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FOREWORD.

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The General Assembly which meets in Kansas City next May is to be an Educational Assembly. This number of the UNION SEMINARY REVIEW is an Educational Number. During the next two or three months the Missionary Survey and the weekly Church papers propose to devote much space to the consideration of educational problems. These are all indications of what we believe to be an unprecedented quickening of interest among our ministers and the people in the fundamental and vital work of Christian Education.

This awakening comes none too soon. The Presbyterian Church was once the greatest educational force in this country. She is still a great educational factor, but she has lost her primacy. Other denominations have of late outstripped her. We rejoice in their progress, but it is to our discredit that latterly we have not shown equal wisdom, zeal and enterprise. We have forfeited the leading place in education which was once indisputably ours. We have not even kept abreast of some of our sister churches. We have made some progress, but relatively we have fallen behind.

That the Presbyterian Church should bring up the rear of the procession in educational work is an anomaly not to be endured. Her place is at the head of the column. We, therefore, welcome the signs of the awakening of our people on this

BAHAISM.

BY REV. S. G. WILSON, D. D.,
of Tabriz, Persia.

The sect of Bahais has its roots and origin in Persia. Mohammedans universally expect the Mehdi; the Persian Shiahs consider that the Mehdi or Kaim will be none other than the twelfth Imam remanifested. After his disappearance, in the tenth century, into a well, where he still lives, certain persons were channels of communication between him and the faithful. Such mediators were termed "Bab" or "the Gate."

In 1844 in Shiraz, a young Persian named Ali Mohammed announced himself as the Bab. He was a Sayid or descendant of Mohammed and had belonged to the Sheikhi sect of the Shiahs, and been under instruction of their "perfect one" Haji Kazim of Resht at Kerbela. Many of the Sheikhis accepted the Bab as their spiritual guide, the Kaim or Mehdi. Later he announced himself as the "Point" of Divinity and his revelation as the abrogation of Islam. His followers were called Babis. The Bab was imprisoned at Maku and Chirik. The Babis started a revolt. The Bab was executed at Tabriz in 1850. The Babi insurrections were put down and many of them were slain with cruel torture. Some of them attempted to take revenge by assassinating the Shah. This led to cruel reprisals on the innocent as well as the guilty.

The Bab had announced the coming of "Him whom God shall manifest," and had appointed as his successor a youth named Mirza Yahya. To him he gave the title Subh-i-Azal, the "Dawn-of-Eternity" and "His Holiness the Eternal." The half-brother of Yahya was Mirza Hussani Ali, thirteen years his senior. He was also a disciple of the Bab and bore the title Baha Ullah, "the Splendor or Glory of God." They were sons of Mirza Abbas, an official of some rank at Teheran. Yahya was son of his wife and Hussani Ali of his concubine. The concubine acted as nurse for Yahya. (Note see *New History*, translated by Prof. Browne of Cambridge University, p. 374-5).

In 1851-2 both brothers fled to Bagdad for safety. Thence the government transferred them to Constantinople and Adrianople. Baha Ullah gradually supplanted Subh-i-Azal in the hearts of the Babis and finally made claim to be "Him whom God will manifest." Quarrels, revilings, recriminations, deceptions, attempts to poison each other, murders and assassinations followed.*

The Turkish Government intervened and sent Azal to Famagusta, Cyprus and Baha to Acca in Syria. Baha completely outwitted Azal, and attracted nearly all the Babis to himself. Henceforth they took the name Bahais. Bahatism may be counted a different religion and revelation. (Footnote. See Abul Tozi's Bahai Proofs, p. 78.) During the next quarter of a century Bahatism made little stir in Persia. Its advancement was by no means as rapid as during the earlier years of the Bab. The zeal and devotion of the followers sensibly slackened. *Ketman* or *Tagia* (dissimulation regarding one's religion) was allowed and practised. The fierce warriors turned to professing the doctrines of expediency, condemning as unwise zealots the fighting Babis of the previous generations. During these years they escaped bloody persecutions except in rare instances. They tried to make their peace with the Shah, constantly emphasizing their loyalty, expurgating their books to suppress condemnation of the dynasty, and inducing the Sadr-Azam, the Prime Minister of Nasr-i-Din Shah to tolerate and befriend them.

In Acca, too, Baha soon acquired considerable freedom, built a palace, called Behja, in a delightful garden and freely received the pilgrims. He sent out many tablets, composed his Books of Revelation and had them published in Bombay.

The doctrines of Bahatism are in brief as follows:

I. Mirza Hussani Ali, entitled Baha Ullah, was the Manifestation of God the Father. Baha wrote to the Pope: "This is indeed the Father of whom Isaiah gave you tidings." In another place he says: "It is Myself which rules over the world." Abbas says (Thornton Chase, "The Bahai Revelation," p. 178): "The

*See "Traveller's Narrative," translated by Prof. Browne (index, word "Assassination") pp. 93, 99, 343, 359-365, 369-371., New, History of the Bab" Browne p. XXIII-IV, p. 391, Browne's "A Year Among the Persians" pp. 328, 406, 513, 530, 306. Prof. Browne, the historian of Babism says, New History p. XXIII, "One by one these (Asalia) disappeared, most of them, I fear cannot be doubted, by foul play on the part of too zealous Bahais."

Father of Christ is come among you." One of his firm disciples in Tabriz told me: "Baha is very God of very God." Mr. Phelps in his *Life of Abbas Effendi* (p. 149) says: "It was necessary for the Essence Itself of God to become manifest, and this It did through the person of Baha Ullah." Mr. Remy says (*Star of the West*, p. 10, March 2, 1913) in the Bahai monthly (the capitals are his): "This one is THE FATHER Himself, The Manifested GOD *Himself* BAHAULLAH."

II. "The tablets and utterances of Baha are a distinct Revelation of God." Baha established a new dispensation superior to all others. Former prophets and books are acknowledged. The Bible and Koran are interpreted to suit the purpose and need of the case and largely allegorically.

III. "Believing and following the Manifestation" is the means of salvation and of entering into the kingdom of God.

IV. The ritual includes prescribed prayers, three times a day, and with postures like Moslems; a fast of nineteen days conforming to the rules of the Moslem Ramazan; pilgrimage to the tombs of Bab, Baha and Martyrs; the giving of a nineteenth of the income; together with imitations of the christening of children, the Lord's Supper, Church chanting, etc.

V. An eclectic system of morals, without any new conceptions or principles, is promulgated. Bigamy is allowed, monogamy recommended; alcohol is prohibited (but more used by Persian Bahais than by Persian Shiahhs), tobacco is permitted; divorce is permitted by the will of either party, after one year's separation. Love, unity, harmony and peace are much enjoined, but in the short time from the appearance of the Bab, their annals are full of wars, and crimes, divisions and sectarian strife, anathemas and cursings.

Baha Ullah died at Acca in May, 1892, in his seventy-fifth year. His temple-tomb is near the Palace Behjo and has become a shrine—a place of pilgrimage—with a ritual service. The death of the father was the signal for a bitter quarrel among his sons. The occasion was the succession to the leadership. The cause, no doubt lay in that jealousy which results from a polygamous household. Baha Ullah had married a second wife in Bagdad and the two wives raised their children in the same

household. This bigamy was the occasion of misfortune even at the time, for the Persian consul at Bagdad, named Mirza Buzurk Khan Kasuini desired to wed the girl and vented his disappointment on the Bahi community by making accusation against them before the Persian and Turkish Governments. (See Traveller's Narrative, p. 84, note 2.)

A word about the family of Baha is necessary. Baha's first wife, wedded in Persia, was named Aseyeh. She was a niece of the Prime Minister (New History, p. 415). Baha gave her the title Madh Ulya, the Supreme Cradle—a title conferred only upon the Queen-Mother in Persia; The second, named Ayesha, was entitled Veraka-i-Ulya, the Supreme Leaf. (Travellers Narrative, p. 361). They bore him twelve children. The wives and seven children survived him. Of these three were daughters. The four sons received "great swelling" titles. Abbas was entitled "The Greatest (Azam) Branch of God" and regarded as the "return" of Jesus; Mehmet Ali, "The Mightiest (Akbar) Branch of God" and the "return" of Mohammed; Ziah Ullah, "The Purest Branch and as Abraham" (died 1898); Badiah Ullah, "The Most Luminous Branch and as Moses."

Abbas Effendi was the son of Aseyeh and was born May 23, 1844. The other three were sons of Ayesha. Abbas Effendi claimed the succession, basing his right and title on the Will of Baha called the 'Ketabil-Ahd and on previous declarations. His right was disputed by the other brothers. I have a manuscript by a life long Bahai which gives the following account. "Nine days after the 'ascension' of Baha, Abbas Effendi desired nine of the chief men to come to the house of Mehmet Ali Effendi. He opened the will. It was in Baha's own handwriting and two pages long. The nine men saw it. On the second page, over a part of the writing, Abbas had put a blue paper that it might not be read, and he refused to have it read. On the same day, the whole congregation (men) gather to the palace of Baha. Mirza Majd-i-Din (Abbas' sister's son) rose and read the will up to the blue paper. Later the women were called to the Kasr Bahja and the will was again read, but the concealed portion was not made known. It was evident that it was for his own selfish purposes that Abbas concealed it, because the future

authority did not pertain to him. From Persia and India many wrote, saying: 'Show the last portion; it is the writing of His Holiness.' He refused. To this day it is concealed."

Abbas assumed authority as the Supreme Ruler of the new dispensation the center of the covenant, and the Infallible Interpreter of its teachings. His claim is clearly set forth in a tablet (Star of the West, July 13, 1912) wherein, speaking in the third person, he declares: "All Bahais must obey the center of the Covenant and must not *deviate one hair's breadth* from obedience to Him." "He should be looked upon as authority by all." "Obedience and submission must be shown Him and the face turned to Him completely." He was given such titles as* "His Holiness the Master," "Our Lord," "The Center of the Cause of God," "Dawning Place of the Divine Light," "Dayspring of the Light of the Covenant." Indeed his first Apostles to Persia bore the message, "I am the Manifestation of God. My paps are full of the milk of Godhead. Whosoever will, let him come and suck freely."

His claims to headship were strenuously opposed by his brothers and some of the nearest disciples. A bitter quarrel began as a consequence and has raged to the present time. Letters were sent by each party to the Persian Bahais, involving them in the quarrel. Mehmet Ali composed a book, called the "Ityan-i-Dallil, presenting proofs of the invalidity of Abbas' claims, from the writings of Baha. They charge† Abbas with concealing and annulling Baha's will, perverting his teachings, changing the writings of Baha, publishing expurgated and interpolated editions of them, and attempting to suppress the authorized Bombay editions. Specifically they accuse him of publishing a Lawh-i-Beirut, a tablet in which Abbas is greatly exalted, and attributing it to Baha, though it is spurious; that he has inserted verses into letters written in the hand of Baha's amanuensis and published them as genuine; has omitted verses from the "Tablet of Command;" made up the "Treasure Tablet" from parts of several others; appropriated to himself Tablets pertain-

*Abul Fosl's "Bahai Proofs" pp. 109-122.

†(See "Facts for Behaists.)

ing to Mehmet Ali; and commanded to destroy all Tablets of Baha which have not his (Abbas') seal upon them.*

Per contra the party of Abbas accused his brothers of intemperance and profligacy (Facts about Bahaists, p. 8 and 9) and of heresy, covenant breaking and fraud. Abbas said to Mrs. Grundy (Ten Days in the Light at Acca, p. 63), "Mehmet Ali has appropriated many papers and tablets written by the Blessed Perfection (Baha). It is possible for these writings to be altered, as the meanings in Persian are greatly changed by a single dot here and there. Before His Ascension, the Blessed Perfection said to me, 'I have given you all the papers.' He put them in two satchels and sent them to me. After His Ascension, Mehmet Ali said, 'you had better give me the two satchels to take care of.' He took them away and never returned them." He said that Mehmet Ali deceives, "for the Will was also written by Mehmet Ali's own hand from dictation of the Blessed Perfection. By violating the Covenant (Will) he has become a *fallen* branch. All the beautiful blossoms upon the Tree of Life were destroyed by Mehmet Ali."

Abbas proceeded to the use of boycott and anathema. He† ordered that no one of the Acca community should send any letters anywhere without first showing them to him, and commanded the Bahais in Persia not to receive any letters that were not sealed by him, but to send them back to him, and that in writing to Acca they should send their letters open. These restrictions on freedom gave great offense. Abbas also prohibited his followers from associating with his brothers and their followers, strictly ordering them "not to sit, meet, speak or correspond with them, not even to trade or associate with them in any profession" (Facts, etc., p. 45). Khadim reports that "once in his own house, Abbas rose up and furiously attacked" his step-mother, who, in return, reviled him and fled from the house, wailing, "At the sacred tomb he used cruelly to treat the brothers and sisters" (Facts, p. 59). "On one occasion he repeatedly struck his youngest (half) sister in the presence of her little ones

*We can well believe that these accusations are true, in view of what we know from Prof. Browne of the way Abbas Effendi perverted that facts of the history of the Bab and Subh-i-Asal, in the Traveller's narrative of which he was the author. (New History p. XIV, XXXI.)
†Persian manuscript.

and many believers," scolding her "with a loud voice, uttering many harsh words" (p. 60 *idem*). On another occasion he "insulted and beat Khadim (Mirza Aga Jan, Baha's amanuensis) at the sacred place" and afterwards "ordered his followers to imprison and cruelly beat him, which they did" (Facts, p. 25). He sent adrift Abdul Gaffar Ispahani, called Abdullah, one of first believers on Baha, in such destitute condition that he died of hunger and was buried in a potter's field at Damascus (Persian Manuscript).

Abbas Effendi also cut off the living of his stepmother, brothers and their dependents. Baha Ullah and his household had a stipend from the Turkish Government, as Azal and the Babis in Cyprus had, and it was not an ungenerous allowance. (Note Traveller's Narrative, p. 378.)

"The family had an income from the Government, as well as a revenue from three villages." (Mrs. Templeton's letter to Dr. Pease in "Facts," p. 9). "These funds Abbas Effendi appropriated and with these made his charitable gifts (?) leaving the forty dependents of the younger brothers to live as best they could." (Mrs. Templeton, p. 9.) This excluding the protesters from their share of the income and offerings embittered the strife, at the same time weakening their ability to propagate their contention. Bitterness and enmity increased; recriminations and accusations inflamed the passions of both sides.

Mirza Abul Fazl, the philosopher and historian of the movement, gives, as a partisan of Abbas Effendi, an account of these times in his "Bahai Proofs" (pages 116-118.) He describes the "ruinous discords and divisions," "the world-consuming flame of jealousy and hatred of the people of error," "the hard hearts of the men of hostility," "the animosity and groundless pride," "the senseless hatred, degradation and shame of the violators of the covenant." He gives the opprobrious title of *Nakazeen* to Mehmet Ali's party. He continues, "The evil intrigues, calumnies, false pamphlets and accusations, evil tongues and cursings of the *Nakazeen* divided the community and filled it with foul odors." Several outside parties tried to act as mediators and bring about a reconciliation. Among these were the British Consul at Haifa and Mrs. Templeton. The younger brothers

agreed to the terms. Abbas Effendi was formally requested to show the Will before impartial witnesses and all were to abide by its word. "This he resolutely refused to do and he must stand condemned for this before all impartial men" (Mrs. Templeton). After the failure of these efforts at reconciliation, the anger and bitterness waxed hotter. To quote Abul Fazl again: "The Nakazeen cursed and insulted the visitors to the tomb of the Blessed Perfection," so that there was danger of its desecration. "Consequently Abbas Effendi asked the local (Turkish) Government to supply a guard to accompany and protect" his party. Abbas also went to Tiberias and made complaint to the Government there. (See Facts, etc., Khadin's letter). As a result of all these conditions, "The people of hostility and violation," says Abul Fazl, "availed themselves of political machinations," in other words, Mehmet Ali's party, "those dwellers in hellfire" (p. 136) appealed to the "fanatical men of those lands," *i. e.*, those same Turkish Authorities. Mehmet Ali Effendi formally complained to the Governor of Damascus against Abbas, sending a special messenger. Note (See Mr. Howard MacNutt's Interview with Badi Ullah, Star of the West July 13, 1912). They accused Abbas of retaining their stipends, of confiscating their patrimony, including the father's gold watch which had been donated to Mehmet Ali. Above all, according to the interesting narrative of Abbas' sister, Behiah Khanum (Phelp's Life, p. 81), they made accusation that the shrine which was being erected on Mt. Carmel, "was intended as a fort, in which Abbas and his followers would intrench themselves, defy the Government, and endeavor to gain possession of this part of Syria." In answer to these charges and counter-charges of the "Greatest Branch of God" and the "Mightiest Branch of God," a telegram was received from the Sultan to the Governor "issuing a fire-mase, decreeing the original order, by which Baha's family were confined within the walls of Acca." After *nine* years of quarrelling (*nine* being the sacred number of Bahais) this order was put in force, 1901 A. D. They were still confined to Acca in 1906 when I visited Haifa. I saw the shrine and the fine residence of Baha at Haifa, just besides the English Mission. It deserved to be emphasized that the *cause*

of the Bahai leaders being restricted to Acca was not religious persecution by Moslems but *their own quarrellings*. The numbers of Bahais living at Acca then was about ninety (Phelps, p. 109), and of them thirty (Abul Fazl, p. 118) or forty (Mrs. Templeton, Facts, etc., p. 9) were of the opponents of Abbas.

In Persia, where Bahais number several hundred thousands, a small, but influential minority rejected the authority of Abbas Effendi. These were placed under the ban, anathematized, and ostracized. For example, one of them, Mirza Jalil of Khai was driven out of his house, which was destroyed by Shiah, instigated by new Bahais. Another adherent of Mehmet Ali, Mirza Khalil of Tabriz was completely ostracized, according to command received from Acca. His daughter, who was married to a new Bahai, was allowed to visit her parents only once a year, though living in the same city, and when she died they did not give them word till six days after the funeral. Another one libeled the man to his employer in hope of injuring him.

The quarrel spread to America also. In the United States, following the opportunity afforded by the Parliament of Religions at the Chicago Exposition, Bahaism had gained some converts. The chief representative was Mr. Kheiralla, who assisted by Mr. Howard MacNutt published a voluminous work on the Theology and Apologetics of Bahaism. Mr. Kheiralla rejected Abbas Effendi's pretensions and Mirza Abul Fazl was sent to supersede him as oriental representative of the sect. In the United States, also, the Abdul-Bahais greatly outnumber the old Bahais (written Behais by them). According to the last census (1906) the Behais numbered twenty-eight persons, confined to Chicago and Kenosha, Wis., the Bahais numbered 1,280 persons in twenty-four organizations. The feeling on both sides is still bitter and vindictive. The Bahai monthly, "The Star of the West," shows that the fire of hatred still burns. In the July 4, 1913, number Abbas Effendi, "the prophet of love," says; Because "the stench, vile odor, of the Nakazeen was spread in that city (Chicago) there was a stagnation. The cause in Chicago is stationary." "Hold aloof from the Violators," he cries out, while in theory he proclaims "Associate with all with spirituality and fragrance." Mr. Kheiralla continues as leader

of the minority in America, though he declares that "Abbas' agent, Abdul Karim, promised me plenty of money to renounce them" (The Three Questions, p. 23).

Abbas Effendi, influenced by the opposition, has put a veil over his high claims and instructed his followers to speak of him as simply Abdul Baha, "the Servant of Baha," which is usually translated by them "the servant of God." The protesters reply, "Rather let the title be Abdul-Hawa, 'the servant of air,'" *i. e.*, windy and bombastic. But notwithstanding his disavowals Abdul Baha allows himself to be assigned a position both inconsistent with his own words and with the teachings of Baha. Mr. Phelps, his disciple and biographer says (Page XXXIV). "Abdul Baha, styled 'Our Lord,' 'Our Master,' is regarded with a love and a *veneration* second only, *if indeed second*, to that which they bestow upon Baha Ullah. He is classed as the third or last of the Divine Messengers of the present Dispensation." The Bab, Baha and Abbas constitute, as it were, the Bahai trinity. Abdul-Baha commended and approved for publication an ode written by Thornton Chase in which he is glorified with the following epithets among many others.

"O Thou Enlightener of the Spirits of Men! Thou Heart of the World!

"Thou Physician of Souls! Thou Prince of Peace!

"Thou Right Arm of the Almighty! Thou Lord of the Sabbath of Ages!

"Thou Mystery of God!"

Another disciple, Mrs. Grundy (Ten Days at Acca, p. 105) writes, "Within Abdul Baha is the inexhaustible Fountain of Knowledge. He is the Bazaar of God, where everything humanity needs may be found without money and without price." Mr. Remey (A Hebrew Bahai) writes (Star. Sept. 8, 1913) "The Divine Spirit is manifested in Abdul Baha—the *Branch*. He is the unique channel through which the Power of God is conveyed to each individual believer. He is the intermediary. The spiritual well-being of every Bahai depends on his connection with Abdul Baha."

The history I have narrated above refutes these various pretensions of Bahatism, its arrogant claims, its "great swelling

words" more forcibly than logic or the judgments and opinions of myself and others.

Abdul Baha Abbas was freed from restriction to the city of Acca after the establishment of the Turkish Constitution. He took up residence in Egypt. Thence he has made several tours to Europe and one to America in 1912. On his lips he bore the message of love, universal brotherhood, unity of mankind, peace. We can certainly say to him: "Physician! Heal thyself!" The conduct of Abdul Baha and his followers towards the brothers and their followers, as well as that of Bahais to the Azalis, gives the lie to their fine professions of toleration and love to all religions and all men. Well may we exclaim with Prof. Browne; "Where is the restraining power, when they can show such *bitter animosity* against those of their own household!"

A study of their history in the period of the Bab, 1844-1850, during the domination of Azal 1850-68, during the domination of Baha, 1868-1892, or under the lordship of Abbas Effendi, 1892 to the present, reveals the utter emptiness of any claim to Divinity on the part of the leaders. It shows no new revelation, no superior combination of truths and morals. Neither in the persons nor in the systems is there anything to draw away the allegiance of any one who truly comprehends the person and work of the pure and spotless Saviour of mankind, the Lord Jesus Christ.