

A NEW RELIGION.

BY THE EDITOR.

[CONCLUDED.]

ABBAS EFFENDI.

Babism counts more adherents in Persia than one might expect considering the fact that it is a proscribed faith. It counts adherents also in Mesopotamia and in Syria and other parts of the world. Even America can claim a goodly number of adherents to the new faith. In Chicago there is a Babist congregation, the speaker and representative of which is Ibrahim George Kheiralla, and a New York lawyer, Mr. Myron H. Phelps, visited Abbas Effendi, the present representative of Mirza Huseyn Ali's family. We shall in the following pages present a *resumé* of both books, that of Mr. Phelps, which gives a description of the life and teachings of Abbas Effendi, and that of Mr. Kheiralla, which describes the faith and doctrines of the Babists who believe in Beha Ullah.

Mr. Myron H. Phelps believes that the Christian idea has lost its hold on the Western nations. Materialism is increasing and the ethical, social, and political standards need some fresh spiritual impulse, but where shall we find it, if Christianity itself cannot give it. Mr. Phelps believes that it may be supplied by the teachings of Beha Ullah and his son and spiritual successor Abbas Effendi. Convinced of the importance of the Babist faith, Mr. Phelps went on a pilgrimage to Acre and visited the present representative of the most prominent branch of the Babist faith, Abbas Effendi, the son of Beha Ullah, and he undertook to write down for Western readers his life and teachings as he had it stated by Abbas Effendi himself.

The introduction to the book has been written by the Nestor of the Babist religion, Professor Edward G. Browne, whom he had the good fortune to meet in Cairo. Professor Browne in the preface dwells on the continued spread of the Babist faith, and he asks:

“How is it that the Christian Doctrine, the highest and noblest which the world has ever known, though supported by all the resources of Western civilisation, can only count its converts in Muhammedan lands by twos and threes, while Babism can reckon



ABBAS EFFENDI.

Gusn-i-Azam (The Greatest Branch). Taken over thirty years ago.

them by thousands? The answer, to my mind, is plain as the sun at midday. Western Christianity, save in the rarest cases, is more Western than Christian, more racial than religious; and, by dallying with doctrines plainly incompatible with the obvious meaning

of its Founder's words, such as the theories of 'racial supremacy,' 'imperial destiny,' 'survival of the fittest,' and the like, grows steadily more rather than less material. Did Christ belong to a 'dominant



MUHAMMAD-ALI EFFENDI.
Gusn-i-Akbar (The Mightiest Branch). Taken 1900.

race,' or even to a European or 'white' race? Nay, the 'dominant race' was represented by Pontius Pilate, the governor, who was

compelled to abandon his personal leanings toward clemency under constraint of 'political necessities' arising out of Rome's 'imperial destiny.'

"It is in manifest conflict with several other theories of life which practically regulate the conduct of all States and most individuals in the Western world.

"Many even of the most excellent and earnest Christian missionaries—not to speak of laymen—whom Europe and America send to Asia and Africa would be far less shocked at the idea of receiving on terms of intimacy in the house or at their table a white-skinned atheist than a dark-skinned believer. The dark-skinned races to whom the Christian missionaries go are not fools, and have no object in practising that curious self-deception wherewith so many excellent and well-meaning European and American Christians blind themselves to the obvious fact that they attach much more importance to race than religion; they clearly see the inconsistency of those who, while professing to believe that the God they worship incarnated Himself in the form of an Asiatic man,—for this is what it comes to,—do nevertheless habitually and almost instinctively express, both in speech and action, contempt for the 'native' of Asia."

There is an additional reason which gives the advantage to the Babist propagandists over the Christian missionary. While the latter explicitly or by implication rejects the Koran and Mohammed's prophetic mission, the former admits both and only denies their finality. Christian missionaries waste most of their efforts in proving the errors of Islam, but they forget that in destroying the Moslem's faith in their own religion, they are mostly making converts to scepticism or atheism, and they very rarely succeed in convincing them of the truth of Christianity. The Babist does not destroy but builds upon the religious convictions of people. He finds a foundation ready laid, but the Christian missionary deems it necessary to destroy the foundation and finds himself incapable of laying another one.

Babism makes a new synthesis of old ideas. It is the entire Eastern civilisation united into a new yet thoroughly consistent system. Not only do the Babists incorporate in their faith the traditions of the Old and New Testaments, and of the Koran, but also some most significant documents of the Manichæans of the Ismaili propagandists, the early Sufis, and also the spirit of profane poets such as Hafiz, the immortal poet of love and wine. Professor Browne in his introductory comments to Mr. Phelps' book further

calls special attention to the attitude of the Babists with whom love of Beha Ullah is paramount. It is interesting to notice first, their uncertainty as to the authorship of many of their own religious



حضرة نخصن الله الاظهر ضياء الله

ZIA 'ULLAH EFFENDI.

Gusni-At'har (The Holiest Branch). Departed October, 1898.

books; second the unfixed character of most important doctrines such as immortality of the soul; third, their inclination to ignore

and even suppress facts which they regard as useless or hurtful to their present aims. All these marks are characteristic of a growing faith. The Babists are by no means broad and tolerant. If they came into power in Persia, a case which is by no means impossible, the persecuted would be apt to turn persecutors.

The Behaists are especially fond of listening to the reading of the epistles of Beha Ullah which are mostly rhapsodies, interspersed with ethical maxims, rarely touching on questions of metaphysics, ontology, or eschatology. They show a dislike to historical investigation and says Professor Browne, "Some of them even showed great dislike at his attempts to trace the evolution of Babi doctrine from the Shia sect of Muhammedans through that of the Shaykhi school (in which the Bab and many of his early disciples were educated), to the forms which it successively assumed in the hands of the Bab and his followers." An English diplomat who knew the Babists thoroughly once said to Professor Browne: "They regard you as one who, having before his eyes a beautiful flower, is not content to enjoy its beauty and fragrance, but must needs grub at its roots to ascertain from what foul manure it derived its sustenance."

The first part of Mr. Phelps's book is devoted to Beha Ullah's life which we learn here from the lips of his daughter Behiah Khanum, one of the Three Leaves, so-called, of the new prophet's family. The story is interesting in so far as it adds the zest of a personal narrative to the history of Beha Ullah as related by Professor Browne in his several accounts of the Babist movement. We learn also of the accusations made against Mirza Yahya who is supposed to have poisoned Beha Ullah, the father of Abbas Effendi, but the attending physician walked around the bed of the patient, and repeated three times, "I will give my life—I will give my life—I will give my life." Nine days later the physician died. Another physician was called in, but he looked upon the case as hopeless. Nevertheless Beha Ullah grew stronger and finally overcame the effects of the poison.

A footnote informs us that the Ezelis, the adherents of Mirza Yahya, claim that Beha Ullah had prepared the poison for the purpose of killing Mirza Yahya, but the dish of rice containing the poison was prepared with onions, a taste which Yahya disliked; and Beha Ullah, thinking that his scheme had been betrayed, deemed it best to take a little of the poisoned rice, whereupon he almost died of its effects. Mr. Phelps simply states the narrative without giving his own opinion, and there is no need to believe the accusa-



حضرة غصن الله الانور براج الله

BADI 'ULLAH EFFENDI.

Gusn-i-Anwar (The Most Luminous Branch). Taken 1900.

tion of either party. It is quite common that fanatics are apt to accuse their rivals in dignity of the absurdest crimes, and we have here a highly colored story on both sides which may be paralleled in almost all the religions of history. The fact that Beha Ullah fell sick cannot be doubted; that he had eaten rice together with his half-brother, his rival in the leadership of the Babist faith, may also be true, but that either had made an attempt to poison the other may be regarded as highly improbable.

When Beha Ullah died a new schism split up the Babist church, and Abbas Effendi, the "Greatest Branch," became the recognised leader of one party, and Mohammed Ali Effendi, the "Mightiest Branch," the leader of another party.

The philosophy of Behaism, especially its psychology and its ethics, are related by Mr. Phelps, and he adds a few discourses all of which are greatly interesting on the standards of truth, on the nature of God and the universe, on spirit, the parable of the seed, reincarnation, heavenly wisdom, on heaven and hell, on love, talks to children, the poor, the prayer, and similar topics.

A most charming picture of Abbas Effendi's daily life is given in the first chapter and brings the personal appearance of the man more home to us than can be done by an exposition of his philosophy and psychology. Mr. Phelps describes the master of Akka in the first chapter of his book.

THE MASTER OF AKKA.

"Imagine that we are in the ancient house of the still more ancient city of Akka, which was for a month my home. The room in which we are faces the opposite wall of a narrow paved street, which an active man might clear at a single bound. Above is the bright sun of Palestine; to the right a glimpse of the old sea-wall and the blue Mediterranean. As we sit we hear a singular sound rising from the pavement, thirty feet below—faint at first, and increasing. It is like the murmur of human voices. We open the window and look down. We see a crowd of human beings with patched and tattered garments. Let us descend to the street and see who these are.

"It is a noteworthy gathering. Many of these men are blind; many more are pale, emaciated, or aged. Some are on crutches; some are so feeble that they can barely walk. Most of the women are closely veiled, but enough are uncovered to cause us well to believe that, if veils were lifted, more pain and misery would be seen.



MOUSA EFFENDI, EL KALEEM. THE ELDEST BROTHER OF BEHA ULLAH.*
*Mousa means "Moses," and El Kaleem "Speaker With God."

Some of them carry babes with pinched and sallow faces. There are perhaps a hundred in this gathering, and besides, many children. They are of all the races one meets in these streets—Syrians, Arabs, Ethiopians, and many others.

“These people are ranged against the walls or seated on the ground, apparently in an attitude of expectation;—for what do they wait? Let us wait with them.

“We have not long to wait. A door opens and a man comes out. He is of middle stature, strongly built. He wears flowing light-coloured robes. On his head is a light buff fez with a white cloth wound about it. He is perhaps sixty years of age. His long grey hair rests on his shoulders. His forehead is broad, full, and high, his nose slightly aquiline, his moustaches and beard, the latter full though not heavy, nearly white. His eyes are grey and blue, large, and both soft and penetrating. His bearing is simple, but there is grace, dignity, and even majesty about his movements. He passes through the crowd, and as he goes utters words of salutation. We do not understand them, but we see the benignity and the kindness of his countenance. He stations himself at a narrow angle of the street and motions to the people to come towards him. They crowd up a little too insistently. He pushes them gently back and lets them pass him one by one. As they come they hold their hands extended. In each open palm he places some small coins. He knows them all. He caresses them with his hand on the face, on the shoulders, on the head. Some he stops and questions. An aged negro who hobbles up, he greets with some kindly inquiry; the old man’s broad face breaks into a sunny smile, his white teeth glistening against his ebony skin as he replies. He stops a woman with a babe and fondly strokes the child. As they pass, some kiss his hand. To all he says, *‘Marhabbah, marhabbah’*—‘Well done, well done!’

“So they all pass him. The children have been crowding around him with extended hands, but to them he has not given. However, at the end, as he turns to go, he throws a handful of copers over his shoulder, for which they scramble.

“During this time this friend of the poor has not been unattended. Several men wearing red fezes, and with earnest and kindly faces, followed him from the house, stood near him and aided him in regulating the crowd, and now, with reverent manner and at a respectful distance, follow him away. When they address him they call him ‘Master.’

“This scene you may see almost any day of the year in the



KHADIM ULLAH. THE SERVANT OF BEHA ULLAH.*

Khadim Ullah served Beha Ullah faithfully for over forty years. He survived his master and died in 1901. We are informed that he supported the cause of Mohammed Ali Effendi.

*The name Khadim Ullah means "Servant of God."

streets of Akka. There are other scenes like it, which come only at the beginning of the winter season. In the cold weather which is approaching, the poor will suffer, for, as in all cities, they are thinly clad. Some day at this season, if you are advised of the place and time, you may see the poor of Akka gathered at one of the shops where clothes are sold, receiving cloaks from the Master. Upon many, especially the most infirm or crippled, he himself places the garment, adjusts it with his own hands, and strokes it approvingly, as if to say, 'There! Now you will do well.' There are five or six hundred poor in Akka, to all of whom he gives a warm garment each year.

"On feast days he visits the poor at their homes. He chats with them, inquires into their health and comfort, mentions by name those who are absent, and leaves gifts for all.

"Nor is it the beggars only that he remembers. Those respectable poor who cannot beg, but must suffer in silence—those whose daily labor will not support their families—to these he sends bread secretly. His left hand knoweth not what his right hand doeth.

"All the people know him and love him—the rich and the poor, the young and the old—even the babe leaping in its mother's arms. If he hears of anyone sick in the city—Moslem or Christian, or of any other sect, it matters not—he is each day at their bedside, or sends a trusty messenger. If a physician is needed, and the patient poor, he brings or sends one, and also the necessary medicine. If he finds a leaking roof or a broken window menacing health, he summons a workman, and waits himself to see the breach repaired. If any one is in trouble,—if a son or a brother is thrown into prison, or he is threatened at law, or falls into any difficulty too heavy for him,—it is to the Master that he straightway makes appeal for counsel or for aid. Indeed, for counsel all come to him, rich as well as poor. He is the kind father of all the people.

"This man who gives so freely must be rich, you think? No far otherwise. Once his family was the wealthiest in all Persia. But this friend of the lowly, like the Galilean, has been oppressed by the great. *For fifty years he and his family have been exiles and prisoners.* Their property has been confiscated and wasted, and but little has been left to him. Now that he has not much he must spend little for himself that he may give more to the poor. His garments are usually of cotton, and the cheapest that can be bought. Often his friends in Persia—for this man is indeed rich in friends, thousands and tens of thousands who would eagerly lay

down their lives at his word—send him costly garments. These he wears once, out of respect for the sender; then he gives them away.

“He does not permit his family to have luxuries. He himself eats but once a day, and then bread, olives, and cheese suffice him.



A PREACHER OF BEHAISM.

“His room is small and bare, with only a matting on the stone floor. His habit is to sleep upon this floor. Not long ago a friend, thinking that this must be hard for a man of advancing years, presented him with a bed fitted with springs and mattress. So these stand in his room also, but are rarely used. ‘For how,’ he says.

'can I bear to sleep in luxury when so many of the poor have not even shelter?' So he lies upon the floor and covers himself only with his cloak.

"For more than thirty-four years this man has been a prisoner at Akka. But his jailors have become his friends. The Governor of the city, the Commander of the Army Corps, respect and honour him as though he were their brother. No man's opinion or recommendation has greater weight with them. He is the beloved of all the city, high and low.

"This master is as simple as his soul is great. He claims nothing for himself—neither comfort, nor honour, nor repose. Three or four hours of sleep suffice him; all the remainder of his time and all his strength are given to the succour of those who suffer, in spirit or in body. 'I am,' he says, 'the servant of God.'

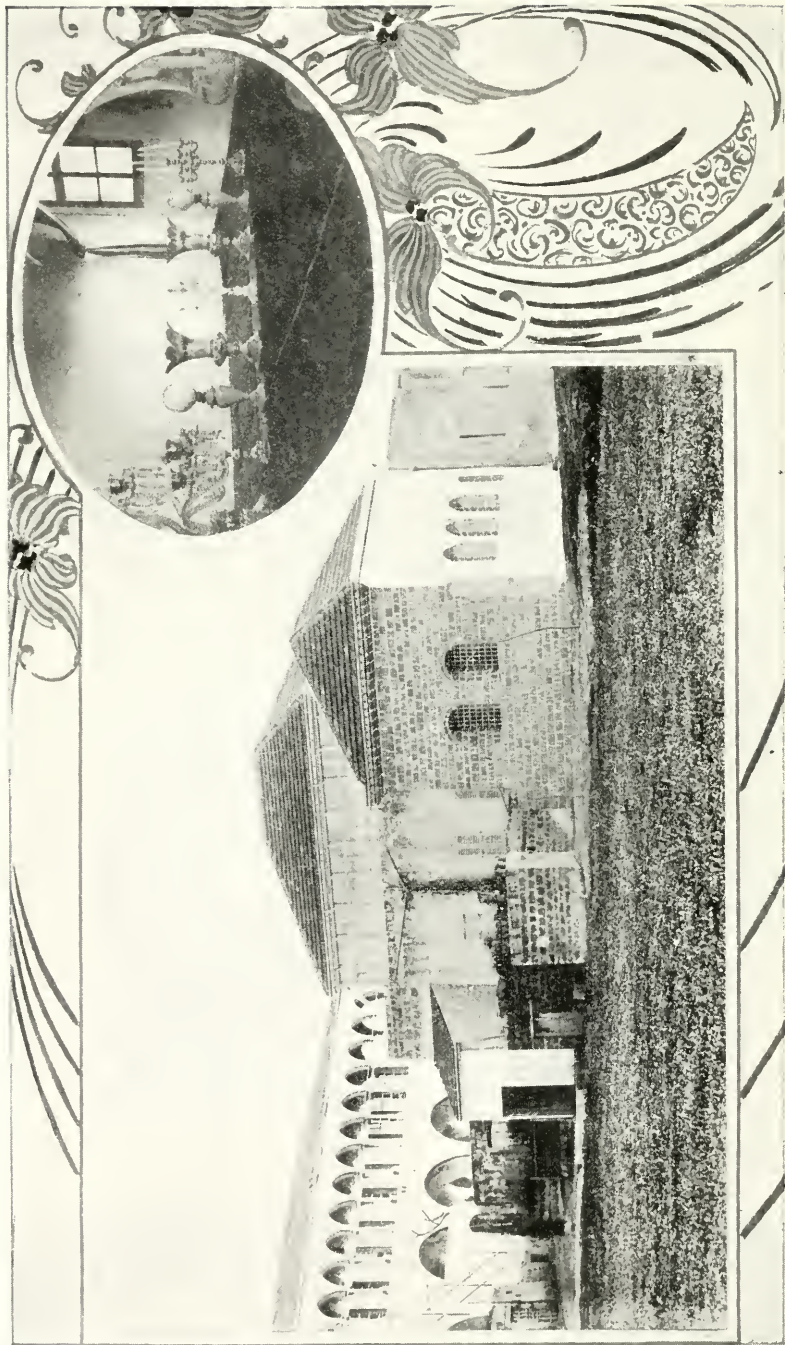
"Such is Abbas Effendi, the Master of Akka."

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS OF BEHAISM.

For the sake of completeness we have to add that the Behaist Church has been rent again by a schism which at first sight seems to be a personal matter,—question of leadership.

For a long time Abbas Effendi, the oldest son of Beha Ullah, has been the recognised head of the Church. He is the son of the wife whom Beha Ullah married first, some time before he had declared himself to be the Manifestation of God, and this Abbas is known to Behaists as "the greatest branch." Three young half-brothers of Abbas Effendi were born to Beha Ullah by another wife and among them Mohammed Ali was called by his father "the mightiest branch."

For a long time the leadership of "the greatest branch" was accepted without objection, but finally a dissension arose between Abbas Effendi on one side and his younger half-brothers on the other, and the Behaists in Persia and other countries began to doubt the divine inspiration of "the greatest branch." In fact some of them declared that Abbas Effendi has changed the doctrine of his father and has introduced some innovations which are contrary to the spirit of Behaism. It seems that several Behaists, including some of the congregations that exist in the United States, no longer recognise Beha Ullah's oldest son "the greatest branch," but look to Mohammed Ali, "the mightiest branch," as their spiritual guide and head of the Church. Abbas Effendi claims that his authority is absolute and that it rests on the testament left him by his father



THE TOMB OF BEHÁ 'U'LLAH. The Interior of the Tomb. The Palace of Behjá

Beha Ullah, and it is true that Beha Ullah declared that his sons, among them "the greatest branch," should spread his fragrances, but similar declarations have been made of the other branch, and so the opponents of Abbas Effendi claim that Beha Ullah intended to have his son, Mohammed Ali, succeed Abbas Effendi, and that the leadership at present has passed to "the mightiest branch."

We here will omit as much as possible purely personal complaints and limit our report to matters of doctrine.

The report of Mr. Phelps already indicates that Abbas Effendi must somehow have become acquainted with ideas that seem to be Buddhistic, and a critical reader of Mr. Phelps' book might be inclined to think that these thoughts were imputed to him by his interviewer, for Mr. Phelps is well acquainted with Buddhism, and so he might have suggested some of the answers that indicate a similarity with Buddhist doctrines, but such is not the case. Abbas Effendi has actually gone away from the simple Semitic soul conception, and teaches a theory of reincarnation that might not be unacceptable to the disciples of Shakya Muni. On the other hand, he surrenders the rigidity of monotheism, which has always been the cardinal point in the religion of the Semites, the Jews as well as the Mohammedans, and propounds a philosophical trinity that would appeal to Christians influenced by modern philosophy.

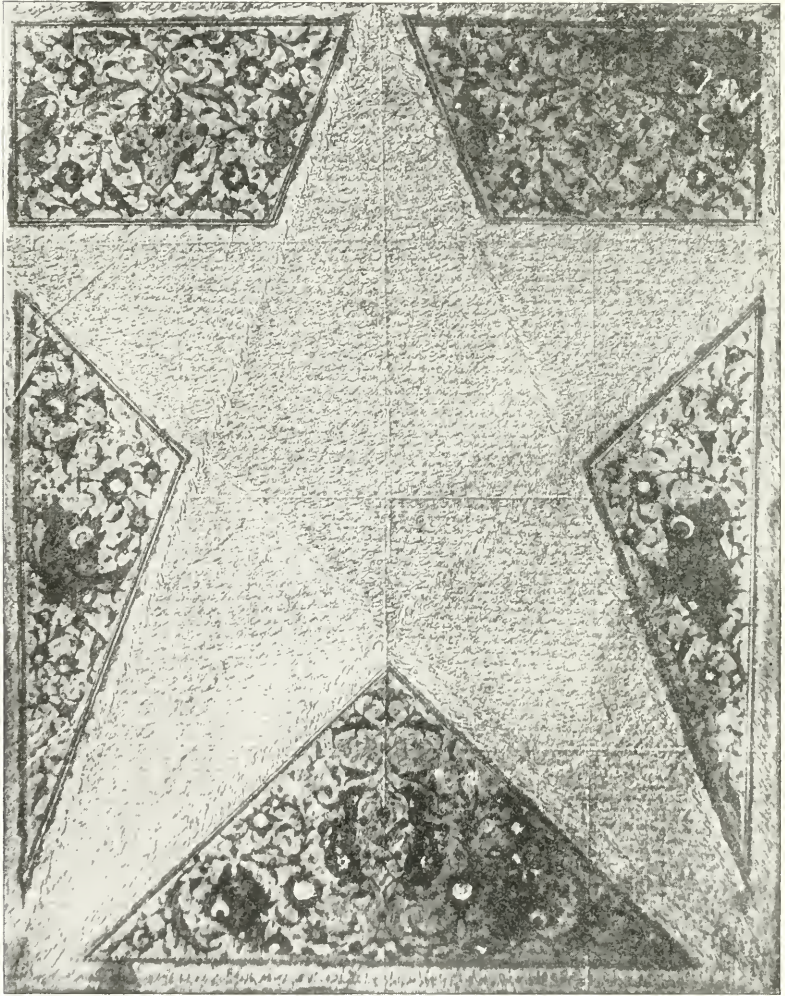
A lady, Mrs. Rosamond Templeton, who visited Acre and showed great interest in Behaism, although she herself is not a Behaist but a Christian, tried to reconcile the two parties and proposed that the brothers should meet on a certain date at the tomb of their father, which is considered as their common shrine, and show their testaments because Abbas Effendi bases upon his testament the claim of leadership. But Abbas Effendi would not accede to the terms. He insisted on his claims and refused to show his father's testament to his brothers. Mrs. Templeton's correspondence is published as a pamphlet* and we here reproduce the most essential passages of her letter to Abbas Effendi:

"The principal accusation which you made against your brothers was that they have refused to obey you as the chief of the religion of 'Bab' at d'Acre.

"You state that your authority is based on a Testament given by your venerable father, and you say that this Testament is in your possession and that it has been read by Colonel Bedrey-Bey. On leaving your house I went directly to the house of your brothers in order to present to them your objection. Their answer is that they

* *Facts for Behaists.* Translated and edited by I. G. Kheiralla. 1901.

are absolutely ready to obey the Testament, which has been given by their father on condition that they can see this Testament written by the hand of Beha Ullah. This question, therefore, is a simple one, Effendi; I propose that you, Abbas Effendi, Mohammed Ali Effendi,



A TABLET IN THE HANDWRITING OF THE BAH.

Bedi Ullah Effendi and myself, with three witnesses chosen by you and three chosen by your brothers, an interpreter, an English photographer whom I will bring—I propose that these twelve persons shall meet at the sacred tomb of your father at noon on the 7th day of

this authority you would be quite ready to read it before witnesses and to send photographic copies of it to Persia.”

Having refused to submit his father's Testament to the inspection of his brothers, the opponents of Abbas Effendi declare that he cannot make good his claim. Moreover, they believe the Beha Ullah was the great and only manifestation of God and that his sons are only venerable expounders of his doctrines but not new manifestations. In other words, they are regarded as inferior to him, and Beha Ullah alone is believed to be ‘exalted above all those who are upon the earth and in heaven.’ Mr. Kheiralla in the name of the Behaists that have rejected Abbas Effendi's claim declares:

“Beha Ullah, since He declared Himself, has conclusively proved from all Scriptures that He was the Promised One. He has uttered tablets and written epistles which attracted the hearts and refreshed the souls. The noble life He lived astonished and impressed the people, and His fame spread to all countries. All who knew him acknowledged His Supremacy and were awed by the loftiness and greatness of His character.

“His claim that He was the Promised One of the Holy Scriptures and that His Appearance was the Greatest, and that it will take place only once in every five thousand years, may be found in His many writings. He also proved that a higher virtue and greater grace distinguished His day.”

The teachings of Abbas Effendi may be characterised by the following quotations:*

Abbas Effendi, in reply to a question of a Behaist concerning the return of spirit (i. e. reincarnation), distinguishes five kinds of spirit. He says:

“As to what thou askest concerning the Spirit and its return to this world of humanity, and this elemental space, know that the Spirit in general is divided into five sorts, the Vegetable Spirit, the Animal Spirit, the Human Spirit, the Spirit of Faith, and the Divine Spirit of Sanctity.”

For the three first spirits there is no light, for they are subject to “reversions, production and corruption.” In other words they are mortal. They originate and pass away. There is immortality only for the Spirit of Faith and the Divine Spirit of Sanctity. Abbas Effendi says:

* *Tablets from Abdul Beha Abbas to some American Believers in the Year 1900.* The Truth Concerning: (A) Re-Incarnation; (B) Vicarious Atonement; (C) The Trinity; (D) Real Christianity. Published by the Board of Counsel, Carnegie Hall, New York, 1901.

“The Spirit of Faith, which is of the Kingdom (of God) consists of the all-comprehending Grace, and the Perfect Attainment (or salvation, fruition, achievement, etc., as above), and the power of Sanctity, and the Divine Effulgence from the Sun of Truth on Luminous, Light-seeking essences, from the Presence of the Divine Unity. And by this Spirit is the Life of the Spirit of man, when it is fortified thereby, as Christ (to whom be Glory!) saith: ‘That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.’ And this Spirit hath both restitution and return, inasmuch as it consists of the Light of God, and the unconditioned Grace. So, having regard to this state and station, Christ (to whom be Glory!) announced that John the Baptist was Elias, ‘who was for to come’ before Christ. (Matt. xi:14.) And the likeness of this station is as that of lamps kindled (from one another): for these, in respect to their glasses and oil-burners, are different, but in respect to their Light, ONE, and in respect to their illumination, ONE; nay, each one is identical with the other, without imputation of plurality, or diversity, or multiplicity, or separateness. This is the Truth, and beyond the Truth there is only error.”

The idea of trinity appeals to Abbas Effendi and he defends it on the following considerations:

“There are necessarily three things, the Giver of the Grace, and the Grace, and the Recipient of the Grace; the Source of the Effulgence, and the Effulgence, and the Recipient of the Effulgence; the Illuminator, and the Illumination, and the Illuminated. Look at the Mosaic cycle—the Lord, and Moses, and the Fire (i. e., the Burning Bush), the intermediary; and in the Messianic cycle, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost the intermediary; and in the Muhammedan cyle, the Lord and the Apostle (or Messenger Mohammed) and Gabriel (for, as the Mohammedans believe, Gabriel brought the Revelation from God to Muhammad,) the intermediary. Look at the Sun and its rays, and the heat which results from its rays: the rays and the heat are but two effects of the Sun, but inseparable from it and sent out from it; yet the Sun is one in its essence, unique in its real identity, single in its Attributes, neither is it possible that anything should resemble it. Such is the Essence of the Truth concerning the Unity, the real doctrine of the Singularity, the undiluted reality as to the (Divine) Sanctity.

“As to the question concerning the Atonement on the part of the Holy Redeemer, I have explained this to thee by word of mouth in a plain and detailed manner, devoid of ambiguities, and I have made it clear to thee as the Sun at noonday. (1.)

“And I ask God to open unto thee the Gates, that thou mayest

thyself apprehend the true meanings of these mysteries: Verily. He is the confirmer, the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

While he approaches Christianity in the question of trinity, Abbas Effendi rejects “Vicarious Atonement.” He says:

“There is no such thing as ‘Vicarious Atonement,’ as held and taught by the theologians and ‘Churches.’ As it was the custom in the old times to offer sacrifices for sins, so did Christ (Glory be to Him!) say in substance, ‘I offer myself as an example and as a sacrifice for the safety and salvation of the people, i. e., I am willing to accept every disaster and calamity for the sake of guiding the people’—even death, for He was necessarily opposing everybody. I have accepted all things that the people may know the Truth as it is. If I wish to guide you to Jerusalem, I must personally accept the hardships of the journey first. So Jesus Christ first accepted all the trials, sufferings and death for the purpose of quieting the people. Had He not so accepted He could not have finished His Work.”

Reincarnation is explained by the instance of John the Baptist who according to Christ was Elijah. Abbas Effendi says:

“John the Baptist was right in saying that he was not Elijah, considering material body, name, time (he came 900 years after Elijah), place, etc. Christ was right in declaring that John the Baptist was Elijah in Spirit; thus both were right. The Divine Spirit is One only, no matter how many it is manifested in or through.”

Mr. Kheiralla had visited Acre after he had become a believer in Beha Ullah. He saw Abbas Effendi and accepted him at the time as the representative of Behaism, but when he became acquainted with Abbas Effendi’s doctrine of immortality which to him implies destruction of personal identity, and when he heard of the complaints of Abbas Effendi’s younger brothers, he changed his mind and became an adherent of “the mightiest branch.” Mr. Kheiralla says in his Behaist pamphlet which appeared under the title “The Three Questions”:

“While I was in Syria visiting, I was not allowed by the diplomatic policy of Abbas Effendi to meet any of the Branches, his brothers, or any of the family, or any of their followers, just like all those who went there and visited him. So I remained ignorant of the facts.

“Abbas Effendi had, while there, honored me to the utmost degree in the presence of his followers. This was the chief cause of my delusion. It is the case of all those who have been there to visit him.

For he and his followers are past masters in the art of treating visitors wonderfully fine."

As to points of doctrine the views of Behaism represented by Mr. Kheiralla may be condensed in the following quotations:

"Abbas Effendi has taught plainly that the human spirit is perishable, like the vegetable spirit, and the end of it is corruption or mortality; and that it 'consists of the rational (or logical, reasonable) faculty which apprehends general ideas and things intelligible and perceptible.'

"The Pre-existence of man's soul was taught by Beha Ullah, by the prophets and by Christ.

"Beha Ullah taught us in the book of Heykle, that there are some souls in the Pavillion of Greatness and Might, who though they have never been upon the earth, yet they shall come here to help the Cause of God and promulgate His Word.

"Beha Ullah taught us also, that if we come to this earth and do not attain the truth for which we came, we shall return to the spiritual realms and resume the positions in which we were before our coming to this earth.

"The Bible, as well as the Koran, teaches, that God cometh to judge the living and the dead. How can this be true if there were no Return of the Soul?

"So we see, that the teachings of Abbas Effendi are not in accordance with the teachings of Beha, neither with the teachings of Christ whom he quoted. Christ taught us, as did Beha, that the human soul or spirit is immortal, and that it keeps its identity after death and that it has its own existence and is distinguishable from all other spirits or souls. For Christ taught that the soul of the rich man, after death, went to Hell, and there it kept its own individuality and was separated from the Spirit of Abraham, and from that of Lazarus; and that it conversed with Abraham from Hell to Heaven, and that it was not 'the Spirit of Faith, which is of the Kingdom of God.'

"Beha Ullah taught, that His appearance has ended the manifestations, for one complete thousand years; but He foretold us that somebody will claim to be a manifestation, and warned us from following him.

"Abbas Effendi has proved beyond doubt, that he is the one against whom the warning was uttered.

"Beha Ullah strictly taught us, in nearly every tablet He uttered to observe the Oneness and Singleness of God. He declared Himself to be the Father and Comforter. In the letter to the Pope,

He said: 'This is indeed the Father, whereof Isaiah gave you tidings, and the Comforter whom the Spirit (Christ) promised.'

"Beha Ullah taught, in many of his utterances, that there is no son to Him, no successor, no equal, no agent.

"Abbas Effendi teaches, that he is divinely the son of Beha Ullah, and His successor. If he is the successor of Beha, he is equal to Beha, for the successor is not less than the succeeded. Also the son is not less than the Father. In both cases, Abbas Effendi is a claimant; and the teachings of Beha Ullah do not permit this.

"Beha Ullah had foreseen the probability of the schism and so he left the following rule for the settlement of disputed points in *Kitab-i-Ackdas*, p. 20; he said:

"'If ye differ in a matter, bring it to God, so long as the Sun is shining from the Horizon of this heaven; but when He sets, bring it to what he uttered, verily it suffices the worlds.'

"Abbas Effendi, and his disciples teach that Beha Ullah was like all the other prophets; only he was a greater Manifestation, because He was a larger Mirror. According to their teachings we must conclude that Beha Ullah was not what He claimed, and was not the Father whom the Christians expected. If Beha Ullah was like Jesus, He would be merely a vine, like Jesus, though a larger one. But He cannot be the Lord of the vineyard, because the Lord of the vineyard cannot be one of the vines which He planted. Jesus said, that He was the vine, the disciples were the branches, and the Father was the Husbandman. There is a great difference between the vines and the *Lord of the vineyard* or the *Husbandman*. Beha's superiority is not realized by Abbas Effendi, or for some reason he does not wish to confess it.

"This point is the greatest one in this religion; for the followers of Beha must believe, that Yahoah, the 'Everlasting Father,' Beha, is the known God who appeared and spoke in Jesus Christ, in Moses, in Abraham, who were His ministers, and at the latter days He came himself in the flesh, to judge the living and the dead; and that the Unknown Being which cannot be known from the beginning which has no beginning to the end which has no end, hath appeared and spoke in Beha Ullah just as Beha Ullah appeared and spoke in Jesus Christ and in the other prophets. This Infinite being, the 'Unknowable' Creator of heavens and earths is called by Beha Ullah the '*Eternal Identity*.' Beha said: 'Zatul Azel cannot be seen.'"