The Oriental Rose

OR THE

TEACHINGS OF ABDUL BAHA

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WHICH TRACE THE CHART OF

“The Shining Pathway”

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BY

MARY HANFORD FORD

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FOREWORD.

In the preparation of the present volume I

have been deeply indebted to M. Nicolas,

Secretary of the Persian Legation in Paris,

who has written a biography entitled *Seyed Ali*

*Mohammed, dit le Bab,* which is indicative of

profound research in both the Persian and

Arabic tongues. It is, however, lacking in dis-

crimination, as it uses the untruthful and par-

tisan Mohammedan memorials of the Bab, as

of equal authority with those written by his

friends, and it is therefore necessary to cull its

pages. As the book has not been translated

into English, I have taken the liberty of bor-

rowing frankly from its contents, in much that

touches upon the story of the Bab and Kurret

ul Aine. I must also express my obligations to

Gobineau’s famous monograph upon the Bab.

It would be impossible, however, to put into

words the treasure of what I owe to my own

visit to Acca, and to the long line of traveling

Americans returning from that prison city,

each of whom perhaps has added a color, an

outline or a bit of sunshine to the *ensemble* of

the booklet here offered; may I hope it has

caught some fragrance of sweet rich roses, of

sandalwood and myrrh?

All the travelers have come back like pil-

grims of a new hope, bubbling and overflowing

with the ideas, impressions and suggestions

drawn from their visit to this inspiring spirit-

ual center, and their contact with Abdul Baha.

Each has illustrated the reply given by the

Servant of God to the questioner who asked

him: “Why do all the guests who visit you

come away with shining countenances?”

He said with his beautiful smile; “I cannot

tell you, but in all those upon whom I look, I

see only my Father’s Face.”

THE AUTHOR.

THE ORIENTAL ROSE

OR

“The Shining Pathway”

CHAPTER I.

THE COMING OF THE BAB.

Have you ever heard of Abbas Effendi? He

is known to his followers as Abdul Baha, which

means the Servant of God. He has been for

many years a political prisoner in Acca, the

ancient prison city of the Turkish Sultan, but

his name is beginning to be whispered every-

where as a symbol of the love which frees,

which warms the heart and stirs the world to

betterment.

Acca was once known as *Acre,* and it walls

frown upon the traveler as darkly as in the

day when Richard Coeur de Lion stormed them

with his tumultuous crusaders; but since the

restoration of the constitution in Turkey and the

abdication of Abdul Hamid, openings have

been cut in these strong defenses, and the gates

are no longer closed and barred.

In the August which followed the wonderful

July day that gave the turbaned people the

franchise, Abdul Hamid issued a strange de-

cree, setting free every prisoner held that day

within the confines of the empire, and thus

Abbas Effendi was liberated.

He had been confined within the walls of

Acca since 1868, and had been a prisoner since

he was a boy of nine, and perhaps even the

promulgation of the constitution would not

have broken his bonds. He said to an Ameri-

can guest:

“Whenever I thought of freedom I could

not but remember the many suffers languish-

ing in prison, so I was not able to pray for my

own liberation, I must pray for the freedom

of all, and I was made happy because at last

liberty was granted to every imprisoned one as

well as to myself.”

For thirty years Abdul Baha has not been

confined within prison walls, but simply within

the limits of the town of Acca, and since 1892

he has been the center of the great Bahaist

movement that has brought light to the Orient

and the Occident.

For many decades troops of pilgrims have

poured into Acca from all parts of the world;

western merchant and Oriental dreamer have

jostled one another in the streets of the prison

city seeking the greatest message of peace and

unity, of loving service that has quickened the

heart of mankind from the center of oppress-

sion.

In spite of the surveillance of the suspicious

Turkish police the mansion of Abdul Baha has

sheltered countless foreign guests, and English,

German, French and American pilgrims have

left its generous portals to carry back to their

own rushing and progressive commonwealth a

sense of the splendor of life that they had

never before suspected.

The house of Abbas Effendi is an Oriental

structure built round a court, and its situation

just beside the sea wall of Acca gives its upper

chambers a wonderful outlook over the Mediter-

ranean. Upon the roof is the simple apart-

ment, furnished with the merest necessaries,

which the Teacher of man occupies during the

greater part of the year. It frequently con-

tains no bed, for Abdul Baha is continually giv-

ing away this necessity of civilized existence.

It is impossible to buy a bed in Acca, and so,

when this lover of his kind during his morning

walk finds a fever stricken sufferer tossing

upon the bare ground, he straightway sends him

his bed, and lies upon the hard floor himself until

some one discovers his plight and pro-

vides him with a new one.

Let no one commiserate him too much in such

a sacrifice, however, for Abdul Baha’s body

is of such slight import to him, that he prob-

ably sleeps as sweetly on the uncovered boards

as on his narrow cot, and nothing would drive

slumber from his eyes so quickly as the con-

sciousness that another needed his couch.

To understand the mission of Abdul Baha

and its significance to the world, we, must go

back to the year of his birth in 1844, and to

the Persian city of Shiraz, where, in that same

year Mohammed Ali first cried his messaged into

the listening air, and received his title of the

Bab or Gate. He was accepted immediately

by many followers, as the eagerly expected

“Mahdi.” Mohammedan tradition had lovingly

preserved the holy legend of the Twelfth

Imaum, who had disappeared two hundred and

sixty years after the coming of Mohammed,

and whose return was promised in a thousand

years. The expiration of that period brought

the date 1260 of the Islamic chronology, which

corresponds with 1844 of our era.

In Chicago a temple is in process of erection

to which funds have been contributed by all

the religions of the world, and yet its building

is in the hands of Americans. It is to be called

the Maszhrak el Azcar, which means the Dawn-

ing Place of Prayer, and is the result of the

widespread movement which the Bab initiated

in 1844. As we shall see, this is a movement of

unity and brotherhood, far reaching in its con-

sequences. For years Americans have been de-

spatching missionaries to the Orient, and pour-

ing forth generous floods of money to Chris-

tianize the heathen. And now suddenly they

have become so Christianized that they have

sent a contribution of something like five thou-

sand dollars as their portion towards this great

Place of Prayer in the Occident, where they

realize that the time of fulfillment has come

for all that Christ taught.

The message of the Bab was for the estab-

lishment of a world religion which would unite

all creeds, and teach men to realize that God

is one and the same in every faith that has

brought truth to the human heart. Such a

teaching must have seemed dangerously heret-

ical to the narrow and theological Mohamme-

dan priesthood, and therefore the devotees of

this new cult, great and simple as it is, have

suffered terrible persecution. But its tenets

have laid a solid foundation of unity, equality,

and brotherhood throughout Persia and Tur-

key, which has been manifested recently in the

constitutional reforms of those countries.

Thirty years ago also, Abdul Baha wrote a

book entitled *The Mysterious Forces of Civili-*

*zation,* which has just been translated into Eng-

lish, but it has circulated among his Oriental

disciples from its first production, giving them

ideas of rational and noble human relationships

such as can only be realized under a free and

constitutional government.

The western world is accustomed to regard

Mohammed as an imposter who misled his fol-

lowers and taught them to persecute the Chris-

tians, but the student has discovered that Mo-

hammed, so far from persecuting the Chris-

tians, wrote out an oath for their protection,

which he obliged his followers to sign. He

reverenced Christ as a prophet of God, and

necessarily respected the believers in the reli-

gion he founded. But Mohammed’s death was

followed by the immediate degradation of his

noble teaching.

Mohammed’s daughter Fatima was a remark-

able woman, devoted to the preservation of her

father’s cult in its spiritual integrity, her hus-

band Ali became his true interpreter, and was

designated by the prophet as the one who

should stand in his place to keep the faith pure.

But because Ali was an apostle of peace he was

set aside, and the warlike Omar interpolated

a new propaganda, which the world still mis-

names that of Mohammed, in which the sword

usurped the place of the divine Word.

A schism arose consequently among the re-

legionaries of Islam. The followers of Ali be-

came the Shiite sect, and those of Omar the

Sonnites. The Shiites have always been the

repository of Mohammed’s mystical teaching,

they have been poets and lovers of peace, pon-

derers of their sacred Scriptures. The Persian

Mohammedans are all Shiite, while the Turks

on the contrary are all Sonnite, and adherents

of Omar. So while the Sonnites have controlled

the political machinery of the later Moham-

medanism, the Shiites have produced its sufis,

its poets and soothsayers.

It is remarkable that Mohammed should have

foretold the coming of the twelve Imaums or

holy men, who must keep fresh his teachings in

the heart of man, and not only the date of the

last one but his reappearance in the year 1260.

This accounts for the excitement in regard to

the rising of the Mahdi\* in Africa and Arabia

in recent years. The Mahdi is the expected

Imaum, whose rise would revolutionize the

world and establish the kingdom of God on the

earth, as his zealous converts believed.

When Mohammed Ali announced his identity

with this Wonderful One for whom the soul of

his people yearned, many accepted him imme-

diately. The Mohammedan Mullahs demanded

of him sternly: “Who are you?” He replied:

\* Mahdi means the Inspired or well directed one.

“I am that One for whom you have been

waiting a thousand years!”

But the Mullahs refused to recognize him

as the True One because they looked for a

royal personage, surround by state and

splendor, bearing many titles, and the inhabit-

ant of purely symbolic localities. To be sure

Mohammed Ali fulfilled the requirements in

that he was a descendant of Mohammed wear-

ing the green turban, and was a young man of

barely twenty-five when he began to deliver his

message. But the Mullahs had conceived a far

more worldly image of a different personage,

and besides the Bab did not proclaim the doc-

trine they wished to hear. They demanded that

he should re-enforce their authority, and

strengthened their already deeply entrenched the-

ology of degenerate Mohammedanism.

Instead of that he announced the coming of

a new day of God, when all men should become

brothers, forgetting their religious differences

in the kinship of one universal and loving

Father. Moreover he spoke of himself as

merely the herald of another who was to fol-

low him, who was to be Baha Ullah, the glory

of God, or Him whom God shall manifest. This

precious effulgence of the Almighty he de-

scribed most lovingly as the greatest revelator

of God whom the world had ever known.

He assures his followers that while he him-

self would be martyred, the greater on would

soon dawn upon the horizon, and that they

should see him. When they asked how they

might know him, the Bab replied earnestly:

“Every word of his utterance will be so

thrilling that you can not mistake him. If he

recites a verse from the Koran you will feel in

the marvel of his tone that he is the promised

one. So do not yield to the conventional fear

of being in the wrong, and thus sacrifice the

greatest joy of human life, the joy of recog-

nizing a Manifestation of God in his Day!”

The Shiite tradition in regard to the appear-

ance of the Imaums or Holy men is very exact.

Djaber ed Abdullah reports that Mohammed

himself foretold their coming, and said of the

twelfth:

“This twelfth Imaum is he to whom God will

give victory from the rising to the setting,

and it is he who will be concealed among his

secretaries and his saints. While he is hidden no

one will believe in his reign, except the chosen

ones to whose hearts God will give faith.”

When Djaber inquired if the Imaum would

be of value to his followers even in conceal-

ment, the prophet responded:

“Surely he will, I swear it by him who has

made me his prophet! His faithful ones will

be resplendent in his light, and his concealed

reign will be as glorious to them as is the sun

to other men.”

Among the traditional books of Islam the

prescience of the Bab’s arrival is so constant

that one wonders how any one could have failed

to recognize him, and it is plainly spoken that

his falsifiers shall be found among the great

Mullahs or clergy. The True One is called

sometimes the Gha’im, literally the One

who arises. It is said of him:

“The perfection of Moses, the splendor of

Jesus, and the patience of Job shall be in him,

and his friends shall be abused during his time,

and their heads shall be just as the heads of the

Turks and Deylanites were exchanged as pres-

ents, they shall be slain and burnt, terrified with

fear and appalled; the earth shall be dyed with

their blood, and lamentation and wailing shall

prevail among their women; these are indeed

my friends.”

Again the events of his days are definitely

foretold in the prediction of the martyrdom at

“Zora,” which is identified as “the city of Rey,”

an ancient city near which Teheran is built.

Thus runs the tradition which Baha Ullah re-

peats in the *Ighan*:

“Hast thou entered the city of Rey?”

“Yes,” I replied. He inquired: “Hast thou

visited the cattle market?” “Yes.” “Hast

thou seen the black mountain upon the right

hand of the road? There is Zora, where they

will slay eighty men of the children of certain

ones, all of whom are free from guilt.” “Who

will kill them?” I questioned. He said, “The

children of Persia.”

And in that very spot these eighty poor

creatures were tortured to death for no crime

except that they accepted the revelation of the

True One!

Mohammed said of Ali: “I am the city of

knowledge, and Ali is the Gate thereto, if there

were no gate the city could not be entered.”

So each Imaum was known as a Gate, and

naturally Mohammed Ali gave himself this title

which was perpetuated by his followers.

Another element of extreme radicalism in his

teaching which was necessarily obnoxious to the

established faith of the clergy, was that there

should be no priesthood in the new Day, but

that all should teach the truth of God in the

leisure permitted by ordinary avocations. In

this the wealthy and powerful Mullahs saw the

destruction of their caste and privilege, and

they could not combat too earnestly a revelation

the spread of which must reduce them to the

condition of the average man. The Bab also

insisted upon the equality of the sexes, and

taught that the seclusion of women according

to the Mohammedan law should cease, and that

men must take but one wife. His followers

among the women therefore took off their veils,

and went about as freely as did English women,

while their teaching and speaking were marked

by a peculiar eloquence and power, as advo-

cates of the new faith.

The Bab was extremely fond of symbolism,

and pondered deeply on the spiritual signify-

cance of numbers and mathematical forms. The

numbers 19 and 9 were especially sacred to

him, and as 19 is the series of years constit-

uting the lunar cycle, and provides a more exact

chronology for the earth than the movement of

the sun, he established a new chronology for his

followers according to which there shall be a

year of nineteen months, each containing nine-

teen days.

He spoke of the awakening of which he repre-

sented the dawning point as an ellipse, which

is an oblong, larger in the middle than at the

ends. He called himself the first Point or

Nukta of this ellipse, while the Glory of God,

of Him who God shall manifest, should con-

stitute its mighty center.

The Bab was the precursor of Baha Ullah,

and yet he also was heralded in his turn, for

the completion of the prophesied time was

recognized by Mohammedan students, and many

were looking for the twelfth Imaum, the great

Imaum Mahdi. Mohammed Ali was an orphan,

and was reared by his uncle who intended that

he should become a merchant like himself. He

received, therefore, only the very limited edu-

cation which is deemed sufficient for such a busi-

ness in Persia. When he was about nineteen

years of age he was sent by his uncle on a

business mission to Boushir, and from there

went to Kerbelah, where are the tombs of the

Imaums.

Though intended for the career of a mer-

chant, Mohammed Ali was an exceedingly de-

vout young man. He loved to ponder the Holy

Scriptures, and was often sunk in meditation

upon their hidden meanings. All traditions

agree that he was of a peculiarly charming per-

sonality. He was beautiful to look upon, and

possessed a gift of eloquent and magnetic

speech which would have rendered him irresist-

ible if he had been left free to teach his great

truth.

At the time of his visit to Kerbelah one of

the most distinguished Mohammedan *savants*

was delivering his lectures there to a crowd of

students, and among his disciples were two who

became the most noted among the early fol-

lowers of the Bab himself, Mullah Sadek, who

later was known as Khorassani, and Houssein

Bouchrouyehi, afterwards called the Bab-el-bab,

or Gate of the Bab. He was the first convert

of the Bab.

Khorassani has told us of his initial meeting

with his master. While at Kerbelah Moham-

med Ali was accustomed to go to the mosque

at the same hour every day, where he would

stand lost in meditation for a long time.

Khorassani felt strongly attracted towards

him, and determined to address him. He did

so upon his next visit to the mosque, but the

young man put his finger on his lip, and turned

away without response. Khorassani somewhat

angered at this rebuff, left the place of devo-

tion at the same time as the stranger, but

resolved never to speak to him again. Mo-

hammed Ali, however, hastened toward him as

soon as they were outside the limits of the

sacred edifice, and excused himself so engag-

ingly for his apparent discourtesy that he

could not fail of pardon.

The young devotee explained that while in

the house of prayer he felt it wrong to allow

even a vagrant thought to linger in his mind,

and could not therefore indulge in conversa-

tion of mundane affairs. Khorassani there-

upon invited him to come to his house the fol-

lowing evening when he would be honored by a

visit from the holy teacher, Sheik Kazem, and

some of his most distinguished pupils.

“What a joy to be present in an assembly

where the most heavenly light of God will be

spoken of!” Mohammed Ali replied with much

delight.

Upon the following evening, however, the

company had all gathered before the stranger

appeared. The prayers had begun, and Mul-

lah Houssein Bouchrouyehi was discoursing

upon the martyrdom of the Imaum Houssein

when Mohamed Ali stood upon the threshold.

It is the Persian custom that all shall rise

when a person of special distinction enters a

room, but Sheik Kazem was too independent

to attend to such points of etiquette, and was

never accustomed to notice in any fashion the

entrance of belated guests. As the beautiful

unknown paused upon the threshold, however,

Sheik Kazem rose, and naturally all followed

his example, while a thrill ran though the

assembly touching the heart of each one. Mul-

lah Houssien Bouchrouyehi to whom this ad-

vent was to prove of supreme importance

stopped speechless for the moment, while the

stranger apparently unconscious of the excite-

ment he had caused sank modestly into a seat

near the door. Sheik Kazem begged him to

station himself among the more honored guests,

but the young stranger from Shiraz refused,

and sat quietly until all had taken their de-

parture. Then Khorassani insisted that he

should be seated more worthily, and rising

without further protest he possessed himself of

the place which Sheik Kazem had occupied.

Shortly afterward the gifted Shirazi was no

longer seen in Kerbelah, but he was not for-

gotten. He returned to Shiraz, where, in a

few years, he made the amazing announcement

of his mission, which he repeated at Mecca,

where he went on the holy pilgrimage, but not

as an orthodox Mohammedan.

Before the death of old Sheik Kazem he had

told his chosen disciples that they would see

the Imaum Mahdi. Some of these have re-

peated the predictions of the old seer. Soulci-

man Kham Qualihi suffered a horrible death as

martyr for his acceptance of the Bab’s teach-

ing, and he said:

“The Sheik promised me that I should see

the reappearance of the Imaun Mahdi. ‘You

will be there,’ he declared, ‘and you will give

him your faith.’”

Mullah Houssein Bouchrouyehi demanded

with insistence how the Manifestation would

appear, and the Sheik replied by quoting a

verse from the sacred writings:

“I can not speak more definitely, but the sun

of truth from whatever dawning point it may

rise will illumine all the horizons; and the mir-

rors of the hearts of those who love it well, it

will adjust them in such fashion that they will

receive the emanations of light and knowledge.”

Before the Sheik passed away he announced

his approaching departure to his followers,

and reiterated his prophecy of the coming of

the True One. All broke forth into lamenta-

tion, and loudest among them was Kerim

Khan. The old Sheik fixed his eyes upon him

and exclaimed:

“Dog! You do not wish that I go, and

that after me the Absolute Truth shall be

manifested!”

The aged Seer looking into the soul of the

man whose complaints massacred the air recogn-

ized the Judas of the group, for Kerim Khan

became the successor of Sheik Kazem, the

greatest of the Ulema, and the most terrible

persecutor of the Bab and his devoted fol-

lowers. In fact, with the Vizier Aghassi, he

was responsible for the murderous execution

of the Bab.

The remainder of the group was prominent

in the early movement of the Bab, and some

of its members were numbered as those, “Liv-

ing Letters” who spelled the new knowledge of

God into the heart of the world. After the

death of Shiek Kazem they spent forty days in

Kouffa praying in the mosque, and preparing

themselves for the great mission they felt was

before them. Then they separated to find the

Imaum, who they were convinced was some-

where in Persia, and to whom they believed

they would be led.

Is it not a beautiful picture, this group of

praying men, gathered first about the reverend

figure of the seer who warned them of the ap-

proaching wonder, and then, after his serene

departure, waiting together for the confirma-

tion they were certain would come?

They scattered at length to look for the

dawning place of the light. Three of them,

Bouchrouyehi, Khorassani, and Mullah Ali

Goher were united by a friendship which never

lessened. Bouchrouyehi in his wanderings

reached Shiraz just at the moment when the

Bab gave the first announcement of his mis-

sion:

“Come to me, all ye seekers, for the gate

of divine wisdom is opened through my per-

son.”

We can imagine how Bouchrouyehi fell at

his feet, quite vanquished by the light in his

face, by the love that radiated from him, and

he became his first missionary.

The Bab sent him forth to Isfahan, to

Khorassan, and at length to Teheran, bearing

letters to the Shah, and his Vizier Aghassi,

and also to two very different persons, Mirza

Houssein Ali who should later become Baha

Ullah, and to Mirza Yaha, his half brother.

This latter individual was known to subsequent

history as Subh-y-Ezel. When Houssein Ali

was recognized as the promised one, his half

brother craving this honor for himself, claimed

it, and became the founder of a schism which

had no existence except on paper. Western

historians have discussed his pretensions as if

they had importance, and Professor Browne, of

Cambridge, who wrote the *Narrative of Persian*

*Travel,* and the volumes on Subh-y-Ezel, did

not discover that the disciples of the latter

never numbered more than sixty, most of whom

were members of his own family. Browne spent

a day with him in his imprisonment at Cyprus,

and filled with sympathy at the tale of trouble

he poured into the Englishman’s ears, Browne

wrote a history in his defense. He did not re-

flect that the prisoner was the victim of his

own vanity and held absolutely no place in the

fulfillment of the Bab’s prophecy, as the fol-

lowers of the Gate well knew.

Probably the True One perceived as he wrote

the letters what was the destiny of each re-

cipient, for all things seemed clear in his vision

of the future. The Shah and Vizier Aghassi

threw carelessly aside the documents delivered

to them announcing the dawn of a New Day in

which the justice of God must reign, and

Aghassi was inspired only to that bitter per-

secution of the True One which ended in his

death.

It would be interesting to follow Mullah

Bouchrouyehi in his progress through Persia,

and his picturesque encounter with the fellow-

students of Sheik Kazem. It was a simple

message that he delivered to these brothers in

truth:

“I have found him, he is in Shiraz, go and

see for yourself!”

And they went! Bouchrouyehi was a mili-

tant personality, worthy of confidence, and his

friends were in the habit of trusting him.

Innumerable stories are told of the charm

and potency reflected in the personality of the

True One, of his miraculous wisdom, and the

swift and intuitive power which enabled him to

meet and overthrow his adversaries invariably

with such ease that he would have conquered

the world if he had been left at liberty. As

one reads one is reminded of the apocryphal

tales which reveal to us perhaps the person-

ality of Jesus Christ, and the exquisite gospel

stories which picture Him in the house of the

publican, or in the court of Pilate, with Martha

and Mary, or on the mountain with the inti-

mate group of those he loved.

What was it that rendered him different

from all others, that would have rescued him

invulnerable, and irresistible had he chosen to

be so? It was the breath of God upon him,

the heavenly effulgence shining into his per-

fect mirror, and as we read these later stories,

it seems that the light is again gleaming in

our dark world!

The clergy of Shiraz, enraged at the per-

sistence of the Bab in preaching his truth, and

convinced that he was ignorant and unlettered,

and could not withstand them in public de-

bate, arranged a grand council in the mosque

of the city, where they commanded him to

retract his dangerous teachings, threatening

him with fearful tortures if he refused. The

Bab, however, mounted the pulpit and gave a

discourse so eloquent, so replete with the learn-

ing of his adversaries, so convincing in its

declaration of his own claims, that the antag-

onists who came to shame him witnessed the

conversion of their own public.

Shortly afterwards that Shah and the Vizier

Aghassi moved by the fame of this episode sent

Sheik Yahya to Shiraz to reduce this danger-

ous heretic to submission, and bring back to

the court an account of his unquestionable

charlatanry. Sheik Yahya was an honourable

and really devout person, by no means so con-

ventionally conservative in his faith as his su-

periors supposed. His first interview with the

Bab interested him tremendously, and left him,

in spite of his mission, impressed with the sin-

cerity and illumination of this unique personage.

At length he asked the True One for a com-

mentary upon the Surat 108 of the Koran.

The Bab was famous for the illuminated verses

which he delivered extemporaneously at the

request of any one who desired an utterance

or discourse upon sacred subjects.

In this case the response was immediate and

surprising. The Bab gave the commentary,

and Sheik Yahya realized that it was one that

he himself had conceived after long pondering

upon this very passage. But he had never

committed it to writing, or spoken of it to any

one. It was preserved alone in the treasure

house of his soul.

He bowed and departed, deeply troubled.

What was this man? Was he a prophet of

God? Could an imposter, a charlatan possess

such illumination, such insight? He pondered

long, and finally decided that he would cast

lots with God, so to speak, on this momentous

decision. He had always been conventionally

received at the house of the Bab, where a serv-

ant opened the door and conducted him into

the presence of the True One. He decided that

on his next visit he would knock softly at the

door, and if contrary to custom the Bab him-

self came to admit him, took his hand, and

did not relinquish it until he was led into the

reception chamber, he would accept him as a

Manifestation of God, as the One in fact who

had been longed for a thousand years!

He prayed earnestly before he started on

his momentous journey the following day. He

tapped gently on the door, the Bab himself un-

closed it, grasped his hand, led him into the

salon, and only released his clasp when he had

seated him in his chair.

Then the soul of Sheik Yahya rose within

him, he embraced the True One and confessed

his faith in him. The Bab rejoiced over him

with an especial happiness, for he was an en-

lightened man. He accepted gladly the mis-

sion the Bab laid upon him, and wrote to the

Shah and Vizier Aghassi of his conversion. As

a matter of course his life in this world was

completely ruined by his courageous decision,

but eternity became his and he had no regrets.

He suffered martyrdom soon afterward, and

was not long separated from his beloved master.

CHAPTER II.

THE TEACHING OF THE TRUE ONE.

The Bab was not long left in peace, how-

ever. His wanderings from place to place, his

escapes from death were for some time marvel-

ous. His enforced separation from his beauty-

ful young wife added to the pathos of this

tragic situation. His bridal day was scarcely

over before imprisonment snatched him forever

from her side. For a long time she refused to

sleep in a bed, and flung herself upon the hard

floor, declaring that if she could not share

his incarceration, at least, she would weep

through the dark hours of each night. At

last, however, the True One wrote her a touch-

ing letter in which he said:

“Do you not know that when you lie upon

the floor I feel all its hardness, and that when

you weep my eyes also are drowned in tears?”

After that the poor lady wept no more

though the sorrow of her heart never lessened

for the wonderful one who had been with her

for so short and blissful a moment.

At one time it was planned to destroy the

Bab by secret assassination. The authorities

did not dare venture upon a public execution,

because the True One had won a position of

such dignity, through his wisdom and beauty

of character, that this did not seem to be ad-

visable, the shock to public feeling would be

too great. So the arrangement was made that

his house should be entered on a certain date

by a band of apparent thieves who would de-

stroy him. After his cruel death the govern-

ment would decently regret the distressing

event.

The date for this catastrophe was ap-

pointed, but suddenly cholera broke out with

such violence that all fled from the town. The

Bab also took his departure, and as a result

was protected for some time by the governor

of Isfahan, Meu’temed ed Dowleh, who be-

came a believer, and might have kept the True

One in concealment still longer, but he died

suddenly, and his nephew who succeeded him

was amazed to discover whom his uncle had

been harboring. He demanded of Aghassi what

should be done with the Bab. The Vizier was

the implacable foe of the great teacher, and

knowing his eloquence and charm was deter-

mined that the Shah should not come in con-

tact with him, so he sent him from place to

place on one excuse or another.

He appeared before various councils, was

insulted and questioned, but invariably aston-

ished his persecutors by the calm, and the per-

fect illumination, with which he met both

cruelty and inquiry. On one occasion he was

asked:

“What do you mean by the Bab?”

He replied:

“Have you not heard the statement, ‘I am

the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate’?”

As these were Mohammed’s words in regard

to Ali, his successor, and the Bab’s interlocutor

was one of the Mohammedan clergy, no further

comments were necessary.

Again he had been speaking with supreme

inspiration, and used the words ear, eye, in the

singular. Mullah Mohammed interrupted him

with the query:

“Why do you say ‘eye’ and ‘ear’ when we

have two eyes and two ears?”

“Oh my soul, that means you must listen!”

was the response. “Open the ear of thy heart,

and comprehend God!”

Another asked him jeeringly:

“Who was it wished you good morning, and

gave you the title of Bab?”

“I am that one for whom you have waited

a thousand years,” replied the True One.

“And by what can we recognize you, “pro-

ceeded the interrogator.

“By my inspired utterance,” said the pris-

oner with imperturbable calm.

Thereupon his investigators demanded that

he should improvise upon some subject, and

when he did so, they exclaimed:

“But we do not understand anything that

you say!”

Then the inspired one declared: “Whence

were you able to comprehend that the Koran is

the word of God? That which you say of the

Holy Scriptures, you should repeat here!”

He was condemned at length to incarcera-

tion in the fortress of Makou. Its governor

had heard much of the Bab’s teachings, and

had wondered at them. Wherever the True One

went, in spite of his persecution, and the diffi-

culties thrown in his way, in spite of the public

scorn and vile accusations of the clergy, con-

versions multiplied in constant and unexplain-

ed fashion.

Ali Khan Makoui had weighed the words

that had been repeated to him. He sympa-

thized heartily with the Bab’s thunderings

against the corruption and abuses of the age,

yet he feared to put faith in him, lest he might

prove an imposter.

When the Bab arrived at the fortress, which

was perched upon a mountain difficult of ac-

cess, he asked immediately for permission to

go to the public baths. He was always immacu-

late in his person, and scrupulous in bathing,

and in his writings are many injunctions to

his followers that they resist filthy habits

of the unregenerate man. He craved at this

moment the refreshment of the bath after his

tedious and dusty journey.

The governor had in his stables a young

horse so vicious and dangerous that no one

could ride him. It was in fact perilous to ap-

proach him, and almost impossible to put sad-

dle and bridle upon him. The idea flashed into

the mind of the governor that he should offer

the Bab this charger.

“If he mounts him, and reduces him to

docility,” reflected Ali Khan, “I shall take it

as a sign from God that I am to recognize him

as the Promised One whom he claims to be. If

on the contrary he is thrown and killed in his

struggle with the beast, the State will be easily

rid of a bad man, who is only a false prophet

guilty of deluding his fellow men.”

It required several men to accouter the

horse, and conduct him to the entrance of the

bath. The attendant explained that the gov-

ernor wished to save his guest the fatigue of

climbing the hill, and had sent his own steed

with a little escort to do him honor.

The Bab approached the creature which was

rearing and prancing in rage at the compul-

sion that had been put upon him. The stallion

paused trembling, as the Bab caressed its

quivering head, and spoke to it with extreme

kindness. After a moment the Bab commanded

the groom to release the bridle. He mounted

the beautiful animal and rode away with the

utmost ease. In fact the tradition of the

event recalls that the horse sweat profusely in

his effort at absolute gentleness in bearing this

loving burden.

A crowd of people who had watched the re-

sult of the experiment, knowing the horse and

divining the governor’s intention, rushed into

the bath house and secured in various recept-

acles the water in which the True One had

bathed, while those who were too late to obtain

this, wiped up the remaining moisture with

towels, and preserved them as relics.

The governor, meanwhile, what must have

been his feelings when he saw his prisoner ap-

proaching, his furious charger reduced to the

submissive temper of a lady’s pony? He fell

at the feet of the True One, and confessed his

faith to him, declaring that he was his faith-

ful servant for all time. The Bab remained in

the fortress for nine months in comparative

freedom, receiving all who came. He wrote

much, and conducted an enormous correspond-

ence and the sojourn must have offered a wel-

come respite to the hunted and persecuted

savior of his kind.

One great word which reappeared con-

stantly in the teaching of the Bab, and which

lends its color with even more positive decision

to the utterances of Baha Ullah and Abdul

Baha, is that of unity. The degenerate fol-

lowers of Mohammed, like the degenerate

Christians, had become purely partisan; each

considering his own religion the only true one

was eager to send missionaries with sword or

book to convert the world, and each was con-

vinced that only his particular cult could

save the soul. The Bab cried aloud the truth

that all the sublime prophets of God are re-

vealers of his light. Moses and Zoroaster,

Christ and Mohammed have led mankind to

God, and all have been inspired by the same

divine breath of the Infinite One.

Each prophet who comes builds upon the

foundation of his predecessor, and brings to a

greater clearness the conception of God in the

human consciousness, so the latest message is

necessarily the most complete, though each

possesses the same essentials, and all lead to

God. Thus the Bab recognized the sacred

books of the world as divinely inspired. The

Bible, the Koran, the Rig Veda, the Zend

Avesta were all a part of the golden flood of

heavenly knowledge given to the world to

create in the mind of man a true and reverent

conception of the ethereal and loving spirit

that is behind all being. So the Bab regarded

his own appearance as a fulfillment of prophe-

cies not only in the Koran, but in the Zend

Avesta and the ancient Hindu scriptures, as

well as in the Bible. He believed his mission

was for the evangelization of the world, and

that the coming of the wonderful day of God

he heralded had been foretold by divine mes-

sengers in many languages.

His conception of God was exceedingly

lofty. He revealed the creator as pure spirit,

manifested in all things, but also hidden in his

unmanifested essence, which is quite beyond the

comprehension of ordinary mortals. But to

advance, man must arrive at a knowledge of

God, and therefore the prophets or manifesta-

tions of God have lived as pure mirrors every-

where, reflecting the light of the mighty central

sun. The minds of men in their turn receiving

the radiance of these lovely mirrors become

filled with the true conception of God, and

having once accepted the vital imprint of

truth, grow in grace and add their touch to

the increasing stature of spiritual manhood.

Civilization is thus the result of the applied

knowledge of God that the different prophets

have brought to the universe, for whether or

not one yields faith to them, they have been

among all nations the enlighteners of the earth,

the brilliant torches of progress so far in ad-

vance of their contemporaries that almost in-

variably they have been martyred for the truth

they proclaimed.

In later ages it often happens that the inde-

pendent thinker is more filled with the spirit

of the original message than its theology build-

ing upholder, so that Voltaire was as deeply

indebted to Christ as Calvin, and Galileo was

nearer to the divine source of wisdom than the

church which condemned him as a heretic.

The writings of the Bab were numerous,

considering his short mission, and are, of

course, the result of the leisure rising from his

continued confinement. Among these the

*Beyan,* or *Clear Exposition* is most remark-

able, and together with the *Seven Proofs* is

most generally read. None of his books have

yet been translated into western languages, so

that we are obliged to depend upon the slight

transcripts that have been granted us by

Arabic and Persian scholars for an opinion of

them.

Besides these important volumes however,

there is a mass of wonderful letters, prayers,

and addresses, all illuminating and only less

remarkable in character than the production of

Baha Ullah. Many of the Bab’s letters are

exceedingly vivid and eloquent, and attest not

only his vital inspiration, but that sensitive-

ness and feeling which so endeared him to all

with whom he came in contact. Here is one:

“Oh, thou who art sorrowful! I have read

thy letter, and thy sorrow and thy tears have

filled me with grief! But as I am to-day in

Paradise, I obey the command of God and say:

Glory to God who has protected me from tor-

ment! This God is sublime, and beyond all the

qualities which men could attribute to him!

“Now thou also, even as I, glorify God, who

has kept thee from torment! In truth!

Our God is he who pardons, he who is the

provider! Now, oh, man, do not be distressed

by anything, for thy distress affects me! Do

not weep for anything, for thy tears cause

mine to flow, and henceforth I can give thee

no orders, for I love thee! Be now firm in

obedience to God. In truth thou art firm in

the friendship of God. Be patient in the mis-

fortunes that assail thee, for what thou seest

is the way of fortune. It is not extraordinary

that such torments assail the friends of God,

it is not strange that men gather to the name

of him who is the cause of the creation of all,

who is the Primitive Will himself, the name of

Maha Viya. Fie upon fortune! Fie upon

fortune!”

Another written at Makou, to the father of

A. Seyed Houssein, is very touching. The lat-

ter was the secretary of the Bab, who was con-

demned to execution with his beloved master,

but feigned a recantation of his faith at the

last moment, according to the Bab’s wish, in

order to write an account of his last hours, for

the consolation of the bereaved friends of the

cause. The communication runs as follows:

“In truth I have read the letter which thou

hast sent to thy son. May God recompense thee

for thy great sorrow! May God increase thy pa-

tience! And as for me, because I love death,

I say for you these four verses:

“Oh, Death, thou who permittest none to

escape, come and deliver me also from the diffi-

culties of this world!

Thou art, O Death, the one who has taken

all my friends!

Truly it is in thee that I see the safety of

all those who love me!

O Death, ever thou dost turn towards one of

my friends as if some one had pointed him out

to thee!”

The remainder of the epistle is filled with

those tender and intimate details which one

addresses only to the beloved. It had been in-

spired by the news of the death of a son and

brother, in his secretary’s family, and shows

how clearly the Bab felt the deprivation of

each one in the family circle at the loss of this

cherished member.

Some of the Bab’s writings, while in the fort-

ress of Makou, were almost pathetic in their

recognition of the oppression that must follow

the illumination that enveloped him, and ren-

dered his earthly pilgrimage so difficult. He

says in one passage:

“The fruit of religion is to believe in the

manifestation of the Bab, and they have im-

prisoned him at Makou!”

He says again that all had much respect

for him while he remained a simple gentleman,

but heaped insults and scorn upon him as soon

as he became a Manifestation of God!

He reproaches the Mohammedans that they

expected the coming of the Mahdi with such

impatience, and imprisoned him as soon as he

appeared!

In another curious passage he pities the

Mohammedans who refuse to recognize him,

“because,” he declares, “in your eagerness to

serve God you flout and distress Him!”

He goes on, speaking of God in his own

person, but not in blasphemy, as one might

imagine at first. He speaks thus in that recog-

nition of the spirit of illumination upon him

which led Christ to say:

“I and the Father are one.” “There is no

other way to the Father save through Me.”

The Bab continues: “In spite of the utter-

ances which distill from My power, and the

treasure of which rests in this person, the Bab,

in spite of the utterances which issue from his

lips only by My permission, behold, with no

shadow of right, you have immured him on the

summit of a mountain the inhabitants of which

are not even worthy to quote them! Near him,

that is near Me, is no one, not even one of the

Letters of Life of My book. Besides his two

hands, which are My hands, he has not a single

attendant to light his lamp for him at night,

and behold, the men of the earth have been

created solely for his existence; it is by his

generosity that they are full of joy, and they

do not give him one light!”

Again his sense of exaltation drives away the

consciousness of suffering, and he says:

“All that belongs to the man of Paradise is

in Paradise. This solitary chamber (in which

I am) and which has not even a door, is to-day

the greatest of the gardens of Paradise, for

the tree of truth is planted there, all the atoms

which compose it cry: ‘In truth there is no

other God than God! In truth I am God, and

there is no other God than Me, the Master of

the Universe!’”

He says in his letter to the Shah, which he

begins with his customary exalted praise of

divine unity:

“And now let me tell you a secret, this man

has imprisoned in my person all the prophets,

all the saints, and all that the knowledge of

God has embraced, and there is no sin of any

degree under which I have not groaned!”

Again he says: “As for me, I am that point

of God whence all that exists has found ex-

istence. I am that face of God which dies not,

I am that light which is never extinguished.

He who recognizes me is accompanied by all

good, he who repulses me has behind him all

of evil.”

“The light of God which shone upon the

mountain for Moses is my light,” he declares

farther. He discusses the passage of the

Koran in which the return of the Imaum is

foretold. It is the fourth verse of the thirty-

second chapter, and runs:

“God conducts the affairs of the world from

heaven to earth, then recalls all to himself for

a day, the duration of which is a thousand

years of our computation.”

This closing of the gate of knowledge was

in 260 of the Mohammedan era, when the

twelfth Imaum disappeared, and the Bab

quotes the question of Moufazzl who de-

manded when the Mahdi would arise, and

the answer of the Imam, who replied: “He will

manifest in the year 60, and his name will be

a great one.”

This, of course, indicates the often repeated

year of 1260, corresponding to our date of

1844, which was that of the Bab’s manifesta-

tion.

One of the most touching of these utter-

ances is that in which he speaks of his coming

successor, the *Glory of God;* “I am only the

suggestion of what he will be,” he says, “and

may the followers of my *Beyan* not persecute

him as the followers of the Koran have perse-

cuted me!”

CHAPTER III.

THE MARTYRS AND THE BAB’S DEATH.

While the Bab was imprisoned in the fort-

ress of Makou his faith spread tumultuously

through Persia, and the blood of the martyrs

poured copious floods in demonstration of the

ardor with which they accepted his teachings.

It is not within the purpose of this volume to

describe the horrors which took place at

Mazanderan, or Zendjan, or even the atrocities

that were inflicted upon the Babis in general

in the effort to turn them from their faith.

Bouchrouyehi had been sent to the province

of Mazanderan, and prosecuted his missionary

work there so vigorously that presently the

entire community was aflame. The people

took arms in defense of their faith and for a

long time resisted the soldiers of the Shah that

were marched against them. Civil war raged,

indeed, until at length Bouchrouyehi, the Bab-

el-bab fell, and the slaughter had reached such

an enormous figure that peace reigned from

pure inability to struggle longer. Meanwhile

it is said that no Babi ever recanted, and the

“Friends” as the followers of the Bab called

themselves, sought death so fearlessly that the

troopers of the Shah could scarcely be induced

to combat them. They came to be regarded

as invincible, and whenever they were exe-

cuted, even with the most horrible tortures,

their joy and exaltation were so manifest that

all who had witnessed their destruction de-

manded knowledge of the faith which elimi-

nated the fear of death, and rendered so evi-

dent the presence of God.

Mullah Mohammed Ali, a remarkable man in

Zendjan, was a leading member of the clergy

there who took the title of Houdjet ul Islam.

He had become a paramount influence in the

city, and when so much was repeated of the

Bab’s strange teachings, he despatched one of

his followers to the True One, to discover the

meaning of his existence. The messenger re-

turned one day as Houdjet was surrounded by

his pupils, and bowing low delivered a letter

from the Bab which he had carried in his

breast. His master took it, perused it with

greatest attention, then rising cried, “Allah ou

Akbar!” and seating himself again, resumed

his lesson. Presently, however, his feeling be-

came irrepressible. Starting to his feet he de-

clared once more, “Allah ou Akbar!” and turn-

ing to his pupils exclaimed:

“It would be a shameful thing to continue

to seek a proof after one has arrived at the

end! To search for knowledge when one is

in possession of his object is a waste of time!

Close your books for the master is risen!

Hear the news of it! The sun which makes our

path clear has appeared! The night of ignor-

ance and error is annihilated!”

He then cast aside his turban, called for a

fresh Koulah, and when this was brought him

proceeded to adjust it upon his head, while he

recited in a loud voice the prayer for Friday,

which must replace that of all other days when

the Mahdi has revealed himself.

He next expatiated upon the Bab calling

himself the most humble of his slaves.

“My knowledge beside his is like a candle

extinguished in the light of day,” he exclaimed,

“Know God by God, and the sun by his rays,

for to-day the Sahab ez Zeman has appeared,

the Sultan of possibilities is living!”

One can imagine that after so enthusiastic

a conversion Houdjet lost no time in shar-

ing his truth with his townspeople, and they

accepted it with the same eagerness their

teacher had displayed. Shortly afterwards the

Bab passed near Zendjan on his way to Makou,

and Houdjet wrote him begging for an inter-

view, and also for permission to rescue him

from his guards. The True One refused both

requests, but comforted his follower with the

assurance that very soon they would both

meet in the other world.

The very day after the receipt of this letter

Houdjet ul Islam was seized by the Shah’s

guards, and transported to Teheran, which,

for him, was the beginning of the end. He had

previously attracted the attention of the Shah,

for clergy of Zendjan had complained of

his radicalism, and he had been obliged to ex-

plain his views to his royal master. At that

time he had charmed the Shah by the frank

expression of his illuminated criticism upon

the shortcomings of the Mohammedan clergy,

and their grasping love of money. The Shah

had sent him home on that occasion with a full

pardon, but now affairs were sadly different.

He had stirred a dangerous hubbub in his city

over this strange heresy of the Bab, and in

order to avoid absolute confinement in prison

he was obliged to give the Shah his promise

that he would not escape.

This situation was relieved for Houdjet by

the death of the Shah, and by the appointment

of a new governor for Zendjan. Feeling that

his parole did not hold with the new govern-

ment, Mulla Mohammed Ali departed for

Zendjan, where he was received with a tumult-

ous ovation. The insurrection of Mazanderan

had roused all hearts, and the Babis everywhere

were ready to join their besieged companions

and fight with them for freedom of faith.

Houdjet would not permit this, and did his

utmost to preserve peace, but it seemed impossible.

An accidental brawl resulting in the serious

wounding of a Mohammedan precipitated the

conflict, and the streets of Zendjan, like those

of the villages in Mazanderan, ran with blood.

The Shah sent his troops against the fated

city, under the leadership of Ferrouk Khan,

one of his favorite princes. This brilliant

young man was slain by a half insane old

woman after he had been taken prisoner, and

the Shah’s anger at the sacrifice gave counten-

ance to every imaginable cruelty.

Houdjet was taken by surprise by a platoon

of soldiers and killed in the house where he

was sheltered with a handful of followers.

Those who remained buried his body with the

utmost care, that no trace of its existence

might reveal the place of sepulchure, but the

Mohammedans were determined to discover it,

and shame the believers by its mutilation.

In the pursuit of this purpose they sub-

jected the survivors to horrible tortures, for

instance, one martyr had boiling oil poured

upon his head, but his silence remained invio-

late. At length a child of seven years was se-

cured, who knew the secret, and it was drawn

from him by cajolement and deceit. Then the

body of Houdjet was dragged from its place

of repose, paraded through the blighted city,

until every abuse and ignominy had been in-

flicted upon it. Finally its shattered remnants

were thrown to the dogs, but the courageous

“friends” who had watched it all with tor-

tured eyes, gathered them together, and pre-

served them as sacred relics. In the orgy of

blood which resulted from this sacrifice the de-

voted Babis were shot down, or bayoneted by

hundreds, and it became a familiar sight to see

a company of these innocent people slaugh-

tered one by one or in mass, as the commander

of the Mohammedan troop saw fit to decide.

Meanwhile the people who looked on, and

frequently took no part in the massacre, said

to one another:

“But why should they murder these poor

Babis? They believe that the Imaum has

come. Well, we believe it is time for him to

arrive, and perhaps it is true that he is here!”

So the very means taken to hinder the

growth of the movement hastened its spread,

and the on-lookers who did not become drunken

with blood caught the ecstasy of the martyred

ones, and adopted their faith.

One remarkable part of the Bab’s teaching

was that death did not separate the souls of

the believers from their previous scene of ac-

tion, but only increased their power.

“All those who work for this great cause,”

he declared, “will continue to do so whether

they are in the body or out of it. If they are

martyred they will attach themselves to those

who can best receive their influence, and the

power of these will be doubled or quadrupled

by this dynamic assistance of those who have

already left the scene of outward action.”

The followers of the Bab therefore watched

their companions and themselves after a terrible

martyrdom, convinced that their mighty

struggle would receive a fresh impetus from

the souls of the departed. Naturally death

lost all terrors for them. They knew that in

reality there is no such thing as death, and in

the ecstasy of martyrdom clairvoyance and

prophecy became frequent phenomena. To

them the mysterious change to another plane

of existence merely enhanced the intensity of

life.

Meanwhile Houdjet and Bouchrouyehi, the

Bab-el-bab, had given up their lives for the

cause, and the Bab himself was executed at

Tabriz, on the morning of July 8, 1850.

Thus the inspired leader of the movement, and

his most important disciples were gone, and it

must have looked to the Persian authorities

as if the strange excitement over him who

claimed to be the Mahdi, would come to an

end. They forgot, however, how completely

the True One had rested his teaching on the

fact that he was merely the Herald of Him

whom God shall Manifest, Baha Ullah, the

Glory of God.

Again and again he said, “I am a letter out

of that most mighty book; a dewdrop from

that limitless ocean, and when He shall appear

my true nature, my mysteries, riddles, and

intimations will become evident, and the em-

bryo of this religion will develop through all

the grades of its being, and ascent, attain the

most comely of forms, and become endowed

with the robe of Blessed be God, the Best of

Creators!” The entire *Beyan* revolves around

the prediction of “Him whom God shall Mani-

fest” and “The *Beyan* and such as are believ-

ers yearn more after Him than the yearning of

any lover after his beloved!”

In spite of dire persecutions visited upon

the “friends” the teaching of the Bab con-

tinued to spread with miraculous swiftness in

the period before his death, and the Shah

querulously called the attention of his Vizier to

this fact, saying:

“It is all the fault of Aghassi. He sent the

Bab to Makou instead of bringing him here,

before a tribunal, as my father wished. If

that had been done, his foolishness would have

been demonstrated long ago.”

The Vizier responded: “The words of kings

are the kings of words!” and from that mo-

ment the execution of the Bab was decided

upon, though it has been said that here as on

the previous occasion the Vizier acted without

the authority of his master. The Shah wished

to see the Bab, the Vizier feared his magnetic

contact with the head of the state, so he was

removed to the fortress of Chirik, and then, in-

stead of being brought to Teheran, he was car-

ried to Tabriz and executed.

Before this dolorous event transpired, how-

ever, the True One was paraded about the

town, led shamefully in procession through the

principal streets, in an endeavor to render the

holiest and most illuminated being in the world

an abject and criminal spectacle.

The night before his martyrdom the Bab had

spent in prayer with the two devoted friends

who were to be executed with him, A. Seyed

Houssein, and Mullah Mohammed Yezdi. In

order that the afflicted remnant of followers

might be comforted in his loss, the True One

arranged with Seyed Houssein that he should

appear to retract on the way to the place of

punishment, and thus being reprieved, could

write for the world the commands of the Be-

loved One, and the story of his last hours.

The Bab, six months before, had transmit-

ted to a faithful follower a letter marked “To

be opened when you have suffered a great af-

fliction.” When the execution was made known

the seal was broken and the contents revealed

a prediction of the author’s execution at Ta-

briz on the day of the fatality.

The melancholy journey to the hill of exe-

cution was varied by attempts to win the de-

nial of their faith by the Bab’s two compan-

ions, and Seyed Houssein apparently yielded.

But he sought martyrdom later in Teheran,

and thus proved his courage and his abiding

love for the True One.

Nothing shook the determination of Mullah

Mohammed Yezdi, however. When the little

party arrived at the fatal hill, his wife and

children were brought to him, but he refused

to listen to them, asking only that he might

be shot before his beloved leader. This re-

quest, of course, was not granted, but though

his executioners were not clement, a higher

power was more so, as will be seen.

It may be recalled that one of the titles

which the glorious re-incarnated Imaum must

traditionally bear was that of Sahab-ez Zeman,

the Master of Time, and this had never been

given the Bab. Strange to say, it became his

at the moment of execution, for the mount upon

which he was shot to death was called the *Place*

*of the Sahab-ez-Zcman*. The unbelievers had

constantly reverted to the fact that he did not

claim this name, yet it must always be asso-

ciated with him through the dramatic events

of his passing. It is a symbol of the Twelfth

Imaum.

The Bab and Mullah Mohammed were sus-

pended to the wall by ropes, and a regiment

of Christian soldiers was drawn up to fire upon

them, so that a thousand bullets assailed them

at once. The body of Mullah Mohammed was

riddled with shot, but he turned his head

toward the True One, and asked, to the amaze-

ment of all, in a perfectly audible voice:

“Master, are you content with me?”

The True One, however, had not been

touched by one of the thousand bullets. The

cords that bound him to the wall were cut,

but he did not receive a wound. He fell upon

his feet, and stood smiling at the soldiers whose

firearms had been leveled at him in vain. He

made no attempt to fly, though he could easily

have escaped in the shock and consternation

of this miraculous moment. He seemed to

say to his executioners:

“You may extinguish the Light, but not un-

til it wishes to give place to darkness!”

At the command of the officers he was seized

and bound again, but the soldiers absolutely

refused to fire upon him.

“This is a divine man!” they cried. “We

will do him no harm!”

The officers were obliged to march the men

away, and call up a regiment of barbarians,

who knew nothing of what had taken place.

So at length the tragedy was accomplished,

and again the True One, the Liberator, the

Herald of Truth, gave his body as a sacrifice

for the hearts of men!

The physical relics of the Bab were thrown

into the ditch to be devoured by the dogs, but

they were rescued by his faithful followers.

Mohammed Yezdi’s remnant was buried, and

that of the Bab preserved in the house of Sou-

leiman Khan in Tabriz, until a communication

had been sent to Houssein Ali at Teheran, he

who later became Baha Ullah. According to

the latter’s directions, the case containing the

body of the True One was forwarded to Te-

heran, and was finally placed in the favourite

cemetery of the Babis, where it remained for

a number of years, then Baha Ullah, who was

at that time a prisoner at Adrianople, sent

word that the precious relic must be removed,

and soon afterward the building in which it

had been secreted was destroyed, so that the

earthly tenement of the Bab would have been

lost if it had not been safeguarded in this

clairvoyant fashion. The body lies now in the

simple and noble tomb on Mount Carmel,

which has been erected by Abdul Baha, and

the feet of many pilgrims turn thither from

distant lands into which the light of the True

One’s message has penetrated.

There is a glory of youth about the tragic

mission of the Bab, which, from the human

standpoint, is irresistible and compelling. He

was but twenty-five years old when he gave

his announcement that a new Day of God had

dawned, a day of brotherhood and unity, when

all men shall begin to love one another, a day

of Manifestation, when men shall again learn

to know God, “and I am the Herald of this

Day!”

Courageous and loving to a supreme degree,

the spirit of God upon him seemed to enhance

the splendor of his youth, to intensify the ac-

cent of his consecration. He was two years

younger than Jesus when he gave his life in

the same sacrifice for the salvation of the

world, declaring himself the precursor of that

wonderful second coming so long expected.

The theologians have destroyed the beauty of

youth in Jesus, but its radiance will always

linger upon the Bab, who will be remembered as

a wonderful illumined boy going to martyrdom

with a smile upon his lips!

CHAPTER IV.

KURRET UL AINE.

Among the many women who accepted the

new teaching with eager hearts none has won

such distinction as Zarrine Tadj, Crown of

Gold, known to the world as Kurret ul Aine.

This title, which means *Consolation of the*

*Eyes*, she was given on account of the extreme

beauty and charm which were her portion.

She was the daughter of Mullah Saleh Barra-

kani of Casvine, a man illustrious in learning

and wealth, and born of a family distinguished

for the same fortunate possessions.

From her infancy Kurret ul Aine was nota-

ble for the qualities which rendered her re-

markable in later years. She received such an

education as only her social position rendered

possible in those days, and became famous, not

only for her poems, which were popularly re-

peated, but for her unusual learning and judg-

ment.

Thus, though obliged to submit to the seclu-

sion of a Mohammedan woman she was accus-

tomed to take part in the lessons and lectures

of her learned father and uncle, and would sit

in a hall with two or three hundred students,

protected by a curtain. From the shelter of

this veil she did not hesitate to dispute the con-

clusions of her accomplished relatives, and she

became famous throughout Persia for her dif-

ferences with the mullahs, who frequently

yielded precedence to her, and adopted her

opinions.

She was unique among her conservative con-

nections for her ardent independence, and her

radical views, and yet she was so loved by them

all that they never dreamed of disputing her

right to think as she pleased. Marriage did

not alter her position, which remained supreme,

and it was natural that she should early have

become interested in the Proclamation of the

True One. She entered into correspondence

with him, and in 1848 frankly confessed her

faith in him.

With her spirit and courage no half way

measures were possible, and she was soon one

of the most inspired and eloquent teachers of

the new truth. She naturally was delighted

with the declaration of the True One that the

sexes are equal, and that the seclusion of

women according to the Mohammedan custom

is wrong. She took off her veil therefore, and

went about freely teaching the new truth, out-

raging thereby all the traditions of her very

honorable family.

When a woman like Kurret ul Aine became

convinced of the injustice endured by the

women of the faith in which she had been

reared, she would stop at nothing to rouse

them, and ameliorate their condition. Natur-

ally courageous the Bab’s teaching in regard

to death and the other world made her long

for martyrdom, and only the position of her

family prevented her obtaining this crown be-

fore the execution of the Bab. She was with

Bouchrouyehi in Mazanderan, and was closely

associated with him and with Khorassani in all

their work.

She became famous for her predictions in re-

gard to the fate of various eminent public men

who persecuted the Babis, and so many of

these were almost immediately fulfilled that she

was looked upon as infallible in such clear see-

ing. Significant in this way was her prophecy

of her uncle’s death. Mullah Taghi Barrakani

was distinguished for his literal interpretation

of the sacred writings, and his adherence to

the mere written word of all Mohammedan tra-

dition. He was especially irritated at the new

freedom of his niece, and her adoption of the

dangerous heresy of the Bab.

The prominent position of the Mullah ren-

dered him at once a protection and a menace to

Kurret ul Aine. After one of her teaching

tours in which she had roused much comment

by her independent speech and action, he

brought her to her father’s house, and gave

her to understand that he would confine her

there until he had reason to believe that she

would be more prudent in her conduct. He is-

sued his orders to the servants therefore that

she should not be permitted to leave the man-

sion.

He sought her presence meanwhile, hoping

by argument and persuasion to recall her from

her dangerous course. He was doubly irri-

tated by the calm with which she listened to

his angry words, and the sweet wisdom with

which she answered his objections. At length

unable to restrain his fury he turned upon her,

and cursed the True One, showering insult

upon his name. Gazing fixedly upon the en-

raged man Kurret ul Aine exclaimed:

“How unfortunate you are! For I see your

mouth fill with blood!”

Mullah Taghi was accustomed to rise very

early, and repeat his devotions at the mosque

at an hour when as a rule there was but one

priest in attendance. The following morning

he wended his way as usual to the place of

prayer, and in the instant of crossing the

threshold he was struck upon the mouth by the

lance of a hidden assailant. The attack was

followed up by five or six other assassins who

sprang at him furiously, and did not pause

until the life was beaten from the mangled

body of the famous Mullah. No doubt his own

injustice and tyranny were responsible for this

tragic death, but as usual the strange insight

of Kurret ul Aine had foreseen its coming.

The assassination removed a serious obstacle

from her pathway, though she would have been

the last to wish such a catastrophe.

For some years longer Kurret ul Aine pur-

sued her own course with such brilliant results

that it was said when she addressed an audi-

ence upon the Revelation of the Bab, all were

immediately converted to her faith. Her elo-

quence and magnetic force were so pronounced

that sometimes women were carried out faint-

ing from the assemblage where she spoke, and

men broke down and sobbed.

The story of her martyrdom is very touch-

ing. She was an exceedingly feminine person

in spite of her power, extremely gentle, and

possessed of an alluring charm that rendered

her irresistible. It was at length decided to

confine her in the house of Mahmond Khan,

Kalanter of Casvine. Here she remained a

long time, receiving numerous visits from both

men and women. The latter she pleased in-

variably, and left upon them an indelible im-

pression of the dignity and freedom the new

religion imparted to women. In her discus-

sions with the husbands also she talked much

of the improved position of women, and al-

ways found a way to refute their conservative

arguments.

She maintained a certain reserve during her

stay in the household, where her station was

nominally that of an honored guest. She rose

very early, usually before dawn, and sang her

prayers in a low tone while she bathed. She

was very particular as to her ablutions, often

performing them at night in the fountain of

the woman’s court, after every one but her-

self had retired. She dressed as carefully as

if for a reception, preferably in white, but

usually saw no one until evening, unless there

was a special request for her presence, and this

was certain to be made if guests appeared, for

no one was considered so fascinating as Kurret

ul Aine.

In the course of her confinement one of the

daughters of the family was married, and the

wedding was a splendid affair, for which no

expense was spared. Musicians and dancers had

been provided for the entertainment of the com-

pany, but presently all demanded Kurret ul

Aine, and as soon as she appeared the dancers

were sent away as all were immediately ab-

sorbcd in the conversation of this wonderful

woman. The guests even forgot the sweets

provided for their refreshment, of which ori-

ental women are extremely fond. No one

wished to do anything but listen to Kurret ul

Aine.

Various councils were arranged for her, at-

tended by the learned Mullahs, in the hope

that contact with trained masculine minds

might lead her away from the religious fal-

lacies into which she had fallen. But invari-

ably she met logic with a better reasoning, and

plead her cause so admirably that her would-

be instructors were discomfited.

One day, however, she lost patience. She

encountered always the same arguments of a

theological school, which seemed to her awak-

ened mind but shallow emptiness. The Bab

could not be the expected Mahdi because he

did not bear this title or that, and finally be-

cause he did not spring from the cities of Djab

ul Ka, and Djab ul Sa.

She responded violently that these places

never existed, and were invented by traditional

theology as symbols, that the ideas in regard

to them were the product of morbid minds.

This was undoubtedly true, and perhaps was

as well known to her adversaries s to herself.

Still they persisted.

At length worn out by their obstinacy she

exclaimed:

“The reasonings you advance are those of

an ignorant and stupid child! When will you

cease these insanities and lies? When will you

lift your eyes to the Sun of Truth?”

The Mullahs outraged at what they consid-

ered her blasphemy withdrew immediately, and

then and there decided upon her death. They

could never recall her from her heresies, they

could not lessen her constantly growing influ-

ence over their women, and their only safety

lay in putting her out of the way. They said

nothing of their decision, however, for they

well knew that if the Babis suspected for a

moment that danger threatened Kurret ul

Aine, they would rescue her at any cost.

One night she left her chamber as she was

accustomed to do, and bathed in the fountain

of the enclosed court, which is always part of

the woman’s house in an oriental residence.

She was singing softly during this little cere-

mony and seemed very happy.

She returned to her chamber, perfumed her-

self, and dressed entirely in white. Then she

made the tour of the house, visiting all the

ladies, saying farewell to each as if she were

going on a long journey. She begged them

to excuse every inconvenience her stay in the

mansion might have caused, and to forgive any

wrong she had done while there.

They asked her in surprise, “What does this

mean? Are you going to leave us?” And she

replied:

“I am going on a very long journey to-

night.”

She spoke with such joy, she appeared so

strangely exulted that all wept at her words,

for they loved her exceedingly.

While they were talking there came a knock

at the street door.

“Go quickly and open!” she cried, “they are

looking for me!”

It was the Kalanter himself who entered.

He went directly to her chamber and said to

her:

“Come Madam, they are asking for you!”

“Yes,” she responded, “I know, I know

where you will take me, and what you will do

to me, but beware! The day will come when

your master will cause you to be slain in your

turn!”

This prediction was verified shortly after-

ward, and is the more remarkable as the Shah

himself had ordered the execution of Kurret ul

Aine, at the instigation of the Mullahs, but all

had been kept a profound secret.

She went out with the Kalanter dressed as

she was. Her friends did not guess where she

was going, and only learned of her execution

the following day.

The utmost precautions had been taken to

prevent the rescue of Kurret ul Aine. The

nephew of the Kalanter had been ordered to

draw a cordon of police about the house of the

Kalanter, and the garden of Ilkhani, though

the reason for this was not explained. The

inhabitants were forbidden to be upon the

streets later than three hours after sundown.

At four hours from this time Kurret ul Aine

was removed from the house. The Kalanter

put her in charge of his nephew, to whom he

gave a folded paper, saying:

“You will take this woman to the garden

of Ilkhani, and place her in the hands of the

Serdar Aziz Khan. Then bring me a receipt

for her delivery.”

A horse was led forward and the victim

mounted upon it was convoyed silently through

the deserted streets, which would have been a

scene of wild uproar if the town had dreamed

the villainy that was plotting. The young

escort was in constant dread of rescue, and

breathed a sigh of relief when the garden was

at last reached. The Serdar was awaiting him,

and leaving his prisoner carefully guarded in

a lower chamber, he demanded his receipt.

“You are sure that no one has seen you?”

asked the Serdar.

“No one,” was the response, “Give me the

receipt.”

Upon this he was informed that he was to

assist in the execution of Kurret ul Aine, and

could not have his receipt until this was ac-

complished. We are not told that the young

man objected to this brutal office, and the cere-

mony proceeded somewhat as it had been

planned.

The Serdar called a Turkish valet who had

been in his service for some time. He was a

fine looking fellow with a handsome face. The

Serdar spoke flatteringly to him, told him he

had recognized his merit, and wished to reward

him. Then he gave him twenty pieces of gold,

telling him to spend them as he pleased, and

handed him a silk handkerchief.

“Go with this officer,” he added, “to the

lower chamber. There you will find a young

woman who is an infidel, and is turning the

women away from the pathway that Moham-

med has marked out for them. Strangle her

with this handkerchief. You will thus render

a great service to God, and I will reward you

generously.”

The two men descended to the room where

Kurret ul Aine had been left, and found her

in prayer. The valet approached her to exe-

cute the order he had received, when she

turned, fixed her eyes upon him, and ex-

claimed:

“Oh, young man! It would be unmanly of

you to soil your hand with this murder!”

It would be impossible to explain what revo-

lution these simple words caused in the soul of

the youth, but he fled as if insane. The of-

ficer followed him, and he rushed into the pres-

ence of the Serdar, crying:

“You may do with me what you will, but I

can not carry out your orders. I will not

touch this woman!”

The Serdar sent him away, and after think-

ing a moment, ordered up a trooper who had

been put to work in the kitchen as a punish-

ment for disorderly conduct. He poured him

a stiff glass of brandy, knowing he had drunk

no liquor for some weeks, assured him that he

now had an opportunity to regain the good

will of his master, handed him another hand-

kerchief, and commanded him to execute Kur-

ret ul Aine.

This time the murder was quickly accom-

plished, for the brutal fellow fell upon his vic-

tim without an instant’s hesitation, and she

made no resistance. Before the deed was fully

complete, however, there was a disturbance.

Fearing the ever dreaded rescue the assassins

dragged the fainting but still living woman to

an abandoned well in the garden. They hurled

her into its depths, and hastily flung stones

upon her until the place was filled up suffi-

ciently to conceal all evidences of the vile deed

that had been perpetrated.

So died one of the most charming women of

the world, a martyr to her religion, but more

especially to the enfranchisement of her sex.

Wherever the cause of the liberation of women

is championed the name of Kurret ul Aine

should be recalled as the brave woman who

shed her blood for the True One, but who

never failed to remind her hearers that the en-

lightened hearts of the future must ensure the

freedom of women.

What splendor of life is in the record of

these exalted men and women who so easily

forgot comfort and every joy the body craves

for the sake of a shining ideal? The Bab re-

membered nothing but the message he was to

give, a message that must soften the hearts of

men, turn them toward God and fill them with

love for their brothers. The love of God shone

through him so powerfully that wherever he

went, and whenever his divine word was re-

peated men, women, and little children trem-

bled and listened, and then began to love so

ardently that God was in their hearts, and

they forgot themselves completely in their

eagerness to serve the heavenly cause that

meant peace on earth, and brotherhood to all

mankind!

The Mohammedans feared the Babis. They

could not conquer them, could not understand

the light in their faces, the exaltation in their

voices, the heavenly presence that surrounded

them when they met death. We read the iden-

tical story in the history of the early Chris-

tian martyrs. They encountered death with

the same joy, they were surrounded by the

same Presence, they prophesied as did the

Babis the swift retribution that would over-

take their persecutors.

This was to be expected, for while the Bab

was the Mahdi to his Mohammedan followers,

he was the Angel of the resurrection to the

Christian world, the Herald of Baha Ullah,

and the Precursor of the Wonderful One,

whose return must usher in the dawn of peace,

the millennium of progress.

CHAPTER V.

THE RISE OF BAHA ULLAH.

The movement of the new faith by no means

stagnated after the execution of the True One.

He had warned his followers that they must

look for the coming of the Glory of God, Him

whom God shall manifest, within nineteen years

after his own passing, and when this sad event

was accomplished the hearts of the devoted

ones turned more and more toward the figure

of Houssein Ali, Prince of Nur, who had been

one of the first to accept the message of the

Bab. The wealth and position of Houssein

Ali’s family would have rendered him a note-

worthy figure in any case, but his beautiful

character necessitated his true prominence.

He was two years older than the Bab, being

born in November, 1817, and from his infancy

he had been the counsellor and the dearly be-

loved of his immediate environment. At the

moment of the Bab’s proclamation he was mar-

ried, and had become the head of his family.

His wife, the mother of Abdul Baha, was a

very remarkable woman, to whom the orientals

gave a title expressive of her supreme excel-

lencc. They called her the *Lady of the Ladies*

*of the Ladies*. Three years after the execution

of the Bab Houssein Ali was imprisoned with

his entire family, as a follower of the Bab, and

all of his great property was confiscated. This

sacrifice was demanded of the one upon whom

the Glory of God was to rest, for the Saviour

of his kind must always be “a man of sorrows

and acquainted with grief.”

Houssein Ali was an individual of splendid

appearance. He was more than six feet in

height, of magnificent figure, with wonderful

blue eyes, and the fair skin and dark hair of

the ancient Persian race. He would have been

remarked anywhere for the simple beauty of

his manhood. When added to this, the su-

preme gift of illumination that had been prom-

ised came upon him, surely it would have been

very difficult not to believe that he was a divine

messenger, bringing a new revelation to man-

kind.

The teaching of Baha Ullah was in every

case an amplification of that which the Bab

had uttered, though by no means limited to the

text already eloquently expressed. In fact the

True One came so little in contact with his

followers that they comprehended scarcely

more than the bare outline of what he had ac-

tually taught.

It was in this way that they took up arms

and fought for their faith and their liberty.

The Bab would never have counseled such ac-

tion, for his principle was that of love, and

like all the great prophets, his predecessors,

he was a non-resistant. Baha Ullah corrected

this misunderstanding among his followers,

and one of his first commands was that the

persecuted Babis should lay down their arms.

“We can only conquer by love,” he insisted,

“and if you cease fighting the persecution will

die out.”

This promise was literally fulfilled, so that

for many years before the death of Baha Ullah

in 1892, there was no persecution of the

“friends.” The reverence of the people for

the expressed wish of the *Blessed Perfection*

as he is often lovingly termed, rendered them

immediately obedient to his desire, and the fol-

lowing anecdote illustrates how powerful was

his influence.

There was one leader among the oppressed

people who had been so successful in his gen-

eralship of the outlawed religionaries, that

again and again he had enabled them to evade

or overcome the Shah’s troopers. These last

were constantly on the watch for him. At

length a regiment of cavalry discovered the lit-

tle band of persecuted outcasts in their fast-

ness, and a hot skirmish was imminent, though

the soldiers hoped to capture their prey in the

end.

Meanwhile a tablet or letter from Baha

Ullah had just been given to the Babist leader,

in which the Holy One counseled peace and

submission as the only way to bring repose to

the tortured country, and success to the cause

of God. The writings of Baha Ullah are full

of power, so that it is impossible to read them

even in cold print without a profound con-

sciousness of their inspiration. It is easy to

imagine, therefore, how deeply touched an in-

dividual may have been at receiving one of

these eloquent epistles, the thought of which

was addressed directly to himself.

The leader in question was so stirred at the

perusal of the communication sent him by his

spiritual Lord that after reflecting a moment

he suddenly stuck it in his sleeve, and turning,

left his companions and walked toward the

watching enemy. He approached the com-

manding officer of the hostile force, and

tendered him his sword, with the request that

as he gave himself up, his companions might

be allowed to go free.

The captain of the troop took the sword,

delighted at his easy conquest, and exclaimed:

“How is this? You are the man I most

dreaded to meet, and it seems you have turned

coward!”

“It is not fear of you that has made me re-

linquish my sword,” replied the persecuted

man, “but the word of one mightier than you

has conquered me!” Then drawing the letter

of Baha Ullah from his sleeve he extended it

to the officer.

The latter read it in his turn, found it dif-

ficult to see clearly for a moment, and return-

ing it to his prisoner, he remarked, “I can not

arrest a man so protected!”

Then springing upon his horse he led his

troop away, and the little company of outcasts

was safe for the moment. But the recipient

of Baha Ullah’s letter sought martyrdom

shortly afterward as if determined to prove

that he had not shrunk from that glorious des-

tiny.

The words unity and equality were even

more constantly upon the lips of Baha Ullah

than upon those of the Bab. Always a pris-

oner, he was taken first to Bagdad, then to

Adrianople and Constantinople, and finally, in

1868, to the prison town of Acca in Syria,

where he passed away in 1892. But the pano-

rama of the world seemed ever unfolding be-

fore his eyes, and the streets of Paris, London,

St. Petersburg and New York appeared more

familiar to him than the walls of his prison.

The sufferings of man were constantly in

his thoughts, and he taught that these suffer-

ings must be obliterated by the establishment

of justice, and the attainment of that “most

great Peace” of which he dreamed. He told

Professor Browne, of Cambridge, who visited

him in Acca in 1891, that the essence of his

teachings was contained in Christ’s Sermon on

the Mount, and in the literal interpretation of

his words to his disciples. The world must

put in practice every element of those divine

commands, he insisted, yet two thousand years

after they were spoken, the social system of

the universe is planned on such opposite lines

that a man is considered a crank and a fanatic

who endeavors to live the life that Christ de-

manded of his followers!

Baha Ullah is regarded by his people as

bringing the fulfilment of Christ’s promise to

come again and establish his kingdom. They

realize that the kingdom is a spiritual one,

though one which must dynamically alter hu-

man conditions, and their interpretation of the

“Coming” is somewhat different from that of

the Christian church.

When the spirit of God rests upon a man,

say the Bahaist Teachers, he receives the pro-

phetic gift, he becomes a divine Messenger, and

these divine Messengers appearing again and

again have lifted men from barbarism, and

given them a constantly more illumined con-

ception of God. The prophet may be one who

speaks only to a group of men, like Moses for

instance, or a Manifestation of God, whose

message is for the world, like that of Christ

or Baha Ullah. But it is the Breath of God

upon him which renders him different from

other men, and not any peculiarity of human

birth.

Thus the Bab was a descendant of Moham-

med, but there had been many of the prophet’s

kindred before him, and not one had been illu-

minated until the Bab came to fulfill the

prophecy of the returning Imaum, and this

prophecy rose not from the flesh of the Imaum

who spoke it, nor of Mohammed who first

voiced it, but from the spirit that rested upon

both, and upon the Bab as well.

So Christ’s promise to come again was ut-

tered through the lips of Jesus, but it did not

mean that the man Jesus was to walk the earth

once more as the Christian world has believed.

Christ was the spirit of God resting upon

Jesus, which rendered him the Saviour of man.

He became a Manifestation of God in the mo-

ment of that great Illumination and because of

it, not because he was the son of Mary, the

virgin. So the spirit of God breathing

through the lips of Jesus made a definite

promise to appear again as the *Comforter*, the

*Prince of this World*, as an individual who

once more should be the light bearer.

Christian theology has familiarized us with

the idea that there has never been but one

Saviour of the world, whose coming was

planned with the “Fall of man” and the eating

of that terrible apple which caused such an

acute case of indigestion not only to Adam

but to all his descendants.

“Oh, Thou who man of baser Earth didst

make,

And ev’n with Paradise divine the snake;

For all the sin wherewith the face of man

Is blackened, man’s forgiveness give and

take!”

We must always remember that this scheme

of salvation is not in the least that of Christ,

but that of Paul essentially, and of the early

Christian theologians. It sprang from the

brain of man, not from the illumination of

God.

Christ came to save the world surely. He

was the divine Word made flesh, but he was

one of the heavenly chain that will never be

complete as long as man yearns for God, and

the human mind is capable of a constantly

fuller and deeper conception of his divinity.

While this yearning endures the Messenger

of God must appear to satisfy it, and lift us

to still higher comprehension of that ethereal

and infinite Deity who is our Environer!

Abdul Baha says the growth of the soul is

like the return of the seasons to the earth. As

Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter follow

one another, the seeds are planted, the soft

breezes of the south woo them to blossom, the

heats of Summer ripen them, the Autumn

brings the harvest, and in the snows of Winter

the earth is wrapped beneath the cold repose

that is in reality the precursor of blossoming

Spring, for ever it must dawn again with bloom

and fragrance.

So the soul of man does not retain the fresh-

ness and glory of inspiration which rises when

the great Messenger of God proclaims his

message. Then the human heart is softened.

It receives the heavenly imprint, coldness and

selfishness disappear for the time being, and

earth offers a transient picture of heaven.

When Christ was in Judea, every one who

approached him and lingered to know him was

transformed, and after his Departure the de-

light of his memory rendered the journeys of

the disciples and the establishment of the early

church a story of Paradise.

So with Mohammed. The wisdom of his

presence lifted the cloud of barbarism from his

followers, and the memory of it founded that

magnificent civilization of the Moors that is

the marvel of history.

But the hearts of the Christians grew cold,

theology replaced the words of the great

Teacher, and the conduct of the Christian

world to-day is far from that inculcated by

the precept and example of the exalted Mentor.

So the heavy tyranny of succeeding rulers

offered the blackest contrast to the lesson of

peace and justice Mohammed taught to his de-

lighted listeners. It seems as one looks at the

disturbance and suffering of the world as if no

prophet had ever whispered love into eager

ears. But the fields must always lie blanketed

in snow before the brown earth is ready once

more to receive the winged seeds, and only the

fragrance of the breath of God, the thunder of

his utterance through the lips of his prophets

can melt the frost from the heart of the world,

and rouse our human nature so that it casts

aside once more the enshrouding folds of its cold

invented theologies, and determines to live as

God wills, as his message directs.

*Dieu le veut, Dieu le veut!* God wills it! is

the ancient crusaders’ cry, and it seems to

thrill the world again when a Manifestation of

God appears. At such a time a new law must

be spoken for mankind. Its essentials are like

the old one, because all religions inculcate the

same principles as to love of God and man,

and the relation of this life to its eternal suc-

cession. But there are differences in details,

as for instance, the Jewish law permitted di-

vorce, and Christ declared it wrong, while

Baha Ullah upholds it. The Old Testament

prophets allowed a man to have several wives,

so did Mohammed, while Christ taught monog-

amy, as does Baha Ullah.

In such a period of transition between the

old day and the new, profound distress must

always be experienced, because established

truth has lost its hold upon the heart. The

few have learned the new law and rejoice in it

with fervor; others who are discontented with

traditions of right and wrong feel at liberty

to hew a pathway of their own, while the many

arrogate to themselves a license in all things

which is shocking to the conservative and pain-

ful to all sensitive and spiritual minds.

Such a condition accompanied the preaching

of Christ’s wonderful Word, a similar situa-

tion followed Mohammed’s death and the set-

ting aside of his successor Ali, and a sadly ex-

aggerated replica of the identical condition ex-

ists to-day.

In religion we have various new cults like

that of Christian Science and the notable de-

parture of Dr. Worcester, the separation of

church and state in France, and the threat of

its repetition in Spain. In governmental up-

rising there are the revolutions of Turkey and

Persia, the rumblings of suffering Russia, the

distress of England, the threat of increasing

armament in Germany, the growing struggle

between capital and labor in the United States

—these are only a few indications of the deep

spirit of change that seems pervading all our

institutions.

Most curiously in evidence perhaps are the

increase of divorce, and the mad thirst for

gold, for the possession of more money, both

tendencies in marked contrast with the teach-

ing of Jesus Christ, who inculcated above all

things the law of brotherhood, and of unselfish,

faithful love.

As creed has so largely replaced practical

Christianity, so the development of pure in-

tellectualism has generally set aside that use of

spiritual intuition which holds so large a place

in religious experience, and renders it vital.

The thirst for money meanwhile has upset all

customs of sweet and rational living. The de-

sire to be very rich in the goods of this world,

or to follow the example of the extremely rich

has invaded all walks of life, transforming hos-

pitality into a mere giving and receiving of en-

tertainment, and introducing into business

methods a cold indifference to the cost of hu-

man life in the output of a product which is

shocking in the extreme. The gentle admoni-

tion of the Saviour:

“If a man ask thee for thy coat, give him

thy cloak also,” has been so far forgotten

that the maker of coats compels his employee

to labor long hours in conditions inimical to

life, and when we remonstrate with him, shrugs

his shoulders and responds:

“Business can not consider life, it deals only

with profits!”

This period of transition between the mes-

sages of two great prophets or Manifestations

of God, when one is fading from the spiritual

consciousness of the world, and the other has

not yet pervaded it with controlling potency,

has been termed by Baha Ullah the day of

Judgment. Christ’s words to his disciples did

not indicate an end of the physical universe,

a destruction of the planet, but the close of a

spiritual dispensation with the throes and dis-

turbances that must necessarily attend such an

epoch. It is a time of horror because it is law-

less, but it is one of enormous advancement be-

cause new truth is manifesting itself in every

direction.

The shocking occurrences, the pain, suffer-

ing, disdain and indifference of human life

were never so noticeable as to-day, the spir-

itual development is beyond all parallel, and

the new revelation must necessarily be one of

enormous power and significance to meet a de-

mand which has fruited from all religions.

Baha Ullah declared that the disturbances of

this period would be manifested in the physical

as well as in the mental and spiritual worlds

and certainly the record of calamity in the

preceding ten years is without precedent in his-

tory. There have been single catastrophes

as stupendous as some of these. So the burn-

ing of plague stricken London in the seven-

teenth century could be mentioned in the same

breath with the earthquake of San Francisco,

and the destruction of Pompeii with that of

Messina, but pause a moment and realize that

sixteen centuries intervened between the hor-

rors of Pompeii and London, and but three

years between those of San Francisco and Mes-

sina.

We read passages in Isaiah, in Revelations

and St. Matthew which seem to picture the

present day in its heaping up of disastrous

events, yet there are certain potential forces

at work in its upheavals that would indicate a

divine force working beneath the surface to at-

tain certain permanent results. For instance,

Baha Ullah in many significant prophetic ut-

terances which he gave in regard to this re-

markable Day of God, called it a day of pub-

licity, when all things must be made clear be-

cause its law is that of manifestation. No

hypocrisy can therefore be successfully main-

tained. All dishonesty must be laid bare, all

scoundrels and dishonest public servants must

be tried at the bar of enlightened public

opinion.

Moreover, as the new ideal is working in the

world consciousness a new sensitiveness will be

manifested as to the rights of the common-

wealth and the individual, a new democracy will

be established on a solid foundation. In many

countries a republic will replace the ancient

monarchy, and where the monarchy remains it

must become distinctively constitutional.

“The day of the rich man is passed,” de-

clared Baha Ullah, “he does not belong to the

new time.”

So two small commonwealths, those of Swit-

zerland and New Zealand, have already rendered

the accumulation of excessive wealth by the in-

dividual an impossibility. This has been ac-

complished by the simple imposition of a grad-

uated tax, and with other laws of similar tenor

has gone far to make these two communities

ideal places of residence for human beings of

all classes. Already the pensioning of old age

and the income tax arc being suggested every-

where, showing that the tendency of advance-

ment is altogether toward the betterment of

the masses.

Perhaps the reader is reflecting “these

changes are not spiritual” but in fact the mes-

sage of every great prophet has produced

enormous economic progress. That of Christ

and of Mohammed destroyed and founded em-

pires, the Mosaic law created a new state, and

the Word of the Bab has already manifested

itself in the constitutions of Persia and Turkey.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNITY OF MAN.

People ask, why should a prophet come to

us from the Orient, surely a new teacher of

truth should spring from the advanced races

that are creating the civilization of the future,

and from the centres of progressive thought?

But in the Spring time of the soul, when again

the spirit rather than the intellect alone is to

control the destiny of man if a prophet or

Manifestation of God came to us from Paris,

London, Berlin, or New York, or from St.

Petersburgh maybe, we would find every ex-

planation of his illumination in the ripened

culture of the nation that produced him, and

we would smile at the assertion that he might

be a Sun reflecting the Splendor of God.

When, however, we perceive a great light in

the darkness of the oppressed Orient, when we

read in the utterances of this far away Mahdi,

Bab, or Manifestation of God, the very sen-

tences that are inciting new movements of our

planet elsewhere, and appearing under differ-

ent phraseologies as the foundation for novel

cults and philanthropies among communities

which bear aloft the torch of culture, we are

compelled to search more deeply for conclu-

sions that satisfy.

We remember that the world has not always

remained content with purely scientific reason-

ings, but as even Zola admitted, the rationalist

must, in his turn, yield the middle of the road

to the idealist and the illuminant. We love

our Charles Darwin, but we do not forget our

Buddha and our Christ. We look for our

Mahdi, as we repeat the hymns of the Rig-

Veda, or the Psalms of David, and the divine

longing within us will not be stilled.

So when we read as the utterance of the

Sultan’s prisoner, certain wonderful words,

the essence of which is thrilling in many hearts

of those who never heard his name, we ponder

deeply, and remember the profound conviction

voiced in all ancient tradition that God shines

upon his chosen ones with a glory that can not

be hidden. Baha Ullah says, for instance:

“We desire but the good of the world and

the happiness of the nations, yet they deem us

a stirrer of strife and sedition, worthy of

bondage and banishment; we desire that all

nations should become one in faith, and all

men as brothers; that the bonds of affection

between the sons of men should be strength-

ened; that diversity of religion should cease,

and differences of race be annulled. What

harm is there in this? Yet so it shall be;

these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall

pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall

come, is not this that which Christ foretold?

Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing

their treasures more freely for the destruction

of the human race than on that which would

conduce to the happiness of mankind. These

strifes and bloodshed and discord must cease,

and all men be as one kindred and one family.

Let not a man glory in this that he loves his

country, let him rather glory in this, that he

loves his kind.”

Again he says: “Oh, children of men, do ye

know why we have created ye from one clay?

That no one should glorify himself over the

other. Be ye ever mindful of how ye were

created. Since we created ye all from the same

substance, ye must be as one soul, walking with

the same feet, eating with one mouth, and liv-

ing in one land, that ye may manifest with

your being, and by your deeds and actions the

signs of unity, and the spirit of oneness. This

is my counsel to ye, Oh, people of Light!

Therefore follow it, that ye may attain the

fruits of holiness from the tree of Might and

Power!”

The illumination of Baha Ullah to those

who came in contact with him seems to have

been always unquestionable. He was not like

other men, as Christ was not, and all loved

him without pausing to question why it was

so. Thus in his imprisonment the most brutal

guards were selected for his custodians that

they might be immune from his charm, but

invariably after they had held him in silent

custody for some weeks or days, they slipped

away to those who believed his message, and

asked:

“Tell us what this Wonderful One teaches,

for he is not like other men, and we would

believe whatever he said was true.”

A very lovely story illustrates this beauti-

ful compelling force in the Revelator, and is

repeated as authentic. During one of his en-

campments a Mohammedan holy man or fakir

had conceived the idea that it was his duty to

assassinate this sacrilegious innovator who de-

clared that God spoke through him as he had

once spoken through Mohammed, his prophet.

So he armed himself with a javelin which he

could use with skill, and creeping under the

side of the tent, entered the presence of the

Blessed Perfection, who sat alone in medita-

tion.

The fakir rose and poised his weapon, and

just then Baha Ullah lifted his head and

glanced at him. The man’s arm dropped and

a quiver of feeling shuddered through his

nerves. But he thought to himself:

“What! Am I to be stirred by the sight of

a base impostor? It is my duty to slay this

blasphemer, and I must do it!”

Again he lifted his arm to strike, and once

more the eyes of Baha Ullah rested upon him

benignantly. His weapon rang upon the

ground, and a deeper thrill transfixed him, but

presently recalling all the power of his con-

viction, he stooped and regained his javelin,

then taking accurate aim, he was about to

launch it, when the Blessed Perfection smiled

upon him!

It was too much for the poor half-crazed

fakir! He fell at the feet of the Illuminated

one and confessed his murderous intention,

begging the prophet to slay him for his sin.

Balm Ullah, however, comforted him, and from

that moment the poor man became an ardent

believer, and never left the circle of the one

who had shown him so potently the wonder

and beauty of love.

The time has not yet come to write the life

of Baha Ullah. Perhaps it may never be

written, for his work in the world had to do

with the significant principle of his illumina-

tion, and not with his personality. The inten-

tion of the present sketch is merely to paint

a picture which will enable the citizen of the

western countries to gain some idea of the

remarkable individual whose presence on our

planet has already shaken so deeply the cur-

rent of our contemporary history.

The effect of his contact was evidently so

tonic and uplifting that all who were with

him for any length of time left him in a mood

of harmony and courage which rendered all

things possible to them. There is a pretty

story of a remarkable visit which was made to

him by a group of twenty Mohammedan Mul-

lahs, who had quarreled over points in their

theology, and could not agree. They came to

lay their case before Baha Ullah, knowing that

all their theological learning would be as

child’s play to him. They remained to forget

their differences in the reality of greater

truth, and before they crossed his threshold

loved one another.

Professor Browne, of Cambridge, describes

eloquently this surpassing power in the man-

hood of Baha Ullah, and his words leave upon

the imagination a vivid image of both the

human and divine in this remarkable Mes-

senger. Perhaps it was better, as he intimated

to his guest, that his message should not

spread in the western world until he had passed

away, for few would have been able to remem-

ber the significant principle that the person-

ality of the prophet is of no importance, it

is the light shining through him which lifts

the world. Men would have been tempted to

worship Baha Ullah, and forget the wonder of

the Light in the charm of the mere man. In

spite of this strong personality, however,

everything goes to show that after Houssein

Ali was enveloped in the illumination, the ma-

terial part of him disappeared. He was hence-

forth the Glory of God, garmented by those

noble qualities that had always been his, but

visible through the beautiful body that was

only human.

The story of Abdel Kerim’s connection with

the Blessed Perfection makes the Manifestation

very real to us. It may not be strictly au-

thentic in minor particulars, but is essentially

true, and enables us to picture the life of Baha

Ullah, and to some extent the character of his

influence. Abdel Kerim was an Egyptian mer-

chant of considerable wealth, who had heard

the story of the new Revelation, and accepted

it with the ardor of his eager temperament.

After some time he felt that he could not be

content without seeing the Messenger of God

whose presence in the world had stirred his

heart. So he wrote a letter to Acca, where the

Manifestation then was, and begged permission

to visit him. He received a strange letter in

response. He was told that he might come to

Acca, but first he must put himself in a po-

sition where he owed no man anything.

Abdel Kerim had carried on his business for

many years in the customary Oriental fashion,

sending his caravans across the desert laden

with a precious freight of riches. He had long

credits everywhere, and probably never dreamed

of doing business on a cash basis. His traffic

was constantly expanding, perhaps he was not

too scrupulous in his dealings. We may be

certain it had not occurred to him that his in-

terest in the new Day of God would transform

his methods of trafficking with his fellow man.

A successful merchant is apt to fall into the

habit of considering his own advantage first.

Naturally Abdel Kerim was absorbed in the

conduct of his rapidly broadening trade con-

nections, for he was a man of fifty years when

this momentous influence came into his life.

As the story develops we can see that it re-

sembles in some respects the problem which

Christ presented to the rich young man, but

Abdel Kerim accepted without hesitation the

ultimatum offered him. Before all else he

wanted to see the Manifestation of God, and

everything became of secondary importance in

comparison with this event.

He began, therefore, to arrange his affairs

with this point in view. Previously he had

thought only of expansion, of increase. Now

his one desire was to reach the condition where

he would owe no man anything. So he began

to pay off. As money came in, instead of in-

vesting it again, he paid a debt with it, until at

length after five years he had attained his goal,

and he did not owe a penny!

But in this careful accounting of outlay and

income his business had dwindled away to noth-

ing. His longing to see the Blessed Perfec-

tion had completely absorbed him, so that the

love of wealth had died out of his heart, and at

the moment of realization he had just money

enough left to pay a deck passage on the

steamer to Haifa, and leave in his wife’s hands

a sum sufficient to provide for the family ex-

penses during his absence.

But he did not hesitate. The luxurious

merchant had never before traveled except as

a first-class passenger, and as he stepped across

the gang plank a shawl upon his arm, which

was his only protection from the weather,

dropped into the water, and at that season the

nights were chill! Nevertheless he went on with

a light heart. Was he not near the consumma-

tion of all his hopes? His soul was alive with

prayer, and he did not know the wind was

chill!

Mean while Baha Ullah warned his family

that he was about to receive a most honored

guest, greater than any that had yet crossed

his threshold. He sent an emissary with a car-

riage to the dock at Haifa, which is the sea-

port of Acca, with strict orders to bring this

noble guest to him without delay. But char-

acteristically he told the attendant nothing as

to the real character of the man he was to

meet. Here was such a test of faith and also

discrimination as he was quite apt to impose

upon those about him. It is not an easy matter

to live in the household of a Blessed Perfec-

tion whose mind necessarily dwells in a world

of stars!

The attendant watched carefully the dis-

embarkation of passengers at the landing of

the steamer. He was looking eagerly for an

ambassador with a noble retinue, for a prince

with many orders upon his breast, for a per-

sonage resplendent in broadcloth and jewels.

But no such individual stepped upon the quay.

In fact the passengers seemed an especially

polyglot assemblage, and the emissary paid no

attention to the shabby looking middle aged

man, who glanced about in disappointment, as

if expecting some one, and then seated himself

quietly upon a bench.

Abdel Kerim had been assured that some one

from the household of the Manifestation would

come in search of him, though he had not

written warning of his expected arrival. He

had no money to pay the necessary carriage

hire to Acca. His faith had carried him so

far, but now it suddenly failed him, and he

sat forlornly upon the bench, while clouds of

black despair settled over him.

The emissary returned alone to Acca, and

reported that the guest had not appeared. He

thought it strange, for he knew that Baha

Ullah’s vision was never mistaken, and he was

familiar with all that transpired about him.

The Blessed Perfection looked keenly at his

factotum as the message was delivered, and re-

plied:

“Ah, your eyes were not far seeing enough

to recognize my princely guest. I will send

Abbas Effendi to find him. He has clearer

vision.”

So Abbas Effendi took his way to the dock,

and though the quick twilight of the Orient

had fallen before he reached the spot, he knew

immediately the disappointed figure huddled

upon the bench. This was the royal guest his

father expected!

He quickly introduced himself, explaining

that the individual sent to meet the stranger,

had failed to find him. Then he added:

“Do you wish to go on to Acca to-night,

or will you wait until morning?”

It was customary for pilgrims to spend some

hours in prayer and purification before enter-

ing the presence of Baha Ullah, and Abdel

Kerim had faithfully accomplished his duty in

this regard. But sitting alone and neglected

during the long afternoon, bitter thoughts had

invaded his consciousness. He looked back re-

gretfully to the fortune he had lost in prepara-

tion for what? For this day of waiting alone

and penniless for a possible interview with a

fictitious prophet! So events had painted

themselves in his anguished soul, but in the

presence of the gentle messenger who had

sought him at last, suspicion vanished, and he

longed for hours of prayer to wash the stain

of doubt from his tormented inward self.

Abbas Effendi knew instinctively that his

new friend would not wish to seek a hotel at

his expense, so finding that he preferred to

wait until morning for the journey to Acca,

he unbuttoned the long cloak that enveloped

him, seated himself beside the pilgrim, and

wrapped both in its ample folds. So they

passed the night praying together, lost in that

ecstasy of prayer that brings realization.

Then in the morning they turned toward

Acca, and Abdel Kerim going to the Blessed

Perfection with a radiant heart found full re-

ward in his lovely presence for the five lonely

years of seeking that had prefaced his pilgrim-

age. We may be certain also that his inward

wealth became so great he quite forgot the flat-

ness of his pocketbook!

After he had been in the household some

days, Baha Ullah said to his guest:

“You have suffered greatly before coming

here, and I see that your heart is pure. I love

you very much, tell me what you desire most,

for I will grant you three wishes.”

The story here begins to partake somewhat

of the fairy tale, and may contain an element

of allegory, though no one who realizes the

power of Baha Ullah could doubt his ability

to fulfill wishes. There is deep truth in the

little drama.

Abdel Kerim had learned his lesson well, and

could not ask for material things. He had but

one desire in his soul. He wished to remain by

the side of Baha Ullah forever, so that even

death itself should not separate him from his

Beloved.

The Blessed Perfection hesitated a moment

over the second half of the request, as the

legend runs, for, indeed, the ardent one had

asked a difficult thing. But at length he

granted it all. He promised that even death

should not remove this eager lover from the

shining circle to which he had attained.

So Abdel Kerim removed his family to

Cairo, where he carried on a business, though

he spent most of his time in the household of

Baha Ullah at Acca. In the succeeding years

he made two fortunes and lost them, dying a

poor man. But he lived to be nearly ninety

years old, with no diminution of youth or

vigor, and he was exactly the same man,

whether he had just made or lost a fortune,

for the possession of money was no longer of

any importance of him. He would walk miles

to talk with some one who was in love with

God, and was seeking truth, and he was always

a most loving person.

The Egyptian was naturally a man of ma-

terial instincts, yet the grace of God was in

him, and tradition says that his consuming de-

sire was fulfilled. Baha Ullah passed from

earth some years before his ardent lover, but

the veil between them did not conceal the radi-

ance of the Departed.

Among the writings of Baha Ullah the book

entitled the *Ighan* holds a peculiar place. In

it the enlightened author has explained for the

student the theory of the succession of God’s

Prophets and their illumination which has been

lightly sketched in the preceding pages. But

the *Ighan* glitters with eloquent passages, not

especially limited to the exposition of its lead-

ing *motif*, and the two which follow illustrate

that feeling in regard to wealth in the Blessed

Perfection which no doubt made him appreciate

profoundly the conquest Abdel Kerim achieved

over the acquisitive man in his own breast.

The first one paints a little picture of Jesus

which enables one to realize what his disap-

pointment must have been when the rich young

man turned from him, and the second is a

story of the Sixth Imaum, such as a poet de-

lights to recall.

“Thus one day Jesus the son of Mary

seated himself upon a chair, and voiced his

feeling through the melodies of the Holy

Spirit, in such words as these:

“Oh, people! My food is from the herbs

of the earth, by which I satisfy my hunger.

My bed is the bare ground; during the night

my lamp is the light of the moon, and I have

no steed but my feet. Who upon earth is

richer than I?

“I swear by God that a hundred thousand

wealths revolve around this poverty, and a hun-

dred thousand kingdoms of glory seek after

this lowliness. Should’st thou attain to a

sprinkling of the ocean of these significances,

thou wilt abandon the world of phenomena and

existence, and sacrifice thy life around the

burning lamp as does the ‘bird of fire.’

“A similar instance is related of His Holi-

ness Sadik. On a certain day one of his fol-

lowers complained of poverty before His Holi-

ness. That Eternal Beauty said:

“‘Thou art rich, and hast drunk from the

wine of wealth.’

“The indigent one astonished at the words of

that brilliant countenance, said:

“‘How am I rich, when I am in need of a

single coin?’

‘‘His Holiness replied:

“‘Hast thou not love for us?’

“He said: ‘Yes, oh, Thou Son of the Mes-

senger of God!’

“‘Wilt thou sell it for one thousand dinars

of gold?’ inquired Sadik.

“He answered: ‘I would not give it for the

world and all that is therein!’

“His Holiness said: ‘How can one be poor

who possesses something which he will not ex-

change for the world?’”

CHAPTER VII.

THE IMPRISONMENT AT ACCA.

One remarkable fact in the life of Baha

Ullah is found in his announcement of his own

mission to the rulers of the world. The Bab

had sent letters to the Shah and the Sultan,

proclaiming his appearance as the long ex-

pected Mahdi, and Baha Ullah wrote to the

crowned heads of Europe and the President of

the United States, saying in most dignified and

stately phrase that he had come to inaugurate

the “Most Great Peace,” and that he was the

reappearance in the world of the Spirit of God

which had been promised for this time.

Napoleon III received the message with

scorn, and ground it under his heel. Victoria

of England laid it away respectfully, saying:

“If it is true, history will reveal it.” President

Grant naturally looked upon it as something

quite beyond his ken, but Alexander II, of

Russia, was so impressed by the dignity and

power of the epistle that he sent an ambassador

in search of its originator. He remained al-

ways afterward in communication with Baha

Ullah, and the books of the Manifestation were

always forwarded to him upon their comple-

tion. If he had been strong enough to follow

the counsels of the Blessed Perfection he would

have carried to a more glorious conclusion the

noble plans of his early reign. But at least

he founded the policy of international peace,

the recognition of which has continued to be a

part of the foreign attitude of his successors.

No one who has followed the recent history of

this pain-racked land can fail to wish that its

rulers had learned more complete lessons from

the great light of Baha Ullah.

In the *Book of Akdas*, the Spirit breathing

through him cries:

“Blessed are the ignorant who seek the

spring of my knowledge, and the lowly who

grasp the robe of my grandeur! Blessed are

the heedless who maintain my commemoration!

Blessed is the spirit resurrected in my Breath,

and thereby entering My Kingdom! Blessed

is the soul who is shaken by my nearness, and

attracted by the kingdom of my command!

Blessed is the eye which has seen, and the ear

which has heard, and the heart which has known

the Lord the Possessor of Glory, and the king-

dom of Grandeur and Might! Blessed are

they who have attained! Blessed is he who is

brightened by the sun of my Word! Blessed

is he whose head is adorned by the crown of

my Love!”

Baha Ullah and his family had been placed

under the suzerainty of the Sultan, and were

transferred by him to his prison city of Acca

in 1868. The Sultan dared not execute Baha

Ullah, and as no prisoner had ever survived

confinement in Acca longer than three months,

it seemed as if his detainment there would solve

many difficulties.

Once immured within these dread walls the

devoted people were treated with the utmost

severity. Baha Ullah himself was bound to

the floor in a cell so small that he could neither

stand erect nor stretch at length within its

limits. His family, with their attendants, were

herded like cattle in an open pen, and as it

was the rainy season when they arrived in Acca

their sufferings could only be termed intoler-

able. Mr. Myron Phelps, in his volume entitled

*The Life of Abbas Effendi*, has written a vivid

description of this painful ordeal, as it was re-

lated by the older sister of Abbas Effendi.

Such gentle people could only have been

subjected to these cruelties with the intention

of shortening their lives, and presently all fell

ill, except Abbas Effendi and Baha Ullah him-

self. Abbas Effendi seems to have been always

the intermediary between his family and its

jailors or the public. Moved by pity for his

companions he went to his father and asked

what could be done to relieve the sufferings

of those so dear to both, and how their anguish

could be assuaged. Perhaps in that sad hour

his faith failed him and he wondered if all were,

indeed, to die victims of the Sultan’s vile and

wicked policy. Martyrdom he would have wel-

comed with joy, but this process of slow and

shameful extinction was hard to endure.

Baha Ullah listened to his son’s impassioned

words, and it would have seemed to an onlooker

as if he were indeed powerless to do aught for

the unfortunate victims of a dark tyranny.

But the Breath of God that could have broken

all bonds was upon him, the Comforter, the

Sustainer!

So he wrote a wonderful little prayer and

gave it to Abbas Effendi, telling him to read it

aloud to all who were ill, and be sure that they

learned it by heart. No other steps need be

taken, all would recover, and conditions would

presently change.

Strangely enough health returned even as

the Blessed Perfection had promised, and

meanwhile the Governor of Acca had not re-

mained unaware of the sublime patience with

which his unusual prisoners had borne their

sufferings. He sent for Abbas Effendi and

after a talk with him removed the family to

the military barracks of the fortress city,

where, though they were by no means what we

would term comfortable, they were at least

assured decency and privacy.

After several years of this seclusion they

were assigned a residence and allowed to live

within the walls on parole, a liberty which

later on was much extended by the Sultan. He

was so impressed by the elevation of character

manifested by Baha Ullah, that, though he

could not grant him freedom, as the Sultan

was the spiritual head of Islam, and Baha

Ullah a great heretic, he established him in the

royal palace outside the walls of Acca, and

appointed him a pension commensurate with

his rank. The Blessed Perfection went freely

to Haifa whenever he chose, and received every

one who came to him, so that the last ten years

of his life were passed in comparative freedom.

It was at this time that Abdel Kerim entered

the household of Baha Ullah, and lived in close

connection with him until the close of his life.

He spoke of the Blessed Perfection as exer-

cising a singularly exhilarating effect upon all

who approached him.

“I never could remain in the room with him

more than twenty minutes at a time,” he con-

fessed, “then I would be obliged to go outside

and walk up and down the corridor, for awhile,

until I regained by poise. The feeling I ex-

perienced was that of a happiness so extreme

that it became excitement, and was unbear-

able.”

He described one occasion when he was in

the garden with the Manifestation, and made

tea for him. Then they walked up and down

the garden paths together. The subject of

conversation was always the same, but handled

with infinite variety. They talked of the love

of God, and the condition of mankind, the

suffering of the world which could so easily be

relieved by an increase of God’s love in men’s

hearts.

The courts of all nations seemed to be re-

vealed to the eyes of the Glory of God, and he

discussed their policies with remarkable acu-

men, foreseeing the results of their selfish and

short-sighted action. Thus he warned the

pope that he would lose his temporal power,

before the invasion of Victor Emanuel, who

conquered Rome, and he warned Napoleon

Third that the Franco-German war would re-

sult in disaster for France.

The delight of association with Baha Ullah

seems to have been felt by every one who came

in contact with him. There is a wonderful

old man in Acca who expresses this. His name

is Mir-za Haider Ali, he is eighty years old,

and seems to possess the youth of a boy of

twenty, yet he languished for years in the

prison of the Khedive of Egypt. When Gen-

eral Gordon entered the country, and opened

the prison doors, he asked Haider Ali, “What

was your crime?” And the victim of fanatic

intolerance replied:

“I taught religious tolerance and freedom,

and unity!”

It certainly was written upon him that such

had been the cause of his incarceration, and

big hearted General Gordon set him free in-

stantly. Whereupon he went straight to

Persia, and began again to teach the truth,

the advocacy of which had deprived him of so

many years of sunlight. But having full sun-

light in his heart, he was able to bear the trial

without bitterness.

He is a remarkable personality endowed

with the joy of a child, and the philosophic

mind of a great man. When he described to

the writer his single meeting with Baha Ullah,

his eyes filled with tears, and for the moment

his voice failed him.

“It was upon the street that I saw him,” he

said at length. “I was only in Acca for a day,

and I feared that I would not have the privi-

lege of resting my eyes upon him. I followed

him for some time trying to find courage to

address him. At length I passed him, but still

my courage failed me. Suddenly I paused and

went toward him determined to fall at his feet.

I felt as if I wanted to do nothing but kiss

his blessed feet! Then he hurried to me, took

me in his arms, and embraced me, speaking

tender words, and repeating:

“You had to do it! You had to do it!”

Haider Ali is a scholar, a thinker, what we

call a gentleman, yet after more than twenty-

five years of eager and progressive existence,

after years of cruel imprisonment, after vivid

experiences which develop manhood, and render

sentimentalism impossible, words die upon his

lips when he endeavors to describe the supreme

moment in which the arms of the Blessed Per-

fection encircled him and he lay upon his

breast.

Mirza Abul Fazl is another unique and

splendid personality who came into personal

contact with Baha Ullah. He had been tutor

in the Shah’s family, was a man of great learn-

ing and inspiration, but had been thrown into

prison for his adherence to the new faith. His

sufferings were so severe that his health was

permanently broken, and when he was at last

set free, it was only to hear the decree of

banishment pronounced upon him.

Baha Ullah spoke to him with great tender-

ness of the trials that were before him, of the

lonely years he should spend in poverty and

exile, where nevertheless he would still labor

for the cause of God. Then he concluded:

“I want you to remember that wherever you

are, no matter how poor and how lonely you

may appear to be, if you but think of me, I

shall be with you instantly. In reality, you

will never be alone, you will never be helpless!”

Then he gave the traveler a little prayer

which he had written for him, to be repeated in

the moment of danger or deep distress, when

he must know that God was near.

“And I never pronounced the lovely words

without the sense of his presence, and imme-

diate relief from the pressure that bound me!”

declared Mirza Abul Fazl.

It is difficult for the modern man hurried,

jostled, smothered in material conditions, to

realize at first the significance of such stories,

but surely we have all experienced the exalta-

tion or depression which assails us in our con-

tact with different persons. Sometimes it is

a mere question of nerves and passion, but

there is a tonic effect that is different. So

Trelawney and Williams relate that after

spending some time with the poet Shelley, they

felt as if walking on air, and our own Ameri-

can painter, Wyatt Eaton, has described a

similar result from his interview with the great

artist François Millet, the year before the lat-

ter’s death.

Eaton had dined with the family at their

own simple table, and lingered until ten

o’clock, unable to tear himself away from the

charm of Millet’s eager disquisition on subjects

of art, of inspiration, of God and man. It

was in 1874, Millet was at the end of his long

life in which he had sought earnestly for the

expression of the lofty impulse he felt within

him. He was very near to God, and was

irradiated by the splendor of his high relation-

ship. He himself, in his poverty, at his frugal

table, dressed in his “blue jeans,” was ex-

periencing the splendor of life, and transmitted

so much of it to the young American student

who had been wise enough to seek him, that

after the interview was closed Eaton walked

miles across the country to relieve his nervous

tension. He was inexpressibly happy, but felt as

if he should never sleep again, as if in fact his

body had disappeared and he “walked on air.”

The circle which gathered around the

hearthstone of Dante Gabriel Rossetti in

Chelsea experienced the same thing. They

talked until morning, not knowing that the

night had passed and felt no fatigue, because

of the noble ideas which possessed them.

Such experiences enable us to understand in

a measure the delightfully inspiring influence

which Baha Ullah exercised upon all who

entered his environment. If an ordinary

human being who has sincerely endeavored to

live according to the higher law of God can

rouse the spirit of others, surely one upon

whom the Breath of God rests must become a

potential tonic to all whom he encounters.

This tonic effect of nearness to God has, of

course, been manifest in all the great religious

reformers. So Savonarola won the hearts of

Botticelli and Michel Angelo as a permanent

possession. Even in that wealth-worshipping

day of the late renaissance Angelo never for-

got for a moment that the splendor of life

lies in our expression of the ideal, not in any

wealth of material things.

So there is a splendor of life in that moment

when Savonarola refused to keep the gold that

Lorenzo di Medici had laid upon the contribu-

tion plate of San Marco. It looked like a

bribe, and the faithful prior knew that the

poor convent was richer without it.

We can imagine the feeling of the publican

when Christ sat at his table, of John, the be-

loved disciple, when his head rested upon the

Master’s shoulder, of Mary Magdalene when

she poured her precious ointment over his

travel worn feet! These last are the surpass-

ing experiences, because the great Messenger

of God, the Saviour, the Manifestation is like

no other. The Glory about him touches all

who come near, and the contact can never be

effaced nor forgotten.

One very substantial result of this divine

tonic has been experienced by the people of

Acca. Baha Ullah and his family were sent

there to die, but instead of that they have

transformed Acca into a city of health and

refreshment, and the dangerous, depressing ele-

ments of the climate and locality have entirely

disappeared.

In former days the currents of the ocean

threw upon the seashore masses of unsightly

and ill smelling debris; dead fish, seaweed and

all the malodorous contents of the tidal ebb

seemed to be flung there, and no flood was ever

full enough to carry them off. So they lay

rotting in the hot sun of the tropics, breeding

fevers for the destruction of the inhabitants.

The Sultan would permit no measures for the

purification of the harbor and shore. He

wished his prison city to remain as unwhole-

some as possible because it was intended to be

a place of death.

After the Glory of God had dwelt within the

walls for some time there came a change. An

alteration in the ocean currents became evi-

dent, the unsightly accumulation upon the

shore was washed away, the offal of the region

was carried far out into the purifying ocean,

and the silvery strand of Acca was played

upon only by glittering blue waters and fra-

grant breezes.

Meanwhile a very wealthy convert one day

came into the presence of Baha Ullah. He was

an Arabian Sheik of enormous possessions, and

he had planned to place an immense sum in the

hands of the Manifestation as a symbol of his

devotion. The Blessed Perfection, however,

would not accept money from his followers.

One significant point in this remarkable move-

ment has always been that its beautiful teach-

ings are never given for money. They are re-

garded as the gift of God, which must be freely

imparted, not sold.

Again and again the old Sheik proffered his

gift and it was refused. At length Baha Ullah

saw how deeply disappointed was his follower.

The Sheik was an old man, and had felt that

he would die more happily if he had bestowed

this money. So, as his friend was turning

away in sadness, the Blessed Perfection recalled

him and said:

“Do you really want to give me this

money?” and when his noble guest positively

fell upon his knees in affirmation, he went on:

“I can not take money, but if you wish to

make me very happy you can do this for me.

The people of Acca suffer for water. All the

water of the valley is brackish and unwhole-

some, but yonder beyond the mountains,”

pointing to the distant hills, “is a bottomless

lake of pure mountain water. Pipe it down to

the city, and bring it up in a fountain, where

it will be free to all. But that will cost a great

deal of money!”

Do you think any human being could have

considered money in such a moment? The

splendor of life surrounded the old Sheik, and

his happiness was supreme as he hurried away

to perform the behest of the Messenger of

God. To-day the people of Acca have this de-

licious water piped into their houses, and the

spectre of fever is still farther banished from

their hearthstones.

From the moment that Baha Ullah became

accessible to his followers, so that even a

glimpse of his radiant face would reward a

toilsome journey to Acca, throngs of pilgrims

turned toward the prison city, eager to carry

away a memory of the Glory of God, and eager

also to do something to show the ardor of their

faith. They soon discovered that Baha Ullah

would not accept gifts of value, but that he

loved flowers and rare plants. So they began

to carry with them seeds, slips and roots, from

the flora of their own locality, especially such

as were fragrant, unusual and beautiful. Tra-

dition has it that no frail atom of a delicate

shrub, wrapped in moss, and borne across the

desert ever failed to live and thrive when

planted at length in the grateful soil of much

blessed Acca.

The result has been the charming garden of

the Rizwan, surely one of the loveliest spots

in the universe. Here are plants and flowers

from Egypt, Arabia, and India, fragrant

violets, crimson passion flowers, red anemones,

tea roses, flowers so delicate and white they

are like frost in the tropics, and blossoms that

seem to weigh down the plant that bears them

with their rich fragrance. Oranges ripen

here, and rich deep colored roses like those of

our American Beauty variety, but more

sweetly odorous. The Blessed Perfection was

especially fond of these magnificent blooms,

and was accustomed to water their roots with

his own hand.

The old gardener who tended the Rizwan is

still living, and has many wonderful stories to

tell of his beloved master whom he served so

faithfully. One of these which he is particu-

larly fond of relating reminds us of a day

when he had planned to serve tea for Baha

Ullah, and though a terrific storm of wind and

rain arose, the Manifestation came to the

garden just the same, because he would not

disappoint his devoted attendant.

Another of his narrations will be less easily

believed by the western reader, but it is vouched

for, not only by the gardener who is an ex-

ceedingly intelligent man, but by others as

well. To followers of modern cults who are

accustomed to regard the outward world as

“phenomenal,” it will not appear in the least

unreasonable.

A pest of locusts had invaded the country,

and was devouring everything in its pathway.

Nothing escaped the rapacious insects, and the

gardener of the Rizwan marked with horror

the advance of the swarm, and knew exactly

on what day the creatures would strip his

Paradise of verdure and fragrance. On that

day Baha Ullah was in the garden, and its

guardian threw himself at the feet of the

Blessed Perfection, begging him to save the

precious bit of loveliness.

“Why should I preserve my garden when

all else is **d**estroyed?” demanded the Manifesta-

tion, “Would that be just?”

“But it is not for your sake that I ask it,”

implored the gardener, well knowing how to

appeal to the generous heart to which he

spoke. “Think of all the care I have taken, and

all the labor I have spent to make it beautiful,

and think of all the people who love it, and

whose gifts are a part of it! Its destruction

will bring pain to all these souls, and it may

never be so perfect again!”

At last Baha Ullah, convinced that it was

right to use his power for such an end, rose

and approached that side of the garden wall

from which the swarm of locusts in a black

cloud was already plainly visible. On they

came, nearer and nearer. The Manifestation

stood quietly by the wall, and presently began

to address them. What wonderful loving

potency vibrated in his words, his thought,

his intention we do not know, but it is a fact

that the mass of insects settled gently to the

ground, remained as if benumbed for awhile,

and not one flew over the wall. Then they be-

gan to eat voraciously, and left not a blade

nor a leaf of green anywhere outside of the

blooming and fragrant verdure of the Rizwan.

There is a tiny shelter in the garden where

Baha Ullah was accustomed to retire at times

when he desired especial privacy. The chair

in which he habitually sat is preserved, and

visitors adorn it with flowers in memory of the

Beloved One who once occupied it.

For a considerable period the inhabitants of

Acca were not interested in the religious prin-

ciples of the famous prisoners domiciled among

them. They had been informed by the au-

thorities that the confined saints were exceed-

ingly wicked persons, that they had committed

murder and other heinous crimes, and had only

escaped death by the tolerance of the Sultan.

The government hoped by such nefarious

methods to ensure the ill treatment and cruel

persecutions of the unfortunate victims in its

power, and for a time the spell worked. But

it is impossible for human beings to come in

contact with veritable saints and not discover

that they are such, and so it happened in this

case.

One family was converted to the faith of

Baha Ullah, in rather remarkable fashion,

shortly after the Blessed Perfection was re-

leased from the military barracks. The grand-

father of the household had been an unusually

devout and studious man, much given to poring

over the holy books of his faith. As a result

of long pondering he had decided that it was

full time for the Manifestation of God to ap-

pear, whose coming was presaged as he be-

lieved by the tradition of the Imaum’s return.

But he doubted whether he himself would be

privileged to see him.

He spent much time with his youngest

grandson who was then a lad of eight or ten

years old, and told him with great solemnity

that his eyes would rest upon the Manifesta-

tion of God, and that he must not miss this

rare opportunity, nor fail to recognize this

divinely gifted personage whom he would be so

blessed as to encounter. Meanwhile the good

old man passed away, the youth grew to young

manhood, the family of Baha Ullah came to

Acca under its cloud of criminal accusation,

and naturally the Mohammedan did not con-

nect the group of dangerous heretics—so

called—with the holy one of his grandfather’s

warning.

One night he dreamed that the old man came

to him and told him the Manifestation of God

was in Acca, and he must seek him. The

young gentleman was interested, and recalled

his deceased relative’s repeated prophecy, but

he did not attach any special importance to

the dream.

Presently, however, it was repeated with in-

creased vividness. The grandfather said to

him:

“You think this is only a dream, but I have

come to tell you the truth, and you must be-

lieve what I say, and obey me!”

The youth was more deeply impressed this

time, because the recurrence of the dream, with

its added insistence, was significant. Still it

did not occur to him that he should act upon

it. Finally he dreamed again, this time with

such detail that he could not resist the convic-

tion of his grandfather’s actual presence. The

old gentleman expressed his impatience at his

grandson’s indifference, reminded him of the

prophecy he had made before his death, as-

sured him the Manifestation of God was none

other than the famous prisoner so long con-

fined in Acca and accused of impossible deeds.

He described the house in which he lived, com-

manded the young man to go there, and added:

“They might not admit you, but I will give

you the password. When you go to the door

say “Allah o’ Abha,” and immediately it will

be opened wide. You will see a man sitting

at a table reading. He is the Manifestation

of God.”

The young man was peculiarly situated. He

did not dare disobey this direct mandate of

his dream, yet he felt himself a fool in consent-

ing to its requisition. He could not venture

to speak of it to any one, and he decided it

would be best to test the adventure. He

therefore went to the house indicated, which

he knew was the house of Baha Ullah, the

dreaded heretic. He walked up the steps hesi-

tatingly, and knocked with a beating heart, for

he had little faith that the password given

him was valid, and he had every reason to dis-

trust the people within.

The door was opened suspiciously, and he

was asked his business. In trembling tones he

pronounced the words, “Allah o’ Abha!” In-

stantly the door was thrown wide open, he was

encircled by the arms of his questioner, and

within the apartment he saw a noble looking

man seated at a table, with his eyes upon a

book.

He had uttered the customary greeting of

the Bahais, “Allah o’ Abha,” which translated

from the Arabic tongue means “God the Glori-

ous.” It has been their means of identifica-

tion and communication as was the sign of the

fish to the Christians of an earlier Day of God,

day of persecution, alas! It is called their

Greatest Name, as was that of Christ to his

followers, that of Jehovah to the Jews, of Om

to the Hindus of an ancient period. It, of

course, expresses that intimate consciousness

of God’s Glory which the devotees of Baha

Ullah claim as the added knowledge of the

Deity in this new Day.

The guest so strangely admitted to the home

of Baha Ullah, could not leave it until he had

realized the truth in his grandfather’s exhorta-

tion. He and all his family became faithful

believers in the wonder of the Blessed Perfec-

tion’s presence in the world, and have formed

a devoted nucleus of friends in the prison city.

When the time came for Baha Ullah to pass

away he warned those about him of his depart-

ure, and he had already made known his will

in the *Kitab el Ad*, or *Book of the Covenant*,

where he designates his son Abdul Baha as his

successor, and the Center of the Covenant, the

one who shall stand as the Interpreter of his

mighty Word after he has crossed the thresh-

old.

The end of mortal life for Baha Ullah was

peaceful as the passing of such a soul must be

when not hastened by the throes of martyrdom,

and after a brief attack of fever in the Spring

of 1892 he disappeared from earthly view.

The following are some portions of a very

remarkable letter sent by Baha Ullah to a

“Friend” in Persia shortly after his great Illu-

mination had come upon him. It may be added

that the followers of Baha Ullah, or Bahais

and Babis are called simply “Friends” in

Persia. This communication, however, was

written to a personal friend of the Manifesta-

tion, who was evidently an individual of un-

usual enlightenment. The original Persian,

which is said to possess particular beauty, has

been translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. The

epistle is so long that only extracts can be

quoted. It begins:

“In the Name of God the Peerless!”

“Glory befits the Discoverer, who, through

one shower of the ocean of his generosity, ex-

panded the firmament of existence, begemmed

it with the stars of knowledge, and summoned

the people to the most high court of percep-

tion and understanding!

“This shower, which is the first Word of the

Almighty, is sometimes called the Water of

Life, for it quickens the dead souls in the desert

of ignorance with the Spring of Intelligence.

Sometimes it is called the first Emanation which

appears from the Sun of Wisdom, and when it

began to shine, the first movement became mani-

fest, and known, and then phenomena stepped

into the arena of existence; and these appear-

ances were through the generosity of the In-

comparable, the Wise One. He is the Knower,

the Giver: He is sanctified and Holy above

every statement and attribute! The seen and

the unseen fail to attain the measure of His

understanding. The world of being and what-

ever has issued from it bears witness to this

Utterance.

“Therefore it has become known that the

First Bestowal of the Almighty is the Word.

The receiver and acceptor of it is the under-

standing.

“The Word is the first instructor in the uni-

versity of existence, and is the Primal Emana-

tion of God. Whatever has appeared is

through the reflection of its Light, and what-

ever is manifested is the appearance of its Wis-

dom.

“All the names originate in His Name, and

the beginnings and endings of all affairs are

in His Hand.

“… The pulse of the world is in the

hand of the Skilful Physician. He diagnoses

the illness, and wisely prescribes the remedy.

Every day has its own secret, and every tongue

a melody. The illness of to-day has one cure,

and that of to-morrow another. Look ye upon

this day, and consider and discuss its needs.

One sees that existence is afflicted with innum-

erable ailments compelling it to lie upon the

bed of suffering. Men who are intoxicated

with the wine of self-contemplation prevent the

Wise Physician from reaching the patient.

Thus have they caused themselves and the

world to suffer. They know not the ailment,

nor recognize the remedy. They take the

wrong for the right, the crooked for the

straight, the enemy for the friend.

“… O Friends, when the Primal

Word appeared in these latter days, a num-

ber of the heavenly souls heard the Melody of

the Beloved and hastened toward it, while

others finding that the deeds of some did not

correspond with their words were prevented

from the Splendors of the Sun of Knowledge.

“… O ye sons of intelligence! The

thin eye-lid prevents the eye from seeing the

world and what is contained therein. Then

think of the result when the curtain of greed

covers the sight of the heart. Say, O ye peo-

ple! The darkness of greed and envy obscures

the light of the soul, as the cloud prevents the

penetration of the sun’s rays. Should one

listen with the ear of intelligence to this Utter-

ance he shall spread the wings of freedom, and

soar with great joy to the Heaven of under-

standing.

“… O people! The word must be

demonstrated by the deed, for the righteous

witness of the word is action. The former

without the latter shall not allay the thirst of

the needy, nor open the doors of sight to the

blind.

“The Heavenly Wise One proclaimeth: A

harsh word is like unto a sword, but gentle

speech is like unto milk. The children of the

world attain unto knowledge and better them-

selves through this. The Tongue of Wisdom

says: Whosoever possesses Me not has noth-

ing. Pass by whatever exists in this world, and

find Me. I am the Sun of Perception, and the

Ocean of Science. I revive the withered ones,

and quicken the dead. I am that Light which

illumines the Path of Insight. I am the Falcon

of the land of the Almighty! I bear healing

in my wings, and teach the knowledge of soar-

ing to the Heaven of Truth.

“The Peerless Beloved says: The Way of

Freedom is opened! Hasten ye! The Foun-

tain of Knowledge is gushing! Drink ye! Say,

O Friends! The Tabernacle of Oneness is

raised! Look not upon each other with the

eye of strangeness! Ye are all the fruits of

one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Truly,

I say: Whatever lessens ignorance, and in-

creases knowledge that has been, is, and shall

be accepted by the Creator.

“Say, O people! Walk ye under the shade

of the Tree of Righteousness; enter ye under

the protection of the Tent of Unity. Say, O

thou possessor of Sight! The past is the mir-

ror of the future: look and perceive. Per-

chance after the acquirement of knowledge ye

may know the Friend, and attain to His good

Pleasure. To-day the best fruit of the Tree of

Science and Knowledge is that which benefits

mankind and improves his condition.

“Say! The tongue is the witness of my

Faith, do not pollute it with untruthfulness.

The Spirit is the treasury of my Mystery, do

not deliver it into the hand of greed. It is

hoped that in this Dawn the universe shall be-

come illumined with the Sun of understanding

and knowledge, so that we may attain to the

good pleasure of the Beloved, and drink from

the Ocean of Divine Recognition.

“… O Friend! We have seen the

pure ground, and cast the seed of knowledge.

Now it depends on the rays of the Sun whether

it burns up or is caused to grow. Say, to-day

through the greatness of the Peerless Wise One,

the Sun of Knowledge has appeared from be-

hind the covering of the Spirit, and all the

birds of the meadow of Oneness are intoxicated

with the wine of Understanding, and are com-

memorating the name of the Beloved. Happy

is the one who finds this and becomes Im-

mortal.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROPHECIES IN REGARD TO THE GREAT DAY.

The Mohammedan prophecies as to the Ap-

pearance of the Bab have already been men-

tioned, but it will surprise many Christian

readers to know that these forewarnings are

even more startling in the Old and New Testa-

ment than in the Koran and the traditions of

the Imaums. The dates of this great arrival

are as definitely given in Isaiah, in Daniel,

Ezekiel and the Book of Revelations as in the

Mohammedan scriptures. Christians have be-

lieved that these prophecies refer to the de-

struction of the world, that this destruction

shall be followed by the horror of the day of

judgment, and the establishment of the Won-

derful thousand of years of peace, called the

Millennium. But the interpretation of these

promises by the Bab and Baha Ullah is more

reasonable, and is already justified by fulfill-

ment.

It may be that the reader is not interested in

prophecy. As a rule the Anglo-Saxon and

American child hears too much of it in youth,

and when the rational life begins with more ma-

ture years, the adult individual casts the entire

question aside as part of the superstition that

must be outgrown.

However, as we return to the wonderful

poetic trance of Isaiah, the direct psychic in-

terpretations of Daniel, and the marvellous

vision in the Book of Revelations, which has

never been comprehended until our day, we are

impressed by the fact that all of these sensi-

tive seers, as well as nearly all of the ancient

Hebrew prophets have had a glimpse of a

lovely Play Day which was to come to the

world some time.

Moreover, when we see what is evidently the

same vision in the words of Christ to his dis-

ciples before his departure, and also in those

of Zoroaster, who came and left his golden mes-

sage in the world’s heart so many years before

him, the question may assume a deeper interest

for us, especially if we realize that Mohammed

at a later day, was clearly possessed of the

same conviction that a wonderful Day was to

dawn for mankind when the divine message

would be so powerfully uttered, so fully ex-

plained that men would not only listen to it,

but live it.

For the sad fact remains to stare us in the

face that up to the present period the world

has not dreamed of living according to the

Word of the divine mentors who have succes-

sively honored us with their radiant Presence,

who have ravished us with the joy of their

short stay, and almost invariably shed their

blood as a sacrifice to our hardness of heart!

The world has listened merely, but it has

hardly been less rapacious, less cruel, less pas-

sionate in the presence of the divine Word

spoken successively by Abraham, Moses,

Brahm, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ and Mo-

hammed. We enshrine the memory of each who

has brought the Light, build temples to his

name, and then again go roaring on after the

delusions of our own glory as if the Word had

never been spoken.

Nevertheless the few who attend sufficiently

to bring a reflection from the splendor of life

into their own existence, we enshrine also in

lesser temples, or in niches where the brilliance

is so evident that it might easily recall us from

the darkness of our own lives.

We never forget Florence Nightingale, for

instance, if we know nothing else about her, we

are aware that she gave herself gladly for

others. We contemplate over the lovely life of Sir

Thomas Moore, and his devotion to his ideal,

in a circle where the ideal was singularly de-

ficient. We drop happy tears upon the chron-

icle of St. Francis of Assisi, and sing with him

his joyous song through Italian byways. We

thrill at the noble endeavor of John Ruskin,

great enough to sacrifice his inherited wealth

that he might walk independently beside his un-

endowed brother, the common man! We love

the complete unselfishness of Camille Corot,

who refused to accumulate wealth because it

made him so happy to share it with others.

We rejoice in the beautiful comradeship of

Donatello, to whom every moment of life was

sweet because he lived in the world of ideas cre-

ated by himself and his companions of the

young Renaissance—and kept his money in a

basket suspended from the ceiling from which

every one in need was free to help himself!

As we read such records, we realize that some

people have lived, and have done more than

listen and perhaps dream! Existence has been

no grey monotonous current to them. They

have loved, enjoyed, created. They have been

so penetrated by divine ideals that the physical

side of life has been always secondary to them.

Was it not significant that when Donatello

first saw the great Christ that his friend

Brunellcschi had carved, he dropped the cor-

ners of his sculptor’s apron, in which he was

carrying the breakfast materials gathered in

the market, and walked away, saying to his

companions:

“You can get your own breakfast, I have

had enough!”

Can you not imagine that during the re-

mainder of that morning Donatello was fed by

celestial food? The whole creative man within

him was roused and nourished by the magnifi-

cent work of his friend, and the impulse of his

genius hung before his astonished eyes the full

production of his later life!

These things are life, not the piling up of

millions, the selection of intricate and dazzling

costumes, the serving of lunches and dinners,

the speeding of automobiles. It is not that

each one of us is a genius, but each one of us

possesses an individuality and a capacity to live

through that love and endeavor that is pene-

trated by the thought of God, and each in his

own way comes at that manner of living when

he listens to the great and simple message that

has been voiced again and again by the Mes-

sengers of God.

An artist friend said recently:

“Most people are so anxious to make a liv-

ing that they forget how to live, but I have

always lived, and yet I have made a living.”

Another said, “It is a great privilege to earn

a living by doing the thing that one loves, and

I would rather earn a meagre living in that

way than a princely one by the sacrifice of the

ideal.”

It was this feeling that prompted in Tolstoi

the impulse to sacrifice his entire fortune and

live the simple life of the common man. Hav-

ing the responsibilities of a large family whom

he had reared in the environment of wealth and

ease, he could not do so, but he would unques-

tionably have found happiness in the sacrifice,

for the eternal life opens as we become inde-

pendent of merely physical things.

“I must find immortality before death, or I

may experience much difficulty in attaining it.

Because to be immortal is to be absorbed in

love, and in the endeavor that is not concerned

in merely physical things. If I am flooded with

great ideas, I am immortal, and death has dis-

appeared.” So the physician absorbed in the

life of his patients, in the processes of healing

which renew life, has found immortality. The

representative of the people seeking unselfishly

the good of his constituents, has found it, the

mother who loves and considers other children

as well as her own, has found it. The agricul-

turist deeply engaged in the best processes for

the development of his land, and also for the

well-being of man and beast upon it, has found

it, and to all such persons mere questions of

personal comfort and aggrandizement are of

slight import. They have learned to live in

the larger circle, where self is not pre-eminent,

and it is only in that circle that one begins to

feel the splendor of life.

This splendor is eternal, and is not confined

to the radius of our little planet, it is electric,

and stings into vivid consciousness every atom

of the individual being. Each truth speaker

who has lived in the ages of the past has felt

this, each Messenger of God has sung it, and

is it not natural to suppose that looking for-

ward into the future aeons many may have

glimpsed suddenly the moment of fulfilment,

the instant in the earth’s history when the ideal

began at last to enter the common life, the mo-

ment when it was no longer centered in indi-

viduals, gifted and erratic, but softened all

hearts, and established justice in our social

system?

Ruskin was so convinced of this possibility

that for years he refused to become a socialist

because he insisted that human beings can not

be reformed by a system of laws. The separate

man must begin to live the ideal life from his

conviction of its excellence, or because he is so

filled with its essence that he can not help it.

Only in later years he came to realize that per-

haps those who first perceive the ideal relation-

ships should make laws to control the individ-

uals in whom the true vision dawns more slowly.

We know enough now-a-days of the tem-

perament and peculiarities of those who possess

the gift of clairvoyance to realize that they see

what is not revealed to ordinary eyes, and we

can imagine if we have not witnessed its evi-

dence that this power is enormously enhanced

from a very different source, in one upon whom

the Spirit of God rests. So it would not be

strange if these True Ones in all ages had

looked forward, and had painted for us por-

tions of that wonderful Day in which at last

the power of God is so fully poured out upon

the world that all men must begin to realize it,

and live according to its law.

We find our own old Testament rich in these

pre-glimpses of what seems the very day in

which we are living now, with its horrors, its

splendors, and its marvellous inspirations. For

instance verses 3 and 4 of the second chapter

of the tiny book of Nahum, paint as vivid a

picture of the present day automobile as could

easily be granted to a truth seer living seven

hundred years before Christ.

“… the chariots shall be with flaming

torches in the day of his preparation, and the

fir trees shall be terribly shaken.

“The chariots shall rage in the streets, they

shall jostle one against another in the broad

ways, they shall seem like torches, they shall

run like the lightnings.”

Many of these old prophetic writers in an-

cient Hebrew are not great message givers, but

they were holy men devoted to the service of

their God, and possessed by the psychic vision

so that their images are sometimes broken and

distorted. For instance the prophet is carried

away upon the mighty current of the distant

future, and paints a clear picture of what re-

sults from the concurrence of celestial powers,

and then without warning there comes a break

in the flow of inspiration. Suddenly the seer is

talking of mere tribal matters, and apparently

is not conscious that both scene and time of his

picture have undergone a momentous trans-

formation.

Any one who has become interested in the

psychologic analysis of those possessing the

psychic gift can understand this irregularity,

this flaw in the plate, and the separate portions

of the picture remain separately interesting and

true.

So it is not a matter of indifference, nor one

for gentle scoffing, when we discover that the

same date for the appearance of the Mahdi

which the Mohammedan tradition preserved ap-

pears repeatedly in our own scriptures. That

date is the year 1260, it will be remembered,

which corresponds with the year 1844 of our

era, the date when the Bab first began to

preach, and when Abdul Baha was born.

In the 7th verse of the remarkable 12th chap-

ter of Daniel, we have the date clearly given.

Daniel asks how long shall it be until the end

of these wonders, and the man clothed in linen

replies: a time, time, and a half. Now biblical

criticism tells us that a “time” is 360 years,

“times” is always recognized as two times, or

720 years, and adding the half time of 180, we

have again this persistent number of 1260

years.

Biblical criticism recognizes that in this

chapter Daniel is dealing with the Mohamme-

dan overthrow of Jerusalem, because it was at

that time, and because of the conquest that the

Jewish daily sacrifice in the temple was ren-

dered impossible, and the “Abomination of deso-

lation” was begun which shall end in this won-

derful year of 1844, or 1260. Daniel is dealing

with the dispensation of Mohammed, and natur-

ally gives the date which includes it, for neces-

sarily the proclamation of the Bab that a new

Manifestation of God had risen, brings to a

close the preceding one.

Later in the chapter we find the verse to

which Christ refers when his disciples asked him

for the “time of the end,” or the great day of

his “second coming.” In the 24th chapter of

Matthew he points them to the 11th verse of the

same wonderful 12th chapter of Daniel:

“And from the time that the daily sacrifice

shall be taken away and the abomination that

maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thou-

sand two hundred and ninety days.”

This gives us the date of 1863, the year when

Baha Ullah announced his mission to the world,

in fulfillment of the Bab’s prophecy, but in this

instance we compute not according to the con-

ventional chronology of Islam from the hegira,

but from the moment ten years before that day,

when Mohammed first told his followers of his

illumination and his mission. It is significant

that Christ should have referred to this verse,

and that its computation should contain this

additional ten years which is not recognized in

the date of the Hcgira. The latter marks the

moment of Mohammed’s outward recognition,

the former that of his own inward light. The

announcement of Baha Ullah in 1863 is also

one of inward light, because the world has not

yet accepted and established his chronology.

In the 12th chapter of Revelations we find

the same date of 1260 repeated in a fashion

which our biblical critics have never under-

stood, because they have not regarded Moham-

med as a prophet of God, and have not ex-

pected to find his figure in the vision of St.

John. This chapter has puzzled many critics,

and has received numerous interpretations. The

Christian Scientists have believed that it refers

to Mrs. Eddy and her beautiful teaching, but

the explanation of it offered by the Bab is the

only satisfactory one.

If John the seer looked into the future, and

the clearing of the spiritual vision had removed

the veils from his eyes, he must surely have per-

ceived the great interruptions and variations

which the Christian dispensation would experi-

ence. As he had been close to its lovely Light,

he would be especially sensitive to all connected

with its long span. So the upheaval of Islam,

whether we regard Mohammed as a true

prophet or not would necessarily have attracted

his spiritual gaze.

The woman clothed with the sun, with the

moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve

stars undoubtedly refers to the movement of

Mohammed. It has been the great dominating

force in the kingdom of Persia, whose symbol

is the sun, and in Turkey, whose symbol is the

moon, and its twelve Imaums are certainly

worthy of the denomination of stars in a crown.

In the progress of the chapter the irruption

and dynasty of the Ommyad Turks are plainly

indicated, as well as the long struggle between

the followers of Christ and those of Mohammed.

The number of 1260 years is given as the length

of time the woman is preserved, and this is

again a reference to the dispensation of Mo-

hammed from the Hegira to the proclamation

of the Bab in 1260 of the Islamic chronology

and 1844 of our own.

In the 11th chapter of Revelations the num-

ber of 1260 is repeated in such fashion that its

reference to the Mohammedan domination of

the Holy Land is unquestionable. The first and

second verses are as follows:

“And there was given me a reed like unto a

rod, and the angel stood, saying, ‘rise and

measure the temple of God, and the altar, and

them that worship therein.’

“‘But the court which is without the temple

leave out, and measure it not, for it is given

unto the gentiles, and the Holy City shall they

tread under foot forty and two months.’”

It must be remembered that in all the mys-

tical and prophetic numbering of the Bible and

other holy books, a day stands for a year, and

forty two months of thirty days each produces

once more this number of 1260. When we have

once begun to connect it with the dispensation

of Islam we feel certain that John had in mind

in these verses those long years in which the

Sultans have ruled the outer courts of Jerusa-

lem. They have always respected the services

in the Christian temples and have carefully

compelled peace between the warring priests of

the Greek and Catholic sects, and their spir-

itual domination ended with the proclamation of

the Bab, which sounded the note of a new day.

During these twelve hundred and sixty years

from the Hegira of Mohammed until the great

message of the Bab there was no fresh claim

of illumination. They represent the unbroken

rule of a prophet whose followers were hostile

to the immense body of believers in Christ, and

who were conquerors of the Jews as well, it

seems natural therefore that such a block of

time should have touched the imagination of

seers in different ages, beginning with the illum-

ination which introduced it to the world, and

ending likewise with the illumination which

quenched it as a dominating objective force.

Another point about the prophecies of the

Bible is of special interest with regard to the

Hebrew race, and the great movement of Chris-

tianity. There are two distinct lines of

prophecy in the old Testament, one referring

to the overthrow and scattering of the Jews,

and their refusal to listen to the voice of God,

and many others which recount in organ tones

of glorious rejoicing the victory of the op-

pressed, the triumph of the humiliated ones, and

the glorification of God in the Holy places.

Now the Jews in the time of Christ were look-

ing for the Messiah as the Mohammedan stud-

ents were expecting the return of the Imaum

in the Day of the Bab. But they did not truly

understand their own scriptures. For instance,

the 53d chapter of Isaiah should have given

them pause. It so clearly records the suffer-

ing, persecution and death of Jesus Christ that

it seems as if it must have been intercalated

after the tragic story of his illumination and

agony had been completed. Yet we know it is

an integral portion of the ancient book of Isaiah.

Surely if the Jewish High Priests had known

this chapter they would have sat reverently at

the feet of the Saviour, recognizing him as the

first who came in fulfillment of the great proph-

ecy. But their minds were occupied only with

visions of triumph, with the advent of a king

crowned in his glory, for so they interpreted

the wonderful chapters in Ezekiel, Isaiah and

the other old Hebrew prophets, who fall into

an ecstasy when picturing this marvellous Play

Day of man which is to come, and on the verge

of which we seem to stand even now.

In this day the Jews shall be restored to their

former glory, and the “Abomination of desola-

tion” shall end. As has been said it is illumin-

ating that Christ should have referred to the

verse in Daniel marking the beginning and end

of this suffering. It is evident that he saw

perfectly his own place in the great scheme,

and knew that the story would complete itself

only when the glory descended the second time,

and more fully.

The Jews have ignored the two distinct lines

of prophecy, and the Christians as well. The

Jews declared that Christ did not fulfill all the

ancient predictions, and truly he did not, for

it was only his function to carry out what be-

longed to himself. The Jews therefore still ex-

pect the Messiah, whose coming will complete

the traditional imageries of their race. They

know that the time is here, and they recognize

its fulfillment in the advent of the Bab and

Baha Ullah with delightful quickness.

Meanwhile the Christian critics have applied

both lines of prophecy to Christ, assuming, ac-

cording to the theology they have created, that

he is the only Saviour, misunderstanding his

own frank statement of his return, and of its

meaning. The theologians forget always that

Jesus was the man, that Christ was the Glory,

the Breath of God resting upon him, and that

when he spoke of return it was the Glory that

promised to visit mankind again. No one can

ponder the ancient Hebrew scriptures with the

clue of the two distinct currents referring to

events evidently wide apart, without feeling

that if there was an actual vision of the future

in these strange picturings, we are in the mo-

ment of the second great dispensation which

brings the fulfillment of the first.

One needs only to compare the 53rd chapter

of Isaiah with the 65th to feel certain that the

latter reveals to us the consequences of the

events foretold in the former. The first verses

of the 65th chapter paint the condition of the

Jews after they refused to accept their prophet.

Then in the 8th verse begins the prophecy of

the succeeding Manifestation which shall cre-

ate “a new heaven and a new earth,” but the

promise is that the scattered and sorrowing

people shall rejoice in this second kingdom,

though it is not of their making. The allusion

to the “valley of Achor” is only one of a num-

ber among the old Testament prophesies which

paint very clearly this positive location where

the Manifestation was confined for so many

years, and where Abdul Baha in his turn has

received all the nations of the world. Achor is

necessarily Acre or Acca, the ancient city at

the foot of Mt. Carmel, which has a long his-

tory among the generations of men.

Thousands of the Jews have recognized the

relation of the two lines of foretelling in their

sacred writings, and in knowing Baha Ullah as

the Messiah promised so gloriously, they see im-

mediately the mistake their people made in

denying Christ, and hasten to give their adher-

ence to him also, and thus they realize at last

the joy of comprehending the great mission of

Christ to the world.

Another point of unquestionable import in

regard to these strange prophecies of the He-

brew seers is the place given to the *Branch* in

the dawning of the Day of Peace, of which

Isaiah always sings the song.

For instance in Zechariah 6:12, the verse runs:

“… Behold the man whose name is the

*Branch*, and he shall grow up out of his place,

and he shall build the temple of the Lord.”

Again in Isaiah 4:2, “In that day shall the

*Branch* of the Lord be beautiful, and glorious,

and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and

comely, for them that are escaped out of

Israel.”

These citations might be multiplied, but they

are all of the same character, and it is unneces-

sary. They have been referred to Christ by

biblical critics but this reference has never

seemed correct. Christ was not called “the

Branch” and he did not inaugurate a day of

peace. The passages of the Old Testament

where the Branch is alluded to always describe

him as presiding in that wonderful Play Day

when wars have ceased, when men have learned

the lesson of love and mutual service, and when

joy reigns because selfishness has died out of the

world’s heart. The 8th chapter of Zechariah

is one of those which speaks very definitely of

the wonders of this day as fulfilling Jewish

prophecy so clearly that every one will recog-

nize it.

Christ of course died in shameful obscurity,

and his beautiful teaching has lived in our con-

sciousness as an ideal which some time we must

carry out. Baha Ullah said, “I am the Real-

izer!” and he went on to explain that in spite

of the heavenly monition which Christ gave, men

could not live according to its law until another

Manifestation of God had come and brought

the power to do so.

The word “realization” seems constantly on

the lips of the world to-day, applied in every

direction, and will presently bid our armaments

exchange their Dreadnoughts for air ships, and

command the melting of Krupp guns into

statues for the peace makers. Even in the

United States we are growing weary of the rich

man and are comprehending that laws prevent-

ing the excessive accumulation of wealth are

necessary for the preservation of the common-

wealth. The rapidly increasing feeling of

brotherhood everywhere will soon render war

impossible, and the ruler of aggressive spirit

can no longer compel the courage and faith of

the common man.

Baha Ullah spoke of himself always as the

“Tree of Life.” He gave this explanation of

the symbol of the tree of life in the Garden of

Eden. The Manifestation of God is the Tree

of Life, he declared, for it is he whose mission

it is to give the bread of life to mankind, and

explain the wonder of the world’s creation, and

man’s relation to God. When he selected his

oldest son as his interpreter, he called him the

greatest *Branch* from the Tree of Life, using

the term unquestionably in its spiritual signifi-

cance, and always spoke of him as “*the*

*Branch*.”

The Day of God when the prophet voices his

message is always illumined by three figures, the

precursor, or herald, the Messenger, or Mani-

festation, and the interpreter, or we might say,

the Illuminator, the Illumination, and the Illum-

inated One.

Thus John the Baptist foretold the coming

of Christ, Christ spoke the Message, and Peter

was his interpreter. In the day of Moses the

coming of the Liberator was foretold by various

wise men. Moses led the people out of bondage,

and Joshua completed their emancipation. Mo-

hammed’s appearance was announced succes-

sively by four wise men. Rouz-bih, surnamed

Salman, had the honor of serving them. When

death came to one he sent Rouz-bih to the

other, until the turn of the fourth arrived.

When death claimed this one, he said to the at-

tendant:

“Oh Rouz-bih, after preparing me for the

tomb, and burying me, go thou to Hijaz where

the Mohammedic Sun will rise. To thee be glad

tidings of the meeting of his Holiness!”

Mohammed delivered the law, and appointed

Ali to have charge of it after his passing. In

our day the Bab cried aloud the reappearance

of the Word in Baha Ullah, and spoke with such

power that no precursor ever so prepared the

way for the luminous Advent. Baha Ullah gave

the message with a fullness and glory that has

never been previously attained. He appointed

Abdul Baha “the Branch” as his interpreter,

and the one who should bring peace to the

world.

There is a very significant point in Christ’s

warning to his disciples of that wonderful time

when the spirit should descend again and bring

the fulfillment of the law which the gentle

teacher had so lovingly propounded He said,

in that day many will come saying, “I am

Christ,” but do not listen to them, beware of

them all, for I am not in them!

One of the peculiar features of the last half

century has been the number of cults which have

risen about a figure who has sincerely believed

himself to be the re-incarnated Christ, and our

insane asylums are filled with the unfortunate

lunatics who cherish the same delusion. These

characters have appeared everywhere, and ap-

parently have spoken every language.

But the great Revelator of this day has never

made this claim. On the contrary the Bab,

Baha Ullah, and Abdul Baha explain for the

first time in fulness what Christ was, what the

manifestation of God always must be, what con-

stitutes the Day of God, and why the Day must

always dawn again and again, because man’s

heart is human, and the divine lesson grows

cold within it.

No one can read the words of Christ to his

disciples, and the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters

of John without realizing that the illumination

upon Jesus spoke of the time when it should de-

scend again to revive the world through the lips

of another divine one. Christ said as he sat at

the table with his consecrated ones:

“I shall not break bread again until I eat it

at my Father’s table,” and now we know that

his prophetic vision painted before him the mar-

vellous Day when the two illuminated ones

should descend to verify Christ’s own loving

symbol of the Sonship of man, and the Father-

hood of God.

He says again, “Many things I would say

unto you, but ye can not bear them, but he that

comes after me, he will say them.” No one

knew better than Christ how much he left un-

said in his short, unwritten, oral message, yet

he gave the people all they could comprehend,

and the fruit of his message, lying in their

hearts has prepared them for much more. So

to-day the prophets of the fulfillment in their

imprisonment have written wonderful volumes

of explanation and interpretation upon that

great law of God his Messengers have revealed

and we must apply. Baha Ullah says in the

*Ighan*, if the wisdom of God made known by his

prophets were estimated according to the letters

in the alphabet all that has been previously re-

vealed would not represent more than the first

two letters, while the present day in its full-

ness has given all of the remainder!

In the *Kitab-el Akdas* Baha Ullah has laid

down the outline on which our future social de-

mocracy shall be reared. They are the lines

of advancement upon which the world is work-

ing everywhere now. In the *Ighan,* as has been

previously said, he explains that wonder of the

successive Manifestations of God which have

enlightened the world. In the *Hidden Words*

he speaks in inspired paragraphs uttered by the

spirit which possessed him. In the *Seven Val-*

*leys* which, like the *Ighan,* was written in one

night in answer to a question propounded to

him, he tells how the soul finds God, through

what different states man passes in his search

for the divine elixir. But these words are but

a bald statement of this exquisite little book

with its heavenly contents.

Baha Ullah has written many volumes, of

which comparatively few have yet been trans-

lated. Those which have already reached the

western world are astonishing not only in their

literary beauty, but in the power they possess

to rouse the soul and fill the student with power

to live. They are like a reincarnation and am-

plification of the words of Christ and Moham-

med, and of course that is exactly what they

are. Besides these numerous volumes of Baha

Ullah we have the productions from the inspired

pen of the Bab, and the remarkable letters or

“tablets” of Abdul Baha, which already would

fill many pages of print, and the volume *Some*

*Answered Questions*, which was written by Miss

Barney after a year’s residence in Acca, during

which time she asked Abdul Baha in regard to

those spiritual points which had troubled the

minds of western believers. The book is full of

light, and may be only one of many we may have

from the pen of Abdul Baha.

Christ alluded to the future Manifestation

under different names. He called him the *Com*-

*forter*, and the Christian critics have inter-

preted this as indicating the breathing of the

Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men, which

surely is a beautiful idea. But Christ speaks

of the Comforter definitely as an individual. He

says:

“But when the Comforter shall come, whom

I will send unto you from the Father, even the

Spirit of Truth, he shall testify of me.”

This has been particularly illustrated in

Baha Ullah and Abdul Baha, who though born

under the Dispensation of Mohammed have so

testified of Christ that they have won his rec-

ognition from the Mohammedan and Jewish

worlds which previously either ignored him en-

tirely, or refused to place him in the lofty sta-

tion which was his.

Again Christ mentions the coming of one as

the “Prince of this World.” In the 30th verse

of the 14th chapter of John, he says:

“Hereafter I will not talk much with you:

for the Prince of this world cometh and hath

nothing in me.”

In this passage Abdul Baha says Christ’s ref-

erence is distinctly to Baha Ullah, who came as

a Manifestation of God, with no reflection of

the personality of Jesus Christ. That is why

Christ says “he has nothing in me.” It is a

new personality upon whom the Divine Glory

rests.

In the 11th verse of the 12th chapter of

Matthew in response to his disciples’ inquiries,

he says:

“… Elias truly shall first come, and

restore all things.”

He adds that Elias is already come “and they

knew him not,” but it is evident that in his first

remark he is not thinking of John, but of the

Bab, that second Elias, for he truly did “re-

store all things,” winning an acceptance, and

breaking the power of tradition as John the

Baptist had not done. The Bab opened the

minds of his generation to the truth so that the

recognition of Baha Ullah was a comparatively

easy matter to thousands.

In the 27th verse of the 16th chapter of Mat-

thew Christ says:

“For the Son of Man shall come in the Glory

of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall

reward every man according to his work.”

Does this not seem again like a curiously def-

inite allusion to the wonderful Manifestation of

to-day, when after “Elias” or the Bab has made

his proclamation the Glory of God has rested

upon these two illuminated ones who were lit-

erally father and son? The Son of man saw all

things, the veils had disappeared from before

his eyes, and clear outlines of the great events

in distant ages were revealed to him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INSPIRING PRESENCE OF ABDUL BAHA.

To many persons in the world the name of

Abdul Baha or Abbas Effendi is like a delight-

ful volume open for perusal. The number of

believers in his faith is very great and includes

devotees from all the religions of the world, who

in recognizing this wonderful Revelation of

to-day have for the first time comprehended

fully the meaning of the cult in which they were

born and bred. So in the home of Abdul Baha

one meets Mohammedan and Braham, Buddhist

and Zoroastrian, Shintoist, Christian and Jew,

Theosophist and Christian Scientist, all rejoic-

ing in one another, and in the fresh and living

understanding of questions human and divine

which has come to them through the illumina-

tion of their union in the great Revelation

that unites all worshippers and seekers for

Truth.

In the Oriental countries and Russia there

are at least twelve million who acclaim Abdul

Baha as their spiritual centre, and in the west-

ern world there are growing organizations of the

movement in most of the principal cities. In

Berlin, Paris, London, New York, Chicago,

Kansas City, Denver, Boston, San Francisco,

Los Angeles one finds vigorous centres of agita-

tion. Washington, D.C., has a large Assembly,

and in New York, Chicago, and Washington

there are Bahai publishing houses, devoted to

the translation and publication of the writings

of the Revelators, and of everything connected

with the propagation of the cult. The litera-

ture is issued in cheap though always attractive

form, and sold at a cost which merely covers

the expense of paper and printing, with the

idea of bringing it within the reach of the

thinnest pocketbook. No commercial feeling

has touched the movement as yet, all its teach-

ings are given with absolute freedom, there are

no lessons to be paid for, and no college of

teachers can demand a high price for services

rendered.

Many travellers have visited Acca, and have

been entertained in the delightfully simple

household of Abdul Baha, but the record is yet

to be made of one who has paid his board while

there, or left a sum of money in the hand of his

host or the “butler” at his departure. Yet each

carries away with him a gift of inspiration, an

impetus toward nobler living which it seems im-

possible to duplicate elsewhere in the visible

world.

Abdul Baha is a man of medium height and

slender figure, with an independent carriage,

which gives an impression of greater stature

than he actually possesses. He has a large and

fine head, his brow is broad and high, his eyes

wide apart, and of unusual size. They are un-

usual in other respects also, for they have a

white line around the iris, from which the light

seems to pour forth in his moments of excite-

ment and happiness, rendering his face fairly

luminous. The color of the eyes alters in sin-

gular fashion, being sometimes brown, again

blue or gray, but always beautiful. The nose is

aquiline, strong and intellectual, the mouth of

good size, but delicate and exceedingly mobile,

the chin oval, but full of power.

The countenance is that of an inspired ideal-

ist, but one who can compass also true prac-

tical knowledge. It is at once powerful and be-

nignant, and one feels always an electric force

about Abdul Baha which is both irresistible and

loving. It is quite unlike that of magnetism,

and has in it nothing of a hypnotic character.

In fact, association with Abdul Baha has the

effect of rousing the will and intelligence to a

marked degree.

Like Baha Ullah he is deeply interested in

the progress of the world, and seems perfectly

familiar with all that occurs outside of Acca,

though he has not left that city of his long con-

finement. His conversation, whether dealin

with great questions or with individuals is al-

ways singularly luminous, and marked by bril-

liancy and eloquence of expression. In all his

speech there is never a word that savors of

“cant,” and he speaks of the “love of God” with

such earnestness and fervor, that one realizes

he is talking life, and that this is religion. One

little utterance of this sort the author has never

forgotten because it was spoken to herself on

the occasion of her visit to Acca. Abdul Baha

had been alluding to the restrictions of the

life in Acca, and went on to say:

“But we are all happy because we have the

love of God in our hearts. When the heart is

full of the love of God it loses consciousness of

the body. Then pain is as pleasure, then dark-

ness is as light! If such a one is shut in a

prison there are no walls for him, no solitude,

he knows not a prison!

“So the martyrs who have suffered for their

faith, their hearts are so full of the love of

God, their ears so penetrated by his songs of

gladness, that they scarcely feel the blows in-

flicted upon them. It is as if the blow did not

reach them, as if the sword could not cut them!

“That is what has preserved us here,” he

added after a moment. “It is as if all the world

is here in us—there is no world outside of our

prison!”

It would be impossible to reproduce the tone

of Abdul Baha’s voice when he said: “He

knows not a prison!” It rang with such sweet-

ness and happiness that it seemed as if all the

violins and flutes of earth, in the hands of the

most perfect masters had combined to produce

that sound. Yet the speaker had been a pris-

oner since he was nine years old, and was still

a prisoner when he uttered the words.

Abdul Baha speaks Persian as a rule, though

he converses freely in all the Oriental languages

and is beginning to use those of the western

world now that police restriction is lightened.

He has half-a-dozen interpreters and translaters

in the household usually, and his youngest

daughter, who speaks English exceedingly well,

frequently acts as his intermediary with western

women.

Abdul Baha is married and has four daugh-

ters, three of whom are married, but all live in

the house with him, and have preferred to share

his confinement. The sons-in-law do business in

Haifa, coming back and forth at will. The

wife of Abdul Baha is a particularly sweet and

motherly woman of very noble character. An-

other remarkable member of the circle is Behiah

Khanom, who is called the Greatest Holy Leaf,

an oriental title hardly comprehensible to west-

ern ears. She is the elder sister of Abdul Baha

and has refused marriage because she could en-

joy more complete freedom in the home of her

brother than in an outside environment gov-

erned by Mohammedan law. There is a deeper

reason of course, for no one who has been priv-

ileged to live in the radius of a Messenger of

God could ever prefer to leave it, and the Great-

est Holy Leaf is an exceedingly gifted and sen-

sitive person. She is tall and slender with won-

derful blue eyes, in which all the sorrows and

joys of the world seem to be mirrored, and a

countenance which is fairly electric in its quick

changes.

The ladies of the family are admirable house-

wives. They make all their own simple wearing

apparel, by the aid of a sewing machine from

the western world. They oversee the produc-

tion of the kitchen for their many guests and

are thoroughly hygienic in the cleanliness of

their environment. They typify the modern

saint, the conception of whom obliges us to rev-

olutionize our entire spiritual cosmogony. A

fashionable woman of the western world, as

helpless as are some of these artificial dames,

and as eager for spiritual culture, was caught

in the gentle household without a trunk, and so

handsomely garbed that she felt disgraced in

the presence of the lovely simplicity that reigns

there. The Greatest Holy Leaf thereupon

made her a print dress with her own beautiful

hands, which was a model for grace and adjust-

ment. The western woman is still puzzling per-

haps over the problem of how such profound

spirituality can be associated with such excel-

lent practical skill and sense, but in reality they

are always found side by side.

This principle is one we see constantly illus-

trated in this household. It helps us to realize

that we must no longer look for a man of God

in seclusion, and as a recluse. Abdul Baha de-

clares that the seeker finds God most truly if he

seeks him as a citizen of the world, working with

his brothers for the betterment of mankind.

We have learned that a Messenger of God

must be a “man of sorrows, and acquainted with

grief,” otherwise how could he know so well the

sorrows of the world? But this man of sorrows

must have learned the law of happiness, so that

he radiates it upon all who approach him, and

this is certainly true of Abdul Baha. Mel-

ancholy could not reside under the same roof

with him, and all who go to him find that they

are learning lessons in regard to the necessity

and the meaning of happiness which they never

previously dreamed of, and it is a happiness not

dependent at all upon the things of this world.

Although Abdul Baha is a poor man his char-

ities are manifold. He provides for many

widows of the martyrs who have given their lives

for the faith in recent years, and educates their

children. Every Friday morning also he spends

with the poor of Acca, who gather in the large

courtyard of the house and tell him their

troubles, sure of a sympathetic hearing. Acca

has been simply a prison city so many years

that there are no means of livelihood there for

the very poor, so that much helpless poverty

exists. Abdul Baha is not content to give

merely money, however. He is well acquainted

with all upon whom he bestows his gifts, and

never fails to add the cheering and illuminating

word, so that it is a suggestive spectacle to see

his providing for his poor. It may be added

that the poverty-stricken unfortunates who

come thus to Abdul Baha are all Mohammedans.

They are of the people who have persecuted

him during his entire life. No follower of Baha

Ullah is allowed to accept or demand charity.

The Blessed Perfection said to his devotees:

“If you are in need call upon the bounty of

God, and you will be relieved immediately, for

God is rich, He is the Provider!”

Neither Abdul Baha nor his family ever

spend a penny upon luxury, because they are so

deeply aware of the suffering they would like

to relieve. The dress of the Center of the Cov-

enant is always of the simplest, and a story is

familiar which relates how the dear Holy

Mother, as the wife of Abdul Balm is termed,

schemed subtly to provide a more expensive coat

for the man of God than the one he usually

wore. She felt that when he entertained the

Governor of Acca he should be garbed in a

handsomer coat, and trusting to that uncon-

sciousness of himself which is one of his charac-

teristics, she planned to order a more costly

garment from the tailor, and substitute it on

the important morning for the one habitually

worn. She believed that he would never know

the difference. He is punctilious in cleanliness

but that is all.

However, upon the morning in question Ab-

dul Baha went searching through the house in

great excitement.

“Where is my coat? Where is my coat?” he

cried, “some one has left me a coat which is not

mine!”

The Holy Mother appeared and tried in vain

to explain away the presence of the expensive

coat. Abdul Baha was completely unreason-

able upon the question of clothes.

“But think of this!” he exclaimed, “For the

price of this coat you can buy five such as I

ordinarily use, and do you think I would spend

so much money upon a coat which only I shall

wear? If you think I need a new one, very

well, but send this back and have the tailor make

me for this price five such as I usually have.

Then you see, I shall not only have a new one,

but I shall also have four to give to others!”

A little story of a friend’s experience reveals

somewhat of the influence which contact with

Abdul Baha exercises upon character. She was

a woman of fashionable rearing, full of noble

theories, but a trifle inexperienced in their ap-

plication because she had seen little of the world

outside of her own particularly gentle circle.

She had a beautiful little boy not quite a year

old, to whom she gave all the devotion of a

young mother. It happened one day she stood

in the court of the house with the infant in her

arms, when a Mohammedan beggar woman wan-

dered in. She was an unusually wretched speci-

men of her filthy class, and she approached the

pretty American lady, sure of a generous

“douceur” and attempted to caress the beauti-

ful child.

Poor Mrs. A. had a sudden vision of all the

most contagious and dreadful diseases which

the unfortunate creature might transmit to her

sweet baby, and fled swiftly to an inner room.

She watched her assailant, however, fearing she

might be followed, and meanwhile Abdul Baha

passed through the court. He paused to speak

to the distressing woman, gave her some money

and rested his hand caressingly upon her shoul-

der while he spoke to her. There are lepers

among the waiting throng who come to him on

Fridays, but he never seems to make any differ-

ence in his loving contact with them.

The woman was evidently grateful for the

kindness of the “heretic” and said as she turned

away, “I will pray for you!” Abdul Baha

bowed his head in thanks and went on evidently

unconscious that he had done anything remark-

able, but Mrs. A. stood looking, her eyes full of

tears.

“He is the nearest to God of any man in the

world!” she said to herself, “yet he thanked

that rag of humanity for her prayers, and I

would not even let her touch my baby!”

Then all at once, as she stood there the class

feeling fell away from her, she knew suddenly

the meaning of brotherhood, and it has not left

her since. She ran after the woman to try and

catch her, but she had disappeared swiftly.

Since then, however, she has found many others.

There are certain virtues which Abdul Baha

is always insisting upon in his talks with others,

and they are the same as those that Jesus coun-

selled. We must not criticise, we must forgive,

we must serve others. As an illustration of the

humility he inculcates, and the nobility of serv-

ice Abdul Baha always insists upon serving

those who sit at his table, upon all occasions of

any formality. He seems to say:

“If you would be stately, be above all things

humble.”

He has said so much upon this theme of serv-

ice and “living the life” that his followers have

gathered some of these precious words into

ittle leaflet which has gone far and wide. It

is headed:

“By these things shall ye know the faithful

servant of God.”

“To live the life. To be no cause of grief

to any one.

“To love each other very much.

“To be kind to all people, and to love them

with a pure spirit.

“Should opposition or injury be done to us,

we must bear it, and be as kind as ever we can

be, and through it all we must *love the people*.

Should calamity exist in the greatest degree,

we must rejoice, for these things are the gifts

and favors of God.

“To be silent concerning the faults of others,

to pray for them, and help them, through kind-

ness, to correct their faults.

“To look always at the good and not at the

bad. If a man has ten good qualities and one

bad one, we must look at the ten and forget the

one. And if a man has ten bad qualities, and one

good one, we must look at the one and for-

get the ten.

“To never allow ourselves to speak one un-

kind word about another, even though that

other be our enemy.

“To rebuke those who speak to us about the

faults of others.

“All of our deeds must be done in kindness.

“To be occupied in spreading the Teachings

for only thorough obedience to this command

Abdul Baha has said will we receive the power

and confirmation of the Spirit; and that who-

soever is granted this power and confirmation

of the Spirit is under the Favor of God, but

otherwise he is as a lamp without light. Abdul

Baha also said that, “every seed cast in this

great and magnificent period will be cultivated

by God, and produce plants, through the

abundance of the clouds of his mercy.”

“To cut our hearts from ourselves and from

the world.

“To be humble.

“To be servants of each other, and to know

that we are less than any one else.

“To be as one soul in many bodies; for the

more we love each other the nearer we are to

God; but our love, our unity, our obedience

must be not by confession but of reality.

“To act with cautiousness and wisdom.

“To be truthful.

“To be hospitable.

“To be reverent.

“To be a cause of healing for every sick one;

a comforter for every sorrowing one; a pleasant

water for every thirsty one; a heavenly table

for every hungry one; a guide for every seeker;

a light for every lamp; rain for cultivation; a

star to every Horizon; a Herald to every yearn-

ing one for the Kingdom of God.”

In illustration of the admonition against

criticism Abdul Baha is very fond of telling an

apochryphal story of Jesus Christ. It runs

something like this:

One day as the Saviour was walking in the

country with his disciples, they passed the car-

case of a dead dog, in an advanced state of de-

cay. Each one expressed in different fashion

his disgust at the spectacle. One commented

upon the dreadful odor, another upon the swol-

len and disgusting flesh, etc., etc. Jesus said

nothing of all these things, but approaching the

creature took a stick and poked out its jaw

from the mass of decaying substance.

“See,” He remarked suddenly, “how white

and brilliant are the dog’s teeth!”

This shows us, comments Abdul Baha that

we can always find some good point to enlarge

upon, even among the most distressing and

wicked people. We can call attention to the

dog’s teeth!

In illustration of Abdul Baha’s long patience

under injuries, a patience which must always

be loving and cheerful as he insists, the persecu-

tion of an old Mohammedan fakir is recalled.

He was fanatically religious and also exceed-

ingly poor. He stood always at the door of the

Mosque, and never lost an opportunity to abuse

and curse Abdul Baha, whom he regarded as a

dangerous and pestiferous heretic. The Serv-

ant of God pitied his misery, and every morn-

ing sent him a basket of food, which was suffi-

cient to last him for the day. Every morning

when the tempting basket was presented to him,

the fakir virtuously kicked it into the ditch, and

cursed Abdul Baha anew. This went on for

twenty-three years, until at last one morning

when the attendant brought the basket of food

and placed it gently beside him, the contumacy

of the old fakir disappeared. He burst into

tears, he seized the basket of food, ran with it

to the home of Abdul Baha and would have

prostrated himself if he had been permitted, ex-

claiming:

“Oh forgive me for all my wickedness, and

let me serve you, for I know that God is in you!

Only God could show such kindness!”

One of the peculiarities of Abdul Baha is his

dislike for forms and ceremonies, and his dis-

taste of all that savors of officialism. The love

and reverence of those about him is so extreme

that if it were not for this pronounced deter-

mination of the opposite character they would

long since have constituted him a high priest in

his own world at least. Not long since an un-

usually large and dignified company of pilgrims

had arrived at Acca, and it was planned to re-

ceive them in the beautiful garden of the Riz-

wan. It is the custom of the country to wash

the hands always before any important cere-

mony, before prayers, before eating, etc. It is

a Mohammedan custom, and these little form-

alities of the people Abdul Baha is always care-

ful not to disdain.

Upon this occasion, however, the friends had

arranged a very charming and, as they thought,

effective ceremony at the reception of the pil-

grims. They sent a beautiful boy in advance

of the company, bearing a highly polished pew-

ter bowl, a handsome bronze pitcher, and a clean

damask towel, scented with attar of rose. The

intention was that the Servant of God should

make a noble function of the simple ablution of

his hands, and all would enjoy it, and reverence

him the more. Abdul Baha saw the procession

coming, however, and divined immediately what

was in the air. There was a trough with a pipe

for watering the flowers at the end of the gar-

den, and a much soiled towel hung there for the

convenience of any one who needed to wash the

hands. Abdul Baha ran hastily to the trough,

performed a most informal cleansing and then

rushed back to love the dusty pilgrims, and

pass them most hospitably the beautiful pewter

bowl, and the rose scented towel. So there was

no function except the spiritual meeting which

he always delights in, and he had the pleasure

of seeing others enjoy the pretty bowl, the clear

water, and the fragrant towel.

The tenor of Abdul Baha’s life is broken by

many wonderful occurrences which the world

calls “miracles,” but their producer himself de-

clares that miracles do not exist. There are

laws of which we have hardly begun to under-

stand the application and use, like the law of

the 4th dimension, and things previously un-

heard of and impossible may be accomplished

by new knowledge or illumination in such direc-

tions.

Abdul Baha is not a “healer” and declares

that his own mission is to the soul of man, and

not to the body, yet many who have suffered

illness in his house have been healed, sometimes

in dramatic and astonishing fashion. One in-

stance in particular illustrates this: An Am-

erican lady was on her way to Acca, and while

waiting at Haifa with her little family, was

taken violently ill with typhoid fever. Every-

thing was done for her that nurses and physi-

cians could compass, but nothing touched the

disease, which appeared in its most virulent

phase, and seemingly must “run its course.”

One day during the afternoon the daughters

of Abdul Baha came to see the American lady,

and distressed at her suffering, they said as

they left:

“Have no fear. We will tell our Lord (for

so they spoke of Abdul Baha) and at twelve

o’clock to-night you will be relieved.”

During the afternoon and evening there was

no alteration in the invalid’s condition, and anx-

iety constantly deepened, but suddenly at mid-

night the patient turned to her husband and ex-

claimed, “I feel better! So much better!”

“What time is it?” he cried instantly, and it

was five minutes after twelve.

She fell asleep almost immediately, and rose

the next morning as well as she had ever been.

Meanwhile all who have gone to Abdul Baha

in illness have received instructions which have

resulted sometimes in physical healing, always

in spiritual restoration. There are numberless

instances of his clear seeing, but he uses such

power only when it is necessary to save a soul,

or help another, never in phenomenal fashion.

Not long since, a woman believer in the

Orient was in great trouble. Her husband did

not accept the truth to which she had given her

heart, and moreover opposed it violently, and

dilemmas and tribulations thickened upon her

until she felt that if she did not go to Acca and

see the center of the mighty movement in which

her faith rested, she could not live. So she

begged her husband’s permission for the jour-

ney, and wrote to Abdul Baha. This modern

iconoclast laughed at her, and said:

“I will let you go to this man by whom you

are deluded if he will perform a miracle, but he

can not do it! I am perfectly safe in my

promise! I will write a series of questions and

lay the envelope containing them in my safe.

Then I will put a blank sheet of paper in your

letter. You will say nothing in explanation of

its presence, and anyway you would not know

what I ask! If he answers my questions, you

can go to Acca!”

The poor lady was helpless to oppose the

trick, which she would never have countenanced,

so her letter came to Abdul Baha containing a

blank sheet of paper. The mail at Acca is so

voluminous that it is always opened and ar-

ranged by one of the young secretarys and on

the morning when this missive arrived the gen-

tleman in attendance called Abdul Baha’s at-

tention to it.

“How strange!” he cried. “Here is a letter

containing a blank sheet of paper!”

Abdul Baha took it and laughed. “This is a

test imposed upon me!” he explained. “Let us

attend to the matter without delay!”

So he dictated a response to the unfortunate

lady and then one to her husband. In the letter

he spoke most lovingly to the scoffing querist,

answered categorically the puzzles propounded,

and opened his soul to light, so that as soon as

possible he accompanied his wife to Acca, and

became a devout and earnest believer, ensuring

happiness to his wife as well as himself.

The experience of Miss Sarah Farmer, of

Greenacre fame, is a similar one and well known

to many persons. Miss Farmer, like the Orien-

tal questioner, perhaps needed the revelation of

Abdul Baha’s illumination to ensure her cer-

tainty in his great mission. She had many

problems to submit to Abdul Baha, and fearing

she might forget something of importance in the

excitement of her important interview, she spent

the preceding night in pouring out her soul in

a written review of her life to lay before this

illuminated adviser. She then carefully wrote

out fifteen questions to ask him, and laid the

paper containing them in her Bible.

At five in the morning Abdul Baha sent for

her, and I quote the words of Mirza Raffi, the

young Persian interpreter, who Englished this

famous interview. Mirza Raffii accompanied

Miss Farmer to Acca and thus first came in

contact with Abdul Baha, though he had ac-

cepted his teaching some time previously. She

had encountered him in Cairo, and he had been

delegated to attend her by Mirza Abul Fazl, the

famous teacher who had instructed her in the

faith.

In her perturbation caused by this early sum-

mons, Miss Farmer had left all her documents

so anxiously tabulated, on the table of the

chamber she vacated to meet Abdul Baha.

When she was seated in his presence he turned

to Mirza Raffi and said:

“Tell Miss Farmer that this is the answer to

her first question,” and went on with an explan-

ation.

Mirza Raffii had not heard any question, and

hesitated in his translation, whereupon Abbas

Effendi repeated with an insistence which could

not be set aside, his previous statement, adding,

“she will understand!” Then the interpreter

translated the words addressed to him. The

succeeding question was next discussed, and so

on to the end of the list which was reposing

quietly in the Bible of the deserted upper apart-

ment. The written order was adhered to, and

Abdul Baha spoke to his questioner with such

exaltation that she was amazed. He went on to

allude to many subjects confided to her paper,

but not placed in his hands. It was not merely

that he knew the words inscribed, but that he

lifted their burden from her soul, and all her

being was stirred. She burst into tears at

length, strange tears of ecstatic happiness, and

went to her room to recover the composure

which had been shaken by these surprising and

illuminating events.

Such instances might be multiplied, for this

heavenly gift of breaking the bonds of the flesh

in those who come to him is experienced by

many guests of Abdul Baha. It is the waken-

ing which for the first time gives true life, so

that after it has been felt the previous existence

seems like death, and this awakening is the most

precious result of contact with the Servant of

God. Necessarily one does not need the jour-

ney to Acca to experience it, for the gift and

the contact are spiritual. As a result of trans-

formation of tendencies, an enlightenment of

temperament must follow, which will be evi-

denced in the life of the individual. Perhaps the

character of this is illustrated by the blessing

which Abdul Baha wrote for a musician who was

recently in Acca:

“O God!

“Make this servant melodious, attuned with

the airs of the Supreme Concourse, and confer

upon him a thrilling and resounding voice, like

the nightingale of hidden meanings in the Di-

vine Rose Garden.”

CHAPTER X.

THE SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS OF ABDUL BAHA.

It is rather a remarkable thing that the three

great leaders of the Bahaist movement with

their pure spiritual principles should all have

been married men. The ascetic celibacy of

Jesus Christ, the open resignation of the mar-

ried state by Gotama Buddha, together with

the attitude of the early church in regard to

woman, and the celibate tendency of most spir-

itual societies has created a feeling more or

less freely expressed that the single state is bet-

ter for holy living than that of sex union. The

result has been a somewhat morbid condition of

the human mind upon this absorbing question

of sex. It was evident that men and women

needed to do more thinking as to its true status,

and familiarity with this wide-spread religious

upheaval begun by the True One in 1844 must

certainly have such an effect.

Abdul Baha says no one need fear marriage

for the law of sex is a part of the divine ar-

rangement in this phenomenal outer world, and

its rational and righteous use fits every human

being better for the sphere to which he or she

belongs. The abused law brings dire conse-

quences which he must suffer who has become

subject to them, but the abuse proves nothing

against the value of the law itself.

Our traditional image of a Messenger of God

is created largely by the asceticism of the early

church, which in its eagerness to be detached

from the world fled from it into the wilderness.

So the holy men like beloved Saint Francis of

Assisi feared the charm of women, feared all

the beauty and loveliness of the universe, so that

they flew from it as from an enchantress. St.

Francis was happy, however, he was too near

his Saviour not to have learned that lesson, and

if he had walked the pathways of Judea with

Christ in his short and painful pilgrimage he

would no doubt have seen him laugh with his

disciples many times, and he would have caught

the same wonderful light in his eyes as that

which now and then illuminates the countenance

of Abdul Baha. When we realize what it means

to be near to God, we understand that an indi-

vidual so blessed can not always have tears in

the eyes!

For many years Abdul Baha has carried on

an enormous correspondence, touching all por-

tions of the globe, and nothing is more won-

derful than to see him dictating his letters to

a corps of stenographers. Perhaps the guest

who witnesses this strange spectacle has visited

the ancient French city of Tours, where, on

the edge of the town, the eternal hills preserve

a series of cells hollowed out of the rocks by

human hands. In these cells dwelt St. Martin

with his little band of faithful followers. He

came from Rome in the fourth century of our

era, and it was by his scholarly hand that the

rock was dug out to afford him a most cheer-

less habitation. But he deserted ease and cul-

ture to convert the barbarians to Christianity,

and we can be certain he was happy in his work.

We see here the holes which the Saint had

scooped from the stone to hold his rosary, and

prayer book, we see the stone slab where he

slept, and all the lonely seclusion in which he

labored for the salvation of the “heathen” in

that primitive day.

Utterly selfless he was, and forgetful of all

but the glorious message entrusted to him. His

miracles were always those of love. Once when

he had given away even the garments he wore,

and his nakedness was only covered by a cloak,

a beggar asked him for that, and he instantly

tore it in two portions, presenting the beggar,

we may be sure, with the larger half! Is it

strange after such examples of courage and de-

privation that we should think of a divine man

ever as a lonely celibate?

But the life of Abdul Baha offers a brilliant

example of the same virtues, and has been spent

constantly in a crowded center, so that he has

no hours of solitude except those he snatches

from an almost necessary slumber, after he has

sought the little chamber at the top of his

house.

His correspondence is carried on in a large

room in the lower story where five or six stenog-

raphers await him. Abdul Baha seldom dictates

one letter at a time. As a rule his stenog-

raphers sit in a line. He begins at one end with

the paragraph of a letter destined perhaps for

America, pauses at the next, and begins one

for Persia, pauses again with some words for a

believer in Turkey, and so on down the succes-

sion of busy paragraphers. More surprising

than all he frequently carries on a lively con-

versation while in the act of dictating. He ad-

dresses a guest who is watching the perform-

ance, and discusses the Cause in America,

maybe, while he is writing to the survivor of

Persian massacres. The dictation is always in

the oriental languages of the individuals to

whom the tablets are addressed, and Abdul Baha

will spring from Turkish to Aramaic, then into

Persian or Arabic without an instant’s hesita-

tion, but if he is sending to a western country,

he speaks in swift Persian and the stenographer

translates the epistle which reaches its con-

signee in both languages.

Meanwhile the missives are despatched, and

each one is so psychologically attuned to the

person to whom it is written that it would seem

as if it could only be indited by some one

familiar with every detail of the recipient’s

life and soul. Yet in all probability Abdul

Baha has received merely a formal expression

of faith from his correspondent. The letter has

been filed away in a cabinet with thousands of

others, and on the morning it was answered,

Abdul Baha took it out from the mass of

papers, and despatched his reply because he

felt that the psychological moment had arrived

when the stranger so far away needed the vital

touch of his dynamic spirit.

The writer has read countless letters of this

sort, so wonderful in their tenderness, penetra-

tion and insight, that it would seem as if they

could only be dictated after profound medita-

tion upon the subject or individual involved.

Yet all are written in the swift, apparently

careless, fashion described, but when the happy

recipient peruses his own, he knows that there

was no carelessness in its composition. Each

missive is a shred of illumination from the

great Messenger, and could not fail of its fine

intent.

A proof of this illumination is seen in the

enormous spread of this remarkable movement

in spite of the persecution and imprisonment

of all its leaders. The cause has grown from

the simple power of the Divine Word from

their lips. Abdul Baha says this is the final

test of the reality of the True One. Healing

and miracles of various sorts are always con-

nected with the appearance of a Manifestation

of God, but none except such a Manifestation

speaks the Divine Word, and once spoken it is

whispered from lip to lip in spite of all the

obstacles which blind humanity heaps against

its progress.

So the Word of Christ, not a syllable of it

written, dropped into the ears of the ignorant

fishermen about him, and after centuries it has

transformed civilization. Likewise the Word

of Mohammed preserved in the eloquent sent-

ences of the Koran reappeared in the splendid

efflorescence of Moorish culture which was

blighted and slain by the iron hand of Spanish

theology.

No barriers could have been reared higher

than those which have been piled against the

extension of the Bab’s message, and that of

Baha Ullah. In the beginning the martyrdom

of the Bab’s followers must have distanced the

sufferings of the early Christians. Then for a

time persecution ceased, and did not break

forth afresh until after the death of Baha

Ullah. Once more it appeared however, in-

cited by the narrowness and jealousy of the

Mohammedan clergy, and the agonies of the be-

lievers were frightful almost up to the moment

when the adoption of the Persian constitution

seemed to promise hope to the tortured ones.

Even then the plotting against the “friends”

went on. Abdul Baha with that clear sight

which apparently nothing escapes warned his

devoted adherents that the Mullahs were plan-

ning to gain the ear of the Shah, and they re-

alized too late the truth of his prediction.

Meanwhile the direful calamity of the new

Shah’s reactionary policy proved in the end

a blessing for the Bahais, because the thorough

shaking up of the nation laid bare the secret

scheming of the Mullahs, and put the people on

their guard.

This same reactionary Shah, while in the

height of his quarrel with the people, wrote to

Abdul Baha asking him what he saw as the

result of the trouble, and what course of action

he would recommend. Whereupon Abdul Baha

sent the Shah a remarkable letter in which he

assured him that in this day of the Manifesta-

tion of God, tyranny can no longer be toler-

ated, that if he would preserve the liberties of

his people and restore the constitution he might

look forward to a long and glorious reign, but

if he persisted in his reactionary policy, dis-

aster must overtake him, and he would be forced

to abdicate. This advice, of course, the Shah

refused to follow, and the prognostication of

Abdul Baha was speedily fulfilled.

Among the many martyrs who have been

tortured to death in Persia because they be-

lieved in the new day, the name of the youth

Badi will always be remembered. At the time

that Baha Ullah sent his letters of announce-

ment to the crowned heads of Europe, he pre-

pared such a paper for the Shah of Persia,

and asked who would carry it. He frankly

said that the mission was one of death, for the

bearer of this great message would not be

allowed to escape with his life. A number of

young men clamored eagerly for the honor,

but Badi was permitted to go. He had seemed

rather dull and unresponsive, though he had

given his faith to the resplendent cause. Now

he begged so ardently for the privilege of the

perilous adventure that it was granted him.

He delivered the packet into the hand of the

Shah as he had been commissioned to do, was

promptly seized and thrown into prison, whence

he was led forth only to his death. He was

tortured by the laying of white hot bricks on

his palpitating body, but instead of shrieking

with the pain, he gave every evidence of joy in

the progress of the execution, seized the bricks

himself and applied them to his burning and

smoking flesh while he sang songs and laughed

aloud as if he were experiencing the most ex-

quisite pleasure. The ecstasy of his death was

such that his name is mentioned with tears of

mystical joy by those who chronicle his his-

tory, and many were led to embrace the faith

for which he died by his endurance of the tor-

tures heaped upon him.

In fact this has been the constant result of

the martyrdoms, the Friends of God have suf-

fered and the Mohammedans acknowledge that

they live up to their title. The only fault of

a martyr lies in the fact that he is a “friend.”

Haider Ali has witnessed the execution of many

martyrs and declares that the Presence of God

is so manifest in the joy of their departure

that numbers of the attending crowd disperse

but to seek out the Bahais and learn the mean-

ing of a faith that can so eliminate the horror

of death!

He tells of a young man, who, when his valu-

ables were taken from him secreted five pounds

in gold, or twenty-five dollars, sewing the coins

into his coat so that they could be easily ex-

tracted. It is customary in Persia to present

such a gift to the man who gives away the

bride in the marriage ceremony. As he stepped

upon the place of death, he turned to the exe-

cutioner, and proffered him the gold, saying,

in clear and happy tones:

“Accept this gift, because you are taking me

to my bride!”

Another youth as he went up the stairs to

the gallows, remarked to the headsman: “I will

give you something before I die!”

The functionary made a jeering response,

for it is the rule to strip the victim of all

money and jewels before leading him to exe-

cution. When the young man’s turn came the

executioner struck him with the axe but did not

entirely decapitate him. Instantly he caught

two handfuls of blood and extended them to his

death dealer, crying in a perfectly audible voice

which all could distinguish:

“I said I would make you a gift! Here it is!”

Haider Ali has written a touching history of

the recent martyrdoms in Persia which were

suffered in 1903. These have been instigated

by the greed of provincial officials, and the

bigotry of the Mohammedan clergy. The Mul-

lahs are powerful and wealthy men enraged at

the rapid spread of the faith which will wipe

out their official existence. They are eager,

therefore, to continue the persecution of the

Friends of God, and whenever they can find the

governor of a province whose cupidity can be

roused, they paint before his cruel and greedy

eyes a flaming picture of the wealth that may

be his through confiscation alone, if he will

persecute the Bahais. The latter are often

found among the wealthy class, and it is these

who are the first victims as a rule.

Then when the thirst for blood has been

roused the lowest elements of the population

rush in to loot and riot, and before order can

be restored numbers have been slain. Fre-

quently the governor is in secret alliance with

the rioters, because after the men have been

murdered, and sometimes women and children

also, he appropriates to himself the property

that should have provided for their defenceless

families.

The household of Abdul Baha is the refuge

of these afflicted people, and the Servant of God

always sees that the children are educated and

the mourning wives comforted. The Friends

of God have learned very positively the habit

of sharing with one another, and they never

seem to prize money except for what it will do

to increase the well being of the world.

The following extract from a beautiful chant

written by Abdul Baha in honor of a recent

martyr reveals the feeling with which these

agonies are regarded.

“Blessed is the pure blood which was shed on

the perfumed soil, and which was poured out

in the path of the forgiving Lord! Blessed is

thy body which was burned by the hand of

every transgressor! Blessed is thy throat

which was cut by the poniard of every traitor!

Blessed is thy breast which was stricken by

the oppressors’ darts! Blessed is thy heart

which was wounded by a sharp sword! Blessed

art thou, for thou hast showed forth all happi-

ness and joy when thou wast being paraded in

the streets of the people of arrogance, and the

wicked ones were clapping their hands and op-

pressing thee with innumerable blows and

wounds, while thou wert clapping thy hands

with them. O, thou manifester of light! And

wert warbling melodies, whereby the people of

the Kingdom of El-Abha were moved and

breasts were dilated with joy.”

During the life of Baha Ullah he gave the

name of Zeab or Wolf to one of the prominent

Mohammedan Mullahs, and that of Ebn Zeab

or Wolf’s Son to his descendant, though this

man had not then displayed the qualities of his

father. It was the latter who inaugurated the

atrocities of Isfahan. Though he is popularly

called Ebn Zeab, his name is Sheik Taki. He

forged a telegram from the prime minister of

Persia, of which he had four hundred flaming

copies posted on the walls of Isfahan, one

night. It read:

“Sheik Taki must protect the religion of

Islam!” and as he well knew it acted as an

incitement to the persecution of the Friends of

God, especially as the town was filled with

rumors of rioting against the Bahais in the

neighboring city of Resht.

The first victim was one of the most honored

citizens of the locality. He was a refuge to

the poor and suffering and beloved by every

one. He was literally chopped to pieces by the

mob. With his last breath he cried out:

“You have done me no harm! You are only

transmitting me to my Lord!”

The devoted people took refuge in the Rus-

sian consulate, which was the only place open

to them, and there they remained until a letter

from the governor was read to them, begging

them to return to their homes and assuring

them of protection. Thereupon they ventured

forth, but the mob was awaiting them, fell

upon them with merciless rage, and seventy

people were killed outright, besides hundreds

who were wounded and maltreated.

In Yezd the rioting was incited again by a

Mullah, who recited as an urge to massacre the

bloody tale of what had been done in Resht

and Isfahan.

It is a strange and rather distressing psycho-

logical fact that the non-resistance of the

Bahais which at first acted as a deterrent from

persecution, has seemed in later years to ap-

peal only to the basest motives of the common-

wealth, and serve as an incentive to abuse. The

persecutor seems to say:

“I may as well get what I can out of the

Friends of God, as they will not resist I can

take my fill of slaughter and spoil!”

The first victim at Yezd was a little child of

eleven years, whose father was a tin smith and

kept a shop of that description. He was

frankly a “friend.” The teacher of the school

where the child was instructed secretly sug-

gested to the pupils that they attack the inno-

cent boy, and when he ran to his superior for

protection, the latter commanded him to curse

his religion and deny it. This the child re-

fused to do, showing remarkable courage and

self control. He said:

“I am only a school boy, knowing nothing

of the reality of things! How can I stain my

lips with a curse?”

Whereupon the inhuman monster who was

his instructor set upon the child with the

swarm of pupils. They beat him with sticks,

slashed him with their pen knives, bored into

his tender flesh with awls, pierced him with

needles until he died. During the frightful

ordeal of this slow anguish, which, as may be

seen was quite unofficial, the boy kept repeat-

ing: “Oh, Most Glorious God! Oh, My Su-

preme Beloved!” and not a complaint escaped

his childish lips. After the orgy of sacrifice

was over, the teacher himself, and the pupils

who assisted in the massacre expressed their

amazement at the superhuman fortitude of the

little one.

While the teacher had been taking his pleas-

ure with the son, the rioting crowd invaded the

shop of the tin smith, destroyed his property,

beat his wife, tormented his babies, and car-

ried away the unfortunate man himself, amused

with the tortures they inflicted upon him.

Arrived at a butcher shop they seized the

meat axes, and proceeded to chop him with

these, until just before life was extinct he was

rescued by a trooper of the governor who came

along, and carried him bleeding and senseless

to the governor’s court. Meanwhile the crowd

had beaten to death in the same way the uncle

of the tin smith, and discovering that three

members of one family had thus been slaught-

ered, these cruel men tied the helpless bodies

together, and dragged them about the town as

honorable trophies of victory. They seemed

to feel a morbid and rabid delight in thus pro-

longing the sensations of blood-shed which had

been roused by the murders.

It would be easy to multiply such examples,

for about a hundred and seventy people were

massacred in this horror of Yezd, but western

readers can not endure even the recapitulation

of such agonies, though they sit quietly

through commercial tragedies which are but

another phase of power in ecstasy.

The courage of the victims who died had

been nourished by such food as that given in

Baha Ullah’s letter to Zeab, the Wolf, father

of Sheik Taki:

“Hast thou imagined we are afraid of thy

cruelty? Know ye, and be assured, from the

first day that the sound of the Supreme Pen

arose, we gave up our lives, our souls, our

children in the Path of God, the Supreme, the

Great! And ever this fact we boast in glory

among all creatures, and the Supreme Con-

course, and to this, what hath befallen us in

this straight Path beareth witness. In truth,

hearts are melted, bodies are crucified, blood is

shed, while the eyes are gazing toward the

horizon of the bounty of their Lord, the Seer

and the Omniscient! With the increase of

calamity, the people of Baha grow in love.

And to their sincerity bears witness that which

the Merciful one has revealed in the Koran,

saying: ‘If ye be sincere, seek death!’

“Which one is better, he who conceals him-

self to preserve his life, or he who sacrifices his

life in the Path of God? Be just, and not of

those who are lost in the wilderness of false-

hood. Verily they are intoxicated with the

wine of His Divine Love to such an extent that

the guns of the world can not prevent them,

nor the swords of the nations hinder them from

turning to the ocean of the gifts of their Lord,

the Tender, the Generous. By the Truth of

God! Calamity has not weakened me, nor

have the objections of the ulemas enfeebled me.

I declared, and am declaring in the face of all

the world: Verily the gates of Bounty are

opened, the Sun of Justice has appeared with

evident signs and clear proofs from the Pen of

God, the Omnipotent, the Self Existent!”

Again he says:

“Blessed is he who has suffered hardships

for my name’s sake, and was not prevented by

the world from entering my Court! Blessed

is he who enters my Kingdom, perceiving the

dominion of my power and Might, drinking

from the sea of my Utterances, being informed

of my Command, and what is concealed in the

Treasury of my Words, and who has shown

forth from the Horizon of Significances my

Commemoration, and my Praise! Verily he is

from me, and upon him be my mercy, my

bounty, my favor and my benediction!”

As the devoted ones were slaughtered some

cried out:

“Is there no one to witness how I offer up

my life?” and others said: “We have found the

Glory, for whose Glory we pay the price of our

blood!”

One greeted his assassin; with “Good Bye!

May God preserve you!” and received his death

blow upon the mouth while the sentence was

half uttered.

A tall handsome youth exclaimed as he saw

himself surrounded by fiercest enemies:

“Oh, to-night is my wedding, and I am to

obtain the beloved of my heart! And the de-

sire of my soul!”

We can not but be reminded of Christ’s

words:

“Blessed are they who are persecuted for

Righteousness’ sake, for their’s is the Kingdom

of Heaven.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall

see God.”

“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you

and persecute you, and shall say all manner

of evil against you falsely for my name’s

sake.”

“Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is

your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they

the prophets which were before you!”

These bloody persecutions are more incom-

prehensible, more inexcusable when one realizes

how well known is the beautiful life of Abdul

Baha throughout Persia and the Orient, and

how wide is his reputation for noble character

and illumination. The letter of the deposed

Shah illustrates this, for though he is a nar-

row Mohammedan he could not resist calling

for the help of this one to whom every one

appeals in his most dire straits.

So much has been written as to the teaching

and inculcation of ideas by Abdul Baha, his

own expression has already become so manifold

in many directions through his beautiful and

illuminating letters or “tablets,” as they are

called by the believers, that one is almost over-

whelmed by the wealth of detail and the diffi-

culty of selection in this direction. The book

of Miss Barney, *Some Answered Questions* is

exceedingly satisfactory. Miss Barney lived

a year in Acca, in order to have constant access

to Abdul Baha, and receive the answers to such

questions as western inquirers generally ask as

to modern phases of religious truth.

The volume covers a wide field, and is full

of suggestive and inspiring nuggets of wisdom.

No one can ever read the chapter in which

Abdul Baha explains the nature of God, and

afterwards cherish the notion that the Bahaist

conception of God is that of a personality.

Abdul Baha makes it very clear that God is

the divine spirit penetrating, permeating and

controlling everything. He is both manifest

and unmanifest, in his essence far removed from

human comprehension, but revealed always

through that lovely and luminous succession of

Messengers or Manifestations who have lifted

the mind of man to the gradually refining and

broadening apprehension of the Divine which it

is capable of to-day.

Many readers might completely misunder-

stand the expression of Baha Ullah and of the

Bab who frequently speak of themselves as

God. For instance Baha Ullah often utters

ecstatic phrases like:

“Blessed is the eye which is enlightened by

my Beauty! Blessed is the ear which hears my

melodies! Blessed is the affrighted one who

hastens to the shelter of My Name! Blessed

is the thirsty one who seeks the nectar of My

Benedictions!”

Or he says in the *Hidden Words*:

“Oh, Son of Man!

“Let thy satisfaction be in Myself, and not

in those who are inferior to Me, and seek not

help from any beside me, for nothing beside

Me will ever satisfy thee.”

“Oh, Son of Existence!

“My Bowl thou art, and My Light is in thee;

Therefore be enlightened by it, and seek not

any beside Me, for I have created thee rich, and

bestowed abundantly Grace upon thee.”

We forget that John said “No man hath

seen God at any time, the only begotten Son

which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath

*declared* *Him*.”

Christ himself said, John, 3, 34, “For he

whom God hath sent speaketh the words of

God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure

unto him.”

It is thus the language of God which comes

to us through his Messenger, but that does not

mean that the Messenger is a personal God.

He is the Wonderful One upon whom the

Spirit rests, and the Spirit using his lips utters

the Truth of God.

In his reality God is the Environer, we can

not escape him, says Abdul Baha, because He

is in all, the manifest, and supremely the un-

manifest, the invisible, the marvellous!

In speaking of immortality, Abdul Baha uses

the beautiful symbol of a bird in the cage. It

is accustomed to its confinement, where food

and drink are always provided, perhaps it does

not know its limitation. But suddenly the

door is opened, it is outside! It is free! It

can spread its wings, and fly where it will.

What joy in comparison with its former state!

Such is the soul with regard to this life and

the next, he declares, and in the beauty of the

illustration we perceive also its significance, for

if the bird has been lamed by the life of the

cage, if it can no longer fly nor seek its food, it

will suffer in the first hours of the freedom it

has attained. It behooves us therefore to keep

our wings in order, that we may be ready to fly

when the door is opened.

Abdul Baha has been asked innumerable

questions in regard to spiritual things, and

some of his answers are very beautiful. For

instance a lady once demanded of him:

“Are the gifts of clairvoyance, and clairau-

dience true, and can we attain them?”

He said thoughtfully:

“I think we should learn to live in the body

as if it were a glass case, through which we

can look clearly on all sides. But we must re-

member that we can not see through glass un-

less it is clean, and no one can dust his own case

but himself.”

At another time he was confronted with an

inquiry as to the reality of spiritual healing,

and gave a most illuminating analysis of the

different modes of restoration; physical heal-

ing, which we must seek through the physician,

mental and spiritual healing. He said we must

not despise the physician, for he is often the

messenger of God for our restoration. More-

over the wisdom of God has distributed healing

agencies through the physical world in mineral

and plant life, which it is the gift of the wise

physician to discover. He said that the re-

markable discoveries in the physical conquest

of disease in recent years were a part of the

world’s advancement under its new law, also

that we are learning so much of the restorative

and upbuilding elements in food, that in the

future we shall know how to keep the body in

its natural condition of health merely through

the use of proper food.

Mental healing, he went on to explain, is

excellent, and illustrates the influence of one

mind upon another, though the suggestion is

not necessarily audible. This inaudible sug-

gestion, he declared, is often confounded with

spiritual healing, but it is very different. In

spiritual healing the soul attains to union with

God, and the healing is perfect. This may be

an individual experience, or one person may

lift another, through the power of exaltation

and prayer, into the divine atmosphere. Then

as the body is filled with light through the

elevation of the spirit, every imperfection dis-

appears. This is the only perfect and perma-

nent healing, he added, all else is a means of

cure, but in the spiritual healing, the soul is

purified, and through that purification the body

is completely restored.

A beautiful extract from one of Abdul Baha’s

letters intensifies his interpretation of spiritual

and mental healing. He speaks very strongly

in this communication of the gifts of the

spirit, of the difference between the outward

and inward voice, etc. Then he says:

“Then know thou that the power of the

Word of God is effective, both in the spirit and

the body, and tile influence of the Spirit of

God is predominant over the material as well

as the essential and spiritual. And that verily

God is powerful in all things, and that the

utterances have exoteric and esoteric meaning,

and neither their outward prevents their in-

ward, nor their inward their outward meaning.”

Abdul Baha has been asked many times in

regard to the existence of evil, and his reply

seems to have brought consternation to those

who prefer to see power resting in the material

rather than the spiritual universe. Here is

a portion of one little discussion of this very

broad subject:

“The darkness spoken of in the Bible as

being created by God, signifies that verily God

has not caused light to shine there! inasmuch as

when there is no light there is darkness; when

there is no sight there will be blindness; when

there is no life there will be death; when there

is no riches there will be poverty; when there

is no knowledge there will be ignorance.

“Consequently it is proven by indisputable

argument and clear explanation that verily

evils are non-existent, but people have not

understood the meaning of the verses of the

Bible.”

Another letter is evidently written in re-

sponse to some queries as to the study of

psychic phenomena, and is illuminating in vari-

ous directions. He says:

“As to him whom thou hast mentioned in

thy letter: It behooveth him to seek only the

divine bounties, and subjects which lead to the

real knowledge of the invisible world of God,

through the mediation of the Holy Spirit.

Then he will perceive the reality of the triune

powers in man, through his innate perception.

For verily the signs of these triune powers

which exist in mankind are spirit, mind and

soul. The spirit is the power of life; the mind

is the power which apprehends the reality of

things; and the soul is an intermediary between

the Supreme Concourse (the spiritual world)

and the lower concourse (material world). The

soul has two phases—the higher aspires to the

kingdom of El Beha, and the lights of the mind

shine forth from that kingdom into its higher

sphere. The other phase inclines to the lower

concourse of the material world, and its lowest

sphere is enveloped in the darkness of ignor-

ance; but when light is poured upon this phase,

and if this phase of the soul is capable of receiv-

ing it, then “truth hath come and falsehood

vanishes, for falsehood is of short duration.”

Otherwise darkness will surround it from all

directions, and it will be deprived of association

with the Supreme Concourse, and will remain

in the lowest depths.

“As to the ‘voice.’ There are two kinds of

voices, one is the physical voice, and it is ex-

pressed by atmospheric vibrations which affect

the nerves of the ear. The other is the Breath

of the Merciful, and this is a call which is

continually heard from the Supreme Concourse,

and cheers the pure and holy souls. May it be

beneficial to those who have heard the Call!”

Abdul Baha teaches that what he terms the

*Supreme Concourse* is that mighty galaxy of

intelligences which we have crudely named

Heaven. It is the union of angels or powers

which are the agents of the Divine One for

the ruling of the universe, and is the center

of illumined spirits. To that center we may

all be united, for its “call” is ringing ever

within us, ringing with an especial clearness

in the Day of the Manifestation of God. The

soul may choose its own guides, as the pas-

sage indicates, which has just been quoted, and

happy is the one who has clarified into that

higher phase where the divine signals are both

visible and audible.

A very remarkable tablet or letter was re-

ceived several years ago by Mrs. and Mr.

Dealy, of Alabama, and was addressed especi-

ally to the little congregation of the faith

which they had founded. It is an admirable

illustration of that eloquence which Abdul Baha

sometimes makes use of, and is full of signifi-

cant allusions. It is as follows:

“When the darkness of ignorance and the

heedlessness concerning the Realm of Eternity

and bereavement from the True One had en-

circled the universe, then the resplendent

Luminary dawned, and the Brilliant Light

illumined the horizon of the East. Hence the

Sun of Reality shone forth, scattering the

sparkling Lights of the Kingdom to the East

and to the West. Those who had the seeing

eyes, found the Most Great Glad Tidings, be-

gan to cry the Call, ‘Oh, Blessed are we!’

‘Oh, Blessed are we!’ and have beheld the

reality of things themselves, have discovered

the Mysteries of the Kingdom, were released

from superstition and doubts, perceived the

lights of Truth, and became so intoxicated

with the Cup of the Love of God, that wholly

forgetting the world and themselves while

dancing, they ran with utmost joy and ecstasy

to the city of martyrdom, sacrificing their

minds and their lives upon the Altar of Love.

“But those who were blinded became aston-

ished, and on account of these joyous accla-

mations were bewildered and began to cry,

‘Where is the Light?’ and said, ‘We do not

behold any light, we do not see any Rising Sun!

It is void of any truth! This is pure imagi-

nation!’

“However they have hastened bat-like to

the darkness below the ground, and according

to their own thoughts they have found a little

comfort and tranquility. Nevertheless it is

yet the early dawn, and the strength of the

heats, and the rays of the Sun of Truth have

not yet made their torrid and complete im-

pression. When it reaches the midst of

Heaven, the heat will interpenetrate with such

great intensity that it will move and spur to

the greatest velocity even the insects below the

earth. Although they are not able to behold

the light, yet the penetration of the heat will

move and agitate all of them.

“Consequently, Oh ye Friends of God, be ye

thankful that in the Day of the Effulgence ye

have turned your faces to the Orb of the

regions and beheld the Lights. Ye have re-

ceived a portion from the rays of Truth, and

are endowed with a share from the everlasting

outpouring. Therefore ye must not rest one

minute, but thank Him for this Bestowal.

“Be not seated and silent! Diffuse the Glad

Tidings of the Kingdom far and wide to the

ears, promulgate the Word of God, and put

into practice the Advices and Covenants of

God. That is, arise ye with such qualities and

attributes that ye may continually bestow life

to the body of the world, and nurse the infants

of the universe, up to the station of maturity

and perfection. Enkindle with all your might,

in every meeting the Light of the Love of God,

gladden and cheer every heart with the utmost

loving kindness, show forth your love to the

strangers just as you show it forth to your rel-

atives. If a soul is seeking to quarrel, ask ye

for reconciliation; if he blame ye, praise; if

he give you a deadly poison, bestow ye an all-

healing antidote; if he create death, administer

ye eternal Life; if he becomes a thorn, change

ye into roses and hyacinths. Perchance

through such deeds and words this darkened

world will become illuminated, this terrestrial

universe will become transformed into a

Heavenly Realm, and this Satanic prison a

Divine Court; warfare and blood-shed be anni-

hilated, and love and faithfulness hoist the Tent

of Unity upon the apex of the world.

“These are the results of the Divine Advices

and Exhortations, and the epitome of the

teachings of the Bahai Cycle.”

This beautiful letter has also been translated

by Ahmad Sohrab, of Washington, and is both

lovely and wonderful in its expression and con-

tents. We must always miss the peculiar

beauty of the Persian tongue, but a trace of it

has crept into the Englishing of this splendid

message.

Naturally there is something in the spoken

word of Abdul Baha, in the radiance of his

face, and the richness of his voice, which is

beyond any written utterance, no matter how

noble that may be. The people to whom his

words are spoken never forget them, and re-

peated and repeated again, they always seem

to carry a trace of the original fragrance that

surrounded them when first dropped into the

listening ear.

Mrs. C. was a believer who went to Acca

some years ago. She was one of a fashionable

and wealthy circle in New York, and had

learned of Abdul Baha while traveling abroad.

She had lived a conventional, and rather un-

satisfied life. She had been a sincere Episco-

palian, but never was able to gain much com-

fort from her religion, though she earnestly

sought this joy. She had lost health from

inanition more than any real illness, and had

become accustomed to a half melancholy state

from which she hardly sought to rouse herself.

She grasped the message of Truth from Ab-

dul Baha with an eagerness that carried her

almost immediately to the prison city. Once

there, she was interested in everything, but

especially in Abdul Baha.

She had formed a habit of spiritual concen-

tration or devotion which caused her some dis-

tress. She spent half an hour after she rose

each morning, in thinking of her duties during

the day, and how she should fulfill them, and

another half hour before retiring at night, in

mourning because she had not consistently car-

ried out her morning’s plans. She believed this

was worship, and was over conscientious as to

her duties, which were always spelled in

capitals. If any one had assured her it was

her duty to be happy, she would probably have

been stricken with horror.

In the household of Abdul Baha the family

meets in the Holy Mother’s large living room

at a very early hour every morning, and tea

is served in delicate cups and saucers of glass.

While the company is quietly disposing of this

simple refreshment, the youngest members of

the family chant the holy words in low musical

tones. It is a very inspiring commencement

of the day, and Abdul Baha frequently talks

with such fervor and gladness that all arc re-

joiced as they separate for their various tasks.

Mrs. C. observed that the Servant of God

always greeted her with the same words, “Be

Happy!” She watched the other members of

the party, and assured herself that he ad-

dressed them all differently, but never failed to

say to her, “Be Happy!”

She was troubled about it, and at length she

begged Monever Khanom the daughter of the

household to ask her father for the reason of

this exclusive admonition. When the question

was propounded to Abdul Baha he turned to

Mrs. ( with his peculiarly illuminating smile,

and replied:

“I tell you to be happy because we can not

know the spiritual life unless we are happy!”

Then Mrs. C.’s dismay was complete, and

her diffidence vanished with the fullness of her

despair.

“But tell me, what is the spiritual life?” she

cried, “I have heard ever since I was born about

the spiritual life, and no one could ever explain

to me what it is!”

Abdul Baha looked at his questioner again

with that wonderful smile of his, and said

gently:

“Characterize thyself with the characteristics

of God, and thou shalt know the spiritual life!”

That was all, but it was enough. Mrs. C.

began to query, “What did he mean? What

are the characteristics of God? They must be

the great attributes, of course, Love, Beauty,

Generosity, Justice,” and so on in beautiful

succession.

All day long her mind was flooded with the

divine puzzle, and all day long she was happy.

She did not give a thought to her duties, and

yet when she arrived at the moment of her

evening’s reckoning, she could not remember

that she had left them undone.

At last she began to understand. If she

was absorbed in Heavenly ideals, they would

translate themselves into deeds necessarily, and

her days and nights would be full of light.

From that moment she never quite forgot the

divine admonition that had been granted her:

“Characterize thyself with the character-

istics of God!”

And she learned to know the spiritual life.

Mrs. C. had another beautiful moment with

Abdul Baha which meant much to her. Just

before she left the household he came into her

room to say farewell, and seating himself by

the window looked off upon the sea in silence

for so long a time that his guest began to

wonder if he had forgotten her presence.

Then at length he turned to her and said,

with that eager speech that is one of his pe-

culiarities:

“Mrs. C. when you go back to New York

talk to people about the love of God. People

in the world do not talk enough about God.

Their conversation is filled with trivialities, and

they forget the most momentous subjects. Yet

if you speak to them of God they are happy,

and presently they open their hearts to you.

Often you can not mention this glorious Reve-

lation, for their prejudice would interfere, and

they would not listen. But you will find that

you can always talk to them about the love

of God.”

Then he went away, and Mrs. C. sat a long

time in the gathering darkness, while the glory

of the sun descended upon the glittering waters

of the Mediterranean. The fragrant shadows

seemed to echo softly with the last words of

Abdul Baha:

“You will find that you can always talk to

them about the love of God.”

THE END.