



"BABI"
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*Cyclopædia of Biblical, theological,
and ecclesiastical literature*

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LITERATURE.

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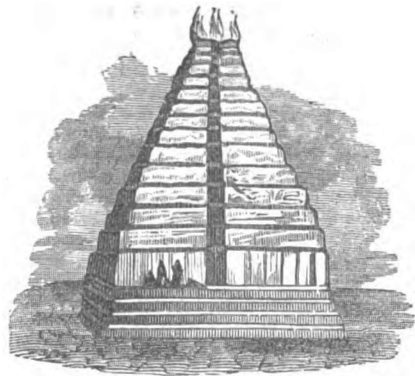
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that of Babil 140 (?), that of the Warka temple 100, that of the temple at Mugheir 50 feet. Strabo's statement that the tomb of Belus was a stade (606 feet in height) would thus seem to be a gross exaggeration. Probably no Babylonian tower ever equalled the Great Pyramid, the original height of which was 480 feet. See PYRAMIDS.

9. *Its Materials and Manner of Construction.*—On these points more light is to be obtained from the Warka and Mugheir buildings than from the Birs. The Birs was rebuilt from top to bottom by Nebuchadnezzar, and shows the mode of construction prevalent in Babylon at the best period; the temples at Warka and Mugheir remain to a certain extent in their primitive condition, the upper stories alone having been renovated. The Warka temple is composed entirely of sun-dried bricks, which are of various shapes and sizes; the cement used is mud; and reeds are largely employed in the construction. It is a building of the most primitive type, and exhibits a ruder style of art than that which we perceive from Scripture to have obtained at the date of the tower. Burnt bricks were employed in the composition of the tower (Gen. xi, 8); and though perhaps it is somewhat doubtful what the *chemar* (כֶּמֶר, "slime") used for mortar may have been (see Fresnel in *Journ. Asiatique* for June, 1853, p. 9), yet, on the whole, it is most probable that bitumen (which abounds in Babylonia) is the substance intended. See BITUMEN. Now the lower basement of the Mugheir temple exhibits this combination in a decidedly primitive form. The burnt bricks are of small size and of an inferior quality; they are laid in bitumen; and they face a mass of sun-dried brick, forming a solid wall outside it ten feet in thickness. No reeds are used in the building. Writing appears on it, but of an antique cast. The supposed date is B.C. 2300, but little later than the era commonly assigned to the building of Babel. Probably the erection of the two buildings was not separated by a very long interval, though it is reasonable to suppose that of the two the tower was the earlier. If we mark its date, as perhaps we are entitled to do, by the time of Peleg, the son of Eber, and father of Keturah (see Gen. x, 25), we may perhaps place it about B.C. 2400. See DISPERSION OF NATIONS.

10. *Advantages of this form.*—It is not necessary to suppose that any real idea of "scaling heaven" was present to the minds of those who raised either the Tower of Babel, or any other of the Babylonian temple-towers. The expression used in Genesis (xi, 4) is a mere hyperbole for great height (comp. Deut. i, 28; Dan. iv, 11, etc.), and should not be taken literally. Military defence was probably the primary object of such edifices in early times; but with the wish for this may have been combined further secondary motives, which remained when such defence was otherwise provided for. Diodorus states that the great tower of the temple of Belus was used by the Chaldeans as an observatory (ii, 9), and the careful emplacement of the Babylonian temples with the angles facing the four cardinal points would be a natural consequence, and may be regarded as a strong confirmation of the reality of this application. M. Fresnel has recently conjectured that they were also used as sleeping-places for the chief priests in the summer time (*Journ. Asiatique*, June, 1853, p. 529-31). The upper air is cooler, and is free from the insects, especially mosquitoes, which abound below; and the description which Herodotus gives of the chamber at the top of the Belus tower (i, 181) goes far to confirm this ingenious view.—Smith, s. v.

11. *Confirmation from other Pyramidal Temples.*—Mr. Taylor (*Fragments to Calmet's Dict.*) has given views of several similar structures now extant, of which we copy two. The first, rising in several steps or stages, is at Tanjore, in the East Indies; and af-



East Indian-Pyramid.

forwards, it is presumed, a just idea of the Tower of Babel. It is, indeed, wholly constructed of stone, in which it differs from that more ancient edifice, which, being situated in a country destitute of stone, was, of necessity, constructed of brick. On the top of this pyramid is a chapel or temple, affording a specimen of the general nature of this kind of sacred edifices in India. These amazing structures are commonly erected on or near the banks of great rivers, for the advantage of ablution. In the courts that surround them innumerable multitudes assemble at the rising of the sun, after having bathed in the stream below. The gate of the pagoda uniformly fronts the east. The internal chamber commonly receives light only from the door. An external pathway, for the purpose of visiting the chapel at the top, merits observation.

The next is an ancient pyramid built by the Mexicans in America; it agrees in figure with the former, and has on the outside an ascent of stairs leading up one side to the upper story, proceeding to the chapels on its summit. This ascent implies that the chapels were used from time to time, and no doubt it marks the shortest track for that purpose, as it occupies one side only.



Mexican Pyramid.

12. *Literature.*—Kircher, *Turris Babel* (Amst. 1778); Zentgravius, *De turri Babel* (Vitemb. 1774); Hoynovius, *De turri Babylonica* (Regiom. 1694); Columbus, *De causis tur. Bab.* (Regiom. 1675); Cyrill. Alex. *De Turri* (in his *Opp.* i, 44); Heidegger, *De Turri Babel* (in his *Hist. Patriarch.* i); Saurin, *Tour de Babel* (in his *Disc.* i, 185; and *Dissert.* p. 75); Calmet, *Le Tour de Babel* (in his *Commentaire*, i, pt. 1, diss. 34); Delany, *Of the Building of Babel* (in his *Rev. Examined.* ii, 79); Berington, *The Tower of Babel* (in his *Dissertations*, p. 407); Drew, *Babel* (in his *Script. Studies*, p. 39); Deyling, *De ortu Babelis* (in his *Observat.* iii, 24); Dietric, *Turris Babylonica* (in his *Antiq.* p. 116); Perizonii *Orig. Babylonia*. c. 9; Hezel, *Ueb. d. Babyl. Stadt u. Thurmbau* (Hildb. 1774); anonymous, *Tractatus de locis quibusd. difficil.* (Frcf. 1839); Kurtz, *Hist. of the Old Covenant*, § 29.

Ba'bi (Baḥi v. r. Bḥai), a chief Israelite whose "son" returned from Babylon (1 Esdr. viii, 37); evidently the BĒBAI (q. v.) of the genuine text (Ezra ii, 11), which also recurs in the same verse of Esdras.

Babi, or Babists, a Persian sect of Mohammedans, whose founder, according to one account, was

Moollah Sadik; according to others, a certain *Bab*, who, coming forth in 1835 as a prophet, was shot by order of the shah of Persia. It is probable that both names refer to the same person, and that Sadik assumed the name of Bab, i. e. *Papa, Father*; or, according to another version, the *Gate*, through which alone truth and eternal bliss can be reached. A more recent account is given by Gobineau, *Les Religions et les Philosophies d'Asie Centrale* (cited in *The Nation*, June 22, 1866, from which this account is taken). About 1843 a youth of Shiraz, named Mirza Ali Mohammed, after reading the Christian Scriptures, as well as the Oriental Sacred Books, came out as a prophet, to reform or destroy Islamism. He is said to have been endowed with many graces of person and manner, and to have soon made many proselytes. Inspired by success, he now declared that, instead of the *Gate*, he was the *Point*; that is, the very creator of truth; no longer a simple prophet, but a living manifestation of divinity. The title of the Bab was now conferred upon a priest of the Khorassan, Moollah Houssein Bourshewich, who became the active chief and soon the warrior-apostle of Babism. Houssein was sent on a missionary tour into Irak and Khorassan, taking with him the writings of his master. He made a great sensation by his preaching. Another missionary was a woman, possessed of extraordinary beauty and eloquence. About 1848, Houssein and the Babists generally gathered at a place called Sheik Teheri, and built a huge tower, providing it for a siege. They now gave out political predictions, in which the advent of the Bab as universal sovereign was announced. All who died fighting for the new faith were to rise again, to become princes of some of the countries over which the Bab would extend his sway. Two large armies sent against the Babists were surprised and routed. A third expedition, though it succeeded in withstanding the sortie of the Babists, and in mortally wounding the Babist chief, Moollah Houssein, retired. The next campaign was more successful. For four months the Babists held out, in spite of tremendous odds, but at last, worn out by famine, they tried to force their way through the enemy's lines, but were overpowered, and when they surrendered only 214 were living. The survivors, and multitudes of others, even those who professed to renounce the heresy, were cruelly put to death. A similar Babist insurrection in Khamsch was also put down. Meanwhile Ali Mohammed had been living in semi-concealment at Shiraz. After the insurrection of Mezenderan he was brought before a court of royal commissioners and Mohammedan priests. In the examination which took place, the Bab, as he was still popularly called, gained the advantage. Seeing this, the discussion was abruptly broken off, and the Bab, with two of his disciples, was condemned to death, which was inflicted the next day. Everything now seemed to be finished; but the new Bab, Mirza Iaia, whom a divine mark had pointed out at the age of fifteen as the successor to the office, established himself at Bagdad, where he kept up communication with his followers through the pilgrims to the shrines there. The Babists were now forbidden from making any more attempts at insurrection until the Bab should decide that the hour had come and should give them the signal. In 1852 an attempt was made to assassinate the king, but failed. The attempted assassins were recognized as Babists. Forty others were arrested, among them the feminine apostle, Gourret-Oul-Ayn, the Consolation of Eyes. The next day she publicly confessed her Babism, was burnt at the stake with insult and indignity, and her ashes were scattered to the wind. The rest of the prisoners were distributed each to a courtier as his especial victim. Then was seen at Teheran a sight never to be forgotten. Through the streets, between the lines of executioners, marched men, women, and children, with burning splinters flaming in their

wounds. The victims sing: "In truth we come from God, and we return to him." A sufferer falls in the road; he is raised by lashes and bayonet thrusts. But no apostate was found among the sufferers.

Babism, like Mohammedanism, asserts the absolute unity of God; but the eternal unity, far from shutting himself up in himself, is, on the contrary, an ever-expanding principle of life. It is ceaselessly moving, acting, creating. God has created the world by means of seven words—Force, Power, Will, Action, Condescension, Glory, and Revelation—which words embrace the active plenitude of the virtues which they respectively represent. God possesses other virtues, even to infinity, but he manifests only these. The creature who emanates from God is distinguished from him by the privation of all emanatory action, but he is not altogether separated from him, and at the last day of judgment he will be confounded anew with him in the eternal unity. The Babist doctrine of revelation does not claim that the Bab has revealed the complete truth, but only as his predecessors, the prophets before him, have done—that portion of truth necessary for the age. The Bab is declared superior to Mohammed as Mohammed was to Jesus; and another revelation, which will complete the Bab's, is announced as coming in the future. Nineteen is a sacred number, which the Bab declares ought to preside over everything. Originally, he says, the Unity was composed of nineteen persons, among whom the highest rank belongs to the Bab. All the prophets who have appeared are, like the world, manifestations of God; divine words; not God, but beings who come from God more really than common men. At the death of a prophet or a saint, his soul does not quit the earth, but joins itself to some soul still in the flesh, who then completes his work. Babism enjoins few prayers, and only upon fixed occasions, and neither prescribes nor defends ablutions, so common in the religious rites of Mohammedanism. All the faithful wear amulets. Mendicancy, so much in honor among the Mussulman people, is forbidden. Women are ordered to discard veils, and to share in the intercourse of social life, from which Persian usage excludes them.

What will be the future of Babism it is difficult to tell. Since 1852 it has changed its character to a secret doctrine, which recruits its disciples in silence. The same Babists who before suffered martyrdom so courageously rather than deny their religion, now, obedient to the new order of their chief, conceal their faith with Oriental dissimulation. Babism is much more in harmony with the subtle and imaginative genius of the Persian people than the Shiite Mohammedanism. The growing spirit of nationality makes their present religion and the present dynasty, both of which were established among them by foreign conquest, less and less acceptable every year. The hour when the Bab shall send word from Bagdad that the time has come for the Babists to take up arms again will be a very critical one for the present dynasty of Persia and for Shiite Mohammedanism.

The first thorough work on the origin and the history of the Babis is the one above referred to by Count Gobineau (formerly French minister in Teheran). Little had previously been published in Europe concerning the sect. (See *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländ. Gesellschaft*, vol. v; Petermann, *Reisen im Orient*, vol. ii.) The history of the Babis in Gobineau's work is followed by treatises on their doctrines, and, as a concluding appendix, he gives the sacred book of the Babis, "*The Book of Precepts*." See also Polak (a German, court-physician of the shah, and director of a medical school at Teheran), *Persien. Das Land und seine Bewohner* (Leipzig, 1865, 2 vols., vol. i, p. 350-354).—Pierer, *Universal Lexikon*, ii, 117; *The Nation*, June 22, 1866; *American Ann. Cyclopædia*, 1865, p. 698.

Babington, GERVAISE, an eminent English prelate, was born at Nottingham in the year 1551. He