

*In
The Light
Of
Prophecies*

Unless otherwise indicated all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Cover by

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Dedication

O SON OF MAN!

Ponder and reflect. Is it thy wish to die upon thy bed, or to shed thy life-blood on the dust, a martyr in My path, and so become the manifestation of My command and the revealer of My light in the highest paradise?

Judge thou aright, O servant!

-- Bahá'u'lláh

Mona Mahmudnizhad, 16, was arrested for being a Bahá'í, and after two years of imprisonment and bitter torment was finally sentenced to be put to death by hanging, in Shiraz, Iran, on June 18th, 1983.

Her father who was a member of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Shiraz was also arrested. During the search of his house, the government authorities found a notebook belonged to Mona in which she had written an essay, titled: "why I became a Bahá'í." This then became enough reason for her arrest.

During the course of her prosecution, Mona heroically defends her faith in Bahá'u'lláh. This soon evoked violent hostility from the Muslim clergy who taught that the



process of Divine revelation ended with Muhammad, and that any assertion to the contrary represented apostasy, punishable by death.

One night in her prison cell, Mona visions Abdu'l-Bahá in a dream offering her the choice of three garments: White, Blue and Red. Abdu'l-Bahá tells her to choose the one color that she desired the most; in response, Mona chooses the "Red." Suddenly afterwards she wakes up to know that her martyrdom was near.

A few days later the time arrived, and she and nine other imprisoned Bahá'í women were taken for their execution. During this time, they were asked if they had any final wishes, to which, Mona replied that she had two. Her first being to chant this prayer from Abdu'l-Bahá:

He is the All-Glorious! O my God!

May my life be a sacrifice for thy loved ones. Shed this withered blood in the path of Thy friends and make this tired flesh as dust in the pathway of Thy companions. O my God!

(An approximate translation from the original Persian)

Afterward, she asked for her second wish, that she would kiss the noose and put it around her own neck. Thus, she willingly drank from the chalice of martyrdom, and ascended to the realm of the All-Glorious.

The heroic sacrifice of Mona is a legend to be remembered for many years to come. An Exemplar of living a life of selflessness, devotion, and servitude in the path of the All-Merciful.

Thus, this work is dedicated to Mona as a humbled token of recognition and acknowledgement of her heroic sacrifice in the Path of her love for Bahá'u'lláh.

In His service...

Jamsheed Bahar

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Introduction

“In the Light of Prophecies”

In the world that we live in, light always rises in the East and sends forth its radiance into the West.

Nevertheless, although it is the function of this light to make things visible to the sight, it cannot give man the power to perceive nor to discern the inner meaning of the things which he sees. For this light has no intelligence, no consciousness.

Thus, it is the light of the intellect which gives man knowledge and understanding, and without this light, the physical eyes would be useless.

This light of the intellect is the highest light that exists, for it is born of the Divine Light.

The light of the intellect enables man to understand and realize all that exists. But it is only the Divine Light that can give him sight for the invisible things, and enable him to see truths that will only be visible to the world thousands of years ahead.

It was the Divine Light which enabled the prophets to see two thousand years in advance what was going to take place and today we see the realization of their vision. Thus it is this

Light which we must strive to seek, for it is greater than any other.

It was by this Light that Moses was enabled to see and comprehend the Divine Appearance, and to hear the Heavenly Voice which spoke to him from the Burning Bush: 'And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush' (***Exodus 3:2***)

It is of this Light Christ is speaking when He says: 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness...' (***John 8:12***)

It is of this Light Muhammad is speaking when he says: 'Allah is the light of the Heavens, and of the Earth' (***Qur'án 24:35***)

We must seek with all our hearts this Heavenly Light, so that we may be enabled to understand the realities, that we may know the secret things of God, that the hidden ways may be made plain before our eyes.

This light may be likened to a mirror, and as a mirror reflects all that is before it, so this Light shows to the eyes of our spirits all that exists in God's Kingdom and causes the realities of things to be made visible.

By the help of this effulgent Light all the spiritual interpretation of the Holy Writings has been made plain, the hidden things of God's Universe have become manifest, and we have been enabled to comprehend the Divine purposes for man.

'In the Light of Prophecies,' may be used as an open way, or a tool for achieving this goal. It is comprised of nine chapters which contain a total of 91 sections. Each section brings into focus an area from the Holy Bible which, when studied in conjunction with related Bahá'í writings, brings to light the mysteries that lie hidden in the Word of the Prophets.

It is hoped that through research and study of this work, and contemplation on the spiritual message that it unfolds, God in His mercy, may guide our hearts and souls with His glorious Light, and assist us in laying down the foundation stone of His Promised Kingdom on earth. Then shall each one of us shine as a radiant star in the dark places of the world.

(Based on: "THE TWO KINDS OF LIGHT," `Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Page: 68-70)

In His Service...

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Chapter 1: The Creation

THE HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

A subject that is essential¹ for the comprehension of the questions that we have mentioned, and of others of which we are about to speak, so that the essence of the problems may be understood, is this: that human knowledge is of two kinds. One is the knowledge of things perceptible to the senses - that is to say, things which the eye, or ear, or smell, or taste, or touch can perceive, which are called objective or sensible. So the sun, because it can be seen, is said to be objective; and in the same way sounds are sensible because the ear hears them; perfumes are sensible because they can be inhaled and the sense of smell perceives them; foods are sensible because the palate perceives their sweetness, sourness or saltiness; heat and cold are sensible because the feelings perceive them. These are said to be sensible realities.

1 *Lit., the pivot*

The other kind of human knowledge is intellectual - that is to say, it is a reality of the intellect; it has no outward form and no place and is not perceptible to the senses. For example, the power of intellect is not sensible; none of the inner qualities of man is a sensible thing; on the contrary, they are intellectual realities. So love is a mental reality and not sensible; for this reality the ear does not hear, the eye does not see, the smell does not perceive, the taste does not discern, the touch does not feel. Even ethereal matter, the forces of which are said in physics to be heat, light, electricity and magnetism, is an intellectual reality, and is not sensible. In the same way, nature, also, in its essence is an intellectual reality and is not sensible; the human spirit is an intellectual, not sensible reality. In explaining these intellectual realities, one is obliged to express them by sensible figures because in exterior existence there is nothing that is not material. Therefore, to explain the reality of the spirit - its condition, its station - one is obliged to give explanations under the forms of sensible things because in the external world all that exists is sensible. For example, grief and happiness are intellectual things; when you wish to express those spiritual qualities you say: "My heart is oppressed; my heart is dilated," though the heart of man is neither oppressed nor dilated. This is an intellectual or spiritual state, to explain which you are obliged to have recourse to sensible figures. Another example: you say, "such an individual made great progress," though he is remaining in the same place; or again, "such a one's position was exalted," although, like everyone else, he walks upon the earth. This exaltation and this progress are spiritual states and intellectual realities, but to explain them you are obliged to have recourse to sensible figures because in the exterior world there is nothing that is not sensible.

So the symbol of knowledge is light, and of ignorance, darkness; but reflect, is knowledge sensible light, or ignorance sensible darkness? No, they are merely symbols. These are only intellectual states, but when you desire to express them outwardly, you call knowledge light, and ignorance darkness. You say: "My heart was gloomy, and it became enlightened." Now, that light of knowledge, and that darkness of ignorance,

are intellectual realities, not sensible ones; but when we seek for explanations in the external world, we are obliged to give them a sensible form.

Then it is evident that the dove which descended upon Christ was not a material dove, but it was a spiritual state, which, that it might be comprehensible, was expressed by a sensible figure. Thus in the Old Testament it is said that God appeared as a pillar of fire: this does not signify the material form; it is an intellectual reality which is expressed by a sensible image.

Christ says, "The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father." Was Christ within God, or God within Christ? No, in the name of God! On the contrary, this is an intellectual state which is expressed in a sensible figure.

We come to the explanation of the words of Bahá'u'lláh when He says: "O king! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing."¹ This is the state of manifestation: it is not sensible; it is an intellectual reality, exempt and freed from time, from past, present and future; it is an explanation, a simile, a metaphor and is not to be accepted literally; it is not a state that can be comprehended by man. Sleeping and waking is passing from one state to another. Sleeping is the condition of repose, and wakefulness is the condition of movement. Sleeping is the state of silence; wakefulness is the state of speech. Sleeping is the state of mystery; wakefulness is the state of manifestation.

For example, it is a Persian and Arabic expression to say that the earth was asleep, and the spring came, and it awoke; or the earth was dead, and the spring came, and it revived. These expressions are metaphors, allegories, mystic explanations in the world of signification.

1 *Extract from the letter to Nasiri'd-Din Shah.*

Briefly, the Holy Manifestations have ever been, and ever will be, Luminous Realities; no change or variation takes place in Their essence. Before declaring Their manifestation, They are silent and quiet like a sleeper, and after Their manifestation, They speak and are illuminated, like one who is awake.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*, Pages: 83-86)

As to the light thou dost witness: It is not an earthly light (phenomenal); nay, rather, it is a heavenly light. It cannot be seen by the sight; nay, rather, it is perceived by the insight.

As to the resurrection of the body of Christ three days subsequent to His departure: This signifies the divine teachings and spiritual religion of His Holiness Christ, which constitute His spiritual body, which is living and perpetual forevermore.

By the "three days" of His death is meant that after the great martyrdom, the penetration of the divine teachings and the spread of the spiritual law became relaxed on account of the crucifixion of Christ. For the disciples were somewhat troubled by the violence of divine tests. But when they became firm, that divine spirit resurrected and that body -- which signifies the divine word -- arose.

Likewise the address of the angels to the people of Galilee, "That this Christ will return in the same way and that He will descend from heaven," is a spiritual address. For when Christ appeared, He came from heaven, although He was outwardly born from the womb of Mary. For He said: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven."

He said: "I came down from heaven and likewise will go to heaven." By "heaven" is not meant this infinite phenomenal space, but "heaven" signifies the word of the divine kingdom which is the supreme station and seat of the Sun of Truth.

To be brief: The mysteries of the Holy Books are many and require explanation and elucidation. I hope thine insight will be so opened that the divine mysteries may become manifest and clear. **(Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1*, p. 192)**

Know verily that the purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the Revealers of God's holy Cause, hath been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illuminated hearts may be known from the perishable and barren soil. From time immemorial such hath been the way of God amidst His creatures, and to this testify the records of the sacred books.

(Baha'u'llah, *The Kitab-i-Iqan*, p. 48)

Throughout the universe the divine power is effulgent in endless images and pictures. The world of creation, the world of humanity may be likened to the earth itself and the divine power to the sun. This Sun has shone upon all mankind. In the endless variety of its reflections the divine will is manifested. Consider how all are recipients of the bounty of the same Sun. At most the difference between them is that of degree, for the effulgence is one effulgence, the one light emanating from the Sun. This will express the oneness of the world of humanity. The body-politic or the social unity of the human world may be likened to an ocean and each member, each individual a wave upon that same ocean.

The light of the sun becomes apparent in each object according to the capacity of that object. The difference is simply one of degree and receptivity. The stone would be a recipient only to a limited extent; another created thing might be as a mirror wherein the sun is fully reflected; but the same light shines upon both.

The most important thing is to polish the mirrors of hearts in order that they may become illumined and receptive of the divine light. One heart may possess the capacity of the polished mirror; another be covered and obscured by the dust and dross of this world. Although the same Sun is shining upon both, in the mirror which is polished, pure and sanctified you may behold the Sun in all its fullness, glory and power revealing its majesty and effulgence, but in the mirror which is rusted and obscured there is no capacity for reflection although so far as the Sun itself is concerned it is shining there-

on and is neither lessened nor deprived. Therefore our duty lies in seeking to polish the mirrors of our hearts in order that we shall become reflectors of that light and recipients of the divine bounties which may be fully revealed through them.

This means the oneness of the world of humanity. That is to say, when this human body-politic reaches a state of absolute unity, the effulgence of the eternal Sun will make its fullest light and heat manifest. Therefore we must not make distinctions between individual members of the human family. We must not consider any soul as barren or deprived. Our duty lies in educating souls so that the Sun of the bestowals of God shall become resplendent in them, and this is possible through the power of the oneness of humanity. The more love is expressed among mankind and the stronger the power of unity, the greater will be this reflection and revelation, for the greatest bestowal of God is love. Love is the source of all the bestowals of God. Until love takes possession of the heart no other divine bounty can be revealed in it.

All the prophets have striven to make love manifest in the hearts of men. His Holiness Jesus Christ sought to create this love in the hearts. He suffered all difficulties and ordeals that perchance the human heart might become the fountain-source of love. Therefore we must strive with all our heart and soul that this love may take possession of us so that all humanity whether it be in the east or in the west may be connected through the bond of this divine affection; for we are all the waves of one sea; we have come into being through the same bestowal and are recipients from the same center. The lights of earth are all acceptable, but the center of effulgence is the sun and we must direct our gaze to the sun. God is the supreme center. The more we turn toward this center of light, the greater will be our capacity.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 217)

As to thy question whether the physical world is subject to any limitations, know thou that the comprehension of this matter dependeth upon the observer himself. In one sense, it

is limited; in another, it is exalted beyond all limitations. The one true God hath everlastingly existed, and will everlastingly continue to exist. His creation, likewise, hath had no beginning, and will have no end. All that is created, however, is preceded by a cause. This fact, in itself, establisheth, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the unity of the Creator.

Thou hast, moreover, asked Me concerning the nature of the celestial spheres. To comprehend their nature, it would be necessary to inquire into the meaning of the allusions that have been made in the Books of old to the celestial spheres and the heavens, and to discover the character of their relationship to this physical world, and the influence which they exert upon it. Every heart is filled with wonder at so bewildering a theme, and every mind is perplexed by its mystery. God, alone, can fathom its import. The learned men, that have fixed at several thousand years the life of this earth, have failed, throughout the long period of their observation, to consider either the number or the age of the other planets. Consider, moreover, the manifold divergencies that have resulted from the theories propounded by these men. Know thou that every fixed star hath its own planets, and every planet its own creatures, whose number no man can compute.

O thou that hast fixed thine eyes upon My countenance! The Day Spring of Glory hath, in this Day, manifested its radiance, and the Voice of the Most High is calling. We have formerly uttered these words: "This is not the day for any man to question his Lord. It behoveth whosoever hath hearkened to the Call of God, as voiced by Him Who is the Day Spring of Glory, to arise and cry out: `Here am I, here am I, O Lord of all Names; here am I, here am I, O Maker of the heavens! I testify that, through Thy Revelation, the things hidden in the Books of God have been revealed, and that whatsoever hath been recorded by Thy Messengers in the sacred Scriptures hath been fulfilled.'"

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 162-163)

O SON OF UTTERANCE!

Turn thy face unto Mine and renounce all save Me; for My sovereignty endureth and My dominion perisheth not. If thou seekest another than Me, yea, if thou searchest the universe for evermore, thy quest will be in vain.

(Baha'u'llah, The Arabic Hidden Words)

O SON OF LIGHT!

Forget all save Me and commune with My spirit. This is of the essence of My command, therefore turn unto it.

(Baha'u'llah, The Arabic Hidden Words)

THE SIX DAYS IN GENESIS

Those who are uninformed of the world of reality, who do not comprehend existing things, who are without perception of the inner truth of creation, who do not penetrate the real mysteries of material and spiritual phenomena and who possess only a superficial idea of universal life and being are but embodiments of pure ignorance. They believe only that which they have heard from their fathers and ancestors. Of themselves they have no hearing, no sight, no reason, no intellect; they rely solely upon tradition. Such persons imagine that the dominion of God is an accidental dominion or kingdom.

For instance they believe that this world of existence was created six or seven thousand years ago; as if God did not reign before that time and had no creation before that period. They think that divinity is accidental, for to them divinity is dependent upon existing things whereas in reality as long as there has been a God there has been a creation. As long as there has been light, there have been recipients of that light, for light cannot become manifest unless those things which perceive and appreciate it exist. The world of divinity presupposes creation, presupposes recipients of bounty, presupposes the existence of worlds. No divinity can be conceived as separate from creation, for otherwise it would be like imagining an

empire without a people. A king must needs have a kingdom, must needs have an army and subjects. Is it possible to be a king and have no country, no army, no subjects? This is an absurdity. If we say that there was a time when there was no country, no army and no subjects, how then could there have been a king and ruler? For these things are essential to a king.

Consequently just as the reality of divinity never had a beginning, -- that is, God has ever been a creator, God has ever been a provider, God has ever been a quickener, God has ever been a bestower, -- so there never has been a time when the attributes of God have not had expression. The sun is the sun because of its rays, because of its heat. Were we to conceive of a time when there was a sun without heat and light, it would imply that there had been no sun at all and that it became the sun afterward. So likewise if we say there was a time when God had no creation or created beings, a time when there were no recipients of His bounties and that His names and attributes had not been manifested, this would be equivalent to a complete denial of divinity, for it would mean that divinity is accidental. To explain it still more clearly, if we think that fifty thousand years ago or one hundred thousand years ago there was no creation, that there were then no worlds, no human beings, no animals, this thought of ours would mean that previous to that period there was no divinity. If we should say that there was a time when there was a king but there were no subjects, no army, no country for him to rule over, it would really be asserting that there was a time when no king existed and that the king is accidental. It is therefore evident that inasmuch as the reality of divinity is without a beginning, creation is also without a beginning. This is as clear as the sun. When we contemplate this vast machinery of omnipresent power, perceive this illimitable space and its innumerable worlds it will become evident to us that the lifetime of this infinite creation is more than six thousand years; nay, it is very, very ancient.

Notwithstanding this, we read in Genesis in the Old Testament that the lifetime of creation is but six thousand years.

This has an inner meaning and significance; it is not to be taken literally. For instance it is said in the Old Testament that certain things were created in the first day. The narrative shows that at that time the sun was not yet created. How could we conceive of a day if no sun existed in the heavens; for the day depends upon the light of the sun? Inasmuch as the sun had not been made, how could the first day be realized? Therefore these statements have significances other than literal.

To be brief; our purpose is to show that the divine sovereignty, the Kingdom of God, is an ancient sovereignty; that it is not an accidental sovereignty; just as a kingdom presupposes the existence of subjects, of an army, of a country; for otherwise the state of dominion, authority and kingdom cannot be conceived of. Therefore if we should imagine that the creation is accidental we would be forced to admit that the creator is accidental whereas the divine bounty is ever flowing and the rays of the Sun of Truth are continuously shining. No cessation is possible to the divine bounty, just as no cessation is possible to the rays of the sun. This is clear and obvious.

Thus there have been many holy Manifestations of God. One thousand years ago, two hundred thousand years ago, one million years ago the bounty of God was flowing, the radiance of God was shining, the dominion of God was existing.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 108)

"We Bahá'ís do not believe in Genesis literally. We know this world was not created in seven days, or six, or eight, but evolved gradually over a period of millions of years, as science, has proved. As to where the idea of a seven-day week originated, it is certainly very ancient and you should refer to scholars for an answer." (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 28, 1949)

(*Compilations, Lights of Guidance*, p. 493)

"In the book of Genesis 1:26- This passage simply means that there is a spark of divinity in man, and not that man is co-equal with the Manifestation of God. Again the friends should

avoid literal interpretations of the Bible.” (***Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 493***)

“The years of Noah are not years as we count them, and as our teachings do not state that this reference to year means His dispensation we cannot interpret it this way.”

“We have no way substantiating the stories of the Old Testament other than references to them in our teachings, so we cannot say exactly what happened at the battle of Jericho.”

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 25, 1950)

(Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 494)

The spiritual evolution of man from his First Birth in Genesis to his Second Birth in the Apocalypse is revealed as being likewise carried through by stages, in a series of separate periods, each complete in itself and each following the same pattern.

The Bible does not state what is meant by the word ‘Day’¹, beyond a clear indication that it had not a literal but a symbolic meaning; for the sun which makes the material day was not created till the fourth of these periods. But it gives a clear account of the division of the evolutionary movement into great Eras, all having certain characteristics the same and having definite epochs and moments of crisis. These Eras are generally known as Dispensations, but they are sometimes spoken of in Scripture by the same name as the Days of creation.

‘Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day,’ said Jesus², referring to His Dispensation. And the time of the end, the time when all things are made new and the Father and the Lamb come to dwell among men is often called the Day of the Lord, meaning the Day when Christ shall reign in the Glory of the Lord God.³

1 Gen 1:3,5

2 John 8:56

3 Matt 16:27

The comparison of Christ's Dispensation to a Day is evidently appropriate because He likened Himself to the sun. 'I am the light of the world,' He said¹ Everything was, save for His illumination, in darkness; and those who believed in Him became children of the light, able to reflect on others the light they gained from Him, their Sun.

The time of the Second Advent is, for the same reason, fitly likened to a Day, for the Father and the Son give it light. 'The city had no need of the sun.'² Besides the Dispensation of Christ and that which is to follow His Second Advent in the power of the Father, there are definitely referred to in Scripture three other Dispensations. One is that of Moses, which is narrated from its beginning to its close. Another is that of Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, which is briefly and distinctly sketched. The third is that of Noah. Christ compared the phenomena of Noah's Advent to those which would occur at the future time of His own Second Advent: 'As it was in the days of Noe.'³

(George Townshend, *The Heart of the Gospel*, p. 47)

The Bahá'í teachings assert that Adam was a Prophet of God and that He inaugurated the Adamic, or prophetic cycle⁴ that ended with the advent of the Báb⁵ and that is followed by the cycle of fulfilment Bahá'u'lláh inaugurated.

Shoghi Effendi explains that "The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh should indeed be regarded, if we wish to be faithful to the tremendous implications of its message, as the culmination of a cycle, the final stage in a series of successive, of preliminary

1 John 8:12

2 Rev 21:23

3 Matt 24:37

4 A unit of time comprising the Dispensations of numerous consecutive Manifestations of God. For example, the Adamic or Prophetic Cycle, began with Adam and ended with the Dispensation of Muhammad. The Bahá'í Cycle began with the Báb and is to last at least five hundred thousand years. (*The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 to 1986*, p. 737)

5 The Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh

and progressive revelations. These, beginning with Adam and ending with the Báb, have paved the way and anticipated with an ever-increasing emphasis the advent of that Day of Days in which He Who is the Promise of All Ages should be made manifest"

(World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 103)

(The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 to 1986, p. 31)

Our Exalted Lord said that a great Manifestation appears on the earth every 500,000 years. The difference between a great Manifestation and a lesser One, is as that between the sun and the planets. The 7th "day" of Genesis, 1st chapter, refers to the Great Manifestation.

(Compilations, Baha'i Prayers 9, p. 50)

Concentration on this theme will enable us all to obtain a deeper appreciation of the meaning and purpose of His Revelation -- "A Revelation," in the words of the Guardian, "hailed as the promise and crowning glory of past ages and centuries, as the consummation of all the Dispensations within the Adamic Cycle, inaugurating an era of at least a thousand years' duration, and a cycle destined to last no less than five thousand centuries, signaling the end of the Prophetic Era and the beginning of the Era of Fulfilment, unsurpassed alike in the duration of its Author's ministry and the fecundity and splendour of His mission...".

(Ridvan Messages of the Universal House of Justice, Ridvan 144, 1987)

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:8)

Thus, it may be perceived that 'the 6 Days' in Genesis(1:1-31) had prophesied 'the 6000 years Adamic', or 'prophetic cycle'. And 'the 1000 years' of 'Christ's reign', in 'the glory of the Father', on 'the Seventh Day' -- **(Gen 2:1-4; Matt 16:27; Matt 6:10; Rev 20:4)**

A similar account may be observed in the Qur'án, knowing that it has been said: "Verily a Day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning." (**Qur'án 22:47**)

Thus, as in the Genesis, 'the 6 Days' in Qur'án(Surah 7:54; 32:4) prophesied 'the 6000 years Adamic Cycle'. The establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, and 'the 1000 years' of 'Christ's reign (the Spirit)', on 'the Seventh Day' -- "The Day that the Spirit and the angels will stand forth in ranks." (**Qur'án 78:38**)

The Kingdom of God 'firmly established on the Throne (of Authority)' (Qur'án 7:54;32:4), with Muhammad being 'the Seal of the Prophets' -- that is to say, 'the Seal' of 'the 6000 years Prophetic Cycle', according to Qur'án (33:40):

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things."

LET THERE BE LIGHT

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Gen 1:1-3)

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12)

"Praise be to Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, and made the darkness and the light." (Qur'an 6:1-3)

"By the Night as it conceals (the light); By the Day as it appears in glory;" (Qur'an 92:1-2)

"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a lamp: the Lamp enclosed in Glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star: lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the East nor of the West, whose Oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light. Allah doth set forth Parables for men: and Allah doth know all things. (Lit is such a light) in houses, which Allah hath permitted to be raised to honor; for the celebration, in them of His name: in them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings, (again and again)" (Qur'an 24:35-36)

"To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: When He decreeth a matter, He saith to it: 'Be,' and it is." (Qur'an 2:117)

"He is the One Who Sends to His Servants manifest Signs, that He may lead you from the depths of Darkness into the Light. And verily, Allah is to you Most Kind and Merciful." (Qur'an 57:9)

"A Book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light -- by the leave of their Lord -- to the Way of (Him) Exalted in Power, Worthy of all Praise!" (Qur'an 14:1)

"O mankind! verily there hath come to you a convincing proof from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light (that is) manifest. Then those who believe in Allah, and hold fast to Him, soon will He admit them to Mercy and Grace from Him, and guide them to Himself by a straight Way." (Qur'an 4:174-175)

"Seeing that it is He that has created you in diverse stages? 'See ye not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another, 'And made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a (Glorious) Lamp?'" (Qur'an 71:14-16)

"Believe, therefore, in Allah and His Messenger, and in the Light which We have sent down. And Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do." (Qur'an 64:8)

As to the light thou dost witness: It is not an earthly light (phenomenal); nay, rather, it is a heavenly light. It cannot be seen by the sight; nay, rather, it is perceived by the insight.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 191)

Consider how all other phenomenal existence and beings are captives of nature. The sun, that colossal center of our solar system, the giant stars and planets, the towering mountains, the earth itself and its kingdoms of life lower than the human, -- all are captives of nature except man.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 236)

...in the spiritual realm of intelligence and idealism there must be a center of illumination, and that center is the everlasting, ever-shining Sun, the Word of God. Its lights are the lights of reality which have shone upon humanity, illumining the realm of thought and morals, conferring the bounties of the divine world upon man. These lights are the cause of the education of souls and the source of the enlightenment of hearts, sending forth in effulgent radiance the message of the glad-tidings of the kingdom of God. In brief, the moral and ethical world and the world of spiritual regeneration are dependent for their progressive being upon that heavenly center of illumination. It gives forth the light of religion and bestows the life of the spirit, imbues humanity with archetypal virtues and confers eternal splendors. This Sun of Reality, this center of effulgences is the prophet or Manifestation of God. Just as the phenomenal sun shines upon the material world producing life and growth, likewise the spiritual or prophetic Sun confers

illumination upon the human world of thought and intelligence, and unless it rose upon the horizon of human existence the kingdom of man would become dark and extinguished.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 254)

Each religion teaches that a mediator is necessary between man and the Creator -- one who receives the full light of the divine splendor and radiates it over the human world, as the earth's atmosphere receives and diffuses the warmth of the sun's rays. This mediator between God and humanity has different designations though he always brings the same spiritual command.

In one era he is called Abraham, at another time Moses, again he is called Buddha, another time Jesus, and yet another time Mohammad. All turned to the divine reality for their strength. Those who followed Moses accepted him as their mediator; those who followed Zoroaster accepted him as their mediator; but all the Israelites deny Zoroaster, and the Zoroastrians deny Moses. They fail to see in both the one light. Had the Zoroastrians comprehended the reality of Zoroaster, they would have understood Moses and Jesus. Alas! the majority of men attach themselves to the name of the mediator and lose sight of the real purport. Therefore did Bahá'u'lláh cry, "O God, deliver us from the sea of names!"

Man must turn to the light and not think that the form of the lamp is essential, for the lamp may be changed; but he who longs for light welcomes it from whatever source it comes. If the Jews had comprehended Moses, they would have accepted the Christ; but they were occupied with the name and when that name was changed they denied the reality.

It is the same with the Christians. What a pity that they are worshipping a title! They see only the garment. If one recognizes a king by his garments, one would not know him were he to clothe himself differently.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 32)

Holy souls are like soil which has been plowed and tilled with much earnest labor; the thorns and thistles cast aside and all weeds uprooted. Such soil is most fruitful and the harvest from it will prove full and plenteous. In this same way man must free himself from the weeds of ignorance, thorns of superstitions and thistles of imitations, that he may discover reality in the harvests of true knowledge. Otherwise the discovery of reality is impossible, contention and divergence of religious belief will always remain and mankind, like ferocious wolves will rage and attack each other in hatred and antagonism. We supplicate God that He may destroy the veils which limit our vision and that these becloudings which darken the way of the manifestation of the shining lights may be dispelled in order that the effulgent Sun of Reality may shine forth. We implore and invoke God, seeking His assistance and confirmation. Man is a child of God; most noble, lofty and beloved by God his creator. Therefore he must ever strive that the divine bounties and virtues bestowed upon him may prevail and control him. Just now the soil of human hearts seems like black earth, but in the innermost substance of this dark soil there are thousands of fragrant flowers latent. We must endeavor to cultivate and awaken these potentialities, discover the secret treasure in this very mine and depository of God, bring forth these resplendent powers long hidden in human hearts. Then will the glories of both worlds be blended and increased and the quintessence of human existence be made manifest.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Foundations of World Unity, p. 76)

...the evil spirit, Satan or whatever is interpreted as evil, refers to the lower nature in man. This baser nature is symbolized in various ways. In man there are two expressions, one is the expression of nature, the other the expression of the spiritual realm. The world of nature is defective. Look at it clearly, casting aside all superstition and imagination. If you should leave a man uneducated and barbarous in the wilds of Africa, would there be any doubt about his remaining ignorant? God has never created an evil spirit; all such ideas and nomenclature are symbols expressing the mere human or earthly nature of man. It is an essential condition of the soil of earth that thorns, weeds and fruitless trees may grow from

it. Relatively speaking, this is evil; it is simply the lower state and baser product of nature.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 77)

By the terms "sun" and "moon," mentioned in the writings of the Prophets of God, is not meant solely the sun and moon of the visible universe. Nay rather, manifold are the meanings they have intended for these terms. In every instance they have attached to them a particular significance. Thus, by the "sun" in one sense is meant those Suns of Truth Who rise from the dayspring of ancient glory, and fill the world with a liberal effusion of grace from on high. These Suns of Truth are the universal Manifestations of God in the worlds of His attributes and names, even as the visible sun that assisteth, as decreed by God, the true One, the Adored, in the development of all earthly things, such as the trees, the fruits, and colours thereof, the minerals of the earth, and all that may be witnessed in the world of creation, so do the divine Luminaries, by their loving care and educative influence, cause the trees of divine unity, the fruits of His oneness, the leaves of detachment, the blossoms of knowledge and certitude, and the myrtles of wisdom and utterance, to exist and be made manifest. Thus it is that through the rise of these Luminaries of God the world is made new, the waters of everlasting life stream forth, the billows of loving-kindness surge, the clouds of grace are gathered, and the breeze of bounty bloweth upon all created things. It is the warmth that these Luminaries of God generate, and the undying fires they kindle, which cause the light of the love of God to burn fiercely in the heart of humanity. It is through the abundant grace of these Symbols of Detachment that the Spirit of life everlasting is breathed into the bodies of the dead. Assuredly the visible sun is but a sign of the splendour of that Day-star of Truth, that Sun Which can never have a peer, a likeness, or rival. Through Him all things live, move, and have their being. Through His grace they are made manifest, and unto Him they all return. From Him all things have sprung, and unto the treasures of His revelation they all have repaired. From Him all created things did proceed, and to the depositories of His law they did revert.

(Baha'u'llah: *The Kitab-i-Iqan*, Pages: 33-34)

Know of a certainty that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation hath been vouchsafed unto men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity. Consider the sun. How feeble its rays the moment it appeareth above the horizon. How gradually its warmth and potency increase as it approacheth its zenith, enabling meanwhile all created things to adapt themselves to the growing intensity of its light. How steadily it declineth until it reacheth its setting point. Were it, all of a sudden, to manifest the energies latent within it, it would, no doubt, cause injury to all created things.... In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to reveal, at the earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty hath bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light. Dismayed and overpowered, they would cease to exist.

(Bahá'u'lláh: Gleanings, Pages: 87-88)

Know that the attributes of perfection, the splendor of the divine bounties, and the lights of inspiration are visible and evident in all the Holy Manifestations; but the glorious Word of God, Christ, and the Greatest Name, Bahá'u'lláh, are manifestations and evidences which are beyond imagination, for They possess all the perfections of the former Manifestations; and more than that, They possess some perfections which make the other Manifestations dependent upon Them. So all the Prophets of Israel were centers of inspiration; Christ also was a receiver of inspiration, but what a difference between the inspiration of the Word of God and the revelations of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Elijah!

Reflect that light is the expression of the vibrations of the etheric matter: the nerves of the eye are affected by these vibrations, and sight is produced. The light of the lamp exists through the vibration of the etheric matter; so also does that of the sun, but what a difference between the light of the sun and that of the stars or the lamp!

The spirit of man appears and is manifest in the embryonic condition, and also in that of childhood and of maturity, and it is resplendent and evident in the condition of perfection. The spirit is one, but in the embryonic condition the power of sight and of hearing is lacking. In the state of maturity and perfection it appears in the utmost splendor and brilliance. In the same way the seed in the beginning becomes leaves and is the place where the vegetable spirit appears; in the condition of fruit it manifests the same spirit -- that is to say, the power of growth appears in the utmost perfection; but what a difference between the condition of the leaves and that of the fruit! For from the fruit a hundred thousand leaves appear, though they all grow and develop through the same vegetable spirit. Notice the difference between the virtues and perfections of Christ, the splendors and brilliance of Bahá'u'lláh, and the virtues of the Prophets of Israel, such as Ezekiel or Samuel. All were the manifestations of inspiration, but between them there is an infinite difference. Salutations!

(Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, p. 150)

Question - What is the degree of the power and the perfections of the Thrones of Reality, the Manifestations of God, and what is the limit of Their influence?

Answer - Consider the world of existence - that is to say, the world of material things. The solar system is dark and obscure, and in it the sun is the center of light, and all the planets of the system revolve around its might and are partakers of its bounty. The sun is the cause of life and illumination, and the means of the growth and development of all the beings of the solar system; for without the bounty of the sun no living being could exist: all would be dark and destroyed. Therefore, it is evident and clear that the sun is the center of light and the cause of the life of the beings of the solar system.

In like manner, the Holy Manifestations of God are the centers of the light of reality, of the source of mysteries, and of the bounties of love. They are resplendent in the world of hearts and thoughts, and shower eternal graces upon the world of spirits; They give spiritual life and are shining with the light of realities and meanings. The enlightenment of the world

of thought comes from these centers of light and sources of mysteries. Without the bounty of the splendor and the instructions of these Holy Beings the world of souls and thoughts would be opaque darkness. Without the irrefutable teachings of those sources of mysteries the human world would become the pasture of animal appetites and qualities, the existence of everything would be unreal, and there would be no true life. That is why it is said in the Gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word,' meaning that it became the cause of all life.¹

Now consider the influence of the sun upon the earthly beings, what signs and results become evident and clear from its nearness and remoteness, from its rising or its setting. At one time it is autumn, at another time spring; or again it is summer or winter. When the sun passes the line of the equator, the life-giving spring will become manifest in splendor, and when it is in the summer solstice, the fruits will attain to the acme of perfection, grains and plants will yield their produce, and earthly beings will attain their most complete development and growth.

In like manner, when the Holy Manifestation of God, Who is the sun of the world of His creation, shines upon the worlds of spirits, of thoughts and of hearts, then the spiritual spring and new life appear, the power of the wonderful springtime becomes visible, and marvelous benefits are apparent. As you have observed, at the time of the appearance of each Manifestation of God extraordinary progress has occurred in the world of minds, thoughts and spirits. For example, in this divine age see what development has been attained in the world of minds and thoughts, and it is now only the beginning of its dawn. Before long you will see that new bounties and divine teachings will illuminate this dark world and will transform these sad regions into the paradise of Eden.

If we were to explain the signs and bounties of each of the Holy Manifestations, it would take too long. Think and reflect

1 John 1:1

upon it yourself, and then you will attain to the truth of this subject.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 162-163)

As to thy question concerning the origin of creation. Know assuredly that God's creation hath existed from eternity, and will continue to exist forever. Its beginning hath had no beginning, and its end knoweth no end. His name, the Creator, presupposeth a creation, even as His title, the Lord of Men, must involve the existence of a servant. As to those sayings, attributed to the Prophets of old, such as, 'In the beginning was God; there was no creature to know Him,' and 'The Lord was alone; with no one to adore Him,' the meaning of these and similar sayings is clear and evident, and should at no time be misapprehended. To this same truth bear witness these words which He hath revealed: 'God was alone; there was none else besides Him. He will always remain what He hath ever been.' Every discerning eye will readily perceive that the Lord is now manifest, yet there is none to recognize His glory. By this is meant that the habitation wherein the Divine Being dwelleth is far above the reach and ken of any one besides Him. Whatsoever in the contingent world can either be expressed or apprehended, can never transgress the limits which, by its inherent nature, have been imposed upon it. God, alone, transcendeth such limitations. He, verily, is from everlasting.

No peer or partner has been, or can ever be, joined with Him. No name can be compared with His Name. No pen can portray His nature, neither can any tongue depict His glory. He will, for ever, remain immeasurably exalted above any one except Himself.

Consider the hour at which the supreme Manifestation of God revealeth Himself unto men. Ere that hour cometh, the Ancient Being, Who is still unknown of men and hath not as yet given utterance to the Word of God, is Himself the All-Knower in a world devoid of any man that hath known Him. He is indeed the Creator without a creation. For at the very moment preceding His Revelation, each and every created thing shall

be made to yield up its soul to God. This is indeed the Day of which it hath been written: 'Whose shall be the Kingdom this Day?' And none can be found ready to answer!"

(Baha'u'llah: *Gleanings*, Pages: 150-151)

To every discerning and illumined heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the divine Being, is immensely exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress. Far be it from His glory that human tongue should adequately recount His praise, or that human heart comprehend His fathomless mystery. He is and hath ever been veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence, and will remain in His Reality everlastingly hidden from the sight of men. "No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision; He is the Subtile, the All Perceiving."¹ No tie of direct intercourse can possibly bind Him to His creatures. He standeth exalted beyond and above all separation and union, all proximity and remoteness. No sign can indicate His presence or His absence; inasmuch as by a word of His command all that are in heaven and on earth have come to exist, and by His wish, which is the Primal Will itself, all have stepped out of utter nothingness into the realm of being, the world of the visible.

Gracious God! How could there be conceived any existing relationship or possible connection between His Word and they that are created of it? The verse: "God would have you beware of Himself"² unmistakably beareth witness to the reality of Our argument, and the words: "God was alone; there was none else besides Him" are a sure testimony of its truth. All the Prophets of God and their chosen Ones, all the divines, the sages, and the wise of every generation, unanimously recognize their inability to attain unto the comprehension of that Quintessence of all truth, and confess their incapacity to grasp Him, Who is the inmost Reality of all things.

1 *Qur'an* 6:103

2 *Qur'an* 3:28

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, the Source of infinite grace, according to His saying: "His grace hath transcended all things; My grace hath encompassed them all" hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being, and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence. These sanctified Mirrors, these Day-springs of ancient glory are one and all the Exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its Essence and ultimate Purpose. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty. The beauty of their countenance is but a reflection of His image, and their revelation a sign of His deathless glory. They are the Treasuries of divine knowledge, and the Repositories of celestial wisdom. Through them is transmitted a grace that is infinite, and by them is revealed the light that can never fade. Even as He hath said: "There is no distinction whatsoever between Thee and them; except that they are Thy servants, and are created of Thee." This is the significance of the tradition: "I am He, Himself, and He is I, myself."

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 98-100)

THE PERFECT MAN

The beginning of the existence of man on the terrestrial globe resembles his formation in the womb of the mother. The embryo in the womb of the mother gradually grows and develops until birth, after which it continues to grow and develop until it reaches the age of discretion and maturity. Though in infancy the signs of the mind and spirit appear in man, they do not reach the degree of perfection; they are imperfect. Only when man attains maturity do the mind and the spirit appear and become evident in utmost perfection.

So also the formation of man in the matrix of the world was in the beginning like the embryo; then gradually he made progress in perfection, and grew and developed until he reached

the state of maturity, when the mind and spirit became visible in the greatest power. In the beginning of his formation the mind and spirit also existed, but they were hidden; later they were manifested. In the womb of the world mind and spirit also existed in the embryo, but they were concealed; afterwards they appeared. So it is that in the seed the tree exists, but it is hidden and concealed; when it develops and grows, the complete tree appears. In the same way the growth and development of all beings is gradual; this is the universal divine organization, and the natural system. The seed does not at once become a tree, the embryo does not at once become a man, the mineral does not suddenly become a stone. No, they grow and develop gradually, and attain the limit of perfection.

All beings, whether large or small, were created perfect and complete from the first, but their perfections appear in them by degrees. The organization of God is one: the evolution of existence is one: the divine system is one. Whether they be small or great beings, all are subject to one law and system. Each seed has in it from the first all the vegetable perfections. For example, in the seed all the vegetable perfections exist from the beginning, but not visibly; afterwards little by little they appear. So it is first the shoot which appears from the seed, then the branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruits; but from the beginning of its existence all these things are in the seed, potentially, though not apparently.

In the same way, the embryo possesses from the first all perfections, such as the spirit, the mind, the sight, the smell, the taste -- in one word, all the powers -- but they are not visible, and become so only by degrees.

Similarly, the terrestrial globe from the beginning was created with all its elements, substances, minerals, atoms, and organisms; but these only appeared by degrees: first the mineral, then the plant, afterward the animal, and finally man. But from the first these kinds and species existed, but were undeveloped in the terrestrial globe, and then appeared only gradually. For the supreme organization of God, and the uni-

versal natural system, surrounds all beings, and all are subject to this rule. When you consider this universal system, you see that there is not one of the beings, which at its coming into existence has reached the limit of perfection. No, they gradually grow and develop, and then attain the degree of perfection.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 312)

We have many times demonstrated and established that man is the noblest of beings, the sum of all perfections, and that all beings and all existences are the centers from which the glory of God is reflected, that is to say, the signs of the Divinity of God are apparent in the realities of things and of creatures. Just as the terrestrial globe is the place where the rays of the sun are reflected -- as its light, its heat, and its influence are apparent and visible in all the atoms of the earth -- so, in the same way, the atoms of beings, in this infinite space, proclaim and prove one of the divine perfections. Nothing is deprived of this benefit; it is either a sign of the mercy of God or it is a sign of His power, His greatness, His justice, His lordship which imparts education; or it is a sign of the generosity of God, His vision, His hearing, His knowledge, His grace, and so on.

Without doubt each being is the center of the shining forth of the glory of God: that is to say, the perfections of God appear from it and are resplendent in it. It is like the sun, which is resplendent in the desert, upon the sea, in the trees, in the fruits and blossoms, and in all earthly things. The world, indeed each existing being, proclaims to us one of the names of God, but the reality of man is the collective reality, the general reality, and is the center where the glory of all the perfections of God shine forth. That is to say, for each name, each attribute, each perfection which we affirm of God, there exists a sign in man; if it were otherwise, man could not imagine these perfections, and could not understand them. So we say that God is the seer, and the eye is the sign of His vision; if this sight were not in man, how could we imagine the vision of God? for the blind, that is one born blind, cannot imagine sight; and the

deaf, that is one deaf from birth, cannot imagine hearing; and the dead cannot realize life. Consequently the Divinity of God, which is the sum of all perfections, reflects itself in the reality of man; that is to say, the Essence of Oneness is the gathering of all perfections, and from this unity He casts a reflection upon the human reality. Man then is the perfect mirror facing the Sun of Truth, and is the center of radiation: the Sun of Truth shines in this mirror. The reflection of the divine perfections appears in the reality of man, so he is the representative of God, the messenger of God. If man did not exist, the universe would be without result, for the object of existence is the appearance of the perfections of God.

Therefore it cannot be said there was a time when man was not. All that we can say is that this terrestrial globe at one time did not exist, and at its beginning man did not appear upon it. But from the beginning which has no beginning, to the end which has no end, a perfect manifestation always exists. This man of whom we speak is not every man; we mean the perfect man. For the noblest part of the tree is the fruit, which is the reason of its existence; if the tree had no fruit, it would have no meaning. Therefore it cannot be imagined that the worlds of existence, whether the stars or this earth, were once inhabited by the donkey, cow, mouse, and cat, and that they were without man! This supposition is false and meaningless. The word of God is clear as the sun. This is a spiritual proof, but one which we cannot at the beginning put forth for the benefit of the materialists; first we must speak of the logical proofs, afterwards the spiritual proofs.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 311)

...the perfect man, the Prophet, is one who is transfigured, one who has the purity and clearness of a perfect mirror -- one who reflects the Sun of Truth. Of such a one -- of such a Prophet and Messenger -- we can say that the Light of Divinity with the heavenly Perfections dwells in him.

If we claim that the sun is seen in the mirror, we do not mean that the sun itself has descended from the holy heights

of his heaven and entered into the mirror! This is impossible. The Divine Nature is seen in the Manifestations and its Light and Splendor are visible in extreme glory.

Therefore, men have always been taught and led by the Prophets of God. The Prophets of God are the Mediators of God. All the Prophets and Messengers have come from One Holy Spirit and bear the Message of God, fitted to the age in which they appear. The One Light is in them and they are One with each other. But the Eternal does not become phenomenal; neither can the phenomenal become Eternal. Saint Paul, the great Apostle, said: "We all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of God, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." (**2 Corinthians 3:18**)
(Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 23)

All the Prophets of God and their chosen Ones, all the divines, the sages, and the wise of every generation, unanimously recognize their inability to attain unto the comprehension of that Quintessence of all truth, and confess their incapacity to grasp Him, Who is the inmost Reality of all things.

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, the Source of infinite grace, according to His saying: "His grace hath transcended all things; My grace hath encompassed them all" hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being, and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence. These sanctified Mirrors, these Day-springs of ancient glory are one and all the Exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its Essence and ultimate Purpose. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty. The beauty of their countenance is but a reflection of His image, and their revelation a sign of His deathless glory. They are the Treasuries of divine knowledge, and the Repositories of celestial wisdom. Through them is transmitted a grace that is infinite, and by them is revealed the light that

can never fade. Even as He hath said: "There is no distinction whatsoever between Thee and them; except that they are Thy servants, and are created of Thee." This is the significance of the tradition: "I am He, Himself, and He is I, myself."

(Baha'u'llah: *The Kitab-i-Iqan*, Pages: 99-100)

...the divine unity or entity...is sanctified above all concept of humanity. It cannot be comprehended nor conceived because it is infinite reality and cannot become finite. Human minds are incapable of surrounding that reality because all thoughts and conceptions of it are finite, intellectual creations and not the reality of divine being which alone knows itself. For example, if we form a conception of divinity as a living, almighty, self-subsisting, eternal being, this is only a concept apprehended by a human intellectual reality. It would not be the outward, visible reality which is beyond the power of human mind to conceive or encompass. We ourselves have an external, visible entity but even our concept of it is the product of our own brain and limited comprehension. The reality of divinity is sanctified above this degree of knowing and realization. It has ever been hidden and secluded in its own holiness and sanctity above our comprehending. Although it transcends our realization, its light, bestowals, traces and virtues have become manifest in the realities of the prophets, even as the sun becomes resplendent in various mirrors. These holy realities are as reflectors, and the reality of divinity is as the sun which although it is reflected from the mirrors, and its virtues and perfections become resplendent therein, does not stoop from its own station of majesty and glory and seek abode in the mirrors; it remains in its heaven of sanctity. At most it is this, that its lights become manifest and evident in its mirrors or manifestations. Therefore its bounty proceeding from them is one bounty but the recipients of that bounty are many. This is the unity of God; this is oneness; -- unity of divinity, holy above ascent or descent, embodiment, comprehension or idealization; -- divine unity. The prophets are its mirrors; its lights are revealed through them; its virtues become resplendent in them, but the Sun of Reality ever descends from its own highest point and station. This is unity, oneness, sanctity; this is

glorification whereby we praise and adore God. (*Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 259*)

Is the Divine Manifestation, God?

Yes, and yet not in Essence. A Divine Manifestation is as a mirror reflecting the light of the Sun. The light is the same and yet the mirror is not the Sun. All the Manifestations of God bring the same Light; they only differ in degree, not in reality. The Truth is one. The light is the same though the lamps may be different; we must look at the Light not at the Lamp. If we accept the Light in one, we must accept the Light in all; all agree, because all are the same. The teaching is ever the same, it is only the outward forms that change.

The Manifestations of God are as the heavenly bodies. All have their appointed place and time of ascension, but the Light they give is the same. if one wishes to look for the sun rising, one does not look always at the same point because that point changes with the seasons. When one sees the sun rise further in the north one recognizes it, though it has risen at a different point.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 66)

Souls are like unto mirrors, and the bounty of God is like unto the sun. When the mirrors pass beyond all coloring and attain purity and polish, and are confronted with the sun, they will reflect in full perfection its light and glory. In this condition one should not consider the mirror, but the power of the light of the sun, which hath penetrated the mirror, making it a reflector of the heavenly glory.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 367)

To man, the Essence of God is incomprehensible, so also are the worlds beyond this, and their condition. It is given to man to obtain knowledge, to attain to great spiritual perfection, to discover hidden truths and to manifest even the attributes of God; but still man cannot comprehend the Essence of God. Where the ever-widening circle of man's knowledge meets the spiritual world a Manifestation of God is sent to mir-

ror forth His splendour. (*Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 66*)

The human spirit which distinguishes man from the animal is the rational soul; and these two names -- the human spirit and the rational soul -- designate one thing. This spirit, which in the terminology of the philosophers is the rational soul, embraces all beings, and as far as human ability permits discovers the realities of things and becomes cognizant of their peculiarities and effects, and of the qualities and properties of beings. But the human spirit, unless assisted by the spirit of faith, does not become acquainted with the divine secrets and the heavenly realities. It is like a mirror which, although clear, polished, and brilliant, is still in need of light. Until a ray of the sun reflects upon it, it cannot discover the heavenly secrets.

But the mind is the power of the human spirit. Spirit is the lamp; mind is the light which shines from the lamp. Spirit is the tree, and the mind is the fruit. Mind is the perfection of the spirit, and is its essential quality, as the sun's rays are the essential necessity of the sun.

(*Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 316*)

The more the world of humanity develops, the more the effulgences or emanations of divinity will become revealed, just as the stone when it becomes polished and pure as a mirror will reflect in fuller degree the glory and splendor of the sun.

(*Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 6*)

The world's great Light, once resplendent upon all mankind, has set to shine everlastingly from the Abha horizon, His Kingdom of fadeless glory, shedding splendor upon His loved ones from on high, and breathing into their hearts and souls the breath of eternal life.

(*Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 349*)

The mission of the prophets, the revelation of the holy books, the manifestation of the heavenly teachers and the

purpose of divine philosophy all center in the training of the human realities so that they may become clear and pure as mirrors and reflect the light and love of the Sun of Reality. Therefore I hope that whether you be in the east or the west you will strive with heart and soul in order that day by day the world of humanity may become glorified, more spiritual, more sanctified; and that the splendor of the Sun of Reality may be revealed fully in human hearts as in a mirror. This is worthy of the world of mankind. This is the true evolution and progress of humanity. This is the supreme bestowal. Otherwise, by simple development along material lines man is not perfected. At most, the physical aspect of man, his natural or material conditions may become stabilized and improved but he will remain deprived of the spiritual or divine bestowal. He is then like a body without a spirit, a lamp without the light, an eye without the power of vision, an ear that hears no sound, a mind incapable of perceiving, an intellect minus the power of reason.

Man has two powers, and his development two aspects. One power is connected with the material world and by it he is capable of material advancement. The other power is spiritual and through its development his inner, potential nature is awakened. These powers are like two wings. Both must be developed, for flight is impossible with one wing. Praise be to God! material advancement has been evident in the world but there is need of spiritual advancement in like proportion. We must strive unceasingly and without rest to accomplish the development of the spiritual nature in man, and endeavor with tireless energy to advance humanity toward the nobility of its true and intended station. For the body of man is accidental; it is of no importance. The time of its disintegration will inevitably come. But the spirit of man is essential and therefore eternal. It is a divine bounty. It is the effulgence of the Sun of Reality and therefore of greater importance than the physical body.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 262)

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was addressed by the name of prophet, he answered, "My name is 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Servant of God" [literally, the Slave of Glory.]¹

(Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 109)

THE EMBODIMENTS OF TRUTH

"Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." (Jeremiah 1:4-7)

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:12-14)

1 Compare: -- "My Name is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My Reality is 'Abdu'l-Bahá: and Service to all the human race is my perpetual Religion.... 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Banner of the Most Great Peace ...The Herald of the Kingdom is he, so that he may awaken the people of the East and the West. The Voice of Friendship, of Truth, and of Reconciliation is he, quickening all regions. No name, no title will he ever have, except 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This is my longing. This is my Supreme height. O ye friends of God! 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the manifestation of Service, and not Christ. The Servant of humanity is he, and not a chief. Summon ye the people to the station of Service of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and not his Christhood." (From a letter sent to the friends in New York, January 1st, 1907.)

"They say: 'Allah hath begotten a son;' Glory be to Him. Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth; everything renders worship to Him." **(Qur'án 2:116)**

"And the messengers whom We sent before thee were all (men) who ate food and walked through the streets:" **(Qur'an 25:20)**

"What kept men back from Belief when Guidance came to them, was nothing but this: they said, 'Has Allah sent a man (like us) to be (His) Messenger?'" **(Qur'an 17:94)**

"Say: 'I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me, that your Allah is One Allah:'" **(Qur'an 18:110)**

"They ask thee concerning the Spirit (of inspiration). Say: 'The Spirit (cometh) by command of my Lord: of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you, (O men!)" **(Qur'an 17:85)**

"And they say: 'What! when we lie, hidden and lost, in the earth, shall we indeed be in a creation renewed?' Nay, they deny the meeting with their Lord!" **(Qur'an 32:10)**

"Verily, I am Allah: there is no god but I: so serve thou Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise." **(Qur'an 20:14)**

These ancient Beings, though delivered from the womb of their mother, have in reality descended from the heaven of the will of God. Though they be dwelling on this earth, yet their true habitations are the retreats of glory in the realms above. Whilst walking amongst mortals, they soar in the heaven of the divine presence. Without feet they tread the path of the spirit, and without wings they rise unto the exalted heights of divine unity. With every fleeting breath they cover the immen-

sity of space, and at every moment traverse the kingdoms of the visible and the invisible.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Page: 67)

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient Being hath ever been, and will continue for ever to be, closed in the face of men. No man's understanding shall ever gain access unto His holy court. As a token of His mercy, however, and as a poof of His loving-kindness, He hath manifested unto men the Day Stars of His divine guidance, the Symbols of His divin unity, and hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings to be identical with te knowledge of His ow Sef Whoso recognizeth them hath recognized God. Whoso hearkeneth to their call, hath hearkened to the Voice of God, and whoso testifieth to the truth of their Revelation, hath testified to the truth of God Himself. Whoso turneth away from them, hath turned away from God, and whoso disbelieveth in them, hath disbelieved in God. Every one of them is the Way of God that connecteth this world with the realms above, and the Standard of His Truth unto every one in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. They are the Manifestations of God amidst men, the evidences of His Truth, and the signs of His glory.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 49-50)

The Bearers of the Trust of God are made manifest unto the peoples of the earth as the Exponents of a new Cause and the Revealers of a new Message. Inasmuch as these Birds of the celestial Throne are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they, therefore, are regarded as one soul and the same person. For they all drink from the one Cup of the love of God, and all partake of the fruit of the same Tree of Oneness.

These Manifestations of God have each a twofold station. One is the station of pure abstraction and essential unity. In this respect, if thou callest them all by one name, and dost ascribe to them the same attributes, thou hast not erred from the truth. Even as He hath revealed: "No distinction do We make between any of His Messengers." For they, one and all, summon the people of the earth to acknowledge the unity of

God, and herald unto them the Kawthar of an infinite grace and bounty. They are all invested with the robe of prophethood, and are honored with the mantle of glory. Thus hath Muhammad, the Point of the Qur'an, revealed: "I am all the Prophets." Likewise, He saith: "I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus." Similar statements have been made by Imam Ali. Sayings such as these, which indicate the essential unity of those Exponents of Oneness, have also emanated from the Channels of God's immortal utterance, and the Treasuries of the gems of Divine knowledge, and have been recorded in the Scriptures. These Countenances are the recipients of the Divine Command, and the Day Springs of His Revelation. This Revelation is exalted above the veils of plurality and the exigencies of number. Thus He saith: "Our Cause is but One." Inasmuch as the Cause is one and the same, the Exponents thereof also must needs be one and the same. Likewise, the Imams of the Muhammadan Faith, those lamps of certitude, have said: "Muhammad is our first, Muhammad is our last, Muhammad our all."

It is clear and evident to thee that all the Prophets are the Temples of the Cause of God, Who have appeared clothed in divers attire. If thou wilt observe with discriminating eyes, thou wilt behold Them all abiding in the same tabernacle, soaring in the same heaven, seated upon the same throne, uttering the same speech, and proclaiming the same Faith. Such is the unity of those Essences of Being, those Luminaries of infinite and immeasurable splendor! Wherefore, should one of these Manifestations of Holiness proclaim saying: "I am the return of all the Prophets," He, verily, speaketh the truth. In like manner, in every subsequent Revelation, the return of the former Revelation is a fact, the truth of which is firmly established....

The other station is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation, and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestine revelation, and specially designated limitations. Each one of them is known by a different name, is characterized by a special attribute, fulfils a definite mission, and is entrusted with a particular

Revelation. Even as He saith: "Some of the Apostles We have caused to excel the others. To some God hath spoken, some He hath raised and exalted. And to Jesus, Son of Mary, We gave manifest signs, and We strengthened Him with the Holy Spirit."

It is because of this difference in their station and mission that the words and utterances flowing from these Well Springs of Divine knowledge appear to diverge and differ. Otherwise, in the eyes of them that are initiated into the mysteries of Divine wisdom, all their utterances are, in reality, but the expressions of one Truth. As most of the people have failed to appreciate those stations to which We have referred, they, therefore, feel perplexed and dismayed at the varying utterances pronounced by Manifestations that are essentially one and the same.

It hath ever been evident that all these divergencies of utterance are attributable to differences of station. Thus, viewed from the standpoint of their oneness and sublime detachment, the attributes of Godhead, Divinity, Supreme Singleness, and Inmost Essence, have been, and are applicable to those Essences of Being, inasmuch as they all abide on the throne of Divine Revelation, and are established upon the seat of Divine Concealment. Through their appearance the Revelation of God is made manifest, and by their countenance the Beauty of God is revealed. Thus it is that the accents of God Himself have been heard uttered by these Manifestations of the Divine Being.

Viewed in the light of their second station - the station of distinction, differentiation, temporal limitations, characteristics and standards - they manifest absolute servitude, utter destitution, and complete self-effacement. Even as He saith: "I am the servant of God. I am but a man like you."

Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: "I am God," He, verily, speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation, their attributes and names, the

Revelation of God, His names and His attributes, are made manifest in the world. Thus, He hath revealed: "Those shafts were God's, not Thine." And also He saith: "In truth, they who plighted fealty unto Thee, really plighted that fealty unto God." And were any of them to voice the utterance, "I am the Messenger of God," He, also, speaketh the truth, the indubitable truth. Even as He saith: "Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but He is the Messenger of God." Viewed in this light, they are all but Messengers of that ideal King, that unchangeable Essence. And were they all to proclaim, "I am the Seal of the Prophets," they, verily, utter but the truth, beyond the faintest shadow of doubt. For they are all but one person, one soul, one spirit, one being, one revelation. They are all the manifestation of the "Beginning" and the "End," the "First" and the "Last," the "Seen" and the "Hidden" - all of which pertain to Him Who is the Innermost Spirit of Spirits and Eternal Essence of Essences. And were they to say, "We are the Servants of God," this also is a manifest and indisputable fact. For they have been made manifest in the uttermost state of servitude, a servitude the like of which no man can possibly attain. Thus in moments in which these Essences of Being were deep immersed beneath the oceans of ancient and everlasting holiness, or when they soared to the loftiest summits of Divine mysteries, they claimed their utterances to be the Voice of Divinity, the Call of God Himself.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 50-55)

...in the verse concerning the "Spirit," He saith: "And they will ask Thee of the Spirit. Say, `the Spirit proceedeth at My Lord's command.'"¹ As soon as Muhammad's answer was given, they all clamorously protested, saying: "Lo! an ingorant man who knoweth not what the Spirit is, calleth Himself the Revealer of divine Knowledge!" And now behold the divines of the age who, because of their being honoured by is name, and finding that their fathers have acknowledge His Revelation, have blindly submitted to His truth. Observe, were this people today to receive such answers in reply to such questionings, they would unhesitatingly reject and denounce them - nay,

1 Qur'an 17:85

they would again utter the self-same cavils, even as they have uttered them in this day. All this, notwithstanding the fact that these Essences of being are immensely exalted above such fanciful images, and are immeasurably glorified beyond all these vain sayings and above the comprehension of every understanding heart. Their so-called learning, when compared with that Knowledge, is utter falsehood, and all their understanding naught but blatant error. Nay, whatsoever proceedeth from these Mines of divine Wisdom and these Treasuries of eternal knowledge is truth, and naught else but the truth. The saying: "Knowledge is one point, which the foolish have multiplied" is a proof of Our argument, and the tradition: "Knowledge is a light which God sheddeth into the heart of whomsoever He willeth" a confirmation of Our statement.

(Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 183-184)

The Bahá'í Writings contain many passages that elucidate the nature of the Manifestation and His relationship to God. Bahá'u'lláh underlines the unique and transcendent nature of the Godhead. He explains that "since there can be no tie of direct intercourse to bind the one true God with His creation" God ordains that "in every age and dispensation a pure and stainless Soul be made manifest in the kingdoms of earth and heaven". This "mysterious and ethereal Being", the Manifestation of God, has a human nature which pertains to "the world of matter" and a spiritual nature "born of the substance of God Himself". He is also endowed with a "double station":

The first station, which is related to His innermost reality, representeth Him as One Whose voice is the voice of God Himself...

The second station is the human station, exemplified by the following verses: "I am but a man like you." "Say, praise be to my Lord! Am I more than a man, an apostle?"

Bahá'u'lláh also affirms that, in the spiritual realm, there is an "essential unity" between all the Manifestations of God. They all reveal the "Beauty of God", manifest His names and attributes, and give utterance to His Revelation. In this re-

gard, He states: Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: "I am God", He, verily, speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation, their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His names and His attributes, are made manifest in the world...

While the Manifestations reveal the names and attributes of God and are the means by which humanity has access to the knowledge of God and His Revelation, Shoghi Effendi states that the Manifestations should "never ... be identified with that invisible Reality, the Essence of Divinity itself". In relation to Bahá'u'lláh, the Guardian wrote that the "human temple that has been the vehicle of so overpowering a Revelation" is not to be identified with the "Reality" of God.

Concerning the uniqueness of Bahá'u'lláh's station and the greatness of His Revelation, Shoghi Effendi affirms that the prophetic statements concerning the "Day of God", found in the Sacred Scriptures of past Dispensations, are fulfilled by the advent of Bahá'u'lláh:

To Israel He was neither more nor less than the incarnation of the "Everlasting Father", the "Lord of Hosts" come down "with ten thousands of saints; to Christendom Christ returned "in the glory of the Father"; to Shi'ah Islam the return of the Imam Husayn; to Sunni Islam the descent of the "Spirit of God (Jesus Christ); to the Zoroastrians the promised Shah-Bahram; to the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna; to the Buddhists the fifth Buddha.

Bahá'u'lláh describes the station of "Divinity" which He shares with all the Manifestations of God as... the station in which one dieth to himself and liveth in God. Divinity, whenever I mention it, indicateth My complete and absolute self-effacement. This is the station in which I have no control over mine own weal or woe nor over my life nor over my resurrection. And, regarding His own relationship to God, He testifies: When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee, I am moved to proclaim to all created things "ver-

ily I am God"; and when I consider my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!

(Baha'u'llah: Aqdas: Notes, Pages: 233-234)

There is a well-known Islamic tradition concerning God and His creation:

I was a Hidden Treasure. I wished to be made known, and thus I called creation into being in order that I might be known.

References and allusions to this tradition are found throughout the Bahá'í Writings. For example, in one of His prayers, Bahá'u'lláh reveals:

Lauded be Thy name, O Lord my God! I testify that Thou wast a hidden Treasure wrapped within Thine immemorial Being and an impenetrable Mystery enshrined in Thine own Essence. Wishing to reveal Thyself, Thou didst call into being the Greater and the Lesser Worlds, and didst choose Man above all Thy creatures, and didst make Him a sign of both of these worlds, O Thou Who art our Lord, the Most Compassionate!

Thou didst raise Him up to occupy Thy throne before all the people of Thy creation. Thou didst enable Him to unravel Thy mysteries, and to shine with the lights of Thine inspiration and Thy Revelation, and to manifest Thy names and Thine attributes. Through Him Thou didst adorn the preamble of the book of Thy creation, O Thou Who art the Ruler of the universe Thou hast fashioned!

(Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, XXXVIII)

Likewise, in the Hidden Words, He states:

O Son of Man! I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may

name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life.

Abdu'l-Baha, in His commentary on the above-cited tradition, wrote:

O wayfarer in the path of the Beloved! Know thou that the main purpose of this holy tradition is to make mention of the stages of God's concealment and manifestation within the Embodiments of Truth, They who are the Dawning-places of His All-Glorious Being.

For example, before the flame of the undying Fire is lit and manifest, it existeth by itself within itself in the hidden identity of the universal Manifestations, and this is the stage of the "Hidden Treasure". And when the blessed Tree is kindled by itself within itself, and that Divine Fire burneth by its essence within its essence, this is the stage of "I wished to be made known." And when it shineth forth from the Horizon of the universe with infinite Divine Names and Attributes upon the contingent an placeless worlds, this constituteth the emergence of new and wondrous creation which correspondeth to the stage of "Thus I called creation into being." And when the sanctified souls rend asunder the veils of all earthly attachments and worldly conditions, and hasten to the stage of gazing on the beauty of the Divine Presence and are honoured by recognizing the Manifestation and are able to witness the splendour of God's Most Great Sign in their hearts, then will the purpose of creation, which is the knowledge of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, become manifest.

(Baha'u'llah: Aqdas: Notes, Pages: 174-176)

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! I beseech Thee by Thy Chosen Ones, and by the Bearers of Thy Trust, and by Him Whom Thou hast ordained to be the Seal of Thy Prophets

and of Thy Messengers, to let Thy remembrance be my companion, and Thy love my aim, and Thy face my goal, and Thy name my lamp, and Thy wish my desire, and Thy pleasure my delight.

I am a sinner, O my Lord, and Thou art the Ever-Forgiving. As soon as I recognized Thee, I hastened to attain the exalted court of Thy loving-kindness. Forgive me, O my Lord, my sins which have hindered me from walking in the ways of Thy good pleasure, and from attaining the shores of the ocean of Thy oneness.

There is no one, O my Lord, who can deal bountifully with me to whom I can turn my face, and none who can have compassion on me that I may crave his mercy. Cast me not out, I implore Thee, of the presence of Thy grace, neither do Thou withhold from me the outpourings of Thy generosity and bounty. Ordain for me, O my Lord, what Thou hast ordained for them that love Thee, and write down for me what Thou hast written down for Thy chosen ones. My gaze hath, at all times, been fixed on the horizon of Thy gracious providence, and mine eyes bent upon the court of Thy tendermercies. Do with me as beseemeth Thee. No God is there but Thee the God of power, the God of glory, Whose help is implored by all men.

(Bahá'u'lláh; Compilations, Baha'i Prayers, p. 73)

ONENESS OF THE PROPHETS

The Christ was the word of God from the beginning - in the same way Mohammed says, "I was a prophet before the existence of Adam," and Bahá'u'lláh says, "In the beginning which has no beginning I loved thee."

(Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy, p. 52)

In the Word of God there is another unity, the oneness of the Manifestations of God, His Holiness Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. This is a unity divine, heavenly, radiant, merciful; the one reality ap-

pearing in its successive manifestations. For instance, the sun is one and the same but its points of dawning are various. During the summer season it rises from the northern point of the ecliptic; in winter it appears from the southern point of rising. Each month between it appears from a certain zodiacal position. Although these dawning-points are different, the sun is the same sun which has appeared from them all. The significance is the reality of prophethood which is symbolized by the sun, and the holy Manifestations are the dawning-places or zodiacal points.

(*Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 259*)

God sent His Prophets into the world to teach and enlighten man, to explain to him the mystery of the Power of the Holy Spirit, to enable him to reflect the light, and so in his turn, to be the source of guidance to others. The Heavenly Books, the Bible, the Qur'an, and the other Holy Writings have been given by God as guides into the paths of Divine virtue, love, justice and peace.

(*Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 61-62*)

When asked if it would be always necessary for prophets to come from time to time--"would not the world in the course of events through progress reach to a full realization of God?"--`Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "Mankind needs a universal motive power to quicken it. The inspired messenger who is directly assisted by the power of God brings about universal results. Bahá'u'lláh rose as a light in Persia and now that light is going out to the whole world."

(*Abdu'l-Bahá, Abdu'l-Baha in London*, Page: 88-89*)

Praise be to God Who hath made being to come forth from nothingness; graven upon the tablet of man the secrets of preexistence; taught him from the mysteries of divine utterance that which he knew not; made him a Luminous Book unto those who believed and surrendered themselves; caused him to witness the creation of all things (Kullu Shay') in this black and ruinous age, and to speak forth from the apex of

eternity with a wondrous voice in the Excellent Temple¹: to the end that every man may testify, in himself, by himself, in the station of the Manifestation of his Lord, that verily there is no God save Him, and that every man may thereby win his way to the summit of realities, until none shall contemplate anything whatsoever but that he shall see God therein.

And I praise and glorify the first sea which hath branched from the ocean of the Divine Essence, and the first morn which hath glowed from the Horizon of Oneness, and the first sun which hath risen in the Heaven of Eternity, and the first fire which was lit from the Lamp of Preexistence in the lantern of singleness: He who was Ahmad in the kingdom of the exalted ones, and Muhammad amongst the concourse of the near ones, and Mahmud² in the realm of the sincere ones. `...by whichsoever (name) ye will, invoke Him: He hath most excellent names'³ in the hearts of those who know. And upon His household and companions be abundant and abiding an eterna pec.

(Baha'u'llah: Seven Valleys and Four Valleys, Pages: 1-2)

Every discerning observer will recognize that in the Dispensation of the Qur'an both the Book and the Cause of Jesus were confirmed. As to the matter of names, Muhammad, Himself, declared: "I am Jesus." He recognized the truth of the signs, prophecies, and words of Jesus, and testified that they were all of God. In this sense, neither the person of Jesus nor His writings hath differed from that of Muhammad and of His holy Book, inasmuch as both have championed the Cause of God, uttered His praise, and revealed His commandments. Thus it is that Jesus, Himself, declared: "I go away and come again unto you." Consider the sun. Were it to say now, "I am the sun of yesterday," it would speak the truth. And should it, bearing the sequence of time in mind, claim to be other than that sun, it still would speak the truth. In like manner,

1 *The Manifestation*

2 *Muhammad, Ahmad and Mahmud are names and titles of the Prophet, derived from the verb "to praise," "to exalt."*

3 *Qur'an 17:110*

if it be said that all the days are but one and the same, it is correct and true. And if it be said, with respect to their particular names and designations, that they differ, that again is true. For though they are the same, yet one doth recognize in each a separate designation, a specific attribute, a particular character. Conceive accordingly the distinction, variation, and unity characteristic of the various Manifestations of holiness, that thou mayest comprehend the allusions made by the Creator of all names and attributes to the mysteries of distinction and unity, and discover the answer to thy question as to why that everlasting Beauty should have, at sundry times, called Himself by different names and titles....

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 21-22)

Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret. To prefer one in honor to another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted. Every true Prophet hath regarded His Message as fundamentally the same as the Revelation of every other Prophet gone before Him. If any man, therefore, should fail to comprehend this truth, and should consequently indulge in vain and unseemly language, no one whose sight is keen and whose understanding is enlightened would ever allow such idle talk to cause him to waver in his belief.

The measure of the revelation of the Prophets of God in this world, however, must differ. Each and every one of them hath been the Bearer of a distinct Message, and hath been commissioned to reveal Himself through specific acts. It is for this reason that they appear to vary in their greatness. Their Revelation may be likened unto the light of the moon that sheddeth its radiance upon the earth. Though every time it appeareth, it revealeth a fresh measure of its brightness, yet its inherent splendor can never diminish, nor can its light suffer extinction.

It is clear and evident, therefore, that any apparent variation in the intensity of their light is not inherent in the light itself, but should rather be attributed to the varying receptivity of an ever-changing world. Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been entrusted with a Message, and charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared. God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.

The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and to have correctly diagnosed its ailments. No man, however acute his perception, can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician in this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy? In like manner, every time the Prophets of God have illumined the world with the resplendent radiance of the Day Star of Divine knowledge, they have invariably summoned its peoples to embrace the light of God through such means as best befitted the exigencies of the age in which they appeared. They were thus able to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and to shed upon the world the glory of their own knowledge. It is towards the inmost essence of these Prophets, therefore, that the eye of every man of discernment must be directed, inasmuch as their one and only purpose hath always been to guide the erring, and give peace to the afflicted....

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 78-81)

The holy Manifestations Who have been the Sources or Founders of the various religious systems were united and agreed in purpose and teaching. Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are one in spirit and reality. Moreover, each Prophet fulfilled the promise of the One Who came before Him and, likewise, Each announced the One Who would follow. Consider how Abraham foretold the coming of Moses, and Moses embodied the Abrahamic statement. Moses prophesied the Messianic cycle, and Christ fulfilled the law of Moses. It is evident, therefore, that the Holy Manifestations Who founded the religious systems are united and agreed; there is no differentiation possible in Their mission and teachings; all are reflectors of reality, and all are promulgators of the religion of God. The divine religion is reality, and reality is not multiple; it is one. Therefore, the foundations of the religious systems are one because all proceed from the indivisible reality; but the followers of these systems have disagreed; discord, strife and warfare have arisen among them, for they have forsaken the foundation and held to that which is but imitation and semblance. Inasmuch as imitations differ, enmity and dissension have resulted. For example, Jesus Christ - may my spirit be a sacrifice unto Him! - laid the foundation of eternal reality, but after His departure many sects and divisions appeared in Christianity. What was the cause of this? There is no doubt that they originated in dogmatic imitations, for the foundations of Christ were reality itself, in which no divergence exists. When imitations appeared, sects and denominations were formed.

If Christians of all denominations and divisions should investigate reality, the foundations of Christ will unite them. No enmity or hatred will remain, for they will all be under the one guidance of reality itself. Likewise, in the wider field if all the existing religious systems will turn away from ancestral imitations and investigate reality, seeking the real meanings of the Holy Books, they will unite and agree upon the same foundation, reality itself. As long as they follow counterfeit doctrines or imitations instead of reality, animosity and discord will exist ad incae. Let me illustrate this. Moses and the prophets of

Israel announced the advent of the Messiah but expressed it in the language of symbols. When Christ appeared, the Jews rejected Him, although they were expecting His manifestation and in their temples and synagogues were crying and lamenting, saying, "O God, hasten the coming of the Messiah!" Why did they deny Him when He announced Himself? Because they had followed ancestral forms and interpretations and were blind to the reality of Christ. They had not perceived the inner significances of the Holy Bible. They voiced their objections, saying, "We are expecting Christ, but His coming is conditioned upon certain fulfillments and prophetic announcements. Among the signs of His appearance is one that He shall come from an unknown place, whereas now this claimant of Messiahship has come from Nazareth. We know his home, and we are acquainted with his mother.

"Second, one of the signs or Messianic conditions is that His scepter would be an iron rod, and this Christ has not even a wooden staff.

"Third, He was to be seated upon the throne of David, whereas this Messianic king is in the utmost state of poverty and has not even a mat.

"Fourth, He was to conquer the East and the West. This person has not even conquered a village. How can he be the Messiah?

"Fifth, He was to promulgate the laws of the Bible. This one has not only failed to promulgate the laws of the Bible, but he has broken the law of the sabbath.

"Sixth, the Messiah was to gather together all the Jews who were scattered in Palestine and restore them to honor and prestige, but this one has degraded the Jews instead of uplifting them.

"Seventh, during His sovereignty even the animals were to enjoy blessings and comfort, for according to the prophetic texts, He should establish peace to such a universal extent

that the eagle and quail would live together, the lion and deer would feed in the same meadow, the wolf and lamb would lie down in the same pasture. In the human kingdom warfare was to cease entirely; spears would be turned into pruning hooks and swords into plowshares. Now we see in the day of this would-be Messiah such injustice prevails that even he himself is sacrificed. How could he be the promised Christ?"

And so they spoke infamous words regarding Him. Now inasmuch as the Jews were submerged in the sea of ancestral imitations, they could not comprehend the meaning of these prophecies. All the words of the prophets were fulfilled, but because the Jews held tenaciously to hereditary interpretations, they did not understand the inner meanings of the Holy Bible; therefore, they denied Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The purpose of the prophetic words was not the outward or literal meaning, but the inner symbolical significance. For example, it was announced that the Messiah was to come from an unknown place. This did not refer to the birthplace of the physical body of Jesus. It has reference to the reality of the Christ - that is to say, the Christ reality was to appear from the invisible realm - for the divine reality of Christ is holy and sanctified above place.

His sword was to be a sword of iron. This signified His tongue which should separate the true from the false and by which great sword of attack He would conquer the kingdoms of hearts. He did not conquer by the physical power of an iron rod; He conquered the East and the West by the sword of His utterance. He was seated upon the throne of David, but His sovereignty was neither a Napoleonic sovereignty nor the vanishing dominion of a Pharaoh. The Christ Kingdom was everlasting, eternal in the heaven of the divine Will. By His promulgating the laws of the Bible the reality of the law of Moses was meant.

The Sinaitic law is the foundation of the reality of Christianity. Christ promulgated it and gave it higher, spiritual essence. He conquered and subdued the East and West. His conquest

was effected through the breaths of the Holy Spirit, which eliminated all boundaries and shone from all horizons.

In His day, according to prophecy, the wolf and the lamb were to drink from the same fountain. This was realized in Christ. The fountain referred to was the Gospel, from which the water of life gushes forth. The wolf and lamb are opposed and divergent races symbolized by these animals. Their meeting and association were impossible, but having become believers in Jesus Christ those who were formerly as wolves and lambs became united through the words of the Gospel. The purport is that all the meanings of the prophecies were fulfilled, but because the Jews were captives of ancestral imitations and did not perceive the reality of the meanings of these words, they denied Christ; nay, they even went so far as to crucify Him. Consider how harmful is imitation. These were interpretations handed down from fathers and ancestors, and because the Jews held fast to them, they were deprived.

It is evident, then, that we must forsake all such imitations and beliefs so that we may not commit this error. We must investigate reality, lay aside selfish notions and banish hearsay from our minds. The Jews consider Christ the enemy of Moses, whereas, on the contrary, Christ promoted the Word of Moses. He spread the name of Moses throughout the Orient and Occident. He promulgated the teachings of Moses. Had it not been for Christ, you would not have heard the name of Moses; and unless the manifestation of Messiahship had appeared in Christ, we would not have received the Old Testament.

The truth is that Christ fulfilled the Mosaic law and in every way upheld Moses; but the Jews, blinded by imitations and prejudices, considered Him the enemy of Moses.

Among the great religious systems of the world is Islam. About three hundred million people acknowledge it. For more than a thousand years there has been enmity and strife between Muslims and Christians, owing to misunderstanding and spiritual blindness. If prejudices and imitations were abandoned, there would be no enmity whatever between them,

and these hundreds of millions of antagonistic religionists would adorn the world of humanity by their unity.

I wish now to call your attention to a most important point. All Islam considers the Qur'an the Word of God. In this sacred Book there are explicit texts which are not traditional, stating that Christ was the Word of God, that He was the Spirit of God, that Jesus Christ came into this world through the quickening breaths of the Holy Spirit and that Mary, His mother, was holy and sanctified. In the Qur'an a whole chapter is devoted to the story of Jesus. It records that in the time of His youth He worshiped God in the temple at Jerusalem, that manna descended from heaven for His sustenance and that He uttered words immediately after His birth. In brief, in the Qur'an there is eulogy and commendation of Christ such as you do not find in the Gospel. The Gospel does not record that the child Jesus spoke at birth or that God caused sustenance to descend from heaven for Him, but in the Qur'an it is repeatedly stated that God sent down manna day by day as food for Him. Furthermore, it is significant and convincing that when Muhammad proclaimed His work and mission, His first objection to His own followers was, "Why have you not believed on Jesus Christ? Why have you not accepted the Gospel? Why have you not believed in Moses? Why have you not followed the precepts of the Old Testament? Why have you not understood the prophets of Israel? Why have you not believed in the disciples of Christ? The first duty incumbent upon ye, O Arabians, is to accept and believe in these. You must consider Moses as a Prophet. You must accept Jesus Christ as the Word of God. You must know the Old and the New Testaments as the Word of God. You must believe in Jesus Christ as the product of the Holy Spirit. He answered, "O Muhammad! We will become believers although our fathers and ancestors were not believers, and we are proud of them. Tell us what is going to become of them?" Muhammad replied, "I declare unto you that they occupy the lowest stratum of hell because they did not believe in Moses and Christ and because they did not accept the Bible; and although they are my own ancestors, yet they are in despair in hell." This is an explicit text of the Qur'an; it is not a story or tradition but from the Qur'an itself,

which is in the hands of the people. Therefore, it is evident that ignorance and misunderstanding have caused so much warfare and strife between Christians and Muslims. If both should investigate the underlying truth of their religious beliefs, the outcome would be unity and agreement; strife and bitterness would pass away forever and the world of humanity find peace and composure. Consider that there are two hundred and fifty million Christians and three hundred million Muslims. How much blood has flowed in their wars; how many nations have been destroyed; how many children have been made fatherless; how many fathers and mothers have mourned the loss of children and dear ones! All this has been due to prejudice, misunderstanding and imitations of ancestral beliefs without investigation of reality. If the Holy Books were rightly understood, none of this discord and distress would have existed, but love and fellowship would have prevailed instead. This is true with all the other religions as well. The conditions I have named will apply equally to all.

The essential purpose of the religion of God is to establish unity among mankind. The divine Manifestations were Founders of the means of fellowship and love. They did not come to create discord, strife and hatred in the world. The religion of God is the cause of love, but if it is made to be the source of enmity and bloodshed, surely its absence is preferable to its existence; for then it becomes satanic, detrimental and an obstacle to the human world.

In the Orient the various peoples and nations were in a state of antagonism and strife, manifesting the utmost enmity and hatred toward each other. Darkness encompassed the world of mankind. At such a time as this Bahá'u'lláh appeared. He removed all the imitations and prejudices which had caused separation and misunderstanding and laid the foundation of the one religion of God. When this was accomplished, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists all were united in actual fellowship and love. The souls who followed Bahá'u'lláh from every nation have become as one family living in agreement and accord, willing to sacrifice life for each other. The Muslim will give his life for the Christian, the Christian for the

Jew and all of them for the Zoroastrian. They live together in love, fellowship and unity. They have attained to the condition of rebirth in the Spirit of God. They have become revived and regenerated through the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Praise be to God! This light has come forth from the East, and eventually there shall be no discord or enmity in the Orient. Through the power of Bahá'u'lláh all will be united. He upraised this standard of the oneness of humanity in prison. When subjected to banishment by two kings, while a refugee from enemies of all nations and during the days of His long imprisonment He wrote to the kings and rulers of the world in words of wonderful eloquence, arraigning them severely and summoning them to the divine standard of unity and justice. He exhorted them to peace and international agreement, making it incumbent upon them to establish a board of international arbitration - that from all nations and governments of the world there should be delegates selected for a congress of nations which should constitute a universal arbitral court of justice to settle international disputes. He wrote to Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, the Czar of Russia, the Emperor of Germany, Napoleon III of France and others, inviting them to world unity and peace. Through a heavenly power He was enabled to promulgate these ideals in the Orient. Kings could not withstand Him. They endeavored to extinguish His light but served only to increase its intensity and illumination. While in prison He stood against the Shah of Persia and Sultan of Turkey and promulgated His teachings until He firmly established the banner of truth and the oneness of humankind. I was a prisoner with Him for forty years until the Young Turks of the Committee of Union and Progress overthrew the despotism of Abdu'l-Hamid, dethroned him and proclaimed liberty. This committee set me free from tyranny and oppression; otherwise, I should have been in prison until the days of my life were ended. The purport is this: that Bahá'u'lláh in prison was able to proclaim and establish the foundations of peace although two despotic kings were His enemies and oppressors. The King of Persia, Nasiri'd-Din Shah, had killed twenty thousand Bahá'is, martyrs who in absolute severance and complete willingness offered their lives joyfully for their faith. These two powerful and tyrannical kings could not withstand a prisoner; this Prisoner

upheld the standard of humanity and brought the people of the Orient into agreement and unity. Today in the East, only those who have not followed Bahá'u'lláh are in opposition and enmity. The people of the nations who have accepted Him as the standard of divine guidance enjoy a condition of actual fellowship and love. If you should attend a meeting in the East, you could not distinguish between Christian and Muslim; you would not know which was Jew, Zoroastrian or Buddhist, so completely have they become fraternized and their religious differences been leveled. They associate in the utmost love and spiritual fragrance as if they belonged to one family, as if they were one people.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 197-203)**

"Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."
(John 18:37)

AND THE WORD WAS GOD

"Being born again...by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." **(1 Peter1:23)**

...in the spiritual realm of intelligence and idealism there must be a center of illumination, and that center is the everlasting, ever-shining Sun, the Word of God. Its lights are the lights of reality which have shone upon humanity, illumining the realm of thought and morals, conferring the bounties of the divine world upon man. These lights are the cause of the education of souls and the source of the enlightenment of hearts, sending forth in effulgent radiance the message of the glad-tidings of the kingdom of God. In brief, the moral and ethical world and the world of spiritual regeneration are dependent for their progressive being upon that heavenly center of illumination. It gives forth the light of religion and bestows the life of the spirit, imbues humanity with archetypal virtues and confers eternal splendors. This Sun of Reality, this center of effulgences is the prophet or Manifestation of God. Just as the phenomenal sun shines upon the material world producing

life and growth, likewise the spiritual or prophetic Sun confers illumination upon the human world of thought and intelligence, and unless it rose upon the horizon of human existence the kingdom of man would become dark and extinguished.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 254*)

Praise be to God, in this day the light of the Word of God has shone forth upon all regions, and from all sects, communities, nations, tribes, peoples, religions and denominations, souls have gathered under the shadow of the Word of Oneness and have in the most intimate fellowship united and harmonized!

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 295*)

Shouldst thou come with the whole of thy being to God and be attracted to the lights of the Kingdom of God and be enkindled by the fire of the love of God, then wilt thou see that which thou canst not see today, wilt comprehend the inner significance of the Word of God and thoroughly understand the mysteries contained in the holy Books.

But as to the Jewish doctors, Christian priests and monks who read those Books, verily, they know the letter only and they utter the words, as parrots, without understanding their inner meanings. They comprehend them not, because they are engrossed in worldly desires and lusts and their hearts are attached to mundane allurements. Verily, are they not heedless of God and understand nothing and find not the right path?

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 391*)

Let us awake! Let us acquire a new intelligence in order to interpret the symbols and become acquainted with the mysteries. The real Christ's spirit has come again from the supreme apex to illumine the world.

In the Gospel, Jesus said, "I am come from heaven." Physically, he was born of a woman, but the Christ's reality is from

the city of eternity, for the heaven is not a place but a state of consciousness.

Man has a sacred power which permits him to discover the inner significances, the reality of invisible things. Ponder over these statements, so that the portals of divine wisdom and infinite knowledge may open before thy face.

I wish to awaken you out of your deep slumber. Do you know in what day you are living? Do you realize in what dispensation you exist? Have you not read in the holy scriptures that at the consummation of the ages there would dawn a day -- the sum total of all past days? This is the day when the Lord of hosts hath come on the clouds of glory. This is the day in which the inhabitants of the world shall enter under the tent of the word of God. This is the day whose real sovereign is His Highness the Almighty. This is the day when the east and the west shall embrace each other like unto two lovers; war and contention shall be forgotten and nations and governments shall enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This century is the fulfillment of the promised century, the dawn of the appearances of the glorious visions of past prophets and sages.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy, p. 37)

Incline your hearts, O people of God, unto the counsels of your true, your incomparable Friend. The Word of God may be likened unto a sapling, whose roots have been implanted in the hearts of men. It is incumbent upon you to foster its growth through the living waters of wisdom, of sanctified and holy words, so that its root may become firmly fixed and its branches may spread out as high as the heavens and beyond.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 97)

Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God is endowed with such potency as can instill new life into every human frame, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth. All the wondrous works ye behold in this world have been manifested through the operation of His supreme and most exalted

Will, His wondrous and inflexible Purpose. Through the mere revelation of the word 'Fashioner,' issuing forth from His lips and proclaiming His attribute to mankind, such power is released as can generate, through successive ages, all the manifold arts which the hands of man can produce. This, verily, is a certain truth. No sooner is this resplendent word uttered, than its animating energies, stirring within all created things, give birth to the means and instruments whereby such arts can be produced and perfected. All the wondrous achievements ye now witness are the direct consequences of the Revelation of this Name. In the days to come, ye will, verily, behold things of which ye have never heard before. Thus hath it been decreed in the Tablets of God, and none can comprehend it except them whose sight is sharp. In like manner, the moment the word expressing My attribute 'The Omniscient' issueth forth from My mouth, every created thing will, according to its capacity and limitations, be invested with the power to unfold the knowledge of the most marvelous sciences, and will be empowered to manifest them in the course of time at the bidding of Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Knowing. Know thou of a certainty that the Revelation of every other Name is accompanied by a similar manifestation of Divine power. Every single letter proceeding out of the mouth of God is indeed a mother letter, and every word uttered by Him Who is the Well Spring of Divine Revelation is a mother word, and His Tablet a Mother Tablet. Well is it with them that apprehend this truth.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 141-142)

It hath been decreed by Us that the Word of God and all the potentialities thereof shall be manifested unto men in strict conformity with such conditions as have been foreordained by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. We have, moreover, ordained that its veil of concealment be none other except its own Self. Such indeed is Our Power to achieve Our Purpose. Should the Word be allowed to release suddenly all the energies latent within it, no man could sustain the weight of so mighty a Revelation. Nay, if that is in heaven and on earth would flee in consternation before it. Consider that which hath been sent down unto Muhammad, the Apostle of God. The measure of the Revelation of which He was the bearer had been clearly

foreordained by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Powerful. They that heard Him, however, could apprehend His purpose only to the extent of their station and spiritual capacity. He, in like manner, uncovered the Face of Wisdom in proportion to their ability to sustain the burden of His Message. No sooner had mankind attained the stage of maturity, than the Word revealed to men's eyes the latent energies with which it had been endowed - energies which manifested themselves in the plenitude of their glory when the Ancient Beauty appeared, in the year sixty, in the person of Ali-Muhammad, the Báb.

(Bahá'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 76-77)

Know assuredly that just as thou firmly believest that the Word of God, exalted be His glory, endureth for ever, thou must, likewise, believe with undoubting faith that its meaning can never be exhausted. They who are its appointed interpreters, they whose hearts are the repositories of its secrets, are, however, the only ones who can comprehend its manifold wisdom. Whoso, while reading the Sacred Scriptures, is tempted to choose therefrom whatever may suit him with which to challenge the authority of the Representative of God among men, is, indeed, as one dead, though to outward seeming he may walk and converse with his neighbors, and share with them their food and their drink.

Oh, would that the world could believe Me! Were all the things that lie enshrined within the heart of Bahá, and which the Lord, His God, the Lord of all names, hath taught Him, to be unveiled to mankind, every man on earth would be dumb-founded.

How great the multitude of truths which the garment of words can never contain! How vast the number of such verities as no expression can adequately describe, whose significance can never be unfolded, and to which not even the remotest allusions can be made! How manifold are the truths which must remain unuttered until the appointed time is come! Even as it hath been said: 'Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regard-

ed as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it.'

Of these truths some can be disclosed only to the extent of the capacity of the repositories of the light of Our knowledge, and the recipients of Our hidden grace. We beseech God to strengthen thee with His power, and enable thee to recognize Him Who is the Source of all knowledge, that thou mayest detach thyself from all human learning, for, 'what would it profit any man to strive after learning when he hath already found and recognized Him Who is the Object of all knowledge?' Cleave to the Root of Knowledge, and to Him Who is the Fountain thereof, that thou mayest find thyself independent of all who claim to be well versed in human learning, and whose claim no clear proof, nor the testimony of any enlightening book, can support.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 175-177)

...All that the sages and mystics have said or written have never exceeded, nor can they ever hope to exceed, the limitations to which man's finite mind hath been strictly subjected. To whatever heights the mind of the most exalted of men may soar, however great the depths which the detached and understanding heart can penetrate, such mind and heart can never transcend that which is the creature of their own conceptions and the product of their own thoughts. The meditations of the profoundest thinker, the devotions of the holiest of saits, the highest expressions of praise from either human pen or tongue, are but a reflectin of that which hath been created within theselves, through the reelation of the Lrdtheir God. Whoever pondereth this truth in his heart will readily admit that there are certain limits which no human being can possibly transgress. Every attempt which, from the beginning that hath no beginning, hath been made to visualize and know God is limited by the exigencies of His own creation - a creation which He, through the operation of His own Will and for the purposes of none other but His own Self, hath called into being. Immeasurably exalted is He above the strivings of human mind to grasp His Essence, or of human tongue to describe His mystery. No tie of direct intercourse can ever bind

Him to the things He hath created, nor can the most abstruse and most remote allusions of His creatures do justice to His being. Through His world-pervading Will He hath brought into being all created things. He is and hath ever been veiled in the ancient eternity of His own exalted and indivisible Essence, and will everlastingly continue to remain concealed in His inaccessible majesty and glory. All that is in heaven and all that is in the earth have come to exist at His bidding, and by His Will all have stepped out of utter nothingness into the realm of being. How can, therefore, the creature which the Word of God hath fashioned comprehend the nature of Him Who is the Ancient of Days?

(Bahá'u'lláh: Gleanings, Pages: 317-318)

THE SEAL OF THE PROPHETS

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things." (Qur'án 33:40)

The Bahá'í Faith reveals that with the coming of Prophet Muhammad, the 'Prophetic Cycle' has been sealed for it is written: 'Muhammad is...the Seal of the Prophets' (Qur'án 33:40) ending the 6,000 years Adamic Cycle.

However, being 'the Seal' of God's Prophets, He was not the last of God's Messengers for there were still to come, in the future, Messengers, Who would succeed Him:

"O ye children of Adam! whenever there come to you Messengers from amongst you, rehearsing my signs unto you, those who are righteous and mend (their lives), on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve." (Qur'án 7:35)

Bahá'u'lláh cautions people "of insight" not to allow their interpretations of the Holy Scriptures to prevent them from recognizing the Manifestation of God. Followers of each religion

have tended to allow their devotion to its Founder to cause them to perceive His Revelation as the final Word of God and to deny the possibility of the appearance of any subsequent Prophet. This has been the case of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Bahá'u'lláh denies the validity of this concept of finality both in relation to past Dispensations and to His own. With regard to Muslims, He wrote in the *Kitab-i-Iqan* that the "people of the Qur'an ... have allowed the words 'Seal of the Prophets' to veil their eyes", "to obscure their understanding, and deprive them of the grace of all His manifold bounties". He affirms that "this theme hath ... been a sore test unto all mankind", and laments the fate of "those who, clinging unto these words, have disbelieved in Him Who is their true Revealer". The Báb refers to this same theme when He warns: "Let not names shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is their Lord, even the name Prophet, for such a name is but a creation of His utterance."

(Bahá'u'llah: Aqdas: Notes, Pages: 243-244)

Notwithstanding the obviousness of this theme, in the eyes of those that have quaffed the wine of knowledge and certitude, yet how many are those who, through failure to understand its meaning, have allowed the term "Seal of the Prophets" to obscure their understanding, and deprive them of the grace of all His manifold bounties! Hath not Muhammad, Himself, declared: "I am all the Prophets?" Hath He not said as We have already mentioned: "I am Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus?" Why should Muhammad, that immortal Beauty, Who hath said: "I am the first Adam" be incapable of saying also: "I am the last Adam"? For even as He regarded Himself to be the "First of the Prophets" - that is Adam - in like manner, the "Seal of the Prophets" is also applicable unto that Divine Beauty. It is admittedly obvious that being the "First of the Prophets," He likewise is their "Seal."

The mystery of this theme hath, in this Dispensation, been a sore test unto all mankind. Behold, how many are those who, clinging unto these words, have disbelieved Him Who is their true Revealer. What, We ask, could this people presume the terms "first" and "last" - when referring to God - glorified

be His Name! - to mean? If they maintain that these terms bear reference to this material universe, how could it be possible, when the visible order of things is still manifestly existing? Nay, in this instance, by "first" is meant no other than the "last" and by "last" no other than the first. Even as in the "Beginning that hath no beginnings" the term "last" is truly applicable unto Him who is the Educator of the visible and of the invisible, in like manner, are the terms "first" and "last" applicable unto His Manifestations. They are at the same time the Exponents of both the "first" and the "last." Whilst established upon the seat of the "first," they occupy the throne of the "last." Were a discerning eye to be found, it will readily perceive that the exponents of the "first" and the "last," of the "manifest" and the "hidden," of the "beginning" and the "end" are none other than these holy Beings, these Essences of Detachment, these divine Souls.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 161-163)

Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: "I am God," He, verily, speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation, their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His names and His attributes, are made manifest in the world. Thus, He hath revealed: "Those shafts were God's, not Thine." And also He saith: "In truth, they who plighted fealty unto Thee, really plighted that fealty unto God." And were any of them to voice the utterance, "I am the Messenger of God," He, also, speaketh the truth, the indubitable truth. Even as He saith: "Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but He is the Messenger of God." Viewed in this light, they are all but Messengers of that ideal King, that unchangeable Essence. And were they all to proclaim, "I am the Seal of the Prophets," they, verily, utter but the truth, beyond the faintest shadow of doubt. For they are all but one person, one soul, one spirit, one being, one revelation. They are all the manifestation of the "Beginning" and the "End," the "First" and the "Last," the "Seen" and the "Hidden" - all of which pertain to Him Who is the Innermost Spirit of Spirits and Eternal Essence of Essences. And were they to say, "We are the Servants of God," this also is a manifest and indisput-

able fact. For they have been made manifest in the uttermost state of servitude, a servitude the like of which no man can possibly attain. Thus in moments in which these Essences of Being were deep immersed beneath the oceans of ancient and everlasting holiness, or when they soared to the loftiest summits of Divine mysteries, they claimed their utterances to be the Voice of Divinity, the Call of God Himself.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 54-55)

Men have failed to perceive Our purpose in the references We have made to Divinity and Godhood. Were they to apprehend it, they would arise from their places, and cry out: "We, verily, ask pardon of God!" The Seal of the Prophets -- may the souls of all else but Him be offered up for His sake -- saith: "Manifold are Our relationships with God. At one time, We are He Himself, and He is We Ourselves. At another He is that He is, and We are that We are."

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 42)

Since the Seal of the Prophets (Muhammad) -- may all else but Him be His sacrifice -- and before Him the Spirit of God (Jesus), as far back as the First Manifestation, all have at the time of Their appearance suffered grievously. Some were held to be possessed, others were called impostors, and were treated in a manner that the pen is ashamed to describe. By God! There befell Them what hath made all created things to sigh, and yet the people are, for the most part, sunk in manifest ignorance! We pray God to assist them to return unto Him, and to repent before the door of His mercy. Potent is He over all things.

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 2)

...Ponder upon the things which have been mentioned, perchance thou mayest quaff the Sealed Wine through the power of the name of Him Who is the Self-Subsisting, and obtain that which no one is capable of comprehending. Gird up the loins of endeavor, and direct thyself towards the Most Sublime Kingdom, that haply thou mayest perceive, as they descend upon Me, the breaths of Revelation and inspiration, and attain thereunto. Verily, I say: The Cause of God hath never had, nor

hath it now, any peer or equal. Rend asunder the veils of idle fancies. He, in truth, will reinforce thee, and assist thee, as a token of His grace. He, verily, is the Strong, the All-Subduing, the Almighty. While there is yet time, and the blessed Lote-Tree is still calling aloud amongst men, suffer not thyself to be deprived. Place thy trust in God, and commit thine affairs unto Him, and enter then the Most Great Prison¹, that thou mayest hear what no ear hath ever heard, and gaze on that which no eye hath ever seen. After such an exposition, can there remain any room for doubt? Nay, by God, Who standeth over His Cause! In truth I say: On this day the blessed words "But He is the Apostle of God, and the Seal of the Prophets" have found their consummation in the verse "The day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds." Render thou thanksgiving unto God, for so great a bounty.

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 113)

...The blind fanaticism of former times hath withheld the hapless creatures from the Straight Path. Meditate on the Shi'ih sect. For twelve hundred years they have cried "O Qá'im!", until in the end all pronounced the sentence of His death, and caused Him to suffer martyrdom², notwithstanding their belief in, and their acceptance and acknowledgment of, the True One -- exalted be His glory -- and of the Seal of the Prophets, and of the Chosen Ones. It is now necessary to reflect a while, that haply that which hath come between the True One and His creatures may be discovered, and the deeds which have been the cause of protest and denial be made known.

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 163)

It is evident that every age in which a Manifestation of God hath lived is divinely ordained, and may, in a sense, be characterized as God's appointed Day. This Day, however, is unique, and is to be distinguished from those that have preceded it. The designation "Seal of the Prophets" fully revealeth its high station. The Prophetic Cycle hath, verily, ended. The Eternal Truth is now come. He hath lifted up the Ensign of Power, and

1 *The Prison of 'Akká*

2 *His Holiness The Báb, the Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh*

is now shedding upon the world the unclouded splendor of His Revelation.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 60)

It is important to note that the mission of all the Manifestations of God in the prophetic cycle, up to and including Muhammad, was to prophesy the advent of the Day of God. Hence they are included in the 'Prophetic Cycle'. Muhammad was the last one among them and is therefore designated 'Seal of the Prophets'. Bahá'u'lláh's claim, on the other hand, makes it clear that He is not a Prophet in the category of those who prophesy, but His station is that of the Supreme Manifestation of God who inaugurates the 'Cycle of Fulfilment' and ushers in the Day of God whose advent had been so clearly foretold by all the Prophets gone before Him.

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Covenant of Baha'u'llah, p. 33)

Through Bahá'u'lláh, the glory of God's Revelation to mankind is unveiled, a glory which the Manifestations of the past foretold. Indeed, Their purpose throughout all ages was to herald the coming of Bahá'u'lláh and prepare mankind for His advent. Muhammad was the last to do so, referring to Himself as the 'Seal of the Prophets', for His was the last Dispensation of the prophetic cycle of religion. With the appearance of the Báb, this cycle closed, and He announced Bahá'u'lláh, Whose Mission was not to foretell the Day of God, but to inaugurate it, as God's supreme Manifestation. These words gleaned from His Tablets illuminate the greatness of His Revelation:

Be fair, ye peoples of the world; is it meet and seemly for you to question the authority of One Whose presence 'He Who conversed with God' [Moses] hath longed to attain, the beauty of Whose countenance 'God's Well-beloved' [Muhammad] had yearned to behold, through the potency of Whose love the 'Spirit of God' [Jesus] ascended to heaven, for Whose sake the 'Primal Point' [the Báb] offered up His life?

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 1, p. 66)

LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis 1:26-27)

In the Old Testament we read that God said, 'Let us make man in Our own image'. In the Gospel, Christ said, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me'.¹ In the Qur'an, God says, 'Man is my Mystery and I am his'. Baha'u'llah writes that God says, 'Thy heart is My home; purify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation'.

All these sacred words show us that man is made in God's image: yet the Essence of God is incomprehensible to the human mind, for the finite understanding cannot be applied to this infinite Mystery. God contains all: He cannot be contained. That which contains is superior to that which is contained. The whole is greater than its parts.

Things which are understood by men cannot be outside their capacity for understanding, so that it is impossible for the heart of man to comprehend the nature of the Majesty of God. Our imagination can only picture that which it is able to create.

The power of the understanding differs in degree in the various kingdoms of creation. The mineral, vegetable, and animal realms are each incapable of understanding any creation beyond their own. The mineral cannot imagine the growing power of the plant. The tree cannot understand the power of movement in the animal, neither can it comprehend what it would mean to possess sight, hearing or the sense of smell. These all belong to the physical creation.

Man also shares in this creation; but it is not possible for either of the lower kingdoms to understand that which takes

¹ John 14:11

place in the mind of man. The animal cannot realize the intelligence of a human being, he only knows that which is perceived by his animal senses, he cannot imagine anything in the abstract. An animal could not learn that the world is round, that the earth revolves round the sun, or the construction of the electric telegraph. These things are only possible to man. Man is the highest work of creation, the nearest to God of all creatures.

All superior kingdoms are incomprehensible to the inferior; how therefore could it be possible that the creature, man, should understand the almighty Creator of all?

That which we imagine, is not the Reality of God; He, the Unknowable, the Unthinkable, is far beyond the highest conception of man.

All creatures that exist are dependent upon the Divine Bounty. Divine Mercy gives life itself. As the light of the sun shines on the whole world, so the Mercy of the infinite God is shed on all creatures. As the sun ripens the fruits of the earth, and gives life and warmth to all living beings, so shines the Sun of Truth on all souls, filling them with the fire of Divine love and understanding.

The superiority of man over the rest of the created world is seen again in this, that man has a soul in which dwells the divine spirit; the souls of the lower creatures are inferior in their essence.

There is no doubt then, that of all created beings man is the nearest to the nature of God, and therefore receives a greater gift of the Divine Bounty.

The mineral kingdom possesses the power of existing. The plant has the power of existing and growing. The animal, in addition to existence and growth, has the capacity of moving about, and the use of the faculties of the senses. In the human kingdom we find all the attributes of the lower world, with

much more added thereto. Man is the sum of every previous creation, or he contains them all.

To man is given the special gift of the intellect by which he is able to receive a larger share of the light Divine. The Perfect Man is as a polished mirror reflecting the Sun of Truth, manifesting the attributes of God.

The Lord Christ said, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father' - God manifested in man.

The sun does not leave his place in the heavens and descend into the mirror, for the actions of ascent and descent, coming and going, do not belong to the Infinite, they are the methods of finite beings. In the Manifestation of God, the perfectly polished mirror, appear the qualities of the Divine in a form that man is capable of comprehending.

This is so simple that all can understand it, and that which we are able to understand we must perforce accept.

Our Father will not hold us responsible for the rejection of dogmas which we are unable either to believe or comprehend, for He is ever infinitely just to His children.

This example is, however, so logical that it can easily be grasped by all minds willing to give it their consideration.

May each one of you become a shining lamp, of which the flame is the Love of God. May your hearts burn with the radiance of unity. May your eyes be illumined with the effulgence of the Sun of Truth!

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 23-26)

"According to the words of the Old Testament God has said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.' This indicates that man is of the image and likeness of God - that is to say, the perfections of God, the divine virtues, are reflected or revealed in the human reality. Just as the light and effulgence of the sun when cast upon a polished mirror are reflected fully,

gloriously, so, likewise, the qualities and attributes of Divinity are radiated from the depths of a pure human heart. This is an evidence that man is the most noble of God's creatures.

Each kingdom of creation is endowed with its necessary complement of attributes and powers. The mineral possesses inherent virtues of its own kingdom in the scale of existence. The vegetable possesses the qualities of the mineral plus an augmentative virtue, or power of growth. The animal is endowed with the virtues of both the mineral and vegetable plane plus the power of intellect. The human kingdom is replete with the perfections of all the kingdoms below it with the addition of powers peculiar to man alone. Man is, therefore, superior to all the creatures below him, the loftiest and most glorious being of creation. Man is the microcosm; and the infinite universe, the macrocosm. The mysteries of the greater world, or macrocosm, are expressed or revealed in the lesser world, the microcosm. The tree, so to speak, is the greater world, and the seed in its relation to the tree is the lesser world. But the whole of the great tree is potentially latent and hidden in the little seed. When this seed is planted and cultivated, the tree is revealed. Likewise, the greater world, the macrocosm, is latent and miniaturized in the lesser world, or microcosm, of man. This constitutes the universality or perfection of virtues potential in mankind. Therefore, it is said that man has been created in the image and likeness of God.

Let us now discover more specifically how he is the image and likeness of God and what is the standard or criterion by which he can be measured and estimated. This standard can be no other than the divine virtues which are revealed in him. Therefore, every man imbued with divine qualities, who reflects heavenly moralities and perfections, who is the expression of ideal and praiseworthy attribute, is, verily, in the image and likeness of God. If a man possesses wealth, can we call him an image and likeness of God? Or is human honor and notoriety the criterion of divine nearness? Can we apply the test of racial color and say that man of a certain hue - white, black, brown, yellow, red - is the true image of his Creator? We must conclude that color is not the standard and estimate of judg-

ment and that it is of no importance, for color is accidental in nature. The spirit and intelligence of man is essential, and that is the manifestation of divine virtues, the merciful bestowals of God, the eternal life and baptism through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, be it known that color or race is of no importance. He who is the image and likeness of God, who is the manifestation of the bestowals of God, is acceptable at the threshold of God - whether his color be white, black or brown; it matters not. Man is not man simply because of bodily attributes. The standard of divine measure and judgment is his intelligence and spirit.

Therefore, let this be the only criterion and estimate, for this is the image and likeness of God. A man's heart may be pure and white though his outer skin be black; or his heart be dark and sinful though his racial color is white. The character and purity of the heart is of all importance. The heart illumined by the light of God is nearest and dearest to God, and inasmuch as God has endowed man with such favor that he is called the image of God, this is truly a supreme perfection of attainment, a divine station which is not to be sacrificed by the mere accident of color."

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 69-70)**

God maketh no distinction between the white and the black. If the hearts are pure both are acceptable unto Him. God is no respecter of persons on account of either color or race. All colors are acceptable to Him, be they white, black, or yellow. Inasmuch as all were created in the image of God, we must bring ourselves to realize that all embody divine possibilities. If you go into a garden and find all the flowers alike in form, species and color, the effect is wearisome to the eye. The garden is more beautiful when the flowers are many-colored and different; the variety lends charm and adornment. In a flock of doves some are white, some black, red, blue; yet they make no distinction among themselves. All are doves no matter what the color.

This variety in forms and colorings which is manifest in all the kingdoms is according to creative wisdom and has a divine purpose. Nevertheless, whether the creatures be all alike or all different should not be the cause of strife and quarreling among them. Especially why should man find cause for discord in the color or race of his fellow creature? No educated or illumined mind will allow that this differentiation and discord should exist or that there is any ground for it.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 113)**

O SON OF MAN!

Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.

(Baha'u'llah: *Arabic Hidden Words*, Page: 3)

O SON OF BEING!

Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me. For I have created thee rich and have bountifully shed My favor upon thee.

(Baha'u'llah: *Arabic Hidden Words*, Page: 11)

O SON OF BEING!

With the hands of power I made thee and with the fingers of strength I created thee; and within thee have I placed the essence of My light. Be thou content with it and seek naught else, for My work is perfect and My command is binding. Question it not, nor have a doubt thereof.

(Baha'u'llah: *Arabic Hidden Words*, Page: 12)

O SON OF MAN!

Thou art My dominion and My dominion perisheth not, wherefore fearest thou thy perishing? Thou art My light and My light shall never be extinguished, why dost thou dread extinction? Thou art My glory and My glory fadeth not; thou art My robe and My robe shall never be outworn. Abide

*then in thy love for Me, that thou mayest find Me
in the realm of glory.*

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 14)

O SON OF LIGHT!

*Forget all save Me and commune with My spirit.
This is of the essence of My command, therefore
turn unto it.*

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 16)

O SON OF SPIRIT!

*My claim on thee is great, it cannot be forgotten.
My grace to thee is plenteous, it cannot be veiled.
My love has made in thee its home, it cannot be
concealed. My light is manifest to thee, it cannot
be obscured.*

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 20)

O SON OF THE SUPREME!

*I have made death a messenger of joy to thee.
Wherefore dost thou grieve? I made the light to
shed on thee its splendor. Why dost thou veil thy-
self therefrom?*

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 32)

O SON OF SPIRIT!

*With the joyful tidings of light I hail thee: rejoice!
To the court of holiness I summon thee; abide
therein that thou mayest live in peace for ever-
more.*

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 33)

O SON OF MAN!

*Magnify My cause that I may reveal unto thee the
mysteries of My greatness and shine upon thee
with the light of eternity.*

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 41)

DENIAL OF THE SIGNS OF GOD

"They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house." **(John 7:52-53)**

"And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country." **(Luke 4:24)**

"Then sent We Our Messengers in succession: every time there came to a people their Messenger, they accused him of falsehood:" **(Qur'án 23:44)**

"As to those who deny the Signs of Allah, and in defiance of right, slay the Prophets, and slay those who teach just dealing with mankind, announce to them a grievous penalty." **(Qur'án 3:21)**

"Say: 'We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord; we make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will...'" **(Qur'án 3:84)**

"And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah, if your (doubts) are true." **(Qur'án 2:23)**

"Those to whom We have sent the book study it as it should be studied; they are the ones that believe therein; those who reject faith therein, the loss is their own." **(Qur'án 2:121)**

"O ye who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye

harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done.” (Qur’án 49:6)

“We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of Messengers; We gave Jesus the son of Mary clear (Signs) and strengthened him with the holy spirit. Is it that whenever there comes to you a Messenger with what ye yourselves desire not, ye are puffed up with pride? Some ye called impostors, and others ye slay!” (Qur’án 2:87)

Consider the past. How many, both high and low, have, at all times, yearningly awaited the advent of the Manifestations of God in the sanctified persons of His chosen Ones. How often have they expected His coming, how frequently have they prayed that the breeze of divine mercy might blow, and the promised Beauty step forth from behind the veil of concealment, and be made manifest to all the world. And whensoever the portals of grace did open, and the clouds of divine bounty did rain upon mankind, and the light of the Unseen did shine above the horizon of celestial might, they all denied Him, and turned away from His face - the face of God Himself. Refer ye, to verify this truth, to that which hath been recorded in every sacred Book.

(Bahá'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Page: 4)

And now, ponder upon these things. What could have caused such contention and conflict? Why is it that the advent of every true Manifestation of God hath been accompanied by such strife and tumult, by such tyranny and upheaval? This notwithstanding the fact that all the Prophets of God, whenever made manifest unto the peoples of the world, have invariably foretold the coming of yet another Prophet after them, and have established such signs as would herald the advent of the future Dispensation. To this the records of all sacred books bear witness. Why then is it that despite the expectation of men in their quest of the Manifestations of Holiness, and inspite of the signs recorded in the sacred books, such

acts of violence, of oppression and cruelty, should have been perpetrated in every age and cycle against all the Prophets and chosen Ones of God? Even as He hath revealed: "As oft as an Apostle cometh unto you with that which your souls desire not, ye swell with pride, accusing some of being impostors and slaying others."¹

Reflect, what could have been the motive for such deeds? What could have prompted such behaviour towards the Revealers of the beauty of the All-Glorious? Whatever in days gone by hath been the cause of the denial and opposition of those people hath now led to the perversity of the people of this age. To maintain that the testimony of Providence was incomplete, that it hath therefore been the cause of the denial of the people, is but open blasphemy. How far from the grace of the All-Bountiful and from His loving providence and tender mercies it is to single out a soul from amongst all men for the guidance of His creatures, and, on one hand, to withhold from Him the full measure of His divine testimony, and, on the other, inflict severe retribution on His people for having turned away from His chosen One! Nay, the manifold bounties of the Lord of all beings have, at all times, through the Manifestations of His divine Essence, encompassed the earth and all that dwell therein. Not for a moment hath His grace been withheld, nor have the showers of His loving-kindness ceased to rain upon mankind. Consequently, such behaviour can be attributed to naught save the petty-mindedness of such souls as tread the valley of arrogance and pride, are lost in the wilds of remoteness, walk in the ways of their idle fancy, and follow the dictates of the leaders of their faith. Their chief concern is mere opposition; their sole desire is to ignore the truth. Unto every discerning observer it is evident and manifest that had these people in the days of each of the Manifestations of the Sun of Truth sanctified their eyes, their ears, and their hearts from whatever they had seen, heard, and felt, they surely would not have been deprived of beholding the beauty of God, nor strayed far from the habitations of glory. But having weighed the testimony of God by the standard of their own

1 *Qur'án* 2:87

knowledge, gleaned from the teachings of the leaders of their faith, and found it at variance with their limited understanding, they arose to perpetrate such unseemly acts.

Leaders of religion, in every age, have hindered their people from attaining the shores of eternal salvation, inasmuch as they held the reins of authority in their mighty grasp. Some for the lust of leadership, others through want of knowledge and understanding, have been the cause of the deprivation of the people. By their sanction and authority, every Prophet of God hath drunk from the chalice of sacrifice, and winged His flight unto the heights of glory. What unspeakable cruelties they that have occupied the seats of authority and learning have inflicted upon the true Monarchs of the world, those Gems of divine virtue! Content with a transitory dominion, they have deprived themselves of an everlasting sovereignty. Thus, their eyes beheld not the light of the countenance of the Well-Beloved, nor did their ears hearken unto the sweet melodies of the Bird of Desire.

(Baha'u'llah: Kitáb-i-Íqán, pp 12-16)

And likewise, He saith: "As for those who believe not in the verses of God, or that they shall ever meet Him, these of My mercy shall despair, and these doth a grievous chastisement await."¹ Also, "And they say, `Shall we then abandon our gods for a crazed poet?'"² The implication of this verse is manifest. Behold what they observed after the verses were revealed. They called Him a poet, scoffed at the verses of God, and exclaimed saying: "These words of his are but tales of the Ancients!" By this they meant that those words which were spoken by the peoples of old Muhammad hath compiled and called them the Word of God.

Likewise, in this day, thou hast heard the people impute similar charges to this Revelation, saying: "He hath compiled these words from the words of old;" or "these words are spurious." Vain and haughty are their sayings, low their estate

1 *Qur'an* 29:23

2 *Qur'an* 37:36

and station! After the denials and denunciations which they uttered, and unto which We have referred, they protested saying: "No independent Prophet, according to our Scriptures, should arise after Moses and Jesus to abolish the Law of divine Revelation. Nay, he that is to be made manifest must needs fulfil the Law." Thereupon this verse, indicative of all the divine themes, and testifying to the truth that the flow of the grace of the All-Merciful can never cease, was revealed: "And Joseph came to you aforetime with clear tokens, but ye ceased not to doubt of the message with which He came to you, until, when He died, ye said, 'God will by no means raise up a Messenger after Him.' Thus God misleadeth him who is the transgressor the doubter."³ Therefore, understand from this verse and know of a certainty that the people in every age, clinging to a verse of the Book, have uttered such vain and absurd sayings, contending that no Prophet should again be made manifest to the world. Even as the Christian divines who, holding fast to the verse of the Gospel to which We have already referred, have sought to explain that the law of the Gospel shall at no time be annulled, and that no independent Prophet shall again be made manifest, unless He confirmeth the law of the Gospel. Most of the people have become afflicted with the same spiritual disease.

Even as thou dost witness how the people of the Qur'an, like unto the people of old, have allowed the words "Seal of the Prophets" to veil their eyes. And yet, they themselves testify to this verse: "None knoweth the interpretation thereof but God and they that are well-grounded in knowledge."⁴ And when He Who is well-grounded in all knowledge, He Who is the Mother, the Soul, the Secret, and the Essence thereof, revealeth that which is the least contrary to their desire, they bitterly oppose Him and shamelessly deny Him. These thou hast already heard and witnessed. Such deeds and words have been solely instigated by leaders of religion, they that worship no God but their own desire, who bear allegiance to naught but gold, who are wrapt in the densest veils of learning, and who, en-

3 *Qur'an* 40:34

4 *Qur'an* 3:7

meshed by its obscurities, are lost in the wilds of error. Even as the Lord of being hath explicitly declared: "What thinkest thou? He who hath made a God of his passions, and whom God causeth to err through a knowledge, and whose ears and whose heart He hath sealed up, and over whose sight He hath cast a veil - who, after his rejection by God, shall guide such a one? Will ye not then be warned?"¹

Although the outward meaning of "Whom God causeth to err through a knowledge" is what hath been revealed, yet to Us it signifieth those divines of the age who have turned away from the Beauty of God, and who, clinging unto their own learning, as fashioned by their own fancies and desires, have denounced Go's divine Message and Revelation. "Say: it is a weighty Message, from which ye turn aside!"² Likewise, He saith: "And when Our clear verses are recited tothem, they say, 'This is merely a man who would fain pervert you from your fathr's worship.' And they say, 'This is nne other than a forged falsehood.'³

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 211-215)

And when after the lapse of a few years the heaven of Divine decree was cleft asunder, and the Beauty of The Báb appeared in the clouds of the names of God, arrayed in a new raiment, these same people maliciously rose up against Him, Whose light embraceth all created things. They broke His Covenant, rejected His truth, contended with Him, caviled at His signs, treated His testimony as falsehood, and joined the company of the infidels. Eventually, they determined to take away His life. Such is the state of them who are in a far-gone error!

And when they realized their powerlessness to achieve their purpose, they arose to plot against Him. Witness how every moment they devise a fresh device to harm Him, that they may injure and dishonor the cause of God. Say: Woe be

1 Qur'an 45:23

2 Qur'an 38:67-68

3 Qur'an 34:43

to you! By God! Your schemings cover you with shame. Your Lord, the God of mercy, can well dispense with all creatures. Nothing whatever can either increase or diminish the things He doth possess. If ye believe, to your own behoof will ye believe; and if ye believe not, ye yourselves will suffer. At no time can the hand of the infidel profane the hem of His Robe.

O My servant that believest in God! By the righteousness of the Almighty! Were I to recount to thee the tale of the things that have befallen Me, the souls and minds of men would be incapable of sustaining its weight. God Himself beareth Me witness. Watch over thyself, and follow not the footsteps of these people. Meditate diligently upon the Cause of thy Lord. Strive to know Him through His own Self and not through others. For no one else besides Him can ever profit thee. To this all created things will testify, couldst thou but perceive it.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 147-148)

It is clear and evident that whenever the Manifestations of Holiness were revealed, the divines of their day have hindered the people from attaining unto the way of truth. To this testify the records of all the scriptures and heavenly books. Not one Prophet of God was made manifest Who did not fall a victim to the relentless hate, to the denunciation, denial, and execration of the clerics of His day! Woe unto them for the iniquities their hands have formerly wrought! Woe unto them for that which they are now doing! What veils of glory more grievous than these embodiments of error! By the righteousness of God! to pierce such veils is the mightiest of all acts, and to rend them asunder the most meritorious of all deeds! May God assist us and assist you, O concourse of the Spirit! that perchance ye may in the time of His Manifestation be graciously aided to perform such deeds, and may in His days attain unto the Presence of God.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 165-166)

Chapter 2:

The Reality of Christ

THE QUICKENING SPIRIT

Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee. The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive, and resplendent Spirit.

We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Through Him the leper recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him, the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened, and the soul of the sinner sanctified.

Leprosy may be interpreted as any veil that interveneth between man and the recognition of the Lord, his God. Whoso alloweth himself to be shut out from Him is indeed a leper, who shall not be remembered in the Kingdom of God, the Mighty, the All-Praised. We bear witness that through the power of the Word of God every leper was cleansed, every sickness was healed, every human infirmity was banished. He it is Who purified the world. Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.

(Baha'u'llah: *Gleanings*, Pages: 85-86)

There is however another spirit which may be termed the divine, to which Jesus Christ refers when He declares that man must be born of its quickening and baptized with its living fire. Souls deprived of that spirit are accounted as dead, though they are possessed of the human spirit. His Holiness Jesus Christ has pronounced them dead inasmuch as they have no portion of the divine spirit. He says: "Let the dead bury their dead." In another instance He declares: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." By this He means that souls though alive in the human kingdom are nevertheless dead if devoid of this particular spirit of divine quickening. They have not partaken of the divine life of the higher kingdom; for the soul which partakes of the power of the divine spirit is verily living.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 261)

...the day of the appearance of the Holy Manifestations is the spiritual springtime; it is the divine splendor; it is the heavenly bounty, the breeze of life, the rising of the Sun of Reality. Spirits are quickened; hearts are refreshed and invigorated; souls become good; existence is set in motion; human realities are gladdened, and grow and develop in good qualities and perfections. General progress is achieved and revival takes place, for it is the day of resurrection, the time of excitement and ferment, and the season of bliss, of joy and of intense rapture.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 74)

Bahá'u'lláh has announced that no matter how far the world of humanity may advance in material civilization, it is nevertheless in need of spiritual virtues and the bounties of God. The spirit of man is not illumined and quickened through material sources. It is not resuscitated by investigating phenomena of the world of matter. The spirit of man is in need of the protection of the Holy Spirit. Just as he advances by progressive stages from the mere physical world of being into the intellectual realm, so must he develop upward in moral attributes and spiritual graces. In the process of this attainment he is ever in need of the bestowals of the Holy Spirit. Material development may be likened to the glass of a lamp whereas divine virtues and spiritual susceptibilities are the light within the glass. The lamp chimney is worthless without the light; likewise man in his material condition requires the radiance and vivification of the divine graces and merciful attributes. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit he is lifeless. Although physically and mentally alive he is spiritually dead. His Holiness Christ announced, "That which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of spirit is spirit," meaning that man must be born again. As the babe is born into the light of this physical world so must the physical and intellectual man be born into the light of the world of divinity.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 58)

Question -- In verse 22 of chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians it is written: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." What is the meaning of these words?

Answer -- Know that there are two natures in man: the physical nature and the spiritual nature. The physical nature is inherited from Adam, and the spiritual nature is inherited from the Reality of the Word of God, which is the spirituality of Christ. The physical nature is born of Adam, but the spiritual nature is born from the bounty of the Holy Spirit. The first is the source of all imperfection; the second is the source of all perfection.

The Christ sacrificed Himself so that men might be freed from the imperfections of the physical nature and might become possessed of the virtues of the spiritual nature. This

spiritual nature, which came into existence through the bounty of the Divine Reality, is the union of all perfections and appears through the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is the divine perfections; it is light, spirituality, guidance, exaltation, high aspiration, justice, love, grace, kindness to all, philanthropy, the essence of life. It is the reflection of the splendor of the Sun of Reality.

The Christ is the central point of the Holy Spirit: He is born of the Holy Spirit; He is raised up by the Holy Spirit; He is the descendant of the Holy Spirit -- that is to say, that the Reality of Christ does not descend from Adam; no, it is born of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this verse in Corinthians, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," means, according to this terminology, that Adam¹ is the father of man -- that is to say, He is the cause of the physical life of mankind; His was the physical fatherhood. He is a living soul, but He is not the giver of spiritual life, whereas Christ is the cause of the spiritual life of man, and with regard to the spirit, His was the spiritual fatherhood. Adam is a living soul; Christ is a quickening spirit.

This physical world of man is subject to the power of the lusts, and sin is the consequence of this power of the lusts, for it is not subject to the laws of justice and holiness. The body of man is a captive of nature; it will act in accordance with whatever nature orders. It is, therefore, certain that sins such as anger, jealousy, dispute, covetousness, avarice, ignorance, prejudice, hatred, pride and tyranny exist in the physical world. All these brutal qualities exist in the nature of man. A man who has not had a spiritual education is a brute. Like the savages of Africa, whose actions, habits and morals are purely sensual, they act according to the demands of nature to such a degree that they rend and eat one another. Thus it is evident that the physical world of man is a world of sin. In this physical world man is not distinguished from the animal.

¹ *Abu'l-bashar, I.e., the father of man, is one of the titles given by the Muslims to Adam*

All sin comes from the demands of nature, and these demands, which arise from the physical qualities, are not sins with respect to the animals, while for man they are sin. The anima is the source of imperfections, such as anger, sensuality, jealousy, avarice, cruelty, pride all these defects are found in animals but do not constitute sins. But in man they are in Adam is the cause of man's physical life; but the Reality of Christ -- that is to say, the Word of God -- is the cause of spiritual life. It is "a quickening spirit," meaning that all the imperfections which come from the requirements of the physical life of man are transformed into human perfections by the teachings and education of that spirit. Therefore, Christ was a quickening spirit, and the cause of life in all mankind.

Adam was the cause of physical life, and as the physical world of man is the world of imperfections, and imperfections are the equivalent of death, Paul compared the physical imperfections to death.

But the mass of the Christians believe that, as Adam ate of the forbidden tree, He sinned in that He disobeyed, and that the disastrous consequences of this disobedience have been transmitted as a heritage and have remained among His descendants. Hence Adam became the cause of the death of humanity. This explanation is unreasonable and evidently wrong, for it means that all men, even the Prophets and the Messengers of God, without committing any sin or fault, but simply because they are the posterity of Adam, have become without reason guilty sinners, and until the day of the sacrifice of Christ were held captive in hell in painful torment. This is far from the justice of God. If Adam was a sinner, what is the sin of Abraham? What is the fault of Isaac, or of Joseph? Of what is Moses guilty?

But Christ, Who is the Word of God, sacrificed Himself. This has two meanings, an apparent and an esoteric meaning. The outward meaning is this: Christ's intention was to represent and promote a Cause which was to educate the human world, to quicken the children of Adam, and to enlighten all mankind; and since to represent such a great Cause -- a Cause which

was antagonistic to all the people of the world and all the nations and kingdoms -- meant that He would be killed and crucified, so Christ in proclaiming His mission sacrificed His life. He regarded the cross as a throne, the wound as a balm, the poison as honey and sugar. He arose to teach and educate men, and so He sacrificed Himself to give the spirit of life. He perished in body so as to quicken others by the spirit.

The second meaning of sacrifice is this: Christ was like a seed, and this seed sacrificed its own form so that the tree might grow and develop. Although the form of the seed was destroyed, its reality became apparent in perfect majesty and beauty in the form of a tree.

The position of Christ was that of absolute perfection; He made His divine perfections shine like the sun upon all believing souls, and the bounties of the light shone and radiated in the reality of men. This is why He says: "I am the bread which descended from heaven; whosoever shall eat of this bread will not die"¹ -- that is to say, that whosoever shall partake of this divine food will attain unto eternal life: that is, every one who partakes of this bounty and receives these perfections will find eternal life, will obtain preexistent favors, will be freed from the darkness of error, and will be illuminated by the light of His guidance.

The form of the seed was sacrificed for the tree, but its perfections, because of this sacrifice, became evident and apparent -- the tree, the branches, the leaves and the blossoms being concealed in the seed. When the form of the seed was sacrificed, its perfections appeared in the perfect form of leaves, blossoms and fruits.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, p. 121)

Question - What is the truth of the story of Adam, and His eating of the fruit of the tree

Answer - In the Bible it is written that God put Adam in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and take care of it, and said to

1 John 6:41, 50, 58

Him: "Eat of every tree of the garden except the tree of good and evil, for if You eat of that, You will die."² Then it is said that God caused Adam to sleep, and He took one of His ribs and created woman in order that she might be His companion. After that it is said the serpent induced the woman to eat of the tree, saying: "God has forbidden you to eat of the tree in order that your eyes may not be opened, and that you may not know good from evil."³ Then Eve ate from the tree and gave unto Adam, Who also ate; their eyes were opened, they found themselves naked, and they hid their bodies with leaves. In consequence of this act they received the reproaches of God. God said to Adam: "Hast Thou eaten of the forbidden tree?" Adam answered: "Eve tempted Me, and I did eat." God then reproved Eve; Eve said: "The serpent tempted me, and I did eat." For this the serpent was cursed, and enmity was put between the serpent and Eve, and between their descendants. And God said: "The man is become like unto Us, knowing good and evil, and perhaps He will eat of the tree of life and live forever." So God guarded the tree of life.⁴

If we take this story in its apparent meaning, according to the interpretation of the masses, it is indeed extraordinary. The intelligence cannot accept it, affirm it, or imagine it; for such arrangements, such details, such speeches and reproaches are far from being those of an intelligent man, how much less of the Divinity - that Divinity Who has organized this infinite universe in the most perfect form, and its innumerable inhabitants with absolute system, strength and perfection.

We must reflect a little: if the literal meaning of this story were attributed to a wise man, certainly all would logically deny that this arrangement, this invention, could have emanated from an intelligent being. Therefore, this story of Adam and Eve who ate from the tree, and their expulsion from Paradise, must be thought of simply as a symbol. It contains divine mysteries and universal meanings, and it is capable of mar-

2 *Gen. 2:16-17*

3 *Gen. 3:5*

4 *Gen. 3:11-15,22*

velous explanations. Only those who are initiated into mysteries, and those who are near the Court of the All-Powerful, are aware of these secrets. Hence these verses of the Bible have numerous meanings.

We will explain one of them, and we will say: Adam signifies the heavenly spirit of Adam, and Eve His human soul. For in some passages in the Holy Books where women are mentioned, they represent the soul of man. The tree of good and evil signifies the human world; for the spiritual and divine world is purely good and absolutely luminous, but in the human world light and darkness, good and evil, exist as opposite conditions.

The meaning of the serpent is attachment to the human world. This attachment of the spirit to the human world led the soul and spirit of Adam from the world of freedom to the world of bondage and caused Him to turn from the Kingdom of Unity to the human world. When the soul and spirit of Adam entered the human world, He came out from the paradise of freedom and fell into the world of bondage. From the height of purity and absolute goodness, He entered into the world of good and evil.

The tree of life is the highest degree of the world of existence: the position of the Word of God, and the supreme Manifestation. Therefore, that position has been preserved; and, at the appearance of the most noble supreme Manifestation, it became apparent and clear. For the position of Adam, with regard to the appearance and manifestation of the divine perfections, was in the embryonic condition; the position of Christ was the condition of maturity and the age of reason; and the rising of the Greatest Luminary¹ was the condition of the perfection of the essence and of the qualities. This is why in the supreme Paradise the tree of life is the expression for the center of absolutely pure sanctity - that is to say, of the divine supreme Manifestation. From the days of Adam until the days of Christ, They spoke little of eternal life and the heav-

1 *Baha'u'llah*

enly universal perfections. This tree of life was the position of the Reality of Christ; through His manifestation it was planted and adorned with everlasting fruits.

Now consider how far this meaning conforms to the reality. For the spirit and the soul of Adam, when they were attached to the human world, passed from the world of freedom into the world of bondage, and His descendants continued in bondage. This attachment of the soul and spirit to the human world, which is sin, was inherited by the descendants of Adam, and is the serpent which is always in the midst of, and at enmity with, the spirits and the descendants of Adam. That enmity continues and endures. For attachment to the world has become the cause of the bondage of spirits, and this bondage is identical with sin, which has been transmitted from Adam to His posterity. It is because of this attachment that men have been deprived of essential spirituality and exalted position.

When the sanctified breezes of Christ and the holy light of the Greatest Luminary² were spread abroad, the human realities - that is to say, those who turned toward the Word of God and received the profusion of His bounties - were saved from this attachment and sin, obtained everlasting life, were delivered from the chains of bondage, and attained to the world of liberty. They were freed from the vices of the human world, and were blessed by the virtues of the Kingdom. This is the meaning of the words of Christ, "I gave My blood for the life of the world"³ - that is to say, I have chosen all these troubles, these sufferings, calamities, and even the greatest martyrdom, to attain this object, the remission of sins (that is, the detachment of spirits from the human world, and their attraction to the divine world) in order that souls may arise who will be the very essence of the guidance of mankind, and the manifestations of the perfections of the Supreme Kingdom.

2 *Baha'u'llah*

3 *John 6:51*

Observe that if, according to the suppositions of the People of the Book¹, the meaning were taken in its exoteric sense, it would be absolute injustice and complete predestination. If Adam sinned by going near the forbidden tree, what was the sin of the glorious Abraham, and what was the error of Moses the Interlocutor? What was the crime of Noah the Prophet? What was the transgression of Joseph the Truthful? What was the iniquity of the Prophets of God, and what was the trespass of John the Chaste? Would the justice of God have allowed these enlightened Manifestations, on account of the sin of Adam, to find torment in hell until Christ came and by the sacrifice of Himself saved them from excruciating tortures? Such an idea is beyond every law and rule and cannot be accepted by any intelligent person.

No; it means what has already been said: Adam is the spirit of Adam, and Eve is His soul; the tree is the human world, and the serpent is that attachment to this world which constitutes sin, and which has infected the descendants of Adam. Christ by His holy breezes saved men from this attachment and freed them from this sin. The sin in Adam is relative to His position. Although from this attachment there proceed results, nevertheless, attachment to the earthly world, in relation to attachment to the spiritual world, is considered as a sin. The good deeds of the righteous are the sins of the Near Ones. This is established. So bodily power is not only defective in relation to spiritual power; it is weakness in comparison. In the same way, physical life, in comparison with eternal life in the Kingdom, is considered as death. So Christ called the physical life death, and said: "Let the dead bury their dead."² Though those souls possessed physical life, yet in His eyes that life was death.

This is one of the meanings of the biblical story of Adam. Reflect until you discover the others. Salutations be upon you.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*, Pages: 122-126)

1 *Jews and Christians*

2 *Matt. 8:22*

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Question - What is the Holy Spirit?

Answer - The Holy Spirit is the Bounty of God and the luminous rays which emanate from the Manifestations; for the focus of the rays of the Sun of Reality was Christ, and from this glorious focus, which is the Reality of Christ, the Bounty of God reflected upon the other mirrors which were the reality of the Apostles. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles signifies that the glorious divine bounties reflected and appeared in their reality. Moreover, entrance and exit, descent and ascent, are characteristics of bodies and not of spirits - that is to say, sensible realities enter and come forth, but intellectual subtleties and mental realities, such as intelligence, love, knowledge, imagination and thought, do not enter, nor come forth, nor descend, but rather they have direct connection.

For example, knowledge, which is a state attained to by the intelligence, is an intellectual condition; and entering and coming out of the mind are imaginary conditions; but the mind is connected with the acquisition of knowledge, like images reflected in a mirror.

Therefore, as it is evident and clear that the intellectual realities do not enter and descend, and it is absolutely impossible that the Holy Spirit should ascend and descend, enter, come out or penetrate, it can only be that the Holy Spirit appears in splendor, as the sun appears in the mirror.

In some passages in the Holy Books the Spirit is spoken of, signifying a certain person, as it is currently said in speech and conversation that such a person is an embodied spirit, or he is a personification of mercy and generosity. In this case, it is the light we look at, and not the glass.

In the Gospel of John, in speaking of the Promised One Who was to come after Christ, it is said in chapter 16, verses 12, 13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come,

He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak."

Now consider carefully that from these words, "for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak," it is clear that the Spirit of truth is embodied in a Man Who has individuality, Who has ears to hear and a tongue to speak. In the same way the name "Spirit of God" is used in relation to Christ, as you speak of a light, meaning both the light and the lamp. (*'Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 108-109*)

Question - How was Christ born of the Holy Spirit?

Answer - In regard to this question, theologians and materialists disagree. The theologians believe that Christ was born of the Holy Spirit, but the materialists think this is impossible and inadmissible, and that without doubt He had a human father.

In the Qur'án it is said: "And We sent Our Spirit unto her, and He appeared unto her in the shape of a perfect man,"¹ meaning that the Holy Spirit took the likeness of the human form, as an image is produced in a mirror, and he addressed Mary.

The materialists believe that there must be marriage, and say that a living body cannot be created from a lifeless body, and without male and female there cannot be fecundation. And they think that not only with man, but also with animals and plants, it is impossible. For the union of the male and female exists in all living beings and plants. This pairing of things is even shown forth in the Qur'án: "Glory be o Him Who has created all the pairs: of such things as the earth produceth, and of themselves; and of things which they know not"² - this to say, men, animals and plants are all in pairs -- "and of everything have We created two kinds" -- that is to say, We have created all the beings through pairing.

1 Qur'án 19:17

2 Qur'án 36:35

Briefly, they say a man without a human father cannot be imagined. In answer, the theologians say: "This thing is not impossible and unachievable, but it has not been seen; and there is a great difference between a thing which is impossible and one which is unknown. For example, in former times the telegraph, which causes the East and the West to communicate, was unknown but not impossible; photography and phonography were unknown but not impossible."

The materialists insist upon this belief, and the theologians reply: "Is this globe eternal or phenomenal?" The materialists answer that, according to science and important discoveries, it is established that it is phenomenal; in the beginning it was a flaming globe, and gradually it became temperate; a crust was formed around it, and upon this crust plants came into existence, then animals, and finally man.

The theologians say: "Then from your statement it has become evident and clear that mankind is phenomenal upon the globe, and not eternal. Then surely the first man had neither father nor mother, for the existence of man is phenomenal. Is not the creation of man without father and mother, even though gradually, more difficult than if he had simply come into existence without a father? As you admit that the first man came into existence without father or mother -- whether it be gradually or at once -- there can remain no doubt that a man without a human father is also possible and admissible; you cannot consider this impossible; otherwise, you are illogical. For example, if you say that this lamp has once been lighted without wick and oil, and then say that it is impossible to light it without the wick, this is illogical." Christ had a mother; the first man, as the materialists believe, had neither father nor mother.³ (*Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, p. 88*)

A great man is a great man, whether born of a human father or not. If being without a father is a virtue, Adam is greater and more excellent than all the Prophets and Mes-

³ *This conversation shows the uselessness of discussions upon such questions; the teachings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá upon the birth of Christ will be found in the following chapter.*

sengers, for He had neither father nor mother. That which causes honor and greatness is the splendor and bounty of the divine perfections. The sun is born from substance and form, which can be compared to father and mother, and it is absolute perfection; but the darkness has neither substance nor form, neither father nor mother, and it is absolute imperfection. The substance of Adam's physical life was earth, but the substance of Abraham was pure sperm; it is certain that the pure and chaste sperm is superior to earth.

Furthermore, in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, verses 12 and 13, it is said: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."¹

From these verses it is obvious that the being of a disciple also is not created by physical power, but by the spiritual reality. The honor and greatness of Christ is not due to the fact that He did not have a human father, but to His perfectness, bounties and divine glory. If the greatness of Christ is His being fatherless, then Adam is greater than Christ, for He had neither father nor mother. It is said in the Old Testament, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."² Observe that it is said that Adam came into existence from the Spirit of life. Moreover, the expression which John uses in regard to the disciples proves that they also are from the Heavenly Father. Hence it is evident that the holy reality, meaning the real existence of every great man, comes from God and owes its being to the breath of the Holy Spirit.

The purport is that, if to be without a father is the greatest human glory, then Adam is greater than all, for He had neither father nor mother. Is it better for a man to be created from a living substance or from earth? Certainly it is better if he

1 John 1:12-13

2 Gen. 2:7

be created from a living substance. But Christ was born and came into existence from the Holy Spirit.

To conclude: the splendor and honor of the holy souls and the Divine Manifestations come from Their heavenly perfections, bounties and glory, and from nothing else.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*, Pages: 89-90)

Question - What is the manner, and what is the meaning, of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, as described in the Gospel?

Answer - The descent of the Holy Spirit is not like the entrance of air into man; it is an expression and a simile, rather than an exact or a literal image. No, rather it is like the entrance of the image of the sun into the mirror - that is to say, its splendor becomes apparent in it.

After the death of Christ the disciples were troubled, and their ideas and thoughts were discordant and contradictory; later they became firm and united, and at the feast of Pentecost they gathered together and detached themselves from the things of this world. Disregarding themselves, they renounced their comfort and worldly happiness, sacrificing their body and soul to the Beloved, abandoning their houses, and becoming wanderers and homeless, even forgetting their own existence. Then they received the help of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit became manifested; the spirituality of Christ triumphed, and the love of God reigned. They were given help at that time and dispersed in different directions, teaching the Cause of God, and giving forth proofs and evidences.

So the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles means their attraction by the Christ Spirit, whereby they acquired stability and firmness. Through the spirit of the love of God they gained a new life, and they saw Christ living, helping and protecting them. They were like drops, and they became seas; they were like feeble insects, and they became majestic eagles; they were weak and became powerful. They were like mirrors facing the sun; verily, some of the light became mani-

fest in them. (*'Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 106-107*)

The Divine Reality is Unthinkable, Limitless, Eternal, Immortal and Invisible. The world of creation is bound by natural law, finite and mortal.

The Infinite Reality cannot be said to ascend or descend. It is beyond the understanding of man, and cannot be described in terms which apply to the phenomenal sphere of the created world.

Man, then, is in extreme need of the only Power by which he is able to receive help from the Divine Reality, that Power alone bringing him into contact with the Source of all life.

An intermediary is needed to bring two extremes into relation with each other. Riches and poverty, plenty and need: without an intermediary power there could be no relation between these pairs of opposites. So we can say there must be a Mediator between God and Man, and this is none other than the Holy Spirit, which brings the created earth into relation with the 'Unthinkable One', the Divine Reality.

The Divine Reality may be likened to the sun and the Holy Spirit to the rays of the sun. As the rays of the sun bring the light and warmth of the sun to the earth, giving life to all created beings, so do the 'Manifestations'¹ bring the power of the Holy Spirit from the Divine Sun of Reality to give light and life to the souls of men.

Behold, there is an intermediary necessary between the sun and the earth; the sun does not descend to the earth, neither does the earth ascend to the sun. This contact is made by the rays of the sun which bring light and warmth and heat.

The Holy Spirit is the Light from the Sun of Truth bringing, by its infinite power, life and illumination to all mankind,

1 *Manifestations of God*

flooding all souls with Divine Radiance, conveying the blessings of God's Mercy to the whole world. The earth, without the medium of the warmth and light of the rays of the sun, could receive no benefits from the sun.

Likewise the Holy Spirit is the very cause of the life of man; without the Holy Spirit he would have no intellect, he would be unable to acquire his scientific knowledge by which his great influence over the rest of creation is gained. The illumination of the Holy Spirit gives to man the power of thought, and enables him to make discoveries by which he bends the laws of nature to his will.

The Holy Spirit it is which, through the mediation of the Prophets of God, teaches spiritual virtues to man and enables him to attain Eternal Life.

All these blessings are brought to man by the Holy Spirit; therefore we can understand that the Holy Spirit is the Intermediary between the Creator and the created. The light and heat of the sun cause the earth to be fruitful, and create life in all things that grow; and the Holy Spirit quickens the souls of men.

The two great apostles, St Peter and St John the Evangelist, were once simple, humble workmen, toiling for their daily bread. By the Power of the Holy Spirit their souls were illumined, and they received the eternal blessings of the Lord Christ.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p. 59)

In the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh, it is written: 'By the Power of the Holy Spirit alone is man able to progress, for the power of man is limited and the Divine Power is boundless.' The reading of history brings us to the conclusion that all truly great men, the benefactors of the human race, those who have moved men to love the right and hate the wrong and who have caused real progress, all these have been inspired by the force of the Holy Spirit.

The Prophets of God have not all graduated in the schools of learned philosophy; indeed they were often men of humble birth, to all appearance ignorant, unknown men of no importance in the eyes of the world; sometimes even lacking the knowledge of reading and writing.

That which raised these great ones above men, and by which they were able to become Teachers of the truth, was the power of the Holy Spirit. Their influence on humanity, by virtue of this mighty inspiration, was great and penetrating.

The influence of the wisest philosophers, without this Spirit Divine, has been comparatively unimportant, however extensive their learning and deep their scholarship.

The unusual intellects, for instance, of Plato, Aristotle, Pliny and Socrates, have not influenced men so greatly that they have been anxious to sacrifice their lives for their teachings; whilst some of those simple men so moved humanity that thousands of men have become willing martyrs to uphold their words; for their words were inspired by the Divine Spirit of God! The prophets of Judah and Israel, Elijah, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel, were humble men, as were also the apostles of Jesus Christ.

Peter, the chief of the apostles, used to divide the proceeds of his fishing into seven parts, and when, having taken one part for each day's use, he arrived at the seventh portion, he knew it was the Sabbath day. Consider this! and then think of his future position; to what glory he attained because the Holy Spirit wrought great works through him.

We understand that the Holy Spirit is the energizing factor in the life of man. Whosoever receives this power is able to influence all with whom he comes into contact.

The greatest philosophers without this Spirit are powerless, their souls lifeless, their hearts dead! Unless the Holy Spirit breathes into their souls, they can do no good work. No system of philosophy has ever been able to change the manners

and customs of a people for the better. Learned philosophers, unenlightened by the Divine Spirit, have often been men of inferior morality; they have not proclaimed in their actions the reality of their beautiful phrases.

The difference between spiritual philosophers and others is shown by their lives. The Spiritual Teacher shows His belief in His own teaching, by Himself being what He recommends to others.

An humble man without learning, but filled with the Holy Spirit, is more powerful than the most nobly-born profound scholar without that inspiration. He who is educated by the Divine Spirit can, in his time, lead others to receive the same Spirit.

I pray for you that you may be informed by the life of the Divine Spirit, so that you may be the means of educating others. The life and morals of a spiritual man are, in themselves, an education to those who know him.

Think not of your own limitations, dwell only on the welfare of the Kingdom of Glory. Consider the influence of Jesus Christ on His apostles, then think of their effect upon the world. These simple men were enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the glad tidings!

So may you all receive Divine assistance! No capacity is limited when led by the Spirit of God!

The earth of itself has no properties of life, it is barren and dry, until fertilized by the sun and the rain; still the earth need not bewail its own limitations.

May you be given life! May the rain of the Divine Mercy and the warmth of the Sun of Truth make your gardens fruitful, so that many beautiful flowers of exquisite fragrance and love may blossom in abundance. Turn your faces away from the contemplation of your own finite selves and fix your eyes upon the Everlasting Radiance; then will your souls receive in

full measure the Divine Power of the Spirit and the Blessings of the Infinite Bounty.

If you thus keep yourselves in readiness, you will become to the world of humanity a burning flame, a star of guidance, and a fruitful tree, changing all its darkness and woe into light and joy by the shining of the Sun of Mercy and the infinite blessings of the Glad Tidings.

This is the meaning of the power of the Holy Spirit, which I pray may be bountifully showered upon you.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p. 166)

Bahá'u'lláh has announced that no matter how far the world of humanity may advance in material civilization, it is nevertheless in need of spiritual virtues and the bounties of God. The spirit of man is not illumined and quickened through material sources. It is not resuscitated by investigating phenomena of the world of matter. The spirit of man is in need of the protection of the Holy Spirit. As he advances by progressive stages from the mere physical world of being into the intellectual realm, so must he develop upward in moral attributes and spiritual graces. In the process of this attainment he is ever in need of the bestowals of the Holy Spirit. Material development may be likened to the glass of a lamp whereas divine virtues and spiritual susceptibilities are the light within the glass. The lamp chimney is worthless without the light; likewise man in his material condition requires the radiance and vivification of the divine graces and merciful attributes. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit he is lifeless. Although physically and mentally alive he is spiritually dead. His Holiness Christ announced, "That which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of spirit is spirit," meaning that man must be born again. As the babe is born into the light of this physical world so must the physical and intellectual man be born into the light of the world of divinity. In the matrix of the mother the unborn child was deprived and unconscious of the world of material existence but after its birth it beheld the wonders and beauties of a new realm of life and being. In the world of the matrix it was utterly ignorant and unable to conceive of these new

conditions but after its transformation it discovers the radiant sun, trees, flowers and an infinite range of blessings and bounties awaiting it. In the human plane and kingdom man is a captive of nature and ignorant of the divine world until born of the breaths of the Holy Spirit out of physical conditions of limitation and deprivation. Then he beholds the reality of the spiritual realm and kingdom, realizes the narrow restrictions of the mere human world of existence and becomes conscious of the unlimited and infinite glories of the world of God. Therefore no matter how man may advance upon the physical and intellectual plane he is ever in need of the boundless virtues of divinity, the protection of the Holy Spirit and the face of God.
(Abdu'l-Baha, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 58)

THE CHRISTHOOD

Consider the statement recorded in the first chapter of the book of John:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." **(John 1:1)**

This statement is brief but replete with the greatest meanings. Its applications are illimitable and beyond the power of books or words to contain and express. Heretofore the doctors of theology have not expounded it but have restricted it to Jesus as "the Word made flesh," the separation of Jesus from God, the Father, and His descent upon the earth. In this way the individualized separation of the godhead came to be taught.

The essential oneness of Father, Son and Spirit has many meanings and constitutes the foundation of Christianity. Today we will merely give a synopsis of explanation. Why was Jesus the Word?

In the universe of creation all phenomenal beings are as letters. Letters in themselves are meaningless and express nothing of thought or ideal - as, for instance, a, b, etc. Like-

wise, all phenomenal beings are without independent meaning. But a word is composed of letters and has independent sense and meaning. Therefore, as Christ conveyed the perfect meaning of divine reality and embodied independent significance, He was the Word. He was as the station of reality compared to the station of metaphor. There is no intrinsic meaning in the leaves of a book, but the thought they convey leads you to reflect upon reality. The reality of Jesus was the perfect meaning, the Christhood in Him which in the Holy Books is symbolized as the Word.

“The Word was with God.” The Christhood means not the body of Jesus but the perfection of divine virtues manifest in Him. Therefore, it is written, “He is God.” This does not imply separation from God, even as it is not possible to separate the rays of the sun from the sun. The reality of Christ was the embodiment of divine virtues and attributes of God. For in Divinity there is no duality. All adjectives, nouns and pronouns in that court of sanctity are one; there is neither multiplicity nor division. The intention of this explanation is to show that the Words of God have innumerable significances and mysteries of meanings - each one a thousand and more.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 154-155)**

...it is recorded in the Gospel of St. John, “In the beginning was the word, the word was with God and the word was God.” The majority of Christians accept this matter literally, but we give a logical explanation that no one need find occasion to reject.

The Christians have made this statement about “the word,” the foundation of the trinity; but philosophers state that the trinity as regards the identity of divinity is impossible.

We explain this subject as follows: By the “word” we mean that creation with its infinite forms is like unto letters and the individual members of humanity are likewise like unto letters. A letter individually has no meaning, no independent significance, but the station of Christ is the station of the word. That

is why we say Christ is the "word" - a complete significance. The universal bestowal of divinity is manifest in Christ. It is obvious that the evolution of other souls is approximate, or only a part of the whole, but the perfections of the Christ are universal, or the whole. The reality of Christ is the collective center of all the independent virtues and infinite significances.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy, p 18)

Since the Departure of Bahá'u'lláh, the Ineffable Splendor and the Glory has become manifest and is visibly reflected to the world from Its Temple of Manifestation in Abdul Baha, Servant of God, Center of the Divine Covenant, Expounder of the Book and Word of God, Unveiler and Unsealer of the Divine Mysteries.

This Divine Manifestation and Appearance of the Word of God constitutes the Christhood, the 'Christ' -- promised by Jesus and foretold in Its former Manifestations, even as Malachi the prophet hath said:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."

(Malachi 3:1)

(Marzieh Gail, Arches of the Years, p. 118)

When asked if it would be always necessary for prophets to come from time to time -- "would not the world in the course of events through progress reach to a full realization of God?" -- 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "Mankind needs a universal motive power to quicken it. The inspired messenger who is directly assisted by the power of God brings about universal results. Bahá'u'lláh rose as a light in Persia and now that light is going out to the whole world."

"Is this what is meant by the Second Coming of Christ?"

"Christ is an Expression of the Divine Reality, the Single Essence and Heavenly Entity, which hath no beginning or ending. It has appearance, arising, and manifestation and setting in each one of the Cycles."

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Abdu'l-Baha in London*, p. 88)

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou Seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." **(John 8:56-58)**

One should consider carefully that the Jews had failed to comprehend the Divine nature of Christ, His 'Christhood', and instead, perceived Him as a man who was less than fifty years of age, who could not have possibly seen Abraham. For 'The Christhood means not the body of Jesus but the perfection of divine virtues manifest in Him' -- it is pre-existent, eternal, and sanctified above time, and place.

UPON THIS ROCK

Question - In the Gospel of St. Matthew it is said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church."¹ What is the meaning of this verse?

Answer - "This utterance of Christ is a confirmation of the statement of Peter, when Christ asked: Whom do you believe Me to be? and Peter answered: I believe that 'Thou art the Son of the living God.' Then Christ said to him: 'Thou art Peter'² - (for Cephias in Aramaic means rock) - 'and upon this rock I will build My church.' For the others in answer to Christ said that He was Elias, and some said John the Baptist, and some others Jeremias or one of the Prophets.³ Christ wished

1 Matt. 16:18

2 Christ called him Cephias, which corresponds to the Greek word *petras*, which means rock

3 Matt. 16:14

by suggestion, or an allusion, to confirm the words of Peter; so on account of the suitability of his name, Peter, He said: 'and upon this rock I will build My church,' meaning, thy belief that Christ is the Son of the living God will be the foundation of the Religion of God, and upon this belief the foundation of the church of God - which is the Law of God - shall be established.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*, Page: 135)

Recall the statement of Jesus Christ in the Gospel. Addressing Peter, He said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." It is evident, therefore, that the church of God is the law of God and that the actual edifice is but one symbol thereof. For the law of God is a collective center which unites various peoples, native lands, tongues and opinions. All find shelter in its protection and become attracted by it. For example, Moses and the Mosaic law were the unifying center for the scattered sheep of Israel. He united these wandering flocks, brought them under control of divine law, educated and unified them, caused them to agree and uplifted them to a superlative degree of development. At a time when they were debased, they became glorified; ignorant, they were made knowing; in the bonds of captivity, they were given freedom; in short, they were unified. Day by day they advanced until they attained the highest degree of progress witnessed in that age. We prove, therefore, that the Manifestation of God and the law of God accomplish unity.

It is self-evident that humanity is at variance. Human tastes differ; thoughts, native lands, races and tongues are many. The need of a collective center by which these differences may be counterbalanced and the people of the world be unified is obvious. Consider how nothing but a spiritual power can bring about this unification, for material conditions and mental aspects are so widely different that agreement and unity are not possible through outer means. It is possible, however, for all to become unified through one spirit, just as all may receive light from one sun. Therefore, assisted by the collective and divine center which is the law of God and the reality of His

Manifestation, we can overcome these conditions until they pass away entirely and the races advance.

Consider the time of Christ. Peoples, races and governments were many; religions, sects and denominations were various; but when Christ appeared, the Messianic reality proved to be the collective center which unified them beneath the same tabernacle of agreement. Reflect upon this. Could Jesus Christ have united these divergent factors or brought about such results through political power? Was this unity and agreement possible through material forces? It is evident that it was not; nay, rather, these various peoples were brought together through a divine power, through the breaths of the Holy Spirit. They were blended and quickened by the infusion of a new life. The spirituality of Christ overcame their difficulties so that their disagreements passed away completely. In this way these divergent peoples were unified and became welded in a bond of love which alone can unite hearts. Therefore, it is shown that the divine Manifestations, the holy Mouthpieces of God, are the Collective Centers of God. These heavenly Messengers are the real Shepherds of humanity, for whenever They appear in the world They unite the scattered sheep. The Collective Center has always appeared in the Orient. Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Muhammad were Collective Centers of Their day and time, and all arose in the East. Today Bahá'u'lláh is the Collective Center of unity for all mankind, and the splendor of His light has likewise dawned from the East. He founded the oneness of humanity in Persia. He established harmony and agreement among the various peoples of religious beliefs, denominations, sects and cults by freeing them from the fetters of past imitations and superstitions, leading them to the very foundation of the divine religions. From this foundation shines forth the radiance of spirituality, which is unity, the love of God, the knowledge of God, praiseworthy morals and the virtues of the human world. Bahá'u'lláh renewed these principles, just as the coming of spring refreshes the earth and confers new life upon all phenomenal beings. For the freshness of the former springtimes had waned, the vivification had ceased, the life-giving breezes were no longer wafting their fragrances, winter and the season of darkness

had come. Bahá'u'lláh came to renew the life of the world with this new and divine springtime, which has pitched its tent in the countries of the Orient in the utmost power and glory. It has refreshed the world of the Orient, and there is no doubt that if the world of the Occident should abandon dogmas of the past, turn away from empty imitations and superstitions, investigate the reality of the divine religions, holding fast to the example of Jesus Christ, acting in accordance with the teachings of God and becoming unified with the Orient, an eternal happiness and felicity would be attained.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 165)

O thou yearning flame, thou who art afire with the love of God! I have read thy letter, and its contents, well-expressed and eloquent, delighted my heart, showing as they did thy deep sincerity in the Cause of God, thy persevering steps along the pathway of His Kingdom, and thy staunchness in His Faith -- for of all great things, this is the greatest in His sight.

How many a soul hath turned itself unto the Lord and entered into the protective shadow of His Word, and become famed throughout the world -- for example, Judas Iscariot. And then, when the tests grew harsh and the violence thereof intensified, their feet slipped on the pathway and they turned backward from the Faith after having acknowledged its truth, and they denied it, and fell away from harmony and love into mischief and hate. Thus became visible the power of tests, which maketh mighty pillars to tremble and shake.

Judas Iscariot was the greatest of the disciples, and he summoned the people to Christ. Then it seemed to him that Jesus was showing increasing regard to the Apostle Peter, and when Jesus said, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church,' these words addressed to Peter, and this singling out of Peter for special honour, had a marked effect on the Apostle, and kindled envy within the heart of Judas. For this reason he who had once drawn nigh did turn aside, and he who had believed in the Faith denied it, and his love changed to hate, until he became a cause of the crucifixion of that glo-

rious Lord, that manifest Splendour. Such is the outcome of envy, the chief reason why men turn aside from the Straight Path. So hath it occurred, and will occur, in this great Cause. But it doth not matter, for it engendereth loyalty in the rest, and maketh souls to arise who waver not, who are fixed and unshakeable as the mountains in their love for the Manifest Light. Convey thou unto the handmaids of the Merciful the message that when a test turneth violent they must stand unmoved, and faithful to their love for Baha. In winter come the storms, and the great winds blow, but then will follow spring in all its beauty, adorning hill and plain with perfumed plants and red anemones, fair to see. Then will the birds trill out upon the branches their songs of joy, and sermonize in lilting tones from the pulpits of the trees. Erelong shall ye bear witness that the lights are streaming forth, the banners of the realm above are waving, the sweet scents of the All-Merciful are wafted abroad, the hosts of the Kingdom are marching down, the angels of heaven are rushing forward, and the Holy Spirit is breathing upon all those regions. On that day thou shalt behold the waverers, men and women alike, frustrated of their hopes and in manifest loss. This is decreed by the Lord, the Revealer of Verses.

As to thee, blessed art thou, for thou art steadfast in the Cause of God, firm in His Covenant. I beg of Him to bestow upon thee a spiritual soul, and the life of the Kingdom, and to make thee a leaf verdant and flourishing on the Tree of Life, that thou mayest serve the handmaids of the Merciful with spirituality and good cheer.

Thy generous Lord will assist thee to labour in His vineyard and will cause thee to be the means of spreading the spirit of unity among His handmaids. He will make thine inner eye to see with the light of knowledge, He will forgive thy sins and transform them into goodly deeds. Verily He is the Forgiving, the Compassionate, the Lord of immeasurable grace.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 164)

Now with regard to your questions. First concerning the statement of Jesus Christ "Thou art Peter and upon this rock...": this saying of Jesus establishes beyond any doubt the primacy of Peter and also the principle of succession, but is not explicit enough regarding the nature and functioning of the Church itself. The Catholics have read too much into that statement, and derived from it certain conclusions which are quite unjustifiable.

(From a letter dated 7 September 1938 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

(Letters of The Universal House of Justice, 1998 Feb 22, Station of Paul)

THE TRINITY

O thou seeker after Truth!

The question of the Trinity, since the time of His Holiness Christ until now, is the belief of the Christians, and to the present time all the learned among them are perplexed and confounded. All have confessed that the question is beyond the grasp of reason, for three cannot become one, nor one three. To unite these is impossible; it is either one or three. If we say the Essence of Divinity is divided, even in some aspects, division is one of the necessities of the contingent world and of generation, but the Ancient is holy (i. e., whole and indivisible). If we say that the Trinity was originally one and was later divided, change and transformation will be necessarily applied to the Essence of Oneness, and change and transformation are necessities of the contingent world and not of the Essence of Divinity. If we say this number is Ancient, three Ancients become necessary, and among the three some are distinguished which are also Ancients. In this wise five Ancients are the result, and among the five are those who are distinguished and thus nine Ancients become necessary, and so on ad infinitum.

Thus considered, Trinity is made a necessity, although the falsity of Trinity is evident. Furthermore, the signs of oneness

are evident and plain in all existence. If thou shouldst gather all existent beings, thou wouldst be unable to find two alike in all states and qualities; of necessity there is difference. Thus the signs of oneness are manifest and evident in all things. How much more is the Creator of all things!

But there are, in the Gospels, clear expressions indicative of Trinity; among them : "The Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father." As Christians did not understand the meaning of this expression, their thoughts were scattered.

The reality of this question is as follows: Divine Oneness is proven and He revealeth Himself in the Holy Essences. The sun is one sun but manifesteth itself in different mirrors. If thou lookest into the mirror and seest the manifestation of the sun, thou wilt say, the sun is in the mirror and this sun manifest in the mirror is the same sun of the heavens; although two suns, yet in reality they are one. The sun hath not descended from its high and lofty station, it hath not taken up its abode in this mirror, but hath manifested itself therein.

The Christ reality was like unto a pure mirror and the Sun of Reality shone upon it from the Holy Horizon. Therefore, it became evident that the sun is one with regard to reality but manifesting itself in all mirrors.

This question was explained in full for Miss L.C. Barney, who translated it upon paper. Thou wilt soon learn thereof.¹ This difficult question in its entirety was elucidated, explained and proven.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v3, p. 513)

Question. - What is the meaning of the Trinity, of the Three Persons in One?

Answer. - The Divine Reality, which is purified and sanctified from the understanding of human beings and which can

¹ Incorporated in book entitled "Some Answered Questions," compiled by Miss L. C. Barney and published in 1908 by Kegan Paul, Trench, Traubner Co., London, Eng.

never be imagined by the people of wisdom and of intelligence, is exempt from all conception. That Lordly Reality admits of no division; for division and multiplicity are properties of creatures which are contingent existences, and not accidents which happen to the self-existent.

The Divine Reality is sanctified from singleness, then how much more from plurality. The descent of that Lordly Reality into conditions and degrees would be equivalent to imperfection and contrary to perfection, and so, therefore absolutely impossible. It perpetually has been, and is, in the exaltation of holiness and sanctity. All that is mentioned of the Manifestations and Dawning-places of God signifies the divine reflection, and not a descent into the conditions of existence.²

God is pure perfection, and creatures are but imperfections. For God to descend into the conditions of existence would be the greatest of imperfections; on the contrary, His manifestation, His appearance, His rising are like the reflection of the sun in a clear, pure, polished mirror. All the creatures are evident signs of God, like the earthly beings upon all of which the rays of the sun shine. But upon the plains, the mountains, the trees and fruits, only a portion of the light shines, through which they become visible, and are reared, and attain to the object of their existence, while the Perfect Man³ is in the condition of a clear mirror in which the Sun of Reality becomes visible and manifest with all its qualities and perfections. So the Reality of Christ was a clear and polished mirror of the greatest purity and fineness. The Sun of Reality, the Essence of Divinity, reflected itself in this mirror and manifested its light and heat in it; but from the exaltation of its holiness, and the heaven of its sanctity, the Sun did not descend to dwell and abide in the mirror. No, it continues to subsist in its exaltation and sublimity, while appearing and becoming manifest in the mirror in beauty and perfection.

2 Cf. "Pantheism," p. 290

3 *The Divine Manifestation*

Now if we say that we have seen the Sun in two mirrors - one the Christ and one the Holy Spirit - that is to say, that we have seen three Suns, one in heaven and the two others on the earth, we speak truly. And if we say that there is one Sun, and it is pure singleness, and has no partner and equal, we again speak truly.

The epitome of the discourse is that the Reality of Christ was a clear mirror, and the Sun of Reality - that is to say, the Essence of Oneness, with its infinite perfections and attributes - became visible in the mirror. The meaning is not that the Sun, which is the Essence of the Divinity, became divided and multiplied - for the Sun is one - but it appeared in the mirror. This is why Christ said, "The Father is in the Son," meaning that the Sun is visible and manifest in this mirror.

The Holy Spirit is the Bounty of God which becomes visible and evident in the Reality of Christ. The Sonship station is the heart of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the station of the spirit of Christ. Hence it has become certain and proved that the Essence of Divinity is absolutely unique and has no equal, no likeness, no equivalent.

This is the signification of the Three Persons of the Trinity. If it were otherwise, the foundations of the Religion of God would rest upon an illogical proposition which the mind could never conceive, and how can the mind be forced to believe a thing which it cannot conceive? A thing cannot be grasped by the intelligence except when it is clothed in an intelligible form; otherwise, it is but an effort of the imagination.

It has now become clear, from this explanation, what is the meaning of the Three Persons of the Trinity. The Oneness of God is also proved. (*'Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 113-115*)

...as to the question of the Trinity, know, O advancer unto God, that in each one of the cycles wherein the Lights have shone forth upon the horizons (i. e., in each prophetic dispensation) and the Forgiving Lord hath revealed Himself on Mount-Paran (see Habbakkuk 3:3, etc.) or Mount Sinai, or Mount Seir

(see Ezekiel 35), there are necessarily three things: The Iver of Grace, and the Grace, and the Recipient of the Grac; the Source of the Effulgenc, and the Effugence, nd hRecipient of the Effulgence; the Illuminator, and the Illumination, and Illuminated. Look at the Mosaic cycle: The Lord, and Moses, and the Fire (i.e., the burning bush), the Intermediary; and [at] the Messianic cycle: The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost the Intermediary; and in the Mohammedan cycle: The Lord, the Apostle (or Messenger, Mohammed), and Gabriel (for, as the Mohammedans believe, Gabriel brought the Revelation from God to Mohammed). Look at the sun and its rays and the heat which results from its rays; the rays and the heat are but two effects of the sun, but inseparable from it; yet the sun is one in its essence, unique in its real identity, single in its attributes, neither is it possible that anything should resemble it. Such is the essence of the Truth concerning the Unity, the real doctrine of Singularity, the undiluted reality as to the (Divine) Sanctity.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 117*)

I personally, like many another believer, have long wondered about the mysterious relationship between the Manifestation of God and God Himself. Shoghi Effendi teaches that the Bahá'í Trinity, God, the Holy Spirit and the Prophet, is like the Sun, the ray and the mirror. 'The mirror never becomes the sun, or the ray the mirror, or the sun the ray.'¹

(Marzieh Gail, *Arches of the Years, p. 315*)

The angel Gabriel is the Holy Ghost, the intermediary between God and Muhammad; in Christianity it is symbolized by a dove; in the Bahá'í Dispensation, the spirit of God within Bahá'u'lláh is personified by a Maiden, as the Guardian explains in the book *God Passes By* (p. 118, 121, etc.). The Trinity according to our teachings is the unknowable Lord, the Perfect Man, and the Holy Spirit.

(Marzieh Gail, *Six Lessons on Islam, p. 18*)

¹ Maxwell, 'Notes', p. 27; see also 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions, chapters 27 and 38*

THE BAPTISM

John the Baptist baptized the people with water, but he said that the one who was to come after him would baptize with fire. What is the meaning of this, for in the material world, these two elements are contrary the one to the other, and then, if Christians take the water literally, they ought also to take the fire literally. The meaning is this: as everything in the material world has its beginning of life in water, so water is a type of the beginning of the spiritual life -- the new birth, which also John preached when he exhorted people to repent, and so their hearts were changed from material desires to a living faith in God. When the soul has begun this new life, then the fire of the love of God will purify them into a higher condition.

(Compilations, Baha'i Prayers 9, p. 52)

In the Gospel according to St John, Christ has said: 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.'¹ The priests have interpreted this into meaning that baptism is necessary for salvation. In another Gospel it is said: 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire'.²

Thus the water of baptism and the fire are one! It cannot mean that the 'water' spoken of is physical water, for it is the direct opposite of 'fire', and one destroys the other. When in the Gospels, Christ speaks of 'water', He means that which causes life, for without water no worldly creature can live - mineral, vegetable, animal and man, one and all, depend upon water for their very being. Yes, the latest scientific discoveries prove to us that even mineral has some form of life, and that it also needs water for its existence.

Water is the cause of life, and when Christ speaks of water, He is symbolizing that which is the cause of Everlasting Life.

1 John 3:5

2 Matt. 3:11

This life-giving water of which He speaks is like unto fire, for it is none other than the Love of God, and this love means life to our souls.

By the fire of the Love of God the veil is burnt which separates us from the Heavenly Realities, and with clear vision we are enabled to struggle onward and upward, ever progressing in the paths of virtue and holiness, and becoming the means of light to the world.

There is nothing greater or more blessed than the Love of God! It gives healing to the sick, balm to the wounded, joy and consolation to the whole world, and through it alone can man attain Life Everlasting. The essence of all religions is the Love of God, and it is the foundation of all the sacred teachings.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 81-82)

Question - It is said in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter 3, verses 13, 14, 15: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him." What is the wisdom of this: since Christ possessed all essential perfection, why did He need baptism?

Answer. - The principle of baptism is purification by repentance. John admonished and exhorted the people, and caused them to repent; then he baptized them. Therefore, it is apparent that this baptism is a symbol of repentance from all sin: its meaning is expressed in these words: "O God! as my body has become purified and cleansed from physical impurities, now purify and sanctify my spirit from the impurities of the world of nature, which are not worthy of the Threshold of Thy Unity!" Repentance is the return from disobedience to obedience. Man, after remoteness and deprivation from God, repents and undergoes purification: and this is a symbol signifying "O God! make my heart good and pure, freed and sanctified from all save Thy love."

As Christ desired that this institution of John should be used at that time by all, He Himself conformed to it in order to awaken the people and to complete the law of the former religion. Although the ablution of repentance was the institution of John, it was in reality formerly practiced in the religion of God.

Christ was not in need of baptism; but as at that time it was an acceptable and praiseworthy action, and a sign of the glad tidings of the Kingdom, therefore, He confirmed it. However, afterward He said the true baptism is not with material water, but it must be with spirit and with water. In this case water does not signify material water, for elsewhere it is explicitly said baptism is with spirit and with fire, from which it is clear that the reference is not to material fire and material water, for baptism with fire is impossible.

Therefore, the spirit is the bounty of God, the water is knowledge and life, and the fire is the love of God. For material water does not purify the heart of man; no, it cleanses his body. But the heavenly water and spirit, which are knowledge and life, make the human heart good and pure; the heart which receives a portion of the bounty of the Spirit becomes sanctified, good and pure - that is to say, the reality of man becomes purified and sanctified from the impurities of the world of nature. These natural impurities are evil qualities: anger, lust, worldliness, pride, lying, hypocrisy, fraud, self-love, etc.

Man cannot free himself from the rage of the carnal passions except by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why He says baptism with the spirit, with water and with fire is necessary, and that it is essential - that is to say, the spirit of divine bounty, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God. Man must be baptized with this spirit, this water and this fire so as to become filled with the eternal bounty. Otherwise, what is the use of baptizing with material water? No, this baptism with water was a symbol of repentance, and of seeking forgiveness of sins.

But in the cycle of Baha'u'llah there is no longer need of this symbol; for its reality, which is to be baptized with the spirit and love of God, is understood and established.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*, Pages: 91-92)

Question. - Is the ablution of baptism useful and necessary, or is it useless and unnecessary? In the first case, if it is useful, why was it abrogated? And in the second case, if it is useless, why did John practice it?

Answer. - The change in conditions, alterations and transformations are necessities of the essence of beings, and essential necessities cannot be separated from the reality of things. So it is absolutely impossible to separate heat from fire, humidity from water, or light from the sun, for they are essential necessities. As the change and alteration of conditions are necessities for beings, so laws also are changed and altered in accordance with the changes and alterations of the times. For example, in the time of Moses, His Law was coformed and adapted to the conditions of the time; but in the days of Christ these conditions had changed and altered to such an extent that the Mosaic Law was no longer suited and adapted to the needs of mankind; and it was, therefore, abrogated. Thus it was that Christ roke the Sabbath and forbade divorce. After Christ four disciples, among whom were Peter and Paul, permitted the use of animal food fobidden by the Bible, except the eating of those animals which had ben strangled, or which were sacriiced to idols, ad of blod (c15:20). They also forbade fornication. They maintained these four commandments. Afterward, Paul permitted even the eating of strangled animals, those sacrificed to idols, and blood, and only maintained the prohibition of fornication. So in chapter 14, verse 14 of his Epistle to the Romans, Paul writes: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean."

Also in the Epistle of Paul to Titus, chapter 1, verse 15:

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

Now this change, these alterations and this abrogation are due to the impossibility of comparing the time of Christ with that of Moses. The conditions and requirements in the later period were entirely changed and altered. The former laws were, therefore, abrogated.

The existence of the world may be compared to that of a man, and the Prophets and Messengers of God to skillful doctors. The human being cannot remain in one condition: different maladies occur which have each a special remedy. The skillful physician does not give the same medicine to cure each disease and each malady, but he changes remedies and medicines according to the different necessities of the diseases and constitutions. One person may have a severe illness caused by fever, and the skilled doctor will give him cooling remedies; and when at some other time the condition of this person has changed, and fever is replaced by chills, without doubt the skilled doctor will discard cooling medicine and permit the use of heating drugs. This change and alteration is required by the condition of the patient and is an evident proof of the skill of the physician.

Consider, could the Law of the Old Testament be enforced at this epoch and time? No, in the name of God! it would be impossible and impracticable; therefore, most certainly God abrogated the laws of the Old Testament at the time of Christ. Reflect, also, that baptism in the days of John the Baptist was used to awaken and admonish the people to repent from all sin, and to watch for the appearance of the Kingdom of Christ. But at present in Asia, the Catholics and the Orthodox Church plunge newly born children into water mixed with olive oil, and many of them become ill from the shock; at the time of baptism they struggle and become agitated. In other places, the clergy sprinkle the water of baptism on the forehead. But neither from the first form nor from the second do the children derive any spiritual benefit. Then what result is obtained from this form? Other peoples are amazed and wonder why the infant is plunged into the water, since this is neither the cause of the spiritual awakening of the child, nor of its faith or conversion, but it is only a custom which is followed. In the

time of John the Baptist it was not so; no, at first John used to exhort the people, and to guide them to repentance from sin, and to fill them with the desire to await the manifestation of Christ. Whoever received the ablution of baptism, and repented of sins in absolute humility and meekness, would also purify and cleanse his body from outward impurities. With perfect yearning, night and day, he would constantly wait for the manifestation of Christ, and the entrance to the Kingdom of the Spirit of God.

To recapitulate: our meaning is that the change and modification of conditions, and the altered requirements of different centuries and times, are the cause of the abrogation of laws. For a time comes when these laws are no longer suitably adapted to conditions. Consider how very different are the requirements of the first centuries, of the Middle Ages, and of modern times. Is it possible that the laws of the first centuries could be enforced at present? It is evident that it would be impossible and impracticable. In the same manner, after the lapse of a few centuries, the requirements of the present time will not be the same as those of the future, and certainly there will be change and alteration. In Europe the laws are unceasingly altered and modified; in bygone years, how many laws existed in the organizations and systems of Europe, which are now abrogated! These changes and alterations are due to the variation and mutation of thought, conditions and customs. If it were not so, the prosperity of the world of humanity would be wrecked.

For example, there is in the Pentateuch a law that if anyone break the Sabbath, he shall be put to death. Moreover, there are ten sentences of death in the Pentateuch. Would it be possible to keep these laws in our time? It is clear that it would be absolutely impossible. Consequently, there are changes and modifications in the laws, and these are a sufficient proof of the supreme wisdom of God.

This subject needs deep thought. Then the cause of these changes will be evident and apparent. Blessed are those who

reflect! (*Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 93-96*)

Cleanliness and sanctity in all conditions are characteristics of pure beings and necessities of free souls. The first perfection consists in cleanliness and sanctity and in purity from every defect. When man in all conditions is pure and immaculate, he will become the center of the reflection of the manifest Light. In all his actions and conduct there must first be purity, then beauty and independence. The channel must be cleansed before it is filled with sweet water. The pure eye comprehendeth the sight and the meeting of God; the pure nostril inhaleth the perfumes of the rose-garden of bounty; the pure heart becometh the mirror of the beauty of truth. This is why, in the heavenly Books, the divine counsels and commands have been compared to water. So, in the Qur'án it is said, "and we have caused a pure water to descend from heaven;" and in the Gospel, "Except a man hath received the baptism of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Then it is evident that the divine teachings are the heavenly grace and the showers of the mercy of God, which purify the hearts of men.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 333*)

The imperfect members of society, the weak souls in humanity, follow their natural trend. Their lives and actions are in accord with their natural propensities; they are captives of physical susceptibilities; they are not in touch or in tune with the spiritual bounties. Man has two aspects: the physical, which is subject to nature, and the merciful or divine, which is connected with God. If the physical or natural disposition in him should overcome the heavenly and merciful, he is, then, the most degraded of animal beings; and if the divine and spiritual should triumph over the human and natural, he is, verily, an angel. The Prophets come into the world to guide and educate humanity so that the animal nature of man may disappear and the divinity of his powers become awakened. The divine aspect or spiritual nature consists of the breaths of the Holy Spirit. The second birth of which Jesus has spoken

refers to the appearance of this heavenly nature in man. It is expressed in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and he who is baptized by the Holy Spirit is a veritable manifestation of divine mercy to mankind. Then he becomes just and kind to all humanity; he entertains prejudice and ill will toward none; he shuns no nation or people.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 41)

Thou hast questioned how thou canst accept this divine Cause, for thou art a member of the church. In the day of the Manifestation of Christ, many souls became portionless and deprived because they were members of the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem. According to that membership, they became veiled from that brilliant Beauty. Therefore, turn thou thy face to the Church of God which consists in divine instructions and merciful exhortations. For what similarity is there between the church of stone and cement and the celestial Holy of Holies!

Endeavor that thou mayest enter in this Church of God. Although thou has given oath to attend the church, yet thy spirit is under the Covenant and Testament of the spiritual Divine Church. Thou shouldst protect this. Although they consider the wine and the bread in the church as the blood and body of Christ, yet this is but the appearance and not the reality. But the reality of Christ is the words of the Holy Spirit. If thou art able, take a portion thereof.

The performance of baptismal celebration would cleanse the body, but the spirit hath no share; but the divine teachings and the exhortations of the Beauty of Abha will baptize the soul. This is the real baptism. I hope that thou wilt receive this baptism.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 390)

This is the century of science, inventions, discoveries and universal laws. This is the century of the revelation of the mysteries of God. This is the century of the effulgence of the rays of the Sun of Truth. Therefore, you must render thanks and glorification to God that you were born in this age. Further-

more, you have listened to the call of Bahá'u'lláh. Your nostrils are perfumed with the breezes of the paradise of Abha. You have caught glimpses of the light from the horizon of the Orient. You were asleep; you are awakened. Your ears are attentive; your hearts are informed. You have acquired the love of God. You have attained to the knowledge of God. This is the most great bestowal of God. This is the breath of the Holy Spirit, and this consists of faith and assurance. This eternal life is the second birth; this is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. God has destined this station for you all.

(Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 188)

THE RESURRECTION

"And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." (Matthew 27:59-6)

Question - What is the meaning of Christ's resurrection after three days?

Answer - The resurrections of the Divine Manifestations are not of the body. All Their states, Their conditions, Their acts, the things They have established, Their teachings, Their expressions, Their parables and Their instructions have a spiritual and divine signification, and have no connection with material things.

For example, there is the subject of Christ's coming from heaven: it is clearly stated in many places in the Gospel that

the Son of man came from heaven, He is in heaven, and He will go to heaven. So in chapter 6, verse 38, of the Gospel of John it is written: "For I came down from heaven"; and also in verse 42 we find: "And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" Also in John, chapter 3, verse 13: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

Observe that it is said, "The Son of man is in heaven," while at that time Christ was on earth. Notice also that it is said that Christ came from heaven, though He came from the womb of Mary, and His body was born of Mary. It is clear, then, that when it is said that the Son of man is come from heaven, this has not an outward but an inward signification; it is a spiritual, not a material, fact. The meaning is that though, apparently, Christ was born from the womb of Mary, in reality He came from heaven, from the center of the Sun of Reality, from the Divine World, and the Spiritual Kingdom. And as it has become evident that Christ came from the spiritual heaven of the Divine Kingdom, therefore, His disappearance under the earth for three days has an inner signification and is not an outward fact. In the same way, His resurrection from the interior of the earth is also symbolical; it is a spiritual and divine fact, and not material; and likewise His ascension to heaven is a spiritual and not material ascension.

Beside these explanations, it has been established and proved by science that the visible heaven is a limitless area, void and empty, where innumerable stars and planets revolve.

Therefore, we say that the meaning of Christ's resurrection is as follows: the disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The Reality of Christ, which signifies His teachings, His bounties, His perfections and His spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after His martyrdom, and was not resplendent and manifest. No, rather it was lost, for the believers were few in number

and were troubled and agitated. The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body; and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting His counsels into practice, and arising to serve Him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and His bounty appeared; His religion found life; His teachings and His admonitions became evident and visible. In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body until the life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.

Such is the meaning of the resurrection of Christ, and this was a true resurrection. But as the clergy have neither understood the meaning of Gospels nor comprehended the symbols, therefore, it has been said that religion is in contradiction to science, and science in opposition to religion, as, for example, this subject of the ascension of Christ with an elemental body to the visible heaven is contrary to the science of mathematics. But when the truth of this subject becomes clear, and the symbol is explained, science in no way contradicts it; but, on the contrary, science and the intelligence affirm it.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 103-105)

As to the resurrection of the body of Christ three days subsequent to His departure: This signifies the divine teachings and spiritual religion of His Holiness Christ, which constitute His spiritual body, which is living and perpetual forevermore.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 191)

Some Christians claim that the Holy Ghost descended after the resurrection of the Christ and that Christ is alluding to this. But as the Holy Ghost was always with the Christ, is this logical? Again he says, "He will guide you unto truth," he will be better for you than I. He adds, "Until I go, he cannot come." Endeavor to understand the divine words, otherwise difficulties will arise. Had the Jews understood symbology, they would have understood the Christ. The holy books are full of significance and must never be taken literally. Elijah also was expected to come from heaven, and the Christ said,

"Elijah is none other than John the Baptist." The reality of John was in the supreme concourse. It is essential to have divine perception in order to see the truth, to hear the call, and obey -- liberating the hearts from all earthly attachment.

The mountains being shaken before the coming of the messenger means that great peoples -- great as mountains -- are shaken and become transplanted.

I hope you will be the cause of opening the eyes and exalting the spirits to follow divine direction. Thus you will assist others to walk in the path of the good pleasure of the Lord. Assuredly it is not to eat, nor to sleep, nor to dress, nor to repose on the couch of negligence. Nay, it is to find one's way to eternity and understand the divine signs; to receive wisdom from the Lord of Lords, and to move steadily forward like a great sea. This is my hope for thee.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 38)

...whosoever, and in whatever Dispensation, hath recognized and attained unto the presence of these glorious, these resplendent and most excellent Luminaries, hath verily attained unto the "Presence of God" Himself, and entered the city of eternal and immortal life. Attainment unto such presence is possible only in the Day of Resurrection, which is the Day of the rise of God Himself through His all-embracing Revelation.

This is the meaning of the "Day of Resurrection," spoken of in all the scriptures, and announced unto all people.

(Baha'u'llah, *The Kitab-i-Iqan*, p. 142)

You will readily recognize that the terms sovereignty, wealth, life, death, judgment and resurrection, spoken of by the scriptures of old, are not what this generation hath conceived and vainly imagined. Nay, by sovereignty is meant that sovereignty which in every dispensation resideth within, and is exercised by, the person of the Manifestation, the Day-star of Truth. That sovereignty is the spiritual ascendancy which He exerciseth to the fullest degree over all that is in heaven and on earth, and which in due time revealeth itself to the world in direct proportion to its capacity and spiritual receptiveness,

(Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 107)

Inasmuch as these undiscerning and wretched souls have failed to apprehend the true meaning of "Resurrection" and of the "attainment unto the divine Presence," they therefore have remained utterly deprived of the grace thereof. Although the sole and fundamental purpose of all learning, and the toil and labour thereof, is attainment unto, and the recognition of, this station, yet they are all immersed in the pursuit of their material studies. They deny themselves every moment of leisure, and utterly ignore Him, Who is the Essence of all learning, and the one Object of their quest! Methinks, their lips have never touched the cup of divine Knowledge, nor do they seem to have attained even a dewdrop of the showers of heavenly grace.

(Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 144)

Strive, therefore, O my brother, to grasp the meaning of "Resurrection," and cleanse thine ears from the idle sayings of these rejected people. Shouldst thou step into the realm of complete detachment, thou wilt readily testify that no day is mightier than this Day, and that no resurrection more awful than this Resurrection can ever be conceived.

(Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 144)

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:" (John 6:63)

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:6)

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

THE RETURN

Know that the return of Christ for a second time doth not mean what the people believe, but, rather, signifieth the One promised to come after Him. He shall come with the Kingdom

of God and His power which hath surrounded the world. This power (or reign) is in the world of hearts and spirits and not in that of matter (or bodies). For the material world is not comparable to a single wing of a fly, or rather less in the sight of thy Lord, wert thou of those who know! Verily Christ came with His Kingdom from the beginning which hath no beginning and will come with His Kingdom to the eternity of eternities, inasmuch as in this sense Christ is an expression of the divine reality, the simple essence and heavenly entity which hath no beginning or ending. It hath appearance, arising and manifestation and setting in each of the cycles.

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha*, page 138)

Question. - Will you explain the subject of Return?

Answer. - "Bahá'u'lláh has explained this question fully and clearly in the *Iqan*.¹ Read it, and the truth of this subject will become apparent. But since you have asked about it, I will explain it briefly. We will begin to elucidate it from the Gospel, for there it is plainly said that when John, the son of Zacharias, appeared and gave to men the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God, they asked him, 'Who art thou? Art thou the promised Messiah?' He replied, 'I am not the Messiah.' Then they asked him, 'Art thou Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.'² These words prove and show that John, the son of Zacharias, was not the promised Elias. But on the day of the transfiguration on Mount Tabor Christ said plainly that John, the son of Zacharias, was the promised Elias.

In chapter 9, verses 11-13, of the Gospel of Mark, it is said: 'And they asked Him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? And He answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that He must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.'

¹ Cf. p. 110, n. 2

² John 1:19-21

In chapter 17, verse 13, of Matthew, it is said: 'Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.'

They asked John the Baptist, 'Are you Elias?' He answered, 'No, I am not,' although it is said in the Gospel that John was the promised Elias, and Christ also said so clearly.¹ Then if John was Elias, why did he say, 'I am not'? And if he was not Elias, why did Christ say that he was?

The explanation is this: not the personality, but the reality of the perfections, is meant - that is to say, the same perfections that were in Elias existed in John the Baptist and were exactly realized in him. Therefore, John the Baptist was the promised Elias. In this case not the essence,² but the qualities, are regarded. For example, there was a flower last year, and this year there is also a flower; I say the flower of last year has returned. Now, I do not mean that same flower in its exact individuality has come back; but as this flower has the same qualities as that of last year - as it has the same perfume, delicacy, color and form - I say the flower of last year has returned, and this flower is the former flower. When spring comes, we say last year's spring has come back because all that was found in last year's spring exists in this spring. That is why Christ said, 'You will see all that happened in the days of the former Prophets.'

We will give another illustration. The seed of last year is sown, branches and leaves grow forth, blossoms and fruits appear, and all has again returned to seed. When this second seed is planted, a tree will grow from it, and once more those branches, leaves, blossoms and fruit will return, and that tree will appear in perfection. As the beginning was a seed and the end is a seed, we say that the seed has returned. When we look at the substance of the tree, it is another substance, but when we look at the blossoms, leaves and fruits, the same

1 John 1:21

2 i.e., the individuality

fragrance, delicacy and taste are produced. Therefore, the perfection of the tree has returned a second time.

In the same way, if we regard the return of the individual, it is another individual; but if we regard the qualities and perfections, the same have returned. Therefore, when Christ said, 'This is Elias,' He meant: this person is a manifestation of the bounty, the perfections, the character, the qualities and the virtues of Elias. John the Baptist said, 'I am not Elias.' Christ considered the qualities, the perfections, the character and the virtues of both, and John regarded his substance and individuality. It is like this lamp: it was here last night, and tonight it is also lighted, and tomorrow night it will also shine. We say that the lamp of this night is the same light as that of last night, and that it has returned. It refers to the light, and not to the oil, the wick or the holder. This subject is fully and clearly explained in the *Kitab-i-Iqan*."

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions, Pages: 132-134*)

Likewise the address of the angels to the people of Galilee, "That this Christ will return in the same way and that He will descend from heaven," (Acts 1:11) is a spiritual address. For when Christ appeared, He came from heaven, although He was outwardly born from the womb of Mary. For He said: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven."

He said: "I came down from heaven and likewise will go to heaven." By "heaven" is not meant this infinite phenomenal space, but "heaven" signifies the word of the divine kingdom which is the supreme station and seat of the Sun of Truth.

To be brief: The mysteries of the Holy Books are many and require explanation and elucidation. I hope thine insight will be so opened that the divine mysteries may become manifest and clear.

(`Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 192*)

It is said in the Holy Books that Christ will come again, and that His coming depends upon the fulfillment of certain signs: when He comes, it will be with these signs. For example, "The sun will be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.... And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."¹ Bahá'u'lláh has explained these verses in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*.² There is no need of repetition; refer to it, and you will understand these sayings.

But I have something further to say upon this subject. At His first coming Christ also came from heaven, as it is explicitly stated in the Gospel. Christ Himself says: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."³

It is clear to all that Christ came from heaven, although apparently He came from the womb of Mary. At the first coming He came from heaven, though apparently from the womb; in the same way, also, at His second coming He will come from heaven, though apparently from the womb. The conditions that are indicated in the Gospel for the second coming of Christ are the same as those that were mentioned for the first coming, as we said before.

The Book of Isaiah announces that the Messiah will conquer the East and the West, and all nations of the world will come under His shadow, that His Kingdom will be established, that He will come from an unknown place, that the sinners will be judged, and that justice will prevail to such a degree that the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the sucking child and the asp, shall all gather at one spring, and in

1 *Matt. 24:29-30*

2 *Kitáb-i-Íqán, one of the first works of Bahá'u'lláh, written at Baghdad, before the declaration of His manifestation*

3 *John 3:13*

one meadow, and one dwelling.⁴ The first coming was also under these conditions, though outwardly none of them came to pass. Therefore, the Jews rejected Christ, and, God forbid! called the Messiah *masikh*,⁵ considered Him to be the destroyer of the edifice of God, regarded Him as the breaker of the Sabbath and the Law, and sentenced Him to death. Nevertheless, each one of these conditions had a signification that the Jews did not understand; therefore, they were debarred from perceiving the truth of Christ.

The second coming of Christ also will be in like manner: the signs and conditions which have been spoken of all have meanings, and are not to be taken literally. Among other things it is said that the stars will fall upon the earth. The stars are endless and innumerable, and modern mathematicians have established and proved scientifically that the globe of the sun is estimated to be about one million and a half times greater than the earth, and each of the fixed stars to be a thousand times larger than the sun. If these stars were to fall upon the surface of the earth, how could they find place there? It would be as though a thousand million of Himalaya mountains were to fall upon a grain of mustard seed. According to reason and science this thing is quite impossible. What is even more strange is that Christ said: "Perhaps I shall come when you are yet asleep, for the coming of the Son of man is like the coming of a thief."⁶ Perhaps the thief will be in the house, and the owner will not know it.

It is clear and evident that these signs have symbolic signification, and that they are not literal. They are fully explained in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*. Refer to it.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, p. 111)

⁴ *In these conversations, as the reader will have already observed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá desires rather to indicate the meaning of certain passages of the Scriptures than to quote the exact text*

⁵ *Masikh -- i.e., the monster. In Arabic there is a play upon the words Masih, the Messiah, and masikh, the monster*

⁶ *1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10*

Notwithstanding, why did Muhammad say: "When He of Whom they had knowledge came unto them" - that is Jesus or Moses - "they disbelieved in Him?" Was not Muhammad to outward seeming called by a different name? Did He not come forth out of a different city? Did He not speak a different language, and reveal a different Law? How then can the truth of this verse be established, and its meaning be made clear?

Strive therefore to comprehend the meaning of "return" which hath been so explicitly revealed in the Qur'an itself, and which none hath as yet understood. What sayest thou? If thou sayest that Muhammad was the "return" of the Prophets of old, as is witnessed by this verse, His Companions must likewise be the "return" of the bygone Companions, even as the "return" of the former people is clearly attested by the text of the above-mentioned verses. And if thou deniest this, thou hast surely repudiated the truth of the Qur'an, the surest testimony of God unto men. In like manner, endeavour to grasp the significance of "return," "revelation," and "resurrection," as witnessed in the days of the Manifestations of the divine Essence, that thou mayest behold with thine own eyes the "return" of the holy souls into sanctified and illumined bodies, and mayest wash away the dust of ignorance, and cleanse the darkened self with the waters of mercy flowing from the Source of divine Knowledge; that perchance thou mayest, through the power of God and the light of divine guidance, distinguish the Morn of everlasting splendour from the darksome night of error.

Furthermore, it is evident to thee that the Bearers of the trust of God are made manifest unto the peoples of the earth as the Exponents of a new Cause and the Bearers of a new Message. Inasmuch as these Birds of the Celestial Throne are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they therefore are regarded as one soul and the same person. For they all drink from the one Cup of the love of God, and all partake of the fruit of the same Tree of Oneness.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 150-152)

THE BREAD AND WINE

Question - The Christ said: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die."¹ What is the meaning of this utterance?

Answer - This bread signifies the heavenly food and divine perfections. So, "If any man eateth of this bread" means if any man acquires heavenly bounty, receives the divine light, or partakes of Christ's perfections, he thereby gains everlasting life. The blood also signifies the spirit of life and the divine perfections, the lordly splendor and eternal bounty. For all the members of the body gain vital substance from the circulation of the blood.

In the Gospel of St. John, chapter 6, verse 26, it is written: "Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."

It is evident that the bread of which the disciples ate and were filled was the heavenly bounty; for in verse 33 of the same chapter it is said: "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." It is clear that the body of Christ did not descend from heaven, but it came from the womb of Mary; and that which descended from the heaven of God was the spirit of Christ. As the Jews thought that Christ spoke of His body, they made objections, for it is said in the 42nd verse of the same chapter: "And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?"

Reflect how clear it is that what Christ meant by the heavenly bread was His spirit, His bounties, His perfections and His teachings; for it is said in the 63rd verse: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

Therefore, it is evident that the spirit of Christ is a heavenly grace which descends from heaven; whosoever receives

1 John 6:51, 50

light from that spirit in abundance - that is to say, the heavenly teachings - finds everlasting life. That is why it is said in the 35th verse: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

Notice that "coming to Him" He expresses as eating, and "belief in Him" as drinking. Then it is evident and established that the celestial food is the divine bounties, the spiritual splendors, the heavenly teachings, the universal meaning of Christ. To eat is to draw near to Him, and to drink is to believe in Him. For Christ had an elemental body and a celestial form. The elemental body was crucified, but the heavenly form is living and eternal, and the cause of everlasting life; the first was the human nature, and the second is the divine nature. It is thought by some that the Eucharist is the reality of Christ, and that the Divinity and the Holy Spirit descend into and exist in it. Now when once the Eucharist is taken, after a few moments it is simply disintegrated and entirely transformed. Therefore, how can such a thought be conceived? God forbid! certainly it is an absolute fantasy.

To conclude: through the manifestation of Christ, the divine teachings, which are an eternal bounty, were spread abroad, the light of guidance shone forth, and the spirit of life was conferred on man. Whoever found guidance became living; whoever remained lost was seized by enduring death. This bread which came down from heaven was the divine body of Christ, His spiritual elements, which the disciples ate, and through which they gained eternal life.

The disciples had taken many meals from the hand of Christ; why was the last supper distinguished from the others? It is evident that the heavenly bread did not signify this material bread, but rather the divine nourishment of the spiritual body of Christ, the divine graces and heavenly perfections of which His disciples partook, and with which they became filled.

In the same way, reflect that when Christ blessed the bread and gave it to His disciples, saying, "This is My body,"¹ and gave grace to them, He was with them in person, in presence, and form. He was not transformed into bread and wine; if He had been turned into bread and wine, He could not have remained with the disciples in body, in person and in presence. Then it is clear that the bread and wine were symbols which signified: I have given you My bounties and perfections, and when you have received this bounty, you have gained eternal life and have partaken of your share and your portion of the heavenly nourishment.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 97-99)

The position of Christ was that of absolute perfection; He made His divine perfections shine like the sun upon all believing souls, and the bounties of the light shone and radiated in the reality of men. This is why He says: "I am the bread which descended from heaven; whosoever shall eat of this bread will not die"² - that is to say, that whosoever shall partake of this divine food will attain unto eternal life: that is, every one who partakes of this bounty and receives these perfections will find eternal life, will obtain preexistent favors, will be freed from the darkness of error, and will be illuminated by the light of His guidance.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 120-121)

Thou hast questioned how thou canst accept this divine Cause, for thou art a member of the church. In the day of the Manifestation of Christ, many souls became portionless and deprived because they were members of the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem. According to that membership, they became veiled from that brilliant Beauty. Therefore, turn thou thy face to the Church of God which consists in divine instructions and merciful exhortations. For what similarity is there between the church of stone and cement and the celestial Holy of Holies!

1 Matt. 26:26

2 John 6:41, 50, 58

Endeavor that thou mayest enter in this Church of God. Although thou has given oath to attend the church, yet thy spirit is under the Covenant and Testament of the spiritual Divine Church. Thou shouldst protect this. Although they consider the wine and the bread in the church as the blood and body of Christ, yet this is but the appearance and not the reality. But the reality of Christ is the words of the Holy Spirit. If thou art able, take a portion thereof.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 390)

Question: Should children be allowed to read the higher criticism?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: They should first be taught the reality of religion as a foundation. For instance, in the Catholic Church the child is taught that through some act of the priest the bread and wine of the sacrament become the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. The mind cannot accept this. The child must be taught that this transformation is symbolical of the truth that Christ is the food from heaven, the eating of which produces eternal life. The Jews had memorized the Bible but failed to grasp its meanings. If they had understood the spiritual significances of the scriptures, they would have been the first believers in Christ. You are among the first believers in this country. You are the children of the Kingdom. Bahá'u'lláh has taught you the reality of religion. There are many of the Bahá'í friends in Persia whom we do not know, but we know you here in America. Turn your faces to the Sun of Reality. That Sun has always risen in the East. Find the answer to your questions in your heart. Be as little children. Until the soil is prepared, it cannot receive the benefit of planting.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 213)

THE DIVINE MIRACLES

Question. - It is recorded that miracles were performed by Christ. Are the reports of these miracles really to be accepted literally, or have they another meaning?

It has been proved by exact science that the essence of things does not change, and that all beings are under one universal law and organization from which they cannot deviate; and, therefore, that which is contrary to universal law is impossible.

Answer. - The Holy Manifestations are the sources of miracles and the originators of wonderful signs. For Them, any difficult and impracticable thing is possible and easy. For through a supernatural power wonders appear from Them; and by this power, which is beyond nature, They influence the world of nature. From all the Manifestations marvelous things have appeared.

But in the Holy Books an especial terminology is employed, and for the Manifestations these miracles and wonderful signs have no importance. They do not even wish to mention them. For if we consider miracles a great proof, they are still only proofs and arguments for those who are present when they are performed, and not for those who are absent.

For example, if we relate to a seeker, a stranger to Moses and Christ, marvelous signs, he will deny them and will say: "Wonderful signs are also continually related of false gods by the testimony of many people, and they are affirmed in the Books. The Brahmans have written a book about wonderful prodigies from Brahma." He will also say: "How can we know that the Jews and the Christians speak the truth, and that the Brahmans tell a lie? For both are generally admitted traditions, which are collected in books, and may be supposed to be true or false." The same may be said of other religions: if one is true, all are true; if one is accepted, all must be accepted. Therefore, miracles are not a proof. For if they are proofs for those who are present, they fail as proofs to those who are absent.

But in the day of the Manifestation the people with insight see that all the conditions of the Manifestation are miracles, for They are superior to all others, and this alone is an absolute miracle. Recollect that Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under

the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all the people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ.

The outward miracles have no importance for the people of Reality. If a blind man receives sight, for example, he will finally again become sightless, for he will die and be deprived of all his senses and powers. Therefore, causing the blind man to see is comparatively of little importance, for this faculty of sight will at last disappear. If the body of a dead person be resuscitated, of what use is it since the body will die again? But it is important to give perception and eternal life - that is, the spiritual and divine life. For this physical life is not immortal, and its existence is equivalent to nonexistence. So it is that Christ said to one of His disciples: "Let the dead bury their dead;" for "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."¹

Observe: those who in appearance were physically alive, Christ considered dead; for life is the eternal life, and existence is the real existence. Wherever in the Holy Books they speak of raising the dead, the meaning is that the dead were blessed by eternal life; where it is said that the blind received sight, the signification is that he obtained the true perception; where it is said a deaf man received hearing, the meaning is that he acquired spiritual and heavenly hearing. This is ascertained from the text of the Gospel here Christ said: "These are those of whom Isaiah said, They have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not; and I healed them."²

The meaning is not that the Manifestations are unable to perform miracles, for They have all power. But for Them inner sight, spiritual healing and eternal life are the valuable and important things. Consequently, whenever it is recorded in the Holy Books that such a one was blind and recovered his

1 *Matt. 8:22; John 3:6*

2 *Matt. 13:14 and John 12:40-41*

sight, the meaning is that he was inwardly blind, and that he obtained spiritual vision, or that he was ignorant and became wise, or that he was negligent and became heedful, or that he was worldly and became heavenly.

As this inner sight, hearing, life and healing are eternal, they are of importance. What, comparatively, is the importance, the value and the worth of this animal life with its powers? In a few days it will cease like fleeting thoughts. For example, if one relights an extinguished lamp, it will again become extinguished; but the light of the sun is always luminous. This is of importance.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions, Pages: 100-102*)

When the prophets of God appear upon this earth, their validity is established by means of certain proofs. One of the proofs is through the fulfillment of former prophecies, the second proofs are their creative words and phrases which salute the hearts of humanity, the third are their deeds and the fourth are their teachings.

The prophecies deal with dates and symbols which proclaim the end of each dispensation. In former books the conditions are explained concerning subsequent manifestors of the divine plan. But those who do not follow closely these things will not be convinced by proofs such as these. This then is not a final proof.

Miracles are likewise convincing to a limited number only. For instance, a Buddhist would not be convinced by the miracles of Moses which are proofs only so far as the orthodox Jews are concerned, because they love Moses. On the other hand the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ are refuted by the Jews as a whole, saying "No one lives today who has seen these miracles performed, therefore, who can bear testimony to them?"

A clear proof of validity lies in the achievements and here we are confronted by certain irrefutable facts. The prophets have come from the lowliest and most humiliated of the na-

tions and in each age the prophet has raised his downtrodden nation to the highest zenith of prosperity and success among the nations of the earth. For instance, His Holiness Christ was quite alone. He was a Jew from among the Jews. He came at a time when the Israelites were under the yoke of the Romans. He revived the people till they were transferred from one state of existence into a higher state of existence.

At a time when the East was enshrouded with superstition and hatred, Bahá'u'lláh flooded these regions with his glorious light. Under the chains he unfurled the flag of the oneness of the world of humanity; in the prisons he spread the principles of universal peace and brotherhood; from behind the barracks he wrote his famous epistles to the kings and rulers of the world, arraiging the oppressors of the earth and calling upon them in the name of God the exalted not to place their sovereignty above that of His Highness the Almighty. He admonished them on the part of the wronged ones to listen to the call of the new day else their kingdoms would pass out of their hands and would fall into the hands of others. "Know that brotherhood hath ben proclaimed - even so hath this matter been recorded upon a mighty tablet with he strong pe of Go."1 A supreme proof is the teaching. For instance the precepts of Christ were sufficient proof of his validity. There is no greater proof than these teachings. They were the light of that cycle and the spirit of that age. All that he said accorded with the needs of the humanity of that time. They were peerless and unique.

Consider His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh and his teaching. They are the spirit of this cycle - the light of this age. They illumine the dark places of humanity, for they address themselves to the heart of the race. For instance, the greatest evil of this century is war. In the new age Bahá'u'lláh has prohibited war. The need of this century is universal peace - Bahá'u'lláh has instituted it. The most urgent requisite of mankind is the declaration of the oneness of the world of humanity - this is the great principle of Bahá'u'lláh. That which will leaven the human world is a love that will insure the abandonment of pride, oppression and hatred. The principles of Bahá'u'lláh are the remedy and balm for the wounded world; and without their

inculcation, reconciliation between the nations will not be reached. These very teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are the greatest proofs of his claim. Such a power hath appeared from him as will suffice to convince the whole world.

Many of the events which Bahá'u'lláh prophesied are taking place today - and many are yet to come.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy, p. 45)

One morning 'Abdu'l-Bahá, on entering the room looked about and said: "It is just like a miracle, our being here together. There is no racial, political or patriotic tie. We are drawn together by the words of Bahá'u'lláh, and in like manner will all the races of the earth be drawn together. Of this, rest assured!"

(Abdu'l-Baha, Abdu'l-Baha in London, p. 105)

We are ever looking for some miracle, some proof -- for the Christ life as viewed from the outside seems so simple; yet could there be anything more dramatically miraculous than this: to establish peace in the hearts in the midst of a warring world? This kind of peace Bahá'u'lláh calls the "most great peace." To establish this kingdom in the hearts -- verily, it is the unrealized dream of the planet!

(Abdu'l-Baha, Divine Philosophy, p. 11)

Praise be to God! the springtime of God is at hand. This century is verily the spring season. The world of mind and the kingdom of soul have become fresh and verdant by its bestowals. It has resuscitated the whole realm of existence. On one hand the lights of reality are shining; on the other the clouds of divine mercy are pouring down the fullness of heavenly bounty. Wonderful material progress is evident and great spiritual discoveries are being made. Truly this can be called the miracle of centuries for it is replete with manifestations of the miraculous. The time has come when all mankind shall be united, when all races shall be loyal to one fatherland, all religions become one religion and racial and religious bias pass away. It is a day in which the oneness of humankind shall uplift its standard and international peace like the true morning

flood the world with its light. Therefore we offer supplications to God, asking him to dispel these gloomy clouds and uproot these imitations in order that the East and West may become radiant with love and unity; that the nations of the world shall embrace each other and the ideal spiritual brotherhood illumine the world like the glorious sun of the high heavens.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 16)

And this is one of Bahá'u'lláh's greatest miracles: that He, a captive, surrounded Himself with panoply and He wielded power. The prison changed into a palace, the jail itself became a Garden of Eden. Such a thing has not occurred in history before; no former age has seen its like: that a man confined to a prison should move about with authority and might; that one in chains should carry the fame of the Cause of God to the high heavens, should win splendid victories in both East and West, and should, by His almighty pen, subdue the world. Such is the distinguishing feature of this supreme Theophany.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 27)

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord.

(Baha'u'llah: *Baha'i Prayers (US)*, Page: 206)

Chapter 3:

The Long Captivity

THE LONG CAPTIVITY

"I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early." (Hosea 5:15)

'I will go and return to my place,' prophesied the Ascension of Christ upon the Crucifixion. The Scripture also foretold of the grievous consequences; the pain and suffering which befell the Israelites for their rising up to oppose the Manifestation of Jesus Christ.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses had foretold:

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee," (Deut 30:1)

One should know that Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman Titus in A.D. 70, and that, the Jews were scattered and exiled, and many of them exactly as had been foretold by Christ, fell "by the edge of the sword" (**Luke 21:24**).

And when the days of Moses were ended, and the light of Jesus, shining forth from the dayspring of the Spirit, encompassed the world, all the people of Israel arose in protest against Him. They clamoured that He Whose advent the Bible had foretold must needs promulgate and fulfil the laws of Moses, whereas this youthful Nazarene, who laid claim to the station of the divine Messiah, had annulled the law of divorce and of the sabbath day - the most weighty of all the laws of Moses. Moreover, what of the signs of the Manifestation yet to come? These people of Israel are even unto the present day still expecting that Manifestation which the Bible hath foretold! How many Manifestations of Holiness, how many Revealers of the light everlasting, have appeared since the time of Moses, and yet Israel, wrapt in the densest veils of satanic fancy and false imaginings, is still expectant that the idol of her own handiwork will appear with such signs as she herself hath conceived! Thus hath God laid hold of them for their sins, hath extinguished in them the spirit of faith, and tormented them with the flames of the nethermost fire. And this for no other reason except that Israel refused to apprehend the meaning of such words as have been revealed in the Bible concerning the signs of the coming Revelation. As she never grasped their true significance, and, to outward seeming, such events never came to pass, she, therefore, remained deprived of recognizing the beauty of Jesus and of beholding the face of God. And they still await His coming! From time immemorial even unto this day, all the kindreds and peoples of the earth have clung to such fanciful and unseemly thoughts, and thus have deprived themselves of the clear waters streaming from the springs of purity and holiness.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 17-19)

...during the days of Jesus Christ the Jews were expecting the appearance of the Messiah, praying and beseeching God day and night that the Promised One might appear. Why did

they reject Him when He did appear? They denied Him absolutely, refused to believe in Him. There was no abuse and persecution which they did not heap upon Him. They reviled Him with curses, placed a crown of thorns upon His head, led Him through the streets in scorn and derision and finally crucified Him. Why did they do this? Because they did not investigate the truth or reality of Christ and were not able to recognize Him as the Messiah of God. Had they investigated sincerely for themselves, they would surely have believed in Him, respected Him and bowed before Him in reverence. They would have considered His manifestation the greatest bestowal upon mankind. They would have accepted Him as the very Savior of man; but, alas, they were veiled, they held to imitations of ancestral beliefs and hearsay and did not investigate the truth of Christ. They were submerged in the sea of superstitions and were, therefore, deprived of witnessing that glorious bounty; they were withheld from the fragrances or breaths of the Holy Spirit and suffered in themselves the greatest debasement and degradation.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 62)**

When Christ appeared with those marvelous breaths of the Holy Spirit, the children of Israel said, "We are quite independent of him; we can do without him and follow Moses; we have a book and in it are found the teachings of God; what need, therefore, have we of this man?" Christ said to them, "The book sufficeth you not." It is possible for a man to hold to a book of medicine and say, "I have no need of a doctor; I will act according to the book; in it every disease is named, all symptoms are explained, the diagnosis of each ailment is completely written out, and a prescription for each malady is furnished; therefore, why do I need a doctor?" This is sheer ignorance. A physician is needed to prescribe. Through his skill the principles of the book are correctly and effectively applied until the patient is restored to health. Christ was a heavenly Physician. He brought spiritual health and healing into the world. Baha'u'llah is, likewise, a divine Physician. He has revealed prescriptions for removing disease from the body politic and has remedied human conditions by spiritual power.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 248-249)**

In the Bible there are prophecies of the coming of Christ. The Jews still await the coming of the Messiah, and pray to God day and night to hasten His advent.

When Christ came they denounced and slew Him, saying:

'This is not the One for whom we wait. Behold when the Messiah shall come, signs and wonders shall testify that He is in truth the Christ. We know the signs and conditions, and they have not appeared. The Messiah will arise out of an unknown city. He shall sit upon the throne of David, and behold, He shall come with a sword of steel, and with a sceptre of iron shall He rule! He shall fulfil the law of the Prophets, He shall conquer the East and the West, and shall glorify His chosen people the Jews. He shall bring with Him a reign of peace, during which even the animals shall cease to be at enmity with man. For behold the wolf and the lamb shall drink from the same spring, and the lion and the doe shall lie down in the same pasture, the serpent and the mouse shall share the same nest, and all God's creatures shall be at rest'.

According to the Jews, Jesus the Christ fulfilled none of these conditions, for their eyes were holden and they could not see.

He came from Nazareth, no unknown place. He carried no sword in His hand, nor even a stick. He did not sit upon the Throne of David, He was a poor man. He reformed the Law of Moses, and broke the Sabbath Day. He did not conquer the East and the West, but was Himself subject to the Roman Law. He did not exalt the Jews, but taught equality and brotherhood, and rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees. He brought in no reign of peace, for during His lifetime injustice and cruelty reached such a height that even He Himself fell a victim to it, and died a shameful death upon the cross.

Thus the Jews thought and spoke, for they did not understand the Scriptures nor the glorious truths that were contained in them. The letter they knew by heart, but of the life-giving spirit they understood not a word. Hearken, and I will show you the meaning thereof. Although He came from Nazareth, which was a known place, He also came from Heaven. His body was born of Mary, but His Spirit came from Heaven. The sword He carried was the sword of His tongue, with which He divided the good from the evil, the true from the false, the faithful from the unfaithful, and the light from the darkness. His Word was indeed a sharp sword! The Throne upon which He sat is the Eternal Throne from which Christ reigns for ever, a heavenly throne, not an earthly one, for the things of earth pass away but heavenly things pass not away. He re-interpreted and completed the Law of Moses and fulfilled the Law of the Prophets. His word conquered the East and the West. His Kingdom is everlasting. He exalted those Jews who recognized Him. They were men and women of humble birth, but contact with Him made them great and gave them everlasting dignity. The animals who were to live with one another signified the different sects and races, who, once having been at war, were now to dwell in love and charity, drinking together the water of life from Christ the Eternal Spring.

Thus, all the spiritual prophecies concerning the coming of Christ were fulfilled, but the Jews shut their eyes that they should not see, and their ears that they should not hear, and the Divine Reality of Christ passed through their midst unheard, unloved and unrecognized.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p. 54)

Chapter 4:

The Land of Promise

THE LAND OF PROMISE

"And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers." (Deuteronomy 30:2-5)

"Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king;

and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.” (Hosea 3:5)

“And We said thereafter to the Children of Israel, ‘Dwell securely in the land (of promise)” (Qur’án 17:104)

“And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead.” (Jeremiah 50:19)

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.” (Isaiah 40:1-2)

“The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children’s children, and peace upon Israel.” (Psalms 128:5-6)

“You have asked Me a question with regard to the gathering of the children of Israel in Jerusalem in accordance with the prophecy.”

“Jerusalem, the Holy of Holies, is a revered Temple, a sublime name, for it is the City of God...The gathering of Israel at Jerusalem means, therefore, and prophesies, that Israel as a whole is gathering beneath the banner of God and will enter the Kingdom of the Ancient of Days. For the celestial Jerusalem, which has as its center the Holy of Holies, is a City of the Kingdom, a Divine City. The East and West are but a small corner of that City.”

“Moreover, materially as well (as spiritually), the Israelites will gather in the Holy Land. This is irrefutable prophecy, for the ignominy which Israel

has suffered for well-nigh twenty-five hundred years will now be changed into eternal glory, and in the eyes of all, the Jewish people will become glorified to such an extent as to draw the jealousy of its enemies and the envy of its friends.”
(Multiple Authors: Lights of Guidance, Page: 500)

Isaiah speaks of this same great ‘gathering’. He prophesies:

‘Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.’ (Isaiah 60:4)

Three verses before, Isaiah foretells that when this ‘gathering’ takes place, the Lord will say to the holy mountain:

‘Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.’ (Isaiah 60:1)

In yet another place, Isaiah speaks of this great ‘gathering’. He says: ‘And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion...’
(Isaiah 35:10)

Eight verses before in this same chapter, he prophesies that when this ‘gathering takes place

‘...Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord.’ (Isaiah 35:2)

In yet another place, Isaiah prophesies the great ‘gathering’. He says:

‘He (the Messiah) shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs...’ (Isaiah 40:11)

Six verses before in that same chapter, Isaiah foretells that when this ‘gathering’ takes place:

'...the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together...' (**Isaiah 40:5**)

Almost invariably, the time of the 'gathering' of the children of Israel was associated with the appearance of 'the Glory of the Lord'.

This gathering or return began in 1844. It reached its climax in 1948 with the formation of the State of Israel. Bahá'u'lláh, after reaching Israel as a prisoner, himself prophesied that this would come to pass. His name, we know, means 'The Glory of the Lord.'

Ezekiel prophesied:

'My tabernacle also shall be with them...my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore'
(**Ezekiel 37:27-28**)

[**William Sears, Thief in the Night, Part 3, p. 135-136**]

"After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."
(**Hosea 6:2**)

According to 'one day is with the Lord as a thousand years' (2 Peter 3:8), the 2nd 'day' in Hosea, chapter 6, verse 2, is the second millenium during which in the middle of the 19th century (A.D. 1844), the Jews began their historical return to the Holy Land (the Land of Promise).

The 'third day', however, prophesies the 1000 years reign of the Second Coming of Christ (Rev 20:4), and the Promised Kingdom of God on earth (Matt 6:10; Matt 16:27; Luke 20:31).

Also, the gathering of the children of Israel in the Holy Land, during the latter days, alludes to the fulfillment of this great prophecy in the Book of Revelation, where, when this gathering takes place, '...Carmel and Sharon; ... shall see the glory of the Lord. (Bahá'u'lláh)' (**Isaiah 35:2**)

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God (the Messiah) is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

Chapter 5:

The Last Days

THE DAY OF THE LORD OF NAMES

This is the Day whereon He Who is the Revealer of the names of God hath stepped out of the Tabernacle of glory, and proclaimed unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth: "Put away the cups of Paradise and all the life-giving waters they contain, for lo, the people of Baha have entered the blissful abode of the Divine Presence, and quaffed the wine of reunion, from the chalice of the beauty of their Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most High."

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 32)

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

(2 Peter 3:3-4)

"And serve thy Lord until there come unto thee the Hour that is certain." (Qur'án 15:99)

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:" (Job 19:25)

"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 works." (Matthew 16:27)

"The Day that the Spirit and the angels will stand forth in ranks, none shall speak except any who is permitted by (Allah) Most Gracious, and he will say what is right. That Day will be the sure Reality: therefore, whoso will, let him take a (straight) Return to his Lord!" (Qur'án 78:38-39)

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2:14)

"And they say: 'What! when we lie, hidden and lost, in the earth, shall we indeed be in a creation renewed?' Nay, they deny the meeting with their Lord!" (Qur'án 32:10)

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matthew 5:18)

"Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18:37)

O Handmaid of God! Harken unto the Voice of the Lord of Names, Who from His Prison hath directed His gaze towards thee and is making mention of thee.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 255)

Say: O friends! Drink your fill from this crystal stream that floweth through the heavenly grace of Him Who is the Lord of Names. Let others partake of its waters in My name, that the leaders of men in every land may fully recognize the purpose for which the Eternal Truth hath been revealed, and the reason for which they themselves have been created.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 215)

Know ye from what heights your Lord, the All-Glorious is calling? Think ye hat ye have recognized the Pen wherewith your Lord, the ord of al namscommandeth you? Nay, by My life! Did ye but know it, ye would renounce the world, and would hasten with your whole hearts to the presence of the Well-Beloved. Your spirits would be so transported by His Word as to throw into commotion the Greater World -- how much more this small and petty one! Thus have the showers of My bounty been poured down from the heaven of My loving-kindness, as a token of My grace; that ye may be of the thankful....

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 139)

Who is there among you, O people, who will renounce the world, and draw nigh unto God, the Lord of all names? Where is he to be found who, through the power of My name that transcendeth all created things, will cast away the things that men possess, and cling, with all his might, to the things which God, the Knower of the unseen and of the seen, hath bidden him observe? Thus hath His bounty been sent down unto men, His testimony fulfilled, and His proof shone forth above the Horizon of mercy. Rich is the prize that shall be won by him who hath believed and exclaimed: "Lauded art Thou, O Beloved of all worlds! Mag-

nified be Thy name, O Thou the Desire of every understanding heart!"

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 34)

Whoso hath, in this Day, refused to allow the doubts and fancies of men to turn him away from Him Who is the Eternal Truth, and hath not suffered the tumult provoked by the ecclesiastical and secular authorities to deter him from recognizing His Message, such a man will be regarded by God, the Lord of all men, as one of His mighty signs, and will be numbered among them whose names have been inscribed by the Pen of the Most High in His Book. Blessed is he that hath recognized the true stature of such a soul, that hath acknowledged its station, and discovered its virtues.

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 159)

O thou that hast fixed thine eyes upon My countenance! The Day Spring of Glory hath, in this Day, manifested its radiance, and the Voice of the Most High is calling. We have formerly uttered these words: "This is not the day for any man to question his Lord. It behoveth whosoever hath hearkened to the Call of God, as voiced by Him Who is the Day Spring of Glory, to arise and cry out: 'Here am I, here am I, O Lord of all Names; here am I, here am I, O Maker of the heavens! I testify that, through Thy Revelation, the things hidden in the Books of God have been revealed, and that whatsoever hath been recorded by Thy Messengers in the sacred Scriptures hath been fulfilled.'"

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 163)

Should any man, in this Day, arise and, with absolute detachment from all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, set his affections on

Him Who is the Day Spring of God's holy Revelation, he will, verily, be empowered to subdue all created things, through the potency of one of the Names of the Lord, his God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Know thou of a certainty that the Day Star of Truth hath, in this Day, shed upon the world a radiance, the like of which bygone ages have never witnessed. Let the light of His glory, O people, shine upon you, and be not of the negligent.

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 318)

These perspicuous verses have been sent down in one of the Tablets by the Abha Pen: "Hearken, O servant, unto the voice of this Wronged One, Who hath endured grievous vexations and trials in the path of God, the Lord of all Names, until such time as He was cast into prison, in the Land of Ta (Tihran).¹ He summoned unto the most sublime Paradise, and yet they seized Him and paraded Him through cities and countries. How many the nights during which slumber fled from the eyes of My loved ones, because of their love for Me; and how numerous the days whereon I had to face the assaults of the peoples against Me! At one time I found Myself on the heights of mountains; at another in the depths of the prison of Ta (Tihran), in chains and fetters. By the righteousness of God! I was at all times thankful unto Him, uttering His praise, engaged in remembering Him, directed towards Him, satisfied with His pleasure, and lowly and submissive before Him. So passed My days, until they ended in this Prison (Akká) which hath made the earth to tremble and the heavens to sigh. Happy that one who hath cast away his vain imaginings, when He Who was hid came with the standards of His signs. We, verily, have announced unto men this Most Great Revelation, and yet the people are in a state of strange stupor."

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 78)

¹ Also known as Tehran

The light that is shed from the heaven of bounty, and the benediction that shineth from the dawning-place of the will of God, the Lord of the Kingdom of Names, rest upon Him Who is the Supreme Mediator, the Most Exalted Pen, Him Whom God hath made the Dawning-Place of His most excellent names and the Dayspring of His most exalted attributes. Through Him the light of unity hath shone forth above the horizon of the world, and the law of oneness hath been revealed amidst the nations, who, with radiant faces, have turned towards the Supreme Horizon, and acknowledged that which the Tongue of Utterance hath spoken in the kingdom of His knowledge: "Earth and heaven, glory and dominion, are God's, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, the Lord of grace abounding!"

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 1)

'Never since the beginning of the world,' Bahá'u'lláh Himself affirms, 'hath the Message been so openly proclaimed.' 'Each one of them,' He, specifically referring to the Tablets addressed by Him to the sovereigns of the earth -- Tablets acclaimed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a 'miracle' -- has written, 'hath been designated by a special name. The first hath been named 'The Rumbling,' the second 'The Blow,' the third 'The Inevitable,' the fourth, 'The Plain,' the fifth 'The Catastrophe,' and the others 'The Stunning Trumpet-Blast,' 'The Near Event,' 'The Great Terror,' 'The Trumpet,' 'The Bugle,' and the like, so that all the peoples of the earth may know, of a certainty, and may witness, with outward and inward eyes that He Who is the Lord of Names hath prevailed, and will continue to prevail, under all conditions, over all men.'¹

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 3, p. 110)

And likewise, He saith: "Let not names shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is their Lord, even the name of Prophet, for such a name is but a creation of His utterance."

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 171)

1 Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 46

Thus doth the Nightingale utter His call unto you from this prison. He hath but to deliver this clear message. Whosoever desireth, let him turn aside from this counsel and whosoever desireth let him choose the path to his Lord.

O people, if ye deny these verses, by what proof have ye believed in God? Produce it O assemblage of falsehood... Be thou assured in thyself that verily, he who turns away from this Beauty hath also turned away from the Messengers of the past and showeth pride towards God from all eternity to all eternity.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablet of Ahmad, Baha'i Prayers (US), Pages: 211-213)

KNOWLEDGE INCREASED

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Baha'u'llah, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united...A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity.

(Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, P. 203)

On May 24th, 1844, in Washington D.C., Mr. Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, stepped to the keyboard of his new instrument. He was about to send the first official telegram in history flashing along the wires from Washington to Baltimore. The press had heralded this day as a modern miracle. By this invention, it was said, the world would be united physically in the twinkling of an eye. These lightning-like impulses leaping along the wires would shrink the size of the planet, they said.

In fact, when Congress appropriated \$40,000 for Morse to continue his work, he was told that now he could send his "lightnings" to the world. Thus his invention was associated

with the words in the Book of Job, although at the time it was said partly in jest.

Students of Scripture asked: 'Is this not still another proof that 1844 is indeed the hour for the appearance of Christ? Is it not written in the Book of Job that only God can send 'lightnings that may go and say unto thee here we are!' (**Job 38:35**)

Does it not mean that Christ is here? Did not this same Job promise:

'For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.' (**Job 19:25**)

Samuel Morse put his hand to the keyboard of the telegraph and tapped out that first formal message. The words were taken from the Book of Numbers:

'What hath God wrought!' (**Numbers 23:23**)

I was curious about that message of Morse in 1844. What had God wrought in that day, if anything besides the telegraph? Was there a hidden story? Was it possible to find it? At least this was a beginning.

About this time I came upon the account of a lecture given by the British scientist, Sir Lawrence Bragg, in Carnegie Hall, New York. Sir Lawrence drew a graph of the scientific achievements of man until the period around 1844. He showed that man's advancement up until that time had been very slow, so slow, indeed, that the line of the graph up to 1844 was almost horizontal.

Subsequently, however, and immediately, the line of the graph went almost directly upwards, and has continued to climb ever since.

This did interest me. Why? What had caused this new spirit of energy and creation in the world following the year 1844? Why had it begun in that particular period?

Had some historical event taken place in 1844 which could account for this new upsurge of knowledge and invention? Was there some happening which the historians had overlooked, or neglected? Did it have anything to do with the coming of the Messiah, the generally talked about return of Christ. These were questions to which I now eagerly wanted the answer. The Case of the Missing Millennium was at last becoming interesting. I decided to make a thorough check on the exact year of Morse's 1844 message.

(William Sears, Thief in the Night, p. 3-5)

I found ample evidence that Christ never tried to 'unseal' the Books Himself. He left this for a future date. Rather, He spoke in parables and hidden meanings. He even prophesied that while He (Christ) spoke in parables, there would be a time in the future, when the Son would return in the Glory of the Father, and would speak plainly to them. Christ said:

'These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall speak no more unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.' **(John 16:25)**

This promise to explain the hidden meanings is given by Jesus in the very same chapter in which He speaks of the coming of the Spirit of Truth who will guide His followers unto all truth. When this 'Comforter' comes, Christ promises:

'...he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' **(John 14:26)**

Christ, in these words, seems to offer the clear promise that the new Messiah would, in the day of His coming, 'unseal the books' and bring to light the 'hidden things of darkness'.

If He had appeared in 1844, that would certainly account for all the renewed enthusiasm.

I turned away from the Scriptures long enough to test my theory. I was intrigued to discover that certainly some creative power had 'brought to light' the 'hidden things' during that epoch of 1844. My search through secular history revealed the astonishing fact that beginning in that decade an entirely new spirit of invention and discovery had made itself apparent.

It proved without doubt the accuracy of Sir Lawrence Bragg's graph, to which we have already referred.

I also read the report given by an official of the United States Patent Office who, in 1844, stated that in his opinion everything worthwhile had already been invented, and the Patent Office might as well close its doors. From that time on the Patent Office was overwhelmed with new inventions and discoveries. The most cursory survey vindicates Bragg's graph and shows that a whole new world seemed to be in the making following 1844.

Some of the great steps forward were these:

- The First Congress of Women's Rights took place.
- The First Congress for Universal Education.
- Initial measures were taken to abolish child labour.
- The Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves in the United States, was signed.
- Great new advances took place in the fields of medicine, literature, music and art.

The following are but a few of the vast downpouring of discoveries and inventions that lighted the age: 1844, Telegraph, Vulcanised rubber; 1845, Turret lathe; 1846, Rotay press; 1854, Elevator; 1855, Gas burner; 1858, AlaniCable; 1867, Typewriter, Dynamite; 1869, Air brakes; 1876, Telephone; 1877, Gas engine; 1878, Incandescent lamp; 1879, Arc lamp; 1880, Centrifugal creamer; 1844, Fountain pen, Cash register; 1885, Automobile, Linotype; 1888, Film, Transparent photo; 1891,

Armourised plate; 1892, Diesel motor; 1893, Motion pictures, Coke oven; 1899, Wireless telegraphy; 1903, Airplane.

New and far-reaching developments took place in the fields of: Thermodynamics, Steam power, Electro-magnetism Electric motor power, Gaslight, Electric light, High-speed press, Lithography, X-ray, Antiseptic surgery, Anesthetics, Steamboats, Railways, Canal construction.

Great progress was made in bacteriology and medicine with such men as Lister, Koch, Pasteur in the lead. In the field of metallurgy, Sorby in Britain and Chernoff in Russia led the way. In music, Chopin, Schubert, Tschaikowsky and a flood of creative genius appeared. Literature produced such names as Emerson, Tolstoi, Fitzgerald, Tennyson, Lowell, Whitman, James, Dickens, Thoreau, Dostevski, to name but a few.

Man's life was enriched by an increasing number of inventions and benefits, a process which has continued from 1844 to the present day, taking even higher the graph of human accomplishment: Airlines, Jets (Planes, Ships, Submarines), Streamlined trains, Luxury liners, Air-conditioning, Radio, Television, Electronics, Antibiotics, Wonder drugs, Missiles, Rockets to the moon, All the magic of nuclear physics.

The endless stream of wonders still continues. The whole concept of life has altered. Newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, telephone, telegraph, schools, education, travel -- have all vastly increased man's knowledge and information.

Is there any doubt these were the events foreseen by Daniel for the time of the end? In the very chapter in which he spoke of the (1) coming of Michael, Who looks like God, (2) in the year of 1844, (3) when the Book will be unsealed, Daniel prophesied:

'...many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' (**Daniel 12:4**)

According to the sacred Writings there was a definite promise that when all these things took place the 'book' would be 'unsealed'. This unique event was foretold in Isaiah, Daniel and Revelation in a remarkable series of prophecies.

In one chapter, Isaiah prophesies that (1) the Book is sealed, and (2) that in the last days the Book will be opened:

1. Sealed

'And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed.' (**Isaiah 29:11**)

2. Unsealed

'And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see... They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.' (**Isaiah 29:18**)

Daniel made the same two promises: (1) that the Books would be sealed until the time of the end, and (2) that they would be opened and explained in the last days:

1. Sealed

'Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.' (**Daniel 12:9**)

2. Unsealed

'I beheld all the (other) thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit ... and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened.' (**Daniel 7:9-10**)

This last promise is given by Daniel in the same chapter in which he says that 'one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.' The Book of Revelation seems to end all

question on this subject. The basic theme of this entire book is the second coming of Christ. Revelation states plainly that those books which were sealed until the time of the end would then be unsealed and would be sealed no more:

'Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand.' (**Revelation 22:10**)

Revelation, like Daniel, repeats the same vision of the coming of the Son of man (Christ) when the books were unsealed:

'And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man...' (**Revelation 14:14**)

In yet another place, Revelation describes this Messiah as one:

'...clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.' (**Revelation 19:13**)

Revelation says of this Lamb of God who will appear in the last days:

'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof...' (**Revelation 5:9**)

I felt that I had found at last a satisfactory answer to those puzzling questions:

Why had interest in Christ's return died out after His crucifixion?

Why had such an enthusiastic revival of this interest taken place in 1844?
(**William Sears, Thief in the Night, p. 47-51**)

Can you blame me for feeling excited? The search had been long, but the reward promised to be great. I might at last solve my mystery.

One of the first things I learned was this:

1. On May 24, 1844, in the West, Samuel Morse sent his famous telegraphic message, quoting from the Scriptures: 'What hath God wrought?'
2. On May 23rd, 1844, the preceding day, in the East, this young man arose to make a staggering claim.

He declared that this was the day foretold in all the Scriptures of the past. This day, he said, was the day when the Promised One of all religions would appear. This was to be the day of the 'one fold and one shepherd'.

This took place in Persia in 1844. Naturally my attention was arrested immediately by the date and the place.

I learned that he was called the Báb. Just as the name Christ means 'the anointed', the name Báb means 'the gate' or 'the door'. This young man claimed that he was the 'gate' or the 'door' through which would come the One promised in all the holy Books, the One Who would establish the one fold of God.

I remembered the promise given by Christ:

'But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep...And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.' (**John 10:2-16**)

The Báb said that he was the herald and forerunner of one greater than himself. His mission was to call men back to God and to prepare the way for the great world Saviour foretold by Christ and all the prophets of the past. Just as John the Bap-

tist had been the forerunner of Christ, the Báb claimed to be the forerunner of this Promised Redeemer of all ages.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p. 90-91)

THE WORD UNVEILED

The revered minister read from the words of the Gospel,

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." **(John 16:12-13)**

The century has dawned when the Spirit of Truth can reveal these verities to mankind, proclaim that very Word, establish the real foundations of Christianity and deliver the nations and peoples from the bondage of forms and imitations. The cause of discord, prejudice and animosity will be removed, the basis of love and amity be established. Therefore, all of you must strive with heart and soul in order that enmity may disappear entirely and that strife and hatred pass away absolutely from the midst of the human world. You must listen to the admonition of this Spirit of Truth. You must follow the example and footprints of Jesus Christ. Read the Gospels. Jesus Christ was mercy itself, was love itself. He even prayed in behalf of His executioners - for those who crucified Him - saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." If they knew what they were doing, they would not have done it. Consider how kind Jesus Christ was, that even upon the cross He prayed for His oppressors. We must follow His example. We must emulate the Prophets of God. We must follow Jesus Christ. We must free ourselves from all these imitations which are the source of darkness in the world.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 41-42)**

"Followers of the Gospel," Baha'u'llah addressing the whole of Christendom exclaims, "behold the gates of heaven are flung open. He that had ascended unto it is now come. Give

ear to His voice calling aloud over land and sea, announcing to all mankind the advent of this Revelation - a Revelation through the agency of which the Tongue of Grandeur is now proclaiming: `Lo, the sacred Pledge hath been fulfilled, for He, the Promised One, is come!'" "The voice of the Son of Man is calling aloud from the sacred vale: `Here am I, here am I, O God my God!' ... whilst from the Burning Bush breaketh forth the cry: `Lo, the Desire of the world is made manifest in His transcendent glory!' The Father hath come. That which ye were promised in the Kingdom of God is fulfilled. This is the Word which the Son veiled when He said to those around Him that at that time they could not bear it... Verily the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth... He is the One Who glorified the Son and exalted His Cause..." "The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him."

(Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 104-105)

Me thinks, with every step He took and every word He uttered thousands of oceans of light surged before my face, and thousands of worlds of incomparable splendor were unveiled to my eyes, and thousands of suns blazed their light upon me!

(H.M. Balyuzi, Baha'u'llah - The King of Glory, p. 110)

Know verily that Knowledge is of two kinds: Divine and Satanic. The one welleteth out from the fountain of divine inspiration; the other is but a reflection of vain and obscure thoughts. The source of the former is God Himself; the motive-force of the latter the whisperings of selfish desire. The one is guided by the principle: "Fear ye God; God will teach you;"¹ the other is but a confirmation of the truth: "Knowledge is the most grievous veil between man and his Creator." The former bringeth forth the fruit of patience, of longing desire, of true understanding, and love; whilst the latter can yield naught but

1 Qur'an 2:282

arrogance, vainglory and conceit. From the sayings of those Masters of holy utterance, Who have expounded the meaning of true knowledge, the odour of these dark teachings, which have obscured the world, can in no wise be detected. The tree of such teachings can yield no result except iniquity and rebellion, and beareth no fruit but hatred and envy. Its fruit is deadly poison; its shadow a consuming fire. How well hath it been said: "Cling unto the robe of the Desire of thy heart, and put thou away all shame; bid the worldlywise be gone, however great their name."

The heart must needs therefore be cleansed from the idle sayings of men, and sanctified from every earthly affection, so that it may discover the hidden meaning of divine inspiration, and become the treasury of the mysteries of divine knowledge. Thus hath it been said: "He that treadeth the snow-white Path, and followeth in the footsteps of the Crimson Pillar, shall never attain unto his abode unless his hands are empty of those worldly things cherished by men." This is the prime requisite of whosoever treadeth this path. Ponder thereon, that, with eyes unveiled, thou mayest perceive the truth of these words.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 69-70)

The praise which hath dawned from Thy most august Self, and the glory which hath shone forth from Thy most effulgent Beauty, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art the Manifestation of Grandeur, and the King of Eternity, and the Lord of all who are in heaven and on earth! I testify that through Thee the sovereignty of God and His dominion, and the majesty of God and His grandeur, were revealed, and the Day-Stars of ancient splendor have shed their radiance in the heaven of Thine irrevocable decree, and the Beauty of the Unseen hath shone forth above the horizon of creation. I testify, moreover, that with but a movement of Thy Pen Thine injunction "Be Thou" hath been enforced, and God's hidden Secret hath been divulged, and all created things have been called into being, and all the Revelations have been sent down.

I bear witness, moreover, that through Thy beauty the beauty of the Adored One hath been unveiled, and through Thy face the face of the Desired One hath shone forth, and that through a word from Thee Thou hast decided between all created things, causing them who are devoted to Thee to ascend unto the summit of glory, and the infidels to fall into the lowest abyss.

I bear witness that he who hath known Thee hath known God, and he who hath attained unto Thy presence hath attained unto the presence of God. Great, therefore, is the blessedness of him who hath believed in Thee, and in Thy signs, and hath humbled himself before Thy sovereignty, and hath been honored with meeting Thee, and hath attained the good pleasure of Thy will, and circled around Thee, and stood before Thy throne. Woe betide him that hath transgressed against Thee, and hath denied Thee, and repudiated Thy signs, and gainsaid Thy sovereignty, and risen up against Thee, and waxed proud before Thy face, and hath disputed Thy testimonies, and fled from Thy rule and Thy dominion, and been numbered with the infidels whose names have been inscribed by the fingers of Thy behest upon Thy holy Tablets.

Waft, then, unto me, O my God and my Beloved, from the right hand of Thy mercy and Thy loving-kindness, the holy breaths of Thy favors, that they may draw me away from myself and from the world unto the courts of Thy nearness and Thy presence. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou, truly, hast been supreme over all things.

The remembrance of God and His praise, and the glory of God and His splendor, rest upon Thee, O Thou Who art His Beauty! I bear witness that the eye of creation hath never gazed upon one wronged like Thee. Thou wast immersed all the days of Thy life beneath an ocean of tribulations. At one time Thou wast in chains and fetters; at another Thou wast threatened by the sword of Thine enemies. Yet, despite all this, Thou didst enjoin upon all men to observe what had been prescribed unto Thee by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

May my spirit be a sacrifice to the wrongs Thou didst suffer, and my soul be a ransom for the adversities Thou didst sustain. I beseech God, by Thee and by them whose faces have been illumined with the splendors of the light of Thy countenance, and who, for love of Thee, have observed all whereunto they were bidden, to remove the veils that have come in between Thee and Thy creatures, and to supply me with the good of this world and the world to come. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.

Bless Thou, O Lord my God, the Divine Lote-Tree and its leaves, and its boughs, and its branches, and its stems, and its offshoots, as long as Thy most excellent titles will endure and Thy most august attributes will last. Protect it, then, from the mischief of the aggressor and the hosts of tyranny. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. Bless Thou, also, O Lord my God, Thy servants and Thy handmaidens who have attained unto Thee. Thou, truly, art the All-Bountiful, Whose grace is infinite. No God is there save Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

(Baha'u'llah: The Tablet of Visitation, Prayers and Meditations, Pages: 310-313)

THE CHOICE SEALED WINE

*"And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."
(Daniel 12:9)*

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim." (Joel 3:18)

"...verily the record of the Righteous is (preserved)...Truly the Righteous will be in Bliss: On

Thrones (of Dignity) will they command a sight (of all things): Thou wilt recognise in their faces the beaming brightness of Bliss. Their thirst will be slaked with Pure Wine sealed: The seal thereof will be Musk: And for this let those aspire, who have aspirations: A spring, from (the waters) whereof drink those Nearest to God.” (Qur’án 83:18-28)

‘The seal of the Choice Wine hath...been broken.’ The reference to choice wine, sealed, may be found in the Qur’án (see 83: 22-6). The significance of ‘sealed’ is that the true meanings of the Words of God in former Dispensations were not disclosed until the advent of Bahá’u’lláh (see vol. 1, pp. 160-61, on this prophecy of Daniel). The unsealing of the Choice Wine signifies the revelation of the Word of God in this age, disclosing to mankind new teachings and new laws. Bahá’u’lláh declares in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, ‘Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay rather We have unsealed the Choice Wine with the fingers of might and power.’

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha’u’llah v 4, p. 433)

“For example, in the Qur’an the righteous are promised that they will be given to drink of the ‘choice sealed wine’. In His Tablets, Baha’u’llah identifies the ‘choice Wine’ with His Revelation whose ‘musk-laden fragrance’ has been wafted ‘upon all created things’. He states that He has ‘unsealed’ this ‘Wine’, thereby disclosing spiritual truths that were hitherto unknown, and enabling those who quaff thereof to ‘discern the splendours of the light of divine unity’ and to ‘grasp the essential purpose underlying the Scriptures of God.’”

(Baha’u’llah: Aqdas: Notes, Page: 166)

Foremost among the priceless treasures cast forth from the billowing ocean of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation ranks the Kitáb-i-Iqan (Book of Certitude), revealed within the space of two days and two nights, in the closing years of that period (1278 A.H. - 1862 A.D.). It was written in fulfillment of the prophecy of the Báb, Who had specifically stated that the Promised One would complete the text of the unfinished Persian Bayan (1),

and in reply to the questions addressed to Bahá'u'lláh by the as yet unconverted maternal uncle of the Báb, Haji Mirza Siyyid Muhammad, while on a visit, with his brother, Haji Mirza Hasan-'Ali, to Karbila.

A model of Persian prose, of a style at once original, chaste and vigorous, and remarkably lucid, both cogent in argument and matchless in its irresistible eloquence, this Book, setting forth in outline the Grand Redemptive Scheme of God, occupies a position unequalled by any work in the entire range of Bahá'í literature, except the Kitab-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book. Revealed on the eve of the declaration of His Mission, it proffered to mankind the "Choice Sealed Wine," whose seal is of "musk," and broke the "seals" of the "Book" referred to by Daniel, and disclosed the meaning of the "words" destined to remain "closed up" till the "time of the end."

***(Shoghi Effendi: God Passes By, Pages: 138-139)
The Holy Book of The Báb***

By the righteousness of God! Idle fancies have debarred men from the Horizon of Certitude, and vain imaginings withheld them from the Choice Sealed Wine. In truth I say, and for the sake of God I declare: This Servant, this Wronged One, is abashed to claim for Himself any existence whatever, how much more those exalted grades of being! Every man of discernment, while walking upon the earth, feeleth indeed abashed, inasmuch as he is fully aware that the thing which is the source of his prosperity, his wealth, his might, his exaltation, his advancement and power is, as ordained by God, the very earth which is trodden beneath the feet of all men. There can be no doubt that whoever is cognizant of this truth, is cleansed and sanctified from all pride, arrogance, and vain-glory. Whatever hath been said hath come from God. Unto this, He, verily, hath borne, and beareth now, witness, and He, in truth, is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

(Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Page: 44)

Those who attained the Presence of Bahá'u'lláh with pure hearts and spiritual vision had the bounty of being able to recognize Him through 'His own Self'. As a result of coming

in contact with His Person these believers became a new creation completely detached from the things of this world, intoxicated by the wine of His presence and carried away into new realms of the spirit. They enjoyed such nearness to the Blessed Beauty that they became the intimates of His mysteries. Some of them saw glimpses of His hidden glory and power and were awestruck at the revelation of His supreme station.

(Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 4, p. 113*)

THE FALLEN STARS

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." **(Isaiah 13:9-10)**

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:" **(Matthew 24:29)**

"He questions: 'When is the Day of Resurrection?' At length, when the Sight is dazed, And the moon is buried in darkness." **(Qur'án 75: 6-8)**

"Assuredly, what ye are promised must come to pass. Then when the stars become dim; When the heaven is cleft asunder;" **(Qur'án 77: 7-9)**

The second coming of Christ also will be in like manner: the signs and conditions which have been spoken of all have meanings, and are not to be taken literally. Among other things it is said that the stars will fall upon the earth. The stars are endless and innumerable, and modern mathematicians have

established and proved scientifically that the globe of the sun is estimated to be about one million and a half times greater than the earth, and each of the fixed stars to be a thousand times larger than the sun. If these stars were to fall upon the surface of the earth, how could they find place there? It would be as though a thousand million of Himalaya mountains were to fall upon a grain of mustard seed. According to reason and science this thing is quite impossible.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, p. 111)

As to the words—"Immediately after the oppression of those days"--they refer to the time when men shall become oppressed and afflicted, the time when the lingering traces of the Sun of Truth and the fruit of the Tree of knowledge and wisdom will have vanished from the midst of men, when the reins of mankind will have fallen into the grasp of the foolish and ignorant, when the portals of divine unity and understanding--the essential and highest purpose in creation--will have been closed, when certain knowledge will have given way to idle fancy, and corruption will have usurped the station of righteousness. Such a condition as this is witnessed in this day when the reins of every community have fallen into the grasp of foolish leaders, who lead after their own whims and desire. On their tongue the mention of God hath become an empty name...

In another sense, by these terms is intended the divines of the former Dispensation, who live in the days of the subsequent Revelations, and who hold the reins of religion in their grasp. If these divines be illumined by the light of the latter Revelation they will be acceptable unto God, and will shine with a light everlasting. Otherwise, they will be declared as darkened...

(Baha'u'llah: Kitáb-i-Íqán, pp 29,36)

Whereas, by "oppression" is meant the want of capacity to acquire spiritual knowledge and apprehend the Word of God. By it is meant that when the Day-star of Truth hath set, and the mirrors that reflect His light have departed, manind will become afflicted with "oppression" and hardship, knowing not

whither to turn for guidance. Thus We instruct thee in the interpretation of the traditions, and reveal unto thee the mysteries of divine wisdom, that haply thou mayest comprehend the meaning thereof, and be of them that have quaffed the cup of divine knowledge and understanding.

And now, concerning His words—"The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give light, and the stars shall fall from heaven." By the terms "sun" and "moon," mentioned in the writings of the Prophets of God, is not meant solely the sun and moon of the visible universe. Nay rather, manifold are the meanings they have intended for these terms. In every instance they have attached to them a particular significance. Thus, by the "sun" in one sense is meant those Suns of Truth Who rise from the dayspring of ancient glory, and fill the world with a liberal effusion of grace from on high. These Suns of Truth are the universal Manifestations of God in the worlds of His attributes and names, even as the visible sun that assisteth, as decreed by God, the true One, the Adored, in the development of all earthly things, such as the trees, the fruits, and colours thereof, the minerals of the earth, and all that may be witnessed in the world of creation, so do the divine Luminaries, by their loving care and educative influence, cause the trees of divine unity, the fruits of His oneness, the leaves of detachment, the blossoms of knowledge and certitude, and the myrtles of wisdom and utterance, to exist and be made manifest. Thus it is that through the rise of these Luminaries of God the world is made new, the waters of everlasting life stream forth the billows of loving-kindness surge, the clouds of grace are gathered, and the breeze of bounty bloweth upon all created things. It is the warmth that these Luminaries of God generate, and the undying fires they kindle, which cause the light of the love of God to burn fiercely in the heart of humanity. It is through the abundant grace of these Symbols of Detachment that the Spirit of life everlasting is breathed into the bodies of the dead. Assuredly the visible sun is but a sign of the splendour of that Day-star of Truth, that Sun Which can never have a peer, a likeness, or rival. Through Him all things live, move, and have their being. Through His grace they are made manifest, and unto Him they all return. From Him all

things have sprung, and unto the treasuries of His revelation they all have repaired. From Him all created things did proceed, and to the depositories of His law they did revert.

(Baha'u'llah: Kitáb-i-Íqán, pp 32-34)

In another sense, by the terms "sun", "moon", and "stars" are meant such laws and teachings as have been established and proclaimed in every Dispensation, such as the laws of prayer and fasting. These have, according to the law of the Qur'án, been regarded, when the beauty of the Prophet Muhammad had passed beyond the veil, as the most fundamental and binding laws of His dispensation. To this testify the texts of the traditions and chronicles, which, on account of their being widely known, need not be referred to here. Nay rather, in every Dispensation the law concerning prayer hath been emphasized and universally enforced.

(Baha'u'llah: Kitáb-i-Íqán, pp 38,39)

...by the words "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven" is intended the waywardness of the divines, and the annulment of laws firmly established by divine Revelation, all of which, in symbolic language, have been foreshadowed by the Manifestation of God. None except the righteous shall partake of this cup, none but the godly can share therein.

(Baha'u'llah: Kitáb-i-Íqán, pp 41)

"He questions: 'When is the Day of Resurrection?'... And the sun and moon are joined together... Before thy Lord (alone) that Day will be the place of rest." (Qur'an 75:6,9,12)

According to the Islamic tradition, the term 'sun,' symbolizes and denotes Prophet Muhammad, and the term 'moon,' symbolizes Imám Ali (His first disciple). Thus, where it has been said: 'the sun and moon are joined together' (Qur'an 75:9), it would mean Ali-Muhammad – the given name of The Báb; the return of the 12th Imám; The Promised Qa'im.

IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven..."

(Daniel 7:13)

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matthew 24:30)

"Will they wait until Allah comes to them in canopies of clouds, with angels (in His train)..." (Qur'an 2:210)

And now, with reference to His words: "And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." These words signify that in those days men will lament the loss of the Sun of the divine beauty, of the Moon of knowledge, and of the Stars of divine wisdom. Thereupon, they will behold the countenance of the promised One, the adored Beauty, descending from heaven and riding upon the clouds. By this is meant that the divine Beauty will be made manifest from the heaven of the will of God, and will appear in the form of the human temple. The term "heaven" denoteth loftiness and exaltation, inasmuch as it is the seat of the revelation of those Manifestations of Holiness, the Day-springs of ancient glory. These ancient Beings, though delivered from the womb of their mother, have in reality descended from the heaven of the will of God. Though they be dwelling on this earth, yet their true habitations are the retreats of glory in the realms above. Whilst walking amongst mortals, they soar in the heaven of the divine presence. Without feet they tread the path of the spirit, and without wings they rise unto the exalted heights of divine unity. With every fleeting breath they cover the immensity of space, and at every moment traverse the kingdoms of the visible and the invisible. Upon their thrones is written: "Nothing whatsoever keepeth Him from being occupied with

any other thing;" and on their seats is inscribed: "Verily, His ways differ every day." They are sent forth through the transcendent power of the Ancient of Days, and are raised up by the exalted will of God, the most mighty King. This is what is meant by the words: "coming in the clouds of heaven."

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 66-67)

And now regarding His words, that the Son of man shall "come in the clouds of heaven." By the term "clouds" is meant those things that are contrary to the ways and desires of men. Even as He hath revealed in the verse already quoted: "As oft as an Apostle cometh unto you with that which your souls desire not, ye swell with pride, accusing some of being impostors and slaying others." (*Qur'an 2:87*)

These "clouds" signify, in one sense, the annulment of laws, the abrogation of former Dispensations, the repeal of rituals and customs current amongst men, the exalting of the illiterate faithful above the learned opposers of the Faith. In another sense, they mean the appearance of that immortal Beauty in the image of mortal man, with such human limitations as eating and drinking, poverty and riches, glory and abasement, sleeping and waking, and such other things as cast doubt in the minds of men, and cause them to turn away. All such veils are symbolically referred to as "clouds."

These are the "clouds" that cause the heavens of the knowledge and understanding of all that dwell on earth to be cloven asunder. Even as He hath revealed: "On that day shall the heaven be cloven by the clouds." (*Qur'an 25:25*)

Even as the clouds prevent the eyes of men from beholding the sun, so do these things hinder the souls of men from recognizing the light of the divine Luminary.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 71-72)

The day is fine, the air is pure, the sun shines, no mist nor cloud obscures its radiance. These brilliant rays penetrate into all parts of the city; so may the Sun of Truth illumine the minds of men. Christ said, "They shall see the Son of Man coming in

the clouds of Heaven.”¹ Baha’u’llah said, “When Christ came for the first time He came upon the clouds.”² Christ said that He had come from the sky, from Heaven - that He came forth from God - while He was born of Mary, His Mother. But when He declared that He had come from Heaven, it is clear that He did not mean the blue firmament but that He spoke of the Heaven of the Kingdom of God, and that from this Heaven He descended upon the clouds. As clouds are obstacles to the shining of the sun, so the clouds of the world of humanity hid from the eyes of men the radiance of the Divinity of Christ.

Men said, “He is of Nazareth, born of Mary, we know Him and we know his brethren. What can He mean? What is He saying? That He came forth from God?”

The Body of Christ was born of Mary of Nazareth, but the Spirit was of God. The capacities of His human body were limited but the strength of His spirit was vast, infinite, immeasurable. Men asked, “Why does He say He is of God?” If they had understood the reality of Christ, they would have known that the body of His humanity was a cloud that hid His Divinity. The world only saw His human form, and therefore wondered how He could have “come down from Heaven” Baha’u’llah said, “Even as the clouds hide the sun and the sky from our gaze, even so did the humanity of Christ hide from men His real Divine character”.

I hope that you will turn with unclouded eyes towards the Sun of Truth, beholding not the things of earth, lest your hearts be attracted to the worthless and passing pleasures of the world; let that Sun give you of His strength, then will not the clouds of prejudice veil His illumination from your eyes! Then will the Sun be without clouds for you. Breathe the air of purity. May you each and all share in the Divine Bounties of the Kingdom of Heaven. May the world be for you no obstacle hiding the truth from your sight, as the human body of Christ hid His Divinity from the people of His day. May you receive the

1 *St Matthew xxiv, 30. St Matthew xvi, 27*

2 *St John III, 13*

clear vision of the Holy Spirit, so that your hearts may be illumined and able to recognize the Sun of Truth shining through all material clouds, His splendour flooding the universe.

Let not the things of the body obscure the celestial light of the spirit, so that, by the Divine Bounty, you may enter with the children of God into His Eternal Kingdom."

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks, Pages: 43-45)*

COMING SECRETLY

"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." (Revelation 3:3)

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Revelation 16:15)

"And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." (Luke 12:39-40)

Did not Christ say that He would come like a thief in the night? But He also said 'every eye' should see Him! (Rev. 1:7) 'Every eye', yes, but those who do not see Him are spiritually blind.

O ye who are the chosen ones of the Abha Kingdom! Praise ye the Lord of Hosts for He, riding upon the clouds, hath come down to this world out of the heaven of the invisible realm, so that East and West were lit by the glory of the Sun of Truth, and the call of the Kingdom was raised, and the heralds of the realm above, with melodies of the Concourse on

high, sang out the glad tidings of the Coming. Then the whole world of being did quiver for joy, and still the people, even as the Messiah saith, slept on: for the day of the Manifestation, when the Lord of Hosts descended, found them wrapped in the slumber of unknowing. As He saith in the Gospel, My coming is even as when the thief is in the house, and the goodman of the house watcheth not.

From amongst all mankind hath He chosen you, and your eyes have been opened to the light of guidance and your ears attuned to the music of the Company above; and blessed by abounding grace, your hearts and souls have been born into new life. Thank ye and praise ye God that the hand of infinite bestowals hath set upon your heads this gem-studded crown, this crown whose lustrous jewels will forever flash and sparkle down all the reaches of time.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, Page: 35)

Praise thou God that in this age, the age of the dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, thou hast been awakened, hast been made aware of the Manifestation of the Lord of Hosts. All the people of the world are buried in the graves of nature, or are slumbering, heedless and unaware. Just as Christ saith: 'I may come when you are not aware. The coming of the Son of Man is like the coming of a thief into a house, the owner of which is utterly unaware.'

In brief, my hope is that from the bounties of Bahá'u'lláh, thou mayest daily advance in the Kingdom, that thou mayest become a heavenly angel, confirmed by the breaths of the Holy Spirit, and mayest erect a structure that shall eternally remain firm and unshakeable....

These days are very precious; grasp the present opportunity and ignite a candle that shall never be extinguished, and which shall pour out its light eternally illuminating the world of mankind!

(Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 198)

In the first half of the nineteenth century there was world-wide and fervent expectation that during the 1840's the return of Christ would take place. The story made the headlines and even reached the Congress of the United States. From China and the Middle East to Europe and America, men of conflicting ideas shared in the expectancy. Scoffers were many but the enthusiasm was tremendous, and all agreed on the time. Why? And what became of the story? Did anything happen or was it all a dream?

The Solution. Patiently, and with exemplary thoroughness, William Sears set out to solve this mystery. In *Thief in the Night* he presents his fully detailed "conduct of the case" in an easy style which enthuses the reader with the excitement of the chase. The solution to which all the clues lead comes as a tremendous challenge.

This is a mystery story with a difference: the mystery is a real one, and of vital importance to every human being. The author presents the evidence in *The Case of the Missing Millennium* in such a way that you can solve it for yourself.

(William Sears, Thief in the Night)

Christ said that this was the day to 'Watch!' for the Lord would come as a 'thief' and 'break up' the house of the faithless. Micah said that this hour was:

'the day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh...' **(Micah 7:4)**

Micah then let loose an astonishing downpour of prophecy. He foretold the exact steps by which the Lord would come to Israel, and the things that would befall Him. No detective had a clearer set of clues. Micah promised that:

1. He would come from Assyria.
2. He would come from the fortified cities.
3. He would come from a fortress to a river.
4. He would come from sea to sea.
5. He would come from mountain to mountain.

6. The land to which he came would be desolate.
7. He would feed his flock in the midst of Mount Carmel.
8. He would work his wonders for a period equal to the days which the Jews spent coming out of Egypt.

Frankly, I felt that a fulfilment of these prophecies would be sufficient by itself to establish the authenticity of the Messiah, for in addition to these eight prophecies, Bahá'u'lláh had also fulfilled Micah's prophecies that the Messiah must:

1. Come as a Messenger of God and tread upon the high places of the earth.
2. Appear in the day when the children of Israel would be gathered into their own land.
3. Establish his house in the mountain.
4. Draw the people to it in a flow of love.
5. Send forth His love from that mountain.
6. Go to Babylon.
7. Withdraw from the city.
8. Dwell in the wilderness and the field.
9. Give birth in Babylon that would redeem the children of Israel.

No wonder I called him the 'Amazing Micah'. I now felt that if Bahá'u'lláh also fulfilled these eight additional prophecies, I might indeed be coming to the end of my search. I had to admit that I had already assembled a powerful array of evidence pointing to a solution of The Case of the Missing Millenium.

[William Sears, Thief in the Night, p. 122-123]

RAISING OF THE DEAD

By the terms "sun" and "moon," mentioned in the writings of the Prophets of God, is not meant solely the sun and moon of the visible universe...Thus, by the "sun" in one sense is meant those Suns of Truth Who rise from the dayspring of ancient glory, and fill the world with a liberal effusion of grace from on high. These Suns of Truth are the universal Manifestations of God in the worlds of His attributes and names...

Thus it is that through the rise of these Luminaries of God the world is made new, the waters of everlasting life stream forth, the billows of loving-kindness surge, the clouds of grace are gathered, and the breeze of bounty bloweth upon all created things. It is the warmth that these Luminaries of God generate, and the undying fires they kindle, which cause the light of the love of God to burn fiercely in the heart of humanity. It is through the abundant grace of these Symbols of Detachment that the Spirit of life everlasting is breathed into the bodies of the dead.

(Bahá'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 33-34)

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised...and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:52)

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8)

Inasmuch as the Christian divines have failed to apprehend the meaning of these words, and did not recognize their object and purpose, and have clung to the literal interpretation of the words of Jesus, they therefore became deprived of the streaming grace of the Muhammadan Revelation and its showering bounties. The ignorant among the Christian community, following the example of the leaders of their faith, were likewise prevented from beholding the beauty of the King of glory¹, inasmuch as those signs which were to accompany the dawn of the sun of the Muhammadan Dispensation did not actually come to pass. Thus, ages have passed and centuries rolled away, and that most pure Spirit hath repaired unto the retreats of its ancient sovereignty. Once more hath the eternal Spirit breathed into the mystic trumpet, and caused the dead to speed out of their sepulchres of heedlessness and error unto the realm of guidance and grace. And yet, that expectant community still crieth out: When shall these things be? When shall the promised One, the object of our expecta-

1 Bahá'u'lláh

tion, be made manifest, that we may arise for the triumph of His Cause, that we may sacrifice our substance for His sake, that we may offer up our lives in His path? In like manner, have such false imaginings caused other communities to stray from the Kawthar of the infinite mercy of Providence, and to be busied with their own idle thoughts.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 26-27)

"If thou couldst but see when they are confronted with their Lord! He will say: 'Is not this the truth?' They will say: 'Yea, by our Lord!' He will say: 'Taste ye then the penalty, because ye rejected faith.' Lost indeed are they who treat it as a falsehood that they must meet Allah, until on a sudden the hour is on them, and they say: 'Ah! woe unto us that we took no thought of it;'" (Qur'an 6:30-31)

"O mankind! fear your Lord! For the convulsion of the Hour (of Judgment) will be a thing terrible!" (Qur'an 22:1)

The following is an evidence of the sovereignty exercised by Muhammad, the Day-star of Truth. Hast thou not heard how with one single verse He asundered light from darkness, the righteous from the ungodly, and the believing from the infidel? All the signs and allusions concerning the Day of Judgment, which thou hast heard, such as the raising of the dead, the Day of Reckoning, the Last Judgment, and others have been made manifest through the revelation of that verse. These revealed words were a blessing to the righteous who on hearing them exclaimed: "O God our Lord, we have heard, and obeyed." They were a curse to the people of iniquity who, on hearing them affirmed: "We have heard and rebelled." Those words, sharp as the sword of God, have separated the faithful from the infidel, and severed father from son.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 111-112)

"And verily the Hour will come: there can be no doubt about it, or about (the fact) that Allah will raise up all who are in the graves." (Qur'an 22:7)

The breeze of the All-Merciful hath wafted, and the souls have been quickened in the tombs of their bodies. Thus hath the decree been fulfilled by God, the Mighty, the Beneficent. They that have gone astray have said: "When were the heavens cleft asunder?" Say: "While ye lay in the graves of waywardness and error."

(Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Page: 133)

"When the Sky is cleft asunder;" (Qur'an 82:1)

...strive thou to comprehend from these lucid, these powerful, conclusive, and unequivocal statements the meaning of the "cleaving of the heaven" - one of the signs that must needs herald the coming of the last Hour, the Day of Resurrection. As He hath said: "When the heaven shall be cloven asunder."¹ By "heaven" is meant the heaven of divine Revelation, which is elevated with every Manifestation, and rent asunder with every subsequent one. By "cloven asunder" is meant that the former Dispensation is superseded and annulled. I swear by God! That this heaven being cloven asunder is, to the discerning, an act mightier than the cleaving of the skies! Ponder a while. That a divine Revelation which for years hath been securely established; beneath whose shadow all who have embraced it have been reared and nurtured; by the light of whose law generations of men have been disciplined; the excellency of whose word men have heard recounted by their fathers; in such wise that human eye hath beheld naught but the pervading influence of its grace, and mortal ear hath heard naught but the resounding majesty of its command - what act is mightier than that such a Revelation should, by the power of God, be "cloven asunder" and be abolished at the appearance of one soul?

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 44-45)

"The Trumpet will (just) be sounded, when all that are in the heavens and on earth will swoon, except such as it will please Allah (to exempt). Then will a second one be sounded, when behold, they will be

1 1. Qur'an 82:1

standing and looking on! And the Earth will shine with the glory of its Lord:" (Qur'án 39:68-69)

The first Trumpet sound prophesied the Manifestation of the Báb; the harbinger of the Advent of the second Trumpet sound: Bahá'u'lláh (The Glory of God).

"Say: O concourse of archbishops! He Who is the Lord of all men hath appeared. In the plain of guidance He calleth mankind, whilst ye are numbered with the dead! Great is the blessedness of him who is stirred by the Breeze o God, and hath arisen from amongst the dead in this prspicuous Nam. "Say: O concourse of bishops! Trembling hath seized all the kindreds of the earth, and He Who is the Everlasting Father calleth aloud between earth and heaven. Blessed the ear that hath heard, and the eye that hath seen, and the heart that hath turned unto Him Who is the Point of Adoration of all who are in the heavens and all who are on earth."

"O concourse of bishops! Ye are the stars of the heaven of My knowledge. My mercy desireth not that ye should fall upon the earth. My justice, however, declareth: 'This is that which the Son [Jesus] hath decreed.' And whatsoever hath proceeded out of His blameless, His truthspeaking, trustworthy mouth, can never be altered. The bells, verily, peal out My Name, and lament over Me, but

My spirit rejoiceth with evident gladness. The body of the Loved One yearneth for the cross, and His head is eager for the spear, in the path of the All-Merciful. The ascendancy of the oppressor can in no wise deter Him from His purpose."

And again: "The stars of the heaven of knowledge have fallen, they that adduce the proofs they possess in order to demonstrate the truth of My Cause, and who make mention of God in My Name. When I came unto them, in My majesty, however, they turned aside from Me. They, verily, are of the fallen. This is what the Spirit [Jesus] prophesied when He came with the truth, and the Jewish doctors caviled at Him,

until they committed what made the Holy Spirit to lament, and the eyes of such as enjoy near access to God to weep."

"Say: O concourse of priests! Leave the bells, and come forth, then, from your churches. It behooveth you, in this day, to proclaim aloud the Most Great Name among the nations. Prefer ye to be silent, whilst every stone and every tree shouteth aloud: `The Lord is come in His great glory!?'... He that summoneth men in My name is, verily, of Me, and he will show forth that which is beyond the power of all that are on earth. ...Let the Breeze of God awaken you. Verily, it hath wafted over the world. Well is it with him that hath discovered the fragrance thereof and been accounted among the well-assured."

And again: "O concourse of priests! The Day of Reckoning hath appeared, the Day whereon He Who was in heaven hath come. He, verily, is the One Whom ye were promised in the Books of God, the Holy, the Almighty, the All-Praised. How long will ye wander in the wilderness of heedlessness and superstition? Turn with your hearts in the direction of your Lord, the Forgiving, the Generous."

(Shoghi Effendi: The Promised Day is Come, Pages: 101-102)

"Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."
(John 18:37)

Thus doth the Nightingale utter His call unto you from this prison. He hath but to deliver this clear message. Whosoever desireth, let him turn aside from this counsel and whosoever desireth let him choose the path to his Lord. O people, if ye deny these verses, by what proof have ye believed in God? Produce it, O assemblage of false ones. Nay, by the One in Whose hand is my soul, they are not, and never shall be able to do this, even should they combine to assist one another...Be thou assured in thyself that verily, he who turns away from this Beauty hath also turned away from the Messengers of the past and showeth pride towards God from all eternity

to all eternity. (*Bahá'u'lláh: Tablet of Ahmad, Baha'i Prayers, p. 209,213*)

...the day of the appearance of the Holy Manifestations is the spiritual springtime; it is the divine splendor; it is the heavenly bounty, the breeze of life, the rising of the Sun of Reality. Spirits are quickened; hearts are refreshed and invigorated; souls become good; existence is set in motion; human realities are gladdened, and grow and develop in good qualities and perfections. General progress is achieved and revival takes place, for it is the day of resurrection, the time of excitement and ferment, and the season of bliss, of joy and of intense rapture.

(*'Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Page: 74*)

RUMOURS OF WARS

Christ compared the phenomena of Noah's Advent to those which would occur at the future time of His own Second Advent:

'As it was in the days of Noe.' (**Matthew 24:37**)
(*George Townshend, The Heart of the Gospel, p. 47*)

Isn't this clear from reading of Genesis that the days of Noe (Noah) were turbulent; that Noe preached for a long time and his preaching fell on deaf ears? Would this not also suggest that in the days of His Second Advent, Christ, was to receive the same treatment as Noe before Him, that man would be reluctant to hear His Call?

Since the coming of Bahá'u'lláh in A.D. 1844, mankind has witnessed many horrific, ruinous and devastating wars that have contributed to nothing but the loss of millions of lives, and the destruction of the environment for all living things on earth...

Together with the Christian scholars of that day, I too, had found that prophecy after prophecy terminated in the year

1844. These prophecies spoke of the Time of the end, the Day of Judgement, the Last days, the Day of Resurrection, and the Hour of the Return of Christ. Yet they spoke of them in a new and provocative manner. Christ said:

*'... there shall be wars and rumours of wars ...
And then shall they see the Son of man coming ...'*
(Mark 13: 7,26)

Bible scholar Paul K. Dealy in his Dawn of Knowledge writes: 'History records the following great wars among the leading nations: (1) About this time a war was in progress between China and England terminating in the loss of Hong Kong to the former. A treaty was signed between them in 1842. (2) The Crimean War -- England, France and Turkey against Russia 1854. (3) The atrocious Sepoy mutiny 1857-8. (4) France and Italy against Austria 1859. (5) Civil war of the United States 1861-65. (6) Franco-Prussian war 1870-1. (7) Russian-Turkish war 1877-8. (8) And during the last decade the wars between China and Japan, Turkey and Greece, Spain and the United States, the invasion of China by all the great powers, and the Boer war.'

To this list could be added the two greatest world wars that mankind had ever seen. The Korean war, the war in Indo-China, the Arab-Jewish war, the multiplying minor wars and revolutions within countries, the increasing border skirmishes, the constant 'cold war' and the never-ending newspaper headlines that threaten man daily with 'rumours of wars.' Certainly the words of Christ aptly fit this day.

In the late 1800's, the conviction became very strong among the American Indians that the Messiah had already appeared and was on earth. Throughout the Western Hemisphere, the great majority of Indians had for centuries been awaiting the appearance of their promised Redeemer.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, General Miles of the United States Army reported in a St. Paul, Minnesota, newspaper that during his tour of the west, 'I have learned

that this belief (in the Messiah) exists among ... 16 tribes.' The belief in the coming of this same Messiah was also strongly held in the East. Krishna had foretold the coming of a great World Educator.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night* p. 2-2)

The distinguished Orientalist, Prof. E. G. Browne of Cambridge, was granted his four successive interviews with Baha'u'llah, during the five days he was His guest at Bahji (April 15-20, 1890), interviews immortalized by the Exile's historic declaration that "these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come." "The face of Him on Whom I gazed," is the interviewer's memorable testimony for posterity, "I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow.... No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain." "Here," the visitor himself has testified, "did I spend five most memorable days, during which I enjoyed unparalleled and un hoped-for opportunities of holding intercourse with those who are the fountain-heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit, which works with invisible but ever-increasing force for the transformation and quickening of a people who slumber in a sleep like unto death. It was, in truth, a strange and moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression."

(Shoghi Effendi: God Passes By, Page: 194)

In that interview, Baha'u'llah spoke these Words:

...Praise be to God that thou hast attained!... Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile.... We desire but the good of the world and happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment.... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; 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.... Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold?... Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind.... These strifes and this 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....

(Baha'u'llah: Peace, Page: 157)

In yet other Tablets, He revealed:

The Great Being, wishing to reveal the prerequisites of the peace and tranquillity of the world and the advancement of its peoples, hath written: The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men. Such a peace demandeth that the Great Powers should resolve, for the sake of the tranquillity of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled among themselves. Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him. If this be done, the nations of the world will no longer require any armaments, except for the purpose of preserving the security of their realms and of maintaining internal order within their territories. This will ensure the peace and composure of every people, government and nation. We fain would hope that the kings and rulers of the earth, the mirrors of the gracious and almighty name of God, may attain unto this station, and shield mankind from the onslaught of tyranny. ...The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential. It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to trans-

late that which hath been written into reality and action.... That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. In another passage He hath proclaimed: It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 249-250)

Consider the civilization of the West, how it hath agitated and alarmed the peoples of the world. An infernal engine hath been devised, and hath proved so cruel a weapon of destruction that its like none hath ever witnessed or heard. The purging of such deeply-rooted and overwhelming corruptions cannot be effected unless the peoples of the world unite in pursuit of one common aim and embrace one universal faith. Incline your ears unto the Call of this Wronged One and adhere firmly to the Lesser Peace.

Strange and astonishing things exist in the earth but they are hidden from the minds and the understanding of men. These things are capable of changing the whole atmosphere of the earth and their contamination would prove lethal. Great God! We have observed an amazing thing. Lightning or a force similar to it is controlled by an operator and moveth at his command. Immeasurably exalted is the Lord of Power Who hath laid bare that which He purposed through the potency of His weighty and invincible command.

O people of Baha! Each one of the ordinances We have revealed is a mighty stronghold for the preservation of the world of being. Verily, this Wronged One desireth naught but your security and elevation.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 69)

THE PROMISED HOUR

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." (Luke 12:40)

"O mankind! fear your Lord! For the convulsion of the Hour (of Judgment) will be a thing terrible!" (Qur'án 22:1)

"One of the most mighty signs that shall signalise the advent of the promised Hour is this: 'A woman shall give birth to One who shall be her Lord.'"

(Shoghi Effendi, The Dawn-Breakers, p. 11)

Bestir yourselves, O people, in anticipation of the days of Divine justice, for the promised hour is now come. Beware lest ye fail to apprehend its import and be accounted among the erring.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 17)

How far from the grace of the All-Bountiful and from His loving providence and tender mercies it is to single out a soul from amongst all men for the guidance of His creatures, and, on one hand, to withhold from Him the full measure of His divine testimony, and, on the other, inflict severe retribution on His people for having turned away from His chosen One! Nay, the manifold bounties of the Lord of all beings have, at all times, through the Manifestations of His divine Essence, encompassed the earth and all that dwell therein. Not for a moment hath His grace been withheld, nor have the showers of His loving-kindness ceased to rain upon mankind.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Page: 14)

You stand at this challenging hour in the history of the Cause at the threshold of a new era; the functions you are called upon to discharge are fraught with immense possibilities; the responsibilities you shoulder are grave and momentous; and the eyes of many peoples are turned, at this hour, towards you, expectant to behold the dawning of a Day that shall witness the fulfilment of His divine Promise.

(Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Administration, p. 44)

"Bahá'u'lláh is a Savior of the Twentieth Century." "The time fore-ordained unto the peoples and kindreds of the earth is now come. The promises of God, as recorded in the holy Scriptures have all been fulfilled." "The Lord is come in His great glory!" "He, verily, is the One Whom ye were promised in the Books of God.

...How long will ye wander in the wilderness of heedlessness and superstition. Turn your hearts in the direction of your Lord, the Forgiving, the Generous." "Every Prophet hath announced the coming of this day ... This Day is God's Day! ... Happy is he who hath renounced this world, and clung to Him. ..." "Bestir yourselves, O people, ... for the promised hour is now come. Beware lest ye fail to apprehend its import. ..." "Night hath succeeded day, and day hath succeeded night, and the hours and moments of your lives have come and gone, yet none of you hath, for one instant, contented to detach yourself from that which perisheth. Bestir yourselves, that the brief moments that are still yours may not be dissipated and lost. Even as the swiftness of lightning your days shall pass, and your bodies shall be laid to rest beneath a canopy of dust. What can ye then achieve? How can ye atone for your past failure?" "He Who is the Everlasting Father calleth aloud between earth and heaven. Blessed the ear that hath heard, and the eye that hath seen, and the heart that hath turned unto Him ... "This is that which the Son (Jesus) hath decreed." -- Bahá'u'lláh
(William Sears, Release the Sun, p. 237)

THE PLACE OF VISION

The light of the intellect enables us to understand and realize all that exists, but it is only the Divine Light that can give us sight for the invisible things, and which enables us to see truths that will only be visible to the world thousands of years hence.

It was the Divine Light which enabled the prophets to see two thousand years in advance what was going to take place and today we see the realization of their vision. Thus it is this

Light which we must strive to seek, for it is greater than any other.

It was by this Light that Moses was enabled to see and comprehend the Divine Appearance, and to hear the Heavenly Voice which spoke to him from the Burning Bush.¹

It is of this Light Muhammad is speaking when he says, 'Allah is the light of the Heavens, and of the Earth'.

Seek with all your hearts this Heavenly Light, so that you may be enabled to understand the realities, that you may know the secret things of God, that the hidden ways may be made plain before your eyes.

This light may be likened unto a mirror, and as a mirror reflects all that is before it, so this Light shows to the eyes of our spirits all that exists in God's Kingdom and causes the realities of things to be made visible. By the help of this effulgent Light all the spiritual interpretation of the Holy Writings has been made plain, the hidden things of God's Universe have become manifest, and we have been enabled to comprehend the Divine purposes for man.

I pray that God in His mercy may illumine your hearts and souls with His glorious Light, then shall each one of you shine as a radiant star in the dark places of the world.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p. 69)

Arise and wash thy body, wear a pure gown, and , directing thyself to the Kingdom of God, supplicate and pray to Him. Sleep in a clean, well prepared and ventilated place, and ask for appearance (or display) in the world of vision. Thou wilt have visions which will cause the doors of doubts to be closed, which will give you new joy, wonderful dilation, brilliant glory. Thou wilt comprehend realities and meanings.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v3*, p. 673)

1 Exodus iii, 2

I now began an earnest search for clues which would tell me something about the place in which the Messiah would appear.

Two interesting things came to light. For the first coming, Daniel had given the time and Micah had given the place.

Daniel had prophesied exactly when the Messiah would appear the first time and when He would be slain. Micah had said of the place:

'But thou, Bethlehem...out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.' (**Micah 5:2**)

Daniel had also prophesied with even greater exactness the time of the second coming of the Messiah in 1844 (see p. 20). Therefore, I turned to Micah for a possible clue as to the place of His second appearance.

I was richly rewarded. In Micah vii. 7 and 12 I found:

'I will wait for the God of my salvation...In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria...' (**Micah 7:7,12**)

The Assyrian Empire at one time covered the entire area in which both Daniel and Micah lived out their lives. Therefore, I chose to study those parts of the Empire in which these two prophets traditionally lived and taught.

To my surprise, I found that there were many other clues to follow as well. Gradually one led to another, until a definite picture began to emerge, and I knew at least in which direction to turn my gaze. The book of Ezekiel spoke of a great Figure who would come in those days. He said:

'And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east.' (**Ezekiel 43:2**)

This was clearly a reference to the second coming of Christ and not the first, for Jesus did not come from the way of the East, He came from north and west of Jerusalem.

Isaiah in like manner spoke of the wondrous Figure who would come from the East. Isaiah said that it was God Himself Who had

'...raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings.' (**Isaiah 41:2**)

Even Christ Himself pointed to the direction from which He would appear in the day of His second coming. Speaking of that day, He said:

'For as the lightning cometh out of the East...so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.' (**Matthew 24:27**)

The Jewish Oracles, the Sibylline books, prophesied that the 'King Messiah' of the time of the end would come 'from the sunrise.' (**The Messianic Idea in Israel, J.G. Klausner, 1956, p. 376**)

Daniel had written his words of millennial prophecy while in the East. In fact, he was in Elam, a part of ancient Persia, when he foretold with such startling accuracy the exact time of both the first and the second comings of Christ.

It was in the capital city of Persia, Shushan, that Daniel had the prophetic vision which revealed the year 1844 as the time for the return of the Messiah.

Daniel not only gave the time 1844, but he also directed attention to the place, saying that 'Elam' (Persia) would be given as a place of 'vision' in the latter days. (**Daniel 8:2**)

The Prophet Jeremiah speaks of things that 'shall come to pass in the latter days' and in the verse preceding this, he says:

'And I will set my throne in Elam (Persia)...saith the Lord.' (**Jeremiah 49:38**)

I came across a prophecy well known among the Arabs. Speaking of the time of the end, it said:

When the promised One appears, the 'upholders of His faith shall be the people of Persia.' [*The Dawnbreakers, Nabil, P. 9 All these prophecies clearly showed that the Messiah would come from the East, and they put a strong emphasis on the territory of Persia. It was something definite to go on. The circle was narrowing.*

(William Sears, Thief in the Night, p. 72-74)

THREE PROMISES OF CHRIST

In all the revealed world religions the coming of the Kingdom is identified with the appearance of the Supreme world Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, the returned Christ, the Qá'im, the new Buddha. "One fold and one shepherd" is to replace the many conflicting and separated groups of men.

This outstanding pledge, originally given thousands of years ago, has never been taken up by any of the Great Prophets until the nineteenth century, when Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, announced to the rulers and religious leaders of the world that He was this Redeemer and the Bearer of God's message to modern man. He proclaimed that He spoke with the Voice of God Himself, that He was the Lord of Hosts, Christ come in the glory of the Father, and that this was indeed the Last Day, the Day of Judgment.

The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and His martyred Forerunner, the Báb, had for twenty years suffered persecution of every form;

yet without investigation the kings and ecclesiastical rulers whom He addressed ignored His message. He died in 1892 in the Holy Land, an exile and captive of the Turks. Yet to-day a world-wide community exists bearing His name and following His teachings.

(George Townshend, *Christ and Baha'u'llah*, p. 9)

...millennial zeal reached its climax in the year 1844. I wanted to know exactly why. What had led all these people to the same year?

I found the answer. This date in history had been chosen primarily because of three specific promises made by Christ Himself to His disciples. He gave three promises, saying that when these three things came to pass, He (Christ) would return to earth. The promises are as follows:

1. His Gospel would be preached everywhere on earth.
2. The 'times of the Gentiles' would be fulfilled, and the Jews would return to Israel (Palestine).
3. All mankind would see the 'abomination of desolation' foretold by Daniel the Prophet.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p. 7)

With all these proofs to guide them, why did the people fail to recognize Christ in the day of His return in 1844? Why did over a century pass with no clear explanation of this great riddle?

The answer is simple. It was the same reason that the people did not recognize Christ in the day of His first coming, until after the passing of centuries. Those who were spiritually "alive" knew Him, but the great mass of mankind were spiritually "dead" and knew Him not. These were the people spoken of by Jeremiah:

"O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not." **(Jeremiah 5:21)**

(William Sears, *Release the Sun*, p. 198)

A study of the following Biblical, and historical facts, reveals that the Second Advent of Christ has already been fulfilled.

Christ made many Promises pointing to His return. The First is easy to find; He made it to His disciples in direct reply to their question. In Matthew, chapter 24, verse 3, we read: "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

In Matthew, chapter 24, verses 13, and 14, Christ said:

"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

This is clear enough that the end would come, and Christ would return, when His Gospel was preached throughout the world.

A study of the spread of Christianity made by scholars of the 1840's, convinced them that the message of Christ, had by their day, already encircled the globe. The Gospel was being taught in all the continents. By 1844 it was being taught even in the interior of Africa, not by solitary missionaries, but on an organized scale. A commercial history of East Africa states: "Christian missions began their activities amongst the African people in 1844." (Year Book and Guide to East Africa, Ed. By Robert Hale Ltd., London, 1953, p. 44)

Another account states: "In 1804 the British and Foreign Bible Society was organized. Students of the prophetic word felt at the time that these agencies were coming in fulfillment of the prophecy." (Our Day in the Light of Prophecy, Spicer, P. 308) This was a direct reference to the prophecy of Christ that He would return when His Gospel was preached everywhere in the world.

M. H. Goyer writes in his book on prophetic fulfillment: "The British and Foreign Bible Society (for one example) has

issued, since its foundation in 1804, over 421 million copies of the Scriptures, in practically every country known throughout the globe."

In *Our Day in the Light of Prophecy*, Spicer wrote that the Gospel in his day had been spread "to ninety-five percent of the inhabitants of the earth.." He added: "It was in 1842 that five treaty-ports in China were opened to commerce and to missions - advance steps in the opening of all China to the Gospel. In 1844 Turkey was prevailed upon to recognize the right of Moslems to become Christians, reversing all Moslem tradition. In 1844 Allen Gardiner established the South American Mission. In 1842 Livingstone's determination was formed to open the African interior."

It was by these accounts that the millennial scholars of the 1840's felt that Christ's first promise had been fulfilled. They felt it had been clearly demonstrated that the Gospel had been preached in all the world for a witness, and, therefore, the hour of His coming must now be at hand.

The second Promise of the return of Christ was made in reply to a direct question asked by His disciples in Luke, chapter 21, verse 7:

"And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?"

Christ, in Luke, chapter 21, verse 24 replied:

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

And, in Luke, chapter 21, verse 31, He added:

"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

This would mean to say that when 'the times of the Gentiles' fulfilled, that meant that, Christ had already returned!

The 'times of the Gentiles' denotes that period of time during which Jerusalem would be held in the power of aliens, or Gentiles, and during which the Jews themselves would be excluded from their homeland. One should know that Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman Titus, in A.D. 70, and that, the Jews were scattered and exiled, and many of them exactly as had been foretold by Christ, fell 'by the edge of the sword'.

The strict exclusion of the Jews from their own land enforced by the Muslims for some twelve centuries was at last relaxed by the Edict of Toleration, and the 'times of Gentiles' were fulfilled. In the year A.D. 1844 the Moslems under the leadership of Turkey were compelled by the Western Powers, notably England, to grant religious toleration to all (nations) within their borders. This included the Holy Land, Palestine.

The Turkish Government agreed to permit religious freedom and signed the document which guaranteed that 'The Sublime Porte engages to take effectual measures to prevent henceforward' any religious intolerance.

For the first time in twelve hundred years the Jews were guaranteed the right to return to Israel in freedom and security. The date on this document was March 21, 1844.

Biblically, by using the accepted formula of 'I have appointed thee each day for a year' (Ezekiel 4:6), the Gentiles were to tread the Holy City (Jerusalem) under foot, for 42 months (1260 days), or for 1260 years.

Therefore, the prophecy from Revelation 11 could now be read as: 'And the Holy City (Jerusalem) shall they tread under foot for 1260 years':

"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.” (Revelation 11:2)

Therefore, according to the Promise of Christ in Luke (21:24), these Gentiles (Romans-Moslems) would tread the city under foot until the hour of His return which would be 1260 years by the measurement of the prophecy. During all that time, the Jews would be banished from their own land. But in the hour of Christ’s return, the privilege of going home would be restored to them, and the ‘times of the Gentiles’ would be ended.

An examination of the calendar of the Muslims reveals the astonishing finding that, the year A.D.1844 of the calendar of the Christians coincided with the year 1260 AH of the calendar of the Muslims.

The year 1260 given in Revelation as the time when the days of the ‘Gentiles’ would be ended and the Jews would be permitted to return to their homeland, was the same year as that of 1844 when the Muslim rulers were forced to sign the Edict of Toleration permitting the return of the Jews to their homeland.

One can now begin to understand the growing enthusiasm of the Bible scholars of the 1840’s. Christ had promised that when the ‘times of the Gentiles’ was fulfilled, He would come back to earth. To these students of Scripture, the Promise of the Second coming of Christ was exactly fulfilled, and the date (1844) established without question.

The third Promise of the return of Christ was made in reply to direct question asked by His disciples in the book of Matthew. In Matthew, chapter 24, verse 3, Christ clearly says that what Daniel meant by his prophecy was the date of the Manifestation, and this is the verse:

“As He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when

shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

One of the explanations He gave them in reply was this (v. 15):

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)."

In this answer He referred them to the prophecies in the Book of Daniel, which relate both to Christ, and The Báb ('the Gate,) Who was to appear as the Forerunner before the Second coming, Bahá'u'lláh, Arabic for 'the Glory of God'.

The year of the martyrdom of Christ is prophesied in chapter 9 of the Book of Daniel. In this book, the time from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the martyrdom of Christ, is given as seventy weeks; for by the martyrdom of Christ the sacrifice is accomplished and the altar destroyed. These seventy weeks begin with the restoration and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, concerning which four edicts were issued by three kings.

The first was issued by Cyrus in the year 536 B.C.; this is recorded in the first chapter of the Book of Ezra. The second edict, with reference to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, is that of Darius of Persia in the year 519 B.C.; this is recorded in the sixth chapter of Ezra. The third is that of Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign - that is, in 457 B.C.; this is recorded in the seventh chapter of Ezra. The fourth is that of Artaxerxes in the year 444 B.C.; this is recorded in the second chapter of Nehemiah.

But the Bahá'í writings clearly state that Daniel refers to the third edict which was issued in the year 457 B.C., after which work on the rebuilding commenced. Seventy weeks make four hundred and ninety days. Each day, according to the text of the Holy Book, is a year. For in the Bible it is said: "The day of the Lord is one year." (Numbers 14:34). Therefore,

four hundred and ninety days are four hundred and ninety years. The third edict of Artaxerxes was issued four hundred and fifty-seven years before the birth of Christ, and Christ, was martyred and ascended four hundred and ninety years after the issue of the edict of Artaxerxes. Thus Christ was thirty three years old at the time of His ascension.

In the eighth chapter of the Book of Daniel, verse thirteen, it is said:

"Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?"

Then he answered (v. 14):

"Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"; (v. 17) "But he said unto me ... at the time of the end shall be the vision."

That is to say, how long will this misfortune, this ruin, this abasement and degradation last? meaning, when will be the dawn of the Manifestation? Then he answered,

"Two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

In the text of the Bible each day is a year. Thus from the date of the issuing of the edict of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem until the dawn of the Manifestation and the cleansing of the sanctuary is two thousand three hundred years. It may be seen that from the issuing of the edict to the birth of Christ, there are 456 years, and the new dawn, therefore, occurs 1844 years later. That is to say, the fulfillment of the vision of Daniel took place in the year A.D. 1844, and this is the year of the Manifestation of The Báb according to the actual text

of the Book of Daniel. Consider how clearly he determines the year of Manifestation; there could be no clearer proof for a prophecy than this.

A CROWN OF TWELVE STARS

The Law of God is also compared to an adorned bride who appears with most beautiful ornaments, as it has been said in chapter 21 of the Revelation of St. John:

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. 21:2)

And in chapter 12, verse 1, it is said:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." (Rev. 12:1)

This woman is that bride, the Law of God that descended upon Muhammad. The sun with which she was clothed, and the moon which was under her feet, are the two nations which are under the shadow of that Law, the Persian and Ottoman kingdoms; for the emblem of Persia is the sun, and that of the Ottoman Empire is the crescent moon. Thus the sun and moon are the emblems of two kingdoms which are under the power of the Law of God.

Afterward it is said: "upon her head is a crown of twelve stars." (Rev. 12:1)

These twelve stars are the twelve Imams, who were the promoters of the Law of Muhammad and the educators of the people, shining like stars in the heaven of guidance.

Then it is said in the second verse: "and she being with child cried," (Rev. 12:2)

Meaning that this Law fell into the greatest difficulties and endured great troubles and afflictions until a perfect offspring was produced -- that is, the coming Manifestation, the Promised One, Who is the perfect offspring, and Who was reared in the bosom of this Law, which is as its mother. The child Who is referred to is the Báb, the Primal Point, Who was in truth born from the Law of Muhammad -- that is to say, the Holy Reality, Who is the child and outcome of the Law of God, His mother, and Who is promised by that religion, finds a reality in the kingdom of that Law; but because of the despotism of the dragon the child was carried up to God. After twelve hundred and sixty days the dragon was destroyed, and the child of the Law of God, the Promised One, became manifest.

Verses 3 and 4: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." (Rev. 12:3-4)

These signs are an allusion to the dynasty of the Umayyads who dominated the Muhammadan religion. Seven heads and seven crowns mean seven countries and dominions over which the Umayyads had power: they were the Roman dominion around Damascus; and the Persian, Arabian and Egyptian dominions, together with the dominion of Africa -- that is to say, Tunis, Morocco and Algeria; the dominion of Andaluia, which is now Spain; and the dominion of the TrksoTransoxania. The Umayyads had power over these countries. The ten horns mean the names of the Umayyad rulers -- that is, without repetition, there were ten names of rulers, meaning ten names of commanders and chiefs -- the first is Abu Sufyan and the last Marvan -- but several of them bear the same name. So there are two Muaviya, three Yazid, two Valid, and two Marvan; but if the names were counted without repetition there would be ten. The Umayyads, of whom the first was Abu Sufyan, Amir

of Mecca and chief of the dynasty of the Umayyads, and the last was Marvan, destroyed the third part of the holy and saintly people of the lineage of Muhammad who were like the stars of heaven.

Verse 4: "And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour the child as soon as it was born." (Rev. 12:4)

As we have before explained, this woman is the Law of God. The dragon was standing near the woman to devour her child, and this child was the promised Manifestation, the offspring of the Law of Muhammad. The Umayyads were always waiting to get possession of the Promised One, Who was to come from the line of Muhammad, to destroy and annihilate Him; for they much feared the appearance of the promised Manifestation, and they sought to kill any of Muhammad's descendants who might be highly esteemed.

Verse 5: "And she brought forth a man child, Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." (Rev. 12:5)

This great son is the promised Manifestation Who was born of the Law of God and reared in the bosom of the divine teachings. The iron rod is a symbol of power and might -- it is not a sword -- and means that with divine power and might He will shepherd all the nations of the earth. This son is the Báb.

Verse 5: "And her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne." (Rev. 12:5)

This is a prophecy of the Báb, Who ascended to the heavenly realm, to the Throne of God, and to the center of His Kingdom. Consider how all this corresponds to what happened.

Verse 6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness" (Rev. 12:6)

-- that is to say, the Law of God fled to the wilderness, meaning the vast desert of Hijaz, and the Arabian Peninsula.

*Verse 6: "Where she had a place prepared of God."
(Rev. 12:6)*

The Arabian Peninsula became the abode and dwelling place, and the center of the Law of God.

Verse 6: "That they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." (Rev. 12:6)

In the terminology of the Holy Book these twelve hundred and sixty days mean the twelve hundred and sixty years that the Law of God was set up in the wilderness of Arabia, the great desert: from it the Promised One has come. After twelve hundred and sixty years that Law will have no more influence, for the fruit of that tree will have appeared, and the result will have been produced.

Consider how the prophecies correspond to one another. In the Apocalypse, the appearance of the Promised One is appointed after forty-two months, and Daniel expresses it as three times and a half, which is also forty-two months, which are twelve hundred and sixty days. In another passage of John's Revelation it is clearly spoken of as twelve hundred and sixty days, and in the Holy Book it is said that each day signifies one year. Nothing could be clearer than this agreement of the prophecies with one another. The Báb appeared in the year 1260 of the Hejira of Muhammad, which is the beginning of the universal era-reckoning of all Islam. There are no clearer proofs than this in the Holy Books for any Manifestation.

For him who is just, the agreement of the times indicated by the tongues of the Great Ones is the most conclusive proof. There is no other possible explanation of these prophecies. Blessed are the just souls who seek the truth. But failing justice, the people attack, dispute and openly deny the evidence, like the Pharisees who, at the manifestation of Christ, denied

with the greatest obstinacy the explanations of Christ and of His disciples. They obscured Christ's Cause before the ignorant people, saying, "These prophecies are not of Jesus, but of the Promised One Who shall come later, according to the conditions mentioned in the Bible."

Some of these conditions were that He must have a kingdom, be seated on the throne of David, enforce the Law of the Bible, and manifest such justice that the wolf and the lamb shall gather at the same spring.

And thus they prevented the people from knowing Christ.

Note. -- In these last conversations 'Abdu'l-Bahá wishes to reconcile in a new interpretation the apocalyptic prophecies of the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims, rather than to show their supernatural character. On the powers of the Prophets, cf. "The Knowledge of the Divine Manifestations," p. 157; and "Visions and Communication with Spirits," p. 251.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 68-72)

It might seem natural to expect that the Dispensation of the Herald of the Kingdom would be followed in sequence by that of the King whose Herald He was. But this was not to be. It had been already so announced in the Book of Genesis.

God foretold to Abraham that the Prophetic succession was to run through Him and be fulfilled not only in Isaac but in Ishmael. In Genesis xii 1-2 it is written:

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram,...I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:"

And again in Genesis xvii 20

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and

will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."

The narrative continues (Gen. xxi 20-21):

"God was with the lad; and he grew,...and he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and...took him a wife out of the land of Egypt."

He became the progenitor of the people of Arabia and the twelve Princes which he begot are interpreted as the twelve Imams who followed Muhammad. Moses confirmed this promise when He Prophesied (Deut. xviii 15) to the Israelites that:

"the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me."

This refers not only to the coming of Jesus Christ, as is usually thought, but more especially to Muhammad. Moses would have used the word "seed" if He had meant to refer to an Israelite, whereas the word "brethren" indicates that He alludes to Isaac's brother Ishmael. He connects Mount Paran explicitly with the Prophetic line when, in His final blessing before His death, He describes the Prophets who will follow Him:

"The Lord came from Sinai" (meaning Himself), and rose up from Seir . . . (meaning Jesus Christ); he shined forth from mount Paran (meaning Muhammad), and he came with ten thousands of saints (meaning Bahá'u'lláh)." (Deut. xxxiii 2)

On the other hand Muhammad mentions in the Qur'án the prophecies of His coming made in the Bible (Sura 26 verses 192-199) and states that Abraham prayed for His coming (Sura 2 verses 118-144) and that He was foretold by Moses and described in the Law and the Evangel.

(George Townshend, *Christ and Baha'u'llah*, P. 31-32)

Note.-- George Townshend, M.A. (Sometime Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin Archdeacon of Clonfert)

*"He questions: 'When is the Day of Resurrection?'...And the sun and moon are joined together"
(Qur'an 75:6,9)*

According to the Islamic tradition, the term 'sun' in the Holy Qur'an symbolizes the Manifestation of Prophet Muhammad. And, the term 'moon' Imám Ali (His first disciple); Commander of the Faithful (Bahá'u'lláh: Kitab-i-Iqan, Page: 164).

Hence, it may be perceived that, symbolically, from the adjoining of 'sun' and the 'moon' (Qur'an 75:9), Ali-Muhammad is resulted – the given name of The Báb; the return of the 12th Imám; The Qa'im.

EVENTS OF THE TIME

It took me three years instead of one before I could close my file of 'findings'. In the end, however, I knew that I had unearthed a truly remarkable story. The hard-boiled newspapermen had been right. If a man picked up his Sunday paper and read this story on the front page, he would indeed be rocked back on his heels. Nothing would ever be quite the same again.

Can you blame me for feeling excited? The search had been long, but the reward promised to be great. I might at last solve my mystery.

One of the first things I learned was this:

On May 24, 1844, in the West, Samuel Morse sent his famous telegraphic message, quoting from the Scriptures: 'What hath God wrought?'

On May 23rd, 1844, the preceding day, in the East, this young man arose to make a staggering claim.

He declared that this was the day foretold in all the Scriptures of the past. This day, he said, was the day when the Promised One of all religions would appear. This was to be the day of the 'one fold and one shepherd'.

This took place in Persia in 1844. Naturally my attention was arrested immediately by the date and the place.

I learned that he was called the Báb. Just as the name Christ means 'the anointed', the name Báb means 'the gate' or 'the door'. This young man claimed that he was the 'gate' or the 'door' through which would come the One promised in all the holy Books, the One Who would establish the one fold of God.

I remembered the promise given by Christ:

'But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep...And other sheep have I which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.' (**John 10:2-16**)

The Báb said that he was the herald and forerunner of one greater than himself. His mission was to call men back to God and to prepare the way for the great world Saviour foretold by Christ and all the prophets of the past. Just as John the Baptist had been the forerunner of Christ, the Báb claimed to be the forerunner of this Promised Redeemer of all ages.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, pp. 90-91)

The early nineteenth century was a period of messianic expectations in many lands. Deeply disturbed by the implications of scientific inquiry and industrialization, earnest believers from many religious backgrounds turned to the scriptures of their faiths for an understanding of the accelerating processes of change.

In Europe and America groups like the Templers and the Millerites believed they had found in the Christian scriptures

evidence supporting their conviction that history had ended and the return of Jesus Christ was at hand. A markedly similar ferment developed in the Middle East around the belief that the fulfillment of various prophecies in the Qur'án and Islamic Traditions was imminent.

Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsai and Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti, who were amongst the greatest scholars and theologians of their time (of Qur'án, the Holy Bband other Holy Books) announced the nearness of the Advent of The Deliverer of the Latter Days -- The Qa'im.

By far, the most dramatic of these millennialist movements emerged in Iran, in 1844(1260 A.H. of Islamic Lunar Calendar). It focused on the person and teachings of a young merchant from the city of Shiraz, a city located in central Persia (Iran). He was known to history as The Báb; Arabic for "The Gate".

From 1844 to 1863, Persians of All classes were caught up in a storm of hope and excitement, aroused by The Báb's announcement that the Day of God was at hand and that He was Himself the One Promised in the Holy Scriptures. Humanity stood, He said, on the threshold of an era that would witness the restructuring of all aspects of life. The human race, He said, was called by God to embrace new changes through undertaking a transformation of its moral, and spiritual life. His own Mission was to prepare humanity for the event that lay at the heart of these developments, the coming of that Universal Messenger of God, "Him Whom God shall make Manifest," awaited by the followers of All religions. The claim soon evoked violent hostility from the Muslim clergy who taught that the process of divine revelation had ended with Muhammad and that any assertion to the contrary represented apostasy, punishable by death. Their denunciation of The Báb soon enlisted the support of the Persian authorities. Thousands of followers of the new faith perished in horrific series of massacres throughout the country, and The Báb was publicly executed on July 9th, A.D. 1850. After The Báb, Bahá'u'lláh's Mission began in a subterranean dungeon in Teheran, in August, A.D. 1852. Bahá'u'lláh in Arabic translates to "The Glory of God".

In some respects, The Báb's role can be compared to John the Baptist in the founding of Christianity. The Báb was Bahá'u'lláh's herald; His primary mission was to prepare the way for Bahá'u'lláh's coming. Accordingly, the founding of The Bábí Faith is viewed by Bahá'ís as synonymous with the founding of the Bahá'í Faith, and its purpose was fulfilled when Bahá'u'lláh announced in 1863 that He was the Promised One foretold by The Báb.

The Bahá'í Faith reveals that it was Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'í who found The Báb. He found Him in Shiraz. He was given the title of "Bábu'l-Báb," "Gate of the Gate" -- the first to believe in The Báb. Mulla Husayn was a follower of Shaykh Ahmad-i-Ahsai, and Siyyid Kazim-i-Rashti.

Chapter 6:

The Father Foretold

THE INFINITE REALITY

The Bahá'í Faith has made clear that God, the Infinite Reality, is eternally concealed from the finite world of man. In order to teach and lovingly guide His creation, God sends forth His Manifestations, thus gradually lifting mankind stage by stage to ever higher levels of understanding and behavior. The following quotations help to further our understanding of this deep subject. It will be clear from these quotations that Bahá'u'lláh has the figurative title of 'the Father,' just as Jesus has the title of 'the Son'.

The Word which the Son concealed is made manifest. It hath been sent down in the form of the human temple in this day. Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous... This is the day whereon the Rock (Peter) crieth out and shouteth, and celebrateth the praise of its Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most High, saying: 'Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye

were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled!...’ My body longeth for the cross, and Mine head waiteth the thrust of the spear, in the path of the All-Merciful, that the world may be purged from its transgressions....

(Baha’u’llah, *The Proclamation of Baha’u’llah*, p. 84)

Rely upon God, thy God and the Lord of thy fathers. For the people are wandering in the paths of delusion, bereft of discernment to see God with their own eyes, or hear His Melody with their own ears. Thus have We found them, as thou also dost witness.

Thus have their superstitions become veils between them and their own hearts and kept them from the path of God, the Exalted, the Great.

Be thou assured in thyself that verily, he who turns away from this Beauty hath also turned away from the Messengers of the past and showeth pride towards God from all eternity to all eternity.

(Baha’u’llah: *Tablet of Ahmad, Baha’i Prayers*, p. 210)

And now, with reference to His words: “And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”¹ These words signify that in those days men will lament the loss of the Sun of the divine beauty, of the Moon of knowledge, and of the Stars of divine wisdom. Thereupon, they will behold the countenance of the promised One, the adored Beauty, descending from heaven and riding upon the clouds. By this is meant that the divine Beauty will be made manifest from the heaven of the will of God, and will appear in the form of the human temple. The term “heaven” denoteth loftiness and exaltation, inasmuch as it is the seat of the revelation of those Manifestations of Holiness, the Day-springs of ancient glory. These ancient Beings, though delivered from the womb of their mother, have in reality descended from the heaven of the will of God. Though they be dwelling on this

¹ Matthew (24:30)

earth, yet their true habitations are the retreats of glory in the realms above. Whilst walking amongst mortals, they soar in the heaven of the divine presence.

Without feet they tread the path of the spirit, and without wings they rise unto the exalted heights of divine unity. With every fleeting breath they cover the immensity of space, and at every moment traverse the kingdoms of the visible and the invisible. Upon their thrones is written: "Nothing whatsoever keepeth Him from being occupied with any other thing;" and on their seats is inscribed: "Verily, His ways differ every day."² They are sent forth through the transcendent power of the Ancient of Days, and are raised up by the exalted will of God, the most mighty King. This is what is meant by the words: "coming in the clouds of heaven."

(Baha'u'llah, *The Kitab-i-Iqan*, p. 66)

When a great force is liberated by the entrance of a divine being into the world arena, it must of necessity express itself through the vehicle of a human temple, and the objective expression of this force manifests itself in thoughts of different grades and degrees according to the capacity of the people. The master-teachers are the expounders of divine common sense which is the pathway to a knowledge of universal law, the result of which will be a harmonious humanity. Man confines his consciousness to this material plane. This new force will liberate him and he will become conscious of many planes and of the ultimate oneness of them all.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 8)

Wert thou to consider in this station the last of them to be the first, or conversely, thou wouldst indeed be speaking the truth, as hath been ordained by Him Who is the Wellspring of Divinity and the Source of Lordship: "Say: Call upon God or call upon the All-Merciful: by whichsoever name ye will, invoke him, for He hath most excellent names." For they are all the Manifestations of the name of God, the Dawning-Places of His attributes, the Repositories of His might, and the Focal

2 *Qur'án* (55:29)

Points of His sovereignty, whilst God - magnified be His might and glory - is in His Essence sanctified above all names and exalted beyond even the loftiest attributes. Consider likewise the evidences of divine omnipotence both in their Souls and in their human Temples, that thine heart may be assured and that thou mayest be of them that speed through the realms of His nearness.

(Baha'u'llah, Gems of Divine Mysteries, p. 33)

I shall restate here My theme, that perchance this may assist thee in recognizing thy Creator. Know thou that God - exalted and glorified be He - doth in no wise manifest His inmost Essence and Reality. From time immemorial He hath been veiled in the eternity of His Essence and concealed in the infinitude of His own Being. And when He purposed to manifest His beauty in the kingdom of names and to reveal His glory in the realm of attributes, He brought forth His Prophets from the invisible plane to the visible, that His name "the Manifest" might be distinguished from "the Hidden" and His name "the Last" might be discerned from "the First", and that there may be fulfilled the words: "He is the First and the Last; the Seen and the Hidden; and He knoweth all things!" Thus hath He revealed these most excellent names and most exalted words in the Manifestations of His Self and the Mirrors of His Being.

(Baha'u'llah, Gems of Divine Mysteries, p. 34)

Among the proofs demonstrating this Cause is that in every time and age, when the invisible Divinity appeared in a human temple, some people who were of no repute, and who had no attachment for the world or any other object, sought illumination from the Sun of Prophethood, were directed to the lights of the Moon of Guidance and attained to the Meeting of God. For this reason, the divines of the age and the wealthy of the time derided; as is related of those erring ones: -- "Among His people the concourse of those who believe no said: 'We see thee (to be) no other than a man like unto us; and we do not see that any follow thee, except those who are the most ajeet among us, and are of a rash judgment neither do we perceive any excellence in thee above us; but we deem you to be liars.'"

(Compilations, Baha'i Scriptures, p. 56)

The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, the Source of infinite grace, according to His saying, "His grace hath transcended all things; My grace hath encompassed them all," hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being, and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence.

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 47)

We have brought forth all Lights from the Orb of Our name, the True One, have caused them to return unto It, and have again made them manifest in the form of a human temple. All glory be unto the Lord of strength, might, and power! None can withstand the operation of My will or the exercise of My might. I am He Who hath raised up all creatures through a word of My mouth, and My power is, in truth, equal to My purpose.

(Baha'u'llah, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 29)

I AM THE WAY

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)

This Scripture in John, chapter 14, verse 6, has commonly been perceived and interpreted by the respected Christians to declare that man could only come 'unto the Father,' if he, or she, only believed in His Holiness Jesus Christ.

However, the Bahá'í Faith reveals the fundamental truth that All of the Manifestations of God, whenever made manifest, were also 'the way,' to 'the truth'; that God has been sending His Divine Messengers to this earth from before the times of Abraham, and that it is through the agency of the same Holy Spirit manifest in each of the Divine Messengers,

and the word they revealed, that we may come `unto the Father.'

The songs which the bird of thine heart had uttered in its great love for its friends have reached their ears, and moved Me to answer thy questions, and reveal to thee such secrets as I am allowed to unfold. In thine esteemed letter thou hadst inquired which of the Prophets of God should be regarded as superior to others. Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret. To prefer one in honor to another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted. Every true Prophet hath regarded His Message as fundamentally the same as the Revelation of every other Prophet gone before Him. If any man, therefore, should fail to comprehend this truth, and should consequently indulge in vain and unseemly language, no one whose sight is keen and whose understanding is enlightened would ever allow such idle talk to cause him to waver in his belief.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 78-79)

Each religion teaches that a mediator is necessary between man and the Creator -- one who receives the full light of the divine splendor and radiates it over the human world, as the earth's atmosphere receives and diffuses the warmth of the sun's rays. This mediator between God and humanity has different designations though he always brings the same spiritual command.

In one era he is called Abraham, at another time Moses, again he is called Buddha, another time Jesus, and yet another time Muhammad. All turned to the divine reality for their strength. Those who followed Moses accepted him as their mediator; those who followed Zoroaster accepted him as their mediator; but all the Israelites deny Zoroaster, and the Zoroastrians deny Moses. They fail to see in both the one light. Had the Zoroastrians comprehended the reality of Zoroaster, they would have understood Moses and Jesus. Alas! the ma-

majority of men attach themselves to the name of the mediator and lose sight of the real purport.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 32)

The Divine Reality is Unthinkable, Limitless, Eternal, Immortal and Invisible.

The world of creation is bound by natural law, finite and mortal.

The Infinite Reality cannot be said to ascend or descend. It is beyond the understanding of man, and cannot be described in terms which apply to the phenomenal sphere of the created world.

Man, then, is in extreme need of the only Power by which he is able to receive help from the Divine Reality, that Power alone bringing him into contact with the Source of all life.

An intermediary is needed to bring two extremes into relation with each other. Riches and poverty, plenty and need: without an intermediary power there could be no relation between these pairs of opposites.

So we can say there must be a Mediator between God and Man, and this is none other than the Holy Spirit, which brings the created earth into relation with the 'Unthinkable One', the Divine Reality.

The Divine Reality may be likened to the sun and the Holy Spirit to the rays of the sun. As the rays of the sun bring the light and warmth of the sun to the earth, giving life to all created beings, so do the 'Manifestations'¹ bring the power of the Holy Spirit from the Divine Sun of Reality to give light and life to the souls of men.

Behold, there is an intermediary necessary between the sun and the earth; the sun does not descend to the earth, nei-

1 *Manifestations of God*

ther does the earth ascend to the sun. This contact is made by the rays of the sun which bring light and warmth and heat.

The Holy Spirit is the Light from the Sun of Truth bringing, by its infinite power, life and illumination to all mankind, flooding all souls with Divine Radiance, conveying the blessings of God's Mercy to the whole world. The earth, without the medium of the warmth and light of the rays of the sun, could receive no benefits from the sun.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p. 58)

I AM IN THE FATHER

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 14:10)

Question. - What is the meaning of the Trinity, of the Three Persons in One?

Answer. - The Divine Reality, which is purified and sanctified from the understanding of human beings and which can never be imagined by the people of wisdom and of intelligence, is exempt from all conception. That Lordly Reality admits of no division; for division and multiplicity are properties of creatures which are contingent existences, and not accidents which happen to the self-existent.

The Divine Reality is sanctified from singleness, then how much more from plurality. The descent of that Lordly Reality into conditions and degrees would be equivalent to imperfection and contrary to perfection, and is, therefore, absolutely impossible. It perpetually has been, and is, in the exaltation of holiness and sanctity. All that is mentioned of the Manifestations and Dawning-places of God signifies the divine reflection, and not a descent into the conditions of existence.¹

¹ Cf. "*Pantheism*," p. 290

God is pure perfection, and creatures are but imperfections. For God to descend into the conditions of existence would be the greatest of imperfections; on the contrary, His manifestation, His appearance, His rising are like the reflection of the sun in a clear, pure, polished mirror. All the creatures are evident signs of God, like the earthly beings upon all of which the rays of the sun shine. But upon the plains, the mountains, the trees and fruits, only a portion of the light shines, through which they become visible, and are reared, and attain to the object of their existence, while the Perfect Man² is in the condition of a clear mirror in which the Sun of Reality becomes visible and manifest with all its qualities and perfections. So the Reality of Christ was a clear and polished mirror of the greatest purity and fineness. The Sun of Reality, the Essence of Divinity, reflected itself in this mirror and manifested its light and heat in it; but from the exaltation of its holiness, and the heaven of its sanctity, the Sun did not descend to dwell and abide in the mirror. No, it continues to subsist in its exaltation and sublimity, while appearing and becoming manifest in the mirror in beauty and perfection.

Now if we say that we have seen the Sun in two mirrors - one the Christ and one the Holy Spirit - that is to say, that we have seen three Suns, one in heaven and the two others on the earth, we speak truly. And if we say that there is one Sun, and it is pure singleness, and has no partner and equal, we again speak truly.

The epitome of the discourse is that the Reality of Christ was a clear mirror, and the Sun of Reality - that is to say, the Essence of Oneness, with its infinite perfections and attributes - became visible in the mirror. The meaning is not that the Sun, which is the Essence of the Divinity, became divided and multiplied - for the Sun is one - but it appeared in the mirror. This is why Christ said, "The Father is in the Son," meaning that the Sun is visible and manifest in this mirror.

2 *The Divine Manifestation*

The Holy Spirit is the Bounty of God which becomes visible and evident in the Reality of Christ. The Sonship station is the heart of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the station of the spirit of Christ. Hence it has become certain and proved that the Essence of Divinity is absolutely unique and has no equal, no likeness, no equivalent.

This is the signification of the Three Persons of the Trinity. If it were otherwise, the foundations of the Religion of God would rest upon an illogical proposition which the mind could never conceive, and how can the mind be forced to believe a thing which it cannot conceive? A thing cannot be grasped by the intelligence except when it is clothed in an intelligible form; otherwise, it is but an effort of the imagination.

It has now become clear, from this explanation, what is the meaning of the Three Persons of the Trinity. The Oneness of God is also proved.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*, Pages: 113-115)

In the Old Testament we read that God said, 'Let us make man in Our own image'. In the Gospel, Christ said, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me'.¹ In the Qur'án, God says, 'Man is my Mystery and I am his'. Bahá'u'lláh writes that God says, 'Thy heart is My home; purify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation'.

All these sacred words show us that man is made in God's image: yet the Essence of God is incomprehensible to the human mind, for the finite understanding cannot be applied to this infinite Mystery. God contains all: He cannot be contained. That which contains is superior to that which is contained. The whole is greater than its parts.

Things which are understood by men cannot be outside their capacity for understanding, so that it is impossible for the heart of man to comprehend the nature of the Majesty of

1 John (14:10)

God. Our imagination can only picture that which it is able to create.

The power of the understanding differs in degree in the various kingdoms of creation. The mineral, vegetable, and animal realms are each incapable of understanding any creation beyond their own. The mineral cannot imagine the growing power of the plant. The tree cannot understand the power of movement in the animal, neither can it comprehend what it would mean to possess sight, hearing or the sense of smell. These all belong to the physical creation.

Man also shares in this creation; but it is not possible for either of the lower kingdoms to understand that which takes place in the mind of man. The animal cannot realize the intelligence of a human being, he only knows that which is perceived by his animal senses, he cannot imagine anything in the abstract. An animal could not learn that the world is round, that the earth revolves round the sun, or the construction of the electric telegraph. These things are only possible to man. Man is the highest work of creation, the nearest to God of all creatures.

All superior kingdoms are incomprehensible to the inferior; how therefore could it be possible that the creature, man, should understand the almighty Creator of all?

That which we imagine, is not the Reality of God; He, the Unknowable, the Unthinkable, is far beyond the highest conception of man.

All creatures that exist are dependent upon the Divine Bounty. Divine Mercy gives life itself. As the light of the sun shines on the whole world, so the Mercy of the infinite God is shed on all creatures. As the sun ripens the fruits of the earth, and gives life and warmth to all living beings, so shines the Sun of Truth on all souls, filling them with the fire of Divine love and understanding.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 24)

MY FATHER IS GREATER

"If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." (John 14:28)

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all;" (John 10:29)

"Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me." (John 12:44)

The Bahá'í Faith has revealed that the utterance of Christ in John, chapter 14, verse 28: `...my Father is greater than I' clarifies that the glory in which He promised to appear the Second time, would be greater than His First. For He had foretold that `the Son of man,' `Christ,' would appear again, but this time, `in the glory of his Father':

"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 works." (Matthew 16:27)

...if we reflect upon the Cause of God we realize that Bahá'u'lláh has ushered in the Day of God, a Day that all the Prophets and Messengers of the past were longing to attain. His Revelation is the Revelation of God Himself, the Heavenly Father spoken of by Christ. Let us for a moment examine the station of Bahá'u'lláh in the light of the New Testament. Christ was manifested in the station of the Son. This does not mean that God, the Inaccessible, the All-Glorious, had a physical son. Such a literal interpretation would reduce God from the realm of the Infinite to that of the finite. In His essence He is exalted above all things, even His own attributes. Therefore, when Christ spoke about His station as the Son of God, He was establishing a relationship. He introduced Himself as the Son, and God as the Heavenly Father. A son who appears in public on behalf of his father must possess two major signs.

He must have the authority of the father and manifest similar characteristics which he has inherited from him. In order to demonstrate the source of His authority, Christ chose to describe Himself as the Son of God and portrayed God as the Father. The terms 'Son' and 'Father' are both figurative in the New Testament.

Christ also made it clear that it was the Father who sent Him.

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John 12:49)

He also made it clear that He would return in the 'glory of the Father'.

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels..." (Matthew 16:27)

Bahá'u'lláh, in many Tablets, has clearly proclaimed His station as that of the Father. Addressing the religious leaders of Christendom, He declares:

O concourse of bishops!... He Who is the Everlasting Father calleth aloud between earth and heaven. Blessed the ear that hath heard, and the eye that hath seen, and the heart that hath turned unto Him Who is the Point of Adoration of all who are in the heavens and all who are on earth...
(Bahá'u'llah: Proclamation of Bahá'u'llah, Page: 93)

And in another Tablet He announces this joyful tidings:

He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: 'Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!' He Who is the Father is come, and the Son (Jesus), in the holy vale, crieth out: 'Here am I, here am I, O Lord, My God!' whilst Sinai circleth

round the House, and the Burning Bush calleth aloud: 'The All-Bounteous is come mounted upon the clouds!'

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Page: 27)

As we have already observed, the Reality of God is indivisible. In the world of creation, His Essence is manifested through His attributes. But in his own domain His Essence and attributes are one and the same. To describe Him by any attribute is tantamount to bringing Him down into the realm of limitations. These are the words of Bahá'u'lláh as He extols the Almighty in His inaccessible heights of glory.

Too high art Thou for the praise of those who are nigh unto Thee to ascend unto the heaven of Thy nearness, or for the birds of the hearts of them who are devoted to Thee to attain to the door of Thy gate. I testify that Thou hast been sanctified above all attributes and holy above all names. No God is there but Thee, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious.

(Baha'u'llah: Aqdas: Other Sections, Page: 95)

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 2, p. 182-184)

The Tablet to Pope Pius IX (in Arabic) was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh around the same time as that to Napoleon. In it Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself as the Lord of Lords and addresses the Pope with the authority and majesty of God, proclaiming to him in unequivocal language the promised return of Christ in the glory of the Father, and summoning him with the commanding voice of the Almighty to leave his palaces and hasten to present himself before the throne of his Lord.

Here are some extracts from this mighty Tablet:

O Pope! Rend the veils asunder. He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained ... He, verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down

from it the first time. Beware that thou dispute not with Him even as the Pharisees disputed with Him (Jesus) without a clear token or proof...

Dwellest thou in palaces whilst He Who is the King of Revelation liveth in the most desolate of abodes? Leave them unto such as desire them, and set thy face with joy and delight towards the Kingdom...

Arise in the name of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, amidst the peoples of the earth, and seize thou the Cup of Life with the hand of confidence and first drink thou therefrom, and proffer it the to such as turn towards it amongst the peoples of all fith. Call thou to remembrance Him Who was the Spirit (Jesus), Who when He came, the most learned of His age pronounced judgment against Him in His own country, whilst he who was only a fisherman believed in Him. Take heed., then, ye men of understanding heart!...

O Supreme Pontiff! Incline thine ear unto that which the Fashioner of mouldering bones counselleth thee, as voiced by Him Who is His Most Great Name. Sell all the embellished ornaments thou dost possess, and expend them in the path of God, Who causeth the night to return upon the day, and the day to return upon the night. Abandon thy kingdom unto the kings, and emerge from thy habitation, with thy face set towards the Kingdom, and, detached from the world, then speak forth the praises of thy Lord betwixt earth and heaven. Thus hath bidden thee He Who is the Possessor of Names, on the part of thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 83-85)

It is significant that very soon after the revelation of this Tablet, the temporal sovereignty of the Pope, which for cen-

turies had proved to be the most powerful in Christendom but which had been diminishing in its power and influence for some time, was, through the potency of the words of the heavenly Father, dramatically extinguished.

Shoghi Effendi in his evaluation of this event has written:

In 1870, after Bahá'u'lláh had revealed His Epistle to Pius IX, King Victor Emmanuel I went to war with the Papal states, and his troops entered Rome and seized it. On the eve of its seizure, the Pope repaired to the Lateran and, despite his age and with his face bathed in tears, ascended on bended knees the Scala Santa. The following morning, as the cannonade began, he ordered the white flag to be hoisted above the dome of St. Peter. Despoiled, he refused to recognize this 'creation of revolution,' excommunicated the invaders of his states, denounced Victor Emmanuel as the 'robber King' and as 'forgetful of every religious principle, despising every right, trampling upon every law.' Rome, 'the Eternal City, on which rest twenty-five centuries of glory,' and over which the Popes had ruled in unchallengeable right for ten centuries, finally became the seat of the new kingdom, and the scene of that humiliation which Bahá'u'lláh had anticipated and which the Prisoner of the Vatican had imposed upon himself.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 54)

(Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 3*, p. 117)

This is a reference to the passage in the Gospels about the falling of the stars which must signalize the advent of the Lord. In His Tablets Bahá'u'lláh has explained that by 'stars' are meant the clergy, who were shining in the firmament of Christendom but who have now fallen for not recognizing Him in this day when He has returned in the glory of the Father.

This subject...has been discussed in greater detail in a previous volume.¹

(Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 4, p. 229*)

GOD has ordained that the Christians of the West shall be foremost among all the peoples of the world in recognizing and acknowledging the second coming of Christ in the glory of the Father and in carrying the glad tidings through the earth.²

The Kingdom of God has come! The Lord of Hosts has appeared with all the prophesied tokens! His teachings have gone through the earth and He has proclaimed His message to the kings and religious leaders. But the Christians hesitate, the churches will not acknowledge not even investigate. They do not heed nor understand the prophetic outline which Christ in Palestine gave to the disciples on the nature of the first Christian era -- the period between the first and second coming -- and of the special dangers and difficulties which would beset the Church during the whole of that time. He declared that there would be no certain knowledge of Christian truth in those centuries, no agreement, but endless doubt and dispute and difficulty. The enemies of the Church would not be open and notorious foes but would be within its own ranks. The Christian community, He warned them, would be like a ripening cornfield, infested with masses of weeds growing so close and strong they could not be dug out but would have to be left to do their evil work right through to the harvest time.³ Then they would reach their highest point. The typical enemy of the Church would be the false prophet who would pervert the true meaning of the Gospel and would mystify people's minds so cunningly that he might even deceive the very elect, at the last, at harvest, when the reapers would gather the weeds, bind them in bundles and burn them.⁴ The teaching position would become so bad that men would fear the gates of hell

1 See vol. 2, p. 270, and Appendix 1, pp. 422-6

2 Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablet to Napoleon III. Shoghi Effendi, America & The Most Great Peace*

3 Matt. xiii 24-30

4 Mark xiii 22. Matt. xxiv 24

might prevail against the true doctrine. Christ reassured His little flock, bade them not fear because it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom.

The Christians of to-day and yesterday have not noticed the accuracy of Christ's forecast, nor do they see that the very things of which Christ warned them are happening to-day.

Now the promised change has come. This is the time which Christ foresaw when He affirmed that He had many more things to tell the disciples but He must withhold them because they were not mature enough to bear them. At last the age of maturity has been reached. The time of uncertainty and doubt, of self-delusion and idle fancy and vain imaginings has gone by. The "Spirit of Truth" has come. A new heaven and a new earth are spread before mankind and every man is required to "prove all things" and "hold fast that which is good".

This book is written lest Christian men and women confused by past errors and falsities, should neglect to observe the newness of the age, to heed the warnings of Christ and should fall into the snare of which He told them so often and so emphatically. Let them not, through lack of discernment or courage, play into the hands of those who are bringing destruction.

This book is written to prove, from the undoubted facts of history, what is the true interpretation of Jesus' prophecies about the character of His era, to show the justice of His warning, especially at this time when the events He foretold have reached the crisis of their fulfillment.

May the Father, in His mercy, grant that the Christians of the West may be shaken out of their composure, may be moved before it is too late to investigate the truth and may at last arise to meet the tremendous, unprecedented emergency which opens before them.

(George Townshend, Christ and Baha'u'llah, p. 13)

"Now as regards the signs that would herald the advent of the new Manifestation. The Guardian wishes you to read over very carefully Bahá'u'lláh's explanation as recorded in the Íqán'. There it is made clear that what is meant by the appearance of the Son of God after the calamitous events preceding His coming is the revelation of His full glory and its recognition and acceptance by the peoples of the world, and not his physical appearance. For Bahá'u'lláh, Whose advent marks the return of the Son in the Glory of the Father, has already appeared, and the signs predicted in the Gospel have not yet fully been realized. Their complete fulfilment, however, would mark the beginning of the recognition of His full station by the peoples of the world, Then and only then will His appearance be made completely manifest."

[(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 29, 1937) (Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 492)]

PLAINLY OF THE FATHER

I found ample evidence that Christ never tried to 'unseal' the Books Himself. He left this for a future date. Rather, He spoke in parables and hidden meanings. He even prophesied that while He (Christ) spoke in parables, there would be a time in the future, when the Son would return in the Glory of the Father, and would speak plainly to them. Christ said:

'These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall speak no more unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.' **(John 16:25)**

This promise to explain the hidden meanings is given by Jesus in the very same chapter in which He speaks of the coming of the Spirit of Truth who will guide His followers unto all truth. When this 'Comforter' comes, Christ promises:

'...he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' **(John 14:26)**

Christ, in these words, seems to offer the clear promise that the new Messiah would, in the day of His coming, 'unseal the books' and bring to light the 'hidden things of darkness'.

If He had appeared in 1844, that would certainly account for all the renewed enthusiasm.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p. 46)

...Having decided to search along these lines, I combed the Scriptures for other clues which Christ might have given concerning the coming of One other than Himself. I found this symbolical interpretation of His return to be strongly fortified by His own words. I discovered that Christ repeatedly made two clear distinctions regarding His second coming. On some occasions He would refer to His own appearance, at other times He would refer to the appearance of One other than Himself. A few examples of this dual reference of Christ make the point evident:

1. That He would return Himself:

'I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.' **(John 14:18)**

'I go away, and come again unto you.' **(John 14:28)**

'A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me.' **(John 16:16)**

'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again...' **(John 14:3)**

2. That another other than Himself would come:

'Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.' **(John 16:7)**

'...but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin...' **(John 16:7-8)**

'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.' **(John 16:12-13)**

'But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.' **(John 15:26)**

In the following words Christ made it clear that He, as well as the One Who would return in His name would be human channels for the same Holy Spirit. Of Himself Christ said:

'...the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.' **(John 14:24)**

In yet another place, Christ repeats this:

'the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself.' **(John 14:10)**

Christ makes this same statement about the One Whom He promises will return after He, Christ, departs:

'...he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.' **(John 16:13)**

That another Messenger would come in His (Christ's) name with the same power of the Holy Spirit is made unmistakably clear from still other words of Christ to His disciples:

'...the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' (**John 14:26**)

Christ issued a stern warning to the people of Jerusalem, telling them that since they had denied Him in His day, they would have no opportunity to believe in Him again until the day of His return.

In one single sentence He links Himself once more with the One to come after Him:

'For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' (**Matthew 23:39**)

There seemed sufficient evidence to show that when Christ spoke of His own return, He was speaking of the Christ-spirit, the Holy Spirit, within Him, which would reappear; and when He spoke of the coming of another, He was speaking of a different human channel, a man with a new name other than Christ, but Who would be filled with this same Holy Spirit. In yet another way Christ expressed the same truth, that it is not the name and the flesh that matter, but the Spirit which the Messenger brings:

'God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' (**John 4:24**)
(**William Sears, Thief in the Night, p. 58-60**)

There was a widespread belief that when Christ spoke of His own return, or of the One who would come after Him, He was not speaking of an actual return, but of a symbolical one. This theory proposed that the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, the One who would come in His name, all these in reality referred to the Holy Ghost Which had descended on the Church at the time of Pentecost; therefore, it was said, the return had been fulfilled at that time. It was over and done with. In my search,

I found that this particular doctrine that Christ had returned in the Holy Ghost at the time of Pentecost was more a doctrine of expediency than one of desire. It had developed long after the time of Jesus. When He did not return as expected, some explanation for this failure had to be discovered. Since Christ's words were true words, therefore His return must be figurative. But belief in the return of Christ did not cease shortly after the crucifixion, never to be revived until 1844, not by any means. In fact, the Christian world suffered so many disappointments because of 'days of expectancy' down through the ages, that after the seventeenth century there was little sincere belief in the return until men's hearts were once again caught up by the vision, in the advent of the early nineteenth century. Rather, strong measures were taken to stamp out such 'vain hopes' and the Pentecostal theory gained great favour. Those who adopted the Pentecostal theory of the return as the only possible answer to the enigma, sincerely believed that although Christ used such terms as the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, as well as the pronoun he upon several occasions, still He (Christ) was alluding to the symbolical coming of the Holy Ghost at that time. This, of course, aroused a flood of opposition.

It was pointed out that, according to this theory, when the Holy Ghost appeared in the Spirit of Truth, it was 'to lead men to all truth,' while in reality since that time the Church had become separated and divided into hundreds and hundreds of sects – each claiming the true path, and each going its own way.

Rev. William B. Riley in *Is Christ Coming Again* writes:

'To speak of the Lord's return as a mere figure of speech that is to know no literal fulfilment, is little less sacrilegious than the total denial of inspiration.' He adds, *'If the plain references to the return of the Lord do not involve a personal coming, language has lost its meaning.'* With such a raging controversy on the second coming of Christ being waged, even after all these years, among the

Christians themselves, I decided to make my own investigation from the Scriptures. I would settle the point in my own mind, and then either go on with my search or abandon it. It would depend on what I found. Until I knew the truth I would not be willing to admit that no answer could be found to the century-old mystery of The Case of the Missing Millenium. I realised by now, of course, that even if Christ had returned in the 1844 period, there was no reason to expect that the knowledge of that return would be general, any more than it had been a hundred years after His first coming. If a World Council of Jews had been held a century after the crucifixion, it is obvious that the historical fact of the first Advent would have been unknown to it. I was determined not to be influenced by any of the conflicting views until I had made my own personal search into the promises of Christ concerning His return. Either He promised to return or He didn't. I decided to find out which.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p. 64-66)

THE COMFORTER, WHICH IS THE HOLY GHOST

I found ample evidence that Christ never tried to 'unseal' the Books Himself. He left this for a future date. Rather, He spoke in parables and hidden meanings. He even prophesied that while He (Christ) spoke in parables, there would be a time in the future, when the Son would return in the Glory of the Father, and would speak plainly to them. Christ said:

'These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall speak no more unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.' **(John 16:25)**

This promise to explain the hidden meanings is given by Jesus in the very same chapter in which He speaks of the coming of the Spirit of Truth who will guide His followers unto all truth. When this 'Comforter' comes, Christ promises:

'...he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' (**John 14:26**)

Christ, in these words, seems to offer the clear promise that the new Messiah would, in the day of His coming, 'unseal the books' and bring to light the 'hidden things of darkness'.

If He had appeared in 1844, that would certainly account for all the renewed enthusiasm.

[William Sears, Thief in the Night, pp. 47.]

In the following words Christ made it clear that He, as well as the One Who would return in His name would be human channels for the same Holy Spirit. Of Himself Christ said:

'...the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.' (**John 14:24**)

In yet another place, Christ repeats this:

'the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself.' (**John 14:10**)

Christ makes this same statement about the One Whom He promises will return after He, Christ, departs:

'...he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.' (**John 16:13**)

That another Messenger would come in His (Christ's) name with the same power of the Holy Spirit is made unmistakably clear from still other words of Christ to His disciples:

'...the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' (**John 14:26**)

[William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, pp. 59.]

Christ foretold that the One Who came in His name at the time of the end would be the 'Spirit of Truth':

'...he will guide you into all truth...' (**John 16:13**)

In another place, He said:

'...he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' (**John 14:26**)

And yet again:

'...he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.' (**John 16:14**)

I was determined to seek for the inward truth behind the outward symbol in Christ's words, for I found written in yet another place:

'...the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him (the believer) in the last day.' (**John 12:48**)

Bahá'u'lláh, I found, had written over a hundred volumes. Here it is possible for me to mention but a few of His teachings, and in only the briefest manner. It is like trying to catch the ocean in a cup.

The scholar Charles Baudouin, in his book *Contemporary Studies*, writes of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings, saying that this:

'ethical code is dominated by the law of love taught by Jesus and by all the prophets. In the thousand and one details of practical life, this law is subject to manifold interpretations. That of Bahá'u'lláh is unquestionably one of the most comprehensive of these, one of the most exalted, one of the most satisfactory to the modern mind...'

[Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith, pp 25-26.]

The former President of Czechoslovakia, Eduard Benes wrote of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings:

'The Bahá'í Cause is one of the great moral and social forces in all the world today.'

[Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith, 62.]

Mr. Benes wrote on another occasion:

'The Bahá'í Teaching is one of the spiritual forces now absolutely necessary to put the spirit first in this battle against material forces...The Bahá'í Teaching is one of the great instruments for the final victory of the spirit and of humanity.'

[Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith, P. 62.]

The scientist, Dr. Glenn A. Shook, inventor of the colour-organ, and former head of the Physics Department at Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts, wrote of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings:

'Here is a mighty river of knowledge. It appeals to the scientist as well as to the layman. Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings meet the challenge of our age head-on, and offer sound, reasonable solutions. They have been an invaluable discovery to me as a scientist, and a treasure and comfort to me as an individual human being.'

[Glenn A. Shook, letter, July 1946.]

Queen Marie of Rumania wrote in the Daily Star of Toronto, Canada, on May 4th, 1926:

'If ever the name of Bahá'u'lláh (or His son) comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine.'

[Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith, P10.]

Eight years later, she wrote:

'These books have strengthened me beyond belief and I am now ready to die any day full of hope.... The Bahá'í Teaching brings peace and understandingIt accepts all great prophets gone before, it destroys no other creeds and leaves all doors open....To those in search of assurance, the words of the Father are as a fountain in the desert after long wandering.'

[Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith, p 13.]

The following words of Bahá'u'lláh, I felt, reflected the spirit of His entire Teaching:

'O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men.'

[Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Section cx.]
(William Sears, Thief in the Night, pp. 208-210)

HE SHALL GLORIFY ME

Jesus Himself had promised that when the Messiah came:

'He shall glorify me.' **(John 16:14)**

'He will reprove the world of sin...because they believe not on me.' **(John 16:8-9)**

'He shall take of mine, and show it unto you.' (**John 16:15**)

'He shall...bring all things to your remembrance , whatsoever I have said unto you.' (**John 14:26**)

Had Bahá'u'lláh done this?

My final clue in The Case of the Missing Millennium was answered with the most resounding proof of all. I found the following words which Bahá'u'lláh had written about Jesus, the Christ. He had indeed glorified Jesus:

'...Whatsoever hath proceeded out of His (Christ's) blameless, His truth-speaking, trustworthy mouth, can never be altered.'

[Bahá'í World Faith, p. 60.]

Bahá'u'lláh penned the following tribute upon the crucifixion of Christ:

'Know thou that when the Son of man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee.'

[The Bahá'í Revelation, 1955, p. 58.]

In his letters to the kings of the earth, Bahá'u'lláh 'reproved' the world for not believing in Christ. He pointed the similarity of his own reception to that of Christ in the day of His first coming:

'And...when I came unto them in My glory, they turned aside. They indeed are of the fallen. This is, truly, that which the Spirit of God (Christ) hath announced, when He came with (the) truth...(and) they perpetrated what hath made the Holy Spirit

to lament, and the tears of them that have near access to God flow.'

[The Bahá'í Revelation, 1955, p. 14.]

Bahá'u'lláh throughout his writings called to 'remembrance' the words of Christ. He did, as Christ foretold, 'take of mine, and show it unto you'. Bahá'u'lláh called upon the people of the world to:

'Consort with the people of religions with joy and fragrance; to show forth that which is declared by the Speaker of the Mount (Jesus Christ); and to render justice in (all) affairs.'

[The Bahá'í Revelation, 1955, p. 148.]

As prophesied by Jesus, Bahá'u'lláh frequently brought to mind the words of Christ: 'whatsoever I have said unto you'. In the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith, I read:

'Unity is the very spirit of the body of the world... His Holiness Jesus Christ -- may My life be a sacrifice to Him -- promulgated this unity among mankind. Every soul who believed in Jesus Christ became revived and resuscitated through this spirit, attained to the zenith of eternal glory, realised the life everlasting, experienced the second birth and rose to the acme of good fortune.'

[The Bahá'í Revelation, 1955, pp. 235-236.]

I was convinced that no honest and sincere Christian would ever consider Bahá'u'lláh or the Bahá'í Faith an enemy of Christ or Christianity, once they had read such words as these in Bahá'í teaching:

'Jesus was a Manifestation (Messenger) of God. Everything of Him pertained to God. To know Him (Christ) was to know God...To obey Him was to obey God. He was the source of all divine virtues. He was a vision of all divine qualities...through this mirror (of Jesus) the energy of God was transmit-

ted to the world. The whole disc of the Sun of Reality (God) was reflected in Him (Christ).'
[Star of the West Magazine, Vol. xii, p. 188.]

Bahá'u'lláh linked his own life with that of Christ throughout his mission. After having suffered stoning, scourging and imprisonment, Bahá'u'lláh lifted up his voice to cry out:

'If ye be intent on crucifying once again Jesus, the Spirit of God, put Me to death, for He hath once more, in My person been made manifest unto you. Deal with Me as ye wish, for I have vowed to lay down My life in the path of God.'
[The Bahá'í Revelation, 1955, p. 59.]

Bahá'u'lláh, expressing the oneness of the Holy Spirit which appears in all the Messengers of God, associates Himself with Christ, and offers Himself as a target for the indignities which the world hurled against Jesus:

'Lay hands on Me and persecute Me, for I am His Well-Beloved, the revelation of His own Self, though My name be not His name. I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory.'
[The Bahá'í Revelation, 1955, p. 59 (the passage refers to several prophets.)]

As Christ had foretold, Bahá'u'lláh 'reproved' the world 'because the Prince of the world (Christ) is judged' by the people. Wishing to share this same suffering at their hands, Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

'If ye have resolved to shed the blood of Him Whose coming...Jesus Christ Himself hath announced, behold Me standing, ready and defenceless before you. Deal with Me after your own desires.'
[The Bahá'í Revelation, 1955, p. 59 (the passage refers to several prophets.)]

Bahá'u'lláh 'glorified' the name of Christ for all time in his writings. The greatness of Jesus Christ was a much-loved theme of Bahá'u'lláh, who said:

'We testify that He (Jesus Christ) came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Through Him we recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him, the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened, and the soul of the sinner sanctified.'

[The Bahá'í Revelation, 1955, p. 58.]

Of the glory of Christ, Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed:

'He (Christ) it is Who purified the world. Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.'

[The Bahá'í Revelation, 1955, p. 59.]

In one volume alone in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith, I found nearly one hundred references to the beauty, the majesty, the greatness, and the glory of His Holiness Jesus the Christ.

[The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 1922, Vol. i.]

Thus Bahá'u'lláh had fulfilled the final, and one of the most important proofs. Christ had prophesied that when the Spirit of Truth came:

'He shall glorify me.'

To this proof I wrote the words: Fulfilled.

[William Sears, Thieftin the Night, pp. 172-175.]

HE SHALL TESTIFY OF ME

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:" (John 15:26)

We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Through Him the leper recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him, the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened, and the soul of the sinner sanctified.

Leprosy may be interpreted as any veil that interveneth between man and the recognition of the Lord, his God. Whoso alloweth himself to be shut out from Him is indeed a leper, who shall not be remembered in the Kingdom of God, the Mighty, the All-Praised. We bear witness that through the power of the Word of God every leper was cleansed, every sickness was healed, every human infirmity was banished. He it is Who purified the world. Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 86)

O Pope! Rend the veils asunder. He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained... He, verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time. Beware that thou dispute not with Him even as the Pharisees disputed with Him (Jesus) without a clear token or proof...Call thou to remembrance Him Who was the Spirit (Jesus), Who when He came, the most learned of His age pronounced judgment against Him in His own country, whilst he who was only a fisherman believed in Him...Consider those who opposed the Son (Jesus), when He came unto them with sovereignty and power. How many the Pharisees who were waiting to behold Him, and were lamenting over their separation from Him! And yet, when the fragrance of His com-

ing was wafted over them, and His beauty was unveiled, they turned aside from Him and disputed with Him... None save a very few, who were destitute of any power amongst men, turned towards His face. And yet, today, every man endowed with power and invested with sovereignty prideth himself on His Name!

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 83-84)

Through Christ the oneness of the world of humanity received its expression and proved to be the cause of spiritual illumination for mankind. The breaths of the Holy Spirit became effective in the hearts of people.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Page: 371)

...through Christ, through the blessing of the New Testament of Jesus Christ, the Old Testament, the Torah, was translated into six hundred different tongues and spread throughout the world. It was through Christianity that the Torah reached Persia. Before that time there was no knowledge in that country of such a book, but Christ caused its spread and acceptance. Through Him the name of Moses was elevated and revered. He was instrumental in publishing the name and greatness of the Israelitish prophets, and He proved to the world that the Israelites constituted the people of God. Which of the kings of Israel could have accomplished this? Were it not for Jesus Christ, would the Bible, the Torah have reached this land of America? Would the name of Moses be spread throughout the world? Refer to history. Everyone knows that when Christianity was spread, there was a simultaneous spread of the knowledge of Judaism and the Torah. Throughout the length and breadth of Persia there was not a single volume of the Old Testament until the religion of Jesus Christ caused it to appear everywhere so that today the Holy Bible is a household book in that country. It is evident, then, that Christ was a friend of Moses, that He loved and believed in Moses; otherwise, He would not have commemorated His name and Prophethood. This is self-evident. Therefore, Christians and Jews should have the greatest love for each other because the Founders of

these two great religions have been in perfect agreement in Book and teaching. Their followers should be likewise.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 408)**

HE SHALL BRING TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

(John 14:26)

The revelations of Bahá'u'lláh, many times, bring to our remembrance the Words of Christ.

Of the common purpose and aim of the Prophets of God in this world, Christ said:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." **(Matthew 5:17)**

Bahá'u'lláh said:

The songs which the bird of thine heart had uttered in its great love for its friends have reached their ears, and moved Me to answer thy questions, and reveal to thee such secrets as I am allowed to unfold. In thine esteemed letter thou hadst inquired which of the Prophets of God should be regarded as superior to others. Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret.

To prefer one in honor to another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted. Every true Prophet hath regarded His Message as fundamentally the same as the Revelation of every other Prophet gone before Him. If any man, therefore, should fail to comprehend this truth, and should consequently indulge in vain and unseemly language, no one whose sight is keen and whose understanding is enlightened would ever allow such idle talk to cause him to waver in his belief.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 78-79)

Of the bond of love and union between God and man, Christ said:

"Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." (John 17:11)

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:" (John 17:22)

"And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:26)

Bahá'u'lláh said:

By the righteousness of the Lord! Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancour.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 138)

The Great Being saith: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as

strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 218)

Be as brilliant as the light and as splendid as the fire that blazed in the Burning Bush. The brightness of the fire of your love will no doubt fuse and unify the contending peoples and kindreds of the earth, whilst the fierceness of the flame of enmity and hatred cannot but result in strife and ruin.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 88)

Of the union of mankind as 'one fold', Christ said:

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." **(John 10:16)**

Bahá'u'lláh said:

The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.

(Baha'u'llah: Aqdas: Other Sections, Page: 11)

That the divers communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His Religion.

(Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Page: 13)

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 255)

Of peace and tranquillity among men, Christ said:

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." **(Matthew 5:9)**

Bahá'u'lláh said:

Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. This, verily, is the most exalted Word which the Mother Book hath sent down and revealed unto you. To this beareth witness the Tongue of Grandeur from His habitation of glory.

(Bahá'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 217-218)

That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; 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.

(Bahá'u'llah: Peace, Page: 157)

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed this one reality and spread the message of the "Most Great Peace". Even in prison he rested not until he lighted this lamp in the East. Praise be to God! all who have accepted his teachings are lovers of peace, peacemakers ready to sacrifice their lives and expend their possessions for it.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Foundations of World Unity, p. 27)

Concerning the sacrifice of one's life in the path of God, Christ said:

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me,

and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” (Matthew 10:37-40)

“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:33)

Bahá'u'lláh said:

O SON OF MAN!

Ponder and reflect. Is it thy wish to die upon thy bed, or to shed thy life-blood on the dust, a martyr in My path, and so become the manifestation of My command and the revealer of My light in the highest paradise? Judge thou aright, O servant!
(Bahá'u'lláh: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 46)

Of those who desire the riches and wealth, Christ said:

“And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Mark 10:23-25)

Bahá'u'lláh said:

O YE THAT PRIDE YOURSELVES ON MORTAL RICHES!

Know ye in truth that wealth is a mighty barrier between the seeker and his desire, the lover and his beloved. The rich, but for a few, shall in no wise attain the court of His presence nor enter the city of content and resignation. Well is it then with him, who, being rich, is not hindered by his riches from the eternal kingdom, nor deprived by

them of imperishable dominion. By the Most Great Name! The splendor of such a wealthy man shall illuminate the dwellers of heaven even as the sun enlightens the people of the earth!

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 53)

O SON OF MAN!

Thou dost wish for gold and I desire thy freedom from it. Thou thinkest thyself rich in its possession, and I recognize thy wealth in thy sanctity therefrom. By My life! This is My knowledge, and that is thy fancy; how can My way accord with thine?

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 56)

O SON OF BEING!

Busy not thyself with this world, for with fire We test the gold, and with gold We test Our servants.

(Baha'u'llah, The Arabic Hidden Words)

The essence of wealth is love for Me; whoso loveth Me is the possessor of all things, and he that loveth Me not is indeed of the poor and needy. This is that which the Finger of Glory and Splendour hath revealed.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 156)

Nothing that existeth in the world of being hath ever been or ever will be worthy of mention. However, if a person be graciously favoured to offer a penny-worth - nay even less - in the path of God, this would in His sight be preferable and superior to all the treasures of the earth. It is for this reason that the one true God - exalted be His glory - hath in all His heavenly Scriptures praised those who observe His precepts and bestow their wealth for His sake.

(Baha'u'llah: Huququ'llah, Page: 489)

Divine nearness is dependent upon attainment to the knowledge of God, upon severance from all else save God. It is contingent upon self-sacrifice and to be found only through forfeiting wealth and worldly possessions. It is made possible

through the baptism of water and fire revealed in the Gospels. Water symbolizes the water of life, which is knowledge, and fire is the fire of the love of God; therefore, man must be baptized with the water of life, the Holy Spirit and the fire of the love of the Kingdom.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Page: 147)

Concerning adultery, Christ said:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." **(Matthew 5:27-28)**

Bahá'u'lláh said:

Ye are forbidden to commit adultery, sodomy and lechery. Avoid them, O concourse of the faithful. By the righteousness of God! Ye have been called into being to purge the world from the defilement of evil passions. This is what the Lord of all mankind hath enjoined upon you, could ye but perceive it. He who relateth himself to the All-Merciful and committeth satanic deeds, verily he is not of Me. Unto this beareth witness every atom, pebble, tree and fruit, and beyond them this ever-proclaiming, truthful and trustworthy Tongue.

(Baha'u'llah: A Chaste and Holy Life, Page: 57)

Of breathing the sins, and judging others, Christ said:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." **(Mathew 7:1-2)**

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set

her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ...But... Jesus... said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” (John 8:3-7)

Bahá'u'lláh said:

O SON OF MAN!

Breathe not the sins of others so long as thou art thyself a sinner. Shouldst thou transgress this command, accursed wouldst thou be, and to this I bear witness.

(Bahá'u'lláh: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 27)

O SON OF BEING!

How couldst thou forget thine own faults and busy thyself with the faults of others? Whoso doeth this is accursed of Me.

(Bahá'u'lláh: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 26)

Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk. God hath forgiven what is past. Henceforward everyone should utter that which is meet and seemly, and should refrain from slander, abuse and whatever causeth sadness in men.

(Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 219-220)

To the hearer of His call, Christ said:

“Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”
(John 18:37)

Bahá'u'lláh said:

Thus doth the Nightingale utter His call unto you from this prison. He hath but to deliver this clear message. Whosoever desireth, let him turn aside

from this counsel and whosoever desireth let him choose the path to his Lord. O people, if ye deny these verses, by what proof have ye believed in God? Produce it, O assemblage of false ones. Nay, by the One in Whose hand is my soul, they are not, and never shall be able to do this, even should they combine to assist one another.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablet of Ahmad, Baha'i Prayers, p. 209)

Of sowing the seeds of wisdom, and divine knowledge, Christ said:

"And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

(Matthew 13:3-11)

Bahá'u'lláh said:

O SON OF DUST!

The wise are they that speak not unless they obtain a hearing, even as the cup-bearer, who proffereth not his cup till he findeth a seeker, and the lover who crieth not out from the depths of his heart until he gazeth upon the beauty of his beloved.

Wherefore sow the seeds of wisdom and knowledge in the pure soil of the heart, and keep them hidden, till the hyacinths of divine wisdom spring from the heart and not from mire and clay.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Pages: 36-37)

O SON OF MY HANDMAID!

Quaff from the tongue of the merciful the stream of divine mystery, and behold from the day-spring of divine utterance the unveiled splendor of the day-star of wisdom. Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of the heart, and water them with the waters of certitude, that the hyacinths of knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green from the holy city of the heart.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 78)

I pray in behalf of these children and beg confirmation and assistance for them from the Kingdom of Abha so that each one may be trained under the shadow of the protection of God, each may become like a lighted candle in the world of humanity, a tender and growing plant in the rose garden of Abha; that these children may be so trained and educated that they shall give life to the world of humanity; that they may receive insight; that they may bestow hearing upon the people of the world; that they may sow the seeds of eternal life and be accepted in the threshold of God; that they may become characterized with such virtues, perfections and qualities that their mothers, fathers and relatives will be thankful to God, well pleased and hopeful. This is my wish and prayer.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Page: 53)

Of steadfastness in proclaiming the Kingdom of God, Christ said:

"And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and

looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:61-62)

Bahá'u'lláh said:

Be unrestrained as the wind, while carrying the Message of Him Who hath caused the Dawn of Divine Guidance to break. Consider, how the wind, faithful to that which God hath ordained, bloweth upon all the regions of the earth, be they inhabited or desolate. Neither the sight of desolation, nor the evidences of prosperity, can either pain or please it. It bloweth in every direction, as bidden by its Creator. So should be every one that claimeth to be a lover of the one true God. It behoveth him to fix his gaze upon the fundamentals of His Faith, and to labor diligently for its propagation. Wholly for the sake of God he should proclaim His Message, and with that same spirit accept whatever response his words may evoke in his hearer. He who shall accept and believe, shall receive his reward; and he who shall turn away, shall receive none other than his own punishment.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 339)

Of the apparent variation in God's message in every dispensation, Bahá'u'lláh said:

The measure of the revelation of the Prophets of God in this world, however, must differ. Each and every one of them hath been the Bearer of a distinct Message, and hath been commissioned to reveal Himself through specific acts. It is for this reason that they appear to vary in their greatness. Their Revelation may be likened unto the light of the moon that sheddeth its radiance upon the earth. Though every time it appeareth, it revealeth a fresh measure of its brightness, yet its inherent splendor can never diminish, nor can its light suffer extinction.

It is clear and evident, therefore, that any apparent variation in the intensity of their light is not inherent in the light itself, but should rather be attributed to the varying receptivity of an ever-changing world. Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been entrusted with a Message, and charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared. God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 79-80)

Lastly, the perfect man, the Prophet, is one who is transfigured, one who has the purity and clearness of a perfect mirror - one who reflects the Sun of Truth. Of such a one - of such a Prophet and Messenger - we can say that the Light of Divinity with the heavenly Perfections dwells in him. If we claim that the sun is seen in the mirror, we do not mean that the sun itself has descended from the holy heights of his heaven and entered into the mirror! This is impossible. The Divine Nature is seen in the Manifestations and its Light and Splendor are visible in extreme glory.

Therefore, men have always been taught and led by the Prophets of God. The Prophets of God are the Mediators of God. All the Prophets and Messengers have come from One Holy Spirit and bear the Message of God, fitted to the age in which they appear. The One Light is in them and they are One with each other. But the Eternal does not become phenomenal; neither can the phenomenal become Eternal.

Saint Paul, the great Apostle, said: "We all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of God, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Abdu'l-Baha in London*, Pages: 23-24)

HE SHALL COME WITH HIS ANGELS

The Báb Himself was the "Primal Point" and, with the eighteen to be by him appointed as they should come to Him, constituted "The Nineteen Letters of the Living."

This declaration was made on the twenty-third day of the month of May, in the year 1844. What a day in the history of the world!

The Báb, the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh, the Promised one, opened the new age of mankind. On this day was born 'Abbas Effendi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Son of Bahá'u'lláh and Centre of His Covenant.

On this day the first telegraphic message was flashed along the wires in these remarkable words: "Behold what God hath wrought!"

(Lady Blomfield, The Chosen Highway, p. 16)

As to those whose supreme privilege it was to be enrolled by the Báb in the Book of His Revelation as His chosen Letters of the Living, their names are as follows:

Mulla Husayn-i-Bushru'i,
 Muhammad-Hasan, his brother,
 Muhammad-Baqir, his nephew,
 Mulla Aliy-i-Bastami,
 Mulla Khuda-Bakhsh-i-Quchani, later named Mulla Ali
 Mulla Hasan-i-Bajistani,
 Siyyid Husayn-i-Yazdi,
 Mirza Muhammad Rawdih-Khan-i-Yazdi,
 Sa'id-i-Hindi,
 Mulla Mahmud-i-Khu'i,
 Mulla Jalil-i-Urumi,
 Mulla Ahmad-i-Ibdal-i-Maraghi'i,
 Mulla Baqir-i-Tabrizi,
 Mulla Yusif-i-Ardibili,

Mirza Hadi, son of Mulla Abdu'l-Vahhab-i-Qazvini,
 Mirza Muhammad-'Aliy-i-Qazvini.
 Tahirih,¹
 Quddus.

These all, with the single exception of Tahirih, attained the presence of the Báb, and were personally invested by Him with the distinction of this rank.

(Shoghi Effendi, The Dawn-Breakers, p. 80)

The first eighteen disciples of the Báb (with Himself as nineteenth) became known as "Letters of the Living." These disciples He sent to different parts of Persia and Turkistan to spread the news of His advent. Meantime He Himself set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca, where He arrived in December 1844, and there openly declared His mission. On His return to Bushihr great excitement was caused by the announcement of His Bábhood. The fire of His eloquence, the wonder of His rapid and inspired writings, His extraordinary wisdom and knowledge, His courage and zeal as a reformer, aroused the greatest enthusiasm among His followers, but excited a corresponding degree of alarm and enmity among the orthodox Muslims. The Shi'ih doctors vehemently denounced Him, and persuaded the Governor of Fars, namely Husayn Khan, a fanatical and tyrannical ruler, to undertake the suppression of the new heresy. Then commenced for the Báb a long series of imprisonments, deportations, examinations before tribunals, scourgings and indignities, which ended only with His martyrdom in 1850.

The hostility aroused by the claim of Bábhood was redoubled when the young reformer proceeded to declare that He

1 One of the 'Letters of the Living', the great heroine and the most outstanding woman among the apostles of the Báb. Her name was Umm-Salamih, Qurratu'l-'Ayn - the Solace of the Eyes. Bahá'í history knows her best as Tahirih - the Pure - a designation bestowed on her by Bahá'u'lláh. Although she never attained the presence of the Báb, yet she arose with burning zeal, all ardour and steadfastness and with determination, to declare and promote His Faith, giving up kith and kin and finally life itself in His path. (H.M. Balyuzi, Baha'u'llah - The King of Glory, p. 30)

was Himself the Mihdi (Mahdi) Whose coming Muhammad had foretold. The Shi'ihis identified this Mihdi with the 12th Imam [1] who, according to their beliefs, had mysteriously disappeared from the sight of men about a thousand years previously. They believed that he was still alive and would reappear in the same body as before, and they interpreted in a material sense the prophecies regarding his dominion, his glory, his conquests and the "signs" of his advent, just as the Jews in the time of Christ interpreted similar prophecies regarding the Messiah. They expected that he would appear with earthly sovereignty and an innumerable army and declare his revelation, that he would raise dead bodies and restore them to life, and so on. As these signs did not appear, the Shi'his rejected the Báb with the same fierce scorn which the Jews displayed towards Jesus.

The Imam of the Shi'ihis is the divinely ordained successor of the Prophet whom all the faithful must obey. Eleven persons successively held the office of Imam, the first being Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. The majority of the Shi'ihis hold that the twelfth Imam, called by them the Imam Mihdi, disappeared as a child into an underground passage in 329 A.H., and that in the fullness of time he will come forth, overthrow the infidels and inaugurate an era of blessedness.

(Dr. J.E. Esslemont, *Baha'u'llah and the New Era*, p. 14-15)

In the Holy Bible, Matthew chapter 16, verse 27, we read of 'angels' who were to follow the Second Advent of Christ in 'the glory of his Father':

"the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels."

In the Qur'an we read:

"Over it are Nineteen. And We have set none but angels as Guardians of the Fire; and We have fixed their number only as a trial for Unbelievers,- in order that the People of the Book may ar-

rive at certainty, and the Believers may increase in Faith,- and that no doubts may be left for the People of the Book and the Believers...Thus doth Allah leave to stray whom He pleaseth, and guide whom He pleaseth: and none can know the forces of thy Lord, except He and this is no other than a warning to mankind." (Qur'án 74:30-31)

In this particularly interesting reference, Muhammad makes clear that he is quoting a specific figure 'nineteen' as the number of the 'Guardians of the Fire,' as a 'trial for the unbelievers,' and a clear proof for His followers and the 'People of the Book' (the Jews and Christians).

THE COMFORTER IS NOW COME

*"Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."
(John 18:37)*

He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: 'Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!' He Who is the Father is come, and the Son (Jesus), in the holy vale, crieth out: 'Here am I, here am I, O Lord, My God!' whilst Sinai circleth round the House, and the Burning Bush calleth aloud: 'The All-Bounteous is come mounted upon the clouds! Blessed is he that draweth nigh unto Him, and woe betide them that are far away.'

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 27-28)

"Followers of the Gospel," Baha'u'llah addressing the whole of Christendom exclaims, "behold the gates of heaven are flung open. He that had ascended unto it is now come. Give ear to His voice calling aloud over land and sea, announcing to all mankind the advent of this Revelation - a Revelation through the agency of which the Tongue of Grandeur is now proclaiming: 'Lo, the sacred Pledge hath been fulfilled, for He, the Promised One, is come!'"

"The voice of the Son of Man is calling aloud from the sacred vale: 'Here am I, here am I, O God my God!' ... whilst from the Burning Bush breaketh forth the cry: 'Lo, the Desire of the world is made manifest in His transcendent glory!' The Father hath come. That which ye were promised in the Kingdom of God is fulfilled. This is the Word which the Son veiled when He said to those around Him that at that time they could not bear it... Verily the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth... He is the One Who glorified the Son and exalted His Cause..." "The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him."

(Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 104-105)

And in the fourth Gospel, according to John, it is recorded: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness." (John 15:26) And elsewhere He saith: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26) And: "But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you..." (John 16:5-6) And yet again: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (John 16:7) And: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." (John 16:13)

Such is the text of the verses revealed in the past. By Him besides Whom there is none other God, I have chosen to be brief, for were I to recount all the words that have been sent down unto the Prophets of God from the realm of His supernal glory and the kingdom of His sovereign might, all the

pages and tablets of the world would not suffice to exhaust My theme. References similar to those mentioned, nay even more sublime and exalted, have been made in all the Books and Scriptures of old. Should it be My wish to recount all that hath been revealed in the past, I would most certainly be able to do so by virtue of that which God hath bestowed upon Me of the wonders of His knowledge and power. I have, however, contented Myself with that which was mentioned, lest thou becomewearied in thy journey or feel inclined to turn back, or lest thou be overtaken by sadness and sorrow and overcome with despondency, trouble and fatigue.

Be fair in thy judgement and reflect upon these exalted utterances. Inquire, then, of those who lay claim to knowledge without a proof or testimony from God, and who remain heedless of these days wherein the Orb of knowledge and wisdom hath dawned above the horizon of Divinity, rendering unto each his due and assigning unto all their rank and measure, as to what they can say concerning these allusions. Verily, their meaning hath bewildered the minds of men, and that which they conceal of the consummate wisdom and latent knowledge of God even the most sanctified souls have been powerless to uncover.

Should they say: "These words are indeed from God, and have no interpretation other than their outward meaning", then what objection can they raise against the unbelievers among the people of the Book? For when the latter saw the aforementioned passages in their Scriptures and heard the literal interpretations of their divines, they refused to recognize God in those who are the Manifestations of His unity, the Exponents of His singleness, and the Embodiments of His sanctity, and failed to believe in them and submit to their authority. The reason was that they did not see the sun darken, or the stars of heaven fall to the ground, or the angels visibly descend upon the earth, and hence they contended with the Prophets and Messengers of God. Nay, inasmuch as they found them at variance with their own faith and creed, they hurled against them such accusations of imposture, folly, waywardness, and misbelief as I am ashamed to recount. Refer to

the Qur'án, that thou mayest find mention of all this and be of them that understand its meaning. Even to this day do these people await the appearance of that which they have learned from their doctors and imbibed from their divines. Thus do they say: "When shall these signs be made manifest, that we may believe?" But if this be the case, how could ye refute their arguments, invalidate their proofs, and challenge them concerning their faith and their understanding of their Books and the sayings of their leaders?

(Baha'u'llah, *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 11)

O thou yearner after the Kingdom! Each Manifestation is the heart of the world and the proficient Physician of every patient. The world of humanity is sick, but that skilled Physician hath the healing remedy and He bestoweth divine teachings, exhortations and advices which are the remedy of every ailment and the dressing for every wound. Undoubtedly, the wise physician discovereth the needs of the patient at every season and prescribeth medicine. Therefore, when thou wilt compare the teachings of the Beauty of Abha with the requisitions and necessities of the present time, thou wilt conclude that they are to the sick body of the world the swift healing antidote; nay, rather they are the remedy of everlasting health. The prescription of the proficient physicians of the past and the future will not be the same; nay, rather they will be in accord with the ailment of the patient. Although the medicine is changed, yet all of these are for the sole purpose of the healing of the sick. In former dispensations the sick body of the world could not bear the strong and overpowering remedies. That is why His Highness the Christ said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of the Comforter, who is sent by the Father, is come, He will guide you into all truth." Therefore, in this age of lights, specific teachings have become universal, in order that the outpouring of the Merciful One environ both the East and the West, the oneness of the kingdom of humanity become visible and the luminosity of truth enlighten the world of consciousness. The descent of the New Jerusalem is the heavenly religion which secures the prosperity of the human world and is the effulgence of the illumination of the realm of

God. (***Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 381***)

Say: O people! The Lamp of God is burning; take heed, lest the fierce winds of your disobedience extinguish its light. Now is the time to arise and magnify the Lord, your God. Strive not after bodily comforts, and keep your heart pure and stainless. The Evil One is lying in wait, ready to entrap you. Gird yourselves against his wicked devices, and, led by the light of the name of the one true God, deliver yourselves from the darkness that surroundeth you. Center your thoughts in the Well-Beloved, rather than in your own selves.

Say: O ye that have strayed and lost your way! The Divine Messenger, Who speaketh naught but the truth, hath announced unto you the coming of the Best-Beloved. Behold, He is now come.

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 167)

The Heavenly Father gave the priceless gift of intelligence to man so that he might become a spiritual light, piercing the darkness of materiality, and bringing goodness and truth into the world. If ye will follow earnestly the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, ye shall indeed become the light of the world, the soul for the body of the world, the comfort and help for humanity, and the source of salvation for the whole universe. Strive therefore, with heart and soul, to follow the precepts of the Blessed Perfection, and rest assured that if ye succeed in living the life he marks out for you, Eternal Life and everlasting joy in the Heavenly Kingdom will be yours, and celestial sustenance will be sent to strengthen you all your days.

It is my heartfelt prayer that each one of you may attain to this perfect joy!

(Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 113)

Chapter 7:

The Kingdom Foretold

THY KINGDOM COME

In speaking of the coming of Kingdom of God, on earth, His Holiness Jesus Christ, in Matthew, chapter 6, verses 9 through 10, said: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

The Bahá'í Faith has revealed that this utterance of Christ was fulfilled, when He returned 'in the glory of His Father': "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father" (Matt 16:27). That the Kingdom of God had not yet come when Christ First walked upon the earth, is shown in John, chapter 18, verse 36, where it is written: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

In the Holy Qur'án, chapter 83, verse 6, Prophet Muhammad referred to that Day as: "A Day when (all) mankind will

stand before the Lord of the Worlds," while the Holy Bible had spoken of it as a Day, when He, the "Glory of the Lord," the "Everlasting Father," the "Prince of Peace," the "Lord of Hosts," would reign, on earth, for a 'thousand years': "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (**Rev 20:4**)

The Bahá'í Faith furthermore reveals that, the Second Advent of Christ, was fulfilled, upon coming of Bahá'u'lláh, "The Glory of God":

Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will, no doubt, forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will, assuredly, send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. Terrible, indeed, is God in punishing! Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which encompasseth all created things. Fear God, and follow not your idle fancies. Nay, rather, follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise. Erelong shall clamorous voices be raised in most lands. Shun them, O My people, and follow not the iniquitous and evil-hearted.

(Bahá'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, Page: 32)

The Dispensation of Baha'u'llah will last until the coming of the next Manifestation of God, Whose advent will not take place before at least "a full thousand years" will have elapsed. Baha'u'llah cautions against ascribing to "this verse" anything other than its "obvious meaning", and in one of His Tablets, He specifies that "each year" of this thousand year period consists

of "twelve months according to the Qur'an, and of nineteen months of nineteen days each, according to the Bayan."¹

The intimation of His Revelation to Baha'u'llah in the Siyah-Chal of Tihiran, in October 1852, marks the birth of His Prophetic Mission and hence the commencement of the one thousand years or more that must elapse before the appearance of the next Manifestation of God.

(Baha'u'llah: Aqdas: Notes, Pages: 195-196)

...the Revelation identified with Baha'u'llah abrogates unconditionally all the Dispensations gone before it, upholds uncompromisingly the eternal verities they enshrine, recognizes firmly and absolutely the Divine origin of their Authors, preserves inviolate the sanctity of their authentic Scriptures, disclaims any intention of lowering the status of their Founders or of abating the spiritual ideals they inculcate, clarifies and correlates their functions, reaffirms their common, their unchangeable and fundamental purpose, reconciles their seemingly divergent claims and doctrines, readily and gratefully recognizes their respective contributions to the gradual unfoldment of one Divine Revelation, unhesitatingly acknowledges itself to be but one link in the chain of continually progressive Revelations, supplements their teachings with such laws and ordinances as conform to the imperative needs, and are dictated by the growing receptivity, of a fast evolving and constantly changing society, and proclaims its readiness and ability to fuse and incorporate the contending sects and factions into which they have fallen into a universal Fellowship, functioning within the framework, and in accordance with the precepts, of a divinely conceived, a world-unifying, a world-redeeming Order.

A Revelation, hailed as the promise and crowning glory of past ages and centuries, as the consummation of all the Dis-

1 *The Holy Book of the Báb - "Prophet and Herald of the Faith of Baha'u'llah, Founder of the Dispensation marking the culmination of the six thousand year old Adamic Cycle, Inaugurator of the five thousand century Baha'i Cycle."* (Shoghi Effendi: Citadel of Faith, Page: 80)

pensations within the Adamic Cycle, inaugurating an era of at least a thousand years' duration, and a cycle destined to last no less than five thousand centuries, signaling the end of the Prophetic Era and the beginning of the Era of Fulfillment...

(Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, Page: 100)

The Cause of God hath come as a token of His grace. Happy are they who act; happy are they who understand; happy the man that hath clung unto the truth, detached from all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth.

(Baha'u'llah: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Page: 139)

THE CITY OF MY GOD

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."
(Rev 3:12)

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;" **(Rev 21:10-11)**

They that valiantly labour in quest of God's will, when once they have renounced all else but Him, will be so attached and wedded to that City that a moment's separation from it would to them be unthinkable. They will hearken unto infallible proofs from the Hyacinth of that assembly, and receive the surest testimonies from the beauty of its Rose and the melody of its Nightingale. Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and re-adorned.

Wherefore, O my friend, it behooveth Us to exert the highest endeavour to attain unto that City, and, by the grace of God and His loving-kindness, rend asunder the "veils of glory"; so that, with inflexible steadfastness, we may sacrifice our drooping souls in the path of the New Beloved. We should with tearful eyes, fervently and repeatedly, implore Him to grant us the favour of that grace. That city is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation. In the days of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the days of Jesus the Gospel; in the days of Muhammad the Messenger of God the Qur'an; in this day the Bayan; and in the dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest His own Book - the Book unto which all the Books of former Dispensations must needs be referred, the Book which standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme. In these cities spiritual sustenance is bountifully provided, and incorruptible delights have been ordained. The food they bestow is the bread of heaven, and the Spirit they impart is God's imperishable blessing. Upon detached souls they bestow the gift of Unity, enrich the destitute, and offer the cup of knowledge unto them who wander in the wilderness of ignorance. All the guidance, the blessings, the learning, the understanding, the faith, and certitude, conferred upon all that is in heaven and on earth, are hidden and treasured within these Cities.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 198-200)

CALL out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendour is revealed. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt. Hasten forth and circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven, the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favoured of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels. O how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of this Revelation - a Revelation to which the heart of Sinai hath been attracted, and in whose name the Burning Bush is calling: 'Unto God, the Lord of Lords, belong the kingdoms of earth and heaven.' Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea re-

joice at this announcement, the Day for which have been laid up those things which God, through a bounty beyond the ken of mortal mind or heart, hath destined for revelation. Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Baha who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Page: 89)

The Most Great Law is come, and the Ancient Beauty ruleth upon the throne of David. Thus hath My Pen spoken that which the histories of bygone ages have related. At this time, however, David crieth aloud and saith: `O my loving Lord! Do Thou number me with such as have stood steadfast in Thy Cause, O Thou through Whom the faces have been illumined, and the footsteps have slipped!'

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 89-90)

The time fore-ordained unto the peoples and kindreds of the earth is now come. The promises of God, as recorded in the holy Scriptures, have all been fulfilled. Out of Zion hath gone forth the Law of God, and Jerusalem, and the hills and land thereof, are filled with the glory of His Revelation. Happy is the man that pondereth in his heart that which hath been revealed in the Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Meditate upon this, O ye beloved of God, and let your ears be attentive unto His Word, so that ye may, by His grace and mercy, drink your fill from the crystal waters of constancy, and become as steadfast and immovable as the mountain in His Cause.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Page: 111)

Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised One. The Call of God hath been raised, and the light of His countenance hath been lifted up upon men. It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and to gaze, with an open and unbiased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the proofs of His Mission, and the tokens of His glory.

Great indeed is this Day! The allusions made to it in all the sacred Scriptures as the Day of God attest its greatness. The soul of every Prophet of God, of every Divine Messenger, hath thirsted for this wondrous Day. All the divers kindreds of the earth have, likewise, yearned to attain it. No sooner, however, had the Day Star of His Revelation manifested itself in the heaven of God's Will, than all, except those whom the Almighty was pleased to guide, were found dumbfounded and heedless.

O thou that hast remembered Me! The most grievous veil hath shut out the peoples of the earth from His glory, and hindered them from hearkening to His call. God grant that the light of unity may envelop the whole earth, and that the seal, 'the Kingdom is God's', may be stamped upon the brow of all its peoples.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 111-112)

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. Then will the effulgence of the world's great Luminary envelop the whole earth, and its inhabitants become the citizens of one city, and the occupants of one and the same throne. This wronged One hath, ever since the early days of His life, cherished none other desire but this, and will continue to entertain no wish except this wish. There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. This, verily, is the most exalted Word which the Mother Book hath sent down and re-

vealed unto you. To this beareth witness the Tongue of Grandeur from His habitation of glory.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Page: 114)

The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System - the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.

Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths. Take heed that ye do not vacillate in your determination to embrace the truth of this Cause - a Cause through which the potentialities of the might of God have been revealed, and His sovereignty established. With faces beaming with joy, hasten ye unto Him. This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. Let him that seeketh, attain it; and as to him that hath refused to seek it - verily, God is Self-Sufficient, above any need of His creatures.

Say: This is the infallible Balance which the Hand of God is holding, in which all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth are weighed, and their fate determined, if ye be of them that believe and recognize this truth. Say: Through it the poor have been enriched, the learned enlightened, and the seekers enabled to ascend unto the presence of God. Beware, lest ye make it a cause of dissension amongst you. Be ye as firmly settled as the immovable mountain in the Cause of your Lord, the Mighty, the Loving

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 118-119)

O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures. Thus hath it been sent down from the heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Lord of Revelation. Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his pos-

session, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His bountiful care and loving-kindness.

From My laws the sweet smelling savour of My garment can be smelled, and by their aid the standards of victory will be planted upon the highest peaks. The Tongue of My power hath, from the heaven of My omnipotent glory, addressed to My creation these words: `Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty.' Happy is the lover that hath inhaled the divine fragrance of his Best-Beloved from these words, laden with the perfume of a grace which no tongue can describe. By My life! He who hath drunk the choice wine of fairness from the hands of My bountiful favour, will circle around My commandments that shine above the Dayspring of My creation.

Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!...

Whenever My laws appear like the sun in the heaven of Mine utterance, they must be faithfully obeyed by all, though My decree be such as to cause the heaven of every religion to be cleft asunder. He doth what He pleaseth. He chooseth; and none may question His choice. Whatsoever He, the Well-Beloved, ordaineth, the same is, verily, beloved. To this He Who is the Lord of all creation beareth Me witness. Whoso hath inhaled the sweet fragrance of the All-Merciful, and recognized the Source of this utterance, will welcome with his own eyes the shafts of the enemy, that he may establish the truth of the laws of God amongst men. Well is it with him that hath turned thereunto, and apprehended the meaning of His decisive decree.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 119-121)

This is the Day in which God's most excellent favours have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things. It is incum-

bent upon all the peoples of the world to reconcile their differences, and, with perfect unity and peace, abide beneath the shadow of the Tree of His care and loving-kindness. It behoveth them to cleave to whatsoever will, in this Day, be conducive to the exaltation of their stations, and to the promotion of their best interests. Happy are those whom the all-glorious Pen was moved to remember, and blessed are those men whose names, by virtue of Our inscrutable decree, We have preferred to conceal.

Beseech ye the one true God to grant that all men may be graciously assisted to fulfil that which is acceptable in Our sight. Soon will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily, thy Lord speaketh the truth, and is the Knower of things unseen.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 121-122)

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD." (Isaiah 65:25)

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." (ISAIAH 11:6)

In Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 1 to 10, it is said:

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall

not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

This rod out of the stem of Jesse might be correctly applied to Christ, for Joseph was of the descendants of Jesse, the father of David; but as Christ found existence through the Spirit of God, He called Himself the Son of God. If He had not done so, this description would refer to Him. Besides this, the events which he indicated as coming to pass in the days of that rod, if interpreted symbolically, were in part fulfilled in the day of Christ, but not all; and if not interpreted, then decidedly none of these signs happened. For example, the leopard and the lamb, the lion and the calf, the child and the asp, are metaphors and symbols for various nations, peoples, antagonistic sects and hostile races, who are as opposite and inimical as the wolf and lamb. We say that by the breath of the spirit of Christ they found concord and harmony, they were vivified, and they associated together.

But "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." These conditions did not prevail in the time of the manifestation of Christ; for until today

various and antagonistic nations exist in the world: very few acknowledge the God of Israel, and the greater number are without the knowledge of God. In the same way, universal peace did not come into existence in the time of Christ - that is to say, between the antagonistic and hostile nations there was neither peace nor concord, disputes and disagreements did not cease, and reconciliation and sincerity did not appear. So, even at this day, among the Christian sects and nations themselves, enmity, hatred and the most violent hostility are met with.

But these verses apply word for word to Baha'u'llah. Likewise in this marvelous cycle the earth will be transformed, and the world of humanity arrayed in tranquillity and beauty. Disputes, quarrels and murders will be replaced by peace, truth and concord; among the nations, peoples, races and countries, love and amity will appear. Cooperation and union will be established, and finally war will be entirely suppressed. When the laws of the Most Holy Book¹ are enforced, contentions and disputes will find a final sentence of absolute justice before a general tribunal of the nations and kingdoms, and the difficulties that appear will be solved. The five continents of the world will form but one, the numerous nations will become one, the surface of the earth will become one land, and mankind will be a single community. The relations between the countries - the mingling, union and friendship of the peoples and communities - will reach to such a degree that the human race will be like one family and kindred. The light of heavenly love will shine, and the darkness of enmity and hatred will be dispelled from the world. Universal peace will raise its tent in the center of the earth, and the blessed Tree of Life will grow and spread to such an extent that it will overshadow the East and the West. Strong and weak, rich and poor, antagonistic sects and hostile nations - which are like the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and kid, the lion and the calf - will act toward each other with the most complete love, friendship, justice and equity. The world will be filled with science, with the knowledge of the reality

1 *The Most Holy Book (Kitab-i-Aqdas)*

of the mysteries of beings, and with the knowledge of God.
(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*, Pages: 62-64)

Behold the disturbances which, for many a long year, have afflicted the earth, and the perturbation that hath seized its peoples. It hath either been ravaged by war, or tormented by sudden and unforeseen calamities. Though the world is encompassed with misery and distress, yet no man hath paused to reflect what the cause or source of that may be. Whenever the True Counsellor uttered a word in admonishment, lo, they all denounced Him as a mover of mischief and rejected His claim. How bewildering, how confusing is such behaviour! No two men can be found who may be said to be outwardly and inwardly united. The evidences of discord and malice are apparent everywhere, though all were made for harmony and union. The Great Being saith: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. We cherish the hope that the light of justice may shine upon the world and sanctify it from tyranny. If the rulers and kings of the earth, the symbols of the power of God, exalted be His glory, arise and resolve to dedicate themselves to whatever will promote the highest interests of the whole of humanity, the reign of justice will assuredly be established amongst the children of men, and the effulgence of its light will envelop the whole earth.

(Baha'u'llah: *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, Pages: 163-164)

Furthermore, how numerous are those peoples of divers beliefs, of conflicting creeds, and opposing temperaments, who, through the reviving fragrance of the Divine springtime, breathing from the Ridvan of God, have been arrayed with the new robe of divine Unity, and have drunk from the cup of His singleness!

This is the significance of the well-known words: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together."² Behold the ignorance and folly of those who, like the nations of old, are still expecting to

2 Isaiah 65:25

witness the time when these beasts will feed together in one pasture! Such is their low estate. Methinks, never have their lips touched the cup of understanding, neither have their feet trodden the path of justice. Besides, of what profit would it be to the world were such a thing to take place? How well hath He spoken concerning them: "Hearts have they, with which they understand not, and eyes have they with which they see not!"¹

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 112-113)

THE LORD WILL ROAR FROM ZION

"And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither." (Amos 1:2)

... "through the tongue of the Prophets two or three thousand years before." God, "faithful to His promise," had, "to some of the Prophets" "revealed and given the good news that the 'Lord of Hosts should be manifested in the Holy Land.'" Isaiah had, in this connection, announced in his Book: "Get thee up into the high mountain, O Zion that bringest good tidings; lift up thy voice with strength, O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings. Lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: 'Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him.'" David, in his Psalms, had predicted: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory." "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence." Amos had, likewise, foretold His coming: "The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither."

(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 183)

1 Qur'an 7:179

Carmel, in the Book of God, hath been designated as the Hill of God, and His Vineyard. It is here that, by the grace of the Lord of Revelation, the Tabernacle of Glory hath been raised. Happy are they that attain thereunto; happy they that set their faces towards it.

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 145)



The Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel: “The LORD will roar from Zion” (Amos 1:2)

“As I live, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts, Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come.” (Jeremiah 46:18)

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 40:3-5)

"The mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken... Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence...He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth...Hear, O my people, and I will speak...I am God, even thy God." (Psalms 50:1-4,7)

IT SHALL BLOSSOM ABUNDANTLY



The Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel: "It shall blossom abundantly" (Isa 35:2)

In Isaiah¹, we read, "...Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down; Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits." Isaiah also says, "...The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellence of our God."² It is

¹ 'Isaiah', chapter 33, verse 9

² 'Isaiah', chapter 35,verse2

interesting to compare this last verse with its Arabic version which, when translated literally, into English, reads as follows: "God will render to Lebanon its glory: the Baha of Carmel and Sharon shall be manifested, and they shall see the glory of God, the Baha of our Lord."³ When Jesus spoke to the Jews who were familiar with these terms, He told them that He would return "in the glory of the Father."

(Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, *An Explanation of the Greatest Name*, p. 5)

"It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God." (Isaiah 35:2)

Isaiah saith: "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day." Concerning the greatness of the Revelation He saith: "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty." And in another connection He saith: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the splendor of our God."

These passages stand in need of no commentary. They are shining and manifest as the sun, and glowing and luminous as light itself. Every fair-minded person is led, by the fragrance of these words, unto the garden of understanding, and attaineth unto that from which most men are veiled and debarred. Say: Fear God, O people, and follow not the doubts of such as shout aloud, who have broken the Covenant of God and His Testament, and denied His mercy that hath preceded all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth.

³ 'Holy Bible', Arabic translation, 1881, Third Ed., also: Ishraq Khavari, *Rahiq-i-Makhtum (Rae Sealed Wine)* pp. 218-219

And likewise, He saith: "Say to them that are of a fearful heart: be strong, fear not, behold your God." This blessed verse is a proof of the greatness of the Revelation, and of the greatness of the Cause, inasmuch as the blast of the trumpet must needs spread confusion throughout the world, and fear and trembling amongst all men. Well is it with him who hath been illumined with the light of trust and detachment. The tribulations of that Day will not hinder or alarm him. Thus hath the Tongue of Utterance spoken, as bidden by Him Who is the All-Merciful. He, verily, is the Strong, the All-Powerful, the All-Subduing, the Almighty. It is now incumbent upon them who are endowed with a hearing ear and a seeing eye to ponder these sublime words, in each of which the oceans of inner meaning and explanation are hidden, that haply the words uttered by Him Who is the Lord of Revelation may enable His servants to attain, with the utmost joy and radiance, unto the Supreme Goal and Most Sublime Summit - the dawning-place of this Voice.

(Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Pages: 146-147)

THE MOUNTAIN OF HIS HOLINESS



The Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel: “the mountain of his holiness” (Ps 48:1)

“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.” (Psalms 48:1-2)

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” (Isaiah 60:1-2)

*"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."
(Isaiah 62:1,3)*

*"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God....And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."
(Isaiah 40:3,5)*

*"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."
(Isaiah 40:31)*

Carmel hath, in this Day, hastened in longing adoration to attain His court, whilst from the heart of Zion there cometh the cry: "The promise is fulfilled. That which had been announced in the holy Writ of God, the Most Exalted, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved, is made manifest."

(Bahá'u'llah, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 48)

All glory be to this Day, the Day in which the fragrances of mercy have been wafted over all created things, a Day so blest that past ages and centuries can never hope to rival it, a Day in which the countenance of the Ancient of Days hath turned towards His holy seat. Thereupon the voices of all created things, and beyond them those of the Concurrence on High, were heard calling aloud: 'Haste thee, O Carmel, for lo, the light of the countenance of God, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Names and Fashioner of the heavens, hath been lifted upon thee.'

Seized with transports of joy, and raising high her voice, she thus exclaimed: 'May my life be a sacrifice to Thee, inasmuch

as Thou hast fixed Thy gaze upon me, hast bestowed upon me Thy bounty, and hast directed towards me Thy steps. Separation from Thee, O Thou Source of everlasting life, hath well nigh consumed me, and my remoteness from Thy presence hath burned away my soul. All praise be to Thee for having enabled me to hearken to Thy call, for having honoured me with Thy footsteps, and for having quickened my soul through the vitalizing fragrance of Thy Day and the shrilling voice of Thy Pen, a voice Thou didst ordain as Thy trumpet-call amidst Thy people. And when the hour at which Thy resistless Faith was to be made manifest did strike, Thou didst breathe a breath of Thy spirit into Thy Pen, and lo, the entire creation shook to its very foundations, unveiling to mankind such mysteries as lay hidden within the treasures of Him Who is the Possessor of all created things.'

No sooner had her voice reached that most exalted Spot than We made reply: 'Render thanks unto thy Lord, O Carmel. The fire of thy separation from Me was fast consuming thee, when the ocean of My presence surged before thy face, cheering thine eyes and those of all creation, and filling with delight all things visible and invisible. Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established upon thee His throne, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs and the dayspring of the evidences of His Revelation. Well is it with him that circleth around thee, that proclaimeth the revelation of thy glory, and recounteth that which the bounty of the Lord thy God hath showered upon thee. Seize thou the Chalice of Immortality in the name of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, and give thanks unto Him, inasmuch as He, in token of His mercy unto thee, hath turned thy sorrow into gladness, and transmuted thy grief into blissful joy. He, verily, loveth the spot which hath been made the seat of His throne, which His footsteps have trodden, which hath been honoured by His presence, from which He raised His call, and upon which He shed His tears.

'Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings: He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendour is revealed. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt. Hasten forth and

circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven, the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favoured of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels. Oh, how I long to announce unto every spot on the surface of the earth, and to carry to each one of its cities, the glad-tidings of this Revelation - a Revelation to which the heart of Sinai hath been attracted, and in whose name the Burning Bush is calling: "Unto God, the Lord of Lords, belong the kingdoms of earth and heaven." Verily this is the Day in which both land and sea rejoice at this announcement, the Day for which have been laid up those things which God, through a bounty beyond the ken of mortal mind or heart, hath destined for revelation. Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Baha who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.'

Sanctified be the Lord of all mankind, at the mention of Whose name all the atoms of the earth have been made to vibrate, and the Tongue of Grandeur hath been moved to disclose that which had been wrapt in His knowledge and lay concealed within the treasury of His might. He, verily, through the potency of His name, the Mighty, the All-Powerful, the Most High, is the ruler of all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 3-5)

This is the Day in which He Who held converse with God hath attained the light of the Ancient of Days, and quaffed the pure waters of reunion from this Cup that hath caused the seas to swell. Say: By the one true God! Sinai is circling round the Dayspring of Revelation, while from the heights of the Kingdom the Voice of the Spirit of God is heard proclaiming: "Bestir yourselves, ye proud ones of the earth, and hasten ye unto Him." Carmel hath, in this Day, hastened in longing adoration to attain His court, whilst from the heart of Zion there cometh the cry: "The promise is fulfilled. That which had been announced in the holy Writ of God, the Most Exalted, the Almighty, the Best-Beloved, is made manifest."

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, Pages: 48-49)

The voice and the lamentation of the true Faith have been raised. It calleth aloud and saith: "O people! By the righteousness of God! I have attained unto Him Who hath manifested me and sent me down. This is the Day whereon Sinai hath smiled at Him Who conversed upon it, and Carmel at its Revealer, and the Sadrah at Him Who taught it. Fear ye God, and be not of them that have denied Him. Withhold not yourselves from that which hath been revealed through His grace. Seize ye the living waters of immortality in the name of your Lord, the Lord of all names, and drink ye in the remembrance of Him, Who is the Mighty, the Peerless."

(Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Page: 38)



"the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion" (Ps 48:2)

NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD



The Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel: “for out of Zion shall go forth the law” (Isa 2:3)

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Isaiah 2:2-4)

"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." (Rev 21:22-24)

The Bahá'í Faith has revealed that "the last days" prophecy of Isaiah, in chapter 2, verses 2, 3, and 4, related to the time when Christ returned: "in the glory of his Father" (Matt 16:27); in "the Glory of God." (Rev 21:23)

It has been Promised that: "...he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law ...he shall judge among the nations...nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2:3-4), and "...the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." (Rev 21:24)

The Bahá'í Faith further reveals that this Promise of peace and tranquillity "among the nations," that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," will be fulfilled within the Dispensation of Baha'u'llah ("The Glory of God",) and in the light of guidance of His Words:

The Great Being, wishing to reveal the prerequisites of the peace and tranquillity of the world and the advancement of its peoples, hath written: The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foun-

dations of the world's Great Peace amongst men. Such a peace demandeth that the Great Powers should resolve, for the sake of the tranquillity of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled among themselves. Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him. If this be done, the nations of the world will no longer require any armaments, except for the purpose of preserving the security of their realms and of maintaining internal order within their territories. This will ensure the peace and composure of every people, government and nation. We fain would hope that the kings and rulers of the earth, the mirrors of the gracious and almighty name of God, may attain unto this station, and shield mankind from the onslaught of tyranny. ...The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential. It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action.... That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. In another passage He hath proclaimed: It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 249-250)

Thus, the Bahá'í Faith reveals that the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is "the law," that was "...to go forth... out of Zion... from Jerusalem," that would secure peace, tranquillity, brotherhood, and harmony among the nations of the world:

“for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (*Isaiah 2:3*)

Mount Carmel was extolled by the prophet Isaiah almost three thousand years ago, when he announced that “it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.” Now, with the coming of the Lord of Hosts, His devoted servants throughout the world have been summoned to the momentous undertaking with which the fulfillment of this ancient promise is associated. As they dedicate themselves to this mighty task, let them draw inspiration from these Words of Bahá’u’lláh: “Carmel, in the Book of God, hath been designated as the Hill of God, and His Vineyard. It is here that, by the grace of the Lord of Revelation, the Tabernacle of Glory hath been raised. Happy are they that attain thereunto; happy they that set their faces towards it.”

Letter from the Universal House of Justice, dated January 4, 1994, to all National Spiritual Assemblies (Compilations, NSA USA - Developing Distinctive Baha’i Communities)

In the crowds of visitors from every land thronging the stairs and pathways each day and the stream of distinguished guests who are welcomed to the World Centre’s reception rooms, perceptive minds already sense the dawning fulfillment of the vision recorded twenty-three hundred years ago by the prophet Isaiah: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.”

(Commissioned by The Universal House of Justice, Century of Light, p. 142)

...the distinguished Orientalist, Prof. E. G. Browne of Cambridge, was granted his four successive interviews with Bahá’u’lláh, during the five days he was His guest at Bahji (April 15-20, 1890), interviews immortalized by the Exile’s historic declaration that “these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come.” “The

face of Him on Whom I gazed," is the interviewer's memorable testimony for posterity, "I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow.... No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain." "Here," the visitor himself has testified, "did I spend five most memorable days, during which I enjoyed unparalleled and un hoped-for opportunities of holding intercourse with those who are the fountain-heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit, which works with invisible but ever-increasing force for the transformation and quickening of a people who slumber in a sleep like unto death. It was, in truth, a strange and moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression."

(Shoghi Effendi: God Passes By, Page: 194)

In the course of one of those interviews, Bahá'u'lláh revealed these Words:

...Praise be to God that thou hast attained!... Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile.... We desire but the good of the world and happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment.... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; 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.... Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold?... Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind.... These strifes and this 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....

(Baha'u'llah: Peace, Page: 157)

With the coming of Bahá'u'lláh (the 'Glory of God'), the earth has finally reached the stage when all these prophecies will be fulfilled. Within this Dispensation mankind will finally reach true peace. In the words of Bahá'u'lláh: "... these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the Most Great Peace shall come."

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 10)

BY THE WAY OF THE GATE



The Shrine of The Báb (The Gate) on Mount Carmel: "the gate that looketh toward the east" (Ezek 43:1)

"Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory... And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east." (Ezekiel 43:1-2,4)

The Bahá'í Faith has revealed that Christ Himself pointed out that "east" was the direction from which He would appear in the Day of His Second Coming, when He returned in the "glory of his Father" (Matt 16:27). Speaking of that day, He said: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt 24:27) Isaiah, in like manner, spoke of the

wondrous Figure who would come 'from the east'; Isaiah said that it was God Himself: "Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings" (Isaiah 41:2) In a similar fashion, Ezekiel, foretold that "the glory of the LORD' (i.e. , Bahá'u'lláh) came into the house by the way of the gate(i.e., The Báb)" (Ezekiel 43:4)

Set thine heart towards Him Who is the Point of adoration for the world, and say: O peoples of the earth! Have ye denied the One in Whose path He Who came with the truth¹, bearing the announcement of your Lord, the Exalted, the Great, suffered martyrdom? Say: This is an Announcement whereat the hearts of the Prophets and Messengers have rejoiced. This is the One Whom the heart of the world remembereth and is promised in the Books of God, the Mighty, the All-Wise. The hands of the Messengers were, in their desire to meet Me, upraised towards God, the Mighty, the Glorified.... Some lamented in their separation from Me, others endured hardships in My path, and still others laid down their lives for the sake of My Beauty, could ye but know it. Say: I, verily, have not sought to extol Mine Own Self, but rather God Himself were ye to judge fairly. Naught can be seen in Me except God and His Cause, could ye but perceive it. I am the One Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled, the One with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned.... Blessed be the king whose sovereignty hath withheld him not from his Sovereign, and who hath turned unto God with his heart. He, verily, is accounted of those that have attained unto that which God, the Mighty, the All-Wise hath willed. Ere long will such a one find himself numbered with the monarchs of the realms of the Kingdom. Thy Lord is, in truth, potent over all things. He giveth what He willeth to whomsoever He willeth, and withholdeth what He pleaseth from whomsoever He willeth. He, verily, is the All-Powerful, the Almighty.

(Bahá'u'llah: Proclamation of Bahá'u'llah, Pages: 29-30)

1 *The Báb (The Gate)*

The Forerunner of the Faith was Mirza 'Ali-Muhammad of Shiraz, known as the Báb (The Gate) Who proclaimed on May 23, 1844, His twofold mission as an independent Manifestation of God and Herald of One greater than Himself², Who would inaugurate a new and unprecedented era in the religious history of mankind.

(Shoghi Effendi, Summary Statement -The World Religion)

Mirza Ali Muhammad, Who afterwards assumed the title of Báb (i.e. Gate), was born at Shiraz, in the south of Persia, on the 20th of October 1819 A.D. He was a Siyyid, that is, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

(Dr. J.E. Esslemont, Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 12)

He made Himself known as the Qá'im, the High Prophet or Messiah so long promised, so eagerly expected by the Muhammadan world. He added to this the declaration that he was also The Gate (that is, The Báb) through whom a greater Manifestation than Himself was to enter the human realm.

(Shoghi Effendi, The Dawn-Breakers, p. xxix)

The Báb declared Himself at the beginning of His mission to be the " Báb" by which He meant to be the gate or forerunner of "Him Whom God will make manifest", that is to say Bahá'u'lláh, Whose advent the Shí'ahs also expected in the person of "the return of Imam Husayn".

(Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Baha'i Community, p. 426)

CONSIDER the manifold favours vouchsafed by the Promised One, and the effusions of His bounty which have pervaded the concourse of the followers of Islam to enable them to attain unto salvation. Indeed observe how He Who representeth the origin of creation, He Who is the Exponent of the verse, 'I, in very truth, am God', identified Himself as the Gate [Báb] for the advent of the promised Qá'im, a descendant of Muhammad, and in His first Book enjoined the observance of the laws of the Qur'án, so that the people might not be seized with

perturbation by reason of a new Book and a new Revelation and might regard His Faith as similar to their own, perchance they would not turn away from the Truth and ignore the thing for which they had been called into being.

(The Bab, Selections from the Writings of the Bab, p. 119)

Raise the cry: "Awake, awake, for lo! the Gate of God is open, and the morning Light is shedding its radiance upon all mankind!"

(Marzieh Gail, Dawn Over Mount Hira, p. 66)

"Verily I say, I am The Báb, The Gate of God..."

(Marzieh Gail, Dawn Over Mount Hira, p. 163)

His name, The Báb, meant the door or gate. His teaching, He said, was to open the door or the gate to a new age of unity in which men would recognize one God and worship in one religion -- the same religion which all of God's prophets had taught from the beginning of time. It would be an age in which all men would live as brothers.

(William Sears, Release the Sun, p. 16)

The Báb did everything in His power to assist His followers so that they would know where to turn after His own martyrdom. He clearly announced that He was the Promised One, but that He stood in relation to a succeeding and greater (Messenger) as did John the Baptist to the Christ. He was the Forerunner of One more mighty than Himself. He (The Báb) was to decrease; that Mighty One was to increase. And as John the Baptist had been the Herald or Gate of the Christ, so was (He) the Báb the Herald or Gate of Bahá'u'lláh."

(William Sears, Release the Sun, p. 163)

The Báb was the Gate by which Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, entered into the hearts of men.

(William Sears, Thief in the Night)

GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER



The Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel, the Baha'i World Center, Haifa, Israel: "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isa 9:7)

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6-7)

The Bahá'í Faith has revealed that the prophecy of Isaiah, in chapter 9, verses 6, and 7, was fulfilled, when Christ returned: "in the glory of his Father" (Matt 16:27); in "the Glory of God" (Rev 21:23), (Ezek 43:1-2).

This is a prophecy that has often been regarded as referring to His Holiness Jesus Christ. However, a study of the Holy Scriptures reveals that:

1. Christ disclaimed bearing the government upon His shoulder, when He said:

"...My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 18:36)

"Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? ...Render...unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Matt 22:17-21)

2. Christ disclaimed being "The mighty God," for even though that He said, that He, and the Father were one in Their Purpose, still, He considered Himself different from God:

"And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." (Mark 10:18)

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do:" (John 5:19)

"...for my Father is greater than I." (John 14:28)

"My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all;" (John 10:29)

3. Christ disclaimed being "The everlasting Father," when He called Himself "the Son of God":

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do

men say that I the Son of man am?...And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt 16:13,16-17)

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:36)

4. Christ disclaimed being “The Prince of Peace,” when He said:

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” (Matt 10:34)

“Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but Rather division:” (Luke 12:51)

...It is clear and evident that the term “Heavenly Father” has been in use only among the Christian and Jewish peoples. Other nations, such as the Zoroastrians, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists, do not use this phrase, and a great many of them have never heard of it. The origin of this term is in the Old Testament. From it, this term has entered into the New Testament which is born of the former Book. Therefore we must look at the testimony of the Old Testament concerning the “Heavenly Father”, and be prepared to accept its description as authentic and not to follow the imaginations of the learned.’

...Chapter 9, verse 6 of Isaiah,...is as follows:

‘For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.’

(Verse 7): 'Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.'

...these words testified that a son would be born who would save the Children of Israel from abasement and misery, and would be described by the following attributes: first, a 'Counsellor' who counsels the people; second, 'the mighty God' which means the Supreme Manifestation of God and the greatest Primal Word; third, 'the everlasting Father', through whom all human beings from the beginning till the end have been created and born of His sovereignty and omnipotence; fourth, 'the Prince of Peace', through whose Revelation the foundation of the oneness and unity of the human race would be laid, and the ills of discord and war which cause the destruction of the world and the deradation of the umrace would be eliminated. From this clear and explicit verse it is clear that the 'Heavenly Father' will appear in the form of the human temple, will be born of a mother and be known by the Greatest Name. It appears that in other passages of the Holy Books one may not be able to find a statement about the 'Heavenly Father' as explicit and evident as this one.

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 4, p. 267)

This is one of the prophecies¹ that has often been regarded as referring to Christ...but a little examination will show how much more fully and aptly it applies to Bahá'u'lláh. Christ has, indeed, been a light-bringer and Savior, but for nearly two thousand years since His advent the great majority of the people of the earth have continued to walk in darkness, and the children of Israel and many other of God's children have continued to groan under the rod of the oppressor. On the other hand, during the first few decades of the Bahá'í era, the light of truth has illumined the East and the West, the gospel

1 Isaiah 9:2-7

of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man has been carried into all countries of the world, the great military autocracies have been overthrown, and a consciousness of world unity has been born which brings hope of eventual relief to all the downtrodden and oppressed nationalities of the world. The great war which from 1914 to 1918 convulsed the world, with its unprecedented use of firearms, liquid fire, incendiary bombs and fuel for engines, has indeed been "with burning and fuel of fire." Bahá'u'lláh, by dealing at great length in His Writings with questions of government and administration, and showing how they may best be solved, has "taken the government upon His shoulders" in a way that Christ never did. With regard to the titles "everlasting Father," "Prince of Peace," Bahá'u'lláh repeatedly refers to Himself as the manifestation of the Father, of whom Christ and Isaiah spoke, whereas Christ always referred to Himself as the Son...

(Dr. J.E. Esslemont, Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 215)

The Word which the Son concealed is made manifest. It hath been sent down in the form of the human temple in this day. Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous... This is the day whereon the Rock (Peter) crieth out and shouteth, and celebrateth the praise of its Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most High, saying: `Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled!...'

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 84-85)

MY SERVANTS SHALL DWELL THERE



The Seat of the Universal House of Justice on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel: “and mine elect shall inherit it” (Isa 65:9)

“Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.” (Isaiah 62:11-12)

“And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.” (Isaiah 65:9)

“...and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.” (Ezekiel 48:35)

The Bahá'í Faith has revealed that these prophecies, were fulfilled, upon the formation, and the establishment of the Bahá'í World's Administrative Center, "The Universal House of Justice," on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel.

The assignment of a world governing body, consisted of nine members, each elected from a Bahá'í world community, diligently, and collectively engaging in consultation upon all kinds of matters and issues, pertaining to the well being, peace, and prosperity of all the inhabitants of the earth:

"and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there," "And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD," "and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there."

The men of God's House of Justice have been charged with the affairs of the people. They, in truth, are the Trustees of God among His servants and the daysprings of authority in His countries

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 26-27)

In the abundance of Our grace and loving-kindness We have revealed specially for the rulers and ministers of the world that which is conducive to safety and protection, tranquillity and peace; haply the children of men may rest secure from the evils of oppression. He, verily, is the Protector, the Helper, the Giver of victory. It is incumbent upon the men of God's House of Justice to fix their gaze by day and by night upon that which hath shone forth from the Pen of Glory for the training of peoples, the upbuilding of nations, the protection of man and the safeguarding of his honour.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 125)

We have enjoined upon all mankind to establish the Most Great Peace - the surest of all means for the protection of humanity. The sovereigns of the world should, with one accord, hold fast thereunto, for this is the supreme instrument that

can ensure the security and welfare of all peoples and nations. They, verily, are the manifestations of the power of God and the daysprings of His authority. We beseech the Almighty that He may graciously assist them in that which is conducive to the well-being of their subjects.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 126)

From the beginning of time the light of unity hath shed its divine radiance upon the world, and the greatest means for the promotion of that unity is for the peoples of the world to understand one another's writing and speech. In former Epistles We have enjoined upon the Trustees of the House of Justice either to choose one language from among those now existing or to adopt a new one, and in like manner to select a common script, both of which should be taught in all the schools of the world. Thus will the earth be regarded as one country and one home. The most glorious fruit of the tree of knowledge is this exalted word: Of one tree are all ye the fruit, and of one bough the leaves. Let not man glory in this that he loveth his country, let him rather glory in this that he loveth his kind. Concerning this We have previously revealed that which is the means of the reconstruction of the world and the unity of nations. Blessed are they that attain thereunto. Blessed are they that act accordingly.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 127-128)

"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 works." **(Matt 16:27)**

O people of God! That which traineth the world is Justice, for it is upheld by two pillars, reward and punishment. These two pillars are the sources of life to the world. Inasmuch as for each day there is a new problem and for every problem an expedient solution, such affairs should be referred to the Ministers of the House of Justice that they may act according to the needs and requirements of the time. They that, for the sake of God, arise to serve His Cause, are the recipients of divine inspiration from the unseen Kingdom. It is incumbent upon all to be obedient unto them. All matters of State should

be referred to the House of Justice, but acts of worship must be observed according to that which God hath revealed in His Book.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 27)

WILL SET MY SANCTUARY IN THEIR MIDST



The “Sanctuary” of Bahá'u'lláh, “The Glory of God,” is a place of great beauty and joy in the vicinity of the garden of Bahji, Akka, in the midst of Israel.

The Bahá'í Faith has revealed that, Ezekiel, concludes this prophecy with God's Promise that the Shrine of the Messiah shall be eternally placed in Israel:

“I will make a covenant of peace with them...and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.” (Ezekiel 37:26)

It is historically evident that no one knows where His Holiness Moses lies buried. There is yet much doubt and dispute about the resting-place and the tomb of His Holiness Jesus Christ. But, the exact spot and location of the Shrine, the resting-place, the "tabernacle," or the "sanctuary" of Bahá'u'lláh is known. It has been placed in the "midst" of Israel "for evermore".

Each year thousands upon thousands of people visit this Sacred spot. The Christian writer, Arthur Moore, says that it is a "place of international pilgrimage. On Sundays and holidays the citizens of Haifa of all faiths come for rest and recreation..." (***Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith, p. 60.***)

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall blossom as the rose." (***Isaiah 35:1***)

"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious." (***Isaiah 60:13***)

These beautiful gardens and holy places which were raised up by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh lie on the north side of Mount Carmel, looking across the Bay of Haifa toward the white sands of 'Akká. Here on the north side of the mountain is being built all the future institutions of the Bahá'í Faith at its world center.

(William Sears, Release the Sun, p. 226)

Surrounding these beautiful Shrines and gardens are orange, lemon, and pomegranate trees. Beautiful coloured paths of red and white stone wind through multi-coloured flowers, graceful lawns, and dark green hedges. Wherever the feet of Bahá'u'lláh walked can be found these lovely gardens.

The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the sanctuary where he is buried, is a place of great beauty and peace. It lies in the center of giant circle with many walks leading to it. This land was once an arid desert, but now it blossoms out in splendor. It is

perfumed by rose, hyacinth, jasmine and geranium. Smooth white stones from the Sea of Galilee make a pathway directly to the door of his Shrine. Three hills carpeted in crimson shelter his sanctuary from wind and storm. These sacred Shrines are surrounded by cedars of Lebanon, fir trees, pine trees, cypress, box, and olive trees.

Isaiah had foretold: "...his rest shall be glorious." (Isaiah 11:10) In still another chapter, Isaiah prophesies: "...the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."(60:1) And a few verses later he foresees the following: 'The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.' (**Isaiah 60:13**)

Bahá'u'lláh's name means 'the Glory of the Lord'. The place of his 'rest' had been made glorious, as well as the place where his feet had walked.

Isaiah also prophesies: 'I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry lands springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.' (Isaiah 41:18-20) [**William Sears, Thief in the Night, p.161-163**]



A glimpse of the beautiful garden of Bahji: “the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary” (Isa 60:13)

Baha’u’llah ordains His resting-place as the Qiblih¹ after His passing. The Most Holy Tomb is at Bahji, Akka. Abdu’l-Baha describes that Spot as the “luminous Shrine”, “the place around which circumambulate the Concourse on high”.

In a letter written on his behalf, Shoghi Effendi uses the analogy of the plant turning in the direction of the sun to explain the spiritual significance of turning towards the Qiblih: ...just as the plant stretches out to the sunlight - from which it receives life and growth - so we turn our hearts to the Manifestation of God, Baha’u’llah, when we pray; ... we turn our faces ... to where His dust lies on this earth as a symbol of the inner act.

(Baha’u’llah: Aqdas: Notes, Page: 169)

It was in that same mansion that the distinguished Orientalist, Prof. E. G. Browne of Cambridge, was granted his four successive interviews with Baha’u’llah, during the five days he was His guest at Bahji (April 15-20, 1890), interviews immortalized by the Exile’s historic declaration that “these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come.” “The face of Him on Whom I gazed,”

1 Arabic for: Point of Adoration, i.e. Bahji, Akka

is the interviewer's memorable testimony for posterity, "I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow.... No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain." "Here," the visitor himself has testified, "did I spend five most memorable days, during which I enjoyed unparalleled and unhoped-for opportunities of holding intercourse with those who are the fountain-heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit, which works with invisible but ever-increasing force for the transformation and quickening of a people who slumber in a sleep like unto death. It was, in truth, a strange and moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression."

(Shoghi Effendi: God Passes By, Page: 194)

THE TABERNACLE OF GLORY



The Shrine of The Báb and the tall Cyprus trees, on Mount Carmel

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.." (Rev 21:3)

'Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel.' (**Micah 7:14**)

My records showed that when Bahá'u'lláh was released from captivity in the final years of his life, he pitched his tent in a small wood in the midst of Carmel. Seated in that tiny clump of cypress trees on the side of that stony, barren mountain, Bahá'u'lláh pointed out the spot where the shrine of the Báb, his herald, should be erected¹. From there he poured out his teachings to his followers. He fed the people and his flock with his words of love and kindness:

'The world is but one country, and mankind its citizens...Let not a man glory in this that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.'

[The Promised Day is Come, Shoghi Effendi, 1941, p. 118.]

There in the midst of Carmel, Bahá'u'lláh linked his own mission with that of Jesus. He addressed the following words to that holy mountain where the feet of Christ had walked:

¹ ...He pointed out Himself to Abdu'l-Bahá, as He stood on the slopes of that mountain, the site which was to serve as the permanent resting-place of the Báb, and on which a befitting mausoleum was later to be erected. Properties, bordering on the Lake associated with the ministry of Jesus Christ, were, moreover, purchased at Baha'u'llah's bidding, designed to be consecrated to the glory of His Faith, and to be the forerunners of those "noble and imposing structures" which He, in His Tablets, had anticipated would be raised "throughout the length and breadth" of the Holy Land, as well as of the "rich and sacred territories adjoining the Jordan and its vicinity," which, in those Tablets, He had permitted to be dedicated "to the worship and service of the one true God." (Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, Page: 194)

'Render thanks unto Thy Lord, O Carmel. The fire of thy separation from Me was fast consuming thee, when the ocean of My presence surged before thy face, cheering thine eyes and those of all creation...He, verily, loveth the spot which hath been made the seat of His throne, which His footsteps have trodden, which hath been honoured by His presence, from which He raised His call, and upon which He shed His tears.'

[Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Section xi.]
[William Sears, Thief in the Night, Page 125]

Furthermore, the laying of the foundation-stone of the Báb's Mausoleum, the Martyr-Herald of Bahá'u'lláh, on Mt. Carmel, by Abdu'l- Bahá, Who has been designated by Bahá'u'lláh Himself as "the Most Mighty Branch," in His Will and Testament, is, the fulfillment of the great Prophecy of Zechariah, in chapter 6, verse 12:

"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, 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:"

In Isaiah², we read, "...Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down; Sharon is like a wilderness; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits."

Isaiah also says, "...The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellence of our God."³ It is interesting to compare this last verse with its Arabic version which, when translated literally, into English, reads as follows: "God will render to Lebanon its glory: the Baha of Carmel and Sharon shall be manifested, and they shall see the glory of God, the Baha of our Lord."⁴ When Jesus spoke to the Jews

2 'Isaiah', chapter 33, verse 9

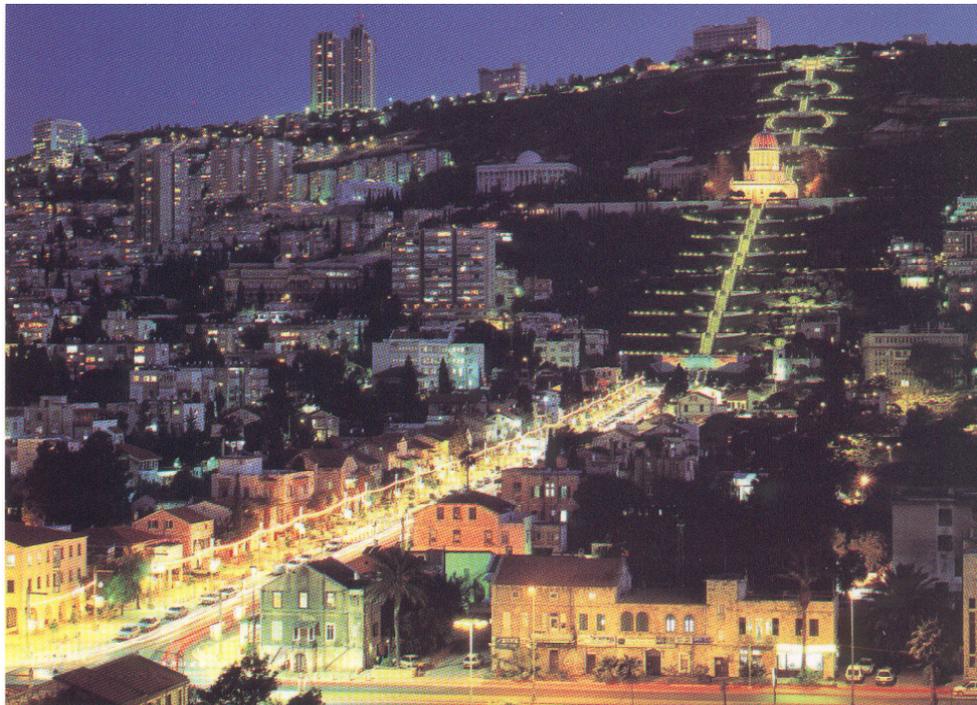
3 'Isaiah', chapter 35, verse 2

4 'Holy Bible', Arabic translation, 1881, Third Ed., also: Ishraq Khavari, Rahiq-i-Makhtum (Rae Sealed Wine) pp. 218-219

who were familiar with these terms, He told them that He would return "in the glory of the Father."¹

(Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, An Explanation of the Greatest Name, p. 5)

AND THE LAMB IS THE LIGHT THEREOF



The Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it:" (Rev 21:23)

"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev 21:22-23)

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall

1 Matt 16:27

arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” (Isaiah 60:2)

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” (Rev 14:1)

“And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 40:5)

“And all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it: it shall not be quenched.” (Ezekiel 20:48)

The Bahá’í Faith has revealed that, in the Holy Texts of our past, such terms as the “lamb of God,” bear the inner significance of symbolizing the Ultimate Sacrifice. Thus, it is that the Scripture in John, chapter 1, verse 29, portrays His Holiness Jesus Christ as “the Lamb of God,” Who took away “the sin of the world”.

However, this portrayal of the sacrificial lamb continues on in the Book of Revelation, when, “the son of man,” or “Christ,” is once again to become the lamb of God, suffering the ultimate sacrifice, a martyrdom. That is, when He came in “the glory of his Father” (Matt 16:27), “the glory of the LORD” (Isaiah 40:5), and ‘the glory of God’: “for the glory of God (Baha’u’llah) did lighten it, and the Lamb (The Báb) is the light thereof.” (Rev 21:23)

This ultimate sacrifice took place in the city of Tabriz, in Persia (modern Iran), when the glorious crown of martyrdom was placed upon the head of The Báb.

In a short period of time, not only The Báb, as the Herald and Forerunner of the Supreme Manifestation of God, but also tens of thousands of His followers suffered martyrdom in the path of the “Great Being,” awaited by the followers of all Faiths. The Báb spoke of this “Great Being” as “Him Whom

God shall make manifest"; the Holy Bible refers to Him as Christ come "in the Glory of His Father," and His name is "The Glory of God," or in the tongue of His native land,

Bahá'u'lláh. Thus, The Báb suffered martyrdom in the path of Bahá'u'lláh, just as John the Baptist suffered martyrdom in the path of Christ.

Say: In this Day the City of God hath appeared and is seen in full adornment. This is the City wherein the God of All is become manifest. Reflect upon the words of John, wherein he hath prophesied of the Holy City: "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it. And the City hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the Glory of God (Bahá'u'lláh) did lighten it"¹ and so on.

Take the rod of resignation in the name of God and guide the erring people, with entire severance, to the great City of God, that peradventure the wanderers may attain to the real native land and the blind ones may receive discerning sight. Verily, He is the Powerful to do that which He willeth. All things are in the grasp of His Power. Verily, He is the Mighty!

(Compilations, Baha'i Scriptures, p. 117)

The belief that one day man will attain the presence of his God is based on the Holy Scriptures of the past. In the Qur'án there are many references to this theme. In fact this is the clearest and most important promise given by the Prophet of Islam. The great Bahá'í scholar, Mirza Abu'l-Fadl, states that any man of insight who has a true knowledge of the Qur'án will bear witness that at least one-third of that Book deals with the advent of the great Day of God.

The following verses are only a few examples among many: 'As for those who believe not in the signs of God, or that they shall ever meet Him, these of my mercy shall despair, and for

1 Rev (21:22-23)

them doth a grievous chastisement await';² and 'let him then who hopeth to attain the presence of His Lord work a righteous work';³ and again 'They who bear in mind that they shall attain unto the presence of their Lord, and that unto Him shall they return';⁴ and yet again 'He ordereth all things. He maketh His signs clear, that ye may have firm faith in attaining the presence of your Lord.'⁵

(Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 2, p. 16*)

Further search uncovered additional evidence that the title 'Glory of the Lord' or 'Glory of God' would be the new name by which the Messiah could be identified in the latter days...Christ Himself links the hour of His return with this same wondrous Figure 'the Glory of the Lord' or the 'Glory of God'. He promises that in the last days He will appear in this very likeness of God, and in His glory: 'For the Son of man shall come in the Glory of his Father.'⁶

This vision of the 'Glory of God' promised by Christ and seen by St. John and Isaiah, is identical with the vision which came to Ezekiel. He saw the 'Glory of God' on more than one occasion, and associated it with a Promised One who would come into His House in a latter day. His coming, Ezekiel said, was:

*'...the appearance of...the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face...'*⁷

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night, p. 40*)

This is the Day whereon He Who is the Revealer of the names of God hath stepped out of the Tabernacle of glory, and proclaimed unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth: "Put away the cups of Paradise and all the life-giving waters they contain, for lo, the people of Baha have entered the blissful abode of the Divine Presence, and quaffed

2 *Qur'an 29:23*

3 *Qur'an 18:110*

4 *Qur'an 2:46*

5 *Qur'an 13:2*

6 *Matt (16:27)*

7 *Ezek (1:28)*

the wine of reunion, from the chalice of the beauty of their Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most High.”

Forget the world of creation, O Pen, and turn thou towards the face of thy Lord, the Lord of all names. Adorn, then, the world with the ornament of the favors of thy Lord, the King of everlasting days. For We perceive the fragrance of the Day whereon He Who is the Desire of all nations hath shed upon the kingdoms of the unseen and of the seen the splendor of the light of His most excellent names, and enveloped them with the radiance of the luminaries of His most gracious favors - favors which none can reckon except Him, Who is the omnipotent Protector of the entire creation.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 32-33)

OUR GOD SHALL COME



A magnificent sunset at the Shrine of The Báb, on Mount Carmel: “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence” (Ps 50:3)

"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people." (Psalms 50:2-4)

Indeed such a consummation, He assures us, had been actually prophesied "through the tongue of the Prophets two or three thousand years before." God, "faithful to His promise," had, "to some of the Prophets" "revealed and given the good news that the 'Lord of Hosts should be manifested in the Holy Land.'" Isaiah had, in this connection, announced in his Book: "Get thee up into the high mountain, O Zion that bringest good tidings; lift up thy voice with strength, O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings. Lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: 'Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him.'"¹ David, in his Psalms, had predicted: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory."² "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence."³ Amos had, likewise, foretold His coming: "The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither."⁴

(Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 183)

Describing the pre-eminent nature of His Revelation, Bahá'u'lláh writes:

Say: This is an Announcement wherewith the hearts of the Prophets and Messengers have rejoiced. This is the One Whom the heart of the world re-

1 Isaiah (40:9-10)
 2 Psalms (24:9-10)
 3 Psalms (50:2-3)
 4 Amos 1:2

membereth and is promised in the Books of God, the Mighty, the All-Wise. The hands of the Messengers were, in their desire to meet Me, upraised towards God, the Mighty, the Glorified... Some lamented in their separation from Me, others endured hardships in My path, and still others laid down their lives for the sake of My Beauty, could ye but know it. Say: I, verily, have not sought to extol Mine Own Self, but rather God Himself were ye to judge fairly. Naught can be seen in Me except God and His Cause, could ye but perceive it. I am the One Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled, the One with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned...

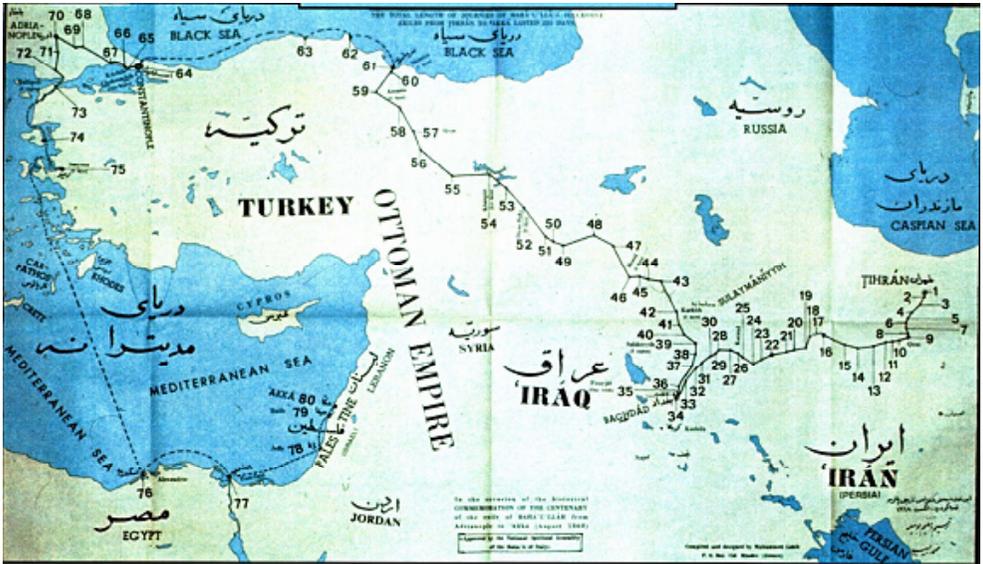
(Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 3, p. 119*)

Bahá'u'lláh, I learned, wrote over one hundred volumes, addressing many letters to the leaders of the world's governments and religions. Was this not the promise in the Psalms: 'Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence.' (Psalms 50:2-3)

The world administrative centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith is on the north side of Mount Carmel, one of the most beautiful situations and views in all of Israel. Thus the new Zion fulfilled the prophecy of the Psalms for the last days: 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.' (Psalms 48:1-2)

[William Sears, *Thief in the Night, Part iii, Sect. 9, p 151*]

HE SHALL COME FROM ASSYRIA



Map of the stages in Bahá'u'lláh's exiles, from Tehran to 'Akká (January 12, 1853 – August 31, 1868)

The manner of His coming, and each step along His path to Israel, was set down in detail by Micah in the same chapter: "In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain."¹

The exact number of years during which the Mission of the promised Messiah would last are also foretold by Micah: "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew Him marvelous things."² These startling and prophetic words were all fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh in the following manner:

1. He was born in Persia, once part of the ancient kingdom of Assyria; thus He came from Assyria.

1 Micah (7:12)

2 Micah (7:15)

2. He was driven in exile to Baghdad, modern metropolis of Mesopotamia. It is near the site of the ancient capital, Babylon, which was queen of the region in Biblical times.
3. Bahá'u'lláh withdrew out of the city into the fields and mountains, as Christ had gone into the desert. After a period of prayer and meditation, He returned to Baghdad (successor of Babylon) to make His declaration that He was the promised Redeemer of mankind.
4. He came to the Holy Land and dwelt in the midst of Carmel;¹ from there His flock was fed by the rod of His teachings, for Mount Carmel is the world center of His Faith, and the site of many of its holy places.
5. Bahá'u'lláh came from Assyria to Babylon. He was then marched over land as a prisoner, and finally shipped by sea to the fortified city of Constantinople. He was later exiled further, and came by sea to the fortified city of 'Akká. For two years He was confined in a cell in the fortress prison. After nine years within the prison walls of 'Akká, Bahá'u'lláh was at last permitted to leave the shadow of the fortress and go out to the river which flowed around an island in the garden of Ridvan. As a prisoner, He was shipped across the Black Sea to Constantinople, and via the Mediterranean Sea to Haifa and 'Akká. Bahá'u'lláh withdrew into the mountain of Sar Galu outside of Baghdad to pray before announcing His Mission, and in the last years of His life, He pitched His tent on the side of Mount Carmel, called by Isaiah the "mountain of God."
6. From the time Bahá'u'lláh's Mission began, until the day of His death in The Holy Land, exactly forty years elapsed, which was precisely "according to the days of thy [the Jews] coming out of the land of Egypt" ; during these forty years Bahá'u'lláh poured out His teach-

1 *Micah (7:14)*

ing as Almighty God "shewed Him marvelous things." Bahá'u'lláh had come to Israel "by way of the sea" as prophesied by Isaiah. He was sent as a prisoner to the great stone fortress in the valley of Achor, now called 'Akká, as foretold by the Book of Hosea: "And I will give her vineyard from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."²

(William Sears, *Release the Sun*, p. 225)

Millennial Bible scholars were well aware of this special promise for Assyria and Elam and Persia, but they could not understand it. Reverend H. Bonar, speaking as one of fourteen Christian clergymen at a special conference on the Second Coming of Christ called *Our God Shall Come*, declared: 'There is another nation reserved for blessing and restoration. Elam.³ I take these as the overlooked specimens of a certain class of God's doings in the latter days, when the whole earth is given to Christ for His inheritance.' Bonar accepts these prophecies concerning Assyria, Elam and Persia, although, as he says, 'I cannot venture on giving any reason why Elam, or Assyria, should be so especially blessed in the latter days...' ['Our God Shall Come', *Addresses on the Second Coming of the Lord*, Horatius Bonar, 1878.]

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*)

All glory be to this Day, the Day in which the fragrances of mercy have been wafted over all created things, a Day so blest that past ages and centuries can never hope to rival it,

2 Hosea (2:15)

3 *The holy Bible of Christianity, as well as the sacred writings of the Jews, and the Scriptures of Islam all foretold that the Promised One would appear in the last days in Elam or Persia. The Prophet Jeremiah, speaking of the time of the end, says: "And I will set my throne in Elam." [Jer 49:38] In a prophecy of remarkable clarity, the sacred writings of Islam state: When the Promised One appears, "the upholders of His faith shall be the people of Persia."* (a) (William Sears, *Release the Sun*, p. 198) a) Nabil-i-A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers, Nabil's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, 1953), p. 49

a Day in which the countenance of the Ancient of Days hath turned towards His holy seat. Thereupon the voices of all created things, and beyond them those of the Concourse on high, were heard calling aloud: "Haste thee, O Carmel, for lo, the light of the countenance of God, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Names and Fashioner of the heavens, hath been lifted upon thee."

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 14)

When the stream of words reached this stage, the sweet savours of true knowledge were shed abroad and the day-star of divine unity shone forth above the horizon of His holy utterance. Blessed is he whom His Call hath attracted to the summit of glory, who hath drawn nigh to the ultimate Purpose, and who hath recognized through the shrill voice of My Pen of Glory that which the Lord of this world and of the next hath willed. Whoso faileth to quaff the choice wine which We have unsealed through the potency of Our Name, the All-Compelling, shall be unable to discern the splendours of the light of divine unity or to grasp the essential purpose underlying the Scriptures of God, the Lord of heaven and earth, the sovereign Ruler of this world and of the world to come. Such a man shall be accounted among the faithless in the Book of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

(Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 105)

FOR OUT OF PRISON HE COMETH TO REIGN



The Prison of 'Akká in the Holy Land: "and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth" (Hosea 2:15)

In the Book of Hosea it was promised that:

'I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth...' **(Hosea 2:15)**

When will this come to pass? It seemed clear to me that it would be in the last days when Israel would be forgiven for having turned away from the Messiah in His first coming, and would have embraced His truth in the time of His second coming.

Hosea says: 'I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy: and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.' (Hosea 2:23)

Hosea foretells that this will take place at the time of the end. First the valley of Achor will become a place of hope and refuge. Then Israel will return from disbelief, and seek their Beloved (David) from the stem of Jesse (seed of Abraham).

'Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.' (**Hosea 3:5**)

I had already learned that the 'latter days' and 'the time of the end' were synonymous. I had also learned that they began in 1844, the year of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith, and the year of the beginning of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land.

[William Sears, *Thief in the Night, Part 3, p. 144*]

I found in my research, that no one knows for certain where the valley of Achor is. The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible suggests that it might lie between Hyrcania and Gilgal in the wilderness of Judah west of the Dead Sea. George Adams Smith's Historical Atlas of the Holy Land for the University of Aberdeen makes the guess that it lies along what is now the river W. el Qelt near to Jericho and Gilgal on its way to the Jordan above the Dead Sea. However, both mark the spot with a '?'. Ever since the day that Achan and his family had been stoned and buried in the land of Achor, it had been a place unwanted and forsaken. Their sin of disobedience to the law of God had brought this punishment upon them.

Since Achor means trouble, and the valley of Achor the valley of trouble, there seemed little doubt that this was another symbol showing that when the Jews turned to the Messiah in the last days, their suffering and troubles would be ended. Such a day is foreshadowed by Joshua concerning the valley of Achor, when he said: 'The Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger.' (Joshua 7:24-26)

In the last days, Bahá'u'lláh was sent, a prisoner and an exile, to the fortress of 'Akká, the old city of Acco, the ancient Ptolemais, the St. Jean d'Acree of the Crusaders.

It has been described as 'the most detestable in climate' and 'the foulest in water'. Here, in what was once the land of Canaan, Bahá'u'lláh suffered cruel imprisonment and persecution at the hands of Turkish authorities. It was indeed a valley of trouble. I saw the words which Bahá'u'lláh himself wrote about this valley:

'Know thou, that upon Our arrival at this Spot, We chose to designate it as the "Most Great Prison". Though previously subjected in another land (Persia) to chains and fetters, We yet refused to call it by that name...Ponder thereon, O ye endued with understanding!' (**God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, p. 185**)

On another occasion Bahá'u'lláh wrote of the prison of 'Akká:

'None knoweth what befell Us, except God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing!' (**God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, p. 187**)

In this valley of trouble (Achor), Bahá'u'lláh declared in his writings that his 'sufferings have now reached their culmination.' (That 'Akká was intended by Hosea is attested by Shoghi Effendi in God Passes By, p. 184.)

[William Sears, Thief in the Night, Part 3, p. 145-146]

"He (God) shall prolong his days..." (**Isaiah 53:10**)

Bahá'u'lláh's days were prolonged. He was born in 1817 and passed away in the Holy Land in 1892.

In the last years of his life, Bahá'u'lláh was released from his prison cell. He came out of the prison-city of 'Akká and walked on the sides of Mount Carmel. His followers came from

afar to be with him, and to surround him with their love, fulfilling the words of the prayer of David spoken within a cave:

"Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me." (Psalms 142:7)

These events in the valley of 'Akká with its strong fortress prison had been foreshadowed in Ecclesiastes (4:14): "For out of prison he cometh to reign..."

Bahá'u'lláh, I had found, had written that 'whatsoever hath been announced in the Books hath been revealed and made clear.' He declared that the Ancient Beauty 'ruleth upon the throne of David' and that the 'Most Great Law is come.' [God Passes By, Shoghi Effendi, p. 230.]

Alongside my record of the prophecies which the Messiah would have to fulfil concerning the 'plain of Sharon', the 'valley of Achor', and the sacred mountain 'Carmel', I wrote: Fulfilled.

[William Sears, Thief in the Night, Part iii, Sect. 10, pp. 158-159.]

The Bahá'í House of Worship to be built upon Mount Carmel, and which will be open to the people of all nations and faiths, will look down upon both the plain of Sharon and the valley of 'Akká (Achor), as foreshadowed by the prophet Isaiah: "Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people who have sought me." (Isaiah 65:10) Bahá'u'lláh had been sent to the prison of 'Akká because it was believed by the religious leaders of Persia and Turkey that He would die there and be forgotten. The atmosphere was so foul that proverb said of the spot: "If a bird flies over 'Akká, it dies!" His enemies did not realize that by driving Him there in exile, they were fulfilling the prophecies of sacred Scripture.

(William Sears, Release the Sun, p. 225)

O handmaid of God! It is recorded in the Torah: And I will give you the valley of Achor for a door of hope. This valley of Achor is the city of 'Akká, and whoso hath interpreted this otherwise is of those who know not.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 161)

'Akká, itself, flanked by the "glory of Lebanon," and lying in full view of the "splendor of Carmel," at the foot of the hills which enclose the home of Jesus Christ Himself, had been described by David as "the Strong City," designated by Hosea as "a door of hope," and alluded to by Ezekiel as "the gate that looketh towards the East," whereunto "the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East," His voice "like a noise of many waters." To it the Arabian Prophet had referred as "a city in Syria to which God hath shown His special mercy," situated "betwixt two mountains ... in the middle of a meadow," "by the shore of the sea ... suspended beneath the Throne," "white, whose whiteness is pleasing unto God." "Blessed the man," He, moreover, as confirmed by Bahá'u'lláh, had declared, "that hath visited 'Akká, and blessed he that hath visited the visitor of 'Akká." Furthermore, "He that raiseth therein the call to prayer, his voice will be lifted up unto Paradise." And again: "The poor of 'Akká are the kings of Paradise and the princes thereof. A month in 'Akká is better than a thousand years elsewhere." Moreover, in a remarkable tradition, which is contained in Shaykh Ibnu'l-'Arabi's work, entitled "Futuhati-Makkiyyih," and which is recognized as an authentic utterance of Muhammad, and is quoted by Mirza Abu'l-Fadl in his "Fara'id," this significant prediction has been made: "All of them (the companions of the Qa'im) shall be slain except One Who shall reach the plain of 'Akká, the Banquet-Hall of God."

(Shoghi Efendi: God Passe By, Page: 184)

Praised be Thou, O my God! Thou seest me shut up in this Prison, and art well aware that I have entered it solely for Thy sake and for the sake of the glorification of Thy word and the proclamation of Thy Cause. I cry out to Thee, this very moment, O Thou Who art the Lord of all worlds, beseeching Thee, by Thine undoubted Name, to attract the hearts of Thy

servants unto the Day-Spring of Thy most excellent titles and the Dawning-Place of Thy most resplendent signs.

(Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations, Page: 111)

Meditate on the world and the state of its people. He, for Whose sake the world was called into being, hath been imprisoned in the most desolate of cities ('Akká), by reason of that which the hands of the wayward have wrought. From the horizon of His prison-city He summoneth mankind unto the Dayspring of God, the Exalted, the Great. Exultest thou over the treasures thou dost possess, knowing they shall perish? Rejoicest thou in that thou rulest a span of earth, when the whole world, in the estimation of the people of Baha, is worth as much as the black in the eye of a dead ant? Abandon it unto such as have set their affections upon it, and turn thou unto Him Who is the Desire of the world. Whither are gone the proud and their palaces? Gaze thou into their tombs, that thou mayest profit by this example, inasmuch as We made it a lesson unto every beholder. Were the breezes of Revelation to seize thee, thou wouldst flee the world, and turn unto the Kingdom, and wouldst expend all thou possessest, that thou mayest draw nigh unto this sublime Vision.

(Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Page: 56)



The great stone fortress in the valley of Achor on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, now called 'Akká, the Prison City, as foretold by the Book of Hosea (2:15).

THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM



The Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven..."(Rev 21:2)

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev 21:1-3)

"One day the Earth will be changed to a different Earth, and so will be the Heavens, and (men) will be marshalled forth, before Allah, the One, the Irresistible;" (Qur'án 14:48)

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." **(1 Cor 15:52)**

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." **(2 Peter 3:10)**

Unique and stupendous as was this Proclamation, it proved to be but a prelude to a still mightier revelation of the creative power of its Author, and to what may well rank as the most signal act of His ministry - the promulgation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas.

Alluded to in the Kitab-i-Iqan, the principal repository of that Law which the Prophet Isaiah had anticipated, and which the writer of the Apocalypse had described as the "new heaven" and the "new earth", as "the Tabernacle of God", as the "Holy City", as the "Bride", the "New Jerusalem coming down from God", this "Most Holy Book", whose provisions must remain inviolate for no less than a thousand years¹, and whose system will embrace the entire planet, may well be regarded as the brightest emanation of the mind of Baha'u'llah, as the Mother Book of His Dispensation, and the Charter of His New World Order.

(Bahá'u'lláh: Aqdas: Other Sections, Page: 12)

O thou seeker after the Kingdom! Every divine Manifestation is the very life of the world, and the skilled physician of each ailing soul. The world of man is sick, and that competent Physician knoweth the cure, arising as He doth with teachings,

¹ Rev (20:4): "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

counsels and admonishments that are the remedy for every pain, the healing balm to every wound. It is certain that the wise physician can diagnose his patient's needs at any season, and apply the cure. Wherefore, relate thou the Teachings of the Abha Beauty to the urgent needs of this present day, and thou wilt see that they provide an instant remedy for the ailing body of the world. Indeed, they are the elixir that bringeth eternal health.

The treatment ordered by wise physicians of the past, and by those that follow after, is not one and the same, rather doth it depend on what aileth the patient; and although the remedy may change, the aim is always to bring the patient back to health. In the dispensations gone before, the feeble body of the world could not withstand a rigorous or powerful cure. For this reason did Christ say: `I have yet many things to say unto you, matters needing to be told, but ye cannot bear to hear them now. Howbeit when that Comforting Spirit, Whom the Father will send, shall come, He will make plain unto you the truth.'²

Therefore, in this age of splendours, teachings once limited to the few are made available to all, that the mercy of the Lord may embrace both east and west, that the oneness of the world of humanity may appear in its full beauty, and that the dazzling rays of reality may flood the realm of the mind with light.

The descent of the New Jerusalem denoteth a heavenly Law, that Law which is the guarantor of human happiness and the effulgence of the world of God.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, Page: 59)

O ye beloved of God! O ye children of His Kingdom! Verily, verily, the new heaven and the new earth are come. The holy City, new Jerusalem, hath come down from on high in the form of a maid of heaven, veiled, beauteous, and unique, and prepared for reunion with her lovers on earth. The angelic

2 John (15:26); (16:12-13)

company of the Celestial Concourse hath joined in a call that hath run throughout the universe, all loudly and mightily acclaiming: `This is the City of God and His abode, wherein shall dwell the pure and holy among His servants. He shall live with them, for they are His people and He is their Lord.'

He hath wiped away their tears, kindled their light, rejoiced their hearts and enraptured their souls. Death shall no more overtake them neither shall sorrow, weeping or tribulation afflict them. The Lord God Omnipotent hath been enthroned in His Kingdom and hath made all things new. This is the truth and what truth can be greater than that announced by the Revelation of St. John the Divine?

He is Alpha and Omega. He is the One that will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life and bestow upon the sick the remedy of true salvation. He whom such grace aideth is verily he that receiveth the most glorious heritage from the Prophets of God and His holy ones. The Lord will be his God, and he His dearly-beloved son. Rejoice, then, O ye beloved of the Lord and His chosen ones, and ye the children of God and His people, raise your voices to laud and magnify the Lord, the Most High; for His light hath beamed forth, His signs have appeared and the billows of His rising ocean have scattered on every shore many a precious pearl.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, Pages: 12-13)

We are told in the Holy Scripture that the New Jerusalem shall appear on earth. Now it is evident that this celestial city is not built of material stones and mortar, but that it is a city not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.

This is a prophetic symbol, meaning the coming again of the Divine Teaching to enlighten the hearts of men. It is long since this Holy Guidance has governed the lives of humanity. But now, at last, the Holy City of the New Jerusalem has come again to the world, it has appeared anew under an Eastern sky; from the horizon of Persia has its effulgence arisen to be a light to lighten the whole world. We see in these days

the fulfilment of the Divine Prophecy. Jerusalem had disappeared. The heavenly city was destroyed, now it is rebuilt; it was razed to the ground, but now its walls and pinnacles have been restored, and are towering aloft in their renewed and glorious beauty.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Page: 84)

...what is most frequently meant by the Holy City, the Jerusalem of God, which is mentioned in the Holy Book, is the Law of God. It is compared sometimes to a bride, and sometimes to Jerusalem, and again to the new heaven and earth. So in chapter 21, verses 1, 2 and 3 of the Revelation of St. John, it is said: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Notice how clear and evident it is that the first heaven and earth signify the former Law. For it is said that the first heaven and earth have passed away and there is no more sea - that is to say, that the earth is the place of judgment, and on this earth of judgment there is no sea, meaning that the teachings and the Law of God will entirely spread over the earth, and all men will enter the Cause of God, and the earth will be completely inhabited by believers; therefore, there will be no more sea, for the dwelling place and abode of man is the dry land. In other words, at that epoch the field of that Law will become the pleasure-ground of man. Such earth is solid; the feet do not slip upon it.

The Law of God is also described as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. It is evident that the New Jerusalem which descends from heaven is not a city of stone, mortar, bricks, earth and wood. It is the Law of God which descends from heaven and is called new, for it is clear that the Jerusalem which is of stone and earth does not descend from heaven,

and that it is not renewed; but that which is renewed is the Law of God.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Pages: 67-68)

To His Day¹ Jesus Christ Himself had referred as "the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory."² To the hour of His advent St. Paul had alluded as the hour of the "last trump," the "trump of God,"³ whilst St. Peter had spoken of it as the "Day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."⁴ His Day he, furthermore, had described as "the times of refreshing," "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets since the world began."

(Shoghi Effendi: God Passes By, Page: 96)

THE MOST MIGHTY BRANCH

"Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place...and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

(Zechariah 6:12-13)

In the Suriy-i-Ghusn (Tablet of the Branch) the following verses have been recorded:

"There hath branched from the Sadratu'l-Muntaha⁵ this sacred and glorious Being, this Branch

1 Bahá'u'lláh ("The Glory of God")

2 Matt (16:27), (2 Cor 3:18)

3 1 Cor (15:52)

4 2 Peter (3:10)

5 Literally "the furthestmost Lote-Tree", translated by Shoghi Effendi as "the Tree beyond which there is no passing". This is used as a symbol in Islam, for example in the accounts of Muhammad's Night Journey, to mark the point in the heavens beyond which neither men nor angels can

of Holiness; well is it with him that hath sought His shelter and abideth beneath His shadow. Verily the Limb of the Law of God hath sprung forth from this Root which God hath firmly implanted in the Ground of His Will, and Whose Branch hath been so uplifted as to encompass the whole of creation. Magnified be He, therefore, for this sublime, this blessed, this mighty, this exalted Handiwork!... A Word hath, as a token of Our grace, gone forth from the Most Great Tablet - a Word which God hath adorned with the ornament of His own Self, and made it sovereign over the earth and all that is therein, and a sign of His greatness and power among its people ...Render thanks unto God, O people, for His appearance; for verily He is the most great Favor unto you, the most perfect bounty upon you; and through Him every mouldering bone is quickened. Whoso turneth towards Him hath turned towards God, and whoso turneth away from Him hath turned away from My beauty, hath repudiated My Proof, and transgressed against Me. He is the Trust of God amongst you, His charge within you, His manifestation unto you and His appearance among His favored servants... We have sent Him⁶ down in the form of a human temple. Blest and sanctified be God Who createth whatsoever He willeth through His inviolable, His infallible decree. They who deprive themselves of the shadow of the Branch, are lost in the wilderness of error, are consumed by the heat of worldly desires, and are of those who will assuredly perish."

(Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Baha'u'llah*, Pages: 134-135)

pass in their approach to God, and thus to delimit the bounds of divine knowledge as revealed to mankind. Hence it is often used in the Baha'i Writings to designate the Manifestation of God Himself. (Bahá'u'lláh: Aqdas: Notes, Page: 220)

6 Abdu'l- Bahá

He is, and should for all time be regarded, first and foremost, as the Center and Pivot of Baha'u'llah's peerless and all-enfolding Covenant, His most exalted handiwork, the stainless Mirror of His light, the perfect Exemplar of His teachings, the unerring Interpreter of His Word, the embodiment of every Baha'i ideal, the incarnation of every Baha'i virtue, the Most Mighty Branch sprung from the Ancient Root, the Limb of the Law of God, the Being "round Whom all names revolve," the Mainspring of the Oneness of Humanity, the Ensign of the Most Great Peace, the Moon of the Central Orb of this most holy Dispensation - styles and titles that are implicit and find their truest, their highest and fairest expression in the magic name Abdu'l-Baha. He is, above and beyond these appellations, the "Mystery of God" - an expression by which Baha'u'llah Himself has chosen to designate Him, and which, while it does not by any means justify us to assign to Him the station of Prophethood, indicates how in the person of Abdu'l-Baha the incompatible characteristics of a human nature and super-human knowledge and perfection have been blended and are completely harmonized.

(Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, Page: 134)

Abdu'l-Baha's own statements, in confirmation of this warning, are no less emphatic and binding:

"This is," He declares, "my firm, my unshakable conviction, the essence of my unconcealed and explicit belief - a conviction and belief which the denizens of the Abha Kingdom fully share: The Blessed Beauty¹ is the Sun of Truth, and His light the light of truth. The Báb is likewise the Sun of Truth, and His light the light of truth... My station is the station of servitude - a servitude which is complete, pure and real, firmly established, enduring, obvious, explicitly revealed and subject to no interpretation whatever... I am the Interpreter of the Word of God; such is my interpretation."

(Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, Page: 133)

1 Bahá'u'lláh

Though moving in a sphere of His own and holding a rank radically different from that of the Author and the Forerunner of the Baha'i Revelation², He, by virtue of the station ordained for Him through the Covenant of Baha'u'llah, forms together with them what may be termed the Three Central Figures of a Faith that stands unapproached in the world's spiritual history. He towers, in conjunction with them, above the destinies of this infant Faith of God from a level to which no individual or body ministering to its needs after Him, and for no less a period than a full thousand years, can ever hope to rise.

(Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Baha'u'llah*, Pages: 131-132)

"I affirm," is Abdu'l-Baha's own written comment on the Tablet of the Branch, "that the true meaning, the real significance, the innermost secret of these verses, of these very words, is my own servitude to the sacred Threshold of the Abha Beauty³, my complete self-effacement, my utter nothingness before Him. This is my resplendent crown, my most precious adorning. On this I pride myself in the kingdom of earth and heaven. Therein I glory among the company of the well-favored!" "No one is permitted," He warns us in the passage which immediately follows, "to give these verses any other interpretation." "I am," He, in this same connection, affirms, "according to the explicit texts of the Kitab-i-Aqdas⁴ and the Kitab-i-'Ahd⁵ the manifest Interpreter of the Word of God... Whoso deviates from my interpretation is a victim of his own fancy."

(Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Baha'u'llah*, Page: 138)

2 *The Báb*

3 *Bahá'u'lláh*

4 *The Most Holy Book*

5 *Book of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*

MY COVENANT SHALL STAND FAST



A colorful view of the “Sanctuary” of Bahá’u’lláh, “The Glory of God,” at Bahji, ‘Akká, the Holy Land: “my first-born... my covenant shall stand fast with him.” (Ps 89:27-28)

“Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them...and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.” (Ezekiel 37:26)

‘...he shall see his seed...’ (Isaiah 53:10)

Bahá’u’lláh did see his ‘seed’. He wrote a special document called the Book of the Covenant, in which he appointed his eldest son to be the Centre of his faith after his own passing. This very event was also foretold in the prophecies of the Psalms which proclaim: “Also I will make him my first-born higher than the kings of the earth...and my covenant shall stand fast with him.” **(Psalms 89:27-28)**

The 'first-born' son of Bahá'u'lláh, was named 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which means 'the servant of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh appointed him as his own successor in his Will and Testament. He called 'Abdu'l-Bahá the Centre of his Covenant.

Professor E. G. Browne said of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: 'Seldom have I seen one whose appearance impressed me more...One more eloquent of speech, more ready of argument, more apt of illustration, more intimately acquainted with the sacred books of the Jews, the Christians and Mohammadans, could, I should think, scarcely be found...These qualities, combined with a bearing at once majestic and genial, made me cease to wonder at the influence and esteem which he enjoyed even beyond the circle of his father's followers. About the greatness of this man and his power, no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt.' [A Traveller's Narrative, Browne, p. xxxvi.]

The well-known Bible scholar of Oxford University, the Reverend Dr. T. K. Cheyne, arranged a meeting for 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Manchester College, Oxford. Dr. Cheyne himself invited the public in an advertisement in the Oxford newspaper. In the Preface of his book *The Reconciliation of Races and Religions*, Cheyne mentions the fact that the Hungarian sage Vambery was a believer in Bahá'u'lláh. Of his own belief, Cheyne says, 'I should express my own adhesion to the Bahá'í leader in more glowing terms.' Cheyne is mentioned on the title page of his book as a member of 'the Bahá'í Community'.

This is the same Christian clergyman and Bible scholar who wrote: 'If there has been any prophet in recent times, it is to Bahá'u'lláh that we must go. Character is the final judge. Bahá'u'lláh was a man of the highest class -- that of prophets.'

[*Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith*, p. 18.]

[*William Sears, Thief in the Night, Part iii, Sect. 10, pp.157-158.*]

The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghsan (1), the Afnan (2) and My Kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch. Consider

that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: ‘When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.’ The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch [Abdu’l-Bahá]. Thus have We graciously revealed unto you our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Powerful.

(Bahá’u’lláh: Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh, Page: 221)

“Aghsan” (plural of Ghusn) is the Arabic word for “Branches”. This term is used by Baha’u’llah to designate His male descendants. It has particular implications not only for the disposition of endowments but also for the succession of authority following the passing of Baha’u’llah (see note 145) and of Abdu’l-Bahá. Bahá’u’lláh, in the Book of His Covenant, appointed Abdu’l-Baha, His eldest son, as the Centre of His Covenant and the Head of the Faith. Abdu’l-Bahá, in His Will and Testament, appointed Shoghi Effendi, His eldest grandson, as the Guardian and Head of the Faith.

(Bahá’u’lláh: Aqdas: Notes, Pages: 196-197)

2. The descendants of The Báb.

O my loving friends! After the passing away of this wronged one, it is incumbent upon the Aghsan (Branches), the Afnan (Twigs) of the Sacred Lote-Tree, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God and the loved ones of the Abha Beauty¹ to turn unto Shoghi Effendi² - the youthful branch branched from the two hallowed and sacred Lote-Trees and the fruit grown from the union of the two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness, - as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghsan, the Afnan, the Hands of the Cause of God and His loved ones must turn. He is the Interpreter of the Word of God and after him will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendents.

(‘Abdu’l-Baha: Will and Testament, Page: 11)

1 Bahá’u’lláh

2 The ‘seed’ of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “His seed also will I make to endure for ever” - (Ps 89:29). Also, the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith.

Unto the Most Holy Book³ every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God Himself.

(`Abdu'l-Bahá, *Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 19)

O ye the faithful loved ones of Abdu'l-Baha! It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by the two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree. For he is, after Abdu'l-Baha, the Guardian of the Cause of God, the Afnan, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Will and Testament*, Page: 25)

They (Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá) have also, in unequivocal and emphatic language, appointed those twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship as their chosen Successors, destined to apply the principles, promulgate the laws, protect the institutions, adapt loyally and intelligently the Faith to the requirements of progressive society, and consummate the incorruptible inheritance which the Founders of the Faith have bequeathed to the world.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 19-20)

The Passing of Shoghi Effendi - After prayerful and careful study of the Holy Texts bearing upon the question of the appointment of the successor to Shoghi Effendi as Guardian of the Cause of God, and after prolonged consultation which included consideration of the view of the Hands of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land, the Universal House of Justice

3 Aqdas

finds that there is no way to appoint or to legislate to make it possible to appoint a second Guardian to succeed Shoghi Effendi.

(The Universal House of Justice, Wellspring of Guidance, p. 11)

"Future Guardians are clearly envisaged and referred to in the Writings, but there is nowhere any promise or guarantee that the line of Guardians would endure forever; on the contrary there are clear indications that the line could be broken. Yet, in spite of this, there is repeated insistence in the Writings on the indestructibility of the Covenant and the immutability of God's Purpose for this Day.

"One of the most striking passages which envisage the possibility of such a break in the line of the Guardians is in the Kitab-i-Aqdas itself:

"The endowments dedicated to charity revert to God, the Revealer of Signs. No one has the right to lay hold on them without leave from the Dawning-Place of Revelation. After Him the decision rests with the Aghsan (Branches), and after them with the House of Justice - should it be established in the world by then - so that they may use these endowments for the benefit of the Sites exalted in this Cause, and for that which they have been commanded by God, the Almighty, the All-Powerful."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to Hands of the Cause of God, Continental Boards of Counsellors and National Spiritual Assemblies, December 7, 1969)
(Multiple Authors: Lights of Guidance, Pages: 313-314)

From this passage it may be seen that after the days of Bahá'u'lláh, authority is devolved firstly to the Aghsan, which are the lineal descendants of Bahá'u'lláh, and subsequently to the Universal House of Justice.

THE FINAL BATTLE OF GOOD AGAINST EVIL



The Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel, “the mountain of the LORD’s house” (Isa 2:2-4)

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Isaiah 2:2-4)

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled...And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (**Rev 20:1-4**)

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." (**Rev 16:15-16**)

"The word occurs only in Revelations (16:16) as a Greek translation of the term claimed to be Hebrew. It represents the location of the final cosmic battle of the forces of good and of evil, according to the apocalyptic view of the writer. However, no such term appears elsewhere in Hebrew, and there is no mountain known to ancient or modern by that name. Megiddo (the city) is situated at the north end of the major pass through Mount Carmel range." (**Harper's Bible Dictionary, P 64**)

"...the plain of Megiddo, stretching along the northern slopes of Mt. Carmel to the Plain of Acco..." (**Op Cit p 227**)

Map 3 of the Oxford Companion to the Bible, p 880, shows the dominant mountain nearest the city of Megiddo to be Mt. Carmel overlooking the pass to the sea where great battles were fought in ancient times.

[Note: "The New Testament continues this imagery using the term 'heavenly Jerusalem' or 'Zion' metaphorically in reference to...the place of God's dwelling." (Rev 14:1) (Harper's Bible Dictionary, p 1166.)]

The Great War

Both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on many occasions foretold with surprising accuracy the coming of the Great War of

1914-1918. At Sacramento, California, on October 26, 1912, Abdu'l-Bahá said: -- "Today the European continent is like an arsenal. It is a storehouse of explosives, ready for just a spark, and one spark could set aflame the whole of Europe, particularly at this time, when the Balkan question is before the world."

In many of His addresses in America and Europe He gave similar warning. In another address in California in October 1912 He said: -- We are on the eve of the Battle of Armageddon referred to in the sixteenth chapter of Revelation.

(Dr. J.E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 243)

The Families of the Earth Shall Be Blessed

The next proof by which Bahá'u'lláh was to be tested concerned the 'seed of Abraham'. The millennial scholars were agreed that when the Messiah came, He would be of this sacred 'seed'. I checked the antecedents of Bahá'u'lláh to see if he fulfilled this important requirement.

I had already discovered one remarkable way in which Abraham and Bahá'u'lláh were linked together, as set out in Section 3. I now found another statement which linked them together and demonstrated that Bahá'u'lláh was descended from the Father of the Faithful. This said: 'He derived His descent, on the one hand, from Abraham through his wife Katurah, and on the other from Zoroaster, as well as from Yazdigird, the last king of the Sassian dynasty. He (Bahá'u'lláh) was moreover a descendent of Jesse, and belonged, through His father, Mirza 'Abbas, better known as Mirza Buzurg – a nobleman closely associated with the ministerial circles of the Court...to one of the most ancient and renowned families of Mazindaran.'

(God Passes By, *Shoghi Effendi*, p. 94)

Thus Bahá'u'lláh was of the 'seed' of Abraham, being descended through Abraham's third wife, Katurah. This in itself I found to be a most interesting clue, for among the writings of the British Israelites, as well as among those of some millennial scholars, reference is made to the fact that the latter-day

Messiah would be descended from Katurah, the third wife of Abraham.

In the latter days of His life, Abraham took Katurah to wife. In the latter days in the life of His House, Israel, it is promised that the sons of Katurah, with all the young lions of her family shall stand for the Lord God in the land of Israel.

This belief was based upon the prophecies in Ezekiel which speak of the battle of Armageddon. When the great princes of evil come down from the north from the land of Gog and Magog against 'my people of Israel', the Lord promises that:

'Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee (Gog), Art thou come to take a spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey?' (**Ezekiel 38:13**)

Then, promises the Lord, He will destroy Gog, with the help of these faithful ones:

'I will rain upon him (Gog), and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.' (**Ezekiel 38:22**)

This is the same description given for the last days by Revelation, and the Second Epistle of Peter, when the 'Lord will come as a thief in the night'. These young lions of Sheba and Dedan who will be in Israel at the side of the Lord, are the promised descendents from the line of Katurah, Abraham's third wife. This descent is given in the book of Genesis:

'Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him...Jokshan...and Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan.' (**Genesis 25:1-3**)

Ezekiel says that all this will take place in 'the latter years'. (**Ezekiel 38:8**)

In the chapter preceding the account of the descendents of Sheba and Dedan, Ezekiel foretells that the two Houses of Israel will be united in that day. This, Ezekiel declares, will be part of the ancient Covenant which God made with Abraham. This prophecy foreshadows the reunion in the last days, not only the physical union of Judah and Israel, but also the symbolical reunion of the two spiritual Houses of Judaism and Christianity. The Lord tells Ezekiel:

'I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all...' (***Ezekiel 37:21, 22***)

In the very year in which Bahá'u'lláh's faith began (1844), the Edict was signed which permitted this gathering of the children of Israel. Since the day of Bahá'u'lláh's arrival as a prisoner in Israel, the Holy Land has become an independent State, and one nation. Bahá'u'lláh's teachings declare that one of the fundamental principles of his faith is the union of the Jews and Christians.

(William Sears, Thief in the Night, Part 3, p. 132-135)

THE COMING OF MICHAEL ARTHA



The “Sanctuary” of Bahá’u’lláh, “The Glory of God,”: “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me... but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me... in the latter days:” (Dan 10:13-14)

Further search uncovered additional evidence that the title ‘Glory of the Lord’ or ‘Glory of God’ would be the new name by which the Messiah could be identified in the latter days. The Book of Revelation, which, as we have already seen, gave the date of 1844 (1260) for the end of the ‘times of the Gentiles’, and which promised the new name and the new city, also confirms the name or title of Him Who will be the central Light of that new city of God. St. John declares:

‘And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem ... and the city had no need of the sun ... for the Glory of God did lighten it.’
(Rev 21:2,23)

Christ Himself links the hour of His return with this same wondrous Figure 'the Glory of the Lord' or the 'Glory of God'. He promises that in the last days He will appear in this very likeness of God, and in His glory:

'For the Son of man shall come in the Glory of his Father.'
(Matthew 16:27)

This vision of the 'Glory of God' promised by Christ and seen by St. John and Isaiah, is identical with the vision which came to Ezekiel. He saw the 'Glory of God' on more than one occasion, and associated it with a Promised One who would come into His House in a latter day. His coming, Ezekiel said, was:

'... the appearance of ... the Glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face.'
(Ezekiel 1:28)

It was this same 'Glory of God' that appeared to Daniel as well. When Daniel had his vision of the last days, he spoke movingly of the Prince, Michael, who came to help him, Michael who would stand up for the children of God at the time of the end. When Daniel had his vision, he was unable to bear the glory of it. In his own words:

'... I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.'
(Daniel 10:15)

The meaning of the word MICHAEL when translated into English is: One who looks like God. Thus, it appeared, that Daniel, too, had seen the 'Glory of God'. I uncovered another important clue which seemed to confirm the belief that this Figure seen by Daniel was identical with the one promised by Christ Himself for the time of His return. Christ clearly explained the conditions of His second coming. He foretold that in that day everyone would see

'... the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven...'
(Matthew 24:30)

This exact same picture was given by Daniel as the vision he saw of the 'latter days'. In fact, in almost the exact same words Daniel said:

'... one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven...' (**Daniel 7:13**)

Furthermore, in that same chapter, for the second time, I found that Daniel foretold the hour when this would take place. This wondrous event, the coming of the Messiah, Daniel promised, will come to pass after

'...a time and times and the dividing of time.' (**Daniel 7:25**)

There seemed to be no end to the references that brought me back to the year 1844. Here once again I had found that same prophecy of 1260 days, forty and two months, three and a half years, and now, 'a time and times and the dividing of time'. Students of Scripture agreed that all these phrases referred to one period of time, namely 1260 years. This meant that I had found another reference to when the Messiah would come. According to Daniel, He would appear in the year 1260, and I knew already that in the calendar of the land in which Daniel saw his vision (Persia), the year 1260 coincided with the year 1844 of the West. Daniel and Christ both had promised the coming of the 'Son of man.' Daniel had been overwhelmed and fallen to the ground because of the glory of his vision. In other places too numerous to detail, I found this same prophecy of the coming of the 'Glory of God.' Isaiah promised the faithful that

'...The Glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.' (**Isaiah 58:8**)

And again:

'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ... I the Lord am thy Savior and thy Redeemer ...' (**Isaiah 60:1,16**)

I was satisfied that I had uncovered sufficient evidence to indicate that the title by which the Messiah would be known when He appeared would be:

'the Glory of the Lord.'

This would be the new name, just as Christ, 'the Anointed One', had been the old name. In making the investigation into His name, I had also discovered additional information pointing to His coming with this new name in the year 1844. I felt I was making progress.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p. 40-43)

Daniel also foretells the suffering that will follow the coming of the Messiah in THE TIME OF THE END. He prophesies that this suffering will last until His truth has been accepted. He uses the same words as Jesus, Joel and Revelation. He warns that in the day of the coming of the new Messiah,

'...there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time...' **(Daniel 12:1)**

In these prophecies, Daniel links Christ inseparably with the One Who has the appearance of the 'Glory of God'. Speaking of this TIME OF THE END, Daniel promises that:

'...at that time shall Michael stand up...and at that time thy people shall be delivered.' **(Daniel 12:1)**

My next assignment was to identify this Michael who would deliver the children of God in the last days. The answer can be found in chapter ten of Daniel. There Daniel speaks of the overpowering vision which came to him in the land of Persia, and he says:

'But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me...' **(Daniel 10:13)**

In the next verse, Daniel is told that this vision concerns THE TIME OF THE END and:

'...what shall befall thy people (Israel) in the latter days.'
(Daniel 10:14)

Then the Lord makes the following promise to Daniel:

'I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth...' **(Daniel 10:21)**

In this very same verse, Daniel is told by the Lord that only Michael, the Chief Prince of Persia, understands the meaning of this latter day vision. The Lord says to Daniel:

'...and there is none that holdeth with me (God) in these things, but Michael your prince.' **(Daniel 10:21)**

Michael is obviously a prince of Persia, but a spiritual prince, and unlike the prince of the kingdom of Persia who resisted Daniel. The Lord calls Michael 'your prince' in speaking to Daniel.

The name Michael, translated into English, means One who looses like God. This is yet another way of saying 'th Glory of God. It is interesting to note that Daniel, like Ezekiel, fell to the earth, overcome, when he beheld the glory of this Messenger. Daniel says:

'And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground and I became dumb.' **(Daniel 10:15)**

The same thing happened to Ezekiel when he beheld the 'Glory of God' who came from the East.

The final chapter of Daniel speaks of THE LAST DAYS, and says yet again:

'And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people..and at that time thy people shall be delivered...' (**Daniel 12:1**)

There could no longer be any doubt but that Michael was a spiritual prince, a representative of God. Could he be the Messiah? Would he come at the time foretold, which I had already ascertained from the Bible? The next question, therefore, was: When would this wonder take place? When would Michael, Prince of Persia, Who looked like God, appear and deliver the people?

Daniel was told when this would take place:

1. 'In the latter days...' (**Daniel 10:14**)
2. 'At the time of the end shall be the vision.' (**Daniel 8:17**)
3. 'The words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.' (**Daniel 12:9**)
4. 'Shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.' (**Daniel 12:4**)

Then in vision, Daniel sees the last days, and the coming of the 'ancient of days', the Promised One Who will unseal the books. Daniel says:

'...ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened.' (**Daniel 7:10**)

In this same chapter Daniel says that in this hour

'...one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.' (**Daniel 7:13**)

A few verses later Daniel repeats:

'...the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints (believers) possessed the kingdom.' (**Daniel 7:22**)

In this same chapter, Daniel says that this will come to pass following:

'a time and times and the dividing of time.' (*Daniel 7:25*)

This we know to be three and a half years, or 1260 days; or in the measure of biblical prophesy: 1260 years.

In the final chapter of Daniel, it is said again that Michael, Prince of Persia, the Ancient of days, will stand for the people of the Lord, and deliver them in the hour when the books are unsealed. This also will take place, Daniel prophesies, after:

'...a time, times, and a half.' (*Daniel 12:7*)

Therefore, we again come to this same identical time of 1260 years. In Persia, the land where Daniel wrote his prophecy, the land of Michael, Who looks like God, the year 1260 is identical with the year 1844 of the calendar of the West.

Thus, once again, I learned:

1. that the year 1844 would be the time for the appearance of the Messiah;
2. that He would be 'One Who looks like God' or 'the Glory of God';
3. that He would appear in the land of Persia.

I now had two converging clues, of time and place, in *The Case of the Missing Millennium*.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p. 76-79)

I studied the story of the young Persian student to whom the Báb had made his first announcement. He, too, had sought the One promised by the Báb. He went to Teheran, and inquired among the people.

'Is there any person who is distinguished above all others in this city? Someone who is renowned for his character?'

He was told that there was only one such person.

'What is his occupation?'

'He cheers the disconsolate and feeds the hungry.'

'What of his rank and position?'

'He has none apart from befriending the poor and the stranger.'

'What is his name?'

'He is Husayn 'Ali, Bahá'u'lláh.'

'His age?'

'Eight and twenty.'

(The Dawnbreakers, Nabil, pp. 104-106 (paraphrase))

In this way, too, I learned that his name was Husayn 'Ali, just as the name of Christ was Jesus. Jesus was known by the title of Christ (in English, 'the Anointed'). Husayn 'Ali was known by the title of Bahá'u'lláh (in English, 'the Glory of God').

Bahá'u'lláh was born in Persia, the land in which Daniel had seen his vision of the Prince Michael whose name means 'One who looks like God'.

When Daniel was told to 'seal the books' until THE TIME OF THE END, he also was promised:

'At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of Thy people...' ***(Daniel 12:1)***

Bahá'u'lláh was born in the province of Mazandaran in Persia. This part of Persia had long been known a land of future promise. It has been written of Mazandaran:

'There are many legends regarding the province. It was said that there would grow a celestial tree, with branches reaching to heaven. The fruit of this tree would be for the life of the nations. Many people travelled to this region hoping to find the wonderful tree. Another legend was that the king of war and hatred had been imprisoned in one of these high mountains.'

(*Star of the West Magazine, Vol. xiv, p. 291*)

The author of this account goes on to explain that these were symbolic parables of the coming of a Great Figure from that province, who would bring peace to mankind.

Similar legends were noted in Revelation and in Daniel. Daniel in the very chapter in which he prophesies that Michael, who looks like God, will deliver the people in the last days, also prophesies that it will be the great RESURRECTION DAY as well. A similar RESURRECTION DAY is promised by Christ at the time of His return.

F. Hudgings, scholar of Jewish prophecy, writes of these present days in his *Zionism in Prophecy*:

'Yes, it seems that we are actually in the "time of the end", exactly as the Prophet (Daniel) saw it in vision.'

Husayn 'Ali, Bahá'u'lláh. It was a strange name to me. It took me some time to get used to it. Gradually the story of his life melted away my original coolness. The name was oriental, from the Middle East. I realised of course that I had reacted exactly as the Roman historian who had praised the Emperor for 'stamping out the cult of the Nazarene'. He, too, as a westerner, had objected to the strange oriental name. Yet in reality all the Messengers of God had come from the East with names that were strange at first.

About this time I came across a most remarkable statement. Or so it seemed to me. It had been written, not by a follower of the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh, but by a Bible scholar of Oxford University and a well-known Christian clergyman. He wrote: 'If there is any prophet in recent times, it is to

Bahá'u'lláh that we must go. (He) was a man of the highest class -- that of prophets.'

(Cheyne, cited *Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith*, 1947, p. 18)

I read the account of Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter in his book *Comparative Religions* in which he asked the pointed question: "Has Persia, in the midst of her miseries, given birth to a religion that will go around the world?'

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night, Part II, Chap. 6*, pp. 102-104)

O KINGS OF THE EARTH!



The Lower Terrace at the sacred Threshold to the Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel: "...the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones...and the kings of the earth upon the earth"(Isa 24:21)

I had one last point of proof. Christ Himself had foretold that when the Messiah came, the Spirit of Truth, He would glorify His, Christ's, name.

Had Bahá'u'lláh done this? In order to come to this final evidence, I had set aside two important proofs:

1. 'He shall unseal the Books.'
2. 'He shall topple the unjust kings from their thrones.'

The fulfilment of these two proofs made such a thrilling and dramatic story, that I was not only able to write *Fulfilled* beside them, but I have felt impelled to write a separate book about each, so that you too, might enjoy the same delight which I felt when discovering these astonishing stories. The first of these two books I have called *The Wine of Astonishment*.

On the eve of the declaration of his Mission, Bahá'u'lláh wrote his *Book of Certitude*. This book, he himself said, offered to mankind the 'Choice Sealed Wine' whose seal is of 'musk'. It broke the 'seals' of the 'Book' referred to by Daniel, and disclosed the meaning of the 'words' destined to remain 'closed up' till the 'time of the end'.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote over a hundred volumes. This *Book of Certitude* was completed in the space of two days and two nights, a continuous outpouring. His words have been described as 'a rushing torrent'.

A historian who was living at the time of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, has testified that the words which 'streamed from his lips...in a single day and night' were the equivalent of a large volume. Moreover, 'As to those verses which He either dictated or wrote Himself, their number was no less remarkable than either the wealth of material they contained, or the diversity of subjects to which they referred.'

I found the following eye-witness account of a business man of Shiraz, Persia, who knew both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. He says:

'I bear witness that the verses revealed by Bahá'u'lláh were superior, in the rapidity which with they were penned, in the ease with which they flowed, in their lucidity, their profundity and sweetness to those which I, myself, saw pour from the pen of the Báb when in His presence. Had Bahá'u'lláh no other claim to greatness, this were sufficient, in the eyes of the world and its people, that He produced such verses as have streamed this day from His pen.'

In his writings, Bahá'u'lláh 'unseals' the truth and the 'hidden meanings of those subjects which have long troubled and confused mankind, such as:

The Day of Judgement
 Resurrection
 Baptism
 The Eucharist
 The Trinity
 Reincarnation
 The Creation of the World
 Proofs of the Existence of God
 Life After Death
 The Immortality of the Soul
 The Story of Adam and Eve
 Good and Evil
 The Son of God
 The Father
 Heaven and Hell
 The Stars Falling from Heaven
 The Darkening of the Sun and the Moon
 The Day of God
 The City of God
 The Seal of the Prophets
 The Return

These and many other subjects are revealed in their true meaning by Bahá'u'lláh, whose fresh and clear explanations harmonize with science and education and broaden the outlook of humanity. These have been explained in detail in the Book *The Wine of Astonishment*. The second of these two books I

have called Fire in the Sky. It tells the story of Bahá'u'lláh's letters to the kings and rulers of the world. (***Published as The Prisoner and the Kings***)

Bahá'u'lláh addressed them saying:

'O Kings of the earth! We see you increasing every year your expenditures and laying the burden thereof on your subjects. This, verily, is wholly and grossly unjust...lay not excessive burdens on your peoples. Do not rob them to rear palaces for yourselves; nay rather, choose for them that which ye choose for yourselves...Your people are your treasures. Beware lest your rule violate the commandments of God, and ye deliver your wards to the hands of the robber. By them ye rule, by their means ye subsist, by their aid ye conquer. Yet, how disdainfully ye look upon them! How strange, how very strange!'

In another place Bahá'u'lláh wrote to the kings and rulers:

'O kings of the earth...Compose your differences, and reduce your armaments, that the burden of your expenditures may be lightened, and that your minds and hearts may be tranquillised. Heal the dissensions that divide you...and ye be the emblems of justice amongst them (mankind).'

And again:

'If ye stay not the hand of the oppressor, if ye fail to safeguard the rights of the downtrodden, what right have ye then to vaunt yourselves among men?'

Bahá'u'lláh informed the monarchs of the world by whose authority he spoke, saying:

'I am the One Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled, the One with Whose name both the Torah (of Moses) and the Evangel (of Christ) were adorned...'

Bahá'u'lláh addressed letters to:

- Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria
- Napoleon III of France
- Kaiser William I of Germany
- Czar Nicolaevitch Alexander II of Russia
- The Sultan 'Abdu'l-Aziz of Turkey
- Násiri'd-Dín Sháh of Persia
- Queen Victoria of Britain
- The Presidents and Rulers of the Republics of the West
- The Religious Leaders of the Christians, Jews, Muslims and Zoroastrians
- The followers of Christ, Moses, and Mohammed The peoples of the world

Napoleon III cast Bahá'u'lláh's letter aside scornfully, saying, 'If this man is of God, I am two Gods!' Shortly after, Napoleon fell from power as prophesied by Bahá'u'lláh, and ended his days in exile, after suffering a humiliating imprisonment.

Only one of these sovereigns responded, even in the slightest measure. It was Queen Victoria in Great Britain. This dynasty is the only one which still remains today of those once-mighty monarchies. Bahá'u'lláh foretold that Queen Victoria would have a long and successful reign, although at the time her reign was precarious and she was not in favour because of her German consort. Of far more arresting interest is the fact that still another Sovereign, a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria, became a follower of Bahá'u'lláh. I found these words of Queen Marie of Rumania concerning Bahá'u'lláh and his Faith, quoted in the Toronto Daily Star, May 14th, 1926:

'It (Bahá'u'lláh's Faith) is Christ's message taken up anew... No man could fail to be better because of this Book. I commend it to you all.'

She was quoted in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, September 27th, 1926 as follows:

'Those who read their Bible with "peeled eyes" will find in almost every line some revelation.'

She also wrote in a personal letter:

'These Books (the writings of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith), have strengthened me beyond belief...The Bahá'í teaching brings peace and understanding.' (*Appreciations of the Bahá'í Faith, pp. 12-13*)

Bahá'u'lláh declared that he saw 'abasement hastening after' those unjust rulers who neglected the rights and welfare of the poor and humble among their subjects. They would, he said, be made an 'object lesson' for the world.

Three were assassinated and two went into exile, the royal thrones of all but one were overthrown! These events, I found, were all foretold for the day of the coming of the Messiah, and were part of the proof expected by the millennial scholars. It had been written in Scripture of the Messiah:

1. Psalms: 'He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.' (*Psalms 76:12*)
2. Job: 'He shall break in pieces mighty men without number...' (*Job 34:24*)
3. Isaiah: 'The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.' (*Isaiah 14:5*) 'And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.' (*Isaiah 24:21*)

In the very chapter of Daniel, in which he speaks of the time of the end, saying:

'...behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven...' (*Daniel 7:13*)

Daniel also says:

'I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit (upon His throne)...' (**Daniel 7:9**)

I found over twenty specific prophecies in sacred Scripture which referred to the overthrow of the kings of the earth in the day of the coming of the Messiah.

The welfare and happiness of the under-privileged, the down-trodden, the common man was a favourite theme of Bahá'u'lláh. He had great love for those who suffered from hunger and persecution. He warned the rulers of earth:

'Know ye that the poor are the trust of God in your midst. Watch that ye betray not His trust, and ye deal not unjustly with them and that ye walk not in the ways of the treacherous.'

Bahá'u'lláh's own words set the seal to those winds of adversity which have swept across the face of the earth since 1844, dethroning monarchs, extinguishing dynasties, and uprooting age old kingdoms:

'God hath not blinked, nor will He ever blink His eyes at the tyranny of the oppressor. More particularly in this Revelation hath He visited each and every tyrant with His vengeance.'

This astonishing story concerning the downfall of kings and the fulfilment of prophecy is told with all of its dramatic detail in the book *Fire in the Sky*.

Beneath the two proofs:

1. the Messiah shall unseal the Books, and
2. He shall topple the unjust kings from their thrones, I wrote: Fulfilled.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night, Part iii, Sect. 12, pp. 165-171*)

In the Kitab-i-Aqdas (The Most Holy Book), that priceless treasury enshrining for all time the brightest emanations of the mind of Baha'u'llah, the Charter of His World Order, the chief repository of His laws, the Harbinger of His Covenant, the Pivotal Work containing some of His noblest exhortations, weightiest pronouncements, and portentous prophecies, and revealed during the full tide of His tribulations, at a time when the rulers of the earth had definitely forsaken Him - in such a Book we read the following:

"O kings of the earth! He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is come. The Kingdom is God's, the omnipotent Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Worship none but God, and, with radiant hearts, lift up your faces unto your Lord, the Lord of all names. This is a Revelation to which whatever ye possess can never be compared, could ye but know it. We see you rejoicing in that which ye have amassed for others, and shutting out yourselves from the worlds which naught except My Guarded Tablet can reckon. The treasures ye have laid up have drawn you far away from your ultimate objective. This ill beseemeth you, could ye but understand it. Wash your hearts from all earthly defilements, and hasten to enter the Kingdom of your Lord, the Creator of earth and heaven, Who caused the world to tremble, and all its peoples to wail, except them that have renounced all things and clung to that which the Hidden Tablet hath ordained...."

"O kings of the earth! The Most Great Law hath been revealed in this Spot, this Scene of transcendent splendor. Every hidden thing hath been brought to light, by virtue of the Will of the Supreme Ordainer, He Who hath ushered in the Last Hour, through Whom the Moon hath been cleft, and every irrevocable decree expounded.

"Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is summoning you unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Take heed lest pride deter you from recognizing the Source of Revelation; lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator of

heaven. Arise, and serve Him Who is the Desire of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty.

“By the righteousness of God! It is not Our wish to lay hands on your kingdoms. Our mission is to seize and possess the hearts of men. Upon them the eyes of Baha are fastened. To this testifieth the Kingdom of Names, could ye but comprehend it. Whoso followeth his Lord, will renounce the world and all that is therein; how much greater, then, must be the detachment of Him Who holdeth so august a station! Forsake your palaces, and haste ye to gain admittance into His Kingdom. This, indeed, will profit you both in this world and in the next. To this testifieth the Lord of the realm on high, did ye but know it.

“How great is the blessedness that awaiteth the king who will arise to aid My Cause in My Kingdom, who will detach himself from all else but Me! Such a king is numbered with the companions of the Crimson Ark, the Ark which God hath prepared for the people of Baha. All must glorify his name, must reverence his station, and aid him to unlock the cities with the keys of My Name, the omnipotent Protector of all that inhabit the visible and invisible kingdoms. Such a king is the very eye of mankind, the luminous ornament on the brow of creation, the fountainhead of blessings unto the whole world. Offer up, O people of Baha, your substance, nay your very lives, for his assistance.

“O rulers of the earth! Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions. Beware lest ye disregard the counsel of the All-Knowing, the Faithful.

“Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should anyone among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.”

"O kings of Christendom! Heard ye not the saying of Jesus, the Spirit of God, 'I go away, and come again unto you'? Wherefore, then, did ye fail, when He did come again unto you in the clouds of heaven, to draw nigh unto Him, that ye might behold His face, and be of them that attained His Presence? In another passage He saith: 'When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.' And yet, behold how, when He did bring the truth, ye refused to turn your faces towards Him, and persisted in disporting yourselves with your pastimes and fancies. Ye welcomed Him not, neither did ye seek His Presence, that ye might hear the verses of God from His own mouth, and partake of the manifold wisdom of the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise. Ye have, by reason of your failure, hindered the breath of God from being wafted over you, and have withheld from your souls the sweetness of its fragrance. Ye continue roving with delight in the valley of your corrupt desires. Ye and all ye possess shall pass away. Ye shall, most certainly, return to God, and shall be called to account for your doings in the presence of Him Who shall gather together the entire creation...."

To Pope Pius IX, Baha'u'llah revealed the following: "O Pope! Rend the veils asunder. He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained.... He, verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time. Beware that thou dispute not with Him even as the Pharisees disputed with Him [Jesus] without a clear token or proof. On His right hand flow the living waters of grace, and on His left the choice Wine of justice, whilst before Him march the angels of Paradise, bearing the banners of His signs. Beware lest any name debar thee from God, the Creator of earth and heaven. Leave thou the world behind thee, and turn towards thy Lord, through Whom the whole earth hath been illumined.... Dwellest thou in palaces whilst He Who is the King of Revelation liveth in the most desolate of abodes? Leave them unto such as desire them, and set thy face with joy and delight towards the Kingdom.... Arise in the name of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, amidst the peoples of the earth, and seize thou the Cup of Life with the hands of confidence,

and first drink thou therefrom, and proffer it then to such as turn towards it amongst the peoples of all faiths....

“Call thou to remembrance Him Who was the Spirit [Jesus], Who, when He came, the most learned of His age pronounced judgment against Him in His own country, whilst he who was only a fisherman believed in Him. Take heed, then, ye men of understanding heart! Thou, in truth, art one of the sons of the heaven of His names. Guard thyself, lest darkness spread its veils over thee, and fold thee away from His light.... Consider those who opposed the Son [Jesus], when He came unto them with sovereignty and power. How many the Pharisees who were waiting to behold Him, and were lamenting over their separation from Him! And yet, when the fragrance of His coming was wafted over them, and His beauty was unveiled, they turned aside from Him and disputed with Him.... None save a very few, who were destitute of any power amongst men, turned towards His face. And yet today every man endowed with power and invested with sovereignty prideth himself on His Name! In like manner, consider how numerous, in these days, are the monks who, in My Name, have secluded themselves in their churches, and who, when the appointed time was fulfilled, and We unveiled Our beauty, knew Us not, though they call upon Me at eventide and at dawn....”

“The Word which the Son concealed is made manifest. It hath been sent down in the form of the human temple in this day. Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous! ...This is the day whereon the Rock [Peter] crieth out and shouteth, and celebrateth the praise of its Lord, the All-Possessing, the Most High, saying: `Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled!...' My body longeth for the cross, and Mine head waiteth the thrust of the spear, in the path of the All-Merciful, that the world may be purged from its transgressions....”

“Erelong will God raise up from among the kings one who will aid His loved ones. He, verily, encompasseth all things.

He will instill in the hearts the love of His loved ones. This, indeed, is irrevocably decreed by One Who is the Almighty, the Beneficent.

(Shoghi Effendi: The Promised Day is Come, Pages: 25-74)

For more references, please refer to the Book: "THE PROCLAMATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH" (SUMMONS TO THE KINGS AND RULERS OF THE WORLD; SUMMONS TO THE WORLD'S RELIGIOUS LEADERS, and, THE GREAT ANNOUNCEMENT TO MANKIND). Also, the Book: "THE PROMISE DAY IS COME".

Chapter 8:

The False Prophets

THE RISING OF FALSE PROPHETS

“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.” **(Matt 24:11)**

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” **(Matt 24:24)**

“But there are, among men, those who purchase idle tales, without knowledge (or meaning), to mislead (men) from the Path of Allah and throw ridicule (on the Path): for such there will be a humiliating Penalty.” **(Qur’án 31:6)**

“Behold! when they meet the men of Faith, they say: ‘We believe,’ but when they meet each other in private, they say: ‘Shall you tell them what Allah hath revealed to you, that they may engage you in argument about it before your Lord?’ Do ye not understand (their aim)? Know they not that Allah knoweth what they conceal and what they reveal? And there are among

them illiterates, who know not the Book but (see therein their own) desires, and they do nothing but conjecture." (*Qur'án 2:76-78*)

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (*2 Peter 2:1*)

"And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand..." (*Qur'án 69:44-45*)

"And they say: 'The fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days;' Say: 'Have ye taken a promise from Allah for He never breaks His promise? Or is it that ye say of Allah what ye do not know?' Nay, those who seek gain in Evil, and are girt round by their sins, they are Companions of the Fire, therein shall they abide (for ever). But those who have faith and work righteousness, they are Companions of the Garden, therein shall they abide (for ever)." (*Qur'án 2:80-82*)

Bahá'u'lláh asked no one to accept His statements and His tokens blindly. On the contrary, He put in the very forefront of His teachings emphatic warnings against blind acceptance of authority, and urged all to open their eyes and ears, and use their own judgement, independently and fearlessly, in order to ascertain the truth. He enjoined the fullest investigation and never concealed Himself, offering, as the supreme proofs of His Prophethood, His words and works and their effects in transforming the lives and characters of men. The tests He proposed are the same as those laid down by His great predecessors.

Moses said: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." (*Deut. xviii, 22*)

Christ put His test just as plainly, and appealed to it in proof of His own claim.

He said: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (*Matt. vii, 15-17, 20*)

(Dr. J.E. Esslemont, *Baha'u'llah and the New Era*, p. 8)

They whose sight is keen, whose ears are retentive, whose hearts are enlightened, and whose breasts are dilated, recognize both truth and falsehood, and distinguish the one from the other.

(*Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Page: 9)

We entreat Our loved ones not to besmirch the hem of Our raiment with the dust of falsehood, neither to allow references to what they have regarded as miracles and prodigies to debase Our rank and station, or to mar the purity and sanctity of Our name.

(*Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Page: 33)

Whoever gazeth this day on My signs will distinguish truth from falsehood as the sun from shadow, and will be made cognizant of the goal. God is aware and beareth Me witness that whatever hath been mentioned was for the sake of God, that haply thou mayest be the cause of the guidance of men, and mayest deliver the peoples of the world from idle fancies and vain imaginings.

(*Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Page: 88)

I swear by God! Were he that treadeth the path of guidance and seeketh to scale the heights of righteousness to attain unto this glorious and exalted station, he would inhale, at a distance of a thousand leagues, the fragrance of God, and would perceive the resplendent morn of a Divine guidance rising above the Day Spring of all things. Each and every thing, however small, would be to him a revelation, leading him to

his Beloved, the Object of his quest. So great shall be the discernment of this seeker that he will discriminate between truth and falsehood, even as he doth distinguish the sun from shadow. If in the uttermost corners of the East the sweet savors of God be wafted, he will assuredly recognize and inhale their fragrance, even though he be dwelling in the uttermost ends of the West. He will, likewise, clearly distinguish all the signs of God - His wondrous utterances, His great works, and mighty deeds - from the doings, the words and ways of men, even as the jeweler who knoweth the gem from the stone, or the man who distinguisheth the spring from autumn, and heat from cold. When the channel of the human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments, it will unfailingly perceive the breath of the Beloved across immeasurable distances, and will, led by its perfume, attain and enter the City of Certitude.

Therein he will discern the wonders of His ancient Wisdom, and will perceive all the hidden teachings from the rustling leaves of the Tree that flourisheth in that City. With both his inner and outer ear, he will hear from its dust the hymns of glory and praise ascending unto the Lord of Lords, and with his inner eye will he discover the mysteries of "return" and "revival."

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 267-269)

THE LEADERS OF RELIGION

"Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart." ***(Jer 12:10-11)***

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." ***(Matt 7:21)***

“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.” **(Matt 23:8-10)**

“But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” **(Matt 15:9)**

“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” **(Matt 15:14)**

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” **(Col 2:8)**

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:” **(Eph 2:8)**

It is not only the leaders of the established religions who, by misrepresenting the teachings of their Faiths, have alienated the people. We also come across many a ‘false prophet’ who, out of love for leadership and personal gain, has appeared in the guise of a ‘holy man’, announcing himself as a saviour of men and founder of a religious sect, advocating some sensational or corrupt and immoral practice. He then attracts simple-minded or ignorant persons to his cause, exploits them for his own benefit, holds them tight in the clutches of his authority and rules over their minds and souls. It is this kind of blind obedience which is abhorred by every discerning person.

(Adib Taherzadeh, *The Covenant of Baha’u’llah*, p. 266)

As the moral and spiritual values in life decline today, a great many people all over the world look upon the word ‘obedience’ with suspicion and fear. They regard this word to be synonymous with dictatorship, blind acceptance, religious fanaticism and all sorts of fettered beliefs. The majority of those who hold this view are among the honest, open-minded and enlightened peoples of the world. Some may belong to reli-

gious groups with a liberal outlook, others may be intellectuals, agnostics or atheists. They are fully aware of the dangers which blind obedience may cause within human society and are weary of any so-called authority, whether religious or secular, which demands obedience to its commands.

Such fears are fully justified and those who campaign against the setting up of such an authority and abhor its reign, are worthy of praise and admiration. For, as we survey the religious field, we come across many a 'false prophet' who, for lust of leadership, appears in the guise of a religious leader, posing as a man of holiness, and for his own personal benefit rules over his followers' minds. There are also millions of people, followers of the world's major religions, any of whom are fettered in the cage of outdated religious doctrines and antiquated dogmas.

During this century, more and more of these people are becoming awakened to their tragedy, breaking the shackles which had been placed on their minds and freeing themselves from this bondage. They either remain lukewarm, disillusioned followers, or join the rank of agnostics and atheists. The voice of religious leadership, which in older days inspired multitudes, is now heard by these people with various degrees of indifference or hostility. The reason for this change is that God has manifested Himself through Bahá'u'lláh and religious leaders have not recognized Him and in His words they have become as 'fallen stars'.¹ We have already stated² that every religion has a certain period of validity during which its teachings are operative. That period comes to an end with the birth of a new religion.

(Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 3, p. 29*)

My study of the facts suggested that these seals mentioned by Isaiah and Daniel would not be opened by Christ in His first coming, but only in His second. It would happen only at the time of the end. Furthermore, I found that the New

1 See vol. 2, pp. 270-72

2 See vol. 1, pp. 64-6

Testament upheld this reading of the case. In the words of St. Paul:

'... judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who ... will bring light to the hidden things of darkness.' **(1 Cor 4:5)**

Apparently when Christ returned, all would be clear. Until then it would remain hidden. The Apostle Peter left a similar warning to the followers of Christ not to interpret the prophecies according to their own deficient understanding before the day of His return:

'We have also a more sure word of prophesy...that no prophesy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **(2 Pet 1:19-20)**

Peter told them that there was only one way in which prophecy came to man, and only one way in which it could be interpreted:

'For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' **(2 Pet 1:21)**

Until this Holy Spirit appeared again in the Son of man at the time of the end, the meaning of the prophecies would remain hidden. There seemed to be little doubt that the truth was 'closed up' and the 'books sealed' and that none would be able to read them correctly until that time. I found that Christ made no claim that the time of the end or the day of the one fold and one Shepherd, were fulfilled by Himself. On the contrary, He revealed a prayer which was both a prayer and a prophesy of the future. He said:

'...Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.'

I found ample evidence that Christ never tried to 'unseal' the Books Himself. He left it for a future date. Rather, He

spoke in parables and hidden meanings. He even prophesied that while He (Christ) spoke in parables, there would be a time in the future, when the Son would return in the Glory of the Father, and would speak plainly to them. Christ said:

'These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall speak no more unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.' (**John 16:25**)

This promise to explain the hidden meanings is given by Jesus in the very same chapter in which He speaks of the coming of the Spirit of Truth who will guide His followers unto all truth. When this 'Comforter' comes, Christ promises:

'...he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' (**John 14:26**)

Christ, in these words, seems to offer the clear promise that the new Messiah would, in the day of His coming, 'unseal the books' and bring to light the 'hidden things of darkness'.

If He had appeared in 1844, that would certainly account for all the renewed enthusiasm.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p. 46-47)

"Judge thou fairly, I adjure thee by God. What proof did the Jewish doctors adduce wherewith to condemn Him Who was the Spirit of God (Jesus Christ), when He came unto them with truth? What could have been the evidence produced by the Pharisees and the idolatrous priests to justify their denial of Muhammad, the Apostle of God when He came unto them with a Book that judged between truth and falsehood with a justice which turned into light the darkness of the earth, and enraptured the hearts of such as had known Him? Indeed thou hast produced, in this day, the same proofs which the foolish divines advanced in that age. Unto this testifieth He Who is the King of the realm of grace in this great Prison. Thou hast, truly, walked in their ways, nay, hast surpassed them in their cruelty, and hast deemed thyself to be helping the Faith and defending the Law of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. By

Him Who is the Truth! Thine iniquity hath made Gabriel to groan, and hath drawn tears from the Law of God, through which the breezes of justice have been wafted over all who are in heaven and on earth. Hast thou fondly imagined that the judgment thou didst pronounce hath profited thee? Nay, by Him Who is the King of all Names! Unto thy loss testifieth He with Whom is the knowledge of all things as recorded in the preserved Tablet."

(Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Pages: 81-82)

It is evident and manifest unto every discerning observer that even as the light of the star fadeth before the effulgent splendour of the sun, so doth the luminary of earthly knowledge, of wisdom, and understanding vanish into nothingness when brought face to face with the resplendent glories of the Sun of Truth, the Day-star of divine enlightenment.

That the term "sun" hath been applied to the leaders of religion is due to their lofty position, their fame, and renown. Such are the universally recognized divines of every age, who speak with authority, and whose fame is securely established. If they be in the likeness of the Sun of Truth, they will surely be accounted as the most exalted of all luminaries; otherwise, they are to be recognize as the focal centres of hellish fire. Even as He saith: "Verily, the sun and the moon are both condemned to the torment of infernal fire."³ You are no doubt familiar with the interpretation of the term "sun" and "moon" mentioned in this verse; no need therefore to refer unto it. And whosoever is of the element of this "sun" and "moon", that is, followeth the example of these leader in sttnhis face towards falsehood and in turning away from the truth he undoubtedly cometh out of infernal gloom and returneth thereunto.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 37-38)

And, now, strive thou to comprehend the meaning of... "Piercing the veils of glory, unaided." Among these "veils of glory" are the divines and doctors living in the days of the Manifestation of God, who, because of their want of discernment and their love and eagerness for leadership, have failed

3 Qur'an 55:5

to submit to the Cause of God, nay, have even refused to incline their ears unto the divine Melody. "They have thrust their fingers into their ears."⁴ And the people also, utterly ignoring God and taking them for their masters, have placed themselves unreservedly under the authority of these pompous and hypocritical leaders, for they have no sight, no hearing, no heart, of their own to distinguish truth from falsehood.

(Baha'u'llah: *The Kitab-i-Iqan*, Page: 164)

Notwithstanding the divinely-inspired admonitions of all the Prophets, the Saints, and Chosen ones of God, enjoining the people to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears, they have disdainfully rejected their counsels and have blindly followed, and will continue to follow, the leaders of their Faith. Should a poor and obscure person, destitute of the attire of men of learning, address them saying: "Follow ye, O people! the Messengers of God,"⁵ they would, greatly surprised at such a statement, reply: "What! Meanest thou that all these divines, all these exponents of learning, with all their authority, their pomp and pageantry, have erred, and failed to distinguish truth from falsehood? Dost thou, and people like thyself, pretend to have comprehended that which they have not understood?" If numbers and excellence of apparel be regarded as the criterions of learning and truth, the peoples of a bygone age, whom those of today have never surpassed in numbers, magnificence and power, should certainly be accounted a superior and worthier people.

It is clear and evident that whenever the Manifestations of Holiness were revealed, the divines of their day have hindered the people from attaining unto the way of truth. To this testify the records of all the scriptures and heavenly books. Not one Prophet of God was made manifest Who did not fall a victim to the relentless hate, to the denunciation, denial, and execration of the clerics of His day! Woe unto them for the iniquities their hands have formerly wrought! Woe unto them for that which they are now doing! What veils of glory more grievous than these embodiments of error! By the righteousness of God! to

4 *Qur'an* 2:19

5 *Qur'an* 36:20

pierce such veils is the mightiest of all acts, and to rend them asunder the most meritorious of all deeds! May God assist us and assist you, O concourse of the Spirit! that perchance ye may in the time of His Manifestation be graciously aided to perform such deeds, and may in His days attain unto the Presence of God.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 164-166)

The ordinances of God have been sent down from the heaven of His most august Revelation. All must diligently observe them. Man's supreme distinction, his real advancement, his final victory, have always depended, and will continue to depend, upon them. Whoso keepeth the commandments of God shall attain everlasting felicity.

A twofold obligation resteth upon him who hath recognized the Day Spring of the Unity of God, and acknowledged the truth of Him Who is the Manifestation of His oneness. The first is steadfastness in His love, such steadfastness that neither the clamor of the enemy nor the claims of the idle pretender can deter him from cleaving unto Him Who is the Eternal Truth, a steadfastness that taketh no account of them whatever. The second is strict observance of the laws He hath prescribed - laws which He hath always ordained, and will continue to ordain, unto men, and through which the truth may be distinguished and separated from falsehood.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 289-290)

CHRIST, AND THE PHARISEES

Christ was considered, by the great mass of the people of His day, to be a 'false prophet'. It is written:

'And here was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, he is a good man; others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.' ***(John 7:12)***

When the simple, humble people went to their religious leaders and asked about the truth of Christ's Mission, they

were told that He was a false prophet. They were warned against Him. Even though Christ showed signs and wonders that attracted people, the leaders still denied Him. This is shown clearly in the words:

'The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?' **(John 7:46-47)**

The great separation between the few who considered Him true and the vast majority who considered Him false is clear from the words of John:

'So there was a division among the people because of him.' **(John 7:43)**

The public was told that only the lowest class believed in Christ, and that the important and influential people who had knowledge, education, and wisdom knew Christ to be false. It was pointed out to those foolish ones who wanted to believe:

'Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?' **(John 7:48)**

It was repeatedly said that only those ignorant ones who didn't know the book of Moses believed in Christ. These people were misled, and as false as Christ, the leaders warned, saying:

'...this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.' **(John 7:49)**

The great public of Palestine did not believe in Jesus of Nazareth because He had not fulfilled their understanding of the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah.

To the followers of Christ who tried to win over their allegiance, the people replied scornfully that He, Christ, was a false prophet. They proved it from the prophecies in their Scriptures.

'The Messiah will sit upon the throne of David,' they pointed out. 'Where is the throne of the Nazarene?'

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p. 201-202)

The Bahá'í writings have shown that His Holiness Jesus Christ had fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament and proved that He was the promised Messiah. However in the days of His life on earth, He was denied, bitterly persecuted and finally crucified.

Although some perceived Him to be a good man, yet there were others who claimed that "He deceiveth the people". Could it be that Christ had not fulfilled their expectations of a prophet, who would be the idol of their own handiwork that they themselves would have conceived? Or perhaps, was it due to their ignorance and lack of understanding of the Truth, and the meaning of the Holy Scriptures that pointed to His coming? Likewise, in His Second coming, there would still be some who would misconceive the Truth of the Holy Scriptures and deny Him again, and consequently, inflict upon Him the torment as had been when He First came to mankind. In Mathew, chapter 17, verses 11 though 13, Jesus points out to the disciples as to how the scriptures had already been misunderstood:

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

It is evidently clear that every prophet has been called false by His own generation. It had been true of Jesus Christ as well, for He, too, was considered by the great mass of the people of His Day as a "false prophet". In John, chapter 7, verse 12, it has been said of Christ:

"for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people."

Even though that Christ was considered "a good man," yet, the leaders (Pharisees) still denied Him. This has been clearly shown in John, chapter 7, verses 45 through 47:

"Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?"

In John, chapter 7, verse 52, the Pharisees also:

"...answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Was not Christ the Promise of the Old Testament, from Whom, the Jews had lamented their separation for centuries? Was not Christ the One foretold to come after Elijah (John the Baptist)? In Malachi, chapter 4, verse 5, it is written:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:"

Would not the Biblical and historical facts suggest that when He came the Second Time, He would still be called a "deceiver" again, and be bitterly persecuted by the people of His generation?

"Reflect, what could have been the motive for such deeds? What could have prompted such behaviour towards the Revealers of the beauty of the All-Glorious? Whatever in days gone by hath been the cause of the denial and opposition of those people hath now led to the perversity of the people of this age. To maintain that the testimony of Providence was incomplete, that it hath therefore been the cause of the denial of the people, is but open blasphemy. How far from the grace of the All-Bountiful and from His loving providence and tender mercies it is to single out a soul from amongst all men for the guidance of His creatures, and, on one hand, to withhold from Him the full measure of His divine testimony, and, on the other, inflict severe retribution on His people for having

turned away from His chosen One! Nay, the manifold bounties of the Lord of all beings have, at all times, through the Manifestations of His divine Essence, encompassed the earth and all that dwell therein. Not for a moment hath His grace been withheld, nor have the showers of His loving-kindness ceased to rain upon mankind."

(Bahá'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 13-14)

LET HIM BE ACCURSED

The spiritual education of mankind has been a long and difficult process. In order that the writings of God's Holy Messengers bear fruit, it is vitally important that they be protected from changes made by mortal man. Such changes could have disastrous consequences by perverting the Divine message. There are many Holy Writings that make this clear. Although mortal man must not change a single word, a Manifestation of God has total authority as to add to, or abrogate former writings.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." ***(Gal 1:8-9)***

"Can ye (O ye men of Faith) entertain the hope that they will believe in you? Seeing that a party of them heard the word of Allah, and perverted it knowingly after they understood it." ***(Qur'án 2:75)***

"Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say: 'This is from Allah,' to traffic with it for a miserable price! Woe to them for what their hands do write, and for the gain they make thereby. And they say: 'The fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days;' Say: 'Have ye taken a promise from Allah for He never breaks His promise? Or is it that ye say of Allah what ye do not know?'" ***(Qur'án 2:79-80)***

“Those who conceal the clear (Signs) We have sent down, and the guidance, after We have made it clear for the people in the book, on them shall be Allah’s curse, and the curse of those entitled to curse.” (*Qur’án 2:159*)

“O thou who hast gone astray!... Produce thou a sign, if thou art one of the truthful. We testify that thou hast cast behind thy back the Law of God, and laid hold on the dictates of thy passions. Nothing, in truth, escapeth His knowledge; He, verily, is the Incomparable, the All-Informed. O heedless one! Harken unto that which the Merciful hath revealed in the Qur’an: ‘Say not to every one who meeteth you with a greeting, “Thou art not a believer.”’ Thus hath He decreed in Whose grasp are the kingdoms of Revelation and of creation, if thou be of them that hearken. Thou hast set aside the commandment of God, and clung unto the promptings of thine own desire. Woe, then, unto thee, O careless one that doubt-est! If thou deniest Me, by what proof canst thou vindicate the truth of that which thou dost possess? Produce it, then, O thou who hast joined partners with God, and turned aside from His sovereignty that hath encompassed the worlds!

“Know thou that he is truly learned who hath acknowledged My Revelation, and drunk from the Ocean of My knowledge, and soared in the atmosphere of My love, and cast away all else besides Me, and taken firm hold on that which hath been sent down from the Kingdom of My wondrous utterance. He, verily, is even as an eye unto mankind, and as the spirit of life unto the body of all creation. Glorified be the All-Merciful Who hath enlightened him, and caused him to arise and serve His great and mighty Cause. Verily, such a man is blessed by the Concourse on high, and by them who dwell within the Tabernacle of Grandeur, who have quaffed My sealed Wine in My Name, the Omnipotent, the All-Powerful. If thou be of them that occupy such a sublime station, produce then a sign from God, the Creator of the heavens. And shouldst thou recognize thy powerlessness, do thou rein in thy passions, and return unto thy Lord, that perchance He may forgive thee thy sins which have caused the leaves of the Divine Lote-Tree to be burnt up, and the Rock to cry out, and the eyes of men of un-

derstanding to weep. Because of thee the Veil of Divinity was rent asunder, and the Ark has foundered, and the She-Camel was hamstrung, and the Spirit (Jesus) groaned in His sublime retreat."

(Baha'u'llah: Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Pages: 82-83)

Woe betide thee, O thou who hast joined partners with God, and woe betide them that have taken thee as their leader, without a clear token or a perspicuous Book.

How numerous the oppressors before thee who have arisen to quench the light of God, and how many the impious who murdered and pillaged until the hearts and souls of men groaned by reason of their cruelty! The sun of justice hath been obscured, inasmuch as the embodiment of tyranny hath been stablished upon the throne of hatred, and yet the people understand not.

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 101)

BELIEVE NOT EVERY SPIRIT

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." ***(I John 4:1)***

Christ knew that this same disbelief would be repeated in the day of His return. He warned His followers not to be misled by outward, physical wonders which might be worked in His name, but to look for the Figure Who would have that humble, loving, in-swelling Spirit.

Whenever a Messenger of God such as Jesus, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Muhammad, the Báb, or Bahá'u'lláh appears, He is considered to be a 'false prophet' by those who are not spiritually awake.

This is not a new problem. It did not begin with Christ or with Bahá'u'lláh. It is as old as the human race.

In that same chapter of Matthew in which Christ so clearly foretold the time of His return, He also gives His strongest warnings about the false prophets in the last days. He says:

‘Wherefore if they shall say unto you, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.’ (**Matthew 24:26**)

It is said that in the fifty years following the crucifixion, many people arose and claimed to be the Messiah, and throughout the centuries many have made this false claim.

In spite of these false prophets and fake Messiahs, Durant, in his *The Age of Faith*, says that the Jewish thinker Maimonides ‘accepted the Messianic hope as an indispensable support to the Jewish spirit in the Dispersion, and made it one of the thirteen principal tenets of the Jewish Faith.’

Although both Christianity and Judaism eagerly awaited the coming of the Messiah, the great mass of believers lost interest and became indifferent, even though in both Faiths the coming Kingdom was spoken of in prayer each day.

And so I asked myself if there were not some positive way in which I could test Bahá’u’lláh to make certain that He was a true prophet, and not a false prophet.

Fortunately, there was a way. It was given us by Christ Himself. He gave all Christians an infallible method by which they could test each prophet that came.

‘Beware of false prophets,’ Christ warned, ‘which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.’ (**Matthew 7:15**)

Christ promised that if we looked for the ‘inward’ truth and not the ‘outward’ appearance, we would know the true from the false...

In the very prophecy in which Christ warns His followers to 'beware of false prophets', He gives them the method by which they can judge the true from the false. He has provided humanity with an unerring standard by which every person can determine for himself whether a prophet is true or false.

I found this standard in the seventh chapter of Matthew. In this one chapter Christ gives the warning concerning false prophets, and gives the measuring rod by which to judge them.

I felt there was no excuse for me, or any other follower of Christ not to know the truth, for it is taken from His famous Sermon on the Mount.

'Beware of false prophets,' He warns, 'which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.'

Therefore, I intended to use this sound basis for judgement. I would do as Christ Himself advised. I would judge Bahá'u'lláh by His fruits. I would measure Bahá'u'lláh according to the standard which Christ had given, knowing that it would prove once and for all whether Bahá'u'lláh had the right to be called the Messiah.

If the fruit is good, the tree is good; and the prophet is true. That would be my test.

I decided to make this one of my most fundamental proofs, for I felt that the solution to The Case of the Missing Millennium depended upon this one proof perhaps more than on any other.

(William Sears, Thief in the Night, pp. 205-208)

The Bahá'í writings reveal that the Scripture in I John, chapter 4, verse 1, clarifies that on the day when a prophet appears in this world, one must "try the spirit" and find, whether or not, He is of God.

In order to distinguish truth from falsehood, as to whether, the spirit is of God, the Scripture in Galatians, chapter 5, verse 22, teaches that one must investigate and find whether the prophet bears the Divine fruit, which are:

"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,"

Among the fruits that Bahá'u'lláh (The Glory of God) in His 40 years of longsuffering, exile, banishment, and imprisonment, revealed to mankind are the following 12 Divine Principles:

ONENESS OF GOD
 ONENESS OF MANKIND
 COMMON FOUNDATION OF ALL RELIGIONS
 INDIVIDUAL SEARCH FOR TRUTH
 ELIMINATION OF PREJUDICE OF ALL KINDS
 UNIVERSAL AUXILIARY LANGUAGE
 EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN
 UNIVERSAL EDUCATION
 HARMONY OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION
 ELIMINATION OF EXTREME OF WEALTH AND POVERTY
 UNIVERSAL PEACE UPHELD BY A WORLD GOVERNMENT
 PROTECTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

And many more, which include over one hundred volumes containing over twelve thousand Tablets and Revelations for the unification of mankind.

MANY SHALL COME IN MY NAME

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.” **(Matt 24:5)**

The New Testament gives warning that ‘no man knoweth (the new name) saving he that receiveth it.’ Obviously it was not going to be any easier to accept the new name in Christ’s second coming than it had been in His first. Only that small group that had correctly read the prophecies and believed in the Messiah in His first coming had accepted the name Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, and only passing centuries brought popularity to the name Christian. Apparently it would be the same in His second coming. In one and the same chapter of Revelation we read:

1. ‘I will write upon him (that overcometh) my new name.’ **(Rev 3: 12)**
2. ‘I will confess his (new) name before my Father...’ **(Rev 3: 5)**
3. ‘I will not blot out his (new) name out of the book of life...’ **(Rev 3: 5)**
4. ‘These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth...I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou...hast not denied my name.’ **(Rev 3: 7-8)**
5. ‘He that hath an ear, let him hear...’ **(Rev 3: 22)**

In these words is the promise that in the day of His return, Christ will be the ‘holy’ and the ‘true’ Messiah, that He will have the ‘key’, and that He will ‘open the door’ to anyone who has ‘ears to hear’, and who will not deny His new name.

I decided to look further behind this ‘open door’.

The clue of the new name required careful study. Christ Himself gives notice that He will come in an unexpected manner, at an unexpected time, and that it will be difficult to re-

cognize Him. He says in the very chapter which promises the new name:

'Be watchful ... If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee.' **(Rev 3: 2-3)**

To those who would cling to His old name, denying the new name, Christ in that same chapter admonishes:

'I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.' **(Rev 3:1)**

As a Christian, I didn't like the idea of a new name at all. In fact, throughout the early part of my investigation I suffered frequently from the pricking of my conscious. This theory of a new name, however clearly it was written in both the Old and the New Testaments, was contrary to everything I had been taught. Still, I had to admit that those words 'If thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief' could not be lightly set aside.

My investigation of this clue of the new name demonstrated clearly that the followers of Christ had been told in unmistakable terms to cast aside all that they held dear in the hour of His second coming, just as they had been forced to do in the day of His first coming, if they hoped to recognize Him and receive His new name.

The evidence showed distinctly that His return would not be according to the beliefs, standards, or expectations of any man. Each individual was warned to seek out the truth for himself, to be among those who 'overcome' the obstacles placed in their path. Each one must look with his own inner eye for the Messiah. It would not be sufficient in the day of Christ's return to go along the old path and call upon Him by His old name, for in the same chapter in which is promised the new name, it is also foretold of God:

'Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.' **(Rev 2: 2)**

Later in that same book of Revelation, it speaks of the 'great day of God Almighty'. Again Christ warns:

'Behold, I come as a thief.' **(Rev 16: 15)**

Then He comforts those with spiritual insight, saying:

'Blessed is he that watcheth ...' **(Rev 16: 15)**

There seemed little doubt that only those who had 'eyes to see' and 'ears to hear' would 'receive' the new name, recognize it, and understand it.

In the midst of this outpouring, so filled with the promise of Christ's second coming, and so laden with warnings that spiritual faculties would be needed to perceive the manner of His coming, the promise of a new name is given yet another time.

This time it speaks not only of the new name, but of the new city, the new Jerusalem of that day. In these words, all those things with which man was then familiar would be changed, just as they had been changed in the day of His first coming. Unless a man could 'overcome' his preconceived ideas, his prejudices, and empty his cup of 'former things', he would not recognize the new name and the new day. If he could set aside all he possessed and believed in, Christ promised him the following blessing:

'He that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.' **(Rev 3: 12)**

The deeper I went into my search, the more I realized that I had a tiger by the tail and couldn't let go. Instead of gradually diminishing the interest The Case of the Missing Millennium steadily gained momentum. But now my most difficult problem was with myself. I had many mental obstacles to overcome. I had to work overtime at being (in the words of Christ) 'him that overcometh', and I didn't like the taste of it at all. I found the story fascinating, but something inside me rebelled. Long years of training at school, Sunday-school and home rose up within me to do battle. I hoped for the moment that all my research would prove to be nothing more than a fascinating story, but I had a nagging suspicion that the fun was only beginning.

I began to laugh at my predicament and to remind myself that I was a detective trying to solve a century-old mystery, and not a Christian trying to defend my beliefs.

Although I was now confident that, according to the Bible, the Messiah would have a new name in the day of His coming, it still did not satisfy me. As a detective in search of facts, it was not sufficient to know that He would be called by a new name. Therefore, I examined the Scriptures with care to see if I might find it.

I made a very welcome discovery; I actually did find a new name by which the Promised One might very well be known. The more I tested it, the firmer it held, and this name was repeated time after time in connection with the prophecies of the time of the end.

It was given so often, that there seemed little doubt that this would be one of the titles by which He, the Messiah, would be known in that day. He would be recognized as the 'Glory of God' or the 'Glory of the Lord'.

Isaiah prophesied that the plain of Sharon and the holy mountain, Carmel, would both be centres for the light and presence of the 'Glory of the Lord' in the last days. He said:

'... the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the Glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.' (**Isa 35: 2**)

Once again in the chapter preceding the one in which he, Isaiah, promises that God will raise up a 'righteous man from the East,' he foretells:

'And the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of God hath spoken it.' (**Isa 40: 5**)

In the next chapter but one Isaiah adds the warning:

'Hear, ye deaf; and look ye blind, that ye may see.' (**Isa 42: 18**)

One group among the millennial scholars of the 1844 period was so certain that the 'Glory of God' would appear on the side of Mount Carmel, as foretold by Isaiah, that they sold all they owned and sailed for the Holy Land.

This group was originally under the leadership of Leonard H. Kelber. Their home was in Germany, where they were known as Templars. They were disillusioned when Christ did not appear, as expected, between 1843 and 1845, so they abandoned their former life and settled at the foot of Mount Carmel to await the great day of His coming.

They were positive that the 'Glory of God' would appear on the side of Mount Carmel. Their study of the Scriptures assured them that this promise would be kept. In the stone arches above their doorways, they chiseled the words which held their hopes:

DER HERR IST NAHE (The Lord is near).

Further search uncovered additional evidence that the title 'Glory of the Lord' or 'Glory of God' would be the new name by which the Messiah could be identified in the latter days.

The Book of Revelation, which, as we have already seen, gave the date of 844 (1260) for the end of the 'times of the Gentiles', and which promised a new name and the new city, also confirms the name or title of Him Who will be the central Light of that new city of God. St. John declares:

'And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem ... and the city had no need of the sun ... for the Glory of God did lighten it.'
(Rev 21:2,23)

Christ Himself links the hour of His return with this same wondrous Figure 'the Glory of the Lord' or the 'Glory of God'. He promises that in the last days He will appear in this very likeness of God, and in His glory:

'For the Son of man shall come in the Glory of his Father.'
(Matt 16:27)
(William Sears, Thief in the Night, p. 34-40)

Since A.D. 1844 (1260 A.H. of the Islamic Lunar Calendar), many followers of Bahá'u'lláh (The Glory of God) have suffered bitter persecution, and been put to death by the Muslim clerics in Iran (Persia). These clerics believe that the process of divine revelation ended with Prophet Muhammad, and that any assertion to the contrary represented apostasy, punishable by death.

As a result, many Bahá'ís in Iran have been compelled to flee their homeland seeking refuge for safety in the other parts of the world.

"And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:" **(Isaiah 65:15)**

"The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam (Persia)...saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might... and will scatter them... and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come...And I will set my throne

in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith the LORD. But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD.”
(Jer 49:34-39)

YE SHALL NOT ADD UNTO THE WORD

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”
(Deut 4:2)

The Bahá’i Faith has revealed that the utterance of Moses in Deuteronomy, chapter 4, verse 2:

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you,”

has been interpreted by the Jewish clergy as to purport the finality, and ending of the Word of God and His Prophets, that after Moses, no Prophet should have been sent of God. Not surprisingly, the process of divine revelation did not come to a standstill with Moses, for according to His final blessing before death (Deut 33:2), after Him, came other Divine Manifestations Who both abrogated and added to the laws of His Dispensation: The Christ, Muhammad, The Báb, and Bahá’u’lláh.

The chain of successive divine revelations was a theme of Moses in THE OLD TESTAMENT. In Deuteronomy, chapter 33, verse 2, Moses spoke to the Israelites of the signs which accurately foretold the advent of future Dispensations, the High Prophets, Who would each become the Founder and Inaugurator of yet another cycle of divine civilization, conducive to the restructuring of the life of man upon earth:

“And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he Shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.”

"Mount Sinai," is where Moses revealed THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, "Mount Seir," is where Jesus Christ revealed His Sermon on the Mount, "Mount Paran," located in the Arabian Peninsula, is where Muhammad revealed His Divine Message (Habakkuk 3:3 speaks of "the Holy One from mount Paran.",) "he came with ten thousands of saints," prophesied the coming of The Báb(1) and His followers, and, "from his right hand went a fiery law for them," prophesied the Advent of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh: The Most Holy Book (Kitab-i-Aqdas).

1. The Forerunner and Herald of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

...how many Revealers of the light everlasting, have appeared since the time of Moses, and yet Israel, wrapt in the densest veils of satanic fancy and false imaginings, is still expectant that the idol of her own handiwork will appear with such signs as she herself hath conceived!

(Bahá'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Page: 18)

...all the Prophets of God, whenever made manifest unto the peoples of the world, have invariably foretold the coming of yet another Prophet after them, and have established such signs as would herald the advent of the future Dispensation. To this the records of all sacred books bear witness.

(Bahá'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 12-13)

Say: O leaders of religion! Weigh not the Book of God with such standards and sciences as are current amongst you, for the Book itself is the unerring Balance established amongst men. In this most perfect Balance whatsoever the peoples and kindreds of the earth possess must be weighed, while the measure of its weight should be tested according to its own standard, did ye but know it.

(Bahá'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, Page: 56)

But as to the Jewish doctors, Christian priests and monks who read those Books, verily, they know the letter only and they utter the words, as parrots, without understanding their inner meanings. They comprehend them not, because they are engrossed in worldly desires and lusts and their hearts are attached to mundane allurements. Verily, are they not

heedless of God and understand nothing and find not the right path?

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i World Faith*, Page: 391)

In a similar fashion, as in the days of the Mosaic Dispensation (Deut 4:2), the utterance of Jesus Christ in the Revelation of St. John, chapter 22, verse 18:

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book,"

has been interpreted by the Christian clerics as to purport the finality of the Word of God and His Prophets, that after Jesus Christ, no Prophet should have been sent of God. Like Moses, successive divine revelation was yet a theme of Jesus Christ in THE NEW TESTAMENT, for He said:

"I go away, and come again unto you." **(John 14:28)**

The Bahá'í writings reveal that with this utterance, Jesus Christ dispelled the doubts and misunderstandings as to the Truth that His coming was not the last to be expected, and that, neither His revelation to be the last 'of the prophecy of this book,' for He had 'yet many things to say,' which He did not, since, in His Day, no one around Him could yet bear and comprehend their inner meanings:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." **(John 16:12)**

Know of a certainty that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation hath been vouchsafed unto men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity. Consider the sun. How feeble its rays the moment it appeareth above the horizon. How gradually its warmth and potency increase as it approacheth its zenith, enabling meanwhile all created things to adapt themselves to the growing intensity of its light. How steadily it declineth until it reacheth its setting point. Were it, all of

a sudden, to manifest the energies latent within it, it would, no doubt, cause injury to all created things.... In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to reveal, at the earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty hath bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light. Dismayed and overpowered, they would cease to exist.

(Bahá'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 87-88)

Lastly, in a fashion similar as to both the Dispensations of Moses (Deut 4:2), and Jesus Christ (Rev 22:18), the utterance of Prophet Muhammad in the Qur'án, chapter 33, verse 40:

"Muhammad... (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets:,"

has been interpreted by the Moslem clerics as to claiming that Qur'án is the final Book, and the final testimony of God and His Prophets. For by virtue of this verse: "(he is) the... Seal of the Prophets," they believe that the coming of Prophet Muhammad has sealed both the cycle of the Prophethood, as well as the cycle of the Messengership, this to mean that, after Muhammad, no Prophet and Messenger should have been sent of God.

But, continuous divine revelation was yet a theme of Muhammad, the Apostle of God, when He came to the peoples of the world, like Moses and Jesus Christ, testifying, and proclaiming as to the Truth that the process of divine revelation is never to be ended, nor exhausted.

The Bahá'í writings reveal that the Divine teachings of Prophet Muhammad denies the concept of finality. This upon His bestowal of the glad tidings of future Messengers Who would come after Him 'rehearsing my signs unto you':

"O ye children of Adam! whenever there come to you Messengers from amongst you, rehearsing my signs unto you, those who are righteous and mend (their lives), on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve." (*Qur'án 7:35*)

In another Surah, He furthermore admonishes that 'the Words of Allah,' would not 'be exhausted (in the writing)':

"...if all the trees on earth were pens and the Ocean (were ink), with seven Oceans behind it to add to its (supply), yet would not the Words of Allah be exhausted (in the writing): for Allah is Exalted in power, Full of Wisdom." (*Qur'án 31:27*)

This, for the Divine Truth that 'Allah...has power to create the like of them (anew)':

"See they not that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, has power to create the like of them (anew)? Only He has decreed a term appointed, of which there is no doubt." (*Qur'án 17:99*)

It is evident that every age in which a Manifestation of God hath lived is divinely ordained, and may, in a sense, be characterized as God's appointed Day. This Day, however, is unique, and is to be distinguished from those that have preceded it. The designation "Seal of the Prophets" fully revealeth its high station. The Prophetic Cycle hath, verily, ended. The Eternal Truth is now come. He hath lifted up the Ensign of Power, and is now shedding upon the world the unclouded splendor of His Revelation.

(Baha'u'llah: *Gleanings*, Page: 60)

Baha'u'llah cautions people "of insight" not to allow their interpretations of the Holy Scriptures to prevent them from recognizing the Manifestation of God. Followers of each religion have tended to allow their devotion to its Founder to cause them to perceive His Revelation as the final Word of God and to deny the possibility of the appearance of any subsequent Prophet. This has been the case of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Baha'u'llah denies the validity of this concept of

finality both in relation to past Dispensations and to His own. With regard to Muslims, He wrote in the *Kitab-i-Iqan* that the "people of the Qur'an ... have allowed the words 'Seal of the Prophets' to veil their eyes", "to obscure their understanding, and deprive them of the grace of all His manifold bounties". He affirms that "this theme hath ... been a sore test unto all mankind", and laments the fate of "those who, clinging unto these words, have disbelieved in Him Who is their true Revealer". The Báb refers to this same theme when He warns: "Let not names shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is their Lord, even the name Prophet, for such a name is but a creation of His utterance."

(Baha'u'llah: Aqdas: Notes, Pages: 243-244)

Contemplate with thine inward eye the chain of successive Revelations that hath linked the Manifestation of Adam with that of the Báb. I testify before God that each one of these Manifestations hath been sent down through the operation of the Divine Will and Purpose, that each hath been the bearer of a specific Message, that each hath been entrusted with a divinely-revealed Book and been commissioned to unravel the mysteries of a mighty Tablet. The measure of the Revelation with which every one of them hath been identified had been definitely fore-ordained. This, verily, is a token of Our favor unto them, if ye be of those that comprehend this truth.... And when this process of progressive Revelation culminated in the stage at which His peerless, His most sacred, and exalted Countenance was to be unveiled to men's eyes, He chose to hide His own Self behind a thousand veils, lest profane and mortal eyes discover His glory. This He did at a time when the signs and tokens of a divinely-appointed Revelation were being showered upon Him - signs and tokens which none can reckon except the Lord, your God, the Lord of all worlds. And when the set time of concealment was fulfilled, We sent forth, whilst still wrapt within a myriad veils, an infinitesimal glimmer of the effulgent Glory enveloping the Face of the Youth, and lo, the entire company of the dwellers of the Realms above were seized with violent commotion and the favored of God fell down in adoration before Him. He hath, verily, manifested a glory such as none in the whole creation hath witnessed,

inasmuch as He hath arisen to proclaim in person His Cause unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.

(Baha'u'llah: *Gleanings*, Pages: 74-75)

Religion is the outer expression of the divine reality. Therefore, it must be living, vitalized, moving and progressive. If it be without motion and nonprogressive, it is without the divine life; it is dead. The divine institutes are continuously active and evolutionary; therefore, the revelation of them must be progressive and continuous. All things are subject to reformation. This is a century of life and renewal. Sciences and arts, industry and invention have been reformed. Law and ethics have been reconstituted, reorganized. The world of thought has been regenerated. Sciences of former ages and philosophies of the past are useless today. Present exigencies demand new methods of solution; world problems are without precedent. Old ideas and modes of thought are fast becoming obsolete. Ancient laws and archaic ethical systems will not meet the requirements of modern conditions, for this is clearly the century of a new life, the century of the revelation of reality and, therefore, the greatest of all centuries. Consider how the scientific developments of fifty years have surpassed and eclipsed the knowledge and achievements of all the former ages combined. Would the announcements and theories of ancient astronomers explain our present knowledge of the suns and planetary systems? Would the mask of obscurity which beclouded medieval centuries meet the demand for clear-eyed vision and understanding which characterizes the world today? Will the despotism of former governments answer the call for freedom which has risen from the heart of humanity in this cycle of illumination? It is evident that no vital results are now forthcoming from the customs, institutions and standpoints of the past. In view of this, shall blind imitations of ancestral forms and theological interpretations continue to guide and control the religious life and spiritual development of humanity today? Shall man, gifted with the power of reason, unthinkingly follow and adhere to dogma, creeds and hereditary beliefs which will not bear the analysis of reason in this century of effulgent reality? Unquestionably this will not satisfy men of science, for when they find premise

or conclusion contrary to present standards of proof and without real foundation, they reject that which has been formerly accepted as standard and correct and move forward from new foundations.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 140-141)**

The Dispensation of Baha'u'llah will last until the coming of the next Manifestation of God, Whose advent will not take place before at least "a full thousand years" will have elapsed. Baha'u'llah cautions against ascribing to "this verse" anything other than its "obvious meaning", and in one of His Tablets, He specifies that "each year" of this thousand year period consists of "twelve months according to the Qur'an, and of nineteen months of nineteen days each, according to the Bayan⁶".

The intimation of His Revelation to Baha'u'llah in the Siyah-Chal of Tihiran⁷, in October 1852, marks the birth of His Prophetic Mission and hence the commencement of the one thousand years or more that must elapse before the appearance of the next Manifestation of God.

(Baha'u'llah: *Aqdas: Notes*, Pages: 195-196)

6 *The Holy Book of the Báb - "Prophet and Herald of the Faith of Baha'u'llah, Founder of the Dispensation marking the culmination of the six thousand year old Adamic Cycle, Inaugurator of the five thousand century Baha'i Cycle."* (Shoghi Effendi: *Citadel of Faith*, Page: 80)

7 *The notorious "Siya'h-Cha'l," "the Black Pit," a deep, vermin-infested dungeon which had been created in one of the city's abandoned reservoirs.*

Chapter 9: The Fruits of the Tree of Life

THE TREE OF LIFE

The tree of life is the highest degree of the world of existence: the position of the Word of God, and the supreme Manifestation.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Page: 124)

Truth may be likened to the sun! The sun is the luminous body that disperses all shadows; in the same way does truth scatter the shadows of our imagination. As the sun gives life to the body of humanity so does truth give life to their souls. Truth is a sun that rises from different points on the horizon. Sometimes the sun rises from the centre of the horizon, then in summer it rises farther north, in winter farther south - but it is always the self-same sun, however different are the points of its rising.

In like manner truth is one, although its manifestations may be very different. Some men have eyes and see. These worship the sun, no matter from which point on the horizon it may dawn; and when the sun has left the winter sky to appear in the summer one, they know how to find it again. Others there are who worship only the spot from which the sun arose, and when it arises in its glory from another place they remain in contemplation before the spot of its former rising. Alas! these men are deprived of the blessings of the sun. Those who in truth adore the sun itself will recognize it from whatsoever dawning-place it may appear, and will straightway turn their faces towards its radiance.

We must adore the sun itself and not merely the place of its appearance. In the same way men of enlightened heart worship truth on whatever horizon it appears. They are not bound by personality, but they follow the truth, and are able to recognize it no matter from whence it may come. It is this same truth which helps humanity to progress, which gives life to all created beings, for it is the Tree of Life!

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 127-128)

The sun emanates from itself and does not draw its light from other sources. The divine teachers have the innate light; they have knowledge and understanding of all things in the universe; the rest of the world receives its light from them and through them the arts and sciences are revived in each age.

Abraham and Moses went to no school; Jesus had neither school nor master; Mohammed never had a lesson; the Báb and Baha'u'llah had no professors. Read the books written by Baha'u'llah - the philosophers and savants in the Orient will bear witness to his eloquence and learning. In the Orient this is considered a proof of his divinity. There they say, "If some one can write a letter like Baha'u'llah, Baha'u'llah's divinity can be denied." No one has yet competed.

How can those who depend on mortals be divine messengers? How can a lamp which has to be lighted be eternal? The

divine teacher does not come to acquire knowledge, for this tree of life is a fruit tree by birth and not through grafting. Behold the sacred tree which spreads its shade over the whole world! This is the mission of Baha'u'llah - for under this tree all questions are solved!

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 53)

He is the King, the All-Knowing, the Wise! Lo, the Nightingale of Paradise singeth upon the twigs of the Tree of Eternity, with holy and sweet melodies, proclaiming to the sincere ones the glad tidings of the nearness of God, calling the believers in the Divine Unity to the court of the Presence of the Generous One, informing the severed ones of the message which hath been revealed by God, the King, the Glorious, the Peerless, guiding the lovers to the seat of sanctity and to this resplendent beauty. Verily this is that Most Great Beauty, foretold in the book of the Messengers, through Whom truth shall be distinguished from error and the wisdom of every command shall be tested. Verily He is the Tree of Life that bringeth forth the fruits of God, the Exalted, the Powerful, the Great.

(Baha'u'llah, *Tablet of Ahmad*)

It is not reasonable that man should hold to the old tree, claiming that its life forces are undiminished, its fruit unequalled, its existence eternal. The seed of reality must be sown again in human hearts in order that a new tree may grow therefrom and new divine fruits refresh the world. By this means the nations and peoples now divergent in religion will be brought into unity, imitations will be forsaken and a universal brotherhood in the reality itself will be established. Warfare and strife will cease among mankind; all will be reconciled as servants of God. For all are sheltered beneath the tree of His providence and mercy. God is kind to all; He is the giver of bounty to all alike, even as His Holiness Jesus Christ has declared that God "sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"; that is to say, the mercy of God is universal. All humanity is under the protection of His love and favor, and unto all He has pointed the way of guidance and progress.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 226)

Thou hast written of a verse in the Gospels, asking if at the time of Christ all souls did hear His call. Know that faith is of two kinds. The first is objective faith that is expressed by the outer man, obedience of the limbs and senses. The other faith is subjective, and unconscious obedience to the will of God. There is no doubt that, in the day of a Manifestation such as Christ, all contingent beings possessed subjective faith and had unconscious obedience to His Holiness Christ.

For all parts of the creational world are of one whole. Christ the Manifestor reflecting the divine Sun represented the whole. All the parts are subordinate and obedient to the whole. The contingent beings are the branches of the tree of life while the Messenger of God is the root of that tree. The branches, leaves and fruit are dependent for their existence upon the root of the tree of life. This condition of unconscious obedience constitutes subjective faith. But the discerning faith that consists of true knowledge of God and the comprehension of divine words, of such faith there is very little in any age. That is why His Holiness Christ said to His followers, "Many are called but few are chosen."

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 364)

O ye beloved ones of God! The manifestation of the Light of Unity is for binding together the people of the world. If this unity is not attained, the tree of life is made fruitless, the heavenly bounty is not utilized. The blessed blood (of the saints) was shed for bringing about unity and harmony. These souls gave their lives as sacrifice in order to produce the love that bindeth the hearts of all the people. Therefore, ye should all spend your efforts in uniting and reconciling (the people), so that the light of God's love may permeate the universe.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1*, p. 21)

O thou blossom on the Tree of Life! Happy art thou to have girded thy loins in service; to have risen with all thy power in the promulgation of the divine teachings, to have convened gatherings and to have striven for the exaltation of the Word of God.

In this mortal world every important matter hath an end; and every remarkable achievement a termination; none having permanent existence. For instance, consider how the important achievements of the ancient world have been totally exterminated and not a trace remaineth therefrom save the great Cause of the Kingdom of God, which hath no beginning and will have no end. Atmost, it is only renewed. At the beginning of each renewal it commandeth no attention in the sight of the people, but when once definitely established, it will daily advance and in its daily exaltation will reach the supreme heavens.

For instance, consider the day of Christ, which was the day of the renewal of the Kingdom of God. The people of the world attached no importance to it and did not realize its significance to such an extent that the sepulchre of Christ remained lost and unknown for three hundred years, until the maidservant of God, Helen, the mother of Constantine arrived and discovered the sacred spot.

My purpose in all this is to show how unobservant are the people of the world and how ignorant, and on the day of the establishment of the Kingdom, they remain heedless and negligent.

Erelong the power of the Kingdom will encompass all the world and then they will be awakened and will cry and lament over those who were oppressed and martyred, and will sigh and moan. Such is the nature of people.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 310)

Say: O people! The Tree of Life hath verily been planted in the heart of the heavenly paradise and bestoweth life in every direction. How can ye fail to perceive and recognize it? It will in truth aid thee to grasp all that this well-assured Soul hath disclosed unto thee of the essence of the divine mysteries. The Dove of holiness warbleth in the heaven of immortality and admonisheth thee to array thyself with a new vesture, wrought of steel to shield thee from the shafts of doubt con-

cealed in the allusions of men, saying: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." (*John 3:5-7*)

Wing then thy flight unto this divine Tree and partake of its fruits. Gather up that which hath fallen therefrom and guard it faithfully.

(*Bahá'u'lláh, Gems of Divine Mysteries, p. 52*)

The laws and ordinances that constitute the major theme of this Book, Bahá'u'lláh, moreover, has specifically characterized as "the breath of life unto all created things", as "the mightiest stronghold", as the "fruits" of His "Tree", as "the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples", as "the lamps of His wisdom and loving-providence", as "the sweet-smelling savour of His garment", and the "keys" of His "mercy" to His creatures. "This Book", He Himself testifies, "is a heaven which We have adorned with the stars of Our commandments and prohibitions." "Blessed the man", He, moreover, has stated, "who will read it, and ponder the verses sent down in it by God, the Lord of Power, the Almighty. Say, O men! Take hold of it with the hand of resignation... By My life! It hath been sent down in a manner that amazeth the minds of men. Verily, it is My weightiest testimony unto all people, and the proof of the All-Merciful unto all who are in heaven and all who are on earth." And again: "Blessed the palate that savoureth its sweetness, and the perceiving eye that recognizeth that which is treasured therein, and the understanding heart that comprehendeth its allusions and mysteries.

By God! Such is the majesty of what hath been revealed therein, and so tremendous the revelation of its veiled allusions that the loins of utterance shake when attempting their description." And finally: "In such a manner hath the Kitáb-i-Aqdas been revealed that it attracteth and embraceth all the divinely appointed Dispensations. Blessed those who peruse it! Blessed those who apprehend it! Blessed those who meditate

upon it! Blessed those who ponder its meaning! So vast is its range that it hath encompassed all men ere their recognition of it. Ere long will its sovereign power, its pervasive influence and the greatness of its might be manifested on earth."

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, p. 15)

O My Friends!

Have ye forgotten that true and radiant morn, when in those hallowed and blessed surroundings ye were all gathered in My presence beneath the shade of the tree of life, which is planted in the all-glorious paradise? Awestruck ye listened as I gave utterance to these three most holy words:

O friends! Prefer not your will to Mine, never desire that which I have not Desired for you, and approach Me not with lifeless hearts, defiled with worldly desires and cravings. Would ye but sanctify your souls, ye would at this present hour recall that place and those surroundings, and the truth of My utterance should be made evident unto all of you.

The 'true and radiant morn', 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated, refers to the Revelation of the Báb, the 'tree of life' to Bahá'u'lláh, and the 'hallowed and blessed surroundings' to the heart of the individual. He further explained that the gathering referred to in this verse was not a physical but a spiritual one. The call of God was raised within the sanctuary of their hearts; but they did not respond and were bewildered and awestruck.

In other Tablets, 'Abdu'l-Bahá interpreted the meaning of the gathering beneath the shade of the 'tree of life' as the establishment of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. 'The Lord, the All-Glorified,' in the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'hath, beneath the shade of the Tree of Anisa [tree of life], made a new Covenant and established a great Testament...' That this Covenant was established at so early a stage in the ministry of Bahá'u'lláh is one of the mysteries of Divine Revelation. Indeed, in a Tablet 'Abdu'l-Bahá stated that when the day-star of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh dawned upon humanity, the first ray which shed its light upon those gathered beneath the 'tree of life' was that of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.

Another passage in The Hidden Words which refers to this Covenant is the following:

O My Friends!

Call ye to mind that covenant ye have entered into with Me upon Mount Paran, situate within the hallowed precincts of Zaman. I have taken to witness the concourse on high¹ and the dwellers in the city of eternity, yet now none do I find faithful unto the covenant. Of a certainty pride and rebellion have effaced it from the hearts, in such wise that no trace thereof remaineth. Yet knowing this, I waited and disclosed it not.

'Abdu'l-Bahá has stated that the covenant upon Mount Paran refers to the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh which was written by the Exalted Pen in the Holy Land and which was announced there after His ascension.

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 1, p. 80)

Bahá'u'lláh refers to Himself as the 'Nightingale of Paradise', the 'Most Great Beauty' and the 'Tree of Life' and proclaims His august station to those who are pure in heart; He announces the advent of the Day of God and clearly indicates that he who attains His presence has entered the presence of God.

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 2, p. 115)

Blessed art thou for keeping firm in the Cause of God. I pray God to give thee a divine spirit, spiritual blood and to make thee a growing and thriving leaf on the Tree of Life, so that thou mayest serve the maid-servants of God in fragrance and spirituality.

Thy generous Lord will confirm thee in serving in His great vineyard and will make thee an instrument for spreading the spirit of concord and union among the maid-servants of the Merciful, will open thine insight by the light of knowledge and forgive thee thy sins and change them to good deeds. Verily the Lord is the Forgiving, the Merciful and Possessor of Great Bounty! ***(Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 89)***

¹ The gathering of the holy souls in the next world

O leaf upon the Tree of Life! The Tree of Life, of which mention is made in the Bible, is Bahá'u'lláh, and the daughters of the Kingdom are the leaves upon that blessed Tree. Then thank thou God that thou hast become related to that Tree, and that thou art flourishing, tender and fresh.

The gates of the Kingdom are opened wide, and every favoured soul is seated at the banquet table of the Lord, receiving his portion of that heavenly feast. Praised be God, thou too art present at this table, taking thy share of the bountiful food of heaven. Thou art serving the Kingdom, and art well acquainted with the sweet savours of the Abha Paradise.

Then strive thou with all thy might to guide the people, and eat thou of the bread that hath come down from heaven. For this is the meaning of Christ's words: 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven ... he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.'²

(Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 57)

'Abdu'l-Bahá is day and night thinking of you and mentioning you, for the friends of God are dear to Him. Every morning at dawn I supplicate the Kingdom of God and ask that you may be filled with the breath of the Holy Spirit, so that you may become brilliant candles, shine with the light of guidance and dispel the darkness of error. Rest assured that the confirmations of the Abha Kingdom will continuously reach you.

Through the power of the divine springtime, the downpour of the celestial clouds and the heat of the Sun of Reality, the tree of life is just beginning to grow. Before long, it will produce buds, bring forth leaves and fruits, and cast its shade over the East and the West. This Tree of Life is the Book of the Covenant.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 429)

2 1 John 6:51, 58

O thou confident leaf!

Thank thou God that thou hast been guided by the light of guidance and illumined by the brilliance of the Supreme Concourse, kindled by the fire of the love of God and hath directed thyself to His Kingdom, partook of the heavenly table and enjoyed the fruits of the Tree of Life!

(Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v3, p. 510)

Thank God that in such a cycle ye have stepped into the plane of existence, attained the glory of the Lord of the Kingdom, obtained light from the Sun of Truth and were ushered in under the shadow of the Tree of Life in the paradise of joy.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 49)

MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOUSE



The Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it . And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (***Isaiah 2:2-4***)

...Mt. Carmel, "the Hill of God and His Vineyard", the "Mountain of the Lord", to which "all nations shall flow"; faced by the plain of 'Akká, which Muhammad called the "Banquet-Hall of God" and that city it whose whiteness", He said, "is pleasing unto God", that city of which Bahá'u'lláh wrote: "Upon Our arrival We were welcomed with banners of light, whereupon the Voice of the Spirit cried out saying: 'Soon will all that dwell on earth be enlisted under these banners' "; in the neighbourhood of not only the Shrine of the Báb, which Shoghi Effendi associated with the words of Bahá'u'lláh in the Tablet of Carmel when He described "the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favoured of God, the pure in heart, and the company of the most exalted angels"...

(Custodians, Ministry of the Custodians, p. 385)

The arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in 'Akká, signaling the long-awaited fulfilment of the prophecies of the advent of the Lord of Hosts in the Holy Land, opens a new chapter of glorious consummation in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

(Adib Taherzadeh, The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 3, p. xvi)

All the peoples of the world are awaiting two Manifestations, Who must be contemporaneous; all wait for the fulfillment of this promise. In the Bible the Jews have the promise of the Lord of Hosts and the Messiah; in the Gospel the return of Christ and Elijah is promised.

In the religion of Muhammad there is the promise of the Mihdi and the Messiah, and it is the same with the Zoroastrian and the other religions, but if we relate these matters in detail, it would take too long. The essential fact is that all are promised two Manifestations, Who will come, one following on the other. It has been prophesied that in the time of these two Manifestations the earth will be transformed, the world of existence will be renewed, and beings will be clothed in new garments. Justice and truth will encompass the world; enmity and hatred will disappear; all causes of division among peoples, races and nations will vanish; and the cause of union, harmony and concord will appear. The negligent will awake, the blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dumb will speak, the sick will be cured, the dead will arise. War will give place to peace, enmity will be conquered by love, the causes of dispute and wrangling will be entirely removed, and true felicity will be attained. The world will become the mirror of the Heavenly Kingdom; humanity will be the Throne of Divinity. All nations will become one; all religions will be unified; all individual men will become of one family and of one kindred. All the regions of the earth will become one; the superstitions caused by races, countries, individuals, languages and politics will disappear; and all men will attain to life eternal, under the shadow of the Lord of Hosts.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, Page: 39)

Time and again this question hath arisen, and its answer hath emanated in a clear and irrefutable statement from the pen of `Abdu'l-Bahá, that what is meant in the prophecies by the `Lord of Hosts' and the `Promised Christ' is the Blessed Perfection (Bahá'u'lláh) and His holiness the Exalted One (the Báb).

(Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Baha'u'llah, p. 139)

This is the day when the Lord of hosts hath come on the clouds of glory. This is the day in which the inhabitants of the world shall enter under the tent of the word of God. This is the day whose real sovereign is His Highness the Almighty. This is the day when the east and the west shall embrace each other like unto two lovers; war and contention shall be forgotten

and nations and governments shall enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This century is the fulfillment of the promised century, the dawn of the appearances of the glorious visions of past prophets and sages.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 37)

"As I live, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts, Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come." **(Jeremiah 46:18)**

"It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD [The Glory of God (Bahá'u'lláh)], and the excellency of our God." **(Isaiah 35:2)**

"Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holypeople, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." **(Isaiah 62:11-12)**

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." **(Isaiah 9:6-7)**

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father,

inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:" **(Matt 25:31-34)**

"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." **(Isaiah 11:4-5)**

"The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley..." **(Joel 3:16-18)**

"And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead." **(Jeremiah 50:19)**

"So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD (The Glory of God: Bahá'u'lláh) filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places." **(Ezekiel 43:5-7)**

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with

them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (**Rev 21:3-4**)

That 'Abdu'l-Bahá is not a Manifestation of God, that He gets His light, His inspiration and sustenance direct from the Fountain-head of the Bahá'í Revelation; that He reflects even as a clear and perfect Mirror the rays of Bahá'u'lláh's glory, and does not inherently possess that indefinable yet all-pervading reality the exclusive possession of which is the hallmark of Prophethood; that His words are not equal in rank, though they possess an equal validity with the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh; that He is not to be acclaimed as the return of Jesus Christ, the Son Who will come "in the glory of the Father"... My name is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My qualification is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My reality is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My praise is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem, and servitude to all the human race my perpetual religion... No name, no title, no mention, no commendation have I, nor will ever have, except 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This is my longing. This is my greatest yearning. This is my eternal life. This is my everlasting glory.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 139)

HEALING OF THE NATIONS



Fountain on the Terrace, at the Threshold to the Shrine of The Báb on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:” **(John 17:22)**

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” **(Matt 5:9)**

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” **(Rev 22:1)**

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” **(Rev 22:2)**

“Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit...Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” **(Matt 7:17,20)**

The most glorious fruit of the tree of knowledge is this exalted word: Of one tree are all ye the fruit, and of one bough the leaves. Let not man glory in this that he loveth his country, let him rather glory in this that he loveth his kind. Concerning this We have previously revealed that which is the means of the reconstruction of the world and the unity of nations. Blessed are they that attain thereunto. Blessed are they that act accordingly.

(Baha’u’llah: Tablets of Baha’u’llah, Pages: 127-128)

Observe ye the injunctions laid upon you by Him Who is the Dawning-place of Utterance. The sincere among His servants will regard the precepts set forth by God as the Water of Life to the followers of every faith, and the Lamp of wisdom and loving providence to all the denizens of earth and heaven.

(Baha’u’llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, Page: 29)

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith.

(Baha’u’llah: Proclamation of Baha’u’llah, Page: 67)

Look ye not upon the present, fix your gaze upon the times to come. In the beginning, how small is the seed, yet in the end it is a mighty tree. Look ye not upon the seed, look ye upon the tree, and its blossoms, and its leaves and its fruits. Consider the days of Christ, when none but a small band followed Him; then observe what a mighty tree that seed became, behold ye its fruitage. And now shall come to pass even greater things than these, for this is the summons of the Lord of Hosts, this is the trumpet-call of the living Lord, this is the anthem of world peace, this is the standard of righteousness and trust and understanding raised up among all the variegated peoples of the globe; this is the splendour of the Sun of Truth, this is the holiness of the spirit of God Himself. This most powerful of dispensations will encompass all the earth,

and beneath its banner will all peoples gather and be sheltered together. Know then the vital import of this tiny seed that the true Husbandman hath, with the hands of His mercy, sown in the ploughed fields of the Lord, and watered with the rain of bestowals and bounties and is now nurturing in the heat and light of the Day-Star of Truth.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 82)

All nations will become one; all religions will be unified; all individual men will become of one family and of one kindred. All the regions of the earth will become one; the superstitions caused by races, countries, individuals, languages and politics will disappear; and all men will attain to life eternal, under the shadow of the Lord of Hosts.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, p. 39)

The Principle Teachings of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh (The Glory of God) are based upon the following 12 Divine fruits:

ONENESS OF GOD

ONENESS OF MANKIND

COMMON FOUNDATION OF ALL RELIGIONS

INDIVIDUAL SEARCH FOR TRUTH

ELIMINATION OF PREJUDICE OF ALL KINDS

UNIVERSAL AUXILIARY LANGUAGE

EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

UNIVERSAL EDUCATION

HARMONY OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

ELIMINATION OF EXTREME OF WEALTH AND POVERTY

UNIVERSAL PEACE UPHELD BY A WORLD GOVERNMENT

PROTECTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Bahá'u'lláh wrote some twelve thousand Tablets in which He expounded these Principles and many more, thus guiding humanity towards a glorious future in which the Unity of the human family will finally be established.

HE WILL TEACH US OF HIS WAYS



View of the Universal House of Justice at the Bahá'í World Center, Haifa, Israel: "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD... and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his path:" (Isa 2:3)

The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh

All the divine principles announced by the tongue of the Prophets of the past are to be found in the words of Baha'u'llah; but in addition to these He has revealed certain new teachings which are not found in any of the sacred Books of former times. I shall mention some of them; the others, which are many in number, may be found in the Books, Tablets and Epistles written by Baha'u'llah - such as the Hidden Words, the Glad Tidings, the Words of Paradise, Tajalliyat, Tarazat and others. Likewise, in the Kitab-i-Aqdas there are new teachings which cannot be found in any of the past Books or Epistles of the Prophets.

A fundamental teaching of Baha'u'llah is the oneness of the world of humanity. Addressing mankind, He says, "Ye are all leaves of one tree and the fruits of one branch." By this it is meant that the world of humanity is like a tree, the nations or peoples are the different limbs or branches of that tree, and the individual human creatures are as the fruits and blossoms thereof. In this way Baha'u'llah expressed the oneness of humankind, whereas in all religious teachings of the past the human world has been represented as divided into two parts: one known as the people of the Book of God, or the pure tree, and the other the people of infidelity and error, or the evil tree. The former were considered as belonging to the faithful, and the others to the hosts of the irreligious and infidel - one part of humanity the recipients of divine mercy, and the other the object of the wrath of their Creator. Baha'u'llah removed this by proclaiming the oneness of the world of humanity, and this principle is specialized in His teachings, for He has submerged all mankind in the sea of divine generosity. Some are asleep; they need to be awakened. Some are ailing; they need to be healed. Some are immature as children; they need to be trained. But all are recipients of the bounty and bestowals of God.

Another new principle revealed by Baha'u'llah is the injunction to investigate truth - that is to say, no man should blindly follow his ancestors and forefathers. Nay, each must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears and investigate the truth himself in order that he may follow the truth instead of blind acquiescence and imitation of ancestral beliefs.

Baha'u'llah has announced that the foundation of all the religions of God is one, that oneness is truth and truth is oneness which does not admit of plurality. This teaching is new and specialized to this Manifestation.

He sets forth a new principle for this day in the announcement that religion must be the cause of unity, harmony and agreement among mankind. If it is the cause of discord and hostility, if it leads to separation and creates conflict, the absence of religion would be preferable in the world.

Furthermore, He proclaims that religion must be in harmony with science and reason. If it does not conform to science and reconcile with reason, it is superstition. Down to the present day it has been customary for man to accept a religious teaching, even though it was not in accord with human reason and judgment. The harmony of religious belief with reason is a new vista which Baha'u'llah has opened for the soul of man.

He establishes the equality of man and woman. This is peculiar to the teachings of Baha'u'llah, for all other religions have placed man above woman.

A new religious principle is that prejudice and fanaticism - whether sectarian, denominational, patriotic or political - are destructive to the foundation of human solidarity; therefore, man should release himself from such bonds in order that the oneness of the world of humanity may become manifest.

Universal peace is assured by Baha'u'llah as a fundamental accomplishment of the religion of God - that peace shall prevail among nations, governments and peoples, among religions, races and all conditions of mankind. This is one of the special characteristics of the Word of God revealed in this Manifestation.

Baha'u'llah declares that all mankind should attain knowledge and acquire an education. This is a necessary principle of religious belief and observance, characteristically new in this dispensation.

He has set forth the solution and provided the remedy for the economic question. No religious Books of the past Prophets speak of this important human problem.

He has ordained and established the House of Justice, which is endowed with a political as well as a religious function, the consummate union and blending of church and state. This institution is under the protecting power of Baha'u'llah Himself. A universal, or international, House of Justice shall also be organized. Its rulings shall be in accordance with the

commands and teachings of Baha'u'llah, and that which the Universal House of Justice ordains shall be obeyed by all mankind. This international House of Justice shall be appointed and organized from the Houses of Justice of the whole world, and all the world shall come under its administration.

As to the most great characteristic of the revelation of Baha'u'llah, a specific teaching not given by any of the Prophets of the past: It is the ordination and appointment of the Center of the Covenant. By this appointment and provision He has safeguarded and protected the religion of God against differences and schisms, making it impossible for anyone to create a new sect or faction of belief. To ensure unity and agreement He has entered into a Covenant with all the people of the world, including the interpreter and explainer of His teachings, so that no one may interpret or explain the religion of God according to his own view or opinion and thus create a sect founded upon his individual understanding of the divine Words. The Book of the Covenant or Testament of Baha'u'llah is the means of preventing such a possibility, for whosoever shall speak from the authority of himself alone shall be degraded. Be ye informed and cognizant of this. Beware lest anyone shall secretly question or deny this to you. There are some people of self-will and desire who do not communicate their intentions to you in clear language. They envelop their meanings in secret statements and insinuations. For instance, they praise a certain individual, saying he is wise and learned, that he was glorified in the presence of Baha'u'llah, conveying this to you in an insidious way or by innuendos. Be ye aware of this! Be awakened and enlightened! For Christ has said that no one hides the lamp under a bushel. The purport of my admonition is that certain people will endeavor to influence you in the direction of their own personal views and opinions. Therefore, be upon your guard in order that none may assail the oneness and integrity of Baha'u'llah's Cause. Praise be to God! Baha'u'llah left nothing unsaid. He explained everything. He left no room for anything further to be said. Yet there are some who for the sake of personal interest and prestige will attempt to sow the seeds of sedition and disloyalty among you. To protect and safeguard the religion of God from this and all

other attack, the Center of the Covenant has been named and appointed by Baha'u'llah. Therefore, if anyone should set forth a statement in praise or recognition of another than this appointed Center, you must ask him to produce a written proof of the authority he follows. Let him show you a trace from the pen of the Center of the Covenant Himself, substantiating his praise and support of any other than the rightful one. Inform him that you are not permitted to accept the words of everyone. Say to him, "It is possible to love and praise a person today, to accept and follow another tomorrow and still another next day. Therefore, we cannot afford to listen to this or that individual. Where are your proofs and writings? Where is your authority from the pen of the Center of the Covenant?"

My purpose is to explain to you that it is your duty to guard the religion of God so that none shall be able to assail it outwardly or inwardly. If you find harmful teachings are being set forth by some individual, no matter who that individual be, even though he should be my own son, know, verily, that I am completely severed from him. If anyone speaks against the Covenant, even though he should be my son, know that I am opposed to him. Those who speak falsehoods, who covet worldly things and seek to accumulate the riches of this earth are not of me. But when you find a person living up to the teachings of Baha'u'llah, following the precepts of the Hidden Words, know that he belongs to Baha'u'llah; and, verily, I proclaim that he is of me. If, on the other hand, you see anyone whose deeds and conduct are contrary to and not in conformity with the good pleasure of the Blessed Perfection and against the spirit of the Hidden Words, let that be your standard and criterion of judgment against him, for know that I am altogether severed from him no matter who he may be. This is the truth.

The teachings of Baha'u'llah are boundless and illimitable. You have asked me what new principles have been revealed by Him. I have mentioned a few only. There are many others, but time does not permit their mention tonight. I, therefore, pray to God that you may be strengthened in good deeds. I pray

that God may confirm you in order that you may live according to the teachings of Baha'u'llah. Upon ye be Baha'u'l-Abha!
(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 453-457)*

Seven Lights of Unity

In one of His Tablets Abdu'l-Baha, elucidating further His noble theme, reveals the following:

"In cycles gone by, though harmony was established, yet, owing to the absence of means, the unity of all mankind could not have been achieved. Continents remained widely divided, nay even among the peoples of one and the same continent association and interchange of thought were well nigh impossible. Consequently intercourse, understanding and unity amongst all the peoples and kindreds of the earth were unattainable. In this day, however, means of communication have multiplied, and the five continents of the earth have virtually merged into one.... In like manner all the members of the human family, whether peoples or governments, cities or villages, have become increasingly interdependent. For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education, are being strengthened every day. Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved. Verily this is none other but one of the wonders of this wondrous age, this glorious century. Of this past ages have been deprived, for this century - the century of light - has been endowed with unique and unprecedented glory, power and illumination. Hence the miraculous unfolding of a fresh marvel every day. Eventually it will be seen how bright its candles will burn in the assemblage of man.

"Behold how its light is now dawning upon the world's darkened horizon. The first candle is unity in the political realm, the early glimmerings of which can now be discerned. The second candle is unity of thought in world undertakings, the consummation of which will ere long be witnessed. The third candle is unity in freedom which will surely come to pass. The

fourth candle is unity in religion which is the corner-stone of the foundation itself, and which, by the power of God, will be revealed in all its splendor. The fifth candle is the unity of nations - a unity which in this century will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland. The sixth candle is unity of races, making of all that dwell on earth peoples and kindreds of one race. The seventh candle is unity of language, i.e., the choice of a universal tongue in which all peoples will be instructed and converse. Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization."

(Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 38-39)

The Coming of Age of the Human Race

We have appointed two signs for the coming of age of the human race.

The first sign of the coming of age of humanity referred to in the Writings of Baha'u'llah is the emergence of a science which is described as that "divine philosophy" which will include the discovery of a radical approach to the transmutation of elements. This is an indication of the splendours of the future stupendous expansion of knowledge.

Concerning the "second" sign which Baha'u'llah indicates to have been revealed in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, Shoghi Effendi states that Baha'u'llah, "...in His Most Holy Book, has enjoined the selection of a single language and the adoption of a common script for all on earth to use, an injunction which, when carried out, would, as He Himself affirms in that Book, be one of the signs of the 'coming of age of the human race'".

Further insight into this process of mankind's coming of age and proceeding to maturity is provided by the following statement of Baha'u'llah:

One of the signs of the maturity of the world is that no one will accept to bear the weight of kingship. Kingship will remain with none willing to bear alone its weight. That day will be the day whereon wisdom will be manifested among mankind.

The coming of age of the human race has been associated by Shoghi Effendi with the unification of the whole of mankind, the establishment of a world commonwealth, and an unprecedented stimulus to "the intellectual, the moral and spiritual life of the entire human race".

(Baha'u'llah: Aqdas: Notes, Pages: 250-251)

The Unification of Mankind

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Baha'u'llah, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve center of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate. A world language

will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will cooperate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be coordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and cooperation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast

resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation - such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

(Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 203-204)

A Prescription for Healing

O ye the elected representatives of the people in every land! Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind, and bettereth the condition thereof, if ye be of them that scan heedfully. Regard the world as the human body which, though at its creation whole and perfect, hath been afflicted, through various causes, with grave disorders and maladies. Not for one day did it gain ease, nay its sickness waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of ignorant physicians, who gave full rein to their personal desires, and have erred grievously. And if, at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before. Thus informeth you the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

We behold it, in this day, at the mercy of rulers so drunk with pride that they cannot discern clearly their own best advantage, much less recognize a Revelation so bewildering and challenging as this. And whenever any one of them hath striven to improve its condition, his motive hath been his own gain, whether confessedly so or not; and the unworthiness of this motive hath limited his power to heal or cure.

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the

power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 65-68)

Counsels and Admonitions

The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the ninth leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is this:

In all matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil. Consider the civilization of the West, how it hath agitated and alarmed the peoples of the world. An infernal engine hath been devised, and hath proved so cruel a weapon of destruction that its like none hath ever witnessed or heard. The purging of such deeply-rooted and overwhelming corruptions cannot be effected unless the peoples of the world unite in pursuit of one common aim and embrace one universal faith. Incline your ears unto the Call of this Wronged One and adhere firmly to the Lesser Peace.

Strange and astonishing things exist in the earth but they are hidden from the minds and the understanding of men. These things are capable of changing the whole atmosphere of the earth and their contamination would prove lethal. Great God! We have observed an amazing thing. Lightning or a force similar to it is controlled by an operator and moveth at his command. Immeasurably exalted is the Lord of Power Who hath laid bare that which He purposed through the potency of His weighty and invincible command.

O people of Baha! Each one of the ordinances We have revealed is a mighty stronghold for the preservation of the world of being. Verily, this Wronged One desireth naught but your security and elevation.

We exhort the men of the House of Justice and command them to ensure the protection and safeguarding of men, women and children. It is incumbent upon them to have the utmost regard for the interests of the people at all times and under

all conditions. Blessed is the ruler who succoureth the captive, and the rich one who careth for the poor, and the just one who secureth from the wrong doer the rights of the downtrodden, and happy the trustee who observeth that which the Ordainer, the Ancient of Days hath prescribed unto him.

...My counsels and admonitions have compassed the world. Yet, instead of imparting joy and gladness they have caused grief, because some of those who claim to love Me have waxed haughty and have inflicted upon Me such tribulations as neither the followers of former religions nor the divines of Persia did ever inflict.

We have said: `My imprisonment doeth Me no harm, nor do the things that have befallen Me at the hands of My enemies. That which harmeth Me is the conduct of my loved ones who, though they bear My name, yet commit that which maketh My heart and My pen to lament.' Such utterances as these have again and again been revealed, yet the heedless have failed to profit thereby, since they are captive to their own evil passions and corrupt desires. Beseech thou the One true God that He may enable everyone to repent and return unto Him. So long as one's nature yieldeth unto evil passions, crime and transgression will prevail. We cherish the hope that the hand of divine power and the outpouring of heavenly blessings may sustain all men, may attire them with the vesture of forgiveness and bounty and guard them against that which would harm His Cause among His servants. He is, in truth, the Potent, the All-Powerful, and He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Merciful.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 69-70)

VERITIES OF A DIVINE CIVILIZATION

It is incumbent upon everyone to observe God's holy commandments, inasmuch as they are the wellspring of life unto the world.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 126)

Here are, very briefly explained, some of the principles of Baha'u'llah. In short, it behoves us all to be lovers of truth. Let us seek her in every season and in every country, being careful never to attach ourselves to personalities. Let us see the light wherever it shines, and may we be enabled to recognize the light of truth no matter where it may arise. Let us inhale the perfume of the rose from the midst of thorns which surround it; let us drink the running water from every pure spring.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 133-134)

Association with others

...consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship, to proclaim that which the Speaker on Sinai hath set forth and to observe fairness in all matters. They that are endued with sincerity and faithfulness should associate with all the peoples and kindreds of the earth with joy and radiance, inasmuch as consorting with people hath promoted and will continue to promote unity and concord, which in turn are conducive to the maintenance of order in the world and to the regeneration of nations. Blessed are such as hold fast to the cord of kindness and tender mercy and are free from animosity and hatred.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 35-36)

Sharing and Sacrifice

O son of man! If thine eyes be turned towards mercy, forsake the things that profit thee and cleave unto that which will profit mankind. And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbour that which thou chooseth for thyself. Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power, whilst pride abaseth him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 64)

And among the teachings of Baha'u'llah is voluntary sharing of one's property with others among mankind. This voluntary sharing is greater than equality, and consists in this, that man should not prefer himself to others, but rather should sacrifice his life and property for others. But this should not be introduced by coercion so that it becomes a law and man is compelled to follow it. Nay, rather, man should voluntarily and of his own choice sacrifice his property and life for others, and spend willingly for the poor...

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, Page: 302)

Tolerance and Righteousness

This Wronged One exhorteth the peoples of the world to observe tolerance and righteousness, which are two lights amidst the darkness of the world and two doors for the edification of mankind. Happy are they who have attained thereto and woe betide the heedless.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 36)

Goodly Character

A good character is, verily, the best mantle for men from God. With it He adorneth the temples of His loved ones. By My life! The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof. Whoso attaineth unto it is accounted as a jewel among men. The glory and the upliftment of the world must needs depend upon it. A goodly character is a means whereby men are guided to the Straight Path and are led to the Great Announcement. Well is it with him who is adorned with the saintly attributes and character of the Course on High.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 36)

In all matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 69)

Evil Passions

Ye have been forbidden to commit murder or adultery, or to engage in backbiting or calumny; shun ye, then, what hath been prohibited in the holy Books and Tablets.

(Baha'u'llah: *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, Page: 26)

Ye are forbidden to commit adultery, sodomy and lechery. Avoid them, O concourse of the faithful. By the righteousness of God! Ye have been called into being to purge the world from the defilement of evil passions. This is what the Lord of all mankind hath enjoined upon you, could ye but perceive it. He who relateth himself to the All-Merciful and committeth satanic deeds, verily he is not of Me. Unto this beareth witness every atom, pebble, tree and fruit, and beyond them this ever-proclaiming, truthful and trustworthy Tongue. The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct...

(Baha'u'llah: *A Chaste and Holy Life*, Pages: 57-62)

O CHILDREN OF NEGLIGENCE AND PASSION!

Ye have suffered My enemy to enter My house and have cast out My friend, for ye have enshrined the love of another than Me in your hearts. Give ear to the sayings of the Friend and turn towards His paradise. Worldly friends, seeking their own good, appear to love one the other, whereas the true Friend hath loved and doth love you for your own sakes; indeed He hath suffered for your guidance countless afflictions. Be not disloyal to such a Friend, nay rather hasten unto Him. Such is the day-star of the word of truth and faithfulness, that hath dawned above the horizon of the pen of the Lord of all names. Open your ears that ye may hearken unto the word of God, the Help in peril, the Self-existent.

O QUINTESSENCE OF PASSION!

Put away all covetousness and seek contentment; for the covetous hath ever been deprived, and the contented hath ever been loved and praised.

Trustworthiness

Verily it is the door of security for all that dwell on earth and a token of glory on the part of the All-Merciful. He who partaketh thereof hath indeed partaken of the treasures of wealth and prosperity. Trustworthiness is the greatest portal leading unto the tranquillity and security of the people. In truth the stability of every affair hath depended and doth depend upon it. All the domains of power, of grandeur and of wealth are illumined by its light.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 37)

Act of Charity

Charity is pleasing and praiseworthy in the sight of God and is regarded as a prince among goodly deeds. Consider ye and call to mind that which the All-Merciful hath revealed in the Qur'an: `They prefer them before themselves, though poverty be their own lot. And with such as are preserved from their own covetousness shall it be well.'³ Viewed in this light, the blessed utterance above is, in truth, the day-star of utterances. Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself. Verily, such a man is reckoned, by virtue of the Will of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, with the people of Baha who dwell in the Crimson Ark.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 71)

Poverty and Riches

O CHILDREN OF DUST!

Tell the rich of the midnight sighing of the poor, lest heedlessness lead them into the path of destruction, and deprive them of the Tree of Wealth. To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.

3 Qur'an 59:9

O SON OF MY HANDMAID!

Be not troubled in poverty nor confident in riches, for poverty is followed by riches, and riches are followed by poverty. Yet to be poor in all save God is a wondrous gift, belittle not the value thereof, for in the end it will make thee rich in God, and thus thou shalt know the meaning of the utterance, "In truth ye are the poor," and the holy words, "God is the all-possessing," shall even as the true morn break forth gloriously resplendent upon the horizon of the lover's heart, and abide secure on the throne of wealth.

O YE THAT PRIDE YOURSELVES ON MORTAL RICHES!

Know ye in truth that wealth is a mighty barrier between the seeker and his desire, the lover and his beloved. The rich, but for a few, shall in no wise attain the court of His presence nor enter the city of content and resignation. Well is it then with him, who, being rich, is not hindered by his riches from the eternal kingdom, nor deprived by them of imperishable dominion. By the Most Great Name! The splendor of such a wealthy man shall illuminate the dwellers of heaven even as the sun enlightens the people of the earth!

O YE RICH ONES ON EARTH!

The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease.

O SON OF PASSION!

Cleanse thyself from the defilement of riches and in perfect peace advance into the realm of poverty; that from the well-spring of detachment thou mayest quaff the wine of immortal life.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Pages: 49-55)

Seclusion and Asceticism

O people of the earth! Living in seclusion or practicing asceticism is not acceptable in the presence of God. It behoveth them that are endued with insight and understanding to observe that which will cause joy and radiance. Such practices

as are sprung from the loins of idle fancy or are begotten of the womb of superstition ill beseem men of knowledge. In former times and more recently some people have been taking up their abodes in the caves of the mountains while others have repaired to graveyards at night. Say, give ear unto the counsels of this Wronged One. Abandon the things current amongst you and adopt that which the faithful Counsellor bid-deth you. Deprive not yourselves of the bounties which have been created for your sake.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 71)

Vision and Perception

We cherish the hope that through the loving-kindness of the All-Wise, the All-Knowing, obscuring dust may be dispelled and the power of perception enhanced, that the people may discover the purpose for which they have been called into being. In this Day whatsoever serveth to reduce blindness and to increase vision is worthy of consideration. This vision acteth as the agent and guide for true knowledge. Indeed in the estimation of men of wisdom keenness of understanding is due to keenness of vision.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 35)

Acquisition of Knowledge

Knowledge is as wings to man's life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone. The knowledge of such sciences, however, should be acquired as can profit the peoples of the earth, and not those which begin with words and end with words. Great indeed is the claim of scientists and craftsmen on the peoples of the world. Unto this beareth witness the Mother Book on the day of His return. Happy are those possessed of a hearing ear. In truth, knowledge is a veritable treasure for man, and a source of glory, of bounty, of joy, of exaltation, of cheer and gladness unto him. Thus hath the Tongue of Grandeur spoken in this Most Great Prison. **(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 51-52)**

The Gift of Wisdom

The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the fifth leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is this: Above all else, the greatest gift and the most wondrous blessing hath ever been and will continue to be wisdom. It is man's unfailing Protector. It aideth him and strengtheneth him. Wisdom is God's Emissary and the Revealer of His Name the Omniscient. Through it the loftiness of man's station is made manifest and evident. It is all-knowing and the foremost Teacher in the school of existence. It is the Guide and is invested with high distinction. Thanks to its educating influence earthly beings have become imbued with a gem-like spirit which outshineth the heavens.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 66)

Individual Search for Truth

Another new principle revealed by Baha'u'llah is the injunction to investigate truth - that is to say, no man should blindly follow his ancestors and forefathers. Nay, each must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears and investigate the truth himself in order that he may follow the truth instead of blind acquiescence and imitation of ancestral beliefs.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Page: 454)

Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 267)

Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being,

strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breathe the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. Whoso followeth this counsel will break his chains asunder, will taste the abandonment of enraptured love, will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 321)

The Knowledge of God

The first Tajalli which hath dawned from the Day-Star of Truth is the knowledge of God - exalted be His glory. And the knowledge of the King of everlasting days can in no wise be attained save by recognizing Him Who is the Bearer of the Most Great Name. He is, in truth, the Speaker on Sinai Who is now seated upon the throne of Revelation. He is the Hidden Mystery and the Treasured Symbol. All the former and latter Books of God are adorned with His praise and extol His glory. Through Him the standard of knowledge hath been planted in the world and the ensign of the oneness of God hath been unfurled amidst all peoples. Attainment unto the Divine Presence can be realized solely by attaining His presence. Through His potency everything that hath, from time immemorial, been veiled and hidden, is now revealed. He is made manifest through the power of Truth and hath uttered a Word whereby all that are in the heavens and on the earth have been dumb-founded, except those whom the Almighty was pleased to exempt. True belief in God and recognition of Him cannot be complete save by acceptance of that which He hath revealed and by observance of whatsoever hath been decreed by Him and set down in the Book by the Pen of Glory.

They that immerse themselves in the ocean of His utterances should at all times have the utmost regard for the divinely-revealed ordinances and prohibitions. Indeed His ordinances constitute the mightiest stronghold for the protection of

te world and its safeguarding of its peoples - a light upon those who acknowledge and recognize the truth, and a fire unto such as turn away and deny.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 50)

Steadfastness in Belief

The second Tajalli is to remain steadfast in the Cause of God - exalted be His glory - and to be unswerving in His love. And this can in no wise be attained except through full recognition of Him; and full recognition cannot be obtained save by faith in the blessed words: 'He doeth whatsoever He willeth.' Whoso tenaciously cleaveth unto this sublime word and drinketh deep from the living waters of utterance which are inherent therein, will be imbued with such a constancy that all the books of the world will be powerless to deter him from the Mother Book. O how glorious is this sublime station, this exalted rank, this ultimate purpose!

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 51)

Breath of the Holy Spirit

It is only by the breath of the Holy Spirit that spiritual development can come about. No matter how the material world may progress, no matter how splendidly it may adorn itself, it can never be anything but a lifeless body unless the soul is within, for it is the soul that animates the body; the body alone has no real significance. Deprived of the blessings of the Holy Spirit the material body would be inert.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Page: 133)

Religion and Politics

Religion is concerned with things of the spirit, politics with things of the world. Religion has to work with the world of

thought, whilst the field of politics lies with the world of external conditions.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 132-133)

Purpose of Religion

The purpose of religion as revealed from the heaven of God's holy Will is to establish unity and concord amongst the peoples of the world; make it not the cause of dissension and strife. The religion of God and His divine law are the most potent instruments and the surest of all means for the dawning of the light of unity amongst men. The progress of the world, the development of nations, the tranquillity of peoples, and the peace of all who dwell on earth are among the principles and ordinances of God. Religion bestoweth upon man the most precious of all gifts, offereth the cup of prosperity, imparteth eternal life, and showereth imperishable benefits upon mankind. It behoveth the chiefs and rulers of the world, and in particular the Trustees of God's House of Justice, to endeavour to the utmost of their power to safeguard its position, promote its interests and exalt its station in the eyes of the world. In like manner it is incumbent upon them to enquire into the conditions of their subjects and to acquaint themselves with the affairs and activities of the divers communities in their dominions. We call upon the manifestations of the power of God - the sovereigns and rulers on earth - to besithemselves and do all in their power that haply they may banish discord from this world and illumine it with the light of concord.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 129-130)

Religion should unite all hearts and cause wars and disputes to vanish from the face of the earth, give birth to spirituality, and bring life and light to each heart. If religion becomes a cause of dislike, hatred and division, it were better to be without it, and to withdraw from such a religion would be a truly religious act. For it is clear that the purpose of a remedy is to cure; but if the remedy should only aggravate the complaint it had better be left alone.

Any religion which is not a cause of love and unity is no religion. All the holy prophets were as doctors to the soul; they gave prescriptions for the healing of mankind; thus any remedy that causes disease does not come from the great and supreme Physician.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Page: 130)

It is incumbent upon everyone to firmly adhere to and observe that which hath streamed forth from Our Most Exalted Pen. God, the True One, beareth Me witness, and every atom in existence is moved to testify that such means as lead to the elevation, the advancement, the education, the protection and the regeneration of the peoples of the earth have been clearly set forth by Us and are revealed in the Holy Books and Tablets by the Pen of Glory.

We entreat God to graciously aid His servants. What this Wronged One doth expect from everyone is justice and fairness. Let no one be content with mere hearing; rather doth it behove everyone to ponder that which this Wronged One hath revealed. I swear by the Day-Star of utterance, shining above the horizon of the Kingdom of the All-Merciful, had there been any expounder or speaker discernible, We would not have made Ourselves the object of the censure, ridicule and slander of the people.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 130-131)

Education of Children

The Pen of Glory counselleth everyone regarding the instruction and education of children. Behold that which the Will of God hath revealed upon Our arrival in the Prison City and recorded in the Most Holy Book.(1) Unto every father hath been enjoined the instruction of his son and daughter in the art of reading and writing and in all that hath been laid down in the Holy Tablet. He that putteth away that which is commanded unto him, the Trustees are then to take from him that which is required for their instruction, if he be wealthy, and if not the matter devolveth upon the House of Justice. Verily,

have We made it a shelter for the poor and needy. He that bringeth up his son or the son of another, it is as though he hath brought up a son of Mine; upon him rest My Glory, My Loving-Kindness, My Mercy, that have compassed the world.

1. Kitab-i-Aqdas.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 128)

Child education is a matter of the utmost importance. The infant, while yet a suckling, must receive Baha'i training, and the loving spirit of Christ and Baha'u'llah must be breathed into him, that he may be reared in accord with the verities of the Gospel and the Most Holy Book. (From a Tablet - translated from the Persian)

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Education, Page: 266)

You must attach the greatest importance to the education of children, for this is the foundation of the Law of God, and the bedrock of the edifice of His Faith.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Education, Page: 6 Children and Religion)

The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the eighth leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is the following: Schools must first train the children in the principles of religion, so that the Promise and the Threat recorded in the Books of God may prevent them from the things forbidden and adorn them with the mantle of the commandments; but this in such a measure that it may not injure the children by resulting in ignorant fanaticism and bigotry.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 68)

The Uphold of Religion

The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the second leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is the following: The Pen of the Most High exhorteth, at this moment, the manifestations of authority and the sources of power, namely the kings, the sovereigns, the presidents, the rulers, the divines and the wise, and enjoineth them to uphold the cause of religion, and to cleave unto it. Religion is verily the chief

instrument for the establishment of order in the world and of tranquillity amongst its peoples. The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the foolish and emboldened them and made them more arrogant. Verily I say: The greater the decline of religion, the more grievous the waywardness of the ungodly. This cannot but lead in the end to chaos and confusion. Hear Me, O men of insight, and be warned, ye who are endued with discernment!

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 63-64)

When the Day-Star of Wisdom rose above the horizon of God's Holy Dispensation it voiced this all-glorious utterance: They that are possessed of wealth and invested with authority and power must show the profoundest regard for religion. In truth, religion is a radiant light and an impregnable stronghold for the protection and welfare of the peoples of the world, for the fear of God impelleth man to hold fast to that which is good, and shun all evil. Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue, and the lights of fairness and justice, of tranquillity and peace cease to shine. Unto this will bear witness every man of true understanding.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 125)

The Fear of God

The fear of God hath ever been a sure defence and a safe stronghold for all the peoples of the world. It is the chief cause of the protection of mankind, and the supreme instrument for its preservation. Indeed, there existeth in man a faculty which deterreth him from, and guardeth him against, whatever is unworthy and unseemly, and which is known as his sense of shame. This, however, is confined to but a few; all have not possessed and do not possess it.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 63)

In this Revelation the hosts that can render it victorious are the hosts of praiseworthy deeds and upright character. The leader and commander of these hosts hath ever been the fear

of God, a fear that encompasseth all things and reigneth over all things.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 126)

Justice and Fairness

The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the fourth leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is the following: O people of God! Beseech ye the True One - glorified be His Name - that He may graciously shield the manifestations of dominion and power from the suggestions of self and desire and shed the radiance of justice and guidance upon them.

The faults of kings, like their favours, can be great. A king who is not deterred by the vainglory of power and authority from observing justice, nor is deprived of the splendours of the day-star of equity by luxury, riches, glory or the marshalling of hosts and legions shall occupy a high rank and a sublime station amongst the Concourse on high. It is incumbent upon everyone to extend aid and to manifest kindness to so noble a soul. Well is it with the king who keepeth a tight hold on the reins of his passion, restraineth his anger and preferreth justice and fairness to injustice and tyranny.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 65)

Governments should fully acquaint themselves with the conditions of those they govern, and confer upon them positions according to desert and merit. It is enjoined upon every ruler and sovereign to consider this matter with the utmost care that the traitor may not usurp the position of the faithful, nor the despoiler rule in the place of the trustworthy. Among the officials who in the past have governed in this Most Great Prison some, praise be to God, were adorned with justice, but as to others, We take refuge with God. We beseech the One true God to guide them one and all, that haply they may not be deprived of the fruit of faith and trustworthiness, nor be withheld from the light of equity and justice.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 127)

It beseemeth you to fix your gaze under all conditions upon justice and fairness. In The Hidden Words this exalted utterance hath been revealed from Our Most August Pen: `O Son of Spirit! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbour. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behoveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.'

They that are just and fair-minded in their judgement occupy a sublime station and hold an exalted rank. The light of piety and uprightness shineth resplendent from these souls. We earnestly hope that the peoples and countries of the world may not be deprived of the splendours of these two luminaries.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 36-37)

The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the sixth leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is the following: The light of men is Justice. Quench it not with the contrary winds of oppression and tyranny. The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among men. The ocean of divine wisdom surgeth within this exalted word, while the books of the world cannot contain its inner significance. Were mankind to be adorned with this raiment, they would behold the day-star of the utterance, `On that day God will satisfy everyone out of His abundance,⁴ shining resplendent above the horizon of the world. Appreciate ye the value of this utterance; it is a noble fruit that the Tree of the Pen of Glory hath yielded. Happy is the man that giveth ear unto it and observeth its precepts. Verily I say, whatever is sent down from the heaven of the Will of God is the means for the establishment of order in the world and the instrument for promoting unity and fellowship among its peoples. Thus hath the Tongue of this Wronged One spoken from His Most Great Prison.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 66-67)

4 Qur'an 4:129

The Most Great Peace

We have enjoined upon all mankind to establish the Most Great Peace - the surest of all means for the protection of humanity. The sovereigns of the world should, with one accord, hold fast thereunto, for this is the supreme instrument that can ensure the security and welfare of all peoples and nations. They, verily, are the manifestations of the power of God and the daysprings of His authority. We beseech the Almighty that He may graciously assist them in that which is conducive to the well-being of their subjects.

A full explanation regarding this matter hath been previously set forth by the Pen of Glory; well is it with them that act accordingly.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 126)

The Reign of Law

The Law must reign, and not the individual; thus will the world become a place of beauty and true brotherhood will be realized. Having attained solidarity, men will have found truth.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Page: 132)

The House of Justice

He has ordained and established the House of Justice, which is endowed with a political as well as a religious function, the consummate union and blending of church and state. This institution is under the protecting power of Baha'u'llah Himself. A universal, or international, House of Justice shall also be organized. Its rulings shall be in accordance with the commands and teachings of Baha'u'llah, and that which the Universal House of Justice ordains shall be obeyed by all mankind.

This international House of Justice shall be appointed and organized from the Houses of Justice of the whole world, and all the world shall come under its administration.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 455)**



View of the Universal House of Justice at the Baha'i World Center on Mt. Carmel, Haifa, Israel, which began its service in 1963.

It is incumbent upon the Trustees of the House of Justice to take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book, and to enforce that which is agreeable to them. God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth, and He, verily, is the Provider, the Omniscient.

(Baha'u'llah: *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, Page: 68)

This passage, now written by the Pen of Glory, is accounted as part of the Most Holy Book: The men of God's House of Justice have been charged with the affairs of the people. They, in truth, are the Trustees of God among His servants and the daysprings of authority in His countries.

O people of God! That which traineth the world is Justice, for it is upheld by two pillars, reward and punishment. These two pillars are the sources of life to the world. Inasmuch as for each day there is a new problem and for every problem an expedient solution, such affairs should be referred to the House of Justice that the members thereof may act according to the needs and requirements of the time. They that, for the sake of God, arise to serve His Cause, are the recipients of divine inspiration from the unseen Kingdom. It is incumbent upon all to be obedient unto them. All matters of State should be referred to the House of Justice, but acts of worship must be observed according to that which God hath revealed in His Book.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 128-129)

The gift of Consultation

The Great Being saith: The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion. Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 168)

The purpose of consultation is to show that the views of several individuals are assuredly preferable to one man, even as the power of a number of men is of course greater than the power of one man. Thus consultation is acceptable in the presence of the Almighty, and hath been enjoined upon the believers, so that they may confer upon ordinary and personal matters, as well as on affairs which are general in nature and universal.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Consultation, Pages: 97-98)

Promotion of Unity

From the beginning of time the light of unity hath shed its divine radiance upon the world, and the greatest means for

the promotion of that unity is for the peoples of the world to understand one another's writing and speech. In former Epistles We have enjoined upon the Trustees of the House of Justice either to choose one language from among those now existing or to adopt a new one, and in like manner to select a common script, both of which should be taught in all the schools of the world. Thus will the earth be regarded as one country and one home.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 127)

Unity in Diversity

The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the seventh leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is this: O ye men of wisdom among nations! Shut your eyes to estrangement, then fix your gaze upon unity. Cleave tenaciously unto that which will lead to the well-being and tranquillity of all mankind. This span of earth is but one homeland and one habitation. It behoveth you to abandon vainglory which causeth alienation and to set your hearts on whatever will ensure harmony. In the estimation of the people of Baha man's glory lieth in his knowledge, his upright conduct, his praiseworthy character, his wisdom, and not in his nationality or rank. O people of the earth! Appreciate the value of this heavenly word. Indeed it may be likened unto a ship for the ocean of knowledge and a shining luminary for the realm of perception.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 67-68)

Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruit, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and

glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas and convictions of the children of men.

(Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Baha'u'llah*, Page: 42)

When a person becomes a Baha'i, he gives up the past only in the sense that he is a part of this new and living Faith of God, and must seek to pattern himself, in act and thought, along the lines laid down by Baha'u'llah. The fact that he is by origin a Jew or a Christian, a black man or a white man, is not important any more, but, as you say, lends color and charm to the Baha'i community in that it demonstrates unity in diversity.

(Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, Page: 9)

The People of Baha

O people of Baha! Ye are the dawning-places of the love of God and the daysprings of His loving-kindness. Defile not your tongues with the cursing and reviling of any soul, and guard your eyes against that which is not seemly. Set forth that which ye possess. If it be favourably received, your end is attained; if not, to protest is vain. Leave that soul to himself and turn unto the Lord, the Protector, the Self-Subsisting. Be not the cause of grief, much less of discord and strife. The hope is cherished that ye may obtain true education in the shelter of the tree of His tender mercies and act in accordance with that which God desireth. Ye are all the leaves of one tree and the drops of one ocean.

(Baha'u'llah: *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, Page: 129)

TABLET ON PURITY

Cleanliness and sanctity in all conditions are characteristics of pure beings and necessities of free souls. The first perfection consists in cleanliness and sanctity and in purity

from every defect. When man in all conditions is pure and immaculate, he will become the center of the reflection of the manifest Light. In all his actions and conduct there must first be purity, then beauty and independence. The channel must be cleansed before it is filled with sweet water. The pure eye comprehendeth the sight and the meeting of God; the pure nostril inhaleth the perfumes of the rose-garden of bounty; the pure heart becometh the mirror of the beauty of truth. This is why, in the heavenly Books, the divine counsels and commands have been compared to water. So, in the Qur'án it is said, "and we have caused a pure water to descend from heaven;" and in the Gospel, "Except a man hath received the baptism of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Then it is evident that the divine teachings are the heavenly grace and the showers of the mercy of God, which purify the hearts of men.

The meaning is, in all conditions, cleanliness and sanctity, purity and delicacy exalt humanity and make the contingent beings progress. Even when applied to physical things, delicacy causeth the attainment of spirituality, as it is established in the Holy Scriptures.

External cleanliness, although it is but a physical thing, hath a great influence upon spirituality. For example, although sound is but the vibrations of the air which affect the tympanum of the ear, and vibrations of the air are but an accident among the accidents which depend upon the air, consider how much marvelous notes or a charming song influence the spirits! A wonderful song giveth wings to the spirit and filleth the heart with exaltation. To return to the subject, the fact of having a pure and spotless body likewise exerciseth an influence upon the spirit of man.

Now, see how much purity is approved in the Court of God, that it should be especially mentioned in the Holy Books of the Prophets. So the Holy Books forbid the eating of any unclean thing, or the use of anything which is not pure. Certain prohibitions are absolute and imperative for all: he who commits that which is forbidden is detested by God and excluded from

the number of the elect. This applieth to the things forbidden by an absolute prohibition and of which the perpetration is a grave sin; they are so vile that even to mention them is shameful. There are other forbidden things which do not cause an immediate evil and of which the pernicious effect is only gradually produced. They are also abhorred, blamed and rejected by God, but their prohibition is not recorded in an absolute way, although cleanliness and sanctity, spotlessness and purity, the preservation of health and independence are required by these interdictions.

One of these last prohibitions is the smoking of tobacco, which is unclean, malodorous, disagreeable and vulgar and of which the gradual harmfulness is universally recognized. All clever physicians have judged, and have also shown by experiment, that one of the constituents of tobacco is a mortal poison and that smokers are exposed to different indispositions and maladies. That is why cleanly people have a marked aversion for its use.

His supreme Highness the Báb -- may my soul be His sacrifice! -- in the beginning of His Cause, openly forbade it and all the friends abandoned its use. But, as it was a time for caution and he who abstained from smoking was ill treated, persecuted and even killed, therefore the friends were obliged, as a matter of prudence, to smoke. Later, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was revealed and as the prohibition of tobacco was not clearly stated in it, the friends did not renounce it. But the Blessed Perfection had always a marked aversion for its use. At the beginning of the Cause, for certain reasons, He smoked a little, but later He abandoned it completely, and the holy souls who obeyed Him in all circumstances, also entirely gave up smoking. I wish to say that, in the sight of God, the smoking of tobacco is a thing which is blamed and condemned, very unclean, and of which the result is by degrees injurious. Besides it is a cause of expense and of loss of time and it is a harmful habit. So, for those who are firm in the Covenant, it is a thing reprobated by the reason and by tradition, the renouncement of which giveth gradual repose and tranquility, permitteth one

to have stainless hands and a clean mouth, and hair which is not pervaded by a bad odor.

Without any doubt, the friends of God on receiving this epistle will renounce this injurious habit by all means, even if it be necessary to do so by degrees. This is my hope.

As to the question of opium, disgusting and execrated, I resign myself to God for its punishment. The formal text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas forbids and reproves it and, according to reason, its use leads to madness. Experience hath shown that he who giveth himself up to it is completely excluded from the world of humanity. Let us take refuge in God against the perpetration of so shameful a thing, which is the destruction of the foundations of humanity and which causeth a perpetual unhappiness. It taketh possession of the soul of man, killeth the reason, weakeneth the intelligence, maketh a living man dead and extinguisheth the natural heat. It is impossible to imagine anything more pernicious. Happy is he who never mentioneth the word opium! But what is the fate of those who make use of it!

O friends of God! Force and violence, constraint and oppression are condemned in this divine cycle, but to prevent the use of opium, all means must be employed, so that the human species may be delivered and freed from this great calamity. Otherwise, alas! for all the negligent before God.

O Lord! Give to the people of Bahá cleanliness and holiness in all conditions, purify and free them from all defilement, deliver them from the use of all that is execrated, liberate them from the chains of habits, so that they may be pure and free, clean and spotless, that they may be worthy servants of the Sacred Threshold and may deserve to enter into relation with God. Deliver them from alcohol and tobacco, and save them from opium, the purveyor of madness! Make them companions of the holy breezes, in order that they may know the pleasures of the wine of the love of God, and that they may attain to the joy and the happiness of attraction to the Kingdom of Abha!

Hast Thou not said, "All that thou hast in thy cellar will not appease the thirst of my love -- bring me, O cup-bearer of the wine of the spirit, a cup full as the sea!"

O friends of God! Experience hath shown how much the renouncing of tobacco, wine and opium, giveth health, strength and intellectual enjoyments, penetration of judgment and physical vigor. There exists today a tribe which refrains and abstains from tobacco, alcohol and opium and it completely excels all others in power, in bravery, in health, beauty and grace. A single one of these men can withstand ten men of other tribes, and this hath been universally proved; that is to say, generally, the individuals of this tribe are superior to the individuals of the other tribes.

Therefore strive that the greatest cleanliness and sanctity, which is the great desire of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, should be resplendent among the Bahá'ís, and that the companions of God should surpass the rest of mankind in all conditions and perfections; that they may be physically and morally superior to others; that through cleanliness and purity, refinement and health, they may be the chief of wise men, and that by their affranchisement, their prudence, and the control of their desires, they may be the princes of the pure, the free and the wise.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 333-336)

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN



A glimpse of the magnificent Bahá'í Gardens and Shrines in Haifa, Israel

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (**John 3:3**)

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (**1 Peter 1:23**)

"And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." (**Isaiah 6:9**)

Such things have come to pass in the days of every Manifestation of God. Even as Jesus said: "Ye must be born again."⁵ Again He saith: "Except a man be born of water and of the

5 John 3:7

Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."⁶ The purport of these words is that whosoever in every dispensation is born of the Spirit and is quickened by the breath of the Manifestation of Holiness, he verily is of those that have attained unto "life" and "resurrection" and have entered into the "paradise" of the love of God. And whosoever is not of them, is condemned to "death" and "deprivation," to the "fire" of unbelief, and to the "wrath" of God. In all the scriptures, the books and chronicles, the sentence of death, of fire, of blindness, of want of understanding and hearing, hath been pronounced against those whose lips have tasted not the ethereal cup of true knowledge, and whose hearts have been deprived of the grace of the holy Spirit in their day. Even as it hath been previously recorded: "Hearts have they with which they understand not."⁷ In another passage of the Gospel it is written: "And it came to pass that on a certain day the father of one of the disciples of Jesus had died. That disciple reporting the death of his father unto Jesus, asked for leave to go and bury him. Whereupon, Jesus, that Essence of Detachment, answered and said: "Let the dead bury their dead."⁸

In like manner, two of the people of Kufih went to Ali⁹, the Commander of the Faithful. One owned a house and wished to sell it; the other was to be the purchaser. They had agreed that this transaction should be effected and the contract be written with the knowledge of Ali. He, the exponent of the law of God, addressing the scribe, said: "Write thou: `A dead man hath bought from another dead man a house. That house is bounded by four limits. One extendeth toward the tomb, the other to the vault of the grave, the third to the Sirat, the fourth to either Paradise or hell.'" Reflect, had these two souls been quickened by the trumpet-call of Ali, had they risen from the grave of error by the power of his love, the judgment of death would certainly not have been pronounced against them.

6 *John 3:5-6*

7 *Qur'an 7:179*

8 *Luke 9:60*

9 *The first disciple of Prophet Muhammad*

In every age and century, the purpose of the Prophets of God and their chosen ones hath been no other but to affirm the spiritual significance of the terms "life," "resurrection," and "judgment." If one will ponder but for a while this utterance of Ali in his heart, one will surely discover all mysteries hidden in the terms "grave," "tomb," "sirat," "paradise" and "hell." But oh! how strange and pitiful! Behold, all the people are imprisoned within the tomb of self, and lie buried beneath the nethermost depths of worldly desire! Wert thou to attain to but a dewdrop of the crystal waters of divine knowledge, thou wouldst readily realize that true life is not the life of the flesh but the life of the spirit. For the life of the flesh is common to both men and animals, whereas the life of the spirit is possessed only by the pure in heart who have quaffed from the ocean of faith and partaken of the fruit of certitude. This life knoweth no death, and this existence is crowned by immortality. Even as it hath been said: "He who is a true believer liveth both in this world and in the world to come." If by "life" be meant this earthly life, it is evident that death must needs overtake it.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 118-121)

It is clearly evident that while man possesses powers in common with the animal, he is distinguished from the animal by intellectual attainment, spiritual perception, the acquisition of virtues, capacity to receive the bestowals of Divinity, lordly bounty and emanations of heavenly mercy. This is the adornment of man, his honor and sublimity. Humanity must strive toward this supreme station. Christ has interpreted this station as the second birth. Man is first born from a world of darkness, the matrix of the mother, into this physical world of light. In the dark world from whence he came he had no knowledge of the virtues of this existence. He has been liberated from a condition of darkness and brought into a new and spacious realm where there is sunlight, the stars are shining, the moon sheds its radiance, there are beautiful views, gardens of roses, fruits and all the blessings of the present world. How did he attain these blessings? Through the agency of birth from the mother. Just as man has been physically born into this world, he may be reborn from the realm and matrix

of nature, for the realm of nature is a condition of animalism, darkness and defect. In this second birth he attains the world of the Kingdom. There he witnesses and realizes that the world of nature is a world of gloom, whereas the Kingdom is a world of radiance; the world of nature is a world of defects, the Kingdom is a realm of perfection; the world of nature is a world without enlightenment, the Kingdom of spiritual humanity is a heaven of illumination. Great discoveries and revelations are now possible for him; he has attained the reality of perception; his circle of understanding is illimitably widened; he views the realities of creation, comprehends the divine bounties and unseals the mystery of phenomena. This is the station which Christ has interpreted as the second birth. He says that just as ye were physically born from the mother into this world, ye must be born again from the mother world of nature into the life of the divine Kingdom. May you all attain this second, spiritual birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

I pray that the confirmation of God may descend upon you. May you all be born again from this mortal world into the realm of the Kingdom. May you clearly witness the signs of God, sense the virtues of the divine, attain the eternal bounties and perceive the reality of everlasting life.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 332-333)**

Baha'u'llah has announced that no matter how far the world of humanity may advance in material civilization, it is nevertheless in need of spiritual virtues and the bounties of God. The spirit of man is not illumined and quickened through material sources. It is not resuscitated by investigating phenomena of the world of matter. The spirit of man is in need of the protection of the Holy Spirit. Just as he advances by progressive stages from the mere physical world of being into the intellectual realm, so must he develop upward in moral attributes and spiritual graces. In the process of this attainment he is ever in need of the bestowals of the Holy Spirit. Material development may be likened to the glass of a lamp, whereas divine virtues and spiritual susceptibilities are the light within

the glass. The lamp chimney is worthless without the light; likewise, man in his material condition requires the radiance and vivification of the divine graces and merciful attributes. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit he is lifeless. Although physically and mentally alive, he is spiritually dead. Christ announced, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," meaning that man must be born again. As the babe is born into the light of this physical world, so must the physical and intellectual man be born into the light of the world of Divinity. In the matrix of the mother the unborn child was deprived and unconscious of the world of material existence, but after its birth it beheld the wonders and beauties of a new realm of life and being. In the world of the matrix it was utterly ignorant and unable to conceive of these new conditions, but after its transformation it discovers the radiant sun, trees, flowers and an infinite range of blessings and bounties awaiting it. In the human plane and kingdom man is a captive of nature and ignorant of the divine world until born of the breaths of the Holy Spirit out of physical conditions of limitation and deprivation. Then he beholds the reality of the spiritual realm and Kingdom, realizes the narrow restrictions of the mere human world of existence and becomes conscious of the unlimited and infinite glories of the world of God. Therefore, no matter how man may advance upon the physical and intellectual plane, he is ever in need of the boundless virtues of Divinity, the protection of the Holy Spirit and the face of God.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 288-289)**

And among the teachings of Baha'u'llah is that although material civilization is one of the means for the progress of the world of mankind, yet until it becomes combined with Divine civilization, the desired result, which is the felicity of mankind, will not be attained. Consider! These battleships that reduce a city to ruins within the space of an hour are the result of material civilization; likewise the Krupp guns, the Mauser rifles, dynamite, submarines, torpedo boats, armed aircraft and bombers - all these weapons of war are the malignant fruits of material civilization. Had material civilization been combined

with Divine civilization, these fiery weapons would never have been invented. Nay, rather, human energy would have been wholly devoted to useful inventions and would have been concentrated on praiseworthy discoveries. Material civilization is like a lamp-glass. Divine civilization is the lamp itself and the glass without the light is dark. Material civilization is like the body. No matter how infinitely graceful, elegant and beautiful it may be, it is dead. Divine civilization is like the spirit, and the body gets its life from the spirit, otherwise it becomes a corpse. It has thus been made evident that the world of mankind is in need of the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Without the spirit the world of mankind is lifeless, and without this light the world of mankind is in utter darkness. For the world of nature is an animal world. Until man is born again from the world of nature, that is to say, becomes detached from the world of nature, he is essentially an animal, and it is the teachings of God which convert this animal into a human soul.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, Pages: 303-304)

Concerning thy question whether all the souls enjoy eternal life: Know thou those souls partake of the eternal life in whom the spirit of life is breathed from the Presence of God and all beside them are dead - without life, as Christ hath explained in the texts of the Gospel. Any person whose insight is opened by God seeth the souls in their stations after the disintegration of the bodies. Verily they are living and are subsisting before their Lord and he seeth also the dead souls submerged in the gulfs of mortality. Then know thou verily all the souls are created according to the nature of God and all are in the state of purity at the time of their births. But afterward they differ from one another insofar as they acquire excellencies or defects. Nevertheless, the creatures have different degrees in existence insofar as the creation goes, for capacities are different, but all of them are good and pure, then afterward they are polluted and defiled. Although there are different states of creation, yet all of them are beneficial. Glance thou over the temple of man, its members and its parts. Among them there are the eye, ear, nose, mouth, hands and fingers. Notwithstanding the differences between these organs, all of them

are useful in their proper spheres. But if one of them is out of order, there is need of a remedy and if the medicine does not heal, then the amputation of that member becomes necessary.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Baha'i World Faith, Pages: 387-388)**

Praise be unto Thee, O my God! Thou art He Who by a word of His mouth hath revolutionized the entire creation, and by a stroke of His pen hath divided Thy servants one from another. I bear witness, O my God, that through a word spoken by Thee in this Revelation all created things were made to expire, and through yet another word all such as Thou didst wish were, by Thy grace and bounty, endued with new life.

I render Thee thanks, therefore, and extol Thee, in the name of all them that are dear to Thee, for that Thou hast caused them to be born again, by reason of the living waters which have flowed down out of the mouth of Thy will. Since Thou didst quicken them by Thy bounteousness, O my God, make them steadfastly inclined, through Thy graciousness, towards Thy will; and since Thou didst suffer them to enter into the Tabernacle of Thy Cause, grant by Thy grace that they may not be kept back from Thee. Unlock, then, to their hearts, O my God, the portals of Thy knowledge, that they may recognize Thee as One Who is far above the reach and ken of the understanding of Thy creatures, and immeasurably exalted above the strivings of Thy people to hint at Thy nature, and may not follow every clamorous impostor that presumeth to speak in Thy name. Enable them, moreover, O my Lord, to cleave so tenaciously to Thy Cause that they may remain unmoved by the perplexing suggestions of them who, prompted by their desires, utter what hath been forbidden unto them in Thy Tablets and Thy Scriptures.

(*Baha'u'llah: Prayers and Meditations*, Pages: 42-43)

WHEN HE, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, IS COME



A magnificent view of the Threshold to the Shrine of The Báb (The Gate) on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel: “and he will shew you things to come.” (John 16:13)

“Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.”
(Ezekiel 43:1-2)

Raise the cry: “Awake, awake, for lo! the Gate of God is open, and the morning Light is shedding its radiance upon all mankind”

(Marzieh Gail, Dawn Over Mount Hira, p. 66)

“Verily I say, I am The Báb, The Gate of God...”

(Marzieh Gail, Dawn Over Mount Hira, p. 163)

The Báb was the Gate by which Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, entered into the hearts of men.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*)

In the Gospel of John, in speaking of the Promised One Who was to come after Christ, it is said in chapter 16, verses 12, 13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak."

Now consider carefully that from these words, "for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak," it is clear that the Spirit of truth is embodied in a Man Who has individuality, Who has ears to hear and a tongue to speak. In the same way the name "Spirit of God" is used in relation to Christ, as you speak of a light, meaning both the light and the lamp.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Some Answered Questions*, Page: 109)

"O kings of Christendom! Heard ye not the saying of Jesus, the Spirit of God, 'I go away, and come again unto you'?¹⁰ Wherefore, then, did ye fail, when He did come again unto you in the clouds of heaven, to draw nigh unto Him, that ye might behold His face, and be of them that attained His Presence? In another passage He saith: 'When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.' And yet, behold how, when He did bring the truth, ye refused to turn your faces towards Him, and persisted in disporting yourselves with your pastimes and fancies. Ye welcomed Him not, neither did ye seek His Presence, that ye might hear the verses of God from His own mouth, and partake of the manifold wisdom of the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise. Ye have, by reason of your failure, hindered the breath of God from being wafted over you, and have withheld from your souls the sweetness of its fragrance. Ye continue roving with delight in the valley of your corrupt desires. Ye and all ye possess shall pass away. Ye shall, most certainly, return to God, and shall be called to account for your doings in the presence of Him Who shall gather

¹⁰ John (14:28)

together the entire creation...." (*Shoghi Effendi: The Promised Day is Come, Pages: 27-28*)

"Followers of the Gospel," Baha'u'llah addressing the whole of Christendom exclaims, "behold the gates of heaven are flung open. He that had ascended unto it is now come. Give ear to His voice calling aloud over land and sea, announcing to all mankind the advent of this Revelation - a Revelation through the agency of which the Tongue of Grandeur is now proclaiming: 'Lo, the sacred Pledge hath been fulfilled, for He, the Promised One, is come!'" "The voice of the Son of Man is calling aloud from the sacred vale: 'Here am I, here am I, O God my God!' ... whilst from the Burning Bush breaketh forth the cry: 'Lo, the Desire of the world is made manifest in His transcendent glory!' The Father hath come. That which ye were promised in the Kingdom of God is fulfilled. This is the Word which the Son veiled when He said to those around Him that at that time they could not bear it... Verily the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth... He is the One Who glorified the Son and exalted His Cause..." "The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him."

(*Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 104-105*)

The Cause of Baha'u'llah is the same as the Cause of Christ. It is the same Temple and the same Foundation. Both of these are spiritual springtimes and seasons of the soul-refreshing awakening and the cause of the renovation of the life of mankind. The spring of this year is the same as the spring of last year. The origins and ends are the same. The sun of today is the sun of yesterday. In the coming of Christ, the divine teachings were given in accordance with the infancy of the human race. The teachings of Baha'u'llah have the same basic principles, but are according to the stage of the maturity of the world and the requirements of this illumined age.

(*Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i World Faith*, Page: 400*)

HE SHALL TAKE OF MINE



The plants mark the sacred spot where Bahá'u'lláh (The Glory of God) found the comfort of a rest during His time of refreshment in the beautiful Garden of Ridván at Bahjí, Akká, Israel: "...and I will make the place of my feet glorious." (Isa 60:13)

"All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (**John 16:15**)

Release yourselves, O nightingales of God, from the thorns and brambles of wretchedness and misery, and wing your flight to the rose-garden of unfading splendor. O My friends that dwell upon the dust! Haste forth unto your celestial habitation. Announce unto yourselves the joyful tidings: "He Who is the Best-Beloved is come! He hath crowned Himself with the glory of God's Revelation, and hath unlocked to the face of men the doors of His ancient Paradise." Let all eyes rejoice, and let every ear be gladdened, for now is the time to gaze on His beauty, now is the fit time to hearken to His voice. Proclaim unto every longing lover: "Behold, your Well-Beloved hath come among men!" and to the messengers of

the Monarch of love impart the tidings: "Lo, the Adored One hath appeared arrayed in the fullness of His glory!" O lovers of His beauty! Turn the anguish of your separation from Him into the joy of an everlasting reunion, and let the sweetness of His presence dissolve the bitterness of your remoteness from His court.

Behold how the manifold grace of God, which is being showered from the clouds of Divine glory, hath, in this day, encompassed the world. For whereas in days past every lover besought and searched after his Beloved, it is the Beloved Himself Who now is calling His lovers and is invitng them to attain His presence. Take heed lest ye forfeit so precious a favor; beware lest ye belittle so remarkable a token of His grace. bandon not the incorruptible benefits, and be not content with that whch perisheth. Lift up the veil tha obscureth your vsion, an dipthe darkness with which it is enveloped, that ye may gaze on the naked beauty of the Beloved's face, may behold that which no eye hath beheld, and hear that which no ear hath heard.

Hear Me, ye mortal birds! In the Rose Garden of changeless splendor a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breathe the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. Whoso followeth this counsel will break his chains asunder, will taste the abandonment of enraptured love, will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.

Night hath succeeded day, and day hath succeeded night, and the hours and moments of your lives have come and gone,

and yet none of you hath, for one instant, consented to detach himself from that which perisheth. Bestir yourselves, that the brief moments that are still yours may not be dissipated and lost. Even as the swiftness of lightning your days shall pass, and your bodies shall be laid to rest beneath a canopy of dust. What can ye then achieve? How can ye atone for your past failure?

The everlasting Candle shineth in its naked glory. Behold how it hath consumed every mortal veil. O ye moth-like lovers of His light! Brave every danger, and consecrate your souls to its consuming flame. O ye that thirst after Him! Strip yourselves of every earthly affection, and hasten to embrace your Beloved. With a zest that none can equal make haste to attain unto Him.

The Flower, thus far hidden from the sight of men, is unveiled to your eyes. In the open radiance of His glory He standeth before you. His voice summoneth all the holy and sanctified beings to come and be united with Him. Happy is he that turneth thereunto; well is it with him that hath attained, and gazed on the light of so wondrous a countenance.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Pages: 319-322)

O YE PEOPLE THAT HAVE MINDS TO KNOW AND EARS TO HEAR!

The first call of the Beloved is this: O mystic nightingale! Abide not but in the rose-garden of the spirit. O messenger of the Solomon of love! Seek thou no shelter except in the Sheba of the well-beloved, and O immortal phoenix! dwell not save on the mount of faithfulness. Therein is thy habitation, if on the wings of thy soul thou soarest to the realm of the infinite and seekest to attain thy goal.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 1)

O SON OF SPIRIT!

The bird seeketh its nest; the nightingale the charm of the rose; whilst those birds, the hearts of men, content with transient dust, have strayed far from their eternal nest, and with eyes turned towards the slough of heedlessness are bereft of

the glory of the divine presence. Alas! How strange and pitiful; for a mere cupful, they have turned away from the billowing seas of the Most High, and remained far from the most effulgent horizon.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 2)

O FRIEND!

In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love, and from the nightingale of affection and desire loosen not thy hold. Treasure the companionship of the righteous and eschew all fellowship with the ungodly.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 3)

O SON OF JUSTICE!

Whither can a lover go but to the land of his beloved? and what seeker findeth rest away from his heart's desire? To the true lover reunion is life, and separation is death. His breast is void of patience and his heart hath no peace. A myriad lives he would forsake to hasten to the abode of his beloved.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 4)

O SON OF DUST!

Verily I say unto thee: Of all men the most negligent is he that disputeth idly and seeketh to advance himself over his brother. Say, O brethren! Let deeds, not words, be your adorning.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 5)

O SON OF EARTH!

Know, verily, the heart wherein the least remnant of envy yet lingers, shall never attain My everlasting dominion, nor inhale the sweet savors of holiness breathing from My kingdom of sanctity.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 6)

O SON OF LOVE!

Thou art but one step away from the glorious heights above and from the celestial tree of love. Take thou one pace and with the next advance into the immortal realm and enter the pavilion of eternity. Give ear then to that which hath been re-

vealed by the pen of glory. **(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 7)**

O SON OF GLORY!

Be swift in the path of holiness, and enter the heaven of communion with Me. Cleanse thy heart with the burnish of the spirit, and hasten to the court of the Most High.

(Baha'u'llah: Persian Hidden Words, Page: 8)

O SON OF SPIRIT!

My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 1)

O SON OF MAN!

Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 3)

O SON OF BEING!

Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 5)

O SON OF BEING!

Thy Paradise is My love; thy heavenly home, reunion with Me. Enter therein and tarry not. This is that which hath been destined for thee in Our kingdom above and Our exalted Dominion.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 6)

O SON OF MAN!

If thou lovest Me, turn away from thyself; and if thou seekest My pleasure, regard not thine own; that thou mayest die in Me and I may eternally live in thee.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 7)

O SON OF SPIRIT!

There is no peace for thee save by renouncing thyself and turning unto Me; for it behooveth thee to glory in My name, not in thine own; to put thy trust in Me and not in thyself, since I desire to be loved alone and above all that is.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 8)

O SON OF BEING!

My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure, and he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 9)

O SON OF UTTERANCE!

Thou art My stronghold; enter therein that thou mayest abide in safety. My love is in thee, know it, that thou mayest find Me near unto thee.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 10)

O SON OF MAN!

Thou art My dominion and My dominion perisheth not, wherefore fearest thou thy perishing? Thou art My light and My light shall never be extinguished, why dost thou dread extinction? Thou art My glory and My glory fadeth not; thou art My robe and My robe shall never be outworn. Abide then in thy love for Me, that thou mayest find Me in the realm of glory.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 14)

O SON OF UTTERANCE!

Turn thy face unto Mine and renounce all save Me; for My sovereignty endureth and My dominion perisheth not. If thou seekest another than Me, yea, if thou searchest the universe for evermore, thy quest will be in vain.

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 15)

O SON OF THE SUPREME!

I have made death a messenger of joy to thee. Wherefore dost thou grieve? I made the light to shed on thee its splendor. Why dost thou veil thyself therefrom?

(Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, Page: 32)

THE DAWNING OF THE DAY OF GOD

The Bahá'í Faith was founded by The Báb (Arabic for "The Gate") on May 23rd, A.D. 1844 (1260 A.H. of the Islamic Lunar Calendar) in the city of Shiraz, Persia (Iran). The Báb Announced that the Day of God was at hand, and that He was Himself the One Promised in the Holy Scriptures. Humanity stood, He said, on the threshold of an era that would witness the restructuring of all aspects of life. The human race was called by God to embrace new changes through undertaking a transformation of its moral, and spiritual life. His own Mission was to prepare humanity for the event that lay at the heart of these developments, the Coming of that Universal Messenger of God "Him Whom God shall make Manifest," awaited by the followers of All religions. The claim soon evoked violent hostility from the Muslim clergy who taught that the process of divine revelation had ended with Muhammad and that any assertion to the contrary represented apostasy, punishable by death. Their denunciation of The Báb soon enlisted the support of the Persian authorities. Thousands of followers of the new faith perished in a horrific series of massacres throughout the country, and The Báb was publicly executed on July 9th, A.D.1850.

After The Báb, Bahá'u'lláh's Mission began in a subterranean dungeon in Teheran, in August A.D.1852. Bahá'u'lláh in Arabic translates to "The Glory of God". Born into a noble family that could trace its ancestry back to the dynasty of Persia's Imperial past, He declined the ministerial career open to Him in government, and chose instead to devote His energies to a range of philanthropies which had, by early 1840's, earned Him widespread renown as "father of the Poor". This privileged existence was swiftly eroded after 1844, when Bahá'u'lláh became one of the leading advocates of a movement that was to change the course of His country's history.

As a leader of the movement, He and some thirty companions were cast into the notorious "Siya'h-Cha'l," "the Black Pit," a deep, vermin-infested dungeon which had been created in one of the city's abandoned reservoirs. Around Bahá'u'lláh's

neck was clamped a heavy chain, so notorious in penal circles as to have been given its own name. When He did not quickly perish, as had been expected, an attempt was made to poison Him. The marks of the chain were to remain on His neck for the rest of His life. Eventually, still without trial or recourse, Bahá'u'lláh was released from prison and immediately afterwards, upon consultation of the government with the neighboring Ottoman government, He was banished from His native land, and His wealth and properties arbitrarily confiscated. Finally, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to the neighboring territory of Iraq, then under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. This expulsion was the beginning of forty years of exile, imprisonment, and bitter persecution.

On the eve of His departure from the Turkish capital of Constantinople in the year A.D. 1863, He called together individuals among His companions in a garden to which was later given the name "Ridván" (paradise), and confided the central fact of His Mission. Over the next four years, the hearers gradually shared with trusted friends the news that The Báb's promise had been fulfilled, and that, the "Day of God" had dawned.

After Constantinople, He was further exiled to the Turkish city of Adrianople, and afterwards, via the port of Alexandria in Egypt, finally, along with the members of His family, He was exiled to the grim fortress-town of Akká (Acre) on the coast of the Holy Land. Here, He was confined for the rest of His life. Akká was a penal colony used by the Ottoman State for the incarceration of dangerous criminals who could be expected to survive for not too long their imprisonment there.

During the first four years of His exile, Bahá'u'lláh announced His Mission to the political and religious leaders of the world, which took the form of a series of statements that are amongst the most remarkable documents that have ever been recorded in history. In them, the Manifestation of God addresses the "Kings and Rulers of the world," announcing to them the dawning of the Day of God, alluding to the as yet inconceivable changes which were gathering momentum

throughout the world, and calling on them, as trustees of God and of their fellow human beings, to arise and serve the process of the unification of the human race.

In His announcements, Bahá'u'lláh wrote that because of the veneration which the leaders of the world were held by the mass of their subjects, and because of the absolute nature of the rule which most of them exercised, it lay in their power, He said, to assist in bringing about what He called the "Most Great Peace," a world order characterized by unity, and animated by Divine Justice.

He was born on November 12th, A.D.1817, and Ascended in exile on May 29th, A.D.1892.

No man shall attain the shores of the ocean of true understanding except he be detached from all that is in heaven and on earth. Sanctify your souls, O ye peoples of the world, that haply ye may attain that station which God hath destined for you and enter thus the tabernacle which, according to the dispensations of Providence, hath been raised in the firmament of the Bayan¹¹.

The essence of these words is this: they that tread the path of faith, they that thirst for the wine of certitude, must cleanse themselves of all that is earthly - their ears from idle talk, their minds from vain imaginings, their hearts from worldly affections, their eyes from that which perisheth. They should put their trust in God, and, holding fast unto Him, follow in His way. Then will they be made worthy of the effulgent glories of the sun of divine knowledge and understanding, and become the recipients of a grace that is infinite and unseen, inasmuch as man can never hope to attain unto the knowledge of the All-Glorious, can never quaff from the stream of divine knowledge and wisdom, can never enter the abode of immortality, nor partake of the cup of divine nearness and favour, unless and until he ceases to regard the words and deeds of mortal men as a standard for the true understanding and recognition of God and His Prophets.

11 *The Holy Book of The Báb*

Consider the past. How many, both high and low, have, at all times, yearningly awaited the advent of the Manifestations of God in the sanctified persons of His chosen Ones. How often have they expected His coming, how frequently have they prayed that the breeze of divine mercy might blow, and the promised Beauty step forth from behind the veil of concealment, and be made manifest to all the world. And whensoever the portals of grace did open, and the clouds of divine bounty did rain upon mankind, and the light of the Unseen did shine above the horizon of celestial might, they all denied Him, and turned away from His face - the face of God Himself. Refer ye, to verify this truth, to that which hath been recorded in every sacred Book.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 3-4)

We ask for neither meed nor reward. "We nourish your souls for the sake of God; we seek from you neither recompense nor thanks."¹² This is the food that conferreth everlasting life upon the pure in heart and the illumined in spirit. This is the bread of which it is said:

"Lord, send down upon us Thy bread from heaven."¹³ This bread shall never be withheld from them that deserve it, nor can it ever be exhausted. It groweth everlastingly from the tree of grace; it descendeth at all seasons from the heavens of justice and mercy. Even as He saith: "Seest thou not to what God likeneth a good word? To a good tree; its root firmly fixed, and its branches reaching unto heaven: yielding its fruit in all seasons."¹⁴

O the pity! that man should deprive himself of this goodly gift, this imperishable bounty, this everlasting life. It behooveth him to prize this food that cometh from heaven, that perchance, through the wondrous favours of the Sun of Truth, the dead may be brought to life, and withered souls be quickened by the infinite Spirit. Make haste, O my brother, that while there is yet time our lips may taste of the immortal draught, for the breeze of life, now blowing from the city of

¹² *Qur'an* 76:9

¹³ *Qur'an* 5:117

¹⁴ *Qur'an* 14:24

the Well-Beloved, cannot last, and the streaming river of holy utterance must needs be stilled, and the portals of the Ridvan cannot for ever remain open. The day will surely come when the Nightingale of Paradise will have winged its flight away from its earthly abode unto its heavenly nest. Then will its melody be heard no more, and the beauty of the rose cease to shine. Seize the time, therefore, ere the glory of the divine springtime hath spent itself, and the Bird of Eternity ceased to warble its melody, that thy inner hearing may not be deprived of hearkening unto its call. This is My counsel unto thee and unto the beloved of God. Whosoever wisheth, let him turn thereunto; whosoever wisheth, let him turn away. God, verily, is independent of him and of that which he may see and witness.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 22-24)

...the knowledge of the King of everlasting days can in no wise be attained save by recognizing Him Who is the Bearer of the Most Great Name. He is, in truth, the Speaker on Sinai Who is now seated upon the throne of Revelation. He is the Hidden Mystery and the Treasured Symbol. All the former and latter Books of God are adorned with His praise and extol His glory. Through Him the standard of knowledge hath been planted in the world and the ensign of the oneness of God hath been unfurled amidst all peoples. Attainment unto the Divine Presence can be realized solely by attaining His presence. Through His potency everything that hath, from time immemorial, been veiled and hidden, is now revealed. He is made manifest through the power of Truth and hath uttered a Word whereby all that are in the heavens and on the earth have been dumbfounded, except those whom the Almighty was pleased to exempt. True belief in God and recognition of Him cannot be complete save by acceptance of that which He hath revealed and by observance of whatsoever hath been decreed by Him and set down in the Book by the Pen of Glory.

They that immerse themselves in the ocean of His utterances should at all times have the utmost regard for the divinely-revealed ordinances and prohibitions. Indeed His ordinances constitute the mightiest stronghold for the protection

of the world and the safeguarding of its peoples - a light upon those who acknowledge and recognize the truth, and a fire unto such as turn away and deny.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 50)

The fourth Tajalli is concerning Divinity, Godhead and the like. Were a man of insight to direct his gaze towards the blessed, the manifest Lote-Tree and its fruits, he would be so enriched thereby as to be independent of aught else and to acknowledge his belief in that which the Speaker on Sinai hath uttered from the throne of Revelation.

...Say: O people, if ye judge fairly and equitably, ye will testify to the truth of whatsoever hath streamed forth from the Most Exalted Pen. If ye be of the people of the Bayan, the Persian Bayan will guide you aright and will prove a sufficient testimony unto you; and if ye be of the people of the Qur'an, ponder ye upon the Revelation on Sinai and the Voice from the Bush which came unto the Son of Imran [Moses].

Gracious God! It was intended that at the time of the manifestation of the One true God the faculty of recognizing Him would have been developed and matured and would have reached its culmination. However, it is now clearly demonstrated that in the disbelievers this faculty hath remained undeveloped and hath, indeed, degenerated.

...That which they accepted from the Bush they now refuse to accept from Him Who is the Tree of the world of existence.....

By the righteousness of God! But for the anthem of praise voiced by Him Who heralded the divine Revelation, this Wronged One would never have breathed a word which might have struck terror into the hearts of the ignorant and caused them to perish. Dwelling on the glorification of Him Whom God shall make manifest - exalted be His Manifestation - the Báb in the beginning of the Bayan saith: `He is the One Who shall proclaim under all conditions, "Verily, verily, I am God, no God is there but Me, the Lord of all created things. In truth all oth-

ers except Me are My creatures. O, My creatures! Me alone do ye worship.” Likewise in another instance He, magnifying the Name of Him Who shall be made manifest, saith: ‘I would be the first to adore Him.’ Now it behoveth one to reflect upon the significance of the ‘Adorer’ and the ‘Adored One’, that perchance the people of the earth may partake of a dewdrop from the ocean of divine knowledge and may be enabled to perceive the greatness of this Revelation. Verily, He hath appeared and hath unloosed His tongue to proclaim the Truth. Well is it with him who doth acknowledge and recognize the truth, and woe betide the froward and the wayward.

O kindreds of the earth! Incline your ears unto the Voice from the divine Lote-Tree which overshadoweth the world and be not of the people of tyranny on earth - men who have repudiated the Manifestation of God and His invincible authority and have renounced His favours - they in truth are reckoned with the contemptible in the Book of God, the Lord of all mankind.

The Glory which hath dawned above the horizon of My tender mercy rest upon thee and upon whosoever is with thee and giveth ear to thy words concerning the Cause of God, the Almighty, the All-Praised.

(Baha’u’llah: Tablets of Baha’u’llah, Pages: 50-54)

IN THE NAME OF HIM, WHO IS THE SUPREME RULER
OVER ALL THAT HATH BEEN, AND ALL THAT IS TO BE

The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth everyone who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is accept-

able without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.

They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples. He that turneth away from them is accounted among the abject and foolish. We, verily, have commanded you to refuse the dictates of your evil passions and corrupt desires, and not to transgress the bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed, for these are the breath of life unto all created things. The seas of Divine wisdom and Diutterance have risen under the breath of the breeze of the All-Merciful. Hasten to drink your fill, O men of understanding! They that have violated the Covenant of God by breaking His commandments, and have turned back on their heels, these have erred grievously in the sight of God, the All-Possessing, the Most High.

O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures. Thus hath it been sent down from the heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Lord of Revelation. Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His bountiful care and loving-kindness.

Say: From My laws the sweet-smelling savour of My garment can be smelled, and by their aid the standards of Victory will be planted upon the highest peaks. The Tongue of My power hath, from the heaven of My omnipotent glory, addressed to My creation these words: "Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty." Happy is the lover that hath inhaled the divine fragrance of his Best-Beloved from these words, laden with the perfume of a grace which no tongue can describe. By My life! He who hath drunk the choice wine of fairness from the hands of My bountiful favour will circle

around My commandments that shine above the Dayspring of My creation.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, Pages: 19-21)

“Through the movement of Our Pen of Glory We have, at the bidding of the Omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this worldwide regeneration.” “O people! I swear by the one true God! This is the Ocean out of which all Seas have proceeded, and with which every one of them will ultimately be united. From Him all the Suns have been generated, and unto Him they will all return. Through His potency the Trees of Divine Revelation have yielded their fruits, every one of which hath been sent down in the form of a Prophet, bearing a Message to God’s creatures in each of the worlds whose number God, alone, in His all-encompassing knowledge, can reckon. This He hath accomplished through the agency of but one Letter of His Word, revealed by His Pen - a Pen moved by His directing Finger - His Finger itself sustained by the power of God’s Truth.” “By the righteousness of the one true God! If one speck of a jewel be lost and buried beneath a mountain of stones, and lie hidden beyond the seven seas, the Hand of Omnipotence would assuredly reveal it in this Day, pure and cleansed from dross.” “Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation - a creation the magnitude of which is inscrutable to all save God. He verily hath knowledge of all things.” “It is in Our power, should We wish it, to enable a speck of floating dust to generate, in less than the twinkling of an eye, suns of infinite, of unimaginable splendor, to cause a dewdrop to develop into vast and numberless oceans, to infuse into every letter such a force as to empower it to unfold all the knowledge of past and future ages.” “We are possessed of such power which, if brought to light, will transmute the most deadly of poisons into a panacea of unailing efficacy.”

“The days are approaching their end, and yet the peoples of the earth are seen sunk in grievous heedlessness, and lost

in manifest error." "Great, great is the Cause! The hour is approaching when the most great convulsion will have appeared. I swear by Him Who is the Truth! It shall cause separation to afflict everyone, even those who circle around M." "Say: O concourse of the heedless! I swear by God! Th promised day is come, the da when tormentig trias wlhave surged above your heads, and beneath your feet, saying: `Taste ye what your hands have wrought!'" "The time for the destruction of the world and its people hath arrived. He Who is the Pre-Existent is come, that He may bestow everlasting life, and grant eternal preservation, and confer that which is conducive to true living." "The day is approaching when its [civilization's] flame will devour the cities, when the Tongue of Grandeur will proclaim: `The Kingdom is God's, the Almighty, the All-Praised!'" "O ye that are bereft of understanding! A severe trial pursueth you, and will suddenly overtake you. Bestir yourselves, that haply it may pass and inflict no harm upon you." "O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity is following you, and that grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not the deeds ye have committed have been blotted from My sight." "O heedless ones! Though the wonders of My mercy have encompassed all created things, both visible and invisible, and though the revelations of My grace and bounty have permeated every atom of the universe, yet the rod with which I can chastise the wicked is grievous, and the fierceness of Mine anger against them terrible." "Grieve thou not over those that have busied themselves with the things of this world, and have forgotten the remembrance of God, the Most Great. By Him Who is the Eternal Truth! The day is approaching when the wrathful anger of the Almighty will have taken hold of them. He, verily, is the Omnipotent, the All-Subduing, the Most Powerful. He shall cleanse the earth from the defilement of their corruption, and shall give it for an heritage unto such of His servants as are nigh unto Him." "Soon will the cry, `Yea, yea, here am I, here am I' be heard from every land. For there hath never been, nor can there ever be, any other refuge to fly to for anyone." "And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then, and only then, will the

Divine Standard be unfurled, and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody."

(Shoghi Effendi: *The Advent of Divine Justice*, Pages: 80-82)

Arise, and proclaim unto the entire creation the tidings that He Who is the All-Merciful hath directed His steps towards the Ridvan and entered it. Guide, then, the people unto the garden of delight which God hath made the Throne of His Paradise. We have chosen thee to be our most mighty Trumpet, whose blast is to signalize the resurrection of all mankind.

Say: This is the Paradise on whose foliage the wine of utterance hath imprinted the testimony: "He that was hidden from the eyes of men is revealed, girded with sovereignty and power!" This is the Paradise, the rustling of whose leaves proclaims: "O ye that inhabit the heavens and the earth! There hath appeared what hath never previously appeared. He Who, from everlasting, had concealed His Face from the sight of creation is now come." From the whispering breeze that wafteth amidst its branches there cometh the cry: "He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is made manifest. The Kingdom is God's," while from its streaming waters can be heard the murmur: "All eyes are gladdened, for He Whom none hath beheld, Whose secret no one hath discovered, hath lifted the veil of glory, and uncovered the countenance of Beauty."

(Baha'u'llah: *Gleanings*, Page: 31)

Thus doth the Nightingale utter His call unto you from this prison. He hath but to deliver this clear message. Whosoever desireth, let him turn aside from this counsel and whosoever desireth let him coose the path to his Lord. O people, if ye deny these verses, by what proof have ye believed in God... Be thou assured in thyself that verily, he who urns away from this Beauy hath also urnedawyfrom the Messengers of the past and showeth pride towards God from all eternity to all eternity.

(Baha'u'llah: *Baha'i Prayers*, p. 211)

"The Báb, the Exalted One," Abdu'l-Baha more specifically affirms in another Tablet, "is the Morn of Truth, the splendor

of Whose light shineth throughout all regions. He is also the Harbinger of the Most Great Light, the Abha Luminary. The Blessed Beauty¹⁵ is the One promised by the sacred books of the past, the revelation of the Source of light that shone upon Mount Sinai, Whose fire glowed in the midst of the Burning Bush. We are, one and all, servants of their threshold, and stand each as a lowly keeper at their door." "Every proof and prophecy," is His still more emphatic warning, "every manner of evidence, whether based on reason or on the text of the scriptures and traditions, are to be regarded as centered in the persons of Baha'u'llah and the Bab. In them is to be found their complete fulfillment."

(Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 127-128)

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

Religion is the outer expression of the divine reality. Therefore it must be living, vitalized, moving and progressive. If it be without motion and non-progressive it is without the divine life; it is dead. The divine institutes are continuously active and evolutionary; therefore the revelation of them must be progressive and continuous.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 224)

...all the Prophets of God, whenever made manifest unto the peoples of the world, have invariably foretold the coming of yet another Prophet after them, and have established such signs as would herald the advent of the future Dispensation. To this the records of all sacred books bear witness.

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-i-Iqan, Pages: 12-13)

One of the fundamental verities of the Faith of God is that divine Revelation is progressive, the latest Manifestation of God embodying within His Revelation the essence of all past Revelations. This is similar to a human being who contains

¹⁵ Baha'u'llah

within himself at every stage in his life those qualities and attributes which he had previously acquired.

(Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation Bahá'u'lláh v.2 p.126*)

This concept is portrayed very powerfully in this extract from Tablet of Ahmad written by Bahá'u'lláh:

“Be thou assured in thyself that verily, he who turns away from this Beauty¹⁶ hath also turned away from the Messengers of the past and showeth pride towards God from all eternity to all eternity”.

“All the Prophets of God,” asserts Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, “abide in the same tabernacle, soar in the same heaven, are seated upon the same throne, utter the same speech, and proclaim the same Faith.” From the “beginning that hath no beginning,” these Exponents of the Unity of God and Channels of His incessant utterance have shed the light of the invisible Beauty upon mankind, and will continue, to the “end that hath no end,” to vouchsafe fresh revelations of His might and additional experiences of His inconceivable glory. To contend that any particular religion is final, that “all Revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the daysprings of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again, that the ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the Tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest” would indeed be nothing less than sheer blasphemy.

“They differ,” explains Bahá'u'lláh in that same epistle, “only in the intensity of their revelation and the comparative potency of their light.” And this, not by reason of any inherent incapacity of any one of them to reveal in a fuller measure the glory of the Message with which He has been entrusted, but rather because of the immaturity and unpreparedness of the age He lived in to apprehend and absorb the full potentialities latent in that Faith.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 58)

16 *Baha'u'llah*

Among the bounties of God is revelation. Hence revelation is progressive and continuous. It never ceases. It is necessary that the reality of Divinity with all its perfections and attributes should become resplendent in the human world. The reality of Divinity is like an endless ocean. Revelation may be likened to the rain. Can you imagine the cessation of rain? Ever on the face of the earth somewhere rain is pouring down. Briefly, the world of existence is progressive. It is subject to development and growth. Consider how great has been the progress in this radiant century. Civilization has unfolded. Nations have developed. Industrialism and jurisprudence have expanded. Sciences, inventions and discoveries have increased. All of these show that the world of existence is continuously progressing and developing; and therefore, assuredly, the virtues characterizing the maturity of man must, likewise, expand and grow.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 378)

It should also be borne in mind that, great as is the power manifested by this Revelation and however vast the range of the Dispensation its Author has inaugurated, it emphatically repudiates the claim to be regarded as the final revelation of God's will and purpose for mankind. To hold such a conception of its character and functions would be tantamount to a betrayal of its cause and a denial of its truth. It must necessarily conflict with the fundamental principle which constitutes the bedrock of Bahá'í belief, the principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is orderly, continuous and progressive and not spasmodic or final. Indeed, the categorical rejection by the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh of the claim to finality which any religious system inaugurated by the Prophets of the past may advance is as clear and emphatic as their own refusal to claim that same finality for the Revelation with which they stand identified. "To believe that all revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the daysprings of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again, that the ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest"

must constitute in the eyes of every follower of the Faith a grave, an inexcusable departure from one of its most cherished and fundamental principles.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 115)

Just as mankind has progressively evolved from the stage of infancy into childhood and adolescence, and will eventually become mature, so Divine Revelations have unfolded in a progressive manner.

Let us consider the growth of a human being from infancy to manhood. As he grows his capacity and powers increase; yet at each stage he remains the same person and retains the same identity. When he is in the state of childhood, he manifests the characteristics of a child; and although he longs to reach maturity, he is incapable of understanding it at this stage. However, a few years later his attitude and interests will have so changed and his abilities so much increased that he will find it hard to think of himself as the same person. For him the child no longer exists and all that is left is a memory and perhaps a picture. But in essence he is the same person. Throughout his life the same principle applies, namely, oneness of identity with gradual increase of capacity.

In like manner, the Revealers of the Word of God are one and the same in essence; yet in each age the latest Manifestation of God manifests a greater measure of truth while containing within Himself and His Revelation the essence and reality of the former religions.

(Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Baha'u'llah v 1*, p. 65)

A great stumbling block to many, in the way of religious unity, is the difference between the Revelations given by the different Prophets. What is commanded by one is forbidden by another; how then can both be right, how can both be proclaiming the Will of God? Surely the truth is One, and cannot change. Yes, the Absolute Truth is One and cannot change, but the Absolute Truth is infinitely beyond the present range of human understanding, and our conceptions of it must constantly change. Our earlier, imperfect ideas will be by the Grace of

God replaced, as time goes on, by more and more adequate conceptions. Bahá'u'lláh says, in a Tablet to some Bahá'ís of Persia:

O people! Words are revealed according to capacity so that the beginners may make progress. The milk must be given according to measure so that the babe of the world may enter into the Realm of Grandeur and be established in the Court of Unity.

(Dr. J.E. Esslemont, Baha'u'llah and the New Era, p. 122)

THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD



Among the magnificent Bahá'í Houses of Worship around the world is the Lotus Temple in New Delhi, India.

O ye beloved of God! Know ye, verily, that the happiness of mankind lieth in the unity and the harmony of the human race, and that spiritual and material developments are conditioned upon love and amity among all men.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, Page: 286)

There is one God; mankind is one; the foundations of religion are one.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Abdu'l-Baha in London*, Page: 20)

The Great Being saith: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, Page: 218)

Ye are all the leaves of one tree and the drops of one ocean.

(Baha'u'llah: Tablets of Baha'u'llah, Page: 129)

"The well-being of mankind," He declares, "its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." "So powerful is the light of unity," is His further testimony, "that it can illuminate the whole earth.

(Shoghi Effendi: World Orde of Baha'u'llh, Pag: 23)

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Page: 67)

Every flock of the sheep of God which is protected under the shadow of the Divine Shepherd will not be scattered, but when the sheep are dispersed from the flock, they will necessarily be caught and torn by the wolf.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to flock together! It is incumbent upon you to be united! It is incumbent upon you to expose yourselves to the fragrances of God at every time and moment! (**`Abdu'l-Baha: Baha'i World Faith*, Page: 402**)

In all the revealed world religions the coming of the Kingdom is identified with the appearance of the Supreme world Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, the returned Christ, the Qá'im, the new Buddha. "One fold and one shepherd" is to replace the many conflicting and separated groups of men.

This outstanding pledge, originally given thousands of years ago, has never been taken up by any of the Great Prophets until the nineteenth century, when Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, announced to the rulers and religious leaders of the world that He was this Redeemer and the Bearer of God's message to modern man. He proclaimed that He spoke with the Voice of God Himself, that He was the Lord of Hosts, Christ come in the glory of the Father, and that this was indeed the Last Day, the Day of Judgment. The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and His martyred Forerunner, the Báb, had for twenty years suffered persecution of every form; yet without investigation the kings and ecclesiastical rulers whom He addressed ignored His message. He died in 1892 in the Holy Land, an exile and captive of the Turks. Yet to-day a world-wide community exists bearing His name and following His teachings.

(George Townshend, Christ and Baha'u'llah, p. 9)

All the Faiths of the world speak of a great "last day" when God will rule the earth and all the sheep will be gathered together into one flock. Christ Himself said: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." ***(John 10:16)***

In the Book of Zechariah it is expressed in yet another way: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one." [Zechariah 14:9]

Although the name of every prophet up until the present time has appeared in various forms in the different languages of the world, the name Bahá'u'lláh is never spoken other than in this one form which is used throughout the earth. In speaking of the last day, the Book of Habbakuk states: "For

the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord¹⁷, as the waters cover the sea." (**Habbakuk 2:14**)
(William Sears, *Release the Sun*, p. 230)

I found that Christ made no claim that the time of the end or the day of the one fold and one Shepherd, were fulfilled by Himself. On the contrary, He revealed a prayer which was both a prayer and a prophesy of the future. He said:

'...Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.'

I found ample evidence that Christ never tried to 'unseal' the Books Himself. He left this for a future date. Rather, He spoke in parables and hidden meanings. He even prophesied that while He (Christ) spoke in parables, there would be a time in the future, when the Son would return in the Glory of the Father, and would speak plainly to them. Christ said:

'These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall speak no more unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.' [John 16:25]

This promise to explain the hidden meanings is given by Jesus in the very same chapter in which He speaks of the coming of the Spirit of Truth who will guide His followers unto all truth. When this 'Comforter' comes, Christ promises:

'...he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' [John 14:26]

Christ, in these words, seems to offer the clear promise that the new Messiah would, in the day of His coming, 'unseal the books' and bring to light the 'hidden things of darkness'.

If He had appeared in 1844, that would certainly account for all the renewed enthusiasm.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night* p.46-47)

17 *The Glory of God (Bahá'u'lláh)*

Bahá'u'lláh came to Israel, where he declared that all men were the sheep of one sacred fold, that his mission was to gather the scattered 'lambs' of God into one family, one mankind. His name means 'the Glory of God'.

Ezekiel said:

'And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east...and the earth shined with his glory.' (**Ezekiel 43:2**)

And again:

'And the glory of the Lord came into the house by way of the gate whose prospect is towards the east.' (**Ezekiel 43:4**)

Christ also spoke of the great Shepherd of the one fold, saying:

'But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.' (**John 10:2**)

Christ also said:

'...the Son of man shall come in the Glory of his Father.' (**Matthew 16:27**)

This was yet another way of saying: 'the Glory of God'. Bahá'u'lláh came from the East. He came by way of the door, the Báb. His name means 'the Glory of God' or 'the Glory of the Lord'.

(William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p. 129)

'Beware of false prophets,' Christ warned, 'which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.' (**Matthew 7:15**)

Christ promised that if we looked for the 'inward' truth and not the 'outward' appearance, we would know the true from the false, for:

'He that entereth in by the door (Gate) is the shepherd of the sheep...he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.' (**John 10:2, 4**)

Christ was clearly speaking of the day of His return in this warning, for He said:

'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold (Christianity): them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again.' (**John 10:16-17**)

[William Sears, *Thief in the Night*, p.206-207.]

Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed that, inasmuch as God is the one heavenly Shepherd and all mankind are the sheep of His fold, the religion or guidance of God must be the means of love and fellowship in the world. If religion proves to be the source of hatred, enmity and contention, if it becomes the cause of warfare and strife and influences men to kill each other, its absence is preferable. For that which is productive of hatred amongst the people is rejected by God, and that which establishes fellowship is beloved and sanctioned by Him. Religion and divine teachings are like unto a remedy. A remedy must produce the condition of health. If it occasions sickness, it is wiser and better to have no remedy whatever. This is the significance of the statement that if religion becomes the cause of warfare and bloodshed, irreligion and the absence of religion are preferable among mankind.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 298)

...in a letter to the Pope, written from Adrianople in 1867, He (Bahá'u'lláh) says:

Beware lest celebration hinder you from the Celebrated and worship hinder you from the Worshipped One! Behold the Lord, the Mighty, the All-Knowing! He hath come to minister to the life of the world, and for the uniting of whatever dwelleth

therein. Come, O ye people, to the Dawning-place of Revelation! Tarry not, even for an hour! Are ye learned of the Gospel, and yet are unable to see the Lord of Glory? This beseemeth you not, O learned concourse! Say then, if ye deny this matter, by what proof do you believe in God? Produce your proof.

Just as in these letters to Christians He announces the fulfillment of the Gospel promises, so He proclaims also to Muhammadan, Jews, Zoroastrians and the people of other faiths the fulfillment of the promises of their Holy Books. He addresses all men as the sheep of God, who have hitherto been divided into different flocks and sheltered in different folds. His message, He says, is the Voice of God, the Good Shepherd, Who has come in the fullness of time to gather His scattered sheep into one flock, removing the barriers between them, that "there may be one fold and one shepherd."

(Dr. J.E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 126)

"To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety; so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come to thee. To each among you have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues. The goal of you all is to Allah; it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute." **(Qur'an 5:51)**

"If Allah had so willed, He could have made them a single people; but He admits whom He will to His Mercy; and the wrongdoers will have no protector nor helper." **(Qur'an 42:8)**

This is the goal which the missions of all of the Manifestations of God known to history have served, the Day of "one fold and one shepherd." Its attainment, Bahá'u'lláh says, is the stage of civilization upon which the human race is now entering.

(*Bahá'i International Community, 1992 May 29, Statement on Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 16)

UNIVERSAL AUXILIARY LANGUAGE

“Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms...then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.”
(Zephaniah 3:8-9)

“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.” **(Zechariah 14:9)**

The Great Being, wishing to reveal the prerequisites of the peace and tranquillity of the world and the advancement of its peoples, hath written: The time must come when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace amongst men. Such a peace demandeth that the Great Powers should resolve, for the sake of the tranquillity of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled among themselves. Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him. If this be done, the nations of the world will no longer require any armaments, except for the purpose of preserving the security of their realms and of maintaining internal order within their territories. This will ensure the peace and composure of every people, government and nation. We fain would hope that the kings and rulers of the earth, the mirrors of the gracious and almighty name of God, may attain unto this station, and shield mankind from the onslaught of tyranny... The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential.

It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action.... That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. In another passage He hath proclaimed: It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.

(Baha'u'llah: Proclamation of Baha'u'llah, Pages: 115-116)

Today the greatest need of the world of humanity is discontinuance of the existing misunderstandings among nations. This can be accomplished through the unity of language. Unless the unity of languages is realized, the Most Great Peace and the oneness of the human world cannot be effectively organized and established because the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of human hearts. The heart is like a box, and language is the key. Only by using the key can we open the box and observe the gems it contains. Therefore, the question of an auxiliary international tongue has the utmost importance. Through this means international education and training become possible; the evidence and history of the past can be acquired. The spread of the known facts of the human world depends upon language. The explanation of divine teachings can only be through this medium. As long as diversity of tongues and lack of comprehension of other languages continue, these glorious aims cannot be realized. Therefore, the very first service to the world of man is to establish this auxiliary international means of communication. It will become the cause of the tranquillity of the human commonwealth. Through it sciences and arts will be spread among the nations, and it will prove to be the means of the progress and development of all races. We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize

an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 60-61)**

Diversity of languages has been a fruitful cause of discord. The function of language is to convey the thought and purpose of one to another. Therefore, it matters not what language man speaks or employs. Sixty years ago Baha'u'llah advocated one language as the greatest means of unity and the basis of international conference. He wrote to the kings and rulers of the various nations, recommending that one language should be sanctioned and adopted by all governments. According to this each nation should acquire the universal language in addition to its native tongue. The world would then be in close communication, consultation would become general, and dissensions due to diversity of speech would be removed.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 232-233)**

HARMONY OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." (***Genesis 1:3-5***)

"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day." (***Genesis 1:16-19***)

"He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical. But

those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part there of that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: 'We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord;' and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding." **(Qur'an 3:7)**

The spiritual evolution of man from his First Birth in Genesis to his Second Birth in the Apocalypse is revealed as being likewise carried through by stages, in a series of separate periods, each complete in itself and each following the same pattern.

The Bible does not state what is meant by the word 'Day'¹⁸, beyond a clear indication that it had not a literal but a symbolic meaning; for the sun which makes the material day was not created till the fourth of these periods. But it gives a clear account of the division of the evolutionary movement into great Eras, all having certain characteristics the same and having definite epochs and moments of crisis. These Eras are generally known as Dispensations, but they are sometimes spoken of in Scripture by the same name as the Days of creation.

'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day,' said Jesus¹⁹, referring to His Dispensation. And the time of the end, the time when all things are made new and the Father and the Lamb come to dwell among men is often called the Day of the Lord, meaning the Day when Christ shall reign in the Glory of the Lord God²⁰.

The comparison of Christ's Dispensation to a Day is evidently appropriate because He likened Himself to the sun. 'I am the light of the world,' He said²¹. Everything was, save for His illumination, in darkness; and those who believed in Him became children of the light, able to reflect on others the light they gained from Him, their Sun.

¹⁸ Gen.(1:3-5)

¹⁹ John(8:56)

²⁰ Matt (16:27)

²¹ John(8:12)

The time of the Second Advent is, for the same reason, fitly likened to a Day, for the Father and the Son give it light. 'The city had no need of the sun.'²² Besides the Dispensation of Christ and that which is to follow His Second Advent in the power of the Father, there are definitely referred to in Scripture three other Dispensations. One is that of Moses, which is narrated from its beginning to its close. Another is that of Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, which is briefly and distinctly sketched. The third is that of Noah. Christ compared the phenomena of Noah's Advent to those which would occur at the future time of His own Second Advent: 'As it was in the days of Noe.'²³

(George Townshend, *The Heart of the Gospel*, p. 47)

According to science and reason it is evident that the occurrences of the material day, and night, are contingent upon the light from the sun.

It has been said that the sun, 'the greater light to rule the day' (**Gen.1:16**), was not created until 'the fourth day' (**Gen.1:19**). However, question may be raised as to how could 'there be light...the first day' (**Gen.1:3,5**), if there was no sun until 'the fourth day'? (**Gen.1:19**)

It would then be reasonable to say that the creation of the sun on the fourth day is rather an 'allegorical' statement, and not a literal phenomenon. It contains realities that bear 'hidden meanings':

"He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning)...others are allegorical...but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allah..." (**Qur'an 3:7**)

The comparison of the Christ's Dispensation to a spiritual Day is evidently an appropriate claim since He likened Himself to the Sun, 'the light of the world' (**John 8:12**). However, such

²² Rev (21:23)

²³ Matt(24:37)

a claim can also be made regarding the other Lights of Divine Guidance, for Moses portrayed the Advent of the future Dispensations after Himself as the dawning places of the Sun of Truth:

“And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he Shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.” (**Deuteronomy 33:2**)

“Mount Sinai,” is where Moses revealed THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, “Mount Seir,” is where Jesus Christ revealed His Sermon on the Mount, “Mount Paran,” located in the Arabian Peninsula, is where Muhammad revealed His Divine Message (Habakkuk 3:3 speaks of “the Holy One from mount Paran.”,) “he came with ten thousands of saints,” prophesied the coming of The Báb²⁴ and His followers, and, “from his right hand went a fiery law for them,” prophesied the Advent of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: The Most Holy Book (Kitab-i-Aqdas).

Thus, the Baha’i Faith reveals that the “Day”, spoken of in the Scripture of the Genesis, speaks of a pre-existent and a Divine concept, an Eternal Light, which bears mysteries and knowledge of things hidden. It speaks of a Day of a Manifestation of Holiness, a Day of a Divine Dispensation, a Spiritual Cycle, and not, a literal day.

Any religious belief which is not conformable with scientific proof and investigation is superstition, for true science is reason and reality, and religion is essentially reality and pure reason; therefore, the two must correspond. Religious teaching which is at variance with science and reason is human invention and imagination unworthy of acceptance, for the antithesis and opposite of knowledge is superstition born of the ignorance of man. If we say religion is opposed to science, we lack knowledge of either true science or true religion, for both are founded upon the premises and conclusions of reason, both must bear its test. (**‘Abdu’l-Baha: Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Page: 107**)

24 *The Forerunner and Herald of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh*

We may think of science as one wing and religion as the other; a bird needs two wings for flight, one alone would be useless. Any religion that contradicts science or that is opposed to it, is only ignorance - for ignorance is the opposite of knowledge. Religion which consists only of rites and ceremonies of prejudice is not the truth. Let us earnestly endeavour to be the means of uniting religion and science.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Paris Talks*, Pages: 130-131)

Baha'u'llah promulgated the fundamental oneness of religion. He taught that reality is one and not multiple, that it underlies all divine precepts and that the foundations of the religions are, therefore, the same. Certain forms and imitations have gradually arisen. As these vary, they cause differences among religionists. If we set aside these imitations and seek the fundamental reality underlying our beliefs, we reach a basis of agreement because it is one and not multiple.

Among other principles of Baha'u'llah's teachings was the harmony of science and religion. Religion must stand the analysis of reason. It must agree with scientific fact and proof so that science will sanction religion and religion fortify science. Both are indissolubly welded and joined in reality. If statements and teachings of religion are found to be unreasonable and contrary to science, they are outcomes of superstition and imagination. Innumerable doctrines and beliefs of this character have arisen in the past ages. Consider the superstitions and mythology of the Romans, Greeks and Egyptians; all were contrary to religion and science. It is now evident that the beliefs of these nations were superstitions, but in those times they held to them most tenaciously. For example, one of the many Egyptian idols was to those people an authenticated miracle, whereas in reality it was a piece of stone. As science could not sanction the miraculous origin and nature of a piece of rock, the belief in it must have been superstition. It is now evident that it was superstition. Therefore, we must cast aside such beliefs and investigate reality. That which is found to be real and conformable to reason must be accepted, and whatever science and reason cannot support must be rejected as imitation and not reality. Then differences of belief

will disappear. All will become as one family, one people, and the same susceptibility to the divine bounty and education will be witnessed among mankind.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 175-176)**

INDIVIDUAL SEARCH FOR TRUTH

"But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." **(Deuteronomy 4:29)**

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." **(Jeremiah 29:13)**

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." **(Matthew 7:7-8)**

"O ye who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly, and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done." **(Qur'án 49:6)**

Another new principle revealed by Baha'u'llah is the injunction to investigate truth - that is to say, no man should blindly follow his ancestors and forefathers. Nay, each must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears and investigate the truth himself in order that he may follow the truth instead of blind acquiescence and imitation of ancestral beliefs.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page: 454)**

Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be

dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being.

(Baha'u'llah: *Gleanings*, Page: 267)

Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breathe the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. Whoso followeth this counsel will break his chains asunder, will taste the abandonment of enraptured love, will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.

(Baha'u'llah: *Gleanings*, Page: 321)

Man must cut himself free from all prejudice and from the result of his own imagination, so that he may be able to search for truth unhindered. Truth is one in all religions, and by means of it the unity of the world can be realized.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Paris Talks, Page: 129)**

Reality or truth is one, yet there are many religious beliefs, denominations, creeds and differing opinions in the world today. Why should these differences exist? Because they do not investigate and examine the fundamental unity, which is one and unchangeable. If they seek reality itself, they will agree and be united; for reality is indivisible and not multiple. It is evident, therefore, that there is nothing of greater importance to mankind than the investigation of truth.

(`Abdu'l-Baha: *Promulgation of Universal Peace, Pages: 62-63)**

