believers are put to death or widely scattered. The poetess and heroine, Kurratu l'Ain, is among the martyrs. Mirza Hussein Ali narrowly escapes the same fate.

1852-62. The chiefs reside in Bagdad. Subh i Ezel is the recognized head, but his brother (Beha) takes the most prominent part in the organization and conduct of affairs. He wrote the "Ikan," an apology of the new faith, which is regarded as very able and convincing.

1863. The Turkish Government at the request of the Persians removed the Babism from Bagdad to Constantinople and thence to Adrianople.

1865. Mirza Hussein Ali announced himself to be the one predicted by the Bab. He takes the title *Beha Ullah* (glory or brightness of God). He calls upon his brother, Subh i Ezel, to accept his claim, and a very bitter feud breaks out between the two factions called Ezelis and Behais. Two of the former and one of the latter were killed.

1867. The Turks decided to separate the two factions. The Ezelis were removed to Cyprus, the Behais to Acre, in Syria.

1867-92. Beha resides at Acre in a palace surrounded by orange gardens and provided with every luxury by his followers and visited by them. His epistles and messengers visit every part of Persia and Asia Minor.

May 16th, 1892. Beha passes away and is succeeded by one of his sons.

THE BOOKS AND DOCTRINES OF THE BABIS.

The genesis of the Bab's teaching we have already discovered in what he learned of the Sheikhi doctors mentioned above, and from the mystic poets. The gross corruptions and cruelty of the Sheah or Persian established religion furnished the occasion and prepared the soil for the attempted reform.

The writings of the Bab are said to number more than a hundred treatises, including many thousand stanzas of poetry.

The books that specially claim attention are :

1. "Ziyaret Name," written before he claimed to be the Bab. It gives instruction as to the mode of worship at the shrines. Besides this it is the expression of an ardent enthusiast who pours out his longings for the Imam Mahdi. "Where are the days of your empire that I may struggle for you? Where are the days of your glory that I may obtain the blessing of seeing your face? Where are the days of your kingdom that I may take revenge for you on your enemies? Where are the days of your manifestation that I may be free from all except thee (absorbed in thee)?" etc. The young man soon believes that he has the special favor and fellowship of the Imams.

2. A commentary or treatise on the Sura of the Koran called Joseph, written in Shiraz. In this Ali Mohammed declares himself to be inspired, to be the Bab. He does not renounce Islam, but claims that a true knowledge of Islam must come through the Bab. He says that God has placed within his grasp the kingdoms of heaven and earth. He presents himself as a prophet, and appeals to the book he is writing as proof of prophetic

inspiration, that he is able to write hour after hour, composing the most exalted verses by the thousand and on the most exalted themes, the Divine being and attributes. He also directs his followers to rules of life very different from Moslem practice. Divorce and smoking are forbidden. The food of Jews and Christians is counted pure, etc.

3. "The Beyan" or "Exposition," written in Maku. It is the ultimate doctrine of the Bab. His title now is *Nukhta U'la*, first point, or *Nukhta i Beyan*, point of revelation or exposition. A positive system of doctrine and precept is set forth. The doctrine of God is explained at length. The essence of God has existed from all eternity in unapproachable glory and purity. No one has known it as it should be known. No one has praised it as it should be praised. From it has preceded creation, which has no beginning and shall have no end that we can express. Eternal in duration the creation is subordinate in causation, is the emanation of the Divine essence. As the Divine essence is beyond our knowledge, the primal will has incarnated itself from time to time to suit the understanding of mankind. These incarnations are the prophets, an unknown number in the past, as there will be in the future. That primal will spoke through other prophets in the past and speaks now through the Nukhta—i.e., the Bab, and will speak again through "him whom God shall manifest." The primal will is like the sun, which rises and sets, but is in reality the same sun, not a different sun to-day from the sun of yesterday. So each prophet is a new day or manifestation, the same essence, the undivided unit of being. The evidence of a prophet is not miracles so much as the efficiency of his words. "When God wishes to create anything He says 'Be,' and it is. The word of a prophet has the same quality: what he says comes to pass. Mohammed said, 'Make a pilgrimage to Mecca,' and each year brings thousands flocking thither. He said, 'Fast in Ramazan,' and millions obey him year by year. The word of the Nukhta is as powerful to change and construction as the word of Mohammed."

The doctrine that no revelation is final is strongly enforced. One great mistake of Christians and Moslems, it is alleged, has been this, that there is no more to follow. Each prophet is fitted to reveal the primal will for a time, to be followed by another with a fuller utterance. In the childhood of the race all truth was taught by parables and figures. Good is shown to be pleasant and evil, bitter in their results by comparisons. Good men after death are to enter beautiful gardens with all possible delights. The wicked are to enter the torments of consuming fire. But the world has now reached a stage when the true meaning of paradise and hell can be disclosed. Paradise is the joy of belief in the manifestation of God and attaining the perfection of one's being. The perfection of a thing is its paradise. Hell is unbelief and the state of imperfection which it imposes.

The doctrine as to the future life is obscure and transcendental. The worship of God is to be freed from all hope of reward. Perfection will

follow, but how this perfection is reached, whether by stages of transmigration or by absorption in the primal good or in some other way, is not made plain. It is certain that the Bab and his followers had no fear of death. They went to martyrdom singing and exulting, but it is hard to see what it was sustained them in such trials. It was allegiance to the Bab, but just what hopes did he offer them that gave them exultation in death? It was not the hope of the Christian martyr nor the paradise of Islam, but rather a pantheistic disregard of life.

In the Beyan the prophecy is prevalent of another to follow the Bab, called "Him whom God shall manifest." The ordinances and precepts of the new faith all have reference to this coming personage, and prayers are offered that he may not suffer as the Bab suffered. There is a humility and self-renunciation displayed which reminds one of John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ.

The whole round of religious duties is changed to suit a new calendar. A cabalistic power is given to the Arabic letters somewhat after the teaching of Sheikh Akhmed. The chapters of the Beyan are in groups of 19, and this is made the sacred number. Alif stands for *one*. The Arabic name for *one* is *Vahid*. The numerical values of the letters in *Vahid* make the sum 19, and several other formulas are worked out to the same result. The number 1 denotes the uncreated and unknowable essence of God, and this 1 added to the sum of the letters of *Hayz* (the living) gives the sacred number 19. Multiply 19 by 19 and 361 is the result, which again equals the Arabic formula for *all things* plus the initial one. The Bab is the *point*, the initial one, and 18 of his followers are made apostles to complete the sacred number. The year has 19 months of 19 days each, with four days thrown in, just before the vernal equinox, as feast days. Chronology and religion are readjusted on this plan.

There is the strongest assurance given of the ultimate triumph of the new faith. The empires of the future are to be Babi. Church and State are combined, and there is no place for unbelievers, but they are not placed under the hard condition imposed by Islam upon subject races. The central provinces, of the Utopia that floated before the Bab's mind, are in Persia, and each province is given a peculiar place and name. It is a scheme that might satisfy the aspirations of socialism. There is a community of brotherly love; dignity combined with courtesy; leisure with labor; the cultivation of all useful arts and the prohibition of all that is useless; elevation of woman; general elementary education; provision for the poor; strict prohibition of mendicancy and tramps; children to be treated with gentleness, animals with kindness; no persecution for conscience' sake. Such are the leading features of the Beyan.

4. Another work is ascribed to the Bab called the "Seven Proofs," afterward enlarged by Beha and called "Ikan," or Assurance. It is the only book of the Babism which they have printed. The copies are brought from India not for public sale, but kept in the hands of leading men to be

given to inquirers as may be safe for a proscribed religion. Mr. Browne has given the line of argument as follows. After stating the doctrines of God as to His essence, of His creation, and of the prophets or manifestations of the primal will, a passage is quoted from the Koran in which Mohammed says : " As to the prophets, I (am they)"—that is, Mohammed was the same in essence as the preceding incarnations of the primal will.

" In each manifestation word was given of the following one. The Jews were told to expect a Messiah, but when He came as Jesus they rejected Him, because they had imagined His coming in a different way. So the followers of Christ were told to expect His return ; yet when He returned as Mohammed they failed to recognize Him, and are to this day expecting His coming. So the Mohammedans are expecting the coming of Imam Mahdi, yet when he *has* come they refuse to recognize him, because the manner of his coming does not correspond with their own vain imaginings of how he ought to come."

Then he says to the Moslems : " You blame the Jews because they did not accept Christ as the promised Messiah. You also condemn the Christians because they did not recognize Mohammed as the promised comforter or paraclete, although Christ had clearly said, ' One shall come after Me whose name is Akhmed.' * The prodigies expected at the return of the promised one are explained figuratively. By the sun, for example, is meant the primal will manifesting itself in the prophet of the age ; by the moon and stars are meant his companions and the teachers of his religion. The end of the world is the end of the manifestation, when the cycle is completed, and *the sun shall be darkened and the stars shall fall from heaven*—that is, the last manifestation is abrogated, the last sacred book is closed, the priests or mullahs who expounded this book fall from their high place, because the new revelation is given. This is the meaning of the verse in the Koran, ' When the sun shall be folded up and the stars shall fall,' and of similar passages.

" Now the Moslems blame the Jews and Christians, yet act in precisely the same way themselves, urging as a reason for not accepting the new manifestation that the expected signs of the Imam's coming have not appeared."

Then follows an argument to prove that the claims of the Bab are as strong as those of Mohammed as to style of composition and power and excellence of doctrine. The line of reasoning is very strong and convincing in the view of the Babis, and its cogency is felt by the Moslems. Few of the latter are ready to meet a Babi missionary in fair discussion. The same line of argument adopted is used in dealing with Jews, Christians, or Zoroastrians. The new faith is broad enough to include Zoroaster among the prophets, for his words were words of power to his followers.

* These words are based on the promise of Christ as to the Comforter, the *Paraclete*. For this word the Moslems would substitute *Periklutos*, which corresponds in meaning with *Akhmed* or Mohammed. (Praised, lauded.)

After the death of the Bab in 1850 there are no extant writings of importance, till 1865 the announcement of Beha was made claiming to be the one whom God shall manifest. He had expanded the "Seven Proofs" into the "Ikan" before this, but there is no positive proof of it. After this he became a very voluminous writer of epistles to his followers in Persia. He became in their eyes, and claimed to be, the incarnation of the Deity, the Lord of the attributes or centre of the revelation of the Divine essence, perfect in humanity, the One whom God shall manifest, Christ and the Paraclete returned, God the Father in short, the fulness of God manifest in the flesh. He also identified himself with previous prophets, especially with the Bab, that he himself suffered in Tabreez, and his spirit returned to the supreme associate.

Besides these epistles to his followers he addressed to kings and rulers various documents. His appeal to the Shah of Persia in behalf of toleration for his followers is a well-reasoned and cogent plea. He sent letters to the Grand Vizier of the Sultan, to the Pope, to Napoleon III., to the Emperor of Russia, and to Queen Victoria. For some reason he was displeased with the Emperor of Germany, and ventured to predict that dire calamities will fall upon the capital beyond the Rhine.

The only systematic work is called "The Most Holy Tablet." This prescribes more fully the rules for the new religion, but adds no new doctrine to the system of the Bab. The times of prayer and of fasts and feasts are given, places of worship are to have no images or pictures, the dead are to be buried with much ceremonial pomp, pilgrimages are few, very elaborate rules for inheritance are laid down, slavery forbidden, the civilization of the West enjoined in many particulars, the kings of the earth are exhorted. The claim is made that the treatise is not one of scientific production, it is beyond the power of science, the revelation of God Himself, and, hence, above all criticism.

For one whose pretensions are so superlative, the performance is very meagre. There is no transcendent excellence apparent to mark the advance of revelation. Possibly if the Son of God had not appeared in Jesus Christ, and become the Alpha and Omega of human hopes and salvation, such a system might become another "Light of Asia;" but since Christ has come, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, there can be no comparison between Babism and Christianity.

It remains to inquire what is *the relation of Babism to the missionary work.*

When the Bab passed through Oroomiah in 1850 on his way to his execution, the missionaries watched the excitement with great interest. The crowds of people were ready to receive him as the long-expected Imam, even the water in which he bathed was regarded as holy water. Since then the missionaries have ever had a strong desire to utilize the movement, but have found the Babis so satisfied or mystified with their own fanciful views, and so urgent in their argument for a fuller revelation

to suit the present age, that they felt no need of Christ. Our colporteurs have kept in touch with the different sects in all parts of the country and reported the Babism. The congenial field for Babism is not among the rough Turkish race of the north and west of Persia, but among the gentler Persian race of the south and east. The missionaries come from Ispahan and beyond. Two of them have been at Oroomiah for several weeks previous to this date. They have great assurance, and are ready to discuss with Jews, Christians, and Moslems, always with great caution lest they be betrayed to their enemies. Their arguments are from the Pentateuch, and especially from Daniel and Revelation for Jews and Christians, and from the Koran for Moslems. The Jews are not always proof against the infection. Some are said to believe, others are turned away from the true teachings of the Scriptures. In other places, especially in the darker regions where our colporteurs seldom penetrate, the Jews are much affected. Last year two of the colporteurs wrote from such places: "We must hasten to enlighten these Jews, or they will all fall in the snare." Babism offers the Jew a system non-persecuting, suiting his unitarian view of God, and nearer his hopes of an earthly Messiah and kingdom than Christianity. The Christian faith alone has the resources to meet the sophistries of the Babism. The argument of the Moslem is the sword, not reasoning from the Koran and traditions. I have heard of no case of a Christian's conversion to Babism or of a Babism conversion to Christianity. Is it because the chasm between the two faiths is impassible, or because the affinities have not yet been fully established? What shall be the attitude we take? Shall we consider the new creed, now accepted by many thousands of Persians, as for us or against us in the conflict with Islam?

On the favorable side we may mention :

1. It is a most radical reform that revolutionizes the established religion of Persia, and thus breaks down the barriers of intolerance and comes into sympathy with Christianity.

2. In practical duties, compared with Islam, it has a very liberal aspect. It is a protest against the hard legalism and Pharisaism of the mullahs. It exposes their intolerance and corruptions and scandalous vices, and teaches sincerity and gentleness, and thus is breaking down the civil and social system of the prevailing faith, and in so far is an ally of Christianity.

3. The adherents of the Bab claim a friendship and kinship with Christians on these common grounds. The following extract from Mr. Browne's record expresses this feeling in stronger terms, perhaps, than usual. "Yes," said the Babi, "we are much nearer to you in sympathy than the Mohammedans. To them you are unclean and accursed; if they associate with you it is only by overcoming their religious prejudices. But we are taught to regard all good men as clean and pure whatever their religion. With you Christians especially we have sympathy. Has it not struck you how similar were the life and death of our founder (whom we indeed believe to have been Christ Himself returned to earth) and the Founder of

your faith? Both were wise even in their childhood, beyond the comprehension of those around them; both were pure and blameless in their lives; both at last were done to death by a fanatical priesthood and a government alarmed at the love and devotion which they inspired in their disciples." This is very fairly spoken, but one is at a loss to know how far such language comes from the hope of winning converts. Mr. Browne is one much in love with Oriental mysticism, and one whom the Babis hoped to win over to their belief.

Beyond the points just mentioned I cannot see that Christians and Babis can have much in common.

THE UNFAVORABLE RELATIONS TO MISSION WORK.

1. The movement arose entirely outside of Christian influences. It is an outgrowth of Persian Mohammedanism, of the sect of the Sheikhis without a single doctrine derived from the New Testament. The face of Babism is not toward Christianity, but toward the pantheism of the East. It turns away from the God of Islam, who is an absolute monarch far removed from man and his needs. The Bab brings God near, but not through Christ by way of reconciliation, not by regarding God as a loving Father, who through the Son and Spirit is bringing us into fellowship with Himself. The Bab brings God near by pantheism. The universal spirit is manifested in all men. By self-renunciation and abstraction a man may escape the illusion of plurality and attain to the unity and blessedness of true being and say, "I am God." Christ said this, and so the Bab and Beha and so may others yet to come. This misty pantheism is harder for the missionary to deal with than the fatalistic unitarian conception of God presented by Islam.

2. The doctrine of manifestations renders the Babis insensible to Christian influence. They accept Christ most fully, and no one can go beyond them in praise of His Divine nature; but His mission has ended. The inconsistency of applying the same prediction to the Holy Spirit, to Mohammed, and to Beha is overcome by saying that the signs apply equally to all successive manifestations. The argument from the unapproachable personality of Christ is met by the statement that Beha is also a man of perfection, and that Christ showed indications of His weakness in His outcry in Gethsemane and on the cross. The cross of Christ is made of none effect. The phenomenon of the Bab and Beha eclipses the Sun of Righteousness.

This doctrine, taken with the fact that a new faith has a charm which for the time satisfies the religious need, renders the Babis difficult to reach. Through the darkness of pantheism they cannot see the need of a Saviour. The Moslems often feel a need and confess that their system has proved a failure, but the Babis are in the zeal and assurance of a new religion. They study the New Testament not as disciples to learn, but as partisans

to discover what will fortify their theory. All previous Scriptures are valuable to them only in so far as they testify to the new faith.

3. Their basis of morals is quite as far from our faith, perhaps farther removed than the doctrine of Islam. It has been truly said of Islam: "Mohammedan law is based on the theory that right and wrong depend on legal enactment. Moral acts have no inherent moral character. An act is right because God has commanded it, and wrong because He has forbidden it. God may abrogate or change His laws so that what was wrong may become right. So it is impossible to discuss the moral character of the prophet, because it is sufficient answer to any criticism to say that God commanded or expressly permitted those acts which in other men would be wrong. Thus God's moral nature is not known. There is no comprehension that God is a moral being doing what is right because it is right, that He could not be just and justify the sinner without an atonement made by the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ. Sin is not regarded as itself corruption, nor is there any need of regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit before the soul can know the joy of the beatific vision." This statement applies with increased emphasis to the Babis. There is no clear distinction between good and evil, no perception of sin, they wander in the fog.

4. The Babist freedom runs to license, and hence as a reform leaves men worse rather than better. Mr. Browne found himself in the meshes of the opium habit in Kirman by yielding too freely to the influence of his Babi friends. The poetess *Kurratu Ain* praises opium, though Beha afterward forbid it. There is undoubtedly a generous fellowship in the Babi community, but there is no moral principle. Their missionaries have a doubtful reputation morally. There are no high and strong characters developed to lead the world in true reform, no high motives to virtue are developed. The seeds of its own destruction are in the system, and the best arguments against this as other errors will soon be its fruits.

THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE JEW.

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By this we do not mean the conversion of the whole nation, as predicted by St. Paul (Rom. 11 : 26, 27), "So all Israel shall be saved ; even as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer ; *He shall turn away ungodliness* from Jacob ; and this is My covenant unto them *when I shall take away their sins.*" When a people's sins are all taken away they are turned from ungodliness ; then, and then only, can we speak of their conversion nationally—an experience as yet unrecorded, whether among Jews or Gentiles. But in the Jewish era and in this Gospel age alike there has been and there is "a remnant, according to the election of grace"