

death to the apostate is at all times liable to be enforced. The martyrdom of Mirza Ibrahim, contrary to expectations, has had a depressing effect on the work among Mohammedans in Azerbaijan. Inquirers have drawn back, shrinking from drinking the same cup. Some of them say that to forego wealth, position, and even life is a greater cross than they can take up. The workers, too, have felt the need of exercising greater caution than before. The baptism of a Persian woman in Ispahan, in 1894, was the occasion of riotous demonstrations. A *fatva* or decree was given by a Mujtihad to kill the missionary who was the means of her conversion. The woman was seized, but her life was spared, and she is confined in the harem of the prince-governor, where she was lately seen by the ladies of the mission. It is a cause for thanksgiving that she has been permitted to live.

In view of the situation missionaries are in a quandary as to their duty. Some believe in aggressive work for Mohammedans in spite of government prohibitions, while others advocate continuing to give special attention to non-Mohammedan races until Providence opens up the door more effectually. The Church Mission at Ispahan seems lately to be working aggressively. Of its work Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall writes in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* (June, 1896): "Six persons have recently been baptized in Julfa alone, after very careful and long-continued instruction, and these are working quietly among their friends and relatives. These converts estimate the number of secret believers in that neighborhood alone at many thousands. The same is more or less the case throughout the country. Belief in Christ as the one Savior of the world is spreading rapidly. Considerable numbers attend the Sunday services and Bible classes, held in connection with the various missions, and all over the country there are candidates for baptism. The writer of the present article has had some experience of religious work in India and other countries, but nowhere has he witnessed anything approaching the interest in the Gospel now shown in many parts of Persia." I do not think any one would write of the population of Northwest Persia with the same degree of sanguineness, but everywhere there is freedom for discussion. The Persians are remarkably free in the use of their tongues on every subject (except their harems). They speak evil of dignitaries without let or hindrance. Tirades against the mollahs and sentiments disloyal to the Shah are uttered even in public without fear. In like manner religious discussion is indulged in with little restraint. There is opportunity for the presentation of the Gospel to individual Mohammedans, and slight objection is raised until some one accepts the truth.

What the influence of the Babis will be toward solving the problem of religious liberty is not yet evident. Their position is complicated by their political aspirations, and by their former attempt (1852) to assassinate the Shah Nasr-i-Din. Rumor persistently connects them with his final taking off on May 1st, 1896. Altho their severe persecutions have